

## Reasons Pertaining to Substance Abuse among Undergraduates in Chennai

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### KEYWORDS

Alcohol consumption, Cannabis consumption, Initial consumption, Prevention Strategies, Substance abuse, Undergraduates.

### ABSTRACT

**BACKGROUND:** Substance abuse and dependence among undergraduates in India are very concerning as they are next in line to contribute to the social and economic needs of the country. The alarming increase in substance use also contributes to various physical and mental illnesses. **OBJECTIVES:** This research aims to identify the root cause and initial indulgence in substance consumption to prevent the increase of usage and loss of human potential to enhance the quality of society in the upcoming years. **METHODS:** An observational study with a cross-sectional design was done among 174 participants. This questionnaire-based cross-sectional study was done among undergraduates aged between 19-22 in Medical, Dental, Engineering, and Arts and Science College students studying in Chennai. A Drug and Alcohol (DAP) questionnaire for screening of alcohol, tobacco, and cannabis along with a Semi-Structured Performa about socio-demographic factors was used to collect the data. Statistical analysis was carried out using SPSS version-21, Chi-Square Test descriptive for finding out the outcome variable. **RESULT:** About 62.7% tried alcohol/smoking for the first time because they were 'curious' followed by 29.4% stating that it was due to 'emotional disturbances', 23.5% due to 'having free time', 19.6% because they were 'stressed', 17.6% due to 'college' as the three most chosen reasons. Among 45 participants who were consuming substances, 32.4% felt neglected at home. Of the remaining 133 who did not consume any substances when asked the reason for their non-consumption, 28.7% were 'not interested', 15.7% said it was due to 'self-control' and 5.6% said 'both'. **CONCLUSION:** Our study revealed that 'curiosity' was the reason for the initial consumption of the substance but the reason for the continuation of the habit is because of emotional disturbances, stress, or feeling neglected at home and by society. Prevention and treatment of substance abuse and dependence should consider these factors. This can help lay better intervention and relapse strategies for the upcoming generation.

## 1. Introduction

In a country of increasing software industries, chains of restaurants, and smartphones, substance usage and abuse have also seen a rise in recent years <sup>[4,14,15]</sup>. The prominent decline in culture such as not being in joint families, working mothers, and decreased religious beliefs has led to a rise in the number of substance addicts who use them as a medium to get away from reality <sup>[15]</sup>. India is known for its rich tradition and moral values; little did we know that some substances have been a part of religious practices for a long time <sup>[15]</sup>.

Cannabis (marijuana) products have been used all over India as it has some association with Hindu Deities and practices <sup>[22]</sup>. Drug availability, social acceptability, and peer pressure may be the cause behind initial attempts at consumption but other factors such as personality, and individual biology are also important factors behind repeated consumption which tends to produce changes in the central nervous system <sup>[19]</sup>. Drug abuse has been one of the major reasons for the increase in crime rates, sexual assaults, petit clashes, etc. <sup>[15]</sup>. Studies have shown that those who meet the criteria for alcohol or drug abuse (excluding tobacco dependence) are also likely to fall under the criteria for other psychiatric (anxiety, sleep, etc.) disorders <sup>[19]</sup>. Recent studies seemed to have identified substance abuse at higher numbers in literates when compared to illiterates <sup>[11]</sup>. Some findings suggest that heritability in characteristics of brain function, a childhood disorder of ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), conduct disorder, or both increases the risk for an alcohol-related disorder as an adult <sup>[19]</sup>. So, there are more reasons than just pleasure or peer pressure for substance abuse. The mean age of initiation of drugs is 19 years, in India although many tobacco users begin their consumption from adolescence. Adolescence experiences a struggle between independence and dependency. They are striving for individuality, identity formation, independence, and increased vulnerability of concerned sexual behaviors during this phase of growth. Studies say that even genetic factors play an important role in substance consumption primarily due to environmental factors. Many individuals who are exposed to drugs which have the potential to be abused during their adolescence go on to acquire dependence in later stages of life. There is no sharp demarcation between social/moderate and problematic or harmful drinking. <sup>[9,10]</sup> In the US, 85.8% of the population aged 18 years and older have had alcohol in their lifetime and 50% are currently drinking (the age of 18-25 being the highest). A recent study which was done in Assam among adolescent slum dwellers identified that the mean age of initiation

of abusive substances was 12 years<sup>[3]</sup> Among Asians, 62.7% consume in a lifetime and 33% are current binge drinkers.<sup>[9]</sup>

In India, the consumption of alcohol has increased from 2.4L in 2005 to 5.7L in 2016 causing about 3 million deaths and is a causal factor in more than 200 diseases and injuries<sup>[24]</sup>. The use of Cannabis is reported as 4-20% in India<sup>[11]</sup>. The number of men smoking tobacco in India rose to 108 million in 2015, 36% more when compared to 1998. The prevalence in recent years in India is 9.4% in alcohol, 3.2% in cannabis, and 20.9% in smoking which has had a marked increase since 1998. Regular usage of cannabis even for 1-3 weeks can produce tolerance.<sup>[13]</sup> A very recent report was submitted by the National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre (NDDTC), All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi<sup>[1]</sup> which was conducted from December 2017-October 2018 among the 473,569 individuals from 36 states and Union Territories revealed that 14.6% (about 6 crore individuals) are current users of alcohol (among 10-75-year-olds) among which 5.2% (5.7 crore individuals) are estimated to be affected by harmful or dependent alcohol use. About 2.8% of Indians (3.1 crore individuals) consume cannabis and about 0.66% (approx. 72 lakh individuals) need help with their cannabis use problems. There has been a huge, marked increase in the number of people who consume substances when compared to that of 2005.<sup>[1]</sup>

Identifying the root cause will not only reduce the number of people who consume these substances but also reduce the crime rates in India followed by the decrease in infectious and acquired diseases due to alcohol, tobacco, and cannabis. This will give us an idea as to why the majority of the population tried the substance for the first time so that future generations can be prevented from loss of human potential and enhance the quality of each individual to create a better society to live in.

## **2. Material and Methods:**

**Study design:** An observational study with a cross-sectional design was done between July and August 2019 after getting the clearance from the Institutional Human Ethical Committee. The sample size was estimated to be 174 after calculating the current prevalence of consumption of each substance in India. This questionnaire is based on a cross-sectional study of undergraduates aged between 19-22 in Medical, Dental, Engineering, and Arts and Science college students. A standard questionnaire for screening of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs (cannabis) was used<sup>[20]</sup> along with a Semi-Structured perform<sup>[8]</sup> which consisted of questions on sociodemographic factors, to know more about the reasons involved in the usage of the substance. The questionnaire was prepared in a Google Form Format and sent to each individual personally through web links. This online questionnaire method was followed to reduce the wastage of paper and also for easier statistical analysis since the sample size is large. No invasive methods were used and only participants who had signed the informed consent form took part in this study. The duration to filling the questionnaires was approximately 10-15 minutes and academic sessions were not compromised. The data was collected with anonymity and was used only for statistical analysis. No other materials or special tools were used during this study.

**Inclusion criteria:** Students aged between 19-22 years of both sexes were included in this study.

**Exclusion criteria:** Students with hypo/hyperthyroidism, Type 1 diabetes, Hypertension, Cardiovascular diseases, or any other psychiatric disorders for which medications were excluded.

**Statistical analysis:** Data analysis was carried out using SPSS version-23, Chi-Square Test descriptive for finding out the outcome variable.

## **3. Observation and Results:**

Out of a sample size of 180 participants, based on exclusion criteria 2 participants were excluded from the study. Among the 178 participants, 105 were females and 73 were males. Only 45 participants consume any or all of these substances. Alcohol was consumed only by 21 participants, cannabis was consumed by 5 participants, and tobacco was consumed only by 2 participants. Furthermore, 7 participants consumed alcohol and cannabis, 4 participants consumed only alcohol and tobacco and 5 participants consumed all three substances (alcohol, cannabis, and tobacco) (From Fig 1)

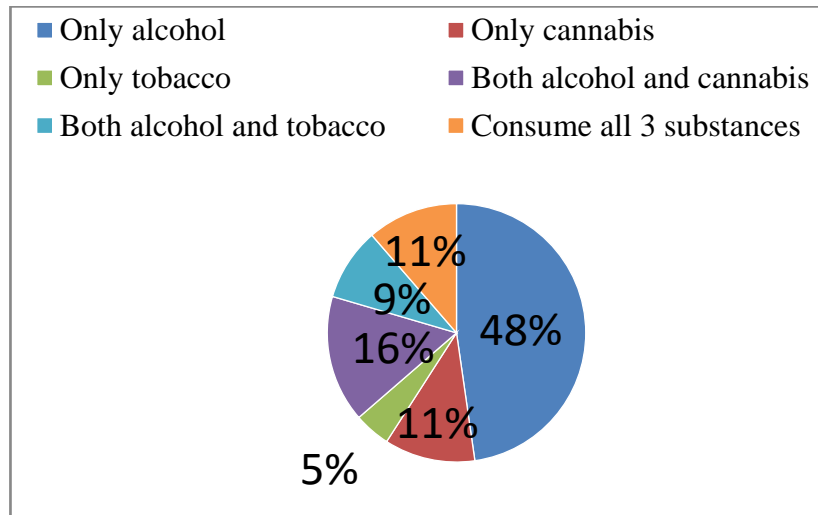


Fig.1: Pie chart representing the percentage of consumption of substances.

It was observed that 33.3% (15) were females and 66.67% (30) were males among the ones who consumed these substances which is very similar to other findings from other parts of India which stated that substance users are more likely to be males (even though more females took part in the study) but there has been an increase in the number of females who consume too when compared to previous studies <sup>[9,21]</sup>.

Out of the 178 participants, Arts and Science or Paramedical was pursued by 44 participants out of which 23 participants consumed substances. Engineering was pursued by 17 participants out of which 9 consumed substances. Medicine was pursued by 49 participants out of which 6 consumed substances and out of 68 participants who pursued dental, 7 consumed substances. (from Table 2) The year of the study was classified as, first years were 11.2% (20), second years 65.7% (117), third years 17.4(31), final years 3.4% (6), and interns 2.2% (4).

**Table 2: Details about the undergraduate participant's year of study**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1st Year	20	11.2	11.2	11.2
	2nd Year	117	65.7	65.7	77.0
	3rd Year	31	17.4	17.4	94.4
	4th Year	6	3.4	3.4	97.8
	Intern	4	2.2	2.2	100.0
	Total	178	100.0	100.0	

The number of participants born and educated in the city was 52.2% (93), 19.7% (35) have been born and educated outside the city, and 28.1% (50) have either been born or educated in the city. Out of 132-day scholars, 94 were non-substance users and 38 were substance users. Out of 46 who stayed in hostels, 39 were non-substance users and 7 were substance users. Out of 48 participants who live in a joint family, 37 were non-substance users and 11 were substance users. Out of 130 participants who live in a nuclear family, 96 were non-substance users and 34 were substance users.

Parent's Marital Status: 1.1% (2) were 'divorced', 6.7% (12) were 'temporarily separated or for other reasons', and 92.1% (164) were 'together'. Psychiatrist/psychologist/therapist consultations were taken by 33 participants in recent times, 26 participants have had 'less than 3 visits', 6 participants had 'more than 3 visits' and 1 participant has 'regular visits'. Out of 178 participants, 66.9% (119) do not have a family member who consumes any of these substances, and 33.1% (59) have a family member who consumes any of these substances.

Results of participants consuming alcohol (Details in Table ???):

Out of 38 participants who answered that they consume alcohol, 6 were binge drinkers. When asked the reason

for their consumption of alcohol for the first time (they were allowed to choose more than one answer), 62.7% answered 'curiosity', 27.5% said that they were 'stressed', 23.5% said that they had 'free time', 21.6% said was because they were 'emotionally disturbed', 19.6% answered it was because of 'college'. 'Peer pressure', 'low self-confidence', or 'due to a breakup' was 7.8% respectively. 'Lack of knowledge about the complications', 'to eliminate shyness', 'family disputes', 'having strict parents', 'lack of amusement facilities', and 'easy access to substances' were other options for which less than 5% chose as an answer. The next question 'Reason behind regular consumption' was answered by 49 participants, 83.3% answered that they consume them 'for fun', 33.3% consume because they are 'stressed', 13.9% because of some 'emotional trauma', and 5.6% due to 'peer pressure'.

**Table 3: Details about the reason behind the participant trying alcohol/smoking for the first time.**

	Frequency	Percent
Curiosity	32	62.7
College	9	17.6
Easy access to consumption of alcohol/tobacco/weed	2	3.9
Having free time	12	23.5
Emotionally disturbed	15	
Low self-confidence	6	
Family disputes	3	5.8
Stressed	10	3.9
Peer Pressure	4	
Lack of amusement	3	
Lack of complications	2	

When questioned about 'how they felt immediately after consumption and a day after consumption' (Details from Table 4 & 5), 78.3% said they felt 'happy', 19.6% felt 'confused', 2.2% felt 'sad' immediately after consumption and 81.3% felt 'any other normal day' a day after the consumption of alcohol. 44.7% 'feel productive' the next day, 34% 'sometimes feel productive', 14.9% 'don't feel productive' and 6.4% 'rarely feel productive'.

**Table 4. How do you feel after IMMEDIATE consumption of alcohol? (generally)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Do not consume	132	74.2	74.2	74.2
	Confused or other undetermined emotions	9	5.1	5.1	79.2
	Happy	36	20.2	20.2	99.4
	Sad	1	.6	.6	100.0
	Total	178	100.0	100.0	

**Table 5. Details about whether they felt productive the next day after substance consumption.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Do not consume	131	73.6	73.6	73.6
	No	7	3.9	3.9	77.5
	Rarely	3	1.7	1.7	79.2
	Sometimes	16	9.0	9.0	88.2
	Yes	21	11.8	11.8	100.0

Total	178	100.0	100.0
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Results for participants who consumed Cannabis:

Out of 18 people who consume cannabis, 78.3% feel 'happy' immediately after smoking, and 21.7% feel 'normal'. 70.8% feel 'just like any other day', 20.8% feel 'happy' and 8.3% feel 'sad' the day after consumption of cannabis (Details from Table.6).

**Table 6. How do you generally feel after smoking (cannabis/weed)?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Do not consume	155	87.1	87.1	87.1
	Happy	18	10.1	10.1	97.2
	Normal	5	2.8	2.8	100.0
	Total	178	100.0	100.0	

28.6% think that 'smoking up' improves their concentration at work the next day, and 37% feel that it brings out their 'creative side, feeling of being productive' the next day.

Results for participants who consumed tobacco:

Out of 12 people that smoke tobacco, 73.7% feel 'happy and relaxed', 21.1% feel like they are 'sad or overthinking', 10.5% feel 'anger', and 5.3% feel 'more productive' after smoking a cigarette. If they skipped smoking for a day, 44.4% feel 'irritated', 33.3% feel 'less productive', and 22.2% feel 'anger or upset'. 36.4% feel that smoking improves their decision-making skills. (Table 7)

**Table 7. Do you experience any one or more of these emotions in case you skip a day?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Do not consume	169	94.9	94.9	94.9
	Anger	1	.6	.6	95.5
	Irritation	4	2.2	2.2	97.8
	Poor decision-making skills	3	1.7	1.7	99.4
	Upset	1	.6	.6	100.0
	Total	178	100.0	100.0	

When questioned about the major reason behind their consumption of any of the substances for the first time, from Table 3 (the participants were allowed to choose more than one answer). For this question, there were 51 responses even though only 45 consume any of these substances daily. This could be an error or 6 of the participants have only tried the substance once. In the next question, about 60% of the participants answered that their parents 'know that they consume' these substances, some answered, 'they don't care' and some 'haven't been confronted yet'. When asked about the most accurate reason for the repeated consumption of any of the above substances 60.6% said it was 'relaxation of mind and pleasure', while 15.2% said it was for handling 'emotional trauma' and 12.1% said it was due to 'peer pressure'.

After repeated consumption of any of the above substances, 57.1% feel 'excitement', 31.4% experience 'rise in self-confidence', 17.1% experience 'anxiety and depression' 11.4% experience 'forgetfulness and sleep disorders', 8.6% feel 'negativity' and 5.7% experience 'improved memory and increased learning ability'.

The consumption of all three substances was consumed by 81% in 'parties' and 9.4% responded that they need no occasion and that it has become a habit now. Although 80.9% believe that alcohol or smoking does not have any important value in helping them out with anything, 11.8% think it helps them overcome 'depression', 10.7% think it helps in 'forgetting about problems', 9.6% think it 'builds up their confidence', and 5.6% think it helps deal with 'anger issues'.

People who do not consume any of these substances:

Among 106 participants who answered this question, 71 responded that they don't consume any of these substances but want to try one of them. From Table.8, When asked for the reason (they were allowed to choose more than one option) 32% (52) answered that they wanted to try 'out of curiosity', 1.7% (3) because of 'curiosity and peer pressure', 1.1% (2) because of 'curiosity, peer pressure, to relieve stress, emotional trauma', 1.7% (3) due to 'curiosity and to relieve stress', 1.7% (3) due to 'emotional trauma', 1.7% (3) 'to relieve stress' and 0.6% (1) 'to relieve stress and emotional trauma'.

**Table 8: Reasons provided by non-substance users considering trying a substance for the first time**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	106	59.6	59.6	59.6
Curiosity	57	32.0	32.0	91.6
Curiosity, Peer pressure	3	1.7	1.7	93.3
Curiosity, Peer pressure, to relieve stress, Emotional trauma such as a breakup, etc.	2	1.1	1.1	94.4
Curiosity, to relieve stress	3	1.7	1.7	96.1
Emotional trauma such as a breakup etc.	3	1.7	1.7	97.8
To relieve stress	3	1.7	1.7	99.4
To relieve stress and emotional trauma such as a breakup, etc.	1	.6	.6	100.0
Total	178	100.0	100.0	

Under the category of those who NEVER (Table.9) want to try any of the substances, when questioned as to 'why they don't want to try', 69.5% said they were just 'not interested', 45.3% chose 'self-control' and 6.3% because they have 'strict parents'.

**Table 9. If your answer was NO, then why do you NOT want to try it?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	83	46.6	46.6	46.6
Not interested	51	28.7	28.7	75.3
Self-Control	28	15.7	15.7	91.0
Self-Control, Not interested	10	5.6	5.6	96.6
Self-Control, Strict Parents, Not interested	5	2.8	2.8	99.4
Strict Parents	1	.6	.6	100.0
Total	178	100.0	100.0	

A majority of these participants, 88% think it's not necessary to consume alcohol or smoke to be accepted in society.

Results co-relating with socio-demographic factors:

The participants were made to answer certain questions about their day-to-day life, their comfort with people around them, their likes and dislikes, their thoughts, decision-making skills, etc., to identify how physiological, social, personal, and environmental factors also play an important role in a person wanting to indulge in



consumption of any substance.

Cross-tabulation of the data was done to identify how people who consumed any of these substances and those who didn't vary. Number of people who consume substances in total is 45. Number of people who don't consume any substance is 133. For the question 'Do you feel neglected at home?' Of a total of 21 people who answered 'YES', 11 participants (8.2%) were non-substance users, and 10 participants (22.2%) were substance users.

For the question 'Do your parents help you make decisions in your life?', in a total of 13 participants who answered 'NO', 5 participants (3.75%) were non-substance users and 8(17.7%) were substance users. For the question 'Can you discuss your everyday problems with someone?' 18 participants answered saying 'NOBODY' out of which 12 participants (9.02%) were non-substance users and 6 participants (13.3%) were substance users. For the question 'Do you feel like your sibling gets more priority than you in the house?', 41 participants answered 'YES', 22 participants (16.5%) were non-substance users and 19 participants (42.2%) were substance users. For the question 'Have you ever felt like moving to a different city away from parents and friends?' 94 answered 'YES' out of which 67 participants (50.3%) were non-substance users and 27 participants (60%) were substance users. For the question 'Do you feel like your parents have lost trust in you recently?', 38 answered 'YES' out of which 25 participants (18.7%) were non-substance users and 13 participants (28.8%) were substance users.

For the question 'Have you had any serious arguments with your parents that have made you want to curse or do things to hurt them or hurt yourself such as punching walls or breaking things?' 76 participants answered 'YES' out of which 46 participants (34.5%) were non- substance users and 30 participants (66.6%) were substance users. For the question, 'Have you had a college suspension so far?', out of 16 people who answered 'YES', 11 participants (8.2%) were non-substance users, and 5 participants (11.1%) were substance users. For the question 'Does your mom or dad have a serious drinking/smoking problem that embarrasses you?' 13 answered 'YES', out of which 10 participants (7.5%) were non-substance users and 3(6.6%) were substance users.

For the question, 'Have you received very poor grades in the past year of your college?', 59 participants answered 'YES' out of which 42 participants (31.5) were non-substance users and 17(37.7%) were substance users. For the question, 'Do most of your friends binge drink or smoke?', 47 participants answered 'YES' out of which 25 (18.7%) were non-substance users and 22 were substance users. For the question, 'Have you ever had a suicide attempt or thoughts even if you have never told anyone about it?', 61 participants answered 'YES' out of which 44 (33%) were non-substance users and 17(37.7%) were substance users.

For the question, 'Do you cry very often?', 67 participants answered 'YES' out of which 55 (41.3%) were non-substance users and 12 (26.6%) were substance users. For the question, 'Do you like the course you're studying at the moment?', 31 participants answered 'NO' out of which 22 (16.5%) were non-substance users and 9(20%) were substance users. For the question, 'Have you dropped out of another college to join this one?' 37 answered 'YES' out of which 29 (21.8%) were non-substance users and 8(17.7%) were substance users.

For the question, 'Do you prefer being alone or surrounded by people?', 64 people answered 'ALONE' out of which 46 (34.5%) were non-substance users and 18(40%) were substance users. For the question, 'Do you make friends easily?', 64 participants answered 'NO', 51 (38.3%) were non-substance users and 13 (28.8%) were substance users. For the question, 'Do you have problems with friends or parents at the moment that you can't handle on your own?' 60 have answered 'YES' out of which 43(32.3%) are non-substance users and 17(37.7%) were substance users. For the question 'Do you feel lonely', 71 participants answered 'YES' out of which 49(36.8%) are non-substance users and 22 (48.8%) are users.

When results were cross-tabulated for the number of participants who wanted to try smoking or drinking but haven't yet to the number of participants who have attempted suicide or had suicidal thoughts, 33 participants (46.5%) answered 'YES' to both these questions.

#### **4. Discussion:**

Out of the three psychoactive substances<sup>[17]</sup>, alcohol was consumed by the majority (84.4%) and alcohol with cannabis was consumed the second most (15.5%) which has differed slightly when the prevalence of cannabis from previous studies.<sup>[9,7,16,6,23]</sup> Earlier studies<sup>[18]</sup> have concluded that peer pressure plays an important role in the indulgence of a substance for the first time. The initial assumption before this study was carried out was the same, however, the results of this study concluded otherwise. This method of conducting the study was helpful

as it was anonymous which made the participants answer the questions more honestly and accurately. After data analysis it is evident that the majority of the people who try a substance for the first time do it out of curiosity (62.7%) with additional factors such as being 'stressed' or 'having free time' and the remaining participants that do not consume any of this and who do not want to try it have said the reason to be 'self-control' and those who want to try it have (but haven't yet) said that it was due to 'curiosity'. Peer pressure was not the choice of answer for the majority of the participants for the initial indulgence of a substance. This reason could be that this generation has grown out of being influenced by others and has started to do things that they feel are right. Although, peer pressure plays a role in continuing the habit as 48.8% (22) have friends who binge drink or smoke.

From the above statistical analysis, we have found the reasons mentioned by the participant up to their knowledge. Correlating sociocultural and social-demographic factors, we were able to find additional factors that may have influenced the individual to try a substance for the first time. 60.6% have answered that they consume these substances repeatedly for 'pleasure' and for 'mind relaxation', in another similar question that was asked, 83.3% answered 'for fun' and 33.3% answered 'to relieve stress' despite knowing the ill-effects, this result was similar to a study done by Arora et al in 2016.<sup>[24]</sup>

In a total of 45 participants who were consuming substances, an average of 15 participants (32.4%) answered 'YES' to questions such as being neglected at home, feeling lonely, not having anybody to share any personal issues with, etc. This clearly shows that even though the majority of the individuals tried a particular substance for the first time out of curiosity, the reason they might have continued to consume it could be because of depression, stress, or feeling neglected by society. They face problems such as a drop in grades in their college, wanting to move to a different city, feeling of uncontrollable anger that converts into doing physical harm, being suspended from college, and not liking the course they are studying at the moment. These are the problems faced by the participants and also the reason for the continuation of consumption of these substances. The feeling of happiness and euphoria that these psychoactive substances give the individual, overpowers their knowledge on the ill effects and harm it can cause to their body. Human beings always want to be happy, and these substances help them achieve it temporarily without any hard work or effort. Millions of people are ruining their quality of life and of those surrounding them to achieve temporary happiness and peace. Another set of the population is not interested in any of these substances, and they claim that it is due to self-control, strict parents, not being interested or they feel they are too young to try it but at the same time, a certain number want to try these substances at least once out of curiosity.

From the data collected, we can identify individuals who feel neglected, lonely, and have had suicidal attempts or thoughts even though they don't consume any of these substances at the moment they are possibly at a higher risk of consuming these substances. When individuals get satisfactory results after their initial consumption, they are prone to make this a habit which in turn leads to addiction and abuse.

Some of the major reasons that make an individual vulnerable which is obtained from this study are the fact of being neglected at home, prioritizing siblings, parents losing their trust in the individual, and not being able to share their problems with anyone. Prevention starts from home at an early age. It is the responsibility of the parents to cater to their children's needs, listen to their problems, and help them become efficient problem solvers. It is also the responsibility of the teachers to instill good moral values into the children.

Educating the children from a young age on the dos and don'ts and teaching them the importance of being responsible human beings not just for society but for themselves. Once an individual becomes an adult it is difficult to change the way they think or behave which is why childhood and adolescence is a very important stages of a human being's life to have a steady and stable mind to prevent them from indulging in such activities when they become adults. It is a good sign that out of 178 participants, 133 have not indulged in any kind of substance consumption, and a good number of them feel accepted by their family, friends, and society and have not had attempts or thoughts of suicide or consumption of any of these substances.

## **5. Conclusion:**

Each person needs to be responsible to themselves and the society. The individual needs to know the importance of exploiting oneself by consuming illicit substances since childhood. From the statistical analysis done, the answers that were given by most of the participants give us a conclusion for the objectives of this study. The primary objective of this study was to identify the root cause behind the initial indulgence of substances such as alcohol, tobacco, and cannabis which was identified to be 'curiosity' and repeated consumption to relieve stress



and emotional trauma. The secondary objective of this study was to identify why a certain population does not consume any of these substances and that was because they were not interested and had self-control. Correlating with the socio-demographic factors, being neglected at home, feeling lonely and not being able to share their problems with anyone, and not being able to solve problems with friends or family could be additional factors in making an individual a substance addict or an abuser.

The age of substance consumption is decreasing day by day. It is better to prevent the population from indulging in the consumption of substances for the first time rather than trying to stop them after they become an addict. Value education must be made mandatory in schools and also must be taught by parents. Proper attention must be given to every individual since childhood by parents and teachers. This way, we will be able to use everyone's potential to its maximum and raise the standard of living in the environment and society we live in. Further studies can be done by co-relating unexplored secondary factors that may have been missed out in this study.

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#### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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