

KERALA CALLING

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 ~~DRUGS~~ 

no
not even
once

Let our children be tomorrow's champions

Sports Minister V. Abdurahiman
with children of Rajaji Nagar, Thiruvananthapuram.



For A Sane Society Sans Intoxicants



The picture of a gifted (invariably) writer either reclining in a chair, his drug-heavy eyes looking heavenwards for inspiration, or plying his pen amidst an incandescent swirl of smoke is perhaps the most romantic image of a creator that has overpowered the world of art lovers. Such a cliched portrait – that links narcotic substances with creative imagination – has been falsely reinforced through centuries to lure many youngsters to take refuge in drinks and drugs. The fact is that creativity has nothing to do with intoxicants.

The Western world has a gallery of innumerable writers whose appetite for stimulants was as deep as their love for art. But in their creative moments, these had seldom roles in their expression. Figures like R. L. Stevenson, Aldous Huxley, Ken Kesey, Edgar Allan Poe, Charles Baudelaire, Jean-Paul Sartre, S. T. Coleridge, and others reveal that even literary heavyweights fell prey to the false belief that narcotics could help them in their creative journey. Myths have also played vicious roles. Perhaps it is not merely coincidental that Bacchus, the god of wine (among other things) in Greek mythology is also the god of epiphany, a factor so crucial to poetic insight and imaginative flights. However, it would be foolish to imagine that such a connection is exclusive to the Western world. Every culture and every country is likely to have its own set of writers who have added more colour and dimensions to this myth.

However, the sad fact that very few people really comprehend is that narcotics have no such positive role to play in enhancing the quality of life or stoking the fires of creativity. They may lift one's spirits for a tragically brief while but later lead the user down a steady downward spiral. They destroy one's potential, incinerate one's personality, poison one's relationships and suck out one's joie de vivre.

The peril of substance abuse and alcoholism poses a big threat

to the achievements Kerala has achieved through incessant struggles and renaissance. We are a society that is far ahead in many domains and has become a beacon of hope for the rest of the country. These great values must be shielded and our promising youngsters and children should be protected from the menace of drugs, tobacco, and alcoholism.

This issue of Kerala Calling addresses this subject with all the gravity it deserves, against the context of burgeoning numbers of alcoholics and drug users in the state. The articles included here are comprehensive in that they cumulatively give details about the alarming phenomenon, the combat techniques, and the preventive measures. Those written by the Chief Minister of Kerala and the Excise Commissioner focus on interventions at the governmental level. The rest are by activists and medical professionals who have studied the trend at a deeper level than their jobs demanded. Together, they will, we hope, remove popular misconceptions and help tackle the menace more effectively.

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SAY NO TO DRUGS

Committed To Pursuing The War On Drugs

A rise in drugs consumption will have a detrimental effect on our entire society's peace and progress. Therefore, we ought to come together and fight it.

The future of Kerala lies in the hands of our next generation. We must not allow drugs to endanger the future of our society by destroying the physical and mental health of our youth. Legal restrictions alone are not enough to fight the menace of drug abuse. Kerala society as a whole should take up this responsibility. The youth should take the lead and every individual and every family should participate in it. Organisations and social groups must make committed efforts to strengthen the programmes

**Pinarayi Vijayan,
Chief Minister**

implemented by the government in this regard. It is in this backdrop, that a state-wide campaign against drugs is being launched on October 2, Gandhi Jayanti.

The goal of this program, which will last till Kerala Piravi, November 1, is to mobilise the people and organise an effective fight against drug abuse. Accordingly, various local groups including youth, women, Kudumbashree members, community organisations, libraries, clubs, residents associations, and socio-cultural and political groups will be part of this campaign. On the

QUIT SMOKING BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE



inaugural day of the campaign, an anti-drug campaign network will be created around

schools, colleges and other educational institutions. Various committees will be formed at the state, district, local self-government and school

The goal of this program, which will last till Kerala Piravi, November 1, is to mobilise the people and organise an effective fight against drug abuse.

levels to take steps to prevent drug consumption and distribution. It will ensure the co-ordination of departments, people's representatives, officials, organisations and the general public, in our battle against drugs.

Short films will be screened to create awareness on drug abuse. Discussions will be held on overcoming drug addiction. Various interactive programmes like plays, songs, poster making, story telling etc. will be organised by educational institutions for the benefits of students. A symbolic burial of drugs will also be held. All these will mark the inaugural programme of Kerala's campaign against drug abuse.

Our anti-drug campaign will effectively utilise NCC,



SPC, NSS, Scout and Guide, JRC, and Vimukti Clubs. All educational institutions will ensure that these groups function effectively. Special training will be provided to students in such organisations. Training modules will be prepared by Vimukti

Mission and SCERT with an emphasis on physical and mental health problems caused by drug abuse as well as the social impact of drug addiction. There will also be a special discussion on drug addiction in the Kudumbashree units. The Public Vigilance Committees in LSGIs will meet once every three months and evaluate the activities. The meetings

will be attended by excise and police officials, who will coordinate anti-narcotics awareness drive throughout the state.

Government agencies are currently working together to

prevent drug trafficking crimes to a large extent. At present, an Anti-Narcotics Special Action Force is working at the state and district levels. NDPS special drives are conducted every two weeks within all station limits. 4,650 cases related to drug trafficking were registered in 2020 and 5,334 in 2021. As of August 29, 2022, 16,128 cases have been registered this year. In such cases 5,674 people were arrested in 2020 and in 2021, 6,704 people were arrested. So far, 17,834 people have been arrested in 2022. This year, 1,340 kgs of cannabis, 6.7 kgs of MDMA and 23.4 kgs of hashish oil were seized.

A major threat today is the proliferation and consumption of synthetic drugs. The fact that such drugs reach educational institutions is a serious problem. To

DRUGS



address this problem, the government is taking effective measures. It has been decided to make some changes to the current method of investigation and charging. As of right now, the charge sheet filed in court does not detail any of the accused persons' previous convictions in narcotics cases. In order to enforce Sections 31 and 31A of the NDPS Act more severely, it needs to be added. Clear instructions have been given to the police in that regard.

Drug offenders will be registered in a database modelled after the KAAPA register. In accordance with the Narcotics Control Bureau's report, preventive detention measures will be taken against repeat offenders. In the coming weeks, a special drive will be organised for this purpose and bonds will be issued under Section 34 of the NDPS Act. In addition,

preventive detention is planned under the PIT NDPS Act for those who are regularly involved in drug trafficking.

Attempts to sell drugs in educational institutions will be completely curbed. Any establishment that sells such intoxicants on its premises will be shut down permanently. Similarly, checks will be strengthened at borders and on trains coming in to Kerala from other states.

Kerala Police is currently organising various awareness programmes through Janamaitri, SPC, and Green Campus - Dream Campus. With the cooperation of various departments, measures are being taken to implement the Yodhavu project. This is being implemented to identify students who use drugs and help them to return to their normal lives.

Such measures alone cannot bring about a massive change. A state-wide movement with the active participation of the public is the need of the hour. Each of us must decide to stand together to achieve the goal of a drug free state. To realise that goal, let us all join hands in Kerala's campaign against drugs.



Let's Unite for a Drug-free Kerala

M.B. Rajesh
**Minister for Local Self Governments,
Rural Development and Excise**

The menace of drugs is spreading in Kerala jeopardising the healthy existence of our society. It is a matter of grave concern that drug use is on the rise in Kerala just as in other regions in the country and across the world.

The social enlightenment and high standard of living that Kerala had attained painstakingly through the past decades are challenged by this social peril. It is imperative that, at this juncture, we address the health and human casualties that drugs inflict. The Government of Kerala is initiating rigorous measures to combat the use of drugs among children and adolescents. The government is also ensuring community participation in these activities.

As we evaluate the recent cases, it is revealed that the younger generation is under the influence of more dangerous synthetic drugs. The use of highly expensive and hazardous synthetic drugs will drive the younger generation into an abyss of unhealthy, chaotic and squandered life. The regular use of drugs will create conditions like paranoia, phobia, anxiety disorders, hallucinations etc. Addicted individuals cannot be expected to behave maturely or respond prudently.

Students and youth are the key sections deviously lured by the drug mafia. Therefore, to eradicate the drug cartel, our activities have to target youngsters and children. This battle against drugs can be won only by increasing awareness of the destructive impact of drug abuse, blocking drug trafficking and ensuring treatment for drug-addicted persons. The surveillance of excise and police departments in the vicinity of schools and in public places has been made more vigilant. Studies conducted by excise among teenagers reveal that in the majority of cases, the first time use is out of curiosity. Social resistance against drugs is inevitable. The government of Kerala has taken up this cause and is conducting a widespread campaign. Every citizen must join the government in this fight against drugs.



Drug peddling and use is not a phenomenon restricted to Kerala. In fact,

To eradicate the drug cartel, our activities have to target youngsters and children.

Kerala is far behind the national average in drug use. The recent headline-grabbing drug hunts occurred in Lakshadweep and Gujarat coasts. Drugs worth around Rs 1026 crores were seized by Mumbai

police in Gujarat on 16

August 2022. Heroin worth a whopping Rs 21,000 crores was seized from Mundra port in Gujarat on 22 September 2021. On 20 May 2022, 218 kilos of heroin worth Rs 1526 crores was seized from Tamilnadu boats at the Lakshadweep coast. These news items reveal that drug trafficking is continuing unabated. This drug that reaches in large scale consignments to different states is then distributed in small quantities. This reaches Kerala too. We can tackle this crisis by strengthening enforcement and social resistance.

The fact that there is a spike in drug hauls indicates that the excise department

is functioning impressively. This is owing to the exceptional dedication of the excise officers. While 3922 cases were registered in 2021, 3668 cases have already been registered in 2022. 5.71 kilogram of MDMA has been seized till now in 2022, whereas 6.13 kilogram of MDMA was seized in 2021. Excise, police and other relevant agencies are making productive interventions in dealing with drug peddling.

The government will take all measures to protect our youth from the clutches of the drug mafia. The excise department has registered 802 narcotic cases, 2425 abkari cases and 8441 tobacco cases as part of the Onam special drive conducted from 5 August to 12 September this year. Harmful substances worth Rs 18 crores were also seized as part of this. These statistics prove that the Excise department has efficiently dealt with drug peddling.

The Excise department and Vimukthi Mission are jointly conducting extensive awareness activities across the state focussing on schools, colleges and hostels. Vimukthi Clubs, counselling and programmes like physical training are all progressing effectively. Background checking is done for online delivery persons who serve areas where many students live. Students and youth should ideally become volunteers against drug trafficking and use. To communicate confidential information regarding drugs, do contact the following phone numbers - 9447178000, 9061178000

Social intervention is essential for the de-addiction and rehabilitation of drug addicts. The de-addiction centres set up by the Vimukthi Mission in association with the Health Department in all the 14 districts are working efficiently. As of August 2022, 77,781 persons have sought treatment in O.P and 6,593 persons



have been admitted to these centres. De-addiction centres are also functioning in regional centres in Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi and Kozhikode. To seek medical help and counselling, toll-free number 14405 is available.

Strong measures are being taken to combat the menace of drug abuse in the state. With a view to curbing drug peddling and trafficking, secret surveillance, strong enforcement and strict checking of vehicles in check posts are being ensured. The convicts in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) cases are constantly monitored and ensured that they are not complicit in further crimes.

Special focus will be given to tribal and coastal areas in drug abstinence activities. Measures like opening fitness centres in these areas are being planned to improve the physical fitness of youngsters and children and to prevent them from getting involved in undesirable activities. Public participation is essential to make sure that the resistance against drug abuse is successful. Steps are being taken to set up Vimukthi Committees with public participation from the ward level in all the local bodies across the state. Vimukthi Committees will help take corrective actions based on the opinions and complaints of the public and also in giving treatment to drug-addicted persons.

The high power committee led by the Chief Minister has decided to strengthen anti-drug activities. The government has taken steps to detain habitual offenders and also to create a databank of drug peddlers and users in the model of KAAPA register. Stringent punishment will be meted out to people who engage in such activities. Multi-level monitoring committees will be established at state, district, local body and educational institutional levels. Extensive anti-drug awareness programmes will commence in the state from October 2. On November 1, an anti-drug human chain comprising students, parents and alumni, will be formed in all schools.

Every person should come forward to be a part of this fight against drugs. Kerala should stand in unison to free our youth from the grip of drugs. We do not need lethargic youth, intoxicated and slaved by drugs. Today, the world needs a vibrant, dynamic younger generation. This movement is not limited to merely spreading awareness, but the government is soliciting the wholehearted participation of every citizen in this fight against drugs. Only then, we will be able to achieve our noble goal of a drug-free Kerala.

Kerala should stand in unison to free our youth from the grip of drugs. We do not need lethargic youth, intoxicated and slaved by drugs.

SAY NO TO DRUGS

With A New Vision And Mission



Reeja Rajan
Psychologist,
Excise Department

WINGS OF WOMEN
REG:NO: TC / TVM /188/2022, RAJAJINAGAR

ലഹരിവിമുക്ത കോളനി

- മദ്യം മയക്കുമരുന്നുകൾ കണ്ടുമുട്ടാൻ ഗൂഢാലോചനകൾ ഉണ്ടാക്കുന്ന എന്തിനും കച്ചവടം ഉപേക്ഷിക്കുക
- ലഹരി മാഫിയകളെ എതിർക്കുക
- വളർന്നു വരുന്ന തലമുറകളെ രക്ഷിക്കുക
- പുറത്തു നിന്നും ലഹരി വാങ്ങാൻ വരുന്നവരെ നമ്മുടെ കോളനിക്ക് അകത്ത് പ്രവേശിപ്പിക്കരുത്
- ഈ വൻ ദുരന്തത്തിൽ നിന്നും നമ്മുടെ കുട്ടികളെയും നമ്മുടെ കുടുംബത്തെയും രക്ഷിക്കുക നമ്മുടെ കുടുംബത്തെ ലഹരി വിമുക്തമാക്കാൻ നമ്മളോരോരുത്തരും പ്രതിബദ്ധരാകുക
- മയക്കുമരുന്നുകൾ കച്ചവടക്കാരെയോ ലഹരി ഉപയോഗിക്കുന്ന കുട്ടികളെയോ കണ്ടാൽ താഴെപ്പറയുന്ന നമ്പറിൽ ബന്ധപ്പെടുക അല്ലെങ്കിൽ കോളനിയിൽ സ്ഥാപിച്ചിരിക്കുന്ന പരാതിപ്പെട്ടിടങ്ങളിൽ നിങ്ങളുടെ പരാതികൾ എഴുതി ഇടുക
- കോളനിക്ക് അകത്ത് പരസ്യമായുള്ള ലഹരിപാർത്ഥങ്ങൾ വിൽക്കുകയോ ഉപയോഗിക്കുകയോ ചെയ്യുന്നതിൽ നിങ്ങളുടെ ശ്രദ്ധയിൽ പെട്ടാൽ താഴെപ്പറയുന്ന നമ്പറിൽ ബന്ധപ്പെടേണ്ടതാണ്

വിമുക്തി ഉണർവ്
എക്സൈസ് **9447178000**



A model community program in Rajaji Nagar, Thiruvananthapuram

Rajaji Nagar is a community located near Thiruvananthapuram Town. The women's community organization created a new format DFC (Drug-Free Community) to eradicate drug abuse from their society. DFC has already associated with Bluepoint Org, a community-based organization. As per their request, Vimukthi has decided to establish a community-based programme to eradicate drug abuse. Excise & Vimukthi Team has prepared a proposal for a model community programme. Vimukthi decided to establish a community-based programme in Rajaji Nagar.

The excise enforcement team visited the colony on daily basis and collect information from the local people regarding the drug movement. A register has been maintained in the colony. Vimukthi also placed information containing the details of the control room

and counselling facilities so that the people from the locality can be communicated with the Excise Department directly.

Mission established some programmes in the community. First of all, we conducted awareness programmes for women regarding the importance of a drug-free society. The program had active participation of women. Our main aim is to establish rapport and good relations with women and children through this we can enter the community and eradicate the drug abuse problems preventing in their society. Secondly, mission provides some indoor and outdoor sports materials to children to divert their attention from drugs and concentrate on other activities. Mission conducted a medical eye camp for Rajaji Nagar. The mission also kept five awareness wall designing art in the colony for public awareness regarding Vimukthi and Excise Enforcement.

Let's Build Resistance Against A Social Evil

V. Sivankutty
Minister for General Education
and Labour

The Government of Kerala and our society is striving to provide quality education to our children. As part of this, the society, educational institutions, the administration and parents have taken the onus of ensuring comprehensive development of the children. Still, even today, children are not free from different types of exploitations and persecutions.

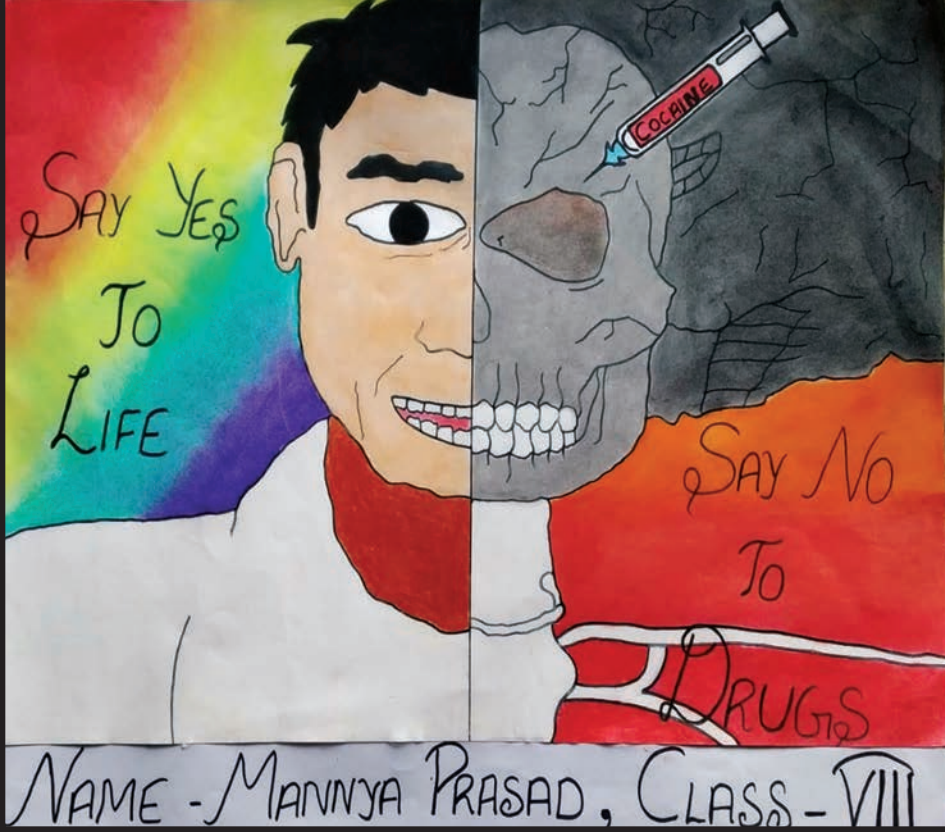
Individuals who tempt children to use alcohol and drugs shall be brought to book. School authorities have been given instruction to register case against such individuals under Juvenile Justice Act.

Taking advantage of the tender age and vulnerability, children are subjected to ruthless harassment by drug mafia. Often, kids are tempted to consume banned products including drugs and forced to be their carriers. In this scenario, it is

imperative that we formulate programmes to safeguard our children from the use of harmful substances like drugs and also create opportunities and facilities for their protection and personality development. One of the basic tenets of child justice includes ensuring safety to children in spaces where they are supposed to be taken care of. It must also be ensured that children are not subjected to any sort of abuse.

The Joint Action Plan prepared by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights stipulates in detail the projects to be undertaken in schools. As per this, schools have been instructed to make sure that harmful substances like cigarette, alcohol, drugs etc are not distributed within the radius of 100 yards of schools. With a view to curb drug abuse among students, SCERT is organizing special training for teachers and is planning various resistance activities in association with National Institute of Social Defence.

Measures have been taken to incorporate subjects providing awareness against drug abuse in the school



syllabus. Samagra Shiksha Kerala has been entrusted with the task of finding school dropouts and give counseling and motivation classes to them to prevent drug abuse. Children's clubs have been formed in schools to conduct awareness activities and monitor students. Hoardings proclaiming that drug trade in front of the school gate is punishable under COTPA Act have been established in various places. The toll free number 1800-11-2536 has also been exhibited in these boards.

Individuals who tempt children to use alcohol and drugs shall be brought to book. School authorities have been given instruction to register case against such individuals under Juvenile Justice Act. Drug-free Navakerala campaign has been organized through Kerala Bharat Scouts & Guides. Through this campaign, notices, pamphlets, posters and banners are distributed to homes and educational institutions.

As part of V.H.S.E, N.S.S activities, evening family meets are organized in 300 schools across Kerala. These meets help to enlighten children and their families regarding the dangers of tobacco use and benefits of healthy lifestyle and diet. Mural paintings called 'Vigilant Walls' are being

set in V.H.S.E schools in the state to raise awareness against tobacco use.

Although these activities are being taken up and implemented in full vigour these are not enough. More strict measures are needed to ensure that children do not fall prey to drug abuse and they are not used as carriers of harmful substances. Institutional societal attention is required to make sure that school-going children are not subjected to drug abuse and peddling. Children should be instilled with hope for a good life. Such optimistic spirit would weaken the urge to depend on drugs. An ideological ecosystem against drugs should be developed in and out of campuses. Different government departments work in tandem to eliminate the possibilities of drug distribution. The government is implementing several projects to rescue children who are addicted to drugs.

The Government of Kerala has envisaged an extensive project for raising awareness against drugs. The Chief Minister has made this very clear. We should build a strong and flawless resistance against this social evil. This will be engendered with a multi-faceted action plan which will be launched on October 2, Gandhi Jayanti. The youngsters of our land should be in the forefront of this campaign. Every individual and every family must take part in this. Organizations and social groups must keep aside their differences and participate in this campaign wholeheartedly. Let's build a vibrant resistance against drugs. I request each and every one of you to be a part of this campaign.

As part of V.H.S.E, N.S.S activities, evening family meets are organized in 300 schools across Kerala.

Determined to Wipe Out the Drug Menace



S. Ananthakrishnan IPS
Excise Commissioner

In recent years there has been a steady increase in the number of cases registered under the NDPS Act within the state by the Excise Department, the Police Department, the Narcotic Control Bureau and other agencies working against drug trafficking. This can be due to two factors. The state agencies, the Kerala Excise Department being the nodal agency for implementation of the NDPS Act as well as the Police have stepped up the intensity of operations against drugs and drug trafficking. This has led to a larger number of cases being registered and a larger quantity of contraband being seized. The quantity of Ganja seized rose from 3209 Kgs in 2020 to 5632 Kgs in 2021 and 2937 Kgs till the end of August this year. It is to be noted that the quantity seized is more in these years compared to the years before 2020 when the number of cases registered was much more. Along with this, the quantities of other drugs and synthetic stimulators seized have also gone up. A point to be noted is the increasing share of synthetic drugs such as MDMA, LSD and so on in the seizures.

The second factor indicated by this is that the influx of drugs into the state and consequently consumption within the state are also rising at somewhat an alarming rate. There are very few instances of cases which have come to notice where drugs are brought into Kerala and then exported. The consumption pattern of drugs was tested through an in-house survey conducted by the Kerala Excise

Department using data taken from persons below 21 years who were arrested for drug cases as well as those who approached the De-addiction Centres and Counseling Centres run by the Excise Department under the 'Vimukthi' scheme.

Even though a limited survey, it brought out certain aspects to be noted such as the following:

- The drug habit is formed as early as 10 years of age in some cases
- Most of the users started with various types of tobacco products
- The most commonly used drug is Ganja
- Most of the youngsters started experimenting with drugs as a matter of curiosity
- Most of the first users got their supplies from friends and peers

These indicate the need for action focused on the youth concerning drug use. The strategy has to be a comprehensive one where supply and demand are tackled together.

However stringent the enforcement may be, that alone would not be sufficient to check the phenomenon since it is part of a





global illegal business with the potential for huge profits. The drugs will keep coming in as long as there is demand. Considering these factors the Vimukthi Mission has been engaging in intensive 'Awareness Creation' activities of a diverse nature. The Government to counteract the menace of various types of addictions initiated the Vimukthi Mission in 2016.

The Kerala Government has also taken cognizance of the seriousness of this matter and the Chief Minister has instructed the initiation of a statewide intensive campaign against the proliferation of drugs. The first phase of this campaign will start on the 2nd of October 2022.

This campaign will involve all the stakeholder departments such as Excise, Police, Education, Local Self Government, and Health and Youth Affairs. Programmes reaching down to the grass root level will be implemented by various committees starting with Ward level and School level committees all over the state. This will involve a maximum number of people from all sections of the Kerala society and is expected to touch all households with information, awareness and positive

action whenever necessary. It is only through a united community-based defence that the invasion of drugs into our society can be countered and the health and happiness of our society especially of the coming generations be secured. Let us all cooperate in this noble venture and render whatever assistance each one of us can towards this endeavour.

'VIMUKTHI' TO COUNTER THE DRUG MENACE

The Mission has undertaken many activities including awareness creation, preventive action, promotion of a culture of health and fitness, encouraging creativity to compact addictions and so on. In the last two years, the Vimukthi Mission has been focusing on children and youth with special attention to Colleges and Schools. Vimukthi Mission has initiated and put into operation various programmes in Schools such as 'Unarvu' to channelize the energy of children into sports activities, 'Nervazhi' to facilitate teachers to effectively intervene in drug-related issues which they come across in their day-to-day work, 'Balyam Amulyam' targeting younger children and through them instil in the parents a proper awareness regarding the issue of drugs and to impart necessary parenting skills to deal with these issues. Similarly in Colleges, starting with colleges under the Health University, committees named 'Sradha' in hostels and 'Nerkkootam' on campuses have been started to enable these institutions to deal with the challenge of drugs themselves. Institutional and legal changes and support are also built into these programmes.

SAY NO TO DRUGS

Yodhavu to Clampdown Drug Peddlers



V.P. Pramod Kumar

Deputy Director (Public Relations)
Kerala Police

The Kerala police have come up with another feather on the cap, the Yodhavu project, to curb the supply and spread of drugs in society. This scheme is envisaged especially to prevent drug use among school students with the help of the Departments of Excise, Education, Health, Social Justice, etc. Various activities and campaigns are designed to spread awareness among the students to achieve the goal.

Drug abuse and drug trafficking are on the rise among youngsters in India at an alarming rate. It has become a social evil that takes the lives of people and has emerged as the biggest challenge to the human community. Drug trafficking can only be limited by controlling the demand and supply side of the drugs. Knowing the fact that the prevention program is the best defense against drug abuse, Kerala Police have come up with the title 'Yodhavu' in collaboration with the stakeholders who are already at the forefront to fight against the menace of drug abuse in society. A study by the Narcotic Control Bureau (NCB) has revealed that 70% of the drugs are smuggled into India through sea routes. In order to curb drug trafficking in the State,



WAR AGAINST NARCOTICS



Kerala Police have taken stringent measures such as strict enforcement of the NDPS Act, special drives with the aid of Kerala Anti-Narcotic Task Force, District Anti-Narcotic Special Action Force, Anti-Organized Crime Cell, and awareness campaigns against drug abuse.

There is a drastic difference in the total number of NDPS cases registered in Kerala in 2022 while comparing to previous years. In 2022 alone till mid of September, 1,48,21 cases have been registered and 16,436 accused were apprehended.

In this context, Kerala Police have conceptualized 'Yodhavu' against the drug abuse menace with the aid of the Departments of Excise, Education, Health, Social Justice, etc. with a view to launch awareness campaign against drug abuse among students and society. As part of the program, one teacher from each school/college will be selected and they will work in tandem with the Principal of Schools, Janamaitri Police, Students and Parents. They are called 'Yodhavu'. They will be trained in various areas to prevent and combat drugs. They join hands with Residents associations, social workers, public bodies etc. with a unified objective



SAY NO TO DRUGS

ലഹരി ആപത്താണ്

ഉപഭോഗവും വിതരണവും തടയാൻ കർശന നടപടി

ലഹരിക്കെതിരെ ജനകീയ ക്യാമ്പയിൻ ഗാന്ധി ജയന്തി ദിനം മുതൽ

PINARAYI VIJAYAN

will also be conducted through cycle rallies, walkathons, and marathons. Literature and pamphlets will be aerated with a view to disseminate the message among the layman.

Kerala Police will provide two days of training to the teachers selected under the programme. They will be trained by explaining different aspects of drug abuse, ill-effects of the drugs on the life of the individual, types of drugs available in the market, stress management, legal provisions related to drug enforcement including punishment for the offences, rehabilitation and tracking the progress of the

to identify victims of drugs abuse and curb drug abuse menace. The Student Police Cadets Project, which turns the lives of thousands of students into good living, will also be pressed into service. 88,000 student cadets from 1,000 schools will actively take part in the movement.

Yodhavu will educate the students in Schools/Colleges/Universities about the ill effects of drugs. They will identify the victims of the drug abuse based on their behavioral changes and they will motivate the students for rehabilitation by counseling in consultation with their parents. They also conduct anti-drug awareness campaigns including quiz competitions, painting competitions, magic shows, drama, pledges, debates, seminars, and webinars in association with NSS, NCC, SPC, and Scouts & Guide. Short films and videos

rehabilitation. The Station House Officers have been directed to convene regular meeting of all Yodhavirus once a month and ensure that they are kept motivated to deliver anti-drug abuse awareness

effectively to achieve the desired result. DySP Narcotic Cell of each District are nominated as the Nodal Officer for

the District and they will co-ordinate all the activities of the anti-Narcotics Clubs in the District concerned. They will also keep a list of de-addiction centres and NGOs in their jurisdiction, that are actively working against drugs.

Yodhavu will educate the students in Schools/ Colleges/Universities about the ill effects of drugs. They will identify the victims of the drug abuse based on their behavioral changes and they will motivate the students for rehabilitation by counseling in consultation with their parents.

The services of 88,000 Student Police Cadets will be utilized for conducting awareness campaigns in 1,000 schools. Various voluntary organizations and Indian Medical Association will also extend their support to achieve this goal. A helpline number will be thrown open for the public to share information on drug use and trafficking privately. Awareness activities through social media will be further intensified. Police dogs will be used to detect drugs smuggling on buses and trains. It has also been decided to prepare a database of those involved in drug cases, which will be shared with all the Police officers.

Kerala Police believe that with the support of youngsters in society, the spread of drugs in the State can be arrested and the society can be saved. A new fight against the dreaded menace will be another feather on the cap of Kerala Police.

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will be produced for creating awareness through social media platforms and electronic media. Awareness programs

When It Conquers Your Consciousness



Dr. Sagar T. Thevalappuram

Consultant in Psychiatry
District Hospital Kollam, Nodal Officer, DMHP

Drug abuse, drug use disorders, and substance use disorders, in general, have definite adverse consequences on the physical and mental health of the users. This is a significant public health problem that affects individuals, their families, and society. The mental health impact and the ways to address the issues are mentioned briefly.

The various manifestations of mental impact largely depend on the substance of abuse. The various manifestations of mental impact largely depend on the substance of abuse either licit substances like alcohol, prescription drugs, nicotine etc or illicit ones like cannabis, opioid drugs like heroin, hallucinogens such as LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide), dimethyl tryptamine, dimethoxy methyl amphetamine, "club drugs" MDMA (methylenedioxymethamphetamine), ketamine, phencyclidine, and gamma-hydroxybutyrate, stimulant drugs like cocaine or NPS (new psychoactive substances). These may affect the mind and its functions including cognition (thinking) conation (action or behaviour) and emotion.

The major impact is addiction, which is a chronic brain disease in which a person regularly finds and uses drugs, or regularly does something despite the negative consequences. Addiction is a disease state like diabetes or heart disease which can change the normal functioning of the brain and mind. Besides harming physical health, it can change the way one thinks, behaves, and feels which in turn last long resulting in harmful actions and thereby affecting the relationships with family friends, and work badly. This can be managed effectively by many helpful methods of treatment by trained clinicians and recovery is possible and the individual can lead a healthy positive way of life. Without treatment and recovery, addiction may keep getting worse. Relapse may occur which is part of recovery.

Psychological interventions play a vital role in the management of all

Addiction is a disease state like diabetes or heart disease which can change the normal functioning of the brain and mind.



drug dependence states. Individual psychotherapy, cognitive therapy, behavioural therapy, motivation enhancement therapy, group therapy, family therapy, etc will be applied appropriately. CRAFT (Community Reinforcement And Family Training) is found to be effective in teaching spouses or concerned significant others in the family to avoid confrontation around substance abuse and instead focus on positive reinforcement engagement programs.

Preliminary assessment, detailed evaluation, investigations and medically supervised treatment are given for alcohol withdrawal. The revised clinical institute withdrawal assessment for alcohol (CIWA _Ar; Sullivan et al. 1989) is the standard scale for measuring alcohol withdrawal symptoms and the clinician has to rate 10 symptoms on a scale of 0 to 7. A CIWA _Ar total score of more than 15 or a history of alcohol withdrawal seizures indicates that medical treatment for withdrawal should be started immediately. The gold standard for the management of alcohol withdrawal is a benzodiazepine drug (Holbrook et al.1999, Mayo _ Smith

1997) such as chlordiazepoxide, clonazepam, diazepam or oxazepam.

Anti-dipsotropic medications like Acamprosate, Disulfiram,

Individual psychotherapy, cognitive therapy, behavioural therapy, motivation enhancement therapy, group therapy, family therapy, etc will be applied appropriately.

Naltrexone and Topiramate are used to help the person to prevent further alcohol intake. During the detoxification phase, Thiamine is supplemented. As an anti-craving medication, Baclofen is used. Regarding opioid addiction, the treatment includes initial assessment, investigations, and drug treatment with buprenorphine, naltrexone, or methadone.

The treatment plan will also include regular follow-up visits, medications, patient commitment to cooperate with treatment, risk of relapse, and other safety concerns.

Common patient responsibilities include keeping all appointments, agreeing to drug testing regularly, taking medication as prescribed, allowing and encouraging the involvement of family and friends, and avoiding persons, places, and situations that may cause a person to use a substance again after a period of not using (relapse). Counselling by a qualified mental health professional is an important part of treatment that helps patients address personal, social, or other problems that may contribute to their addiction. Whatever be the substance or drug, proper relapse prevention strategies are essential.

Alcohol dependence syndrome can be screened using the **CAGE questionnaire** where four questions can be asked using the keywords.

- C** denotes cut down (Have you ever tried to cut down the drinks?)
- A** denotes annoyed (Have you ever got annoyed on hearing criticisms about drinking habits)
- G** denotes guilt (Have you ever felt guilty about your habit?)
- E** denotes eye opener (Have you ever used alcohol early in the morning to steady your nerves?)

If the answer to any of the two questions becomes yes, it's likely to be dependence. There are criteria based on DSM 5 (diagnostic and statistical manual by American Psychiatric Association, APA) and ICD 11 (International classification of diseases by World Health Organization, WHO) for evaluation and diagnosis of disorders due to substance abuse. Nicotine-related disorders occur due to the use of tobacco products for smoking or smokeless ones like chewable ones. Tobacco use disorder and nicotine withdrawal symptoms can be treated by nicotine replacement therapy and by using drugs like Bupropion and Varenicline.

Fallen Minds and Their Failing Families



Dr. C.J. John

Senior Psychiatrist of Medical Trust Hospital, Kochi, Member, State Mental Health Authority

The family remains the basic unit where attachment, nurturing and socialisation happens. The presence of a person with substance use disorder can defeat a family and can disrupt its dynamics. The damage that behaviour causes to the well-being of the family and its members is enormous.

FAILURES IN DIFFERENT FAMILY SITUATIONS

Let's examine how a person with substance use disorder causes failures in the functioning of this important unit in various situations.

1. In the case of married persons without children, substance use disorder may affect healthy bonding in marriage which may cause gaps in communication, emotional closeness, and physical intimacy. Needless to say, it will lead to conflicts. Drug addiction and alcoholism and its related problems are one of the major causes of marital breakdowns.

2. In families with children, the damages are very serious, as it affects the character formation and personality development of tender minds. The presence of a person with drug addiction is likely to make home unsafe for a child. If it's the parent, inconsistent parenting may be the result. There is three times more risk of various types of abuse and neglect in such families. Educational needs may not be properly met. Seeing a parent or a member at home intoxicated with drugs invokes distressing emotions which not only create delays in learning and development but can also



lead to prolonged mental and emotional disorders.

Witnessing domestic violence that coexists with drug addiction can create scars in the child's mind. Teenagers are at a high risk of modelling substance abuse, especially when they are low or frustrated. The skill for healthy peer relationships is also affected. The prevalence of emotional, conduct and oppositional problems are also high and may be evident in classrooms.

3. If a teenager or child gets trapped in drugs, the trauma to the family is unexplainable. The drug mafia is targeting this group and youth in a big way. They are branding the newer dangerous substances as acceptable recreational behaviour making many, including girls vulnerable. The family sadly misses the entry of children into this trap. The psychiatric complications upset the total

rhythm of the family. Parents become depressed and guilty. As the child shows oppositional traits and aggression, the parents often get into a fear that makes them powerless to enforce control. Many of these students end up with heavy losses in educational achievement, if not saved early. If not intervened at this stage, this dangerous habit may extend to later years causing a great burden on the family.

4. In families that are in a phase of launching young adults, substance use disorder can cause a significant crisis. On a supportive home base, the youth have to be ideally in a career and be on the path of economic independence. If the youth is into drugs, they are unable to support themselves and would trouble the family for money needs. Their risk for criminality is high. Youth violence in home environment is another concern that causes stress on families.

5. In families that have caregiving responsibilities for the elderly or sick, a family member affected by addiction will generate a lot of insecurities, isolation and depression. The focus on caregiving will be lost.

MULTIPLE FAILURES

There are multiple failures happening in the families of an addict. There is a dangerous shift from safe home to a home predisposed to violence. The financial crisis is likely due to the loss of work and drain of money to procure drugs. The new friendship circle evolved to sustain the addiction may be unsafe for family members. Behavioural issues that come in conflict with the law may pose a burden to the family. The stress predisposes family members to depression and other mental health issues. If the person with substance use disorder is unwilling to quit or receive treatment that becomes another challenge. Relapses of those who already received treatment erode confidence and push the family to helplessness and hopelessness.

LET'S MAKE THESE FAMILIES WIN

These families need care and protection from society so that they can put in sustained effort to save their family members. Achieving abstinence in the person affected not only brings well-being to that family but also to society at large. There is always a pooling of antisocial elements around every person affected. Hence, it's also society's responsibility. Let's not stigmatise or isolate these fallen minds and their failing families. There is a need to build self-help groups for such families.

Families have a constructive role in the treatment of a person with substance use disorder. They should have the skills for early identification. Factors in the family that may be responsible for addiction need to be addressed. Let's make these families win the battle against drugs. If they win, we win.

Youth Organizations can play a Pivotal Role



Dr. Chintha Jerome
Chairperson, Kerala State Youth Commission



The government of Kerala is implementing state-wide action plans and awareness campaigns to seize substances and curb drug abuse. The youth of Kerala is always capable to carry out the fight against the drug menace. Every youth organization that stands in the way of socio-political and creative activities irrespective of political ideologies have to join their hands together to chalk out and implement the action plan from October 2nd onwards.

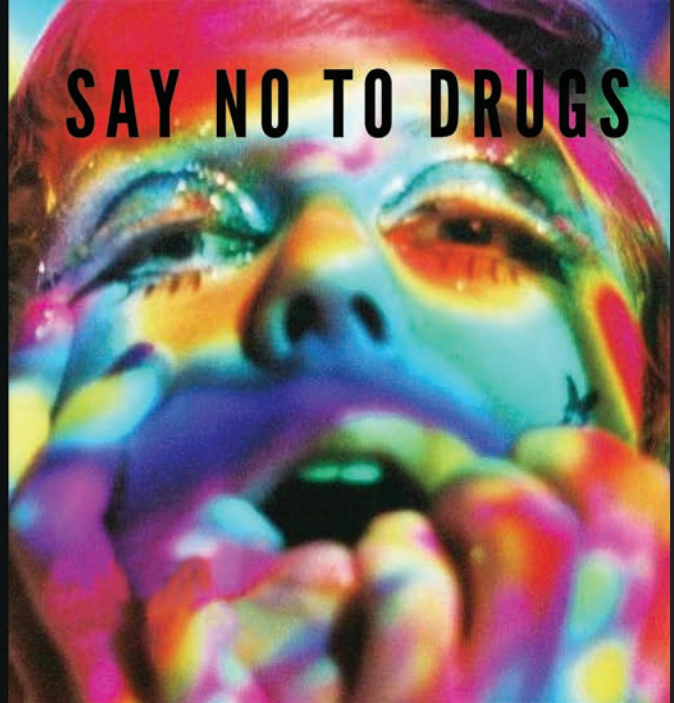
We have to understand that the use of drugs and substance abuse is a threat to the existence of the whole society. We have achieved the goal of building a healthy society both mentally and physically. But substance abuse becomes the reason for the doom of social and cultural goals achieved so far. Today, substance abuse is increasing at an alarming rate in schools, colleges, employees from different strata, and in urban and rural areas also. Many studies suggest that the unavailability of alcohol during the lockdown period paved the way for the Malayalis to search for other sorts of drugs. Financial crimes are not only the reason to argue that drug abuse is a social disaster. But the reality is that majority of the drug abusers will

lose their consciousness and will exhibit their criminal minds or indulge in criminal activities and will lead an anti-social life.

The excise and police are efficiently cracking down the drug peddlers throughout the state. In 2022 17,834 people were caught in drug cases. The police and excise have seized 6.7 kg MDMA and 23.4 kg hashish oil this year. The previous years have witnessed the use of alcohol and drugs among abusers. But today, chemical-synthetic drug products are widely used among youngsters.

The Chief Minister has said in the Legislative Assembly that the public sphere of Kerala has to undertake awareness programs and initiatives seriously to tackle the menace. The political parties, communal, religious organizations, socio-cultural organizations, students, and youth organizations should come to the front line to fight against the drug menace.

The youth activities as a whole have always paved way for the democratic struggles in Kerala and India as well. It has been criticized for a long time that the youth is being surrendered to apolitical ideologies. But the efforts and dedication put forward



SAY NO TO DRUGS

**STOP THE HABIT
BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.**

YOU ARE NOT ALONE IN THIS BATTLE.

by youngsters during the time of flood and pandemic proved that the whole concept and arguments were erroneous. The contribution of 12 crore rupees to CMDRF

The social psyche of Kerala has always been in tune with secular democratic values just because the youth of Kerala has always been at the forefront to take up these kinds of activities. So much so that our youth organizations can strongly lead the fight against the consumption of narcotics and other drugs.

by one of the youth organizations through the 'Recycle Kerala' project itself is a model for this.

Even though the quarantine centers were under the supervision of LSGD, complete activities were taken over by the youth organization, and smooth functioning was ensured. As per the Chief Minister's decision, the youth commission

has given notice seeking bystanders for the patients. Related to this, more than ten thousand youths have registered via our online portal. Many youngsters have come

in front during the pandemic time to save the lives of common people without contemplating their own life and financial security. This was well noted by the world nations. The social psyche of Kerala has always been in tune with secular democratic values just because the youth of Kerala has always been at the forefront to take up these kinds of activities. So much so that our youth organizations can strongly lead the fight against the consumption of narcotics and other drugs.

As per the Chief Minister's decision, every youth organization that stands in the way of socio-political and creative activities irrespective of political ideologies has to join their hands together to chalk out and implement the action plan from October 2nd onwards. It is a fact that youth organizations can influence the lives of youth to a large extent. In one way, the drive against drug abuse will help the youth to restrain from indulging in drug usage and peddling activities. The awareness programs led by these youth organizations will help the youngsters to channelize their energy and creativity for the good cause and will help them to chase goals in their life. The youth commission has been implementing similar model action plans throughout the state. The commission is inviting the active participation of the public and other organizations for the smooth running of such initiatives.

The youth commission has been implementing similar model action plans throughout the state. The commission is inviting the active participation of the public and other organizations for the smooth running of such initiatives.

Identify Them Early



Dr. Anju Angel Alex

Asst. Surgeon,
Kerala State Health Services

There are many ways to identify substance abuse among adolescents and it is possible to take necessary preventive methods. For them, normal age-appropriate peer relationship is a developmental need. Any problem with the natural process of building peer relationships should raise concerns.

Mithun, a 12th standard boy (name changed for anonymity) was brought by his parents to Dr. Shaji T.K., Consultant Psychiatrist in Thrissur Mental Health Centre. He was a child who seemed to use the internet with prudence, discussed with his parents profound things on YouTube, and had engaging sessions with them sharing his thoughts. But when his

profoundness escalated and behaviour turned uncanny for his age, Dr. Shaji was brought into the picture. He reached the diagnosis and shared with the bewildered parents--that Mithun had been using cannabinoids for the past two years.

"Ganja and hashish oil are the commonest forms of abusive substances that we come across, in children," says Rajan Aramana, Circle Inspector, Njarakkal Police Station, Ernakulam. He narrates how two minors were found amidst a group of 6 boys huddled together under a bridge, near a canal. While the older boys jumped into the canal as they saw the police approaching, the minors were left with bottles of hash. The police had rounded this group because of the age disparity among its members. "Keep a watch on your child's peer group and ensure they are not skipping classes. If they get into

new friendships, especially with older children, please be vigilant”, he says. The two minors were taken for therapy next but it would have helped if these kids were taken to a professional at the outset like Mithun was.

Dr. Shaji gives us a list of signs to watch for. Anger, disobedience, retorting to teachers, not communicating well at home, decreased appetite, low energy levels, increasing reticence, defiance, irritability, picking up fights in school, not doing homework, spending more time locked up in a room, new friendships in the locality and sinking scholastic performance fall into it. The Circle Inspector makes a noteworthy observation that the kids they find with drugs are many times academically backwards, or have familial discord in their history.

When asked about this possibility, Dr. Shaji gives a response that can well be a part of the prevention and early identification of substance abuse. “Normal age-appropriate peer relationship is a developmental need. Kids need not always be kind and empathetic to others. Any problem with the natural process of building peer relationships should raise concerns. This implies that if a child has a real or perceived lack of confidence, it makes that child vulnerable to bullying and can lead to deviant behaviour or substance abuse. A keen awareness of this simple psychology and basic science will help anyone pick up signs”, he answers with a flourish.

Dr. Anoop G, a psychiatrist working in Cherthala Taluk Hospital suggests “establishing good role models at home” for the child to emulate. In this context, it is pertinent to add what Dr. Sharath G Rao, AIDS Control Officer for Ernakulam says reproachfully “I come across parents who have ample purchasing power but no time to talk to their child.” In his words,

Hackneyed as it may sound, talking to one’s child, and building a child’s confidence in himself and his trust in his parents are never optional.

psychoactive drugs” are tough to detect, have easy marketability, ease of consumption and easy availability. Our youngsters can be easy prey” He exhorts all parents to have a consistent rapport with their children so that they do not miss the signs of substance abuse.

This implies that if a child has a real or perceived lack of confidence, it makes that child vulnerable to bullying and can lead to deviant behaviour or substance abuse. A keen awareness of this simple psychology and basic science will help anyone pick up signs.

Among psychoactive substances, those derived from the Cannabis sativa plant are widely used and have been so, for millennia for recreational and

ritualistic purposes. Depending on the part of the plant that is used and its mode of preparation the name and potency vary. But be it MDMA, a chemical made in small clandestine laboratories, or be it Bhang – derived from the dried leaves of Cannabis, Ganja-derived from the female inflorescence or Hashish- the dried resinous extract, it is “ absolute balderdash to say that it is okay to do any drugs for any reason whatsoever !” retorts Dr Shaji indignantly, giving vent to his concern over the misplaced sense of right and wrong regarding drugs. He adds that though instances of substance abuse are more prevalent in boys, especially in the 14-19 age group, it pays to be attentive to any little deviation from the normal in children irrespective of gender and is imperative that professional help is sought. This is relevant because many a time these children have underlying disorders.

On that note, let’s mull on the take-home message. Hackneyed as it may sound, talking to one’s child, building a child’s confidence in himself and his trust in his parents are never optional. Let’s do this so that nothing ever would make our children want to go there, try that and be pulled into that vortex.

- **Refusal to obey**
- **Anger**
- **Retorting angrily to teachers**
- **Not communicating well at home**
- **Decreased appetite**
- **Low energy levels**
- **Increasing reticence**
- **Defiance**
- **Irritability**
- **Picking up fights in school**
- **Not doing homework**
- **Spending more time locked up in the room**
- **New friendships in the locality**
- **Friendships with older children**
- **Sinking scholastic performance**
- **Returning home late**
- **Skipping classes**

Tackling the Drug Menace



Dr. Arun B. Nair

Professor of Psychiatry
Medical College, Thiruvananthapuram

News of drug addiction affecting people of all ages from school kids to professionals is doing the rounds these days. Apart from conventional “substances” like tobacco and alcohol, quite a few new gen drugs ranging from cannabis to methamphetamine to LSD are flooding the illegal drug trade market. Drugs like cocaine which were unheard of in our part of the world have also made their way to our cities and small towns.

The increase in the use of substances has to be seen in the light of the recent increase in suicides, crimes, and accidents among the youth of our state. Another fact of grave concern appears to be the increase in the number of youth having mental health issues in our state.

The National Crime Records Bureau statistics for suicide in 2021



show that the suicide rate in Kerala is 26.9 per one lakh, which is a 12 percent increase compared to the previous year. The district of Kollam in Kerala with a suicide rate of 43.9 per lakh, is the district with the highest suicide rate in the whole of India, which is something we need to be extremely worried about.

THE DOPAMINE GAMES

In the prefrontal cortex of our brain, which is the most evolved part of the human brain, a neurotransmitter called dopamine is located. It is the basis of all our happiness. Any activity which enhances dopamine in the brain can provide you with happiness. Activities like workouts, listening to music, socializing, etc. slowly increase dopamine giving a sense of well-being. Substance abuse often leads to a sudden increase in dopamine level, giving an instant high, which prompts people to use it again and get addicted to it. At times, a steep increase in dopamine levels



can lead to the emergence of delusions and hallucinations, causing the “substance-induced psychosis” syndrome. This condition can lead to acute violence.

The younger generation should be trained to engage in activities that enhance dopamine in a healthy way like social activities, healthy friendships, hobbies, and activities exploring creativity.

DO DRUGS ENHANCE CREATIVITY?

There is a myth among a section of youngsters that the use of drugs enhances creativity. The statements made by some celebrities have strengthened this notion. But the reality is that substance use damages the brain leading to cognitive impairment, psychosis, and mood disturbances. Though during the initial phase of drug use, the dopamine high could lead to increased energy and clarity for a short span of time, continued use will lead to brain damage destroying the creative abilities your brain has been

endowed with.

The message that substance use can lead to mental illnesses has to be clearly communicated to the student community right from school days, to enable the generation next to escape from addiction.

HOW TO OVERCOME IT?

A person who is addicted to substances can be brought back to normal life by proper treatment by a competent psychiatrist. Proper intervention at the right time can save the life of youngsters who would otherwise probably land in deep trouble.

Life skills education in a participatory format should be incorporated in the school syllabus from lower primary classes itself, leading to empowerment of the younger generation. Most importantly the implementation of stringent rules preventing drug trade and distribution also is vital to prevent this menace that could engulf the younger generation as a whole.

UNICEF and WHO have recommended activity-based life skills education for all adolescents (10 to 19 years) as part of the school curriculum itself. Efforts in this direction have happened in our state too. A life skills education module titled “ullaasaparavakal” prepared by a group of experts in the field of health and education, including this author has been published by SCERT Thiruvananthapuram. For the first time in India, separate 20 hours of activity-based life skills training modules for each standard from 1 to 12 have been prepared. It was tried out in hundred schools in Kerala on a trial basis with extremely promising feedback from all places. But unfortunately, the covid-19 pandemic took a toll on its further implementation. Now, it's high time that this module is implemented in all schools all over the state irrespective of the syllabus, for the benefit of the next generation at large.

Awareness programs about the adverse health consequences of drug use as well as the advantages of basic counselling skills and mental health first aid should be imparted to teachers and parents as well. Policemen, excise officials, staff of the women and child department, etc. also should be meticulously trained and empowered to handle victims of drug addiction effectively, so as to enable them to come out of this menace.

Any person addicted to drugs should receive professional help from a competent psychiatrist at the earliest. A comprehensive treatment program including medicines, psychological therapies, social intervention, and rehabilitation at the right time will definitely help to bring them out of their addiction and lead a productive life contributing according to their potential to the society at large. ■

The SPC Firewall



P. Vijayan IPS
Director, Social Policing

The Student Police Cadet (SPC) is a project which was launched on 2 August 2010 in Kerala. The project, initiated by the Kerala Police primarily for High School students, provides training in various activities that would enable them to become socially responsible, educated, empowered citizens, who by using the necessary skills, fight against the societal evils that persists in the society today. They are given adequate awareness necessary to be resistant against such practices.

One of the biggest and most concerning factors that affects today's youth is substance abuse or use of drugs. SPC and its cadets help in spreading awareness to students of varying ages. There is an active supply chain and ever-burgeoning demand chain of drugs in the state. Although SPC can't make a major dent in the supply chain activities, they can very well make an impact on the demand side by conducting awareness activities about the selling of substance near school premises. Cadets, along with students, can inform the drill inspectors, who are police officers, who then can take legal actions. Those institutions which have the SPC project strive to make the school a 'drug free premise' with the help of the students and police. SPC also tries to empower the SPG (School Protection Group), a



group of representatives which includes teachers, students, excise officers, police officers, shop owners etc to monitor any illegal and suspicious presence in the school premises.

Statistics indicate that many youngsters are struggling with substance abuse. Youngsters are more prone to using beauty enhancement medicines and pharmaceutical drugs as per the reports. This indicates the rise in demand of drugs among the students. There is a need to examine why students, who should be immersed in education and extra-curricular activities, are dipping their toes in dangerous waters i.e., drugs and other substances.

As the saying goes prevention is always better than cure. Distracting and diverting children from the tendency to use drugs is foremost way out. Sports and related activities are a major



distraction for students. Not only does it help to keep children distracted, it also helps them to be more focused, helps in being healthy, and improves their skills. Sports should be considered as a mode of distraction or entertainment rather than a competition, which would help in the equal participation of all the students in a school. The problem with today's educational system is that it gives too much prominence to academics rather than such activities. Not only sports, arts, and other extracurricular activities also bring out the best in them and help them relax from all the tension and stress of the studies, which is a major cause of substance abuse. No student learns only from the books. It is the experience they acquire from the surroundings and the skills they develop from it that make them.

The SPC project is an apt system for the youth of today as it has a

complimentary education programme instilled in. This programme focuses on the 7 dimensions of a student, which include; physical dimension, emotional dimension, thinking dimension, ethical dimension, social/environmental dimension, skill developmental dimension. Each of the dimensions of the students are evaluated and improved by various activities and programmes which would help them to learn and grow. Through SPC, one can achieve personal growth and identity and learns that you can change the world for better. There is a holistic approach of improving the world for better by helping a child develop a personal outcome which in turn helps in the social outcome in the community that he lives in. It also includes indoor activities, outdoor activities, field visits, camps etc.

SPC aims to mould the children to become individuals who can make a difference in the world. They try to help in correcting any mistakes of the former generation and try to evaluate what needs to be done to make the world a better place to live in. They help the world by advocating humanity and humility to everyone, especially the younger generation without any desire for money, fame or rewards. Their ultimate goal is being true to their motto; **"We Learn to Serve"**.

Rehabilitation and Addiction



Dr. L.R. Madhujan

Director,
Karunasai Psychopark De-Addiction and
Mental Health Research Institute

Rehabilitation is an indispensable part of saving lives from addiction and helping the addicts to cope better in society. There are different types of de-addiction treatments. Rehabilitation ensures physical and mental well-being of the individual.

Rehabilitation refers to the process of balancing out the anomalies in the physical and mental health that one encounters in life. Addiction is one of the most important conditions which require rehabilitation. Speech disorders caused by any kind of brain illness also require adequate rehabilitation. Rehabilitation is also appropriate for those who are affected by depression.

The main aim of rehabilitation is to rekindle the focus in the life of any individual who has gone through a difficult phase and to bring them forth into mainstream without causing any kind of discomfort. Addiction to alcohol or other sorts of drugs was not often understood as an illness or an issue in the past. It was only in the first half of the 20th century that science recognized addiction as a disorder that required treatment. Today we know that addiction is caused due to some minor problems affecting the brain. The most essential neurochemical in the brain called Dopamine acts as a catalyst for feeling emotions such as happiness, contentment, and desire in humans. Consumption of alcohol, drugs, smoking, sex, etc stimulates the brain to release

dopamine in the nucleus accumbens. When the brain gets used to the feeling of having dopamine, its absence leads to temptations, resulting in addictions. People addicted to gambling, mobile games, money, power, alcohol, stimulants and hyper sexuality need rehabilitation to bring them back to normal life.

Rehabilitation is an indispensable part of saving lives from addiction and helping them to cope better in society. The main part of de-addiction treatment is the cognitive restructuring of the brain. It is the process of organizing a person's thoughts, emotions and memories with regard to their cognitive and physical factors. In medical terms, it is called cognitive behavioural therapy. It is neither a self-treatable method nor an outpatient treatment. Merely being admitted to a hospital and taking medicines also does not cure addiction. Rehabilitation is a multi-faceted process where, in addition to medicines, the patient is stationed in calm and peaceful surrounding, and involved in classes, social, physical and cultural activities and art therapy. This may require at least one month. Often, the family members of the patient are also required to attend therapy sessions. Addiction to certain drugs and



nerve stimulants may call for a longer rehabilitation period. Institutionalization for those who want to go to work and come back to the rehabilitation centre is also available these days.

Rehabilitation is a multi-faceted process where, in addition to medicines, the patient is stationed in calm and peaceful surroundings, and involved in classes, social, physical and cultural activities and art therapy.

Rehabilitation is of mainly four types, such as Preventive

rehabilitation, Restorative rehabilitation, Supportive rehabilitation, and Palliative rehabilitation. Except for the fourth kind, i.e., palliative rehabilitation, all the other three types of rehabilitation can be offered separately or together to a person suffering from addiction. The main goal of any rehabilitation is to gradually restore the creativity in any individual. Since addiction most often decreases the talents, abilities, and capabilities

of a person, a person with addiction can be categorized as a disabled person. From that disability, bringing a person back to their full calibre is what rehabilitation aims to do. Promoting adaptation, emphasizing abilities, and providing comprehensive treatment and mental education to individuals are the main tenets of rehabilitation.

Scientific treatment and proper rehabilitation are the foundation of addiction treatment. Preventing circumstances for further addiction is the most important factor. For that social and familial atmosphere should be strengthened.

Happiness is a fundamental right of every individual. If one is restrained from happiness, the brain will search for shortcuts to happiness. Addiction is such a cognitive heuristic state for the brain. Rehabilitation aims to train an individual to walk in the right direction other than choosing shortcuts. This training needs some time. But time is not of the essence when it comes to training the brain and mind to focus on doing right rather than wrong. One should rather take time and make the right choices than attempt the wrong ones in haste.

If one is restrained from happiness, the brain will search for shortcuts to happiness. Addiction is such a cognitive heuristic state for the brain.

Don't Dr(u)ag Yourself Down



Jomon P.
Journalism Student
Kerala University, Kariavattom Campus

“In my experience, I have found that creativity demands a vigilant mind, which is weakened by the influence of drugs”

- Ernst Junger

The youth of a nation determines its future and their actions and inaction both contribute to the state of the nation. Any wealthy nation can stumble down to ruin if their younger generations are unable to keep up with their forefathers and drive innovation and growth, meanwhile any developing nation can enhance its welfare with insightful planning and an enthusiastic youth. India accounts for the largest youth population in the world; around 66 per cent of the total population (more than 808 million) is below the age of 35. Nearly 40 per cent of the Indian population is aged 13 to 35 years (defined as youth in the National Youth Policy).

However, there are many challenges faced by the youth of today and drug abuse may one of be the most impactful and menacing societal evil that has latched upon the very fabric of our society. The use of drugs in Kerala is increasing in an alarming rate as per the reports, as it indicates an increase in drug abuse among all categories of people, especially adolescents and children. **“The use of drugs has segregated the youth into two extremes.**



Those who never use drugs and strive for personal growth and development of the community that they live in and those who live a regressive and self destructive life under the influence of drugs. It is the duty of the youngsters to choose the obvious, better path between the two”, says Noufal N, Research Scholar at Kerala University.

More and more youngsters struggle with addiction than ever before. The trend has now shifted to more elite or more dangerous class of drugs like MDMA (Ecstasy), LSD (Lysergic Acid Diethylamide), Cocaine etc. to name a few. Peer pressure, adolescent immaturity, issues in the family etc. are among the many factors that prompt the youngsters towards addiction. Students hold the misconception that using drugs will help them cope with stress related to work and school or college. They also believe it helps them focus in tasks. Depiction of various drugs in the media also plays a factor in familiarising these among the youngsters and prompts them to try these out of curiosity and to imitate popular figures.



Kala Mohan, Counselling Psychologist says that parents and educational institutions can make

a difference when it comes to drug abuse among youngsters. Quality of time should be given prominence rather than quantity of time in interaction with the youth. Give them space to open up and make them aware about hazards of drug abuse. Educational institutions should also provide space and time to do the same.

Experts like psychologists, psychiatrists, counsellors etc. believe that the recent spike in drug use and drug related cases among the youth can be attributed to the pandemic and the lockdown that followed. The stress and workload that resulted with the isolation was taxing for everyone. Students had to cope with online classes, which was a new experience for them and others had to work from home for a long time. All of these were a change from the normality which we all were used to and this was a major cause in everyone, mostly the youngsters, to rely on drugs to find a relief. The trend of looking for a "feel good" factor and then narrowing in on a drug of choice is increasing among youngsters.

"On contrary to general belief, the use of drugs among women is on the rise. However, there is a common perception that women rarely use drugs and they seldom admit it openly.

So while providing awareness and rehabilitation, this has to be kept in mind" says Aswathy Raj A, Ex- Chairperson at Women's College Thiruvananthapuram

Educational institutions have become a ground for such narcotic activities. Many substances and tobacco products are being seized from the premises of educational institutions. When it comes to youngsters, there should be a healthy monitoring of their routine and activities. There should be continuous monitoring of any drug

related activities in the schools, colleges and in the workplace. This should be accompanied by implementing strict anti-drug policies within the perimeters. Most importantly everyone should be made aware of drugs as knowing facts about drugs can save lives and there is a need to combat misinformation and sharing drug related facts, as well as solutions to fight against the problems. This can be done via seminars, counselling and drug awareness campaigns and other activities conducted on a regular basis.

"Apart from the general awareness given by the government and other organisations through counselling and other means, every educational institution must conduct anti-drug campaigns and activities, and try to incorporate arts and events to educate the students on the negative impact of drug abuse. Awareness through arts and similar events attracts youngsters and make it more impactful", points out Thanzeel Ahmed, Chairman of Kerala University Kariavattom Campus.



Schools and colleges should have a counsellor with appropriate setting, whom the students can interact with matters related and not specific to substance abuse. It is important to make everyone aware about substance abuse and its effects, especially to those who are using them. Only when they accept that they have a condition, which can be cured with proper treatment and care, we can help them.

"People often think addiction as a characteristic or behaviour, rather it is a disease or a condition as per the WHO. This stigma of perceiving addiction as behaviour makes it difficult for people to help those who are addicted to drugs. Proper treatment and care should be given to the person addicted to help them recover", says Dr. V.N Sreekumar.

Assistant Professor, MSW Programme at University of Kerala.

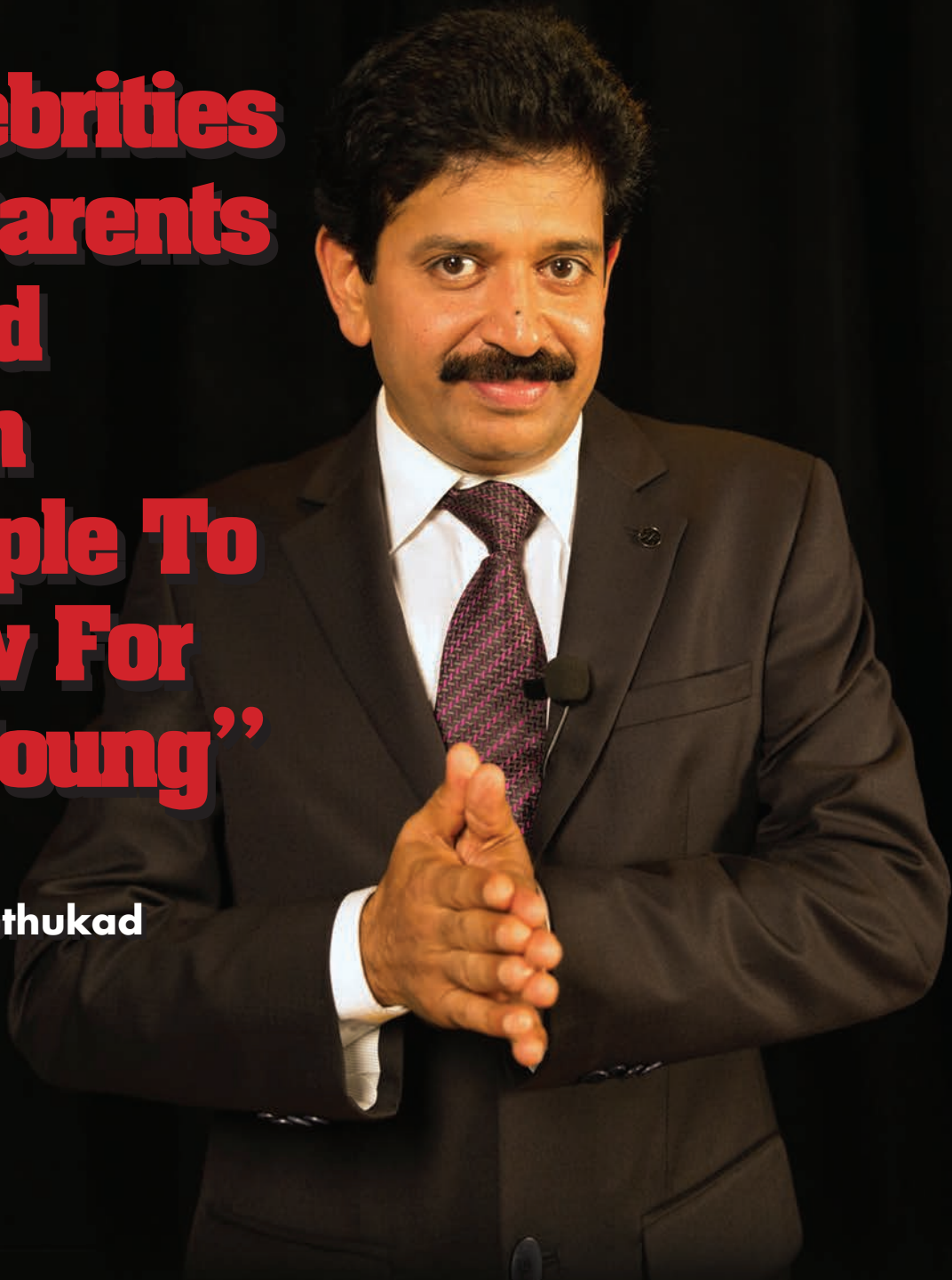


Drug abuse, as many people think, is not an isolated incident/activity, rather it is the most common and a serious concern among today's youth. Some parents might have the opinion that, their children is not using any drugs, so why should they bother to know about such issues. Ironically, they might be unaware on what their children are doing right under their noses. Those incidents that concern the lives and future of our youth shouldn't be taken lightly. The sooner we understand about drugs and it's impact, the sooner we can make everyone realise the dangers that lies ahead.

SAY NO TO DRUGS

“Celebrities And Parents Should Set An Example To Follow For The Young”

Gopinath Muthukad



Amina Najuma

Journalist

Like the craft that he pursues, magic is ingrained in the life and persona of Gopinath Muthukad. And Keralites are familiar with the magical ways in which he touches our lives. The eminent magician who has been active in the anti-drug campaigns talks about the perils of drugs and the fruitful interventions in this regard.



Be it in adolescence or even now, I have been able to stay away from the tempting situations of drugs. I would say that I am fortunate to enjoy the intoxicating charm of life.

Excerpts from the interview

How did you become part of anti-drug activities?

As someone who has never tasted alcohol, cigarette or any drugs, I believe I can communicate sincerely and boldly to the drug addicted persons against drug use. Be it in adolescence or even now, I have been able to stay away from the tempting situations of drugs. I would say that I am fortunate to enjoy the intoxicating charm of life. The ultimate goal of campaigns is to

build awareness. It is the mindful understanding that I will not resort to drugs in any situation. The right approach is to build enduring consciousness against drugs. A person has to give up drugs, not to prove to someone else but to do justice to himself.

Message against drug abuse can be effectively put across through performing art. Taking into note the popularity of magic, I was called in for the anti-drug campaign. During Excise Minister P.K Gurudasan's tenure (2006-2011), I got the opportunity to lead the anti-drug campaign travelling the length and breadth of the state. The campaign done in association with state government, named 'Stop SAD' (Stop Smoking, Alcohol, Drugs), successfully spread the message that abstaining from these three habits will ensure



But this is not the sole responsibility of the government. It is high time the society woke up to the harsh facts. Each and every one of us should be part of this.

happiness in life.

How do you evaluate the outcome of the campaign?

We had performed a dramatic (drama+magic) in Palakkad Street on a temporary stage set by Excise on top of a confiscated lorry. After the programme, a person came forward and broke his alcohol bottle. He vowed to never drink alcohol. Few years later, I came to know that he had totally given up drinking and is living happily with his family. This was informed by another person during a programme attended by Palakkad District Collector K.V Mohandas. This was a highly gratifying experience for me. This is what I mean by spreading awareness.

How can we keep our youth away from drugs?

The first step is to make stringent laws and ensure severe punishment for keeping or trading drugs. Parents can inadvertently create awareness in children right from formative years. And the most significant factor in this highly arduous task is that parents must lead an exemplary life. My father never explicitly asked me to abstain from drugs. But he showed it to us through his life. Teachers,

likewise, can influence children's minds. Our new generation is being lured to the world of drugs through stories, movies and movie stars. Children are led to the misconception that drugs give solace to stressed minds. On the contrary, these popular media should drive home the point that drugs may comfort for a few moments, but it will destroy your life forever. Celebrities should set an example through their work and personal life. Film stars should decide that they will not promote the use of drugs.

This life blessed with all the worldly comforts is itself the biggest intoxication and we should enjoy it sip by sip in every moment that we breathe.

Even after understanding the perils of drugs, why do people go after it?

Most of the people try it for the first



Muthukad performs stop SAD programme

time just for fun. They give in to the questions like don't you want to know what it tastes like. There are umpteen things in the world that we don't know anything about. But don't we live comfortably? Likewise, if we don't taste drugs and don't understand what it feels like, we lose nothing.

We get addicted to drugs in the first use itself. Unlike food, it is absorbed by the blood and directly reaches the brain. This triggers dopamine production. So, the next time you see or hear references of drugs, it creates that urge and this becomes an illness. So, a drunkard, smoker or drug addict must be considered as a patient and given proper treatment.

Also many youngsters, when faced with a problem, turn to drugs for solace and find excuses for it. When I entered the

field of magic, this was not at all a lucrative profession. Every single day was a battle against odds. If I had turned to drugs for comfort, I would not have been half as successful as now. If we throw flowers to the air, flowers will fall down, if we throw stones to the air, what come back are stones. We can decide whether we want flowers or stones.

What is your opinion regarding government's anti-drug activities?

The Stop SAD programme was very effective. More and more such programmes should be conducted. The government is now gearing up for a special drive against drugs. I try to be part of as many programmes as possible.

But this is not the sole responsibility of the government. It is high time the society woke up to the harsh facts. Each and every one of us should be part of this. If a child in our neighbourhood is addicted, do not think that it doesn't affect my family. Just remember that our home is not far away and the drug lobby is too powerful. So, we all must take up the initiative put forward by government.

Creativity Has Nothing To Do With Intoxicants



Dr. Ajitkumar G.
Artist

There is a widespread belief that intoxicants are responsible for the creativity of artists, writers, poets, singers, and scientists who produce beautiful paintings and sculptures. How true is this? Do alcohol and drugs serve as inspiration for the thoughts of these highly creative people?

Caravaggio was an artist who lived his life differently. He was a suspect in several crimes. At the same time, his writings were fascinating and very original. Caravaggio has painted two unique and beautiful pictures of Bacchus, who is considered the god of wine in Greek mythology. Along with worshiping wine, Caravaggio also reflects the hardships of wine addiction in these two paintings. Many later painters have experimented with alcohol to fuel their creativity, beyond their love of the substance.

In the 20th century, many Surrealist painters, including



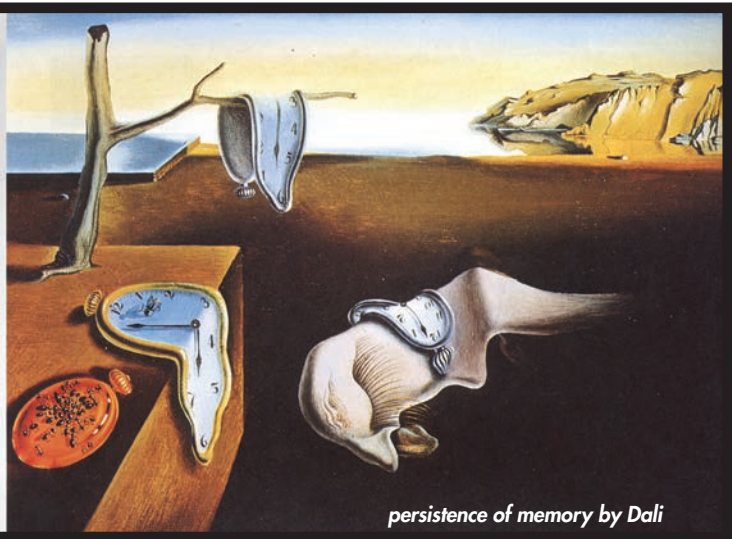
Salvador Dali, believed that dream experiences were the pinnacle of imagination. Dream experiences are the basis of man's most unreal and expressive creations. One of its main inspirations was the famous psychologist Sigmund Freud's observations about dreams.

Artists have attempted to visualize dream experiences by artificially inducing sleep and practicing sudden awakening techniques. Alcohol and wine were also tried in moderation. This was done on the understanding that the world of imagination arises not in the conscious but in the unconscious mind, and that the ways to enter the unconscious mind are sleep and intoxication.

Many artists such as Andy Warhol, Pablo Picasso, Edouard Manet, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Damien Hirst and others used or experimented with drugs. In their own observations, the constant use of



Salvador-Dali



persistence of memory by Dali

these substances destabilizes the mind, the psyche, and life itself. Caravaggio had sought refuge in hospitals many times to recover from addiction.

Liquor and wine

Not all drugs work the same way on the human brain. Alcohol and wine are basically depressants of the nervous system. Comparable frenzy occurs only during the first quick break of intoxication. This frenzy, however, stops suddenly and is followed by an impairment of all mental and physical functions such as speech, thinking, judgment, reflexes, muscle function and physical control. Fainting and falling asleep suddenly in booze state is due to exhaustion of the nervous system.

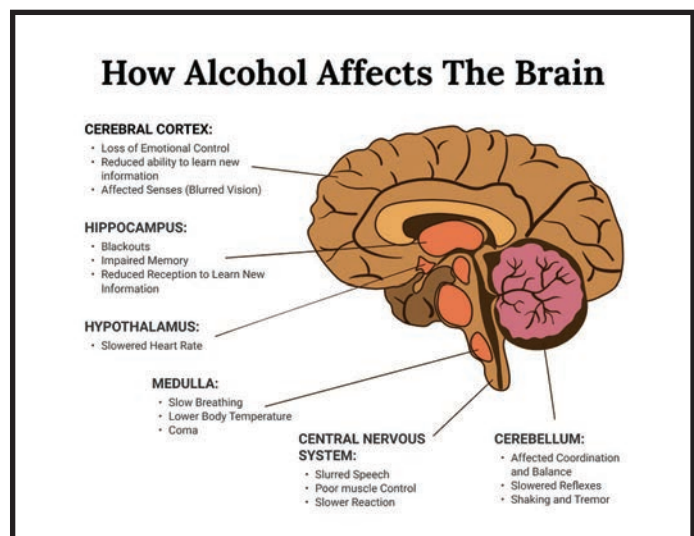
Stimulant substances

Drugs such as MDMA, cocaine, and cannabis which are widely used today, do not work on the brain in the same way that alcohol does. They stimulate many nervous systems. Thoughts change from the clear thoughts of consciousness to something unreal and blurry.

Caravaggio had sought refuge in hospitals many times to recover from addiction.

The brain loses its power of discrimination. A mental state of disconnection from worldly attachments may result from such substances. But it is not something that can be associated with the imaginative world of creativity, because creativity is an original and innovative world formed by conversing with highly rational thoughts. It is not something meaningless or done in vain. Even behind the abstract ideas formed through creativity can be seen the solidity of concrete logic and the sparks of wise decision-making. It may be rejecting the current mundane world, challenging established structures, being disorganized or illogical in presentation. But behind the creation of such a work of art are life experiences and consciously formed thoughts about the world and art.

These substances do not provide creativity; rather, they impart temporary pleasures. It is merely the bliss that comes from forgetting the complex problems and dilemmas they face and being freed from the pressure of rules and regulations.



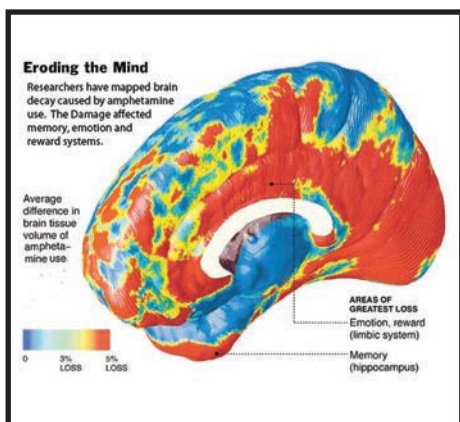


Caravaggio



The Incredulity of St Thomas

The burden of such anxious thoughts is lightened. An unreal world thus mentally



created is one of the dreams of man in the real world. This pleasure that can only be obtained through hard work in the real world is easily obtained through such substances. The brain then insists on getting it again and again. The people please the brain by giving the substance over and over again. As this addiction becomes ingrained, people end up being drug addicts.

Not just artists and geeks, but ordinary people also rely on intoxicants, including alcohol and wine, to de-stress from the rigors of life. But, apart from the harmful effects of addiction, substance abuse can be destructive to one's basic life and well-being.

Creative capacity may have arisen from the way humans and their ancestors formed new ideas for survival over hundreds of thousands of years. The ability to think to survive and improve living conditions may also have led to innovative and original creative ideas over time. Creativity, however, is new and meaningful production. It can be things, ideas, philosophy, political principles or art. Either way, it has to be innovative and inspire people.

Creativity is an amazing brain activity. The basis of creativity is the unique human thought of doubt. In fact, all living things- not just humans- are suspicious of living conditions. At a sudden sound, most creatures will, with suspicion, change their course of action. They will wait with suspicion for a while. However, they do not have the brainpower to systematically approach many doubts and find answers. Humans, though, are not like that.

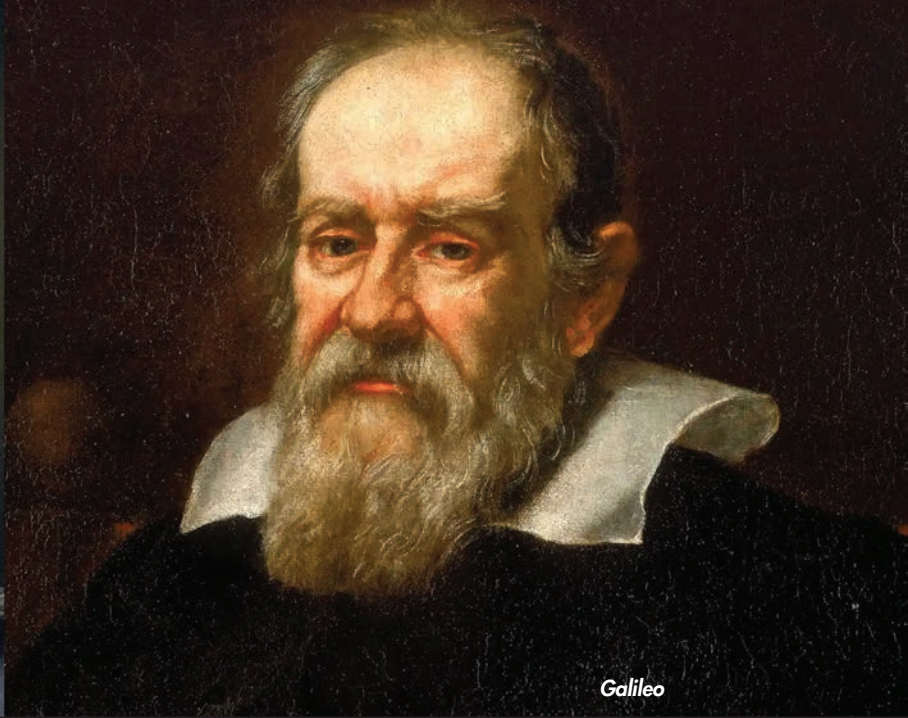
Humans find the answer. Some are not satisfied and doubt even the answer. Some start looking for different answers. Science and art are the investigations that arise out of dissatisfaction. The existence of reasonable doubt is the ultimate source of such thoughts. Logical calculations and answers cannot be expected from the unconscious mind. A conscious and clear state of mind is essential for creativity.

"The Incredulity of Thomas" by Caravaggio is a picture of Thomas's logical doubt. Through this painting, Caravaggio is actually repeating Thomas's unwarranted scepticism. Caravaggio knew fully well

A clear awareness of one's social environment and a tendency to repeat the question are not the sparks of 'uncontrolled imagination' originating in the unconscious mind. They are works of art conceived in a clear mind and executed in clear consciousness.



Bacchus



Galileo

that voicing his doubts was dangerous- he lived in the same era when Galileo was imprisoned for speaking the truth of the universe in defiance of the Church.

Caravaggio found that the solution to this is deception which portrays an instance in the Bible itself. Creativity in art often involves artists performing these conceptual evasions. A clear awareness of one's social environment and a tendency to repeat the question are not the sparks of 'uncontrolled imagination' originating in the unconscious mind. They are works of art conceived in a clear mind and executed in clear consciousness.

The consistency and strength of lines seen in Caravaggio's picture show that it was completed with wisdom in thought, with a clear purpose, and in clear consciousness. At the same time, Caravaggio was obsessed with alcoholism and his name appeared in the list of crimes in society. Society has misunderstood that these contrasting actions by the same person are causally related to each other.

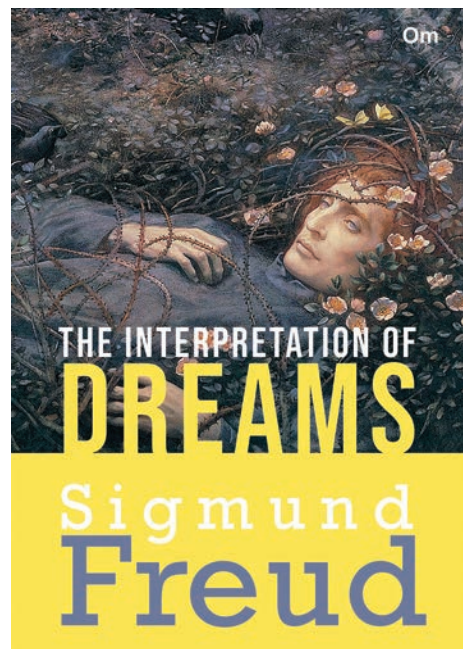
A number of scientific studies have been conducted on whether intoxicants cause creativity. The Leiden University Institute of Psychology in the Netherlands conducted a study on whether cannabis can induce abnormal thinking. It was found that in small doses, no thinking ability is produced, and in higher doses, lateral/divergent thinking decreases.

A study conducted at the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology Graduate University in Okinawa, Japan on LSD found that 'the ability to apply the sensory perceptions to create something original is impaired.'

Similar studies have been made in artists. At Eötvös Loránd University in Hungary, 72 artists were subjected to studies related to drug use. The explanation given by most of the artists is that they have to rely on drugs to alleviate the mental

stress that occurs as part of the creative process.

It is widely believed that by entering the unconscious mind that drugs provide,

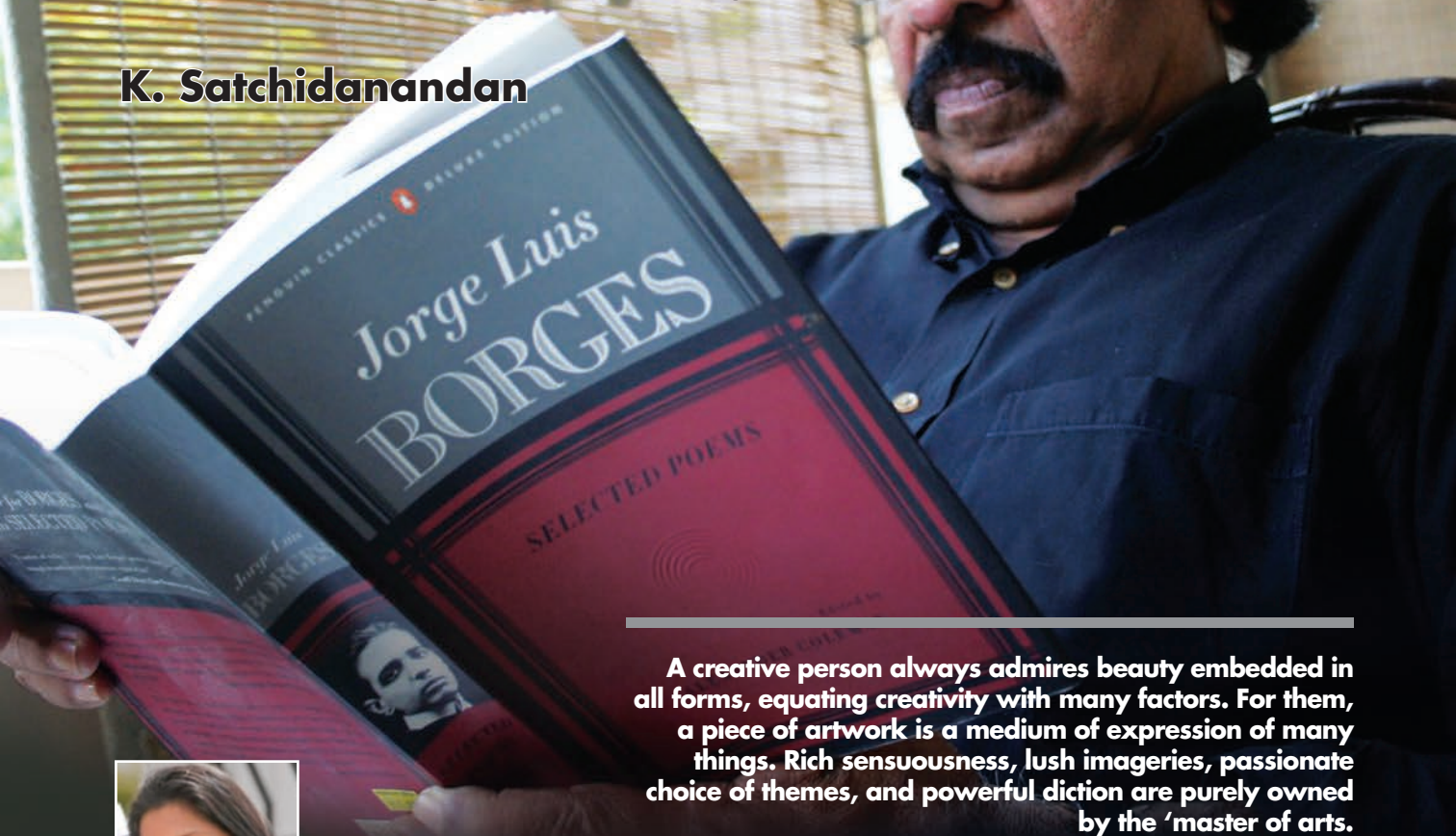


one can gain unique creative abilities. Most studies indicate that there is no relationship between substance abuse and creativity. The same is true for users of other stimulants. Despite all these, substances such as alcohol and drugs are consumed by a large section of the society under the false impression that they inspire creativity.

SAY NO TO DRUGS

“ I do not recall having written a line in a state of intoxication.”

K. Satchidanandan



A creative person always admires beauty embedded in all forms, equating creativity with many factors. For them, a piece of artwork is a medium of expression of many things. Rich sensuousness, lush imageries, passionate choice of themes, and powerful diction are purely owned by the 'master of arts.'

Renowned poet, writer, and critic K.Satchidanandan busts the 'biggest lie told by idiots' that creativity is enhanced with substance abuse and drugs. He strongly believes that for a real writer, writing well is the greatest intoxication.

In an exclusive interview with Anchitha A. for Kerala Calling, the poet asserts that creativity has nothing to do with substance abuse or alcoholism.



A. Anchitha

Assistant Editor, I&PRD,
Thiruvananthapuram



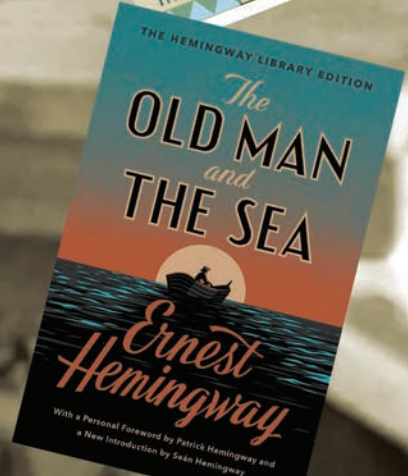
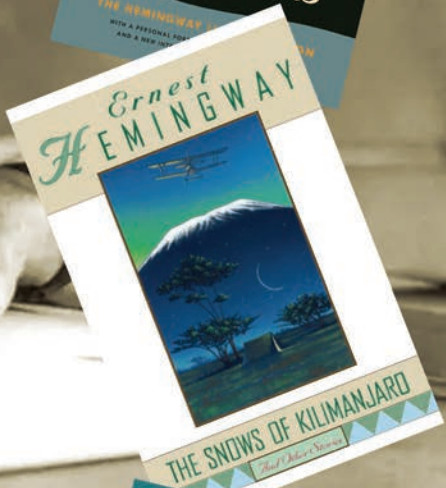
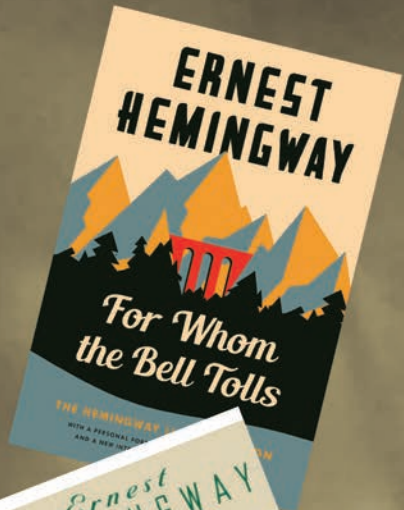
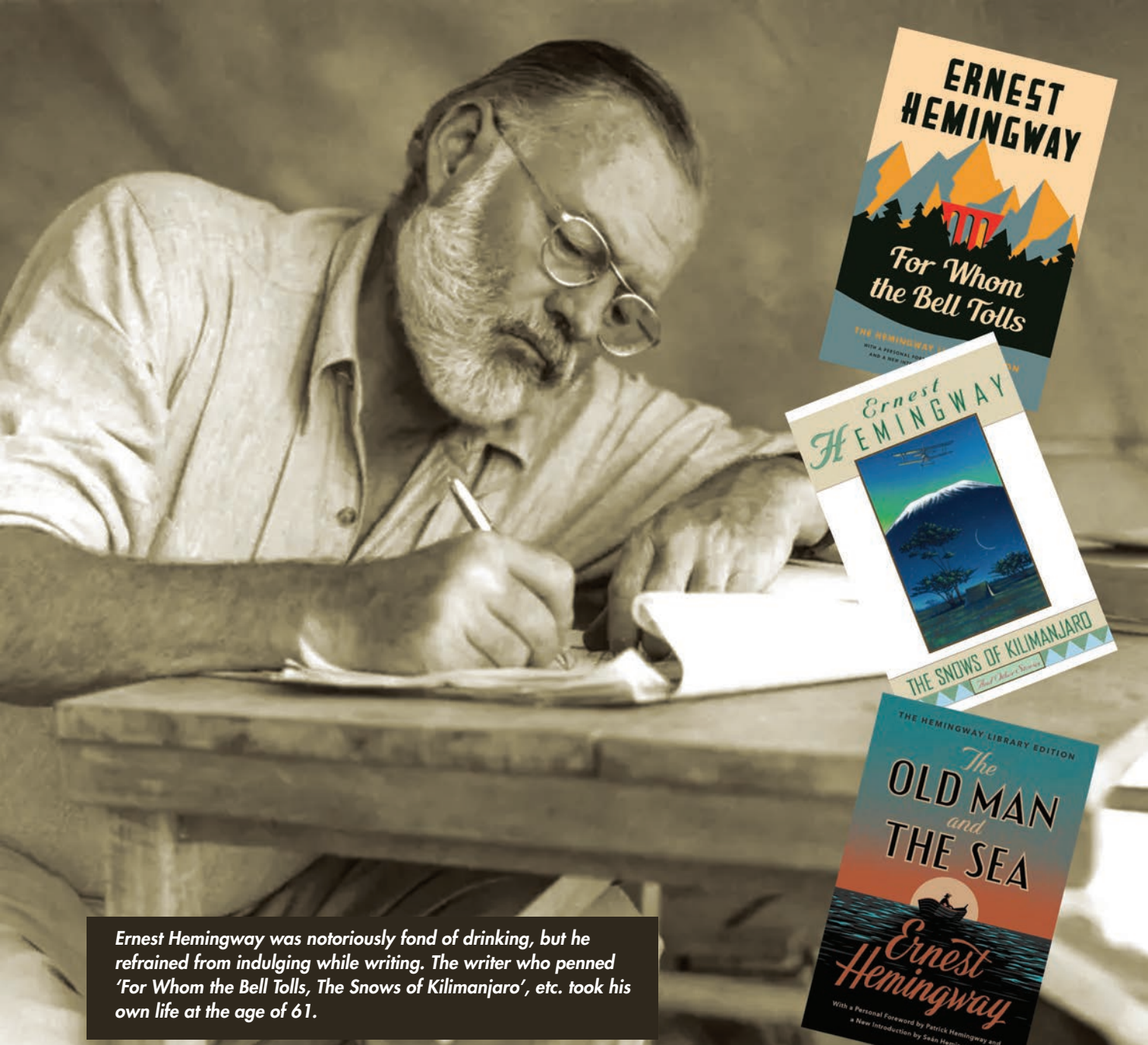
It may be true some of them had addictions but I tend to think they would have been even more creative and written more had they been free of such self-destructive habits. Writing needs absolute concentration and the power of recall both of which can be impacted negatively by drinks and drugs.

There are misconceptions and 'myths' about artists and creative people that they use drugs and substance to enhance their creativity. As a well-known writer, what do you think about this 'myth'? Is there any connection between creativity and addiction?

I do not believe drugs enhance creativity though we have all heard about an opium-eating Coleridge or a marijuana-taking Ginsberg. Similar

stories have been told even about our poets right from Ezhuthachhan, -possibly a mere legend- to Changampuzha to A. Ayyappan. It may be true that some of them had addictions but I tend to think they would have been even more creative and written more had they been free of such self-destructive habits. Writing needs absolute concentration and the power of recall both of which can be impacted negatively by drinks and drugs.

There are many external factors, which can influence a creative mind, and sometimes creativity is deeply interconnected with these factors. Do you think that exposure to substances and alcohol is



Ernest Hemingway was notoriously fond of drinking, but he refrained from indulging while writing. The writer who penned 'For Whom the Bell Tolls, The Snows of Kilimanjaro', etc. took his own life at the age of 61.

related to these external factors?

I do not believe drugs enhance creativity though we have all heard about an opium-eating Coleridge or a marijuana-taking Ginsberg.

No. Reading, acquaintance with writers, deep study of language, appreciation of other arts, or even love, can help inspire and educate writers. For a real writer, writing well is the greatest intoxication.

A piece of art is connected to the lives of the common man and it can be seen as a medium of communication.

How can we bring awareness through pieces of artwork?

Art is a way of telling a truth beautifully. It is inspired by a sense of justice as well as by a profound sense of beauty. Even abstract art communicates the beauty of lines, colours and spaces. Literature deepens our awareness of life and indirectly impels us to fight all forms of unfreedom, exploitation, oppression and injustice. Its power lies in its subtlety and the invisible way it impacts the reader's mind.

During youth, you had witnessed and got chances



Reading, acquaintance with writers, deep study of language, appreciation of other arts, or even love, can help inspire and educate writers. For a real writer, writing well is the greatest intoxication.

to intermingle with some of your contemporary writers of the 70s and 80s who used to glorify the use of alcohol and drugs. What do you feel about it now?

Yes, some of my friends who are writers, painters, and musicians have been occasional drinkers or even frequent ones, but I have not seen them write, paint or sing better under the influence of wine. In fact, the habit has caused immense harm and even caused their untimely demise as in the case of

A. Ayyappan, T.R., or John Abraham. In the cold weather obtained in the West, limited drinking may be all right, but in the tropics, it looks harmful unless it is extremely limited and purely occasional. However, even this kind of drinking or drug abuse has no kinship with creativity of any kind. Its apparent pleasure is evanescent and once out of control, can be a health-hazard.

What is your personal experience with it? Has the use of alcoholic beverages influenced your creative life or creative writing?

Not in the least. I do not recall having written a line in a state of intoxication. ■

Once You're Hooked You're Doomed



Joby Baby

Writer

Dressed in a grey shirt and black trousers, Amal (name changed), 21, walks into the room with a big smile. No one would be able to guess that he was locked up in a drug rehabilitation centre in Muvattupuzha in eastern Ernakulam for over a fortnight. Amal was acquainted with drugs when he was just 13 years old. He was in danger of “losing his mind”, he says, before he controlled his impulses to get his life back on track. Gentle prodding by the excise officials who had nabbed him as well as his mother’s tears paved the way for his rehabilitation. Amal looks composed. “It feels like waking up from a nightmare,” he says. “Earlier, I could not smile, enjoy jokes, or have a normal conversation. I was in a different world. I could beat anyone to a pulp and feel nothing about it. I feel more human now.”

Amal fell in love with it as a teenager, influenced by his peers. “But I never got addicted to it. The ganja that we get here is of low quality. Once, during an online chat, a friend and I shared some pictures of the grass we smoked. And he snubbed me for savouring trash,” he says. Like several others, Amal went on to trade ganja for headier stuff, all because of a friend who was into “real stuff” and kept the source of his supply close to his chest. Soon, Amal was catapulted to a life of perpetual high, riding on a cocktail of meth, MDMA, and LSD. His family,

comprising an indifferent father, clueless mother and a younger brother, had known that something was amiss with him. But it took his mother time to find out what was going on.

Cheating Friends

Last year, the Excise Department conducted a survey. The survey was among 800 children caught with drugs. Most of the participants in the survey revealed that they started using drugs due to the pressure of their friends. There are even fewer people who become drug addicts only because of their desire to use and problems at home.

Need, Social security

It is a big challenge for those who are once drug-free to stay away from it because of inducement by friends and so on. The social defence should also rise against this. It is easy for teachers to detect behavioural changes in children.



Along with the parents, their support is also needed.

Who is the leader?

The look and feel of the drug trade have changed to that of an undisguised big business. Agents, sub-agents, retailers, carriers... There is a huge chain behind it. The mode of transportation here is decentralized. In the past ten years, there have been more than 36,000 cases of drug seizures in Kerala. Children, women, and foreign workers are caught with drugs. However, from where they got the drugs and to whom they brought them, we do not get a precise answer.

Pay attention to these things

Children prone to drug addiction can be divided into four categories. Mental health experts say that identifying such children early can prevent them from going into drug addiction.

1. Excessive misbehaviour in children

The amount of dopamine in the body of such children is very low. Such people lack attention. Nothing can be enjoyed. The condition is called Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Such children find happiness in doing risky things. Speeding and drug use are more likely to do so. ADHD can be cured by early treatment.

2. Those who show criminal tendencies

Children who find pleasure in stealing, lying, and harming others at an early age. Such children are likely to become drug addicts when they reach adolescence.

3. Those who do not have a good relationship with their parents

Children who do not have a good relationship with their parents, those who come from broken family backgrounds, those who come from families where the parents themselves use drugs... These children are more likely to become drug addicts.

4. Introverted children

Children who are introverted by nature and anxious about trifles are often seen using drugs as an experiment or as medicine.

The Time and Presence of Parents and Teachers Would Work Miracles

They were led to the wrong path. But he took them by hand and showed them the right direction. Memoir of a compassionate Excise official

Andrews J.P.

Circle Inspector
Kerala State Excise
Department



Alarmingly petrifying is the radical aberration of the youth with the techno-advanced means of information at the tip of one's finger. My own personal experience in the Government service sector divulges a variety of experiences in the field of enforcement activities.

I joined the Kerala State Excise department in the post of Preventive officer in 1998. As part of the enforcement activities, booking cases against illegal activities was the official method. At the same time, creating awareness among the new generation and reforming them is something remarkable. Here, let me recall the most memorable account of an incident in my profession.

It was in 2014. One day a friend paid me a visit in the office. He was a higher secondary teacher. He told me that three students were caught from the bathroom smoking something. Instead of giving publicity, the three were brought to my office. The parents were also summoned.

The students revealed that almost eleven students in the class were using drugs and that included girls too. The third student, who was the ring leader, was very stubborn. But after some friendly conversation, he came around. His father was a drunkard and had left home. His mother was now working in Singapore. Later, I got a phone call from his mother from Singapore. She told me

that everything was provided to him - a high-tech mobile phone, laptop, and even a bike. She told me that next week she would come back taking leave. I asked the student to come to my office every alternate day till the mother returned.

The parents of the first two students promised that for 2 weeks they will remain with their children and were ready to take leave.

Meanwhile, I began to establish a friendly relationship with the ringleader. For the first week, he tried every possible way to get the narcotic items but later he cried and told me that he was ready to leave everything for good. His mother resigned her job and returned.

This ringleader used to call and meet me. He passed the Plus Two examination and got admission to B.Com. The most memorable thing is that last time he came to meet me with a handful of sweet items and told me that after having completed his business studies he was going abroad. It was a gratifying moment that cannot be put in words. He was accompanied by his father who returned home after a lapse of five years. The father had stopped drinking. Their affection was visible and memorable.

The striking aspect I learned from this incident was that the time and presence of parents and teachers would work miracles. So wish you all a blissful experience in life. ■

നാളെക്ക് നല്ലതിന്!

വിമുക്തി



കേരള സംസ്ഥാന ഏകീകരണ സെന്റർ



ലഹരിയിൽ കുടുങ്ങരുത്

Say No to Drugs

നല്ല നാളെക്കായ് ഇന്ന് തന്നെ ചാനാം

ലഹരി ഉപേക്ഷിക്കാം ജീവിതം ആസ്വാദ്യകരമാക്കാം

Say No to Drugs



കരകയറാൻ വഴിയുണ്ട്

സൗജന്യ കൗൺസിലിംഗിന് വിളിക്കൂ ടോൾഫ്രീ നമ്പർ

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• നാളത്തെ കേരളം ലഹരിമുക്ത നവകേരളം •

Once you're in,
it destroys your memory.
Your dignity.
Your self-respect.
And
everything that makes you human.



Don't let drugs
take control of your life.

NO
NOT EVEN
ONCE

Discover life.
Be creative. Be active.
Find ecstasy in making the world
a better place to live in.
Think anew.



Let's join hands for
A DRUG-FREE KERALA



Information & Public Relation Department, Government of Kerala



Information & Public Relations
Department, Government of Kerala

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