

STUDY OF DRUG ABUSE AND SOCIAL STATUS CHANGES AMONG TRIBAL WOMEN

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Abstract

In the Vijayanagaram district of Andhra Pradesh, India, we were able to choose a sample of 1500 indigenous people aged 14 and up from a previous study on substance use. To find factors associated with substance usage, we used multivariate logistic regression analysis. In comparison to men (54%), women (37% vs. 62%) reported a lower rate of substance addiction. Around the age of 14, people were first introduced to drinking alcohol, which was regarded as a "holy drink" that might be enjoyed with friends, family, and neighbours. Most of their friends were the ones who first exposed them to opium and tobacco. Savara and Gadaba people (72%), people over the age of 40 (> 70%), people without a high school diploma (60%), people who practised their native religion (71%), widows and widowers (70%), and people living in households with two to four people (60%), were more likely to use drugs or alcohol than other groups. Regression research later found that among various tribal communities, there were statistically significant relationships between any substance use and the following demographic factors: ethnicity, religion, age, degree of education, occupation, and marital status. The high rate of substance misuse among the indigenous population demonstrates their steadfast adherence to established social standards. These findings have important policy repercussions, including the significance of providing substance misuse therapies to young people in indigenous communities.

Keywords: Savara, Gadaba tribes, Vijayanagaram, Women, Drug Use, Prevalence rates;

Addiction tendency in tribal women

In the current situation, there are numerous reasons to get drunk. For instance, alcohol is drunk because it is a fashion trend, because of illness, because of poverty or unemployment, etc. Drinking lowers drunkenness even further in India's poor population. Although personal collapse is not always the result of alcoholism, drinking is nonetheless seen as a significant contributor to personal loss. Drinking makes a person unpredictable, which is why alcoholism also causes social exclusion. Intoxication is the result of consuming alcoholic beverages like

liquor, toddy, liquor, etc. Even in tribal societies, drinking is not seen as a vice but rather as part of the culture. Drinking has historically dominated tribal life. It is the fundamental tenet of the manner of life he has been leading ever since his previous existence. He is prepared to make the highest sacrifice to satisfy this yearning. Where there are no Mahua trees, the tribal people get their alcohol from sulfi, toddy, and other trees.[1]

Sulphi, toddy, lauda, mahua, country liquor, tobacco, cannabis, ganja, gudakhu, and other forms of alcoholism are common in tribal societies; only the male class drinks cannabis, country liquor, and ganja. Some women are such that they have become accustomed to drinking, but most ladies only drink alcohol on Teej festivals or the day they get paid.

The custom of the community includes drinking alcohol with one's husband or family, and these ladies make their own Landa and Mahua whiskey at home. Landa rice is prepared by soaking, grinding, steam cooking, and dissolving in water before being stored for two to three days to rot. Intoxication then develops in it. Similar to this, water is added to the Handi and Mahua's Handi is placed on it to soak and cook. After being cooked by steam, the wine is kept in another container. Mahua liquor is created in this manner.[9]

Without alcohol, they cannot perform any tasks or rituals, such as marriage, childbirth, and death ceremonies. Tribal men and women both take intoxicants, and the tribal women themselves ingest alcohol from Mahua and other drugs. Produce and consume. However, the tribes who live close to cities purchase alcohol and other intoxicants from the market and utilise them.

The practise of consuming country liquor has increased as a result of the influence of the modern surroundings. However, women make up a relatively small portion of it. Women do not consume these alcoholic beverages equally for economic reasons.

Until recently, much research on substance usage, particularly psychoactive substances, was androcentric and insensitive to gender differences. Women's substance misuse has long been stigmatised. The law that "a wife who drinks wine... may be abandoned at any time" may be traced all the way back to the Indian Manusmriti and the Western Laws of Hammurabi. Institutes such as the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism did not actively seek scientific and public focus on gender issues until the mid-1970s, owing in part to the ongoing women's liberation movement. Following the feminization of the HIV epidemic and the evident role of drug use in hastening its spread, a focus on women and substance use became critical.[3]

Social change among tribal women

Before, indigenous women's education was not prioritised since they believed that women should solely perform domestic tasks, but this mindset has undergone a significant shift. People are now more conscious of the importance of girls' education. The fact that girls are now sent to study has altered the position of women. People are becoming more interested in education, but the money spent on it is wasted. Women's social dignity is deteriorating. When outside investors interfere with women's social networks, it hurts them more than males. In Gadaba communities, a wife's disrespectful behaviour toward her husband, her disobedience, and her nagging behaviour were the primary sources of marital conflict. People who never owned land but instead relied on sharecropping, offering communal services, or subsisting off of resources from common property will also see their markets and access to these resources disappear. Women currently find themselves in a situation where the majority of jobs are filled by males, the bulk of salary is given to men, and there are no open positions for them. The Pojratribes have a cultural taboo against women farmers. It is prohibited for women from the Gadaba and Porja tribes to trade. The only women permitted to serve as housekeepers for people of other races are Bagatawomen.

Tribal Women in Family and Society

The traditional role of a tribal male was that of breadwinner and provider for his family. In most societies, women have traditionally been responsible for domestic duties and child rearing. The frailty of her body meant that she needed a man's protection more than ever. Even after the development of civilization, the cultural norm of women serving in subservient and dependent roles persisted. Man's dominance persisted, and he owned the woman and everything else necessary to keep the household running. Women's legal and emotional attachment to men as husbands and mothers was mostly motivated by a desire to ensure their own survival in a world where men remained dominant.[6-8]

Due to the pervasiveness of a male-dominated culture, few if any women participate in political or social decision-making. Their contribution still appears to be little. The lack of access to the same resources as men has long been a barrier to women's advancement, and this situation has only recently improved. Because marriage and motherhood were considered more important than careers, girls were often prevented from pursuing higher education. Before the past two decades, no one but men had ever attempted to investigate the issues facing women. Additionally, men alone drafted and enacted emancipation laws. For women to better their

economic and social standing, they must take part in the economy. Women should participate in the workforce on equal footing with men and become fully integrated into society.

The status of women in society has been significantly improved as a result. Since the beginning of time, child marriage has been a common practise among them. Changes are currently occurring in this caste as a result of the spread of education and the impact of modernization. They have contacted civilised culture, and as a result, civilisation is thriving there. A widow could not remarry in the past, but widow marriages do occur today. After receiving an education, women are aware of their right to vote, and as a result of political parties' actions, political awareness is currently rising day by day. They once lived like cavemen, covering their bodies with plant leaves and tree bark, but today they are beginning to adopt various types of clothing. The mode of transportation is now being used by pedestrians. Leaving superstitions behind, individuals have begun to appreciate the value of medical care as their health deteriorates.

Women used to have deliveries at home, which made their health dismal and contributed to a high death rate; but, today, they are beginning to go to hospitals and receive care. Education has also begun to increase awareness of the significance of family planning. The practise of sacrifice rituals and males renouncing their religion and customs, not shaving their hair, have started to progressively adopt Chhattisgarh culture, indicating a change in religious extremism. The young people of today have begun to speak Hindi/Chhattisgarhi despite not speaking it as their first language.

Tribal Women Status

The status of women varies from community to community among tribes of A.P. There are no criteria to determine the status of women exactly because it differs from one mode of society to other mode of society. But generally, basing on treatment of women, their legal status, rights with regard to property, decision making power, control over resources, opportunities, in the field of education, employment etc are suggestive parameters of woman status in the society. Likewise, the degree of freedom of physical movement and social interaction allowed to women of different ages and at different stages of domestic cycle, the opportunities for participation in economic, religious and political fields, the freedom of marital partners to initiate divorce, the grounds for divorce and allocation of the children to one or the other parent, may also be used to determine the status of women.

Raising a daughter is generally no more difficult than raising a son in native communities. The dowry system is not common in tribal societies, with the exception of a few modern tribal groups like the Banjara and the Yerukala, where the husband is expected to pay bride price to the girl's parents. In tribal tribes, it is acceptable to divorce, remarry when a widower passes away, and let a woman marry anyone she chooses.

The perception that non-tribal women are generally less privileged than their tribal counterparts permeates the popular conception of how tribal women live. Both child marriage and widowhood are tolerated without condemnation. Regarding dating and marriage, she is free to choose what she wants. Instead of dowry, bride price denotes the tribal woman's high social status. For a lady of the tribe, marriage and divorce are not forbidden.

In tribal civilizations, it is customary for women to participate in any celebrations or fairs held in their neighbourhoods. They frequently play a key role in traditional, colourful dances. Although they are underrepresented in the workforce, education, and politics. They cannot claim to be the owners of the land. They must live in an unhealthily stressful atmosphere due to poor economic conditions, poor health, overworked jobs, and domestic duties.

Therefore, it is evident from the discussion above that there have been numerous socio-cultural, religious, political, educational, and ideological changes among the tribal women who have come before us as a result of the spread of education and advancements in the knowledge-science fields, etc. In order for tribal women to fully develop, they must be connected to society's mainstream through the government; only then is women's emancipation conceivable.

In India, there are roughly 550 tribal clans made up of 277 distinct ethnic groups living in about 5,000 villages dispersed among the country's various types of forest and vegetation. With China to the north, Myanmar to the east, Bhutan to the northwest, and Bangladesh to the southwest, Northeast India has extensive international borders. With 83,743 square kilometres, Arunachal Pradesh dwarfs its neighbours by a wide margin. Controlling drug trafficking across borders is challenging due to the various mountains and dense forests. According to the 2011 Census, Andhra Pradesh is home to a wide variety of tribes, each of which has its own traditional region. They are often solitary, practise a variety of customs and traditions, and speak their own languages. One of the most important methods for acquiring epidemiological data on the legal or illegal use of various narcotics is through population-based surveys. The current study used population-based survey data to evaluate the prevalence and socio-demographic correlates of

substance use disorders (namely tobacco, alcohol, and opiate dependency) in the tribal tribes of Andhra Pradesh.

Study Location

The Vijayanagaram area of Andhra Pradesh, which is close to the Odisha border in India, was chosen as the study location based on the pilot study and the extensive methodologies described elsewhere. According to the 2021 census, the district of Vizianagaram would have a total population of 2,602,367, a population density of 30 people per square kilometre, and a population of 10.05% tribal origin. 490,911 of them reside in cities, while 1,853,563 do so in rural areas. The district's diversity is highlighted by the fact that local weather conditions vary widely, it has numerous natural resources, and it has a long history of diverse cultures. The district is home to high mountains and a sizable tract of reserve forest (73%). (altitude varies from 200 to 4500 m above sea level).

Variable selection

Data gathered from the individuals were analysed to ascertain the frequency and pattern of substance usage across the tribal tribes across key socio-demographic variables. Tribal ethnicity (Jatapus, Konda Dora, Savara, Gadaba, etc.), age range (14–25, 24-35, 35–45, >45), education (illiterate, primary, secondary, or above), employment status (housewife, unemployed, self-employed, and employed), religion (Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Indigenous), marital status (unmarried, married, and widowed), and household size are all included. The analysis took into account the substance used (tobacco, alcohol, or opium), age at first use (in years), years of usage, and the main factor that led to addiction.

Statistical Study

Groups of respondents were created by classifying them based on their responses to a series of questions designed to reveal underlying demographic trends. An analysis of variance was performed to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in the mean ages, earnings, family sizes, ages at which men and women first used substances, and durations of drug use between the sexes. All of the demographic factors in the outset served as independent variables in the analysis, as determined by Spearman's. The well-known logistic regression model was used to discover factors that are associated with substance abuse. The adjusted odds ratios and 95% confidence intervals were calculated using a stepwise (backward LR) multivariable logistic regression analysis method (CI). In the stepwise regression analysis, the

probabilities of including and excluding the variables were, respectively, 0.05 and 0.10. Since all tests were two-tailed, the significance level set at $p < 0.05$ was mandated.

Research findings

Although women only make up 37% of the tribe's total population, they are responsible for 83% of the population's drug misuse issues. This includes heavy usage of all narcotics (1.5%), alcohol (29%), and cigarettes (21%). According to several other reports, Andhra Pradesh has a high prevalence of alcohol and cigarette use. According to research, 57% of Indian men smoke cigarettes, compared to 32% of Indian men and 11% of Indian women who consume alcohol. The results show that the tribal group had a considerably higher rate of substance usage than the general population.

Alcohol and tobacco use are both highly prevalent in the tribal society, but alcohol consumption typically starts earlier (around age 14) than cigarette use does (17 years). Women in the tribal tribe use alcohol substantially more than women in India's general population do. The tribes' traditional beliefs and the societal acceptability of alcohol may have had an impact. Alcoholic drinks were consumed by both family members and visitors, notably rice brew, which was made at home and referred to as "a lovely drink". Because it is affordable, easily accessible, and frequently smoked or chewed in social situations, tobacco is the most commonly used stimulant. Although their actual incidence is low among people under the age of 25, the average age of first use for both alcohol and cigarettes implies that both substances are frequently introduced at a young age. Privacy concerns are one of the potential causes of this.

The use of any substance was significantly correlated with the user's age group, religion, tribe, household size (two to six people), marital status (married or widowed), and work status, according to the findings of a multivariate regression study (women). Education, on the other hand, had a fairly negligible impact on both men and women. Similar outcomes have been attained by others. According to studies [3-5], substance use is more common as people get older, and it is far more common in older people than in younger people. Others have found a significant link between tribal religion and drug usage [2]. Hindus, Buddhists, and Indigenous religion adherents consume drugs at considerably higher rates than Christians [1]. This shows that cultural norms and attitudes have a significant impact on substance misuse rates and are positively connected with age.

There is a link between drug use and academic success, according to numerous studies from throughout the globe [5]. In this study, we discovered that the prevalence of drug use reduced

as education levels increased; however, in multivariate regression analysis, the influence of education on substance use was not significant, with the exception of female illiterates. Contrarily, a univariate analysis revealed a relationship between illiteracy and cigarette use as well as one between elementary schooling and opium use. The little effect that formal schooling had on tribal communities was evidence of the groups' strong devotion to long-standing traditions and beliefs. Numerous studies [7] have discovered that, like education, a person's occupation has an impact on their substance use. According to the analysis, self-employed respondents had a high prevalence of substance use (70.9%), putting them at three times higher risk than those who were looking for work. Alcohol and tobacco use were linked to higher risk among respondents who were employed. The type of work a person does may indicate their financial stability and, thus, their capacity to afford a range of potentially dangerous substances. Numerous studies [4] have shown a connection between income and employment position and substance usage, and other researchers have confirmed these findings.

Significant policy ramifications include the requirement to target substance use therapies primarily at tribal populations' elementary and secondary school-aged youth [8]. Preventing substance-related issues at an early age will reduce the likelihood that they will have a negative impact on health in later adulthood, as the level of life stress increases with age.

The information provided here is very beneficial for public health. When extrapolating the findings of this secondary analysis, it is crucial to keep in mind the study's constraints and potential bias. We had to settle with information about people's jobs as a substitute for specific pay data because it wasn't available. Despite its shortcomings, the study offers insightful information that could help guide a more thorough community-based investigation of substance addiction and its related morbidity. It also emphasises the significance of including tribal youth leaders in early interventions designed to inspire and inform kids about the detrimental effects of substance usage.

Suggestion-

- Only a woman can educate herself and make the whole family educated. Therefore, tribal women should be aware of their education and by removing many evils, ignorance, conservatism, narrow-mindedness, spread in the society, they should become self-sufficient by becoming educated.
- Women themselves should be given that they can take their own decisions. He should not be put under family pressure.

- Priority should be given to family planning so that the condition and health of women can be improved.
- To strengthen the economic condition, the traditional business should be made profitable by the cooperatives.
- Financial support should be provided by the government for education and business, so that their social status can be improved.
- Tribal women should be aware and connect with modernity.
- Initiatives should be taken by caste panchayats to remove social evils.
- Create interest in children towards studies from childhood and send them to school at the right age so that the new generation can become intelligent and educated.
- People of this caste should stop believing in witchcraft so that their social status can be improved.

Conclusion-

The necessity to focus substance use therapies largely on indigenous adolescents in elementary and secondary school is one of the significant policy repercussions. As the degree of life stress rises with age, preventing substance-related disorders early will decrease the risk that they will have a detrimental effect on health in later adulthood. This article's material is excellent for promoting public health. It is critical to consider the limitations and potential bias of the study before extrapolating the results of this secondary analysis. Specific pay data was not available, so we were forced to make do with information about people's jobs. Despite its flaws, the study provides informative data that may assist direct a more in-depth community-based study of substance abuse and its associated morbidity. The importance of integrating tribal youth leaders in early interventions meant to motivate and educate children about the negative impacts of substance use is also emphasised. In the tribal civilization, consuming alcohol is a part of tradition and culture. They produce and sell opium and other drugs like Mahua exclusively using alcohol as their source of money; however, the issue of intoxication is getting worse today. In addition to these, tribes are increasingly consuming gutkha, cigarettes, alcohol, etc. There are various factors that contribute to drug usage, including family, the social system, career, friendship, and self-awareness. In addition to this, the way that drinking is perceived in tribal society is feeding this addiction. And because these women use these addictions while having poor incomes, their poverty and poverty are both getting worse.

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