



## SUBSTANCE ABUSE AMONG IMMIGRANT CONSTRUCTION WORKERS AND ASSOCIATED RISK FACTORS

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Conflicts of Interest: Nil

### ABSTRACT:

**Introduction:** Substance abuse can simply be defined as a pattern of harmful use of any substance for mood-altering purposes. "Substances" can include alcohol and other drugs (illegal or not) as well as some substances that are not drugs at all. Drug use disorders are associated with substantial burden through impairment in major life roles and increased risk for suicidality, neuropsychological deficits, diminished quality of life, and infectious disease (eg, human immunodeficiency virus and hepatitis)

### Objectives:

- To estimate the prevalence of substance use among migrant workers.
- To assess the factors influencing substance abuse among the migrants worker.

**Material and Method:** This cross sectional study was conducted among the migrant workers working in western part of Uttar Pradesh, over the time duration of 3 months. All migrant laborers above the age group of 18 years were included in the study. Laborers who didn't give consent for the study were excluded from the study. The study was conducted after getting informed consent from all the participants. Data was collected from ante-natal register using Predesigned, pretested, validated and structured proforma.

**Result:** In our study prevalence of substance abuse was found to be among 88.6% of participants. 40% of the study participants were consuming alcohol, 21% of the study participants were chewing tobacco. Around 18.4% were indulged in cannabis and smoking. In this study the participants stated the reasons for initiation of the substance abuse. Around 43% admitted that they initiated substance use because of their friends. Almost 21% of them stated stress as a triggering factor for substance use. Around 20% of the participants reasoned peer pressure. There was statistically significant association between substance users and socio demographic factors like age, sex, living with family and religion ( $p < 0.05$ ).

**Conclusion:** The result of the present study suggests that substance abuse among migrant workers was very high. Policy makers must pay extra attention to the health of migrants by implementing safety measures and organizing intense behaviour change communication.

**Keywords:** substance abuse, migrant workers, alcohol use

### Introduction

Substance abuse can simply be defined as a pattern of harmful use of any substance for mood-altering purposes. "Substances" can include alcohol and other drugs (illegal or not) as well as some substances that are not drugs at all<sup>1</sup>.

The epidemic of substance abuse among migrant workers has taken up alarming dimensions in India. This inclination towards substance abuse is

most likely due to changing cultural values, increasing economic stress and dwindling supportive bonds<sup>2</sup>.

There are an estimated one billion migrants in the world today of whom 214 million international migrants and 740 million internal migrants. Migrant workers contribute significantly to the informal or unorganized sector of occupation. As per the NSSO (National Sample Survey Organization) report, 30 million workers in India

are migrant workers. The health of migrants and health associated with migration are crucial public health challenges faced by governments and societies<sup>3</sup>

Drug use disorders are associated with substantial burden through impairment in major life roles and increased risk for suicidality, neuropsychological deficits, diminished quality of life, and infectious disease (eg, human immunodeficiency virus and hepatitis). Drug use disorders also confer substantial burden on families, social networks, and society as a whole through violent and property crime, incarceration, poverty, and homelessness. Changing societal factors in the last 15 years suggest changes in the distribution of DUDs in the adult population. These include public attitudes that have become increasingly permissive toward some types of drug use and legalization. Also prescriptions for opioid analgesics and other psychoactive medications with addiction potential have increased greatly, with consequences such as drug overdoses<sup>4</sup>.

**Objectives**

- To estimate the prevalence of substance use among migrant workers.
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**Material and methods**

This cross sectional study was conducted among the migrant workers working in western part of Uttar Pradesh, over the time duration of 3 months. All migrant laborers above the age group of 18 years were included in the study. Laborers who didn't give consent for the study were excluded from the study. The study was conducted after getting informed consent from all the participants. Data was collected from ante-natal register using Predesigned, pretested, validated and structured proforma. Data was analysed using the SPSS version 16 software. Descriptive statistics were reported as mean (SD) for continuous variables and frequency (percentage) for categorical variables. Pearson's Chi-square test was used to find association between two categorical variables. A p value < 0.05 was considered as statistically significant.

**Result**

**Table 1: Socio-demographic profile of Study Population (N=300)**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Age</b>		
Below 20	47	15.6
20 to 39	195	65
Above 40	58	19.3
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	264	88
Female	36	12
<b>III. Educational status</b>		
No formal schooling (Illiterate)	82	27.3
Up to primary schooling	98	32.6
Up to Secondary schooling	109	36.3
College/University completed	8	2.6
<b>IV. Income per month</b>		
<4999	1	0.3
5000-9999	170	56.7
10000-14999	90	30
>15000	39	13
<b>Marital status</b>		
Married	170	56.6

Unmarried	130	43.3
<b>Religion</b>		
Hindu	190	63.3
Muslim	67	22.4
Christian	43	14.3
<b>Type of Family</b>		
Nuclear	67	22.3
Joint	190	63.3
Single	43	14.3
<b>Duration in construction field</b>		
< 1 year	28	9.3
to 5 years	97	32.3
>5 years	175	58.3

**Table 1** shows the Distribution Of Study Population By Age And Gender, The age of the participants varied from 20-40 years, with mean of  $27.62 \pm 7.65$  years; among them 264 (88%) were males and 36 (12%) were females. In our study majority 36.3% of the participants completed secondary schooling followed by primary schooling (32.6%). Majority of the participants were earning Rs 5000-9999 per month. Among the study Population 56.6 % of the participants were married and 63.3% belonged to Hindu religion. Around 63.3% of the study participants lived in a joint type of family.

**Table 2: Distribution of study population based on various type of substance abuse (N=266)**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Type</b>		
alcohol	120	40
cannabis	55	18.4
opioids	2	0.7
smoking	56	18.6
tobacco chewing	63	21
Others	4	1.3

Table 2 shows the pattern of substance abuse among the migrant workers, where majority that is 40% of the study participants were consuming alcohol, 21% of the study participants were chewing tobacco. Around 18.4% were indulged in cannabis and smoking.

**Table 3: Distribution of study participants according to the reasons for initiation of the substance abuse (n=266)**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Start tobacco</b>		
Friends	116	43.6
Peer pressure	53	19.9
Stress	57	21.4
Work overload	30	11.2
Experimenting	6	2.2
Others	4	1.5

Table 3 shows the reasons for initiation of the substance abuse among study participants. Participants stated that majority of the participants initiated substance use in their friends company followed by stress, peer pressure, work overload and for the sake of experimenting.

**Table 4: Association between substance use and socio-demographic factors (N=300)**

Variables	Substance use (n=266)	Chi-square (df)	p value
<b>Age f (%)</b>			
Below 20 (n=47)	32(12.1)	12.964 (2)	0.002*
20 to 39 (n=195)	180(67.6)		
Above 40 (n=58)	54(21.8)		
<b>Sex f (%)</b>			
Male (n= 264)	258 (96.9)	17.163	<0.001*
Female (n= 36)	8(3)	(1)	
<b>Educational status f (%)</b>			
No formal schooling (Illiterate) (n=82)	88(33.5)	3.259 (4)	0.490
Up to primary schooling (n=98)	92(34.3)		
Up to Secondary schooling (n=109)	85(31.9)		
College/University completed (n=8)	1(0.3)		
<b>Income f (%)</b>			
<4999 (n=1)	0 (0)	5.803 (4)	0.208
5000-9999 (n=170)	155 (58.2)		
10000-14999 (n=90)	88 (33.2)		
>15000 (n=39)	23 (8.6)		
<b>Religion f (%)</b>			
Hindu (n=190)	186(69.9)	12.144 (2)	0.0028*
Muslim (n=67)	65(24.4)		
Christian (n=43)	15(5.6)		
<b>Income f (%)</b>			
Nuclear (n=67)	63(23.6)	3.801 (2)	0.120
Joint (190)	184(69.3)		
Single (43)	19(7.1)		
<b>Living with family f (%)</b>			
Yes (n=66)	36(13.5)	3.47 (1)	0.042*
No (n=234)	230(86.4)		

- p value <0.05 = significant

Table 4 shows significant association between substance users and socio demographic factors like age, sex, living with family and religion (p<0.05).

## Discussion

Present study was conducted among 300 migrant workers individuals, Prevalence of substance abuse was found to be among 88.6% of participants. Among them 88% were males and only 12% were females. The age of the participants varied from 20-40 years, with mean of  $27.62 \pm 7.65$  years. In a study conducted by Laad PS et al<sup>5</sup>, Akram S et al<sup>6</sup> and Parashar M et al<sup>7</sup> age of the study participants were 27 years, 21 years, 32 years respectively. In our study majority of the participants studied till secondary level. While in the study done by Laad PS et al<sup>5</sup> majority of the participants were not literate. Majority of the participants were earning Rs 5000-9999 per month. In our study most of the participants were married and belonged to Hindu religion (63%). Around 63% of the study participants lived in a joint type of family.

In our study the pattern of substance abuse among the migrant workers was found to be as follows. Majority that is 40% of the study participants were consuming alcohol, 21% of the study participants were chewing tobacco. Around 18.4% were indulged in cannabis and smoking. Akram S et al<sup>6</sup> in his study found that overall tobacco usage was found to be 53.7% and majority of the participants reported to use chewing (41.8%) and smoking form of tobacco (11.9%).

In this study the participants stated the reasons for initiation of the substance abuse. Around 43% admitted that they initiated substance use because of their friends. Almost 21% of them stated stress as a triggering factor for substance use. Around 20% of the participants reasoned peer pressure. In the study conducted by Alhyas et al<sup>8</sup> Peer pressure, inadequate knowledge of the harmful consequences of drug use, family-related factors, affordability and availability of substances, boredom promoted substance abuse.

Substance abuse was most common among males, in the age group of 20-39 years. Most of the substance abuser was Hindu. It was also seen that migrant workers who were not living with their family were more into substance abuse. There was statistically significant association

between substance users and socio demographic factors like age, sex, living with family and religion ( $p < 0.05$ ).

## Conclusion

The result of the present study suggests that substance abuse among migrant workers was very high. Policy makers must pay extra attention to the health of migrants by implementing safety measures and organizing intense behaviour change communication.

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