



## A Study on the Implications of Addiction on the Youth of India

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### Abstract:

Addiction poses a significant public health challenge in India, impacting individuals, families, and communities across the nation. This study aims to comprehensively investigate the landscape of addiction in India, with a focus on understanding its prevalence, patterns, and effective interventions. The method involves incorporating surveys with a diverse sample of participants from various regions and demographic backgrounds. The study aims to collect data on the prevalence of addiction to substances, behaviours, and technology, along with associated risk factors. Conducting interviews to gain insights into the lived experiences of individuals affected by addiction and the cultural and societal factors influencing addiction behaviours.

The findings reveal a complex and evolving picture of addiction in India. Substance abuse, involving alcohol and tobacco, remains a prevalent concern, but emerging trends such as internet addiction and gambling are on the rise, particularly among the youth. Socioeconomic factors, cultural norms, and peer influence were identified as key contributors to addiction vulnerability. Stigma and limited access to treatment and support services were identified as barriers to recovery. By addressing the multifaceted nature of addiction in India, healthcare professionals can develop evidence-based strategies to mitigate its impact on individuals and society.

### Keywords:

Addiction, India, Prevalence, Patterns, Intervention, Substance Abuse, Internet Addiction, Stigma, Youth, Survey.

### I. Introduction:

Addiction is a complex chronic disease characterized by compulsive seeking and use of a substance or adoption of a behaviour despite harmful consequences. It can take many different forms, including substance addiction (such as drugs

and alcohol) and behavioural addiction (such as gaming or technology addiction).

In India, as in many other parts of the world, addiction is a growing concern, affecting individuals of all backgrounds and ages. It results from a combination of social, genetic, and psychological factors and can have devastating consequences for individuals and society. To effectively tackle this problem, India needs comprehensive prevention, treatment, and support programs to help people struggling with addiction regain control of their lives.

Genetic, environmental, and psychological variables often come together to cause addiction. Genetic predisposition may make some people more susceptible to addiction. Environmental factors, such as peer pressure, availability of addictive substances, and socioeconomic conditions, play an important role. Psychological factors, including stress, trauma, and mental health problems, can contribute to the development of addiction.

Some statistics related to addiction in India are:

- Substance Abuse:** According to the National Drug Treatment Centre (NDDTC) in India, an estimated 16 crore (160 million) people in India consume alcohol. Additionally, the country has about 3.1 million marijuana users and over 8 lakh (800,000) heroin users.
- Smoking Addiction:** India has one of the largest smoking populations in the world, with more than 26 million smokers. This includes both smoke and smokeless tobacco.
- Alcoholism:** It is estimated that approximately 5-7% of India's adult population has an alcohol use disorder.
- Youth and Drug Addiction:** Youth adults and adolescents are especially vulnerable to addiction. Statistics show that about 10% of the adolescent population in India may be affected by substance abuse problems.



5. **Target Age Group:** Drug addiction does not discriminate by age, but some age groups are more vulnerable. Teens and young adults are often targets of addiction due to peer pressure and curiosity. Easy access to addictive substances and a desire to experiment make this age group more vulnerable.

6. **Age Group Affected:**

i. **Youth (Teens and Young Adults)-** This age group is especially susceptible to addiction due to factors such as:

a) **Pressure from Friends:** Teens often face immense peer pressure to experiment with substances such as alcohol, tobacco, or drugs. The desire to fit in or appear 'cool' can lead to initial use and possible addiction.

b) **Curiosity and Experimentation:** The young population is naturally curious and may want to try substances out of curiosity without realizing the risks involved.

c) **Easy Access:** In many cases, these substances are readily available, making testing more likely.

d) **Stress and Academic Pressure:** Pressures related to academic performance, college admissions and career aspirations may prompt some young adults to turn to substance use as a coping mechanism.

ii. **Middle-Aged People (30-45-year-olds)-** The age group faces special challenges that can contribute to addiction:

a) **Work Related Stress:** The demands of work and family life can lead to high levels of stress. Some people turn to stimulants to cope with this stress, which can eventually lead to addiction.

b) **Stress in Relationships:** Problems in marriage or family can be the reason why middle-aged people turn to stimulants to avoid or numb mental pain.

c) **Midlife Crisis:** Some may experience a midlife crisis, leading to reckless behaviour and substance abuse as a form of escape.

iii. **Older Population-** Although addiction is less common in older adults, it can still cause concern, mainly for the following reasons:

a) **Prescription Drug Abuse:** Older adults may have more health problems that require medication. Prescription drug abuse, whether intentional or unintentional, can lead to addiction.

b) **Loneliness and Isolation:** Isolation caused by retirement or the loss of a loved one can contribute to substance use as a coping mechanism.

c) **Physical Health Problems:** Age-related health problems may require the use of pain

relievers, which can be abused and lead to dependence.

7. **Children and Adolescents addicted to Internet and Gaming:** A relatively recent concern is the rise in internet and video game addiction in children and adolescents.

8. **Digital Overload:** Excessive use of smartphones, social network and online gaming can lead to addictive behaviours, affecting academic performance and social interactions.

9. **Parent Concerns:** Parents often worry about the impact of too much screen time on their children's physical and mental health.

In India, addiction is a pressing problem, affecting people of all ages and backgrounds, leading to many adverse consequences. To effectively address this challenge, it is essential to focus on prevention through awareness campaigns, improve access to treatment and implement supportive policies. By taking these steps, we can work together to fight addiction and its far fetching consequences in India.

**Title of the Study:**

The title of our research paper is "A Study on the Implications of Addiction on the Youth of India."

**Statement of the Problem:**

Addiction is a complex condition that arises from a combination of biological, psychological, and environmental factors. It typically begins with the repeated exposure to a substance or behaviour that triggers the brain's reward system, leading to feelings of pleasure or relief.

Over time, the brain adapts to this stimulation by reducing its natural response, causing individuals to seek more of the substance or behaviour to achieve the same effect that is a phenomenon known as tolerance.

The problem of addiction among youth in India is a pressing public health concern with far reaching social, economic, and individual consequences. It is crucial to understand the current prevalence rates of addiction among Indian Youth and how these rates have changed over time.

There are many risk factors associated with addiction that need to be addressed including peer pressure, familial influences, socioeconomic status, mental health conditions and access to addictive substances or activities.

Addiction also leads to a range of social and economic issues, including strained relationships, academic or professional setbacks



and financial difficulties. It is important to have access to effective addiction treatment and rehabilitation programs.

Mental health is a major concern among any individual, especially the youth. Addiction had far-reaching consequences on the physical and mental health of individuals. It is necessary to access the specific health-related challenges faced by addicted youth, including the emergence of co-occurring mental health disorders.

#### **Objectives of this Study:**

This study on addiction on India, like any research endeavor, typically has specific objectives or goals that guide its purpose and focus. There are some objectives pertaining to the study-

1. To identify the social, economic, cultural, and psychological factors that contribute to addiction in the Indian society.
2. To investigate the physical and mental health consequences of addiction and evaluate the effectiveness of various treatment modalities for addiction
3. To identify effective prevention strategies and intervention programs tailored to the Indian society.
4. To focus on understanding addiction trends among youth and vulnerable populations, such as women, minorities, and marginalized communities.
5. To investigate how the cultural and regional diversity within India influences addiction patterns and treatment approaches.

#### **Scope of the Study:**

In depth research is conducted to capture precise details on the presence of addiction in India. It includes the investigation of causes and risk factors contributing to addiction in India, including genetic, environmental, social, and psychological factors. This research targets the youth of India that are a part of the age group ranging from 15-34 years of age.

The youth is at a stage in their lives where they are more likely to engage in risk-taking behaviors, including experimentation with drugs, alcohol and other addictive substances or behaviors. Due to the early exposure in this field, the youth could face consequences related to their physical and mental health, educational attainment, career prospects and overall well-being.

#### **Data Collection Methodology:**

The data collected is by using Primary and Secondary sources of data collection. The primary

data is collected through a questionnaire. The questions are designed to gather the opinion of the target audience along with the public. The data collected from this source can be used to build a better understanding of addiction and its implications on the youth of India. The secondary data collected is the published information from reports, research papers, articles, and the internet.

#### **Sampling Technique:**

Random sampling technique is used in our research for data collection as this method involves a subset of the selected population. It is a straightforward method as it involves choosing of random selection and requires mere knowledge about the chosen population for the study.

#### **Sample Size:**

The target audience or respondents for this questionnaire were public of the age 16 and above. The sample size from which we chose to collect the information was 82.

## **II. Literature Review:**

1. (Sharma Arvind, Sharma Richa, 2018) Internet provides tremendous educational benefits for college students and provided better opportunities for communication, information, and social interaction for young adults; however, excessive internet use can lead to negative psychological well-being. Study was conducted with the objective to find out the relationship between internet addiction and psychological well-being of college students. Students with higher levels of internet addiction are more likely to be low in psychological well-being.
2. (Kyaw Mon Thin, Moe Soe, Khaing Sanda Mya and Win Thida Myat, 2022) The effect of COVID-19-related changes (such as disturbance of face-to-face human association, breakdown of propensities, vulnerability almost long-term, money related frailty, and depression) on people's mental well-being. The enormous use of the internet can be harmful. During COVID 19 pandemic, the prevalence of psychological problems such as Internet Addiction increased especially among young adults. Therefore, national policy should be refined to reduce the stressful lifestyle to reduce the impact of internet addiction especially for young adults in India.
3. (Tadikonda Rao Rama, Goud Nandini Dulam, Deepika Sneha Kammari and Ali Shoeb Syed, 2023) Drug Addiction is a chronic illness and has become a worldwide problem, the leading cause of death. The global problem of drug addiction is responsible for millions of deaths and



millions of new HIV cases every year. Drug abuse or substance abuse is a disorder characterized by excessive use of the habit-forming drugs and misuse of over-the-counter medicine, the illegal use of drugs which in turn leads to severe addiction and it refers to the use of certain chemicals for the purpose of creating pleasurable effects on the brain. There are over 190 million drug users around the world and the problem has been increasing at alarming rates, especially among young adults under the age of 30. The most common use of drug in India is alcohol, followed by cannabis and opiates.

4. (Amer Ahmed Samar, Alamri Fahad, Elsayed E.G. Mohamed, 2023) Caffeine is the most used psychostimulant compound with a long history of worldwide consumption. Several clinical studies show that high doses of caffeine could be toxic. This study was conducted to explore the prevalence, determinants, and positive and negative effects of caffeine consumption among governmental health care providers (HCPs) who were caffeine users. The majority of the studied HCPs were females (67.8%), nonsmokers (82.0%), and Saudis (80.5%), with a mean age of 35 years. According to the DSM-IV, the prevalence of caffeine consumption was 94.3%. Caffeine dependence was reported in 270 (47.7%), while 345 (60.9%) were diagnosed as addicts. The main reported adverse effects, in descending order, were sleep disturbances, stomach problems, and cardiac symptoms. The most positive effects reported of caffeine consumption were feeling active, alert, confident, and happy. Caffeine has both positive and negative effects on this population and further research is necessary to better understand the long-term consequences of caffeine consumption.

5. (Qu Wenbo, Li Lanke, Zhang Jingnan, Shi Yunxiang, 2023) The study explores the problem of mobile phone addiction in sleep scenarios and analyses the possibility of designing interventions to address the problem of mobile phone addiction. Based on relevant research in the field of behavioural interventions, a strategy for applying active intervention operationalization to design interventions for mobile phone addiction in sleep scenarios is proposed. Based on this strategy, a night light is designed to stop users' excessive use of mobile phones in sleep scenes. In conclusion, this study has a certain reference value and guidance for future design in this field.

6. (Husenblas A Heather, Schreiber Katherine, Smoliga M James, 2017) Exercise has numerous health benefits and is generally viewed as a positive behaviour, so patients and clinicians

may overlook the dangers of excessive exercise and addiction. This article explores how healthcare professionals can recognise and understand the risks of primary exercise addiction. The overall quality of the evidence for this area is modest with a reliance on descriptive and observational studies. People with exercise addiction experience loss of control such that exercise becomes an obligation and excessive. Although exercise addiction is not officially classified as a mental health disorder, it is characterised by similar negative effects on emotional and social health as other addictions.

7. (Ergun Naif, Ozkan Zafer, Griffiths D Mark, 2023) Many researchers have examined the potential detrimental role of problematic social media use (often referred as 'social media addiction') on mental health. The present study investigated how social media addiction is associated with three components of mental health: depression, anxiety, and stress. Results showed that social media addiction was associated with poorer mental health via internet addiction and phubbing. Social media addiction did not directly influence poorer mental health but did via internet addiction and phubbing. Therefore, greater awareness of the interrelationships between technology-based behaviours and their impact on mental health is needed among a wide range of stakeholders, and these interrelationships need considering in the prevention and treatment of technology-based disorders.

8. (Chiha K, Khemakhem Khaoula, Chaabane M, Touhemi Ben D, 2023) The relationship between cyber video game addiction and impulsivity is controversial. A gaming addiction was found in 4.7% of cases. Similarly, impulse control disorder was noted in 23.6% of adolescents. Problematic internet game use was significantly related to motor impulsivity. Impulsiveness should be considered to explain problematic gaming behaviour as well as to design preventive and treatment interventions.

9. (Sathya J, Babu Manivannan, J Gayathri, Gunasekaran Indhumathi, 2023) The rise of e-commerce and online shopping platforms has revolutionized the way we shop and make purchases. While the convenience and accessibility of online shopping have been a boon for consumers, it has also led to the rise of compulsive buying behaviour and online shopping addiction among women. The purpose of this paper is to explore the phenomenon of compulsive buying behaviour and online shopping addiction among women and to understand the factors that contribute to this problem. This paper provides a



comprehensive review of the literature on compulsive buying behaviour and online shopping addiction using a purposeful sample of two hundred women who consider themselves to be addicted to online shopping.

10. (Zaripova Drozdikova Albina, Kostyunina Nadezhda, Latypova Liliia, Luchinina Anastasiya, 2022) Selfie craze among young people has become a "global catastrophe". Today it is hard to find young people who would not take pictures of themselves and would not post photos on various social networks, chats. And it is crucial for a young person to receive feedback from their friends who have seen the post. In this regard, the issues of studying the psychological characteristics of persons suffering from various forms of addictive disorders are gaining relevance in science, since the presence of addiction is due to the personality characteristics and the accompanying negative emotions (irresponsibility, uncertainty, anxiety), its environment and interaction with people. The purpose of the research is to study the personal characteristics of children's prone to selfie addiction.

11. (Barada S, 2020) Sugar consumption activates the mesolimbic system in a very similar way to substance abuse. There are various ways to deal with the different addictions. However, the problem with sugar addiction, or even more generally with food addiction, is that there is no awareness that the relationship with food can represent an addiction in some cases, and the tools are lacking to identify the most suitable professional figures to help manage the situation when needed. Our patients' stories report how they have learned to manage their emotional needs without escaping, to observe their thoughts by recognising their distortions, to identify what triggers their spasmodic desire for food and understand their behaviour in depth, and to connect better with themselves and others, also sharing the painful emotions along the way.

#### **Limitations of the Study:**

Although our research on drug addiction in India has provided valuable insights into this complex issue, it is essential to recognize the limitations of our study to ensure a transparent and realistic understanding of our findings.

1. **Limited Sample Size-** Our research relies heavily on data from specific regions and may not fully represent the diversity of dependency patterns across the country. Differences addictive behaviour may exist in areas not covered by our study.

2. **Data Availability and Reliability-** Accessing accurate and comprehensive data on drug abuse in India can be difficult. The reliability of self-reported data and differences in data collection methods across regions may affect the accuracy of our results.

3. **Limited Longitudinal Data-** Our research mainly focuses on the current situation of drug addiction in India. Longitudinal data tracking the progression and consequences of addiction over time would help better understand this issue.

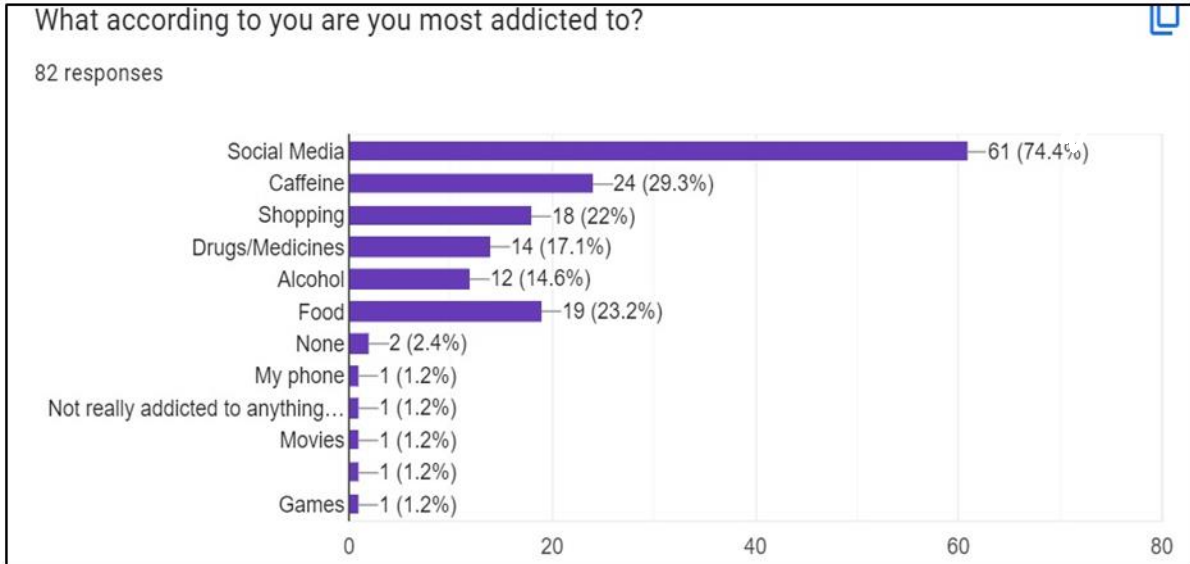
4. **Stigma and Under-reporting-** Stigma surrounding addiction can lead to underreporting, making it difficult to assess the true scale of the problem. Many people may be reluctant to disclose their addiction experiences, which could bias our results.

5. **Data Quality and Reporting-** India's healthcare system may not always maintain the highest standards of data collection and reporting. Inaccuracies in addiction related data can hinder research efforts.

Addiction ensnares the soul, a relentless grip tightening with each passing day. It hijacks dreams, replacing aspirations with an insatiable craving. Relationships crumble, as the substance takes precedence over love and connection. In the clutches of addiction, one's essence fades, leaving behind a hollow shell consumed by a destructive force.



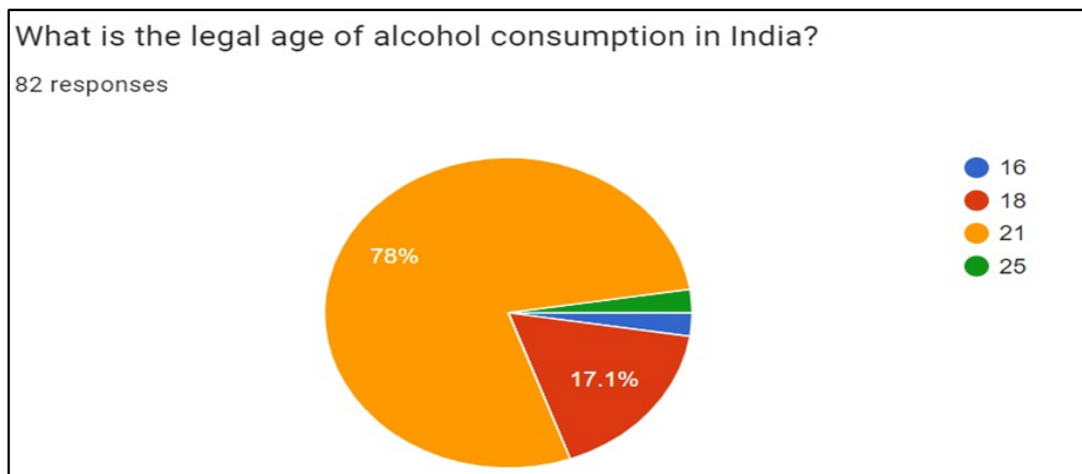
**Data Analysis and Interpretation:**



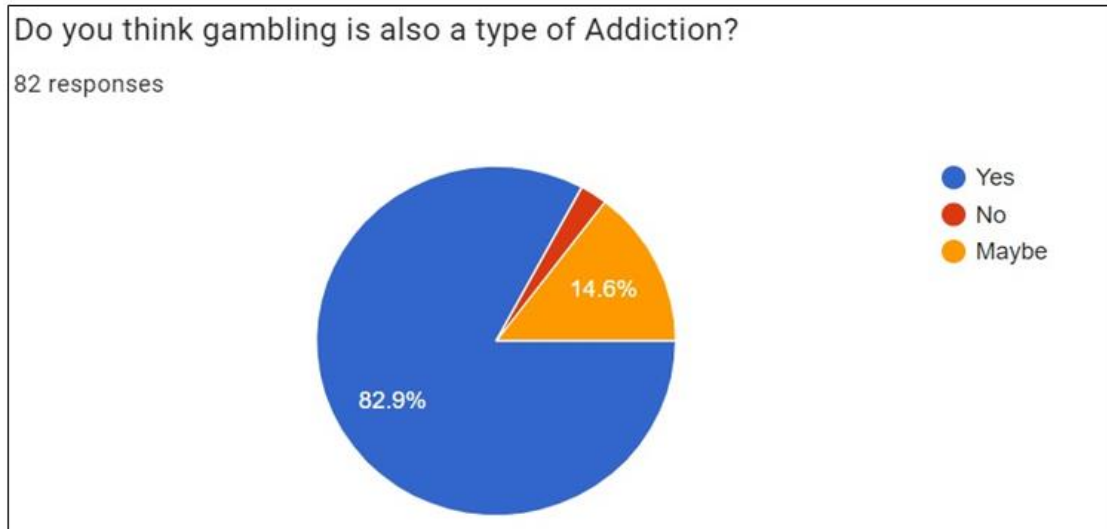
According to the above 1<sup>st</sup> graph, most of the people who participated in the questionnaire, claimed that they were addicted to social media followed by coffee and food. Social media can be addictive due to its features, likes and infinite scrolling, triggering dopamine release in the brain.

The constant stream of information and social validation, leads to increased use of social media. Addiction to coffee stems from the caffeine content.

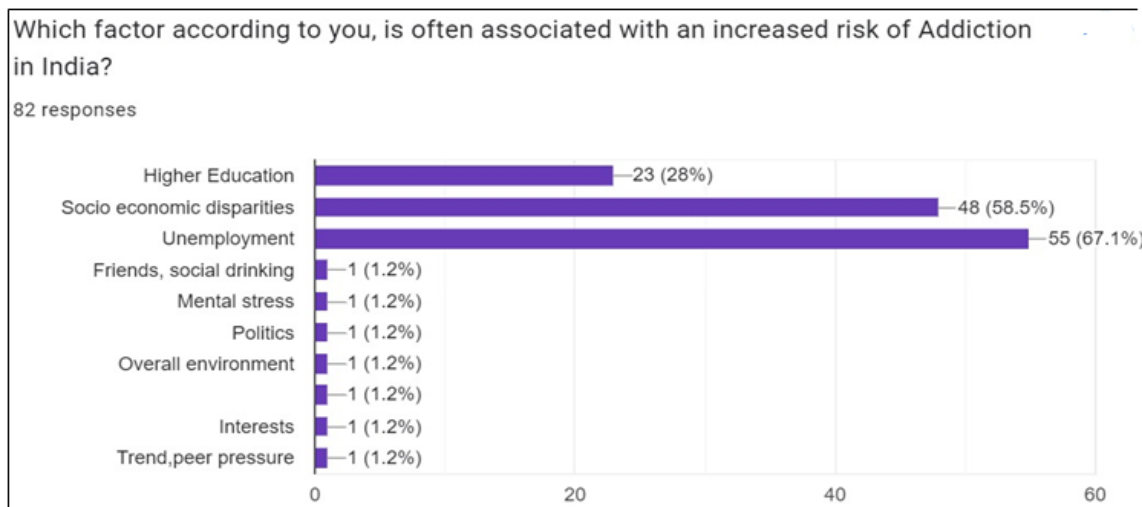
Regular consumption of coffee can create dependency, as the body adjusts to the caffeine intake which results in addiction. There are also other forms of addiction that people suffer through such as shopping, medicines, alcohol etc.



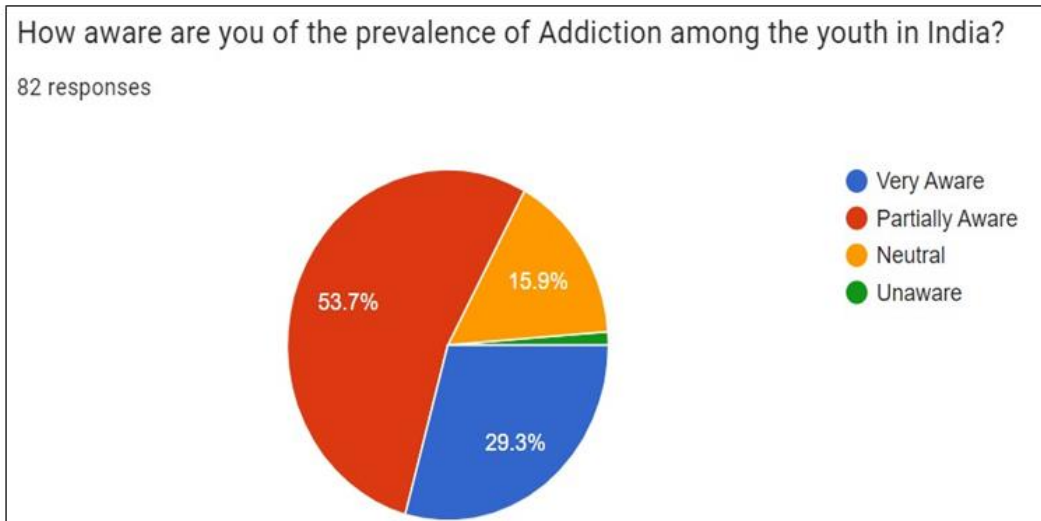
According to the above 2<sup>nd</sup> graph, 78% of the participants of the questionnaire are aware that 21 years and above is the legal age for alcohol consumption while 17% of the participants are unaware and think 18 years and above is the legal age for alcohol consumption. This shows that there are people who are still not aware of these rules and regulations.



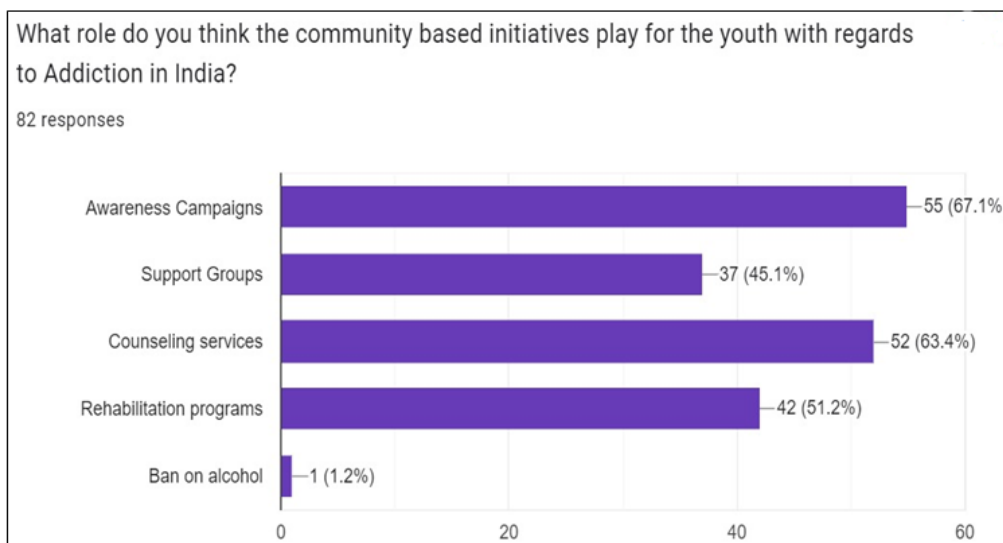
According to the above 3<sup>rd</sup> graph, 82.9% of the participants, in their opinion, think that yes, gambling is also a type of addiction whereas 14.6% of the participants are unsure about this and that is the reason they opted for the option 'maybe'. Gambling creates a pleasurable sensation. It is an addiction fuelled by the psychological thrill of risking money and the potential for a reward, triggering the brain's reward system. The intermittent reinforcement of occasional wins creates a powerful reinforcement loop, making it difficult for the youth to break the cycle.



According to the 4<sup>th</sup> graph, in the opinion of participants of the questionnaire, the major factor associated with an increased risk of addiction in India is 67.1% votes for unemployment followed by 58.5% votes for socio-economic disparities and 28% votes for higher education. There are also other factors like mental stress, peer pressure, overall environment etc.



According to the above 5<sup>th</sup> graph, with the majority, 53.7% of the participants state that they are partially aware of the prevalence of addiction among the youth in India, 29.3% of the participants state that they are very aware and 15.9% of the participants state that they are neutral in this situation, that they are neither fully aware nor partially aware or unaware. This is a situation of awareness among the people.



According to the above 6<sup>th</sup> graph, the role that the participants think the community-based initiatives play for the youth with regards to addiction in India includes 67.1% of the participants leaning towards awareness campaigns, 63.4% leaning towards counselling services, 51.2% leaning towards rehabilitation programs and 45.1% towards support groups.

Awareness campaigns help people understand the aftermath of people getting addicted by educating them about the risks, consequences, and available support.

These campaigns raise awareness about the detrimental effects of substance abuse, provide information on seeking help, and reduce stigma surrounding addiction, encouraging the youth or any individual to seek assistance without the fear of judgement.

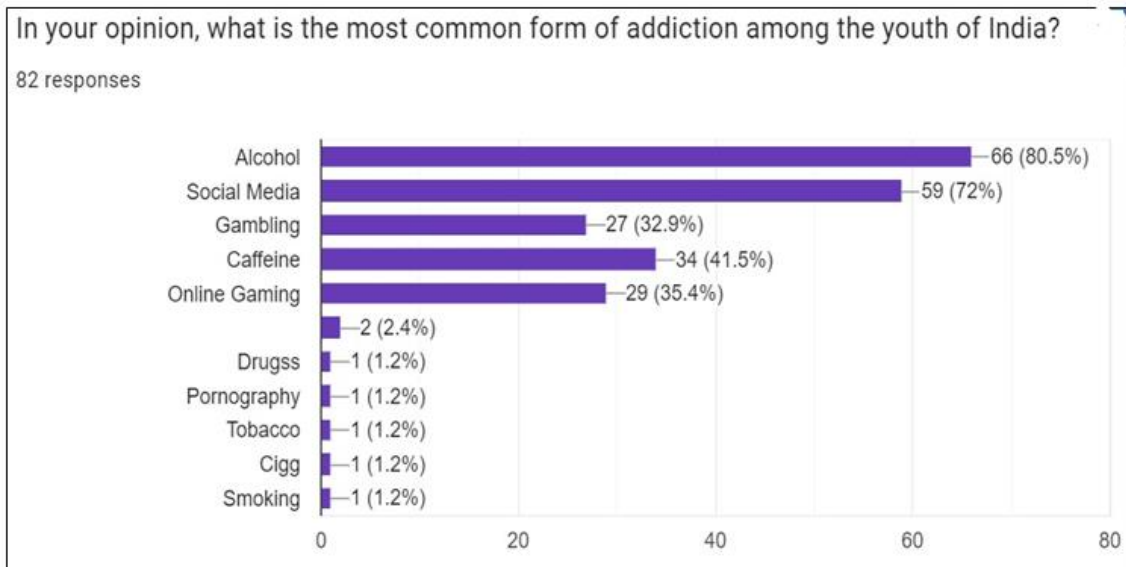
Support groups help people get inspired by talking to others and understand that the problems can become huge if not stopped, counselling services are more of one-on-one conversations where trained professionals engage with young



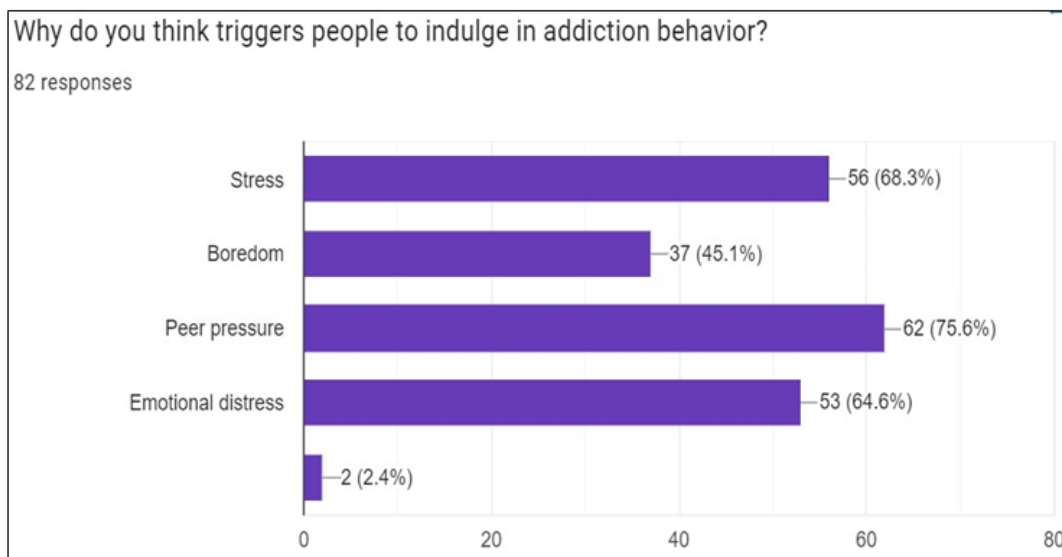


individuals to address substance abuse issues, providing guidance and coping strategies. There are also rehabilitation programs considered for the ones that must get rid of addiction as soon as possible. The rehabilitation programs focus on

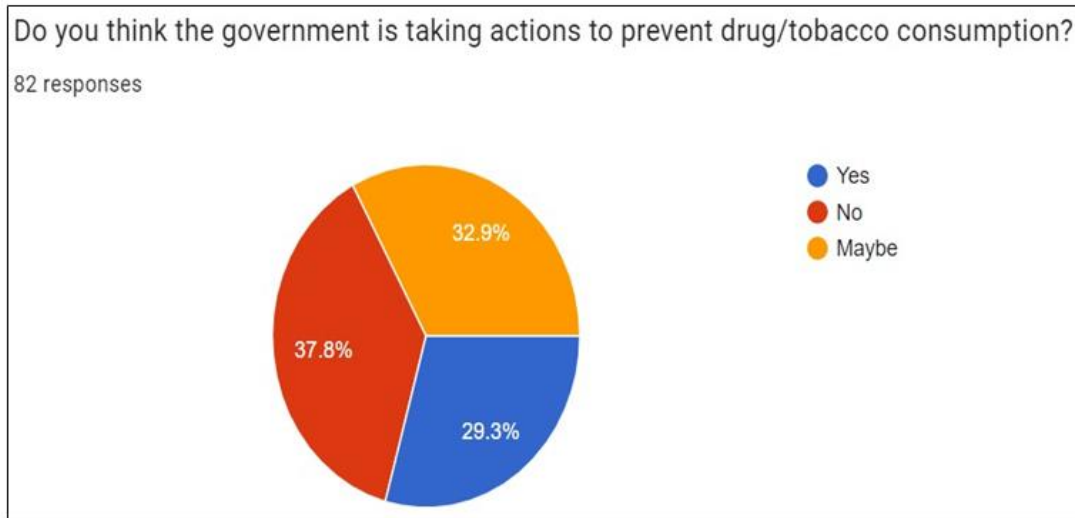
community-based initiatives, offering counselling, skill development and peer support. These collaborative efforts aim to create sustainable solutions for addiction challenges in Indian context.



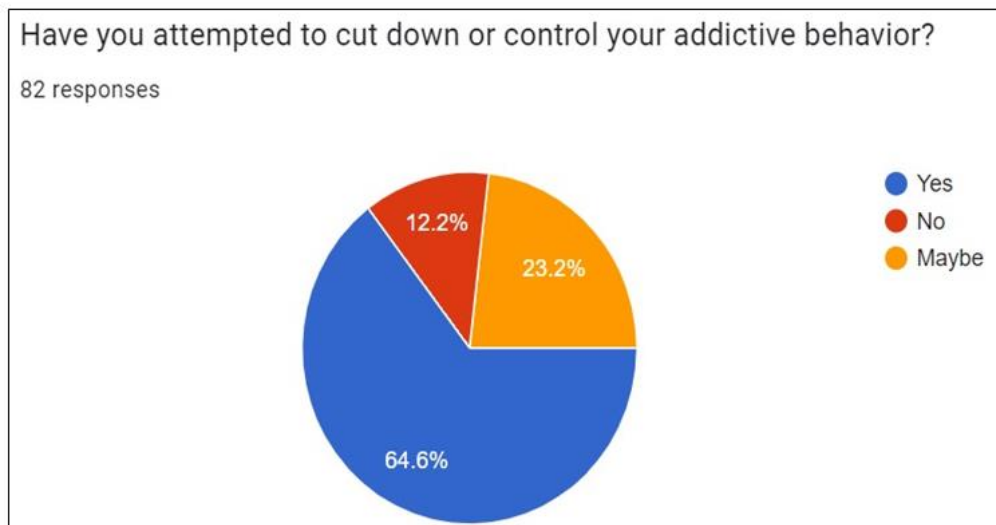
According to the above 7<sup>th</sup> graph, the most common form of addiction among the youth of India, in the opinion of the participants is alcohol with 80.5%, social media with 72%, caffeine with 41.5%, online gaming with 35.4% and gambling with 32.9%. There are also other forms like drugs, smoking, tobacco etc.



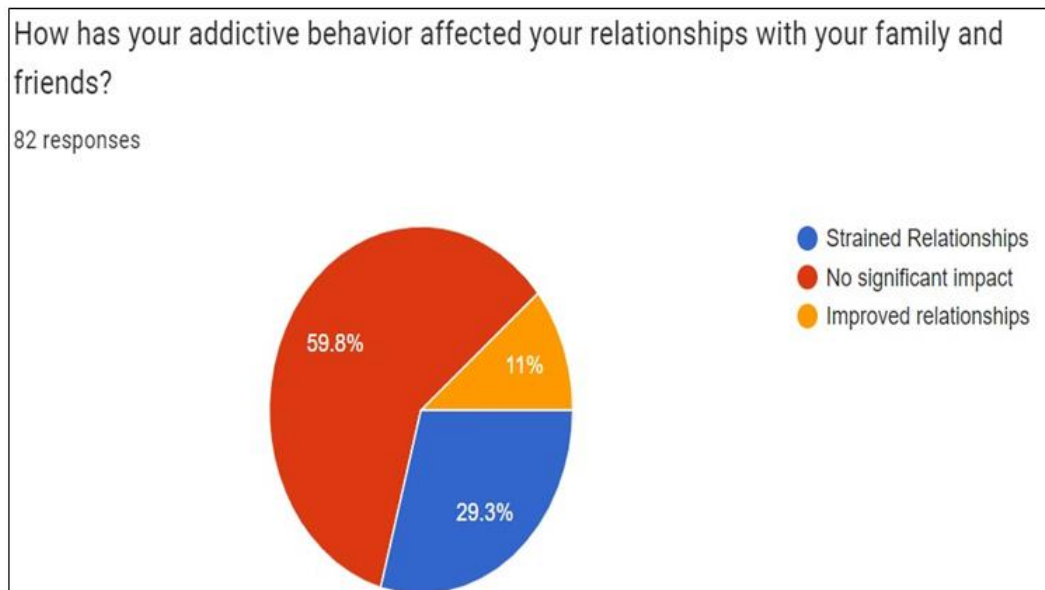
According to the above 8<sup>th</sup> graph, 75.6% of the participants think peer pressure, 68.3% participants think stress, 64.6% think emotional distress and 45.1% of the participants think these aspects trigger people to indulge in addiction behaviour.



According to the above 9<sup>th</sup> graph, 29.3% of the participants think yes, the government is taking actions, 37.8% of the participants think no, the government is not taking actions and 32.9% are unsure and opted for 'maybe', the government might or might not be taking actions to prevent drug/tobacco consumption.



According to the above 10<sup>th</sup> graph, it is important to cut down or control our addictive behaviour. 64.6% chose the option 'yes' and are trying to cut down or control their addictive behaviour, 12.2% chose the option 'no' and might not be trying to cut down or control their addictive behaviour and 23.2% chose the option 'maybe' as they might or might not be making efforts on trying to cut down or control their addictive behaviour.



According to the above 11<sup>th</sup> graph, 59.8% of the participants think their addictive behaviour has no significant impact on their relationships with their family and friends, 29.3% of the participants think their addictive behaviour has caused strain in their relationships with their family and friends and 11% of the participants think their behaviour has improved their relationships with their family and friends.

All the above graphs help us understand people's opinion and perspective towards the impact of various types of addiction on the youth of India.

### III. Summary of Findings:

Addiction among the youth of India can involve substances like tobacco, tobacco, alcohol, and illicit drugs, as well as behavioural addictions such as internet or gaming addiction. Here are some key findings and observations mentioned related to the implications of addiction on the youth of India-

- 1. Prevalence of Substance Abuse-** Substance abuse, including alcohol and tobacco, is prevalent among the youth in India. Factors such as peer pressure, societal influences, and stress contribute to the initiation and continuation of substance use.
- 2. Drug Abuse and Mental Health-** Substance abuse is often linked to mental health issues among the youth. Drug abuse can exacerbate existing mental health conditions or lead to the development of new mental health disorders.
- 3. Internet and Gaming Addiction-** With the proliferation of digital technology, internet and gaming addiction have become concerning among

the Indian youth. Excessive screen time, social media use, and online gaming can negatively impact physical and mental health.

**4. Educational and Occupational Consequences-** Youth addiction can lead to poor academic performance and hinder educational attainment. It may also result in difficulties in obtaining and maintaining employment, affecting the economic well-being of individuals and the country.

**5. Social Implications-** Substance abuse can strain relationships with family and friends, leading to social isolation. Stigmatization and discrimination associated with addiction may further compound social challenges for the affected youth.

**6. Health Consequences-** Substance abuse has serious health consequences, including an increased risk of injuries, accidents, and long-term health problems. The use of contaminated substances can contribute to the spread of infectious diseases.

**7. Government Initiatives-** The Indian Government has implemented various initiatives to address substance abuse, including awareness campaigns, treatment facilities, and regulatory measures. However, challenges such as limited access to treatment facilities and stigma associated with seeking help persist.

**8. Need for Comprehensive Strategies-** Experts emphasize on the importance of comprehensive strategies that address the root causes of addiction, including social, economic, and psychological factors. Prevention and early



intervention are considered crucial in mitigating the impact of youth addiction.

**9. Rural-Urban Disparities-** There may be disparities in the prevalence and impact of youth addiction between urban and rural areas. Access to resources, education, and healthcare services can vary, influencing the patterns of addiction. Public health campaigns and ongoing research initiatives are crucial in addressing this complex issue and implementing effective interventions.

#### IV. Conclusion:

In conclusion, the research on the impact of addiction on the youth of India reveals a multifaceted and concerning scenario. Substance abuse, particularly involving drugs and alcohol, has emerged as a pervasive issue, affecting the physical, mental, and socio-economic well-being of young individuals. The findings underscore the urgent need for comprehensive intervention strategies encompassing prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation.

The study illuminates the interconnected nature of addiction and its repercussions on the academic performance, employment opportunities, and interpersonal relationships among the youth. It highlights the critical role of societal factors, such as peer pressure, socio-economic disparities, and cultural influences, in perpetuating addictive behaviours. The research underscores the importance of fostering awareness and education campaigns to mitigate the allure of substances and promote a culture of well-being.

Addressing addiction requires a holistic approach involving collaboration between government agencies, educational institutions, and community organizations. India currently does not have a system of national or local monitoring of drug misuse.

In accordance with the spirit of the United Nations Conventions and the existing Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act (NDPS) 1985, and NDPS policy 2012, the Ministry has prepared a National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (NAPDDR) for 2018-2023.

Through the combined efforts of all levels of government and non-governmental organizations, the NAPDDR seeks to concentrate on preventive education, raising awareness, identification, counselling, treatment, and rehabilitation of drug-dependent individuals in addiction to educating and enhancing the skills of those who provide solutions.

In conclusion, the research underscores the urgency of concerted efforts to safeguard the

future of India's youth by tackling addiction comprehensively and fostering a society that prioritizes mental and physical health.

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