

Original Article

ATTITUDE OF HIGHER SECONDARY STUDENTS TOWARDS ALCOHOL AND DRUGS IN IMPHAL WEST DISTRICT, MANIPUR

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ABSTRACT

The study aims to investigate higher secondary students' attitude towards alcohol and drugs in Imphal West District, Manipur. It also aims to find out the differences in attitude towards alcohol and drugs between male and female students and type of family. For this study, Descriptive survey method was employed. Through the Random Sampling technique, 243 higher secondary students (124 males and 119 females) were selected from four higher secondary schools in Imphal West District, Manipur. A standardized scale, i.e., "Scale of Attitude towards Drug and Alcohol", constructed by Dr Poorva Jain and Dr Amit Deolia (2016), was administered to the participants. Percentage, mean, standard deviation, and independent samples t-test were used for analysing the data. The higher secondary students' attitude towards alcohol and drugs was found positive, and there exists no significant difference in attitude towards alcohol and drugs between male and female higher secondary students in Imphal West District, Manipur and their type of family. Timely interventions and interactions of students by professionals and experts can help in the early detection and prevention from indulging in unwanted social activities including substance abuse.

Keywords: Attitude, Drugs, Alcohol, Adolescents, Higher secondary students

INTRODUCTION

Adolescents constitute more than one-fifth of the world's population [World Health Organization \(2014\)](#). India, one of the largest and most populous countries in the world, has the largest adolescent population globally, with 253 million, and every fifth person is between 10 and 19 years old [United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime \(2018\)](#). The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines adolescents as individuals in the 10-19 year age group. Of all the Indian adolescent population, 54% belongs to the 10-14 age group, and nearly 46% to the 15- 19 age group [\(Census of India 2011\)](#). The Government of India, however, defines youth in the National Youth Policy as the 15-35 age group and adolescents as those aged 13-19 years [\(Government of India, 2014\)](#). Adolescents are recognised as a positive force in a nation, which is significantly responsible for its future productivity. In general, adolescence is a critical transitional phase between childhood and adulthood characterised by experimentation, exploration, peer influence and self-discovery, as well as risk-taking behaviours [Santrock \(2019\)](#); [Steinberg \(2014\)](#). Such characteristics influence the adolescents in initiation of substance abuse and making them more vulnerable to getting addiction in future. Alcoholism and drug abuse have spread like wildfire and become a way of life for many individuals. The majority of adults who end up with an alcohol or drug use disorder were found to have had their first contact with substances as adolescents [Grant and Dawson, \(1997\)](#); [Kessler et al., \(2005\)](#).

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Almost every country in the world is affected by drug abuse and alcoholism, making it a global concern [World Health Organization \(2018\)](#). India, too is caught in this vicious circle of drug abuse, and the number of addicts is increasing day by day [United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime \(2018\)](#). Alcohol and drug abuse have a greater impact on young people than on any other age group. This poses a serious threat and vulnerability to adolescents who are at a stage of experimentation, adventure, and trying out new things for fun and entertainment, as alcohol and drug use is found to be initiated at the adolescent period due to curiosity, imitation, peer pressure, current trend of adapting to westernisation, modernisation, family environment, and media influences [Bandura \(1977\)](#); [Hawkins et al. \(1992\)](#). Substance abuse is fast becoming a public health problem among children and adolescents in India. A study conducted by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in India reported that 40% of individuals start taking drugs and other substance between 15-20 years. From a study [Gururaj \(2016\)](#), it is found that adolescents as early as 13-15 years of age have started consuming alcohol in India. It is a pressing issue that warrants immediate attention and needs effective interventions and preventive measures to tackle the problem of substance abuse among adolescents.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Despite being one of the poorest and least developed regions of India, Manipur, a northeastern state of India, is battling with one of the highest rates of psychoactive substance abuse in the country. Geographically, Manipur borders Myanmar (Burma), one of the world's largest producers of illicit opium, making the state highly vulnerable to the problem of drug use and its related issues. Being a border state located near key drug trafficking routes from Myanmar and due to its proximity to the Golden Triangle - a region infamous for the notorious production and trafficking of illicit drugs, Manipur has become a major transit hub for drug smuggling, with drugs readily available [Saxena \(2003\)](#); [United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime \(2018\)](#). Available evidence reveals that about 19.8% of the total population of Manipur consumes alcohol, which is the most commonly used substance in Manipur [Saxena \(2003\)](#).

Findings of a Rapid Situation Assessment of Drug use done under the auspices of the United Nations Drug Control Program (UNDCP) and Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MSJE) show that out of 308 drug users from Imphal East and Imphal West districts, which is about 62 per cent, started using drugs in the age group of 15-19 years, 21 percent in the age group of 20-24 years, 12 per cent under 15 years [Ahanthem \(2005\)](#). It means that a large number of people started consuming drugs when they were in adolescence stage. It is also observed that consumption of liquor generally begins around the age of 15 [Indira \(2015\)](#). According to "Magnitude of Substance Use in India 2019", a report published by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, Manipur is 5th highest in the country in terms of the prevalence of opioid use, opium, heroin, etc., between the 10-75 years age group. According to the same report, the prevalence of alcohol use among the age group 10-75 years in Manipur is 22.4 %, the 8th highest in the country. These facts and reports posed a significant threat and concern to the future pillars of society. Even though the rate of substance abuse and alcohol consumption is found to be high, there is still a lack of studies on attitudes towards substance use, though the studies on the prevalence of psychoactive substances are limited in number. It is the need of the hour to address and discuss these issues for the early detection and prevention of youngsters from substance abuse, addiction and other related consequences. Therefore, the study aims to help develop strategies, preventive measures, early prevention and management, awareness programmes, and other related initiatives by the public and professionals to combat substance abuse ensuring the safety and well-being of the young future pillars.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 1) To find out the attitude towards alcohol and drugs among higher secondary students in Imphal West District, Manipur.
- 2) To find out the difference in attitude towards alcohol and drugs among male and female higher secondary students in Imphal West District, Manipur.
- 3) To find out the difference in attitude towards alcohol and drugs among higher secondary students in Imphal West District, Manipur, based on their type of family, i.e., joint and nuclear.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

There exists a significant difference in attitude towards alcohol and drugs between male and female higher secondary students in Imphal West District, Manipur.

There exists a significant difference in attitude towards alcohol and drugs among higher secondary students in Imphal West District, Manipur, based on their type of family, i.e., joint and nuclear.

RESEARCH METHOD

Descriptive research method is used in the present study.

SAMPLE AND SAMPLING

The present study employed a random sample of 243 higher secondary students (124 males and 119 females) aged 15-19 years from four (4) higher secondary schools in Imphal West District, Manipur.

TOOLS USED

A standardized scale, i.e., "Scale of Attitude towards Drug and Alcohol", constructed by [Dr Poorva Jain and Dr Amit Deolia \(2016\)](#), consisting of 26 items, was used to measure higher secondary students' attitude towards alcohol and drugs.

STATISTICAL PROCEDURE

Percentage, mean, standard deviation, and independent samples t-test were used for data analysis.

ANALYSIS AND DATA INTERPRETATION

Analysis and interpretation of data are as follows:

Table 1

Table 1 Attitude Towards Alcohol and Drugs Among Higher Secondary Students in Imphal West District, Manipur

Attitude towards Drug and Alcohol	Total (N)	High positive attitude	Positive attitude	Moderate attitude	Low negative attitude	High negative attitude
	243	0	67.1%	26.3%	6.6%	0

Table 1 shows the attitude towards drug and alcohol among higher secondary students in Imphal West District, Manipur. It indicates that out of 243 students, 67.1% of them have positive attitude, 26.3% have moderate attitude, and 6.6% have low negative attitude, while none of the participants have either high positive attitude or low negative attitude towards drug and alcohol. The finding revealed that higher secondary students in Imphal West District, Manipur have positive attitude towards alcohol and drugs.

Table 2

Table 2 Difference in the Mean Scores of Attitude Towards Alcohol and Drugs Among Male and Female Higher Secondary Students in Imphal West District, Manipur

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t value	Result
Male	124	65.57	10.483	241	3.135	Not significant
Female	119	61.69	8.708			

Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation of attitude towards alcohol and drugs among male and female higher secondary students in Imphal West District, Manipur. The mean scores and standard deviation of males are 65.57 and 10.483 respectively. The mean scores and standard deviation of females are 61.69 and 8.708 respectively. The t-value is 3.135, which is not significant at any level of confidence.

Thus, the **Hypothesis: There exists a significant difference in attitude towards alcohol and drugs between male and female higher secondary students in Imphal West District, Manipur** is rejected.

Table 3

Table 3 Difference in the Mean Scores of Attitude Towards Alcohol and Drugs Among Higher Secondary Students Based on Type of Family, I.E. Joint and Nuclear

Family type	N	Mean	SD	df	t value	Result
Joint family	101	65.27	9.359	241	2.151	Not significant
Nuclear family	142	62.54	10.028			

Table 3 shows the mean and standard deviation of the higher secondary students' attitude towards alcohol and drugs based on type of family, i.e., joint and nuclear. The mean scores and standard deviation of joint family are 65.27 and 9.359 respectively. The mean scores and standard deviation of nuclear family are 62.54 and 10.028 respectively. The t-value is 2.151, which is not significant at any level of confidence.

Thus, the **Hypothesis: There exists a significant difference in attitude towards drug and alcohol among adolescents in Manipur based on type of family, i.e. joint and nuclear** is rejected.

DISCUSSION

It is clear from the results obtained that there is positive attitude towards alcohol and drugs among higher secondary students in Imphal West District, Manipur. This outcome may be interpreted as the students are in the adolescence phase where curiosity to try new things and the desire to experimentation, exploration, and a search for risk taking behaviour may influence them. The tendency to initiate substance abuse among adolescents could also be influenced by changing trends of modernization, peer pressure, cultures, psychological distress, frustration, family, media, cheap and easy availability of substances. Another finding revealed that there is no significant differences in attitude towards alcohol and drugs between male and female higher secondary students. This might be the result of changing social norms, modernization, availability, increased exposure, lifestyle, technological advancement and media influences. The patterns of drug usage are globally changing. Drug abuse and alcohol consumption are no longer an exclusively and predominantly male activity. The easy availability, accessibility and more exposure appears to influence drug-using patterns among women and hence helping to develop greater tendency to experience it which might lead to have positive towards alcohol and drugs among female youngsters. The finding that there is no significant difference in attitude towards alcohol and drugs among higher secondary students based on type of family, i.e., joint and nuclear indicates that environment difference and lifestyle do not the impact students' attitude towards alcohol and drugs.

MAIN FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- 1) The attitude towards alcohol and drugs among higher secondary students in Imphal West, District, Manipur is positive.
- 2) There exists no significant difference in attitude towards alcohol and drugs between male and female higher secondary students in Imphal West District, Manipur.
- 3) There exists no significant difference in attitude towards alcohol and drugs among higher secondary students in Imphal West District, Manipur, based on their type of family, i.e., joint and nuclear.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study may help save the future of adolescents from drowning in the deadly pool of drug abuse and alcoholism. Drug abuse and alcoholism are diseases facing worldwide that cannot be treated or overcome overnight. It is a serious global issue affecting large number of individuals mainly adolescents. Adolescents are embodiments of hope and energy on which the future of a society and nation depends. The right time to shape and transform an individual into a good and healthy resource is adolescence period. Therefore, it is important to plan preventive strategies, management policies, early detection and proper treatment aimed at the vulnerable population to reduce the burden caused by substance abuse and its related consequences. It is the need of the hour for policymakers, professionals, institutional administrators, and other related agencies to address the issue of substance abuse, its consequences, and the vulnerable groups. Timely interventions and interactions of students by professionals and experts can help in the early detection and prevention from indulging in unwanted social activities. It is high time to create awareness programmes to educate and make young individuals aware of substance abuse and its lifelong consequences. Proper and regular counselling sessions could be introduced at various levels so that adolescents have adequate knowledge as well as management skills to save themselves from the urge of peer pressure or any other influencing factors. Inclusion of a curriculum based on substance abuse and its harmful effects, and moral education must be inculcated along with an increase in co-curricular activities. Parents, teachers, and society have equal responsibility in shaping a child's future. Everyone's collective efforts and support are required to make a child a responsible citizen free from engaging in any anti-social elements. Both school and home play a significant role in maintaining students' manners, discipline, morals, values, behaviour, and well-being.

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