



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

INTOXICATION: A CURSE ON SOCIETY A STUDY OF CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF INTOXICATION AS FOUND IN LITERATURE

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Abstract- Intoxication is a condition in which a person has consumed intoxicated substances that affect their physical emotional and mental ability. Intoxication is one of the biggest curse for society. At first it was used as medicine but now it become habit for many people. There are many reasons for which people are using intoxicated substances and it affect them deeply. Intoxication is dangerous not only for physical and mental health but it can also lead to various criminal behavior like suicide,physical and sexual assault, robbery and burglary. In literature many writer has written about their experiences and observations of intoxicated substances and its effect. Some of them talk about pleasure and relaxation it brings, while some talk about the problems and the nightmares it causes. Many author has written about the issues surrounding dependency,fracturing of relationships and many other side effects that intoxicated substances bring.

Difficult word: intoxication, intoxicated substances, relationship,dangerous, curse,society, consumption

Intoxication: Intoxication is a condition in which a person has consumed intoxicated substances such as alcohol, drugs, tobacco etc. which affect their physical emotional and mental ability. Intoxicated substances are widely being used, nowadays it become habitual for people to use intoxicated substances. Intoxication is one of the biggest curse for society because it is the cause of many deaths, accidents,physical and mental abuse and many more crimes. Intoxicated substances affect so deeply that people loses their control and it cause devastating effect. It's hard to find the beginning of the culture of consuming intoxicated substances but at first it was used for medicine and gradually it become part of upper class lifestyle and now everyone has access to it. Intoxication may lead to a temporary relaxation but it also diminishes the senses, changes mood and emotion and ultimately led to loose control or consciousness and sometime to death. Intoxication not only affect the person who is using it but also affect family,relationship and society. As intoxicated substances often changes the behavior of users, it can lead a person to commit crime to support their habit.

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CAUSES FOR CONSUMPTION OF INTOXICATION SUBSTANCES: Consuming alcohol is now a part of culture and fashion. Most of the people are using it to enjoy the relaxation it brings. There are many different reasons for which people are using intoxicated substances on a great level. Some people use it for pleasure and relaxation, some use it to escape reality and get away from problem, some use it as a means to express their feelings and thoughts, while for some people it is a way to get rid of guilt and stress. As Oscar Wilde in his work 'De Profundis' made a confession about drugs that he "deliberately went to the depth in the search for new sensation."

In Oscar Wilde's novel 'Picture of Dorian Gray' the main character Dorian's Faustian Bargain caused him mental decline so Dorian uses opium for seeking mental and physical relief which shows universally human dependency on drugs as a means of coping and relaxation.

Some people use alcohol and drugs to live in their imaginary world. In Edward Albee's 'Who's Afraid Of Virginia Wolf' alcohol is a means of hiding from the world to live in their illusion where Martha and George created illusion of happy family with a child.

In James Joyce's short story 'Counterpart', from the collection 'Dubliner', Farrington use alcohol to escape reality and get away from problem. He feels happiness while drinking with friends because it made him forget his depression and frustration from his job.

EFFECTS OF INTOXICATION: Intoxicated substances might bring temporary pleasure and relaxation but at the end it lead to devastating consequences for a person. Intoxication is dangerous not only for physical and mental health but it can also lead to various criminal behavior like suicide, physical and sexual assault, robbery and burglary. It can also destroy relationship, reputation and family. In Shakespeare's 'Twelfth Knight' Clown's definition of drunken man shows dark aspect of alcohol consumption "like a drown'd man, a fool and a mad man; one draught above heat makes him a fool: the second mads him: and third drowns him." (Act 1 Scene 4)

In Shakespeare's 'Macbeth' the conversation between Macduff and Porter shows the influence of alcohol on sexual prowess:

Macduff: What three things does drink especially provoke?

Porter: Lechery, sir, it provoke and unprovokes; it provokes the desire, but it takes away the performance.(Act 2 Scene 3)

Intoxication can lead one to insanity as seen in the short story 'The Black Cat' by Edgar Allan Poe. The unnamed narrator of Poe's story was fond of animal especially his cat Pluto but his alcoholic habit pushes him towards insanity or unconsciousness. In his drunken condition he murdered his cat later when he he saw a similar cat it led him towards psychological guilt and more alcoholic habit. At the end he murdered his own wife.

Many author has written about the issues surrounding dependency, fracturing of relationship and many other side effect that intoxicated substances can brings. Thomas Hardy's novels shows devastating effect of alcohol on family relationship. The destruction of Tess Durbeyfield in 'Tess of the D'urbervilles' shows the effect of being raised in an alcoholic family. The tragic downfall of Tess was caused her error in judgement which she learned from her alcoholic father. Alcoholism of her father John Durbeyfield caused her the vulnerable life under Alec.

In "Mayor of Casterbridge" by Thomas Hardy, the central character Michael Henchard uses alcohol to escape from his unhappy married life and he end up selling his wife Susan and daughter Elizabeth Jane. Michael Henchard uses alcohol as a means of expressing and releasing stress but at the end he lost control of his action.

Oscar Wilde in his work 'De Profundis' talk about his desire to quit intoxication substances because of it's limiting nature " I threw the pearl of my soul into a cup of wine but to have continued the same life would have been wrong because it would have been limiting." This shows his realization of its physical, psychological and bodily effects and how the mind altering substances restrict human ability for success.

Oscar Wilde's novel 'the Picture of Dorian Gray' shows the horrifying consequences of intoxication. For instance Dorian's visit to the opium den and his description of horrifying encounter with the people affected by the fatal consequences of intoxication. Dorian also considered the opium den to be "dens of horror where the memory of old sins could be destroyed by the madness of sins that are new." Dorian's degeneration from goodness to evil and finally the death shows the devastating effect of intoxication and the psychological turmoil it brings.

In R.L.Stevenson 'The Strange Case Of Dr Jekyll And Mr Hyde', Mr Hyde is described as "hardly human" which shows ability of intoxication to change human form. R.L.Stevenson presented intoxication as having the power to destroy, to take his humanity and not to replace him with anything. He presented the animalistic effect of intoxication through the character of Mr Hyde by giving him animalistic characteristics.

Conclusion: Intoxication is a curse for society as it make human loose their physical as well as mental capability. Intoxication affects not only the person who is using intoxicated substances but also the people around them. So its highly important for us to realise the dangerous effects of intoxication and keep ourselves away from intoxicated substances.

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