



D33 Epidemiological Study of Alcohol Consumption in General Population of Dharan

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The goals of this research project are to study the epidemiology of alcohol consumption in general population of Dharan and to plan effective measures to control the menace of alcohol abuse in Nepal.

Of all the drugs which human beings have used and abused in the course of their checkered history, alcohol is almost certainly the oldest and also the most widely used because it is so easily produced.

Alcohol has always been used in Nepal. Alcoholic beverages are culturally accepted and social tolerance for alcohol use and alcohol dependence is quite high; therefore, alcohol has not been considered a drug for serious concern either by the Government or by any social organization. Alcohol could be the number one problem (drug) if one seriously considers the magnitude and extent of the problem it has created in Nepal. Alcoholic drinks in various forms have long been consumed in Nepal. Alcohol is necessary on most occasions among men, is relatively frequent, and is well tolerated by many communities. However, there is strong social disapproval of female drunkenness. It is not uncommon to see female alcoholics in the country especially in the hilly and mountainous regions.

A "Matwali" is a person who is allowed to drink alcoholic beverage by virtue of his birth. A high percentage of the Nepalese population belongs to this category and many of them take alcoholic beverages either on social occasions or on a regular basis. People who do not belong to this category are not supposed to consume alcoholic beverage even on social occasions. But there seems to be very steady rise in the number of people belonging to this category who consume alcoholic beverages.

People in Nepal generally believe that alcohol is remedy for cold, pain, physical tiredness, and so on. In fact, alcohol is extensively used for many ailments, especially in the rural areas. Most of the unskilled and semi-skilled workers in Nepal believe that they can function better if they take small amount of alcohol form time to time. Moreover, alcohol has become a status symbol for many people. Parties, get-togethers, or festivities are considered incomplete if alcoholic beverages are not served.

According to the 1991 figures form the Department of Excise, the sale of alcoholic beverages seems to be increasing rapidly. Since there is no export of alcoholic beverages from Nepal all beverages are sold and consumed within the country. If home production is taken into account, under-reporting of commercial production, liquor brought in form duty free shops and liquor imports, even more alcoholic beverage are consumed in Nepal. The number of distilleries and breweries is also increasing.

Even light drinking may adversely interact with other medication; temporary heavier drinking can exacerbate most medical illness; and alcoholism can masquerade as many different medical disorder and psychiatric syndromes. Alcohol abuse is a generally acknowledged cause of, or to say the least, an important contributing factor to, accidents, homicides, and suicides.

Therefore, it is felt that the study of the overall prevalence of alcohol consumption, the vulnerable age groups, the ethnic distribution, the role of socio-economic factors, age, sex, and type of liquor shall help to find out the quantum and magnitude of the problem so that the government can plan effective measures to control the menace of alcohol abuse in Nepal.

Alcohol, Drug, Drinking