

The Drug Abuse and Alcohol Addiction

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Social and Economic Dimensions of Substance Abuse

Drug abuse and alcohol addiction are said to be surpassing class differences because it is linked to various other factors, including income, employment, education, and family relations. Cultural and social stereotypes are associated with people belonging to different classes. For example, middle- and lower-class people have no access to many life luxuries, so they are attacked by various preconceived notions. It is assumed by society that lower-class people will be addicted to drugs and alcohol. It shows the prevailing views about substance abuse in lower classes and underlying biases on cultural and social variation in status. It is said that due to socio-economic factors, drug abuse and its usage vary (Schechter, Arnold J).

It is argued by proponents of this matter that drug abuse is influenced by various other factors. It is examined that many drug abuse cases and addicts are affected by socialization factors and the environment that surrounds them. However, social differences and class divisions divide the settings of both classes. People belonging to different classes tend to socialize in a unique cultural environment. Lower-class people are reported to be involved in illegal drug abuse and drug-related activities. There is another persisting assumption about drug abuse, which reflects the biased views attached to this matter. It argues that many drug abusers were reported from lower-class ethnic minorities (Schechter, Arnold J).

Cultural Norms and Patterns of Alcohol and Drug Use

The cultural patterns also determine the use of a drug and whether it's abused or not. Alcohol has been used for hundreds of years, and factual findings are evident in its use for medical purposes and others. However, this study mainly focuses on how a social setting influences the use of a drug. They have established certain ground rules for the use of drugs such as alcohol. In the past and even in recent times, alcohol has been used as a medical remedy in certain medicines. However, certain behavior patterns have been associated with its excessive use to determine drug use. For example, it is an important notion to discuss here that people tend to believe that an alcoholic or drug abuser would be an unemployed, recently divorced, unsuccessful, or uneducated person who has no other meaningful indulgence. This so-called reality about a particular status has been developed by many factors, such as how the media portrays these images.

In addition to that, these pictures penetrate into the minds of people in society, and ultimately, they believe that this reckless behavior regarding alcohol use is prevalent in the lower class. The upper class, who also use alcohol, has been reflected as civilized and sophisticated human beings who indulge in this activity occasionally for celebration purposes, etc. It is not necessarily true because a millionaire has a chance to be a drug abuser. It is believed by experts that people belonging to the higher hierarchy of the societal setup or upper class also become drug addicts due to variant factors such as unfulfilled relationships, failures, and excessive use of the drug, which leads to obsessive addiction.

It is also believed by experts on this matter that some cultures and societies have not developed protective measures and normative behaviors regarding drug abuse and excessive use of alcohol. So, when people are exposed to drugs, they tend to use those drugs in an uncontrolled manner, which gives rise to this issue. Some of the analysts point towards the direction of “anomie” and how when a society is bombarded with a sudden influx of foreigners and their outside cultural norms, the natives may adopt an unhealthy way of life, including drug abuse. It must be noted that these people will belong to the lower class because they are already leading a sub-standard lifestyle. Once the influx of people comes in, they are stressed out with the idea of constant battle and competition for resources. It can be proved through the example of Native Americans; it is believed that very few groups had been exposed to alcoholic beverages, but this situation transformed with the arrival of the British.

Cultural Dislocation, Immigration, and Youth Vulnerability

The loss of cultural values and the decreasing norm system are blamed for the growing drug abuse issue. It is stated that now, the line is often blurred between classes when it comes to substance abuse. It is reported that higher drug abuse levels have been found in those people who do not associate themselves with one particular culture, primarily Native American culture. There is a term used for this drug abuse, “chronic alcoholism.” It is said that no matter how many arguments can be constructed to illustrate that alcohol addiction and drug abuse can be present in any class, it is usually present in those people who have been suffering from socioeconomic traumas. The drug abuse issue varies within classes, and it also differs at a significant level among the youth of variant cultures. Such as, the drug abuse level will be different in Native Americans as compared to Indian immigrant youth or another of that matter (Winfrey, L. Thomas, and Curt T. Griffiths).

It is also argued about those young immigrants who move to a country with flashing lights of opportunities. They have been previously protected by the support and monitoring of their family members. But, when they come to a new land with high expectations to fit in this culture, they tend to adopt the lifestyles of existing native people. It is examined that if an individual society has dominant alcohol-drinking behavioral patterns, then the immigrants or outsiders might adopt to drug abuse or increase their use of drugs such as alcohol, which is not only harmful and unhealthy for the society.

However, it links a cynical notion with those people who cannot adjust to the current cultural differences (May, Philip A.).

Socioeconomic Harm, Media, and Alcohol Marketing

The socio-cultural and economic factors are taken into account regarding the use of alcohol, and it is reported that it results in many harmful effects and even mortality. The health risks erupting from the excessive misuse of drugs and alcohol abuse happen due to social influences at large and individual choices. The social level covers the class differences and divisions persisting within society. It is stated that almost approximately 3.3. Million people die due to the excessive use of alcohol. The interaction of individuals within a certain social setting is also considered significant because sometimes, a person is present in social surroundings where drug abuse is promoted, and alcohol is misused. It was also reported that social and cultural disparities give rise to drinking among lower classes, especially focusing on youth belonging to Asian and African-American backgrounds. According to a study conducted on different minorities in the USA, it was reported that drinking alcohol has increased in both genders at an alarming rate over the past few years (Sudhinaraset).

It is also analyzed that media and marketing factors also play a critical role in drawing these diversions among classes and particular groups regarding drug abuse and excessive usage of alcohol. According to persisting research, it was argued that people are exposed to the availability of alcohol through advertisements of its usage in movies, television programs, and social media networks. The studies conducted on this topic revealed that many young adults, such as college students, started a high rate of alcohol use under the influence of alcohol advertisements. It was mainly focused on the United States, which also revealed that drug abuse and cases of increased alcohol consumption were present in certain environments where alcohol was culturally appropriate or accepted. The problem that was the result of this issue was that alcohol use was portrayed as a positive thing, which leads to regular drinking habits and “binge drinking,” which ultimately leads to drug abuse and “chronic alcoholism.”

It is debated that class difference is critical in drug abuse and alcohol use. But it is also essential to discuss that the media and marketing strategies of companies generating alcoholic beverages mainly focus on younger women. It is also shown on TV that women belonging to lower class status end up drug addicts because of their unfortunate circumstances or because they become regular drinkers. For example, in a television program called “That 70’s Show”, the mother in this role is shown as a binge drinker who tries to hide her financial situation and family problems through drinking. It is shown that small-class people try to cope with their issues by running away from them. Another recent example is illustrated in the infamous show, “The Big Bang Theory,” where “Penny’s” character appears as a failure, and she is an actress belonging to a low-class family. Who comes to LA to try her luck but miserably fails. Her failure is often mocked and shown in the show as a “bit of a

drinking problem.” It was previously discussed that Kendal’s book also indicates that society tries to believe in the reality that is shown by the media (Grenard).

Targeted Marketing, Race, and Class Discrimination

It has also been proved through studies that marketing strategies on alcohol are mainly targeting a particular class and minority groups. i.e., Indian immigrants, African American communities, Latinos, etc. These companies make colorful and exotic advertisements to lure the targeted community into their trap, which ultimately leads to chaos in society. This kind of thing disrupts the balance of society and distorts its moral structure. The result of drug abuse and increased usage of alcohol comes with negative and unhealthy consequences (Alaniz, Maria Luisa, and Chris Wilkes).

The discrimination based on class differences and racial status also reveals perceptions about drug abuse matter and alcohol use. It was shown that most of the educated African-American men had experienced more discrimination. In addition to this, it was argued that discrimination for Afro-Americans also dictates the notion of drug abuse and alcohol use in their community. It was especially believed that young adults in the Afro-American community indulge in drinking and substance abuse problems, which is not only discriminatory but also empirically incorrect. (Kwate, Naa Oyo A., and Ilan H. Meyer) This research further shows how drug abuse and alcohol use are not under the influence of socio-economic perceptions but also involve racial, gender, and sexual orientation also.

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