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Critical Drinking Habit and Its Implications for Alcoholics in the Family Premises: A Case Study of Punjab (India)

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Author's contribution

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ABSTRACT

Drinking has become a major area of concern in contemporary modern world. It has both positive and negative consequences, depending on the pattern of alcohol consumption. The present article discusses about the negative consequences of critical drinking. In particular, it discusses how critical drinking manifests into different types of problems for the alcoholics, and causes the problem of alcoholism in society. The main objective of this study is to understand, how alcoholism ruins the life of alcoholics and the kind of problems they face in the family premises due to their critical drinking habit. The research question for the present study is to determine, whether alcoholics are the problem creator in society, or they are also victims of their critical drinking habit? The study is based on primary data. By keeping in view definition of 'alcoholic', the data has collected from 100 alcoholics from different parts of Punjab (India). And, in order to generate the primary data for present study, the methods like snowballing technique, semi-structured interview schedule, participant observation, etc. have been used. The study has found that the alcoholics face multiple social problems, that varies from minor to major. In most of the cases, normal drinking habit turns into critical drinking pattern, which increases the possibility of troubles for alcoholics as well as for others. The study concludes that alcoholics are not merely the troublemakers in society however,

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they are also the victims of their own misfortune. Moreover, these problems further worsen the alcoholics' drinking habit. Resultantly, this all turns into the vicious circle of excessive drinking and associated problems.

Keywords: Critical drinking; alcoholics; alcohol related problems; alcoholism.

1. INTRODUCTION

Drinking has become a routine part for many people in contemporary modern world [1]. It has some positiveⁱ and negativeⁱⁱ implications depending on the pattern of alcohol consumptionⁱⁱⁱ [11]. Literature exhibits that since the last 9000 years' people have been using this substance for various purposes [12]. Some have been using it for enjoyment, camaraderie, medicinal purpose [13] while others for abstaining themselves from various troubles of life [14]. It is an established fact that while using this substance, some are able to constrain themselves to suggested drinking limits^{iv}, while others cross these limits [17]. Consequently, those who cross the limits, end up as victims of alcoholism.

Alcoholism is a social ill or a social problem [18]. It is a result of critical drinking^v to an extent that

ⁱ There are multiple benefits reported by different agencies for moderate use of alcohol. These can be categories as social benefits such as, it helps in making social relationships or medium of social interchange [2] to host the guests in the marriages etc., health benefits such as control the risk of heart disease [3,4] increase concentration, helps in physical comfort, to remove kidney stones etc., economic benefits such as business promotion etc., psychological benefits such as to relax mind or to avoid many psychological problems etc. [5,6].

ⁱⁱ Negative functions are mainly linked with critical drinking patterns. It ranges from minor to major such as individual level to societal level complications. It ruins social, economic, cultural life of individual as well as affect the larger social structure in society [7,8].

ⁱⁱⁱ Patterns of alcohol consumption include quantity, quality, frequency, context of drinking etc. and are attached with culturally acceptable norms of drinking. It helps to decide that to what extent a person is permitted to drink alcohol and whether a person's drinking is critical or not [9,10].

^{iv} According to WHO (2003) the recommended per day units of alcohol for young people are three standard drinks(SDs) of 30 ml in case of males and two SDs per day in case of females. The given configuration stands true for spirits, such as whisky, rum, vodka etc., with 40% Volume and 75° Proof. It is further suggested that a person must have at least two alcohol-free days a week. Moreover, while drinking one must observe an interval of one hour between two successive drinks, with wholesome nutritious food etc. In case of aged people, who have reduced body water content and slower metabolism of alcohol, for them, the recommended per day alcohol limit is not more than two units of alcohol in case of males and one in case of females. [15,16].

^v The consumption of larger amount of alcohol in a short period time or drinking alcohol without taking care of

exceeds customary dietary use or the socially approved drinking customs of the community or suggested limits [19,20,21,22,23,24] that has a capacity to damage the health of individual [25] and impair the social functioning of whole family [26]. Further, it affects the social structure and functions of different organs of society as well. In a well quoted sociological study by Roman (2007) alcoholism have been defined in terms of individuals' social role performance and others' definition of the extent to which this performance, due to repeated episodes of drinking, fails to meet social expectations [27].

Alcoholism has affected almost all intuitions of society [28]. The larger impact has been seen on family as, it is one of the primary institutions with which members themselves feel connected [29]. Globally, there are many studies that discusses the problem of alcoholism at institutional level, however, there is paucity of empirical research that discusses the problem at individual level such as, the problems faced by alcoholics themselves. Although, the alcoholic himself is the root of all the troubles faced by his family and other members of the society, however they also become victims of alcoholism. They face multiple problems depending upon their social conditions. According to World Health Organization (WHO), 2018 report, in 2016 the critical drinking habit has resulted in some 3 million deaths, which is 5.3% of total deaths in a year worldwide. Besides that, there are many biological and psychological implications due to critical alcohol consumption. WHO reports that the critical use of alcohol is a constituent cause of more than 200 diseases such as liver cirrhosis, cancers, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS, withdrawal discomfort, tolerance and many more [30].

The harmful use of alcohol is also associated with many serious social consequences such as poverty, unemployment, road accidents, family violence, divorce, financial crisis and many more. Thus, the present study is an attempt to understand the issue of critical drinking habit among alcoholics and how it creates troubles for

suggested limits of drinking (see footnote IV for suggested limits of drinking).

alcoholic. The study has social relevance as critical drinking habit among alcoholics also put an institution of family into a crisis. Further, it also triggers many complications for other institutions of society, as all institutions are directly or indirectly interconnected. Therefore, it becomes important to understand the issue, to ensure the menace of alcoholism can be controlled in society.

2. OBJECTIVE OF STUDY

Alcoholism has become one of the major pressing problems of our day. It has affected almost all agencies of our society amongst which family is at a more vulnerable position than others. There is no doubt that all the members of family face many troubles due to problem of alcoholism, however in existing studies very little focus has been given to the troubles faced by alcoholics themselves. Moreover, the problem of alcoholism is directly connected with alcoholics as their drinking patterns and habits, affects others. Therefore, through the present study an attempt has been made to understand the problems faced by alcoholics themselves. Thus, the main objective of the present study is to look into the problems of alcoholics and the possibilities of their survival in this condition. By keeping in mind the above objective, following research questions have been framed. The study tries to identify, whether alcoholics are the troublemakers in society or they are victim of this problem too? Further, what kind of problems they face? Whether alcoholics themselves are responsible for the troubles they face or there are other forces at work too? Despite facing different problems how do alcoholics survive in a society? The study has also scientific contribution, as it validates some existing facts and find out some new facts systematically.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study is based on fieldwork conducted in different parts of Punjab (India). According to data collected from Excise Department, Punjab, the highest consumption of alcohol was reported in district Ludhiana and lowest in district Tarn Taran of Punjab. In order to cover the two extremes, a sample of total 100 alcoholics was selected from both districts with 50 alcoholics each from Ludhiana and Tarn Taran which was further split into urban and rural areas. For each district, after getting data of sale of liquor from Excise Department, Punjab, a list of villages and towns was prepared. Accordingly, two urban and

three rural areas were selected from each district using lottery method. The final places for field work were i.e. Ludhiana (50); urban (25: Ludhiana and Machhiwara Sahib); rural (25: Manawal, Utala and Begowal) and Tarn Taran (50); urban (25: Tarn Taran and Khem Karn); rural (25: Jalalabad, Bhalaipur Dogran and Verowal). The alcoholics were identified further with the help of snow-balling technique^{vi} using the input from panchayat members, members of municipal corporations, nagar nigam etc. (see Fig. 1 and Table 1)

In the beginning, many drinkers were identified and visited with the help of snowballing technique. Most of the drinkers refused to share the information and those who agreed, many of them failed to meet the conditions mentioned in the definition of alcoholic^{vii}. Therefore, a total number of drinkers visited were 342, drinkers who refused to give information were 119, drinkers who did not meet the criteria mentioned in the definition were 123 and sampled alcoholics/critical drinkers were 100 who meet the criteria mentioned in the definition. The maximum refusal was found in the urban area and among women drinker.

The present study has been done through fieldwork, based on primary and secondary sources including both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The secondary data such as WHO reports, census reports, excise department reports, books, research journals and other studies were reviewed extensively while the primary data were collected through fieldwork. The study primarily used

^{vi} Snowball sampling, a kind of non-probability sampling, is also known as reference sampling in which respondents/participants recommend other respondents/participants for a study. It is largely used where the respondents are very hard to locate. This sampling technique consist two main steps. First, identify potential subjects/persons in the population and secondly ask those subjects to refer respondents for study. These steps continues till the appropriate and needed sample is found [31].

^{vii} If one's drinking is deviant in the eyes of another then it may be said that the person is an alcoholic. In addition to this, other symptoms which define person's deviant drinking are, slurred speech, inability to walk strait, continuous laughing, hooting, aggression, fighting and impaired judgment after the use of alcohol. In short, Alcoholic, also known as critical drinker, is one who cannot stop himself from using alcohol and carry out binge type of drinking i.e. drinking large quantity of alcoholic's beverages at a single time or whole the day and whose behavior largely affects others [32,33,34,35,36,37]. Though, an alcoholic may go without a drink for a day or sometimes for even longer periods, inevitable they revert. For these people the greater the need to stop drinking, the more difficulty they find it to do so [38,39].

qualitative methods such as case study, observation, focused group discussions, and used semi-structured interview schedule for data collection. An attempt is also made to supplement research with the help of quantitative methods like attitudinal scales used in interview schedules. The primary data gathered from the field was largely based on the definition of alcoholic as framed in the beginning of the study with the help of different sources. Thus, the present study does not talk about all drinkers but those who are come under the definition of an “alcoholic/ critical drinkers”. While making analysis and interpretation of data, wherever necessary, narratives of respondents were also recorded so as to retain the naturalistic essence of the data. Keeping in mind the research ethics, the identity of alcoholic kept secret. Before collecting information/data, the researcher has introduced himself and elaborated the details about the study to respondents. All data collected systematically and facts drawn with the help of scientific methods.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Addiction to alcohol is a social stigma which results in multiple social consequences to alcoholics. Addiction of alcohol, particularly critical addiction^{viii}, affects alcoholics in a different way. After compilation and analysis of data, it was found that critical addiction reduces the capacity to work with desired efficiency and decreases the potential to control oneself as alcohol tends to overpower the mental faculties of its consumer. Other than this, most of the alcoholics face multiple problems such as poor health status, problems at workplace, unemployment, decreased work capacity, involvement in different types of violence against family members, memory loss, legal hassles, isolation, inability to attend family functions, hospitalization, guilt feeling, social boycott, complained by family members, recreational problems and many more. Further, due to addiction majority of the alcoholics are unable to contribute to the effective socialization of their children and as far as providing for the family is concerned, they fail miserably. The detailed discussion over many of these issues are as follows.

^{viii} Critical addiction, drinking large amount of alcohol in a short time. It is almost equal to binge drinking. In other words, when one can live without food, relations and other necessities but not without alcohol [40,41].

4.1 Problems in Married Life

Marriage is an arrangement in which two individuals cohabit for long term. A married couple is supposed to provide unconditional care, respect and love to one another. Marriage is a bond where the married couple finds a space to share their personal worries with one another. The present research reveals that critical drinking among alcoholics has disturbed their married life. Table 2 shows that those who were married majority of them about 67% reported their drinking has affected the relationship with their spouse. Due to their critical drinking most of the time they lose self-control and engage in abusive behavior aimed particularly at spouses. Further this also instigates the spouse to engage in similar abusive behavior against alcoholic partner. This leads to the conflict amongst husband and wife. In most of the cases it is found that they could not share their feelings with one another as the alcoholic spouse remained under intoxication most of the time. Similarly, the critical drinking of the alcoholic affects the relationship with other family members. Moreover, alcoholics, due to their addictive behavior, also confront a possibility of divorce. In some families, this habit of drinking has led to disputes between the alcoholic and his in-laws. Some of the alcoholics also reported a disturbed sex life due to poor performance, ignorance by the partner etc. This has also been the cause behind extra-marital relationships by alcoholics. Herein below are some stories narrated by the alcoholics regarding the disturbance in their married life: -

“My whole day flies by in an intoxicated state. Due to the addiction to alcohol I am unable to spend time with my wife and children”.

“Due to my addiction to alcohol, my wife leaves me and goes to her parental house. In her absence, preparing food and house-keeping becomes difficult”.

“When I drink alcohol, my children, wife beat me up and abuse me verbally”.

The above-narrated stories depict that the addiction to alcohol creates many complications in the married life of alcoholics. Due to their addiction, the alcoholics were unable to receive care and affection from their partner and other family members. The stories also explain that rather than taking care of alcoholics and controlling their deviant behavior, families outcast them, and demonize the

alcoholics. Alcoholics reported that this sometimes causes immense frustration, and in order to escape from these awful situations they end up consuming more alcohol. The family member's behavior towards alcoholics does not really help in alleviating the misery of the alcoholics, it rather aggravates the problem.

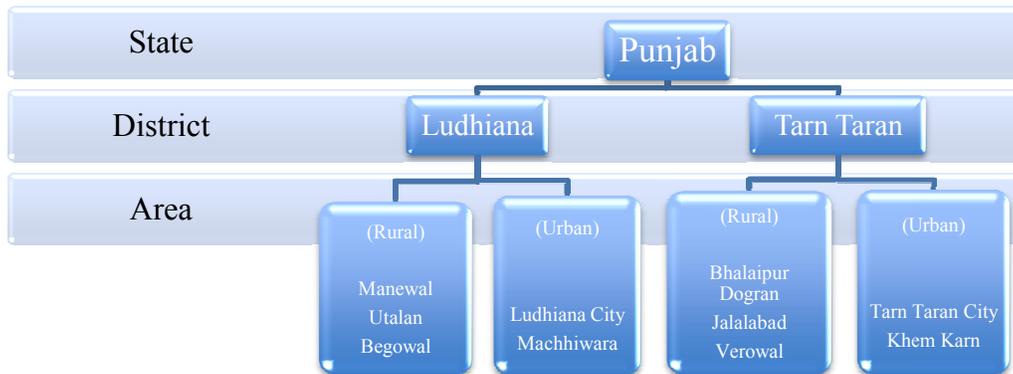


Fig. 1. Distribution of field of study

Source: Primary Data

Table 1. Distribution of alcoholics according to field of study

District (State)	Field of Study	Frequency of Families
Ludhiana (Punjab)	Ludhiana City	11
	Machhiwara Sahib	14
	Manewal	4
	Utalán	10
	Begowal	11
Tarn Taran (Punjab)	Tarn Taran City	9
	Khem Karn	16
	Jalalabad	12
	Verowal	3
	Bhalaipur Dogran	10
	Total	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 2. Problems faced by alcoholics due to critical addiction

S. No.	Problems	Percentage
1	Complaints by Family Members	89%
2	Inability to Perform Family Obligations	73%
3	Problems in Married Life	67%
4	Guilt Feeling	63%
5	Financial Issues	61%
6	Hospitalization	56%
7	Social Boycott/Social Isolation	51%
8	Social Stigma/Labeling	49%
9	Withdrawal Discomfort	46%
10	Problems at Workplace	41%
11	Abuse	37%
12	Stayed Away From Home for Rehabilitation	35%
13	Legal hassles etc.	15%
14	Memory Loss	10%
15	Other Problems	8%

Source: Primary Data

4.2 Frequent Complaints of Family Members

Complaints to others regarding the critical addiction of alcoholic is one of the major problems faced by alcoholics. Table 2 show that the majority of alcoholics (89%) frequently faced complaints by their family members when they were drunk. They were frequently embarrassed by the family members because of their critical addiction. The most common complaint found against alcoholics was the use of abusive language, unacceptable behavior and violence against family members, disturbance and distraction in the education of children, health complications due to not having proper diet. Other than this, minor and major accidents at home and outside home, disturbance in the lives of neighbors, a regular burden on spouse and parents as they have to search for the alcoholic and get him home from unknown places etc. are some other problems. Some of the alcoholics also narrated some stories regarding frequent complaints are as follows:-

“My family members are immensely upset on days my alcohol intake crosses all limits. Sometimes after getting annoyed due to my habits they start insulting me in front of others. Nobody thinks of me as a good person”.

“My family members and relatives accuse my addiction to alcohol as the prime reason behind not finding any suitable match for marriage for the children of the family”.

The above stories clearly reveal that the alcoholics realize that their behavior and addiction to alcohol creates many problems for their family members. When someone approaches them and complains regarding their behavior, they also experience embarrassment owing to thier behavior. Their excessive drinking habit also creates many disturbances during every day activities. Also, it was observed that continuous complaints have had an adverse effect on them as they were forced into consuming more liquor so as to alleviate their pain and forget the burden of stigma, isolation, and shame. An alcoholic narrated his feelings as follows: -

“I feel disturbed after listening to complaints against me and while attempting to get over it, I end up consuming more alcohol”.

4.3 Inability to Perform Family Obligations

Critical drinking and critical addiction beyond limits can also affect the ability of a person to perform family obligations which ultimately creates multiple troubles for alcoholic. The data presented in Table 2 depicts that majority of the alcoholics (73%) were unable to perform family obligations such as earning a livelihood for family, caring for children, parents and spouse or socialization of children, providing education, performing family rituals such as marriage of children, festivals and ceremonies etc. Usually, the children of the alcoholics have to quit their education, due to financial constraints, faced by the family, owing to their father's non-earning which is a consequence of his alcohol addiction. Parents work in their old age and female spouse perform multiple roles such as housewife, taking care of in-laws and children. They are also working to earn livelihood for the family. Thus, alcoholism affects the ability of alcoholic to perform family obligations which results in multiple complications to other family members. However, the story does not end here. The decreased capacity of alcoholic to perform family obligations further affects the alcoholic in a different way. They have to bear the disturbing comments of others including family members. It creates stigma and evokes guilt amongst alcoholics due to which most of the alcoholics try to end their life. Some alcoholics also narrated their stories as follows:

Due to excessive drinking I find myself not able to perform family obligations. Because of this I have to bear abusive comments from family and relatives. Sometimes I think about ending my life to get rid of this trouble.

The habit of drinking has detached me from my family. I could not perform family obligations. I could not give time to my family. I am very much disturbed because of this.

The similar kind of study conducted by Shah et al. supports the above findings. Shah et al. (1996) found that out of 100 alcoholics near about 66% had social and recreational problems. They were unable to contribute to the effective socialization of children and taking care of other family members etc. [42].

4.4 Guilt Feeling Because of Critical Addiction

Feeling stranger to themselves is another complication faced by alcoholics. Table 2 shows that 63% alcoholics had the feeling of guilt due to which many of them tried to commit suicide or leave their house permanently. After interaction with alcoholics, it was found that alcoholics also believe that they are a burden on their family members as they do not care for their children, partner, and parents. They admit that they are responsible for disturbance in the education of their children and act as the biggest distraction in their future goals. Thinking about this over and over again increases their dependency on alcohol. In this context, alcoholics narrated their stories as follows.

“Alcohol is a bad thing. It has destroyed my whole life. Because of drinking I cannot give time to my family and cannot get my children educated. Sometimes I feel like ending my life because of this”.

“I have destroyed my house because of my drinking habit. My family members remain disturbed because of my drinking habit. I get irritated myself. I don’t feel like looking at myself. I always think about leaving my house and going somewhere else”.

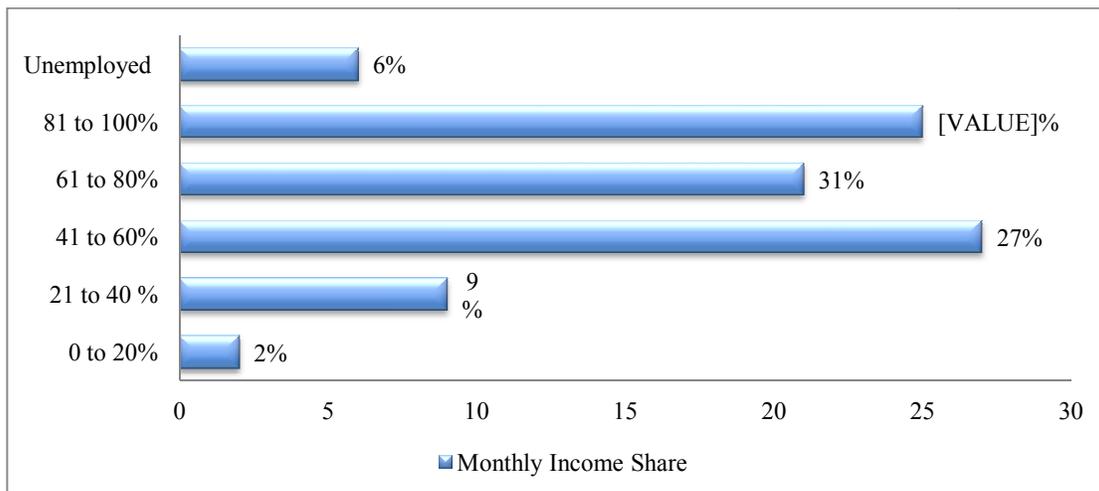
The above narrated stories clarify that alcoholism has disturbed the whole life of an alcoholic. They were unable to cope up and were ready to end their life to get rid of the torment. They themselves

have realized that they are a liability for their family.

4.5 Financial and Other Related Issues Due to Critical Addiction

Addiction of alcohol poses financial difficulties to alcoholics as well as their family members. Table 2 shows that 61% alcoholics faced financial hardships due to their addiction. Many of them reported that their addiction caused a reduction in wages, reduced work capacity, job loss, poverty etc. Most of them were spending large amounts on alcohol consumption and did not contribute anything to the family income which lead to financial hardships on family members. Consequently, the family members of the alcoholic are forced to work outside for earning a livelihood.

Graph 1 shows that most of the alcoholics i.e., 31% were spending 61% to 80% share of their monthly income followed by 27% who spent 41% to 60% and 25% who spent 81% to 100% share of their monthly income on alcohol. Therefore, it can be concluded that majority of alcoholics i.e., 56% were used to spending more than 60% share of their monthly income on alcohol. During data collection some parents and spouses said that they were so concerned about their financial condition that they were unable to bear even their day to day household expenses. Thus, it can be concluded that most of the alcoholic families were facing economic crisis due to alcohol addiction in the family. To tackle this financial issue members of the family were



Graph 1. Percentage of monthly income spent on alcohol consumption by alcoholics

Source: Primary Data

Table 3. Alcoholics and their primary source of money for purchasing alcohol

S. No.	Source of Arranging Money for Alcohol	Frequency and Percentage	
		Initially	Currently
1	Self-earning	100(100%)	75(75%)
2	Borrow Money	-	16(16%)
3	Arranging Money by Unethical Way	-	9(9%)
4	Total	100(100%)	100(100%)

Source: Primary Data

working outside and most of families were receiving financial support from other family members. Similar facts were found by Benegal et al. (2000) in their study which they conducted in Bangalore. They found that most of the alcoholics spend more than they earn on alcohol, most of them took loans to support their habit, an average 18% lost their job in one year [43].

Data presented in Table 3 depicts that in initial days of alcohol consumption all alcoholics consumed alcohol by self-earning. Contrary to this, presently, there were 75% alcoholics who fell in this category. It was also found that those who were presently consuming alcohol by self-earning, many of them were also using other means for satisfying their need of alcohol such as borrowing, stealing and by selling household amenities etc. Data also shows that currently for 16% alcoholics the major source of arrangement of alcohol was their family members, relatives and friends etc. In addition to this there were 9% alcoholics who were arranging money by using unethical ways such as stealing at home and outside home, snatching money from family members, by selling household articles and sometimes using illegal methods such as smuggling of drug and other products etc. It was found during interaction with family members that some alcoholics were engaging in illegal activities to arrange alcohol. Some of stories reported by alcoholics regarding the arrangement of alcohol are as follows: -

“When there is no money left to arrange alcohol, then I earn money by diluting the milk by adding water to it. Neither my family members get to know and nor my customers) The alcoholic was drunk during interview”

“When I don’t have money for alcohol I arrange the money by selling illicit alcohol”.

“My family does not give me money, so to arrange alcohol I sell the household articles”.

Thus, by observing the above data and narrated stories it can be concluded that the addiction of

alcohol reduces the capacity of doing work and addict starts using different means such as snatching, selling land, stealing, illegal methods etc. for arranging money for alcohol.

4.6 Suicide Attempts among Alcoholics

The increase in number of suicide attempts was also found among some of the alcoholics because of the critical nature of their addiction. Data presented in Table 2 shows that 17% alcoholics had tried to end their life due to their chronic addiction. It was found during interaction with many alcoholics that they were unable to control their addiction and came to a conclusion that ending their life was the only solution to get rid of this problem. Therefore, it can be concluded that addiction of alcohol at certain stage forces alcoholics to commit suicide. They feel so frustrated from themselves and their critical drinking habit that they find it better to end their life and get rid of their misery. Most of the alcoholics decide to leave their home so that they don’t disturb the life other family members. Further, the tendency to commit suicide was frequent amongst alcoholics. Therefore, an attempt has also been made to accumulate data of the multiple attempts of suicides and the concerned factors. Table 4 shows the distribution of alcoholics who tried to commit suicide multiple times. Data shows that out of those alcoholics who tried committing suicide, 52.94% of them tried it for once followed by 35.29% twice and 11.77% for multiple times due to the problem of their chronic addiction. They mentioned that their chronic addiction most of the times leads to frustration, economic hardships, violence, guilt feeling, stigma etc. and forces them to attempt suicide again and again. Therefore, from the above data it can be concluded that the problem of committing suicide for multiple times was prevalent among some alcoholics. The situations like frustration, violence, social stigma, hard life, economic hardships etc., which arise from chronic addiction were the major factors behind attempting suicide multiple times.

Table 4. Frequency of suicide attempts reported by alcoholics

S. No.	Number of Times	Suicide Attempts as Reported By Alcoholics
1	Once	52.94%
2	Twice	35.29%
3	More Than Twice	11.77%
4	Total	100%

Source: Primary Data

4.7 Health and Related Social Issues

The consumption of alcohol has a direct relationship with the human body [44]. When a person takes alcohol it leaves some effects on body and mind of a person such as bodily comfort, mood alteration, pleasure, sensation or relief from pain and worries etc. This opens the possibility among the people to use alcohol frequently to get the same effect and hence increase the chances of habitual and critical drinking. Ultimately, it becomes a reason for multiple health complications for alcoholic and moreover a death. The present research shows that almost all alcoholics have faced multiple health complications due to their critical addiction. Data presented in Table 2 shows that 56% alcoholics reported hospitalization due to critical addiction. An alcoholic narrated that

“Due to consuming alcohol, many a times I had to bear injuries and go to hospital for treatment”.

This has also posed a financial burden on them as well as on their family. Many of the families had to sell their valuable articles such as gold ornaments and other household items or had to borrow money from the relatives for the treatment of the alcoholic family member. The financial hardships and health issues have also disturbed the social life of an alcoholic and his family members. It restrained them from socializing with others in the community as they remained busy taking care of the alcoholic. Sometimes it also caused distress and many health complications to the family members also.

It was also found that during hospitalization, many alcoholics used to drink alcohol by hiding it from their family members and others. Data also shows that 10% alcoholics faced the problem of memory loss as they were unable to recall what had transpired the previous night. In addition to this half of them faced severe memory loss as many a times they were unable to recognize their family members.

Further 46% alcoholics also faced the problem of withdrawal discomfort. Whenever they try to

leave their habit of critical drinking, their body did not allow them to do so. Without alcohol, they find that they are unable to do work and most of the times they feel lazy without consuming alcohol. An alcoholic narrated that “It is very hard to work without having consumed alcohol”. Another alcoholic said that “Sometimes it becomes necessary to consume alcohol for providing relief to the body from different types of pain”. Thus, addiction to alcohol causes the problem of withdrawal discomfort. If an alcoholic desire to leave drinking, the problem of withdrawal discomfort along with other social pressures does not allow him to do so.

4.8 The Issue of Social Boycott/Social Isolation

Another important implication reported by the alcoholics was social boycott. 51% alcoholics reported that due to their critical excessive drinking they were largely not accepted by their relatives, neighbors, friends, and others. They were largely ignored in social gatherings such as marriages and other ceremonies. Many of the alcoholics said that sometimes their family members behaved as if they were not a part of the family. Moreover, due to their addiction, many of their friends, relatives, neighbors avoided their company. They also kept their children away from alcoholics and socially isolated the alcoholics. Most of the times to escape from isolation and loneliness alcoholics tend to consume more alcohol. Some of the alcoholics narrated the incidents of social boycott and loneliness as follows: -

“Whenever there is a marriage or any other programme at my relatives’ house, my family members refuse to take me along with them as they fear that I would get drunk and would quarrel with people”.

“My family members treat me like animals. They do not even bother to ask me tea or food”.

“Drinking habit diminishes one’s reputation in the eyes of one’s relatives. This is not a good thing at all”.

4.9 Self-Identity, Social Stigma and Labeling

Another major problem reported by alcoholics is of social stigma and labeling. 49% alcoholics mentioned that many a times people called them with different names such as *sharabi*, *bewda*, *naseyai* etc. This causes a feeling of social stigma and frustration among them. They feel angry and try to divert their frustration on their family members and sometimes on their relatives. Further, labeling and stigmatization also becomes one of the major factors behind critical excessive drinking. It was also found that due to stigma and labeling many of the alcoholics also tried to end their life. Some of the alcoholics narrated their stories as follows: -

“No one thinks good about me, some call me alcoholic, some call me thief and some call me something else. Sometimes I feel like ending my life”.

“When people call me *nasyaiyi*, or *sharabi* (alcoholic), it disturbs me a lot”.

By looking at the above-narrated stories, it can be said that the society at large does not hold high opinions about addicts. While interacting with other people it was observed that people believe alcoholics are a burden on their families. One of them replied, “we should not interact with alcoholics”. Such kind of hatred towards alcoholics sometimes creates frustration among alcoholics which also becomes a reason for their critical addiction. Many of the alcoholics reported that they try to change themselves for the better, however sometimes social pressure does not allow them to do so.

4.10 Effects on Work Efficiency and Problems at Workplace

Critical addiction affects the work efficiency of a person. Data presented in Table 2 depicts, 41% alcoholics reported that they faced many complications at the workplace due to their critical addiction. Critical drinking disturbs their routine life due to which many a times they miss work or are unable to reach their workplace on time. This affects their wages and increases their chances of losing job. A large number of alcoholics reported that they had to leave their jobs or were thrown out from job as they were not able to report to the workplace on time or due to their daytime drinking. As a result of which many of them happen to switch to daily wage

labour from regular work. Their perverse drinking habits also causes injuries at work places. An alcoholic said that

“I was working on a machine while I was intoxicated. Suddenly my mind got distracted and I ended up cutting my two fingers. Since then I am unemployed”.

Drinking at workplace also increase the chances of violence between colleagues. Many of the alcoholics reported that their day time drinking at work place has been the prime reason behind their quarrels with their colleagues. This has also affected adversely their relationships with many people.

4.11 Other Complications

There are many other complications faced by alcoholics. The incidents of violence against alcoholics by the family members and other people were also reported by 37% alcoholics. The alcoholics mentioned that their spouses and sometimes their children abused them. 35% alcoholics also reported that due to their critical addiction many a times they had to stay away from their homes. The similar fact was also found by Gururaj et al. (2006) that 18% of the total study population stayed away from home at least once in the last one year and the majority of them reported that it was due to alcohol addiction [45]. Many of the alcoholics reported that they had to spend more than one month in a rehabilitation centre for their recovery. The present study also shows that 15% alcoholics faced legal hassles due to their critical addiction and many of them also had to remain in police custody.

5. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

In this paper an attempt has been made to understand the issues and problems faced by alcoholics due to alcoholism. To reach the findings and conclusion, analysis of collected data has made. The major findings of the study discussed as follows.

- 1) The study shows that almost all the alcoholics were facing multiple problems due to their critical addition. Consequently, this has also affected the life of the alcoholic's family and other members of the society.
- 2) It was found that alcoholism affects the ability of an alcoholic to perform family

- obligations such as earning a livelihood for family, providing for children, parents and spouse or socialization of children, providing education, performing family rituals, marriage of children, festivals and ceremonies etc. indirectly, this all effects the alcoholic in a different way. Due to lack of ability to perform family obligations they have to face the abusive behaviour from other family members. As a result, they become victim of social stigma and suffer from guilt which leads to the high chances of committing suicide or running away from their houses to escape the torment.
- 3) Further, study shows that frequent complaints by others regarding the behaviour of alcoholic to relatives, neighbours, friends, police, panchayats etc. by family members is one of the most commonly reported issue by alcoholics.
 - 4) Addiction to alcohol creates many complications in a married life of a person. It has a tendency to destroy the relationship of husband and wife because of which both alcoholic and the spouse face many problems. As a result of which, the alcoholics were unable to receive care and affection from their partner and other family members.
 - 5) The critical consumption of alcohol is one of the major causes of poor health of an alcoholic. It becomes a reason of multiple health problems which ultimately creates many other problems to alcoholic and other family members such as financial burden, disturbance in a social life of family members etc.
 - 6) The study reveals that addiction of alcohol creates financial difficulties for the alcoholic and the people associated to him. It causes reduction in capacity to work, job loss, poverty, indebt, high expenditure on alcohol and other related difficulties. Critical addiction of alcohol also forces an alcoholic to choose unethical ways such as borrowing money from friends, family members and relatives, stealing, snatching and selling household articles or land etc. for purchasing alcohol for consumption. It creates a habit of unhealthy diet due to high expenditure on alcohol. Further, it affects the health of alcoholics and ultimately, reduces the capacity of an alcoholic to earn sufficient money for the survival of family members.
 - 7) Another important implication on alcoholics found in this research is social boycott and social isolation. People, including family members, largely ignore alcoholics in social gathering and family premises due to their habit of addiction. Most of the times to escape from isolation and loneliness alcoholics tend to consume more alcohol.
 - 8) The study depicts that critical drinking effects the work efficiency of a person because of which they get reduced wages, suffer from job loss etc. It causes physical injuries due to non-attention during work, quarrels and clashes with other workers or colleagues, poor reputation due to abusive behaviour etc.
 - 9) The study found critical drinking also becomes a reason for violence against alcoholics by family members and outsiders. Further sometimes it also causes legal hassles for alcoholics.
 - 10) The another important finding in this present research is that these problems also become a reason for continuous, repeated, frequent and excess drinking. Which further give rise to many other problems.
- In nutshell, by looking at the above collected data and the stories narrated by the alcoholics, it can be concluded that alcoholics face multiple social problems due to their critical addiction. They are not only problem creator but a victim of this problem too. The major social problems reported by many alcoholics are frequent nagging by family members, their inability to perform family obligations, problems in married life, guilt feeling, financial hardships, social boycott/social isolation, social stigma/labeling, violence, legal hassles etc. In order to escape from such kind of problems, alcoholics try to consume more alcohol which forces them towards the more chronic stage of addiction. Slowly and gradually this all turns into vicious circle of critical drinking and associated problems. For instance, critical drinking, which is a result of some kind of social pressure in society, causes many complications to alcoholics and further these complications force alcoholics to consume more alcohol to get rid of this trouble. Thus, once a problem starts it increases day by day and derails the social life of alcoholics. It affects them both physically and mentally, which further produces a series of problems to the whole family such as divorce, disturbance of home environment, suicide, murder, problem in education of children, job loss, social stigma, health complications and many more. All these problems combine to strengthen the problem called "alcoholism". Thus

in contemporary society, the problem of alcoholism has become one of the major concern not only in Punjab, India but as well as at global level. Therefore, to protect society from such troubles it requires immediate attention. Immense focus has been given to macro level studies, therefore there is a paucity of micro level studies. For instance, there are very few studies which focus on the problems of one of the primary problem creator i.e. alcoholics. The present study has tried to fill this gap. Once we understand alcoholics and their problems and reasons, why they do critical drinking? we can take necessary steps to solve the problems faced by alcoholics. Therefore, solving the problems of alcoholics will ultimately help us to get the solution of a larger problem i.e. alcoholism.

CONSENT

As per international standard informed and written participant consent has been collected and preserved by the authors.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

As per international standard written ethical permission has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

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COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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