

Sociological Study on Treatment of Alcoholism in India Context with Respect to Impact on Depression

*¹ **Ved Parkash**

*¹ Assistant Professor, S.J.K. College of Education, Kalanaur, Rohtak, Haryana, India.

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Abstract

Depression often impacts both the treatment process and outcomes in individuals with alcohol dependence. While identifying depression is crucial, not all alcohol-dependent individuals with depressive symptoms require antidepressant therapy. A clear understanding of how depression and alcohol dependence are linked is vital for effective treatment. Consequently, it is important to adopt policies that include focused harm reduction approaches. From a public health standpoint, there is a pressing need for consistent coordination to ensure that the prevention of alcohol-related issues is fully integrated into policy-making concerning alcohol regulation and market control.

*Corresponding Author

Ved Parkash

Assistant Professor, S.J.K. College of Education, Kalanaur, Rohtak, Haryana, India.

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Introduction

Alcohol is a substance that depresses. Both the spinal cord and the brain's activity are slowed by it. People have consumed alcoholic drinks since ancient times. It is consumed with food, in social settings, during religious celebrations, for health reasons, and on ceremonial occasions. Within a few minutes, alcohol quickly enters the bloodstream and circulates throughout the body. The ordinary 150-pound person may therefore take one drink in an hour and a half without any alcohol building up in their blood, avoiding intoxication. Alcohol consumption happens more quickly than this would lead to intoxication. Alcohol occurs in a variety of forms. The most popular types of alcohol are wine and champagne (9-14%), beer and ale (4-7% alcohol) and strong liquor (40-50%).

Treatment

Treatment refers to the process of supporting individuals in their journey toward recovery. Ideally, it involves psychosocial interventions, which may be combined with additional strategies such as medication and harm reduction guidance. Individuals seeking help often present with complex backgrounds, including their history of substance

use, mental health conditions, and social environments. Therefore, it is essential to maintain realistic expectations regarding the outcomes of treatment. While some individuals may recover with little to no external support, others may require intensive assistance.

Interestingly, various forms of talking therapies, despite appearing different, often share key therapeutic elements. As a result, the specific type of treatment may be less critical than the individual's perception of how the treatment is delivered and its effectiveness. Most treatments are rooted in psychosocial support, potentially supplemented by medication, and aim to foster long-term resilience. Pharmacological interventions tend to be tailored to specific substances and are generally effective only during the period in which they are administered.

Symptoms

People often use the terms "sign" and "symptom" interchangeably, but they have distinct meanings in medical contexts. A symptom refers to a sensation or experience reported by the individual, while a sign is an observable indication of a condition noticed by a healthcare professional or someone else. Understanding the difference is important in

clinical practice.

Signs are objective indicators of illness such as a rash, fever, or persistent cough that can be seen or measured by others, including doctors and caregivers. In contrast, symptoms are subjective experiences like nausea, back pain, or fatigue, which only the affected person can feel and report. Because of their subjective nature, symptoms are not visible to others unless the individual communicates them.

Antidepressant Therapy

Antidepressant therapy involves using prescription medications to treat depression, anxiety, and other mental health conditions. These medications work by affecting brain chemicals called neurotransmitters, which play a role in mood regulation. Antidepressants are often prescribed as part of a comprehensive treatment plan that may also include therapy and lifestyle changes. Antidepressants are a group of medications commonly prescribed for conditions such as major depressive disorder, anxiety, chronic pain, and substance use disorders. These medications can cause several side effects, including dry mouth, weight gain, dizziness, headaches, restlessness (akathisia), reduced sexual function, and emotional numbing. In children, teenagers, and young adults, there is a heightened risk of suicidal thoughts and behaviors associated with their use. Additionally, stopping antidepressants especially selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) can lead to discontinuation syndrome, which may mimic symptoms of a depressive relapse.

Research regarding the effectiveness of antidepressants for depression in adults is controversial and has found both benefits and drawbacks. Meanwhile, evidence of benefit in children and adolescents is unclear, even though antidepressant use has considerably increased in children and adolescents in the 2000s. While a 2018 study found that the 21 most commonly prescribed antidepressant medications were slightly more effective than placebos for the short-term (acute) treatments of adults with major depressive disorder, some studies suggest that the placebo effect may play a significant role in the perceived effectiveness of antidepressant medications, potentially accounting for much or even all of their observed benefits. Research on the effectiveness of antidepressants is generally done on people who have severe symptoms, a population that exhibits much weaker placebo responses, meaning that the results may not be extrapolated to the general population that has not (or has not yet) been diagnosed with anxiety or depression.

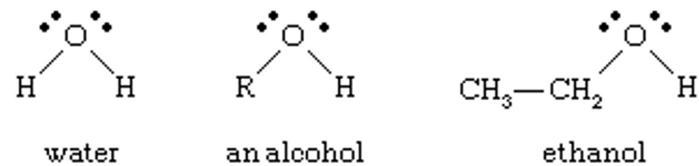
Alcohol

Alcoholic beverages contain ethanol, a psychoactive and toxic substance known for its potential to cause dependence. Although alcohol has been consumed across various cultures for centuries, it carries considerable health risks and can lead to serious harm.

Chemically, alcohols are a group of organic compounds defined by the presence of one or more hydroxyl ($-\text{OH}$) groups bonded to a carbon atom within an alkyl chain. These compounds can be thought of as modified versions of water (H_2O), where one hydrogen atom is replaced by an alkyl group—typically symbolized as "R" in chemical structures. For instance, ethanol, also known as ethyl alcohol, includes an ethyl group ($-\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_3$) attached to the hydroxyl group.

Alcohols are among the most frequently encountered organic molecules. They have a wide range of applications, such as being used in sweeteners, perfumes, and as intermediates in

the production of various chemicals. They are also heavily produced in industrial processes. Two of the most well-known types are ethanol and methanol. Ethanol serves multiple purposes: it is found in alcoholic drinks, used as a disinfectant in medical settings, and included in the production of personal care items, pharmaceuticals, and fuels. Additionally, ethanol is used to create the anesthetic ether. Methanol, on the other hand, is commonly employed as a solvent, a component in the manufacturing of formaldehyde and resins, a specialized fuel, an ingredient in antifreeze, and in the cleaning of metals.



Regulation

Regulation involves the control and guidance of complex systems through the use of established rules and prevailing patterns. In systems theory, such regulatory principles are observed across different disciplines, including biology and the social sciences. However, the definition of "regulation" varies depending on the context.

- **Government:** Regulation often refers to delegated legislation enacted to implement primary laws, such as zoning and land-use policies.
- **Economics:** It pertains to the field of regulatory economics, which examines the impact of rules on economic behavior.
- **Finance:** Financial regulation refers to the set of laws and guidelines that govern the activities of financial institutions and the functioning of financial markets.
- **Business:** Industries may engage in self-regulation through organizations or trade associations that create and enforce standards, often with minimal government oversight.
- **Biology:** Organisms regulate internal processes through mechanisms like gene regulation and metabolic control, helping maintain balance and respond to environmental changes.
- **Psychology:** Self-regulation theory explores how people manage their thoughts and actions to achieve personal goals.

Methodology

A simple random sampling method was employed for data collection. This study utilized a descriptive research design to examine the social and economic conditions of individuals affected by alcohol addiction in India.

Objectives of the Study

- To study the economic status and financial circumstances of individuals affected by alcohol addiction.
- To study the social conditions and status of individuals affected by alcohol addiction.
- To study The drinking history of individuals struggling with alcohol addiction.
- To study the treatment of alcoholism in India and its impact on the depression.

Indian Scenario

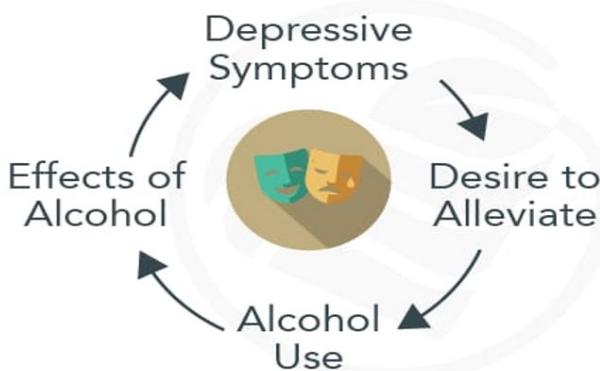
While alcohol consumption per capita has decreased since 1980 in the majority of wealthy nations, it has consistently

increased in developing nations, most noticeably in India. Between 1970-1972 and 1994-1996, per capita alcohol consumption among individuals below the age of 15 in India increased by 106.7%. Over this period, drinking patterns in India changed from occasional, ritual-based consumption to more frequent social drinking. Nowadays, drinking alcohol is frequently done in order to become intoxicated. These changes lead to concern about the social and health effects of drinking excessively.

Some individuals report drinking alcohol as a way to cope with emotional pain following events like a breakup, losing a job, or other significant life challenges. And yes, since alcohol has sedative effects, drinking a few beers or glasses of wine may create a sense of relaxation and temporarily ease anxiety. Having a drink occasionally when feeling stressed or down is different from regular or heavy drinking. But when you need that cocktail every time a problem crops up, it could be a sign of alcohol use disorder.

There is a significant link between excessive alcohol consumption and the occurrence of depression. This raises the question: does frequent drinking contribute to depression, or are individuals with depression more prone to excessive drinking? Both are possible. Learn more about alcohol and depression.

The Alcohol Depression Loop



How Alcohol Affects Mood

Alcohol functions as a depressant by changing the chemical processes in the brain. Regular and excessive alcohol consumption is associated with an increased risk of developing depression. Exceeding the UK Chief Medical Officers' low-risk drinking guidelines which recommend no more than 14 units per week, spaced over at least three days with alcohol-free days in between and avoiding binge drinking can negatively impact brain chemistry and worsen mental health.

While alcohol may temporarily reduce inhibitions and create a sense of relaxation by slowing activity in the brain and central nervous system, these effects are short-lived. As tolerance builds, progressively higher amounts of alcohol are required to produce the same effects. Using alcohol to cope with depressive feelings can lead to dependency, raising the risk of alcohol addiction. In some cases, alcohol use can also contribute to suicidal thoughts.

Binge Drinking and Depression

Studies have shown that individuals who engage in binge drinking are more prone to experiencing depressive symptoms, with those frequently suffering from hangovers being particularly vulnerable.



Effects of Alcoholism on Society

- Higher incidence of DUI related accidents.
- Increased traffic fatalities.
- Public and Private property damage.
- Higher insurance premiums.
- Declining health and the development of chronic long-term conditions.
- Increased medical claims.
- Decrease in workplace productivity.
- Increase in work related accidents.
- Domestic violence.
- Violent crimes.

Effects of Alcoholism on Body

Heart

Consuming large amounts of alcohol regularly or in one sitting can harm the heart, leading to various health issues such as:

- Cardiomyopathy-Stretching and drooping of heart muscle.
- Arrhythmias-Irregular heartbeat.
- Stroke.
- High blood pressure.

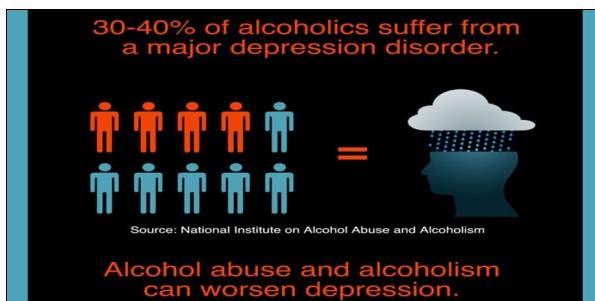
Liver

Excessive alcohol consumption strains the liver and can cause a range of issues, including liver inflammation and other related complications:

- Steatosis or Fatty Liver.
- Alcoholic hepatitis.
- Fibrosis.
- Cirrhosis.

Policy by Government

International and national policy response: the World Health Organization (WHO), in its Global Strategy to Reduce the Harmful Use of Alcohol (2010) and Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases 2013-2020, outlines best practice policy responses to assist countries in reducing harmful alcohol use. As of 2016, nearly all OECD, G20 and non-OECD European countries have adopted a national written policy on alcohol (80%). However, just over one-third of these countries have an aligning action plan to implement the national policy on alcohol.



Conclusion

The primary takeaway from this review is that a significant number of individuals with alcohol dependence exhibit symptoms of depression or anxiety, which need to be identified and managed appropriately.

These issues can heighten the risk of suicide attempts, intensify withdrawal symptoms, and increase the likelihood of relapse in individuals struggling with alcoholism. Appropriate interventions for these psychiatric symptoms include forms of supportive psychotherapy, such as counselling or crisis intervention, and behavioural treatment, such as relaxation techniques and desensitization.

- Depression is commonly found among individuals with alcohol dependence.
- Recovery from depression often occurs following alcohol detoxification and rehabilitation, and in most cases, specific treatment for depression is not required.



Screening for depression and assessing treatment needs during detoxification and rehabilitation is essential for effective care planning.

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