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Drug and Alcohol Specialist Role in the Prison System

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ABSTRACT

The usage of drugs, which includes illicit chemicals like cocaine, heroin, and designer drugs like ecstasy and LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide), as well as controlled substances like painkillers and hallucinogens, is on the rise in today's society. During the pandemic, when the rest of the globe was engaged in a war, some individuals were engaged in daily battles with addiction. Unfortunately, the lack of support prevented these people from winning the fight. The most vulnerable group, those incarcerated in various institutions around the globe are most susceptible to drug and alcohol addiction. Additionally, the majority of inmates have a history of substance abuse.

The main aim of the article is to discuss the role of alcohol and drug specialists in the criminal justice system, the challenges they face in carrying out their duties, the enormous task of helping prisoners get back on their feet, the necessity of these professionals, and steps that can be taken to make the system better.

Keywords: *Drugs, Specialist, Prisoners, Challenges.*

I. INTRODUCTION

An institution that is used for the captivity of persons who had been held in custody under judicial authority. The term prison is derived from the Latin term which means to seize. According to the Oxford English Dictionary prison means a place properly efficient and equipped for the reception of persons who by the legal process are committed to it for safe custody while pending trial and punishment.² In India, the prison act of 1894 is one of the oldest pieces of legislation in India dealing with laws enacted in relation to prisons in India. This Act was enacted on 22nd March 1894 and enforced on 1st July 1894. This act contains 62 sections and XII Chapters.³ India's prison system has a long history that dates back to antiquity. Prisons were employed to house prisoners throughout the Vedic era as they awaited trial and punishment. Depending on how serious the offense was, other penalties were available, such as

¹ Author is a student at UPES College, India.

² Legal Service India, <https://www.legalserviceindia.com/legal/article-4501-system-of-prison-its-history-and-types-in-india.html> (last visited June 22, 2023).

³ Shagun Bahl, Prison Laws in India – The Forgotten Law, IP leaders (Aug. 24, 2017), <https://blog.ipleaders.in/prison-laws-india/>.

fines, corporal punishment, or even death.

The prison system was more centralized and well-organized during the Mughal era. The Mughals established a network of prisons throughout their empire and implemented several improvements, including the provision of food and clothing for inmates. Prisoners were frequently tortured and mistreated in the harsh Mughal prisons, nevertheless. The Indian prison system underwent a significant revamp during the British colonial era. A British politician named Thomas Babington Macaulay put up a variety of proposals to update and humanize the penal system in 1835. These changes included the implementation of a prisoner classification system, the division of male and female inmates, and the inclusion of education and training programs for inmates.

The Indian prison system was significantly affected by the British reforms. The Indian prison system was among the most sophisticated in the world by the turn of the 20th century. The system was still not without flaws, though. The treatment of prisoners was frequently harsh, and many prisons had filthy, overcrowded conditions. The Indian government made several improvements to the jail system after the country attained independence. These initiatives included the building of additional jails, the implementation of fresh rehabilitation plans, and the enhancement of prison conditions already in place. However, there are still a lot of problems with the Indian prison system, such as overcrowding, subpar cleanliness, and a lack of funding. The jail system in India has a lengthy and complicated history. The political and social atmosphere of the nation, among other things, has had an impact on the system's evolution over time. The Indian jail system is currently dealing with a variety of issues, however, there are numerous initiatives underway to enhance the system and make it more humane.

The world is plagued with the problem of drug use and its rising dependence, especially among the youth of the country. The proceeds from illegal drug production and sales are used to fund terror and other unlawful activities. Every year more people are lodged in prisons. Most of these people have a prior history of drug use and are drawn to its usage in prisons.⁴ Numerous factors, such as the rising prevalence of drug use in the general population, the lack of treatment options for drug addiction in prisons, and the stress and trauma that many prisoners endure while incarcerated are likely to be to blame for the rise in drug overdose deaths. A National Institute on Drug Abuse report estimates that 1,667 prisoners died in state jails in 2019 from alcohol- or drug-related causes. About 13% of all inmate deaths in state jails that year were caused by this.

⁴Legal Vidhya, <https://legalvidhiya.com/the-role-of-drug-and-alcohol-treatment-specialists-within-the-prison-system/> (last Visited June 22,2023).

II. WHAT IS ADDICTION AND HOW IT HAPPENED AND ITS EFFECT ON ONE?

The definition of addiction should be covered first. In layman's words, addiction is a dependency on any substance to function daily. Addiction is a problem that has two sides. First of all, people are unaware that they are addicted to some substance and the people who simultaneously take drugs say that it is very easy for them to quit the drugs than they realize that it is not a piece of cake for them, and then the second problem hits them the negative perception of the medication. Most "hard" drug users, such as those who use opiates, cocaine, or heroin, are unable to quit and are unable to ask for help. Even if they wish to stop, they are unable to acquire access to a support network that could help them break their habit. They enter the acceptance phase quickly after failing in their attempt to stop using the substance. In this stage, they give in to their habit and up their dosage while squelching their need to stop. In such a stage when the person loses hope at that time, there is a need for a specialist who can save them from such a pathetic situation. That's why it is generally spoken that the excess of anything is always harmful.

There are various reasons for addiction to drugs nowadays:

- Peer pressure: People may start using drugs because their friends are using them.
- To self-medicate: People may use drugs to cope with emotional pain or trauma.
- To escape reality: Drugs can provide a temporary escape from problems and stress.
- To feel good: Drugs can produce a pleasurable feeling, which can lead to addiction.
- Genetics: Some people may be more susceptible to addiction than others due to their genes.

In the present scenario, most of the criminals are addicted to taking drugs and alcohol treatment. They are either already addicted or develop this nature after entering prison. To relax or get out of a boring situation, people frequently use cigarettes and cannabis. Opioid, cocaine, and heroin usage, however, has surged in the jail system. The consumption of drugs and alcohol treatments become very used nowadays. Everywhere in the world, the criminal justice system is overworked and underfunded. Undertrials are imprisoned for a very long time. Drug usage is a problem that has also expanded to juvenile detention facilities. By rehabilitating the prisoner and offering therapy, the jail system offers the government a good opportunity to decrease drug use and crime. The majority of nations lack an effective system of universally available, free healthcare. Authorities have the chance to cure and reform the most vulnerable members of society who fell victim to drug addiction and were compelled to live a life of crime in the prison system.

The excess intake of drugs and alcohol had a very severe impact on the health of a person. Most drugs affect the brain's "reward circuit," causing euphoria as well as flooding it with the chemical messenger dopamine. A properly functioning reward system motivates a person to repeat behaviors needed to thrive, such as eating and spending time with loved ones.⁵ The brain adjusts as a person uses drugs by lowering the ability of cells in the reward circuit to react to it. As a result, the person experiences a lower high than they did when they initially started using the drug. This is a phenomenon known as tolerance. To try to get the same high, they can use more of the substance. These brain changes frequently result in the person's ability to enjoy formerly enjoyable activities like eating, sex, or social interactions diminishing with time.

III. ROLE OF DRUG AND ALCOHOL TREATMENT SPECIALIST IN INDIA

A drug and alcohol treatment specialist, also known as a substance abuse counselor, is a healthcare professional who is trained to help people who are struggling with drug or alcohol addiction. They can provide individual and group therapy, medication management, and help with finding treatment programs. The main role of these drug specialists is as follows:

- Provide treatment which may be in the form of therapy and counseling,
- To provide a safe environment,
- To provide a nurturing, positive, and helpful relationship

But nowadays there is too much need for such specialists within the prison as the prisoners are getting addicted to the excess intake of drugs. As the life of one is connected with family members. So, it is very necessary for reducing the dose of the drugs and let them free from this addiction. Drug and alcohol specialists work to lessen the dependence on dangerous substances among the prisoners under their care and to spread awareness of and encourage a drug-free lifestyle. The majority of drug users in this day and age are aware of the fundamental health problems that continuous drug use may result in, but they continue to take drugs despite the warnings. The specialist or counselor must now intervene and direct the prisoner in the appropriate direction. Given that the prisoners are not your typical drug addicts, this is not a simple task. Many of them have a history of drug addiction and are seasoned criminals who have sold drugs in the past.

The patient must be made aware of the negative effects of the substance being misused, the best means to stop using it, and the stigma that shouldn't be associated with the issue by the drug and

⁵ National Institute on Drug Abuse, Understanding Drug Use and Addiction, <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/understanding-drug-use-addiction> (last visited June 22, 2023).

alcohol specialist. In jail, there are frequently divisions into different groups based on things like race, caste, religion, etc., and there are ongoing power battles amongst the factions. No member of any group is willing to admit that they are dependent or even addicted to something.

IV. REQUIREMENT OF THE DRUG AND ALCOHOL SPECIALIST IN THE SOCIETY

The decrease in drug and alcohol use in the prison system would result in the reintegration of many people into society, which would decrease crime. It would also result in a decrease in the number of ex-convicts returning to jail. After being released from jail, the majority of people struggle to find or keep jobs and integrate into society. Due to reliance on controlled substances or addictions, individuals most frequently revert to their former behaviors and return to a life of crime since they are unable to maintain their addictions due to inadequate revenues and the stigma associated with addiction. If they are rehabilitated and their addicts are treated then they can live like free men in society which reduces the burden system on the prison system.

But there is a need to rehabilitate the individuals lodged in prisons and provide them with aid and assist their lives. The prisoners have a constitutional right to life and dignity under every law, and the denial of treatment for a condition over which they have no control can be considered to parallel a crime against humanity of a great nature. The need for drug and alcohol specialists is immense considering the number of deaths in the prison system, and the fact that most individuals accused of a crime related to drugs, come from marginalized sectors and are unable to seek adequate medical care and support systems. The specialist plays a very crucial role within society. But for achieving anything one has to go through various hurdles which help them to achieve their goals.

V. CHALLENGES FACED BY THE DRUG AND ALCOHOL SPECIALIST WITHIN THE PRISON SYSTEM

There are various challenges which are faced by the specialist in reducing the addiction of any prisoner which are as follows:

- Most of the prisons are underfunded and unable to afford adequate medical facilities.
- The lack of funding may also lead to overburdening the professionals Who are associated with the programs of drug and alcohol treatment.
- The reduction of addiction programs is dependent on the aftercare provided to the inmates of the prison after their release.
- There are also diseases like HIV and hepatitis etc. caused by the use of drugs and sharing

of syringes. These diseases cause taboos and further, alienate the individual.⁶

- There is a need for adequate training and policies need to be implemented uniformly to increase the effectiveness of the de-addiction program.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

We all are aware that the excess intake of anything is always dangerous. Similarly, the excess consumption of drugs and alcohol is very harmful and leads to life-threatening consequences. Nowadays it has become a part of fashion that the parties of every film star or rich class are incomplete without drugs and alcohol. So, the government should take some strict actions against them and should ban the use of drugs by the parties. This license to keep drugs should be kept with only those people who are running any medicine factory. The government should enhance the funding for the prison system by that the specialist can easily do the medication of the prisoners.

⁶ Legal Vidhya, <https://legalvidhiya.com/the-role-of-drug-and-alcohol-treatment-specialists-within-the-prison-system/> (last Visited June 22,2023).