A study on Adolescent Drug Abuse in India
Sharma Priyanka¹, Tyagi Ankita²
¹Lecturer, Department of Home Science, Swami Vivekanand Subharti University, Meerut, Uttar Pradesh, India.
²Assistant Professor, Department of Home Science, Swami Vivekanand Subharti University, Meerut, Uttar Pradesh, India.

Abstract: Adolescence is a transitional stage of physical and psychological human development that generally occurs during the period from puberty to adulthood. It offers opportunities for growth in competence, autonomy, self-esteem and intimacy. However, it also carries great risks. Drug abuse is one of them all among adolescents. The risk factors for drug abuse by adolescents may be biological predisposition to drug abuse, personality traits that reflect a lack of social bonding, a low socio-economic status of family, family bonding, family relationship and parental guidance and care, a history of being abused or neglected, low emotional or psychiatric problems, stress and inadequate coping skills and social support, association with drug-using peers, rejection by peers due to poor communication skills, poor academic skills, failure in school, a history of anti-social behavior and delinquency. As the path to drug abuse is too complex, simple solutions to this problem are unlikely to be effective. The paper begins with a review of available literature on the extent and demographics of drug abuse along with the substances of abuse used in India. The paper concludes with preventive strategies are required to be planned and suggested for drug abuse. More studies on drug abuse are required to be done in India to see the current situations and to find out the solutions for this situation.

Key words: Adolescents, Risk factors, Peer, Drug abuse, Preventive strategies

I. Introduction
Adolescence is a crucial period for the beginning and experimentation with new things. The situation of drug abuse in adolescence is becoming a global health problem and is reaching at alarming position in India. Therefore, the researches substance abuse have also been receiving attention in developing countries like India because of changing trends in the prevalence of substance use and the rising magnitude of the problem. When the adolescents first experiment with drugs, people perceive that it has much adverse effects over their life and if continuous it may become necessity for user to feel normal. They may continue to take drugs even though it may cause tremendous problems for themselves. The drug abuse is an illness which can be characterized as destructive use of substance that causes many serious health related & social behavior problems. Psychological behavior changes associated with substance abuse may be mood disorder such as depression, anxiety, thought disorders such schizophrenia as well as personality disorder like antisocial personality traits. In adolescence it is a major problem defining the future of the youth in both developed in developing countries. Many studies have been conducted on adolescence drug abuse since long but very few studies are found in India and need to be focused. It was seen by many researchers & clinicians that substance use disorder during adolescence age share many similarities as well as differences when compared to other psychological disorders. There are many researches related to use & risk factors associated with drug abuse among adolescents but there are still many contradictions found in these researches. Even though a very few studies are available on this topic in India, but a review of available can define the causative factors and assess in planning other related studies as well as strategies. In this paper, the extent, pattern and trends of drug abuse among adolescents in India have been reviewed.

II. Objectives
1) To observe the extent and demographics of drug abuse among adolescents in India.
2) To find out the substances of abuse used by adolescents.

III. Extent and demographics of the drug abuse
Adolescence Drug Abuse in India Drug abuse is one of the rising problem in most of the countries associated with various social and economic factors. In general, adolescence is a period of experimentation, exploration and a search for self and risk taking. By the age of adolescence, youth in India have been exposed to various stresses like changing roles in the family and community, new responsibilities and competitions in the fields of education and employment. They also have seen their first experiments to many drugs, especially to those which are easily available to them like glue and other inhalants, tobacco, cannabis and alcohol. In some cases, where social and
peer pressures are often difficult to resist, youth often fall in addictions. The street children, child laborers, those
family histories of drug abuse and other emotional and behavioral problems are at particularly higher risk. In
2002, WHO stated that use of Alcohol and Illicit drugs contributed 4% of disease burden in the 15 to 29 years’
age group in low and middle countries. A study by Saluja et al 2007 on adolescents at Postgraduate Institute of
Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh showed that there was a consistent rise in adolescents registered in
De-addiction OPD, 27 in the first 20 years (1978-1997), 31 over the next four years (1998-2001) and 27 over the
final 2 years (2002-2003). These findings showed that there is increase in the number of adolescents reported for
treatment in the last few years which indirectly indicates the increase in drug abuse among adolescents. A study
in Jaipur by Singh et al 2006 on students of classes 9-12, aged between 13-18 years reported that 2.1 % boys and
1.7% girls were tobacco users. Smoking cigarettes was present in 72.8 % boys and 50.0% of girls with drug abuse.
Smoking and tobacco use was more in adolescents who have families using tobacco and smoke (86.4% in boys
and 68.8 % in case of girls). In another study by Joyal et al 2008 on substance abuse on inter college students
showed that 58.7% students were ever users while 31.3 % were regular user of any drug. It was found that the
regular drug abuse was higher in urban students as compared to rural ones (Urban – 37.9% and Rural – 24.
4%).The study also stated that the drug abuse was more prevalent among male students than female students.

IV. Substances of Abuse among Adolescents in India

Tobacco
As tobacco is the more common substance of abuse among adolescents in India, Most of the Indian researches on
drug abuse are based on tobacco abuse as compared to other substances. India is the third largest consumer and
producer of tobacco in the world. A college based study by Bhojani et al 2009 in Bangalore reported that the ever
use of tobacco was 15.7% whereas 5.3% were current tobacco users. Their mean age for initiation of tobacco
consumption was 14.7(S.D.2.05) years. Tobacco is mostly smoked in the forms of bidi and cigarettes or using
devices such as chillum, hooka etc. According to them adolescents and children are the prime focus of tobacco
manufacturing and marketing industries. A survey by National Sample Survey Organization of the Indian
Government showed that about 20 million children of age ranged from 10-14 years were estimated to be
tobaccoaddicted. To this shocking figure, about 5500 new users are added every year (Chadda, R.K. and
Sengupta, S.N., 2002). As per The Global Youth Survey (GYTS), 3.8 % children were smokers while 11.9%
were using smokeless tobacco (Sinha et al., 2006).

Alcohol
Studies showed that alcohol is also becoming one of the most prevalent substances of use in adolescents. A study
on Andaman school students by Sinha et al 2006 showed that onset of regular use of alcohol in early adolescence
is associated with the highest rate of alcohol consumption in adult life as compared to later onset of drinking.
Alcohol is found to be drug of choice among youth which result in consequences of drinking too much, at too
early an age and leads to public health problem due to underage drinking. In a National Household Survey carried
out by Ray et al in 2004 on a representative male sample of 12-60 years ages, 21.8%(n=8,587) were found to be
between 12 to 18 years. The prevalence of substance use during this age group was 3% for cannabis and 0.1% for
opiates. It was seen similar to 19-30 years’ age group where use of alcohol and cannabis was 19.3% and 2.6%
respectively.

Marijuana
Cannabis is the most commonly used prohibited substance. The intake of cannabis results in short term memory
and learning, impaired ability to focus and poor coordination. It also results in increased heart rate, can affect
lungs and may cause the risk of psychosis among vulnerable people. A population study has shown that about 3%
of children and adolescents of ages ranged from 12 to 18 years abused cannabis and that of only 4% of the
Adolescence Drug Abuse in India abusers go for treatment of these problems. Many other studies also indicate
that cannabis is a common substance of abuse during adolescence such as school and college going students, street
children and working adolescents.(Manu et al, 2013).

Opioids
Opioids are centrally stimulating at very low doses and sedative at high doses. Clinical symptoms related with
opioid are Intoxication, Abuse and Addiction. Signs and symptoms of Opioid intoxication are analgesia, feelings
of dysphoria, flashing of face, itchy skin, dry mouth, warmth feeling etc. Intravenous injection of an opioid can
cause abdominal discomfort and sensation followed by sedation and dreaming. Severe intoxication may even
cause death. Changes are also find in the types of opioid abuse over the years. A decrease in dependence on natural
opioids and concomitant incline in the use of prescribed drugs has been found. A rapid rise in the number of
buprenorphine and codeine containing cough syrup and dextropropoxyphene dependence have been seen in
researches.

Inhalant use
The increased use of inhalant substances can be seen especially among low socioeconomic group belonging
adolescents. In his study Benegal et al, 1998 on street children, he found that the children start off with tobacco
at the age of 10-11 years and after that they gradually move to inhalants as they grew older.
V. Result and Discussion

Researches have shown an increased understanding of the extent and demographic of drug abuse, in general, and common substance abuse among adolescents, in particular. There are many factors which are easily available to the youth which are used by them to abuse their life. There is need to create awareness among our youths about the side effects and consequences of substance abuse. On the other hand, there is also requirement to open counselling centres and run government and non-government programmes to stop over the substance abuse. Substance abuse was found mostly among urban children therefore it is necessary to change the outlook and educate public especially of urban areas.

Drug abuse is a very common and major problem related to health and social issues which is associated with comorbidities and complications. The initiation of drug abuse at early adolescence result in continuation of drug to the adulthood. Therefore, preventive strategies are required to be planned and suggested for drug abuse. More studies on drug abuse are required to be done in India to see the current situations and to find out the solutions for this situation. As most of the studies are either done on small scale on school children or street children, this is the demand of the hour for the bright future of nation.

VI. Conclusion

Drug abuse is a very common and major problem related to health and social issues which is associated with comorbidities and complications. The initiation of drug abuse at early adolescence result in continuation of drug to the adulthood. Therefore, preventive strategies are required to be planned and suggested for drug abuse. More studies on drug abuse are required to be done in India to see the current situations and to find out the solutions for this situation. As most of the studies are either done on small scale on school children or street children, this is the demand of the hour for the bright future of nation.

VII. References