

“Substance Abuse And Its Effect On Work Culture With Special Focus On Vodafone Company (Ahmedabad)”

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I. Introduction

UNODC in its annual report of 2013 says that around 5% of world population uses the drug once at least in a year and 235000 die every year. This is the statistics of drugs which are banned as per international and national NDPS Act. It does not include smoking, drinking and tobacco chewing which is the largest killer of the world.

It is spread across the globe in our young generation. The consumption of this substance is considered cool, which resulting unhealthy workforce, premature deaths, family discords and various other issues affecting the general well being of the society. So substance abuse is affecting badly to organizations. The productivity of employees is going down, untimely deaths, life style related diseases, depression, mental illness, law self esteem is on the rise. At the end it's a loose lose situation for both the employees and for the organization.

Drug use and its health consequences:

It is estimated that a total of 246 million people, or 1 out of 20 people between the ages of 15 and 64 years, used an illicit drug in the year 2013. This represents an increase of 3 million over the previous year but, because of the increase in the global population, illicit drug use has in fact remained stable. The magnitude of the world drug problem becomes more apparent when considering that more than 1 out of 10 drug users is a problem drug user, suffering from drug use disorders or drug dependence. In other words, some 27 million people, or almost the entire population of a country the size of Malaysia, are problem drug users. Almost half (12.19 million) of those problem drug users inject drugs, and an estimated 1.65 million of those who inject drugs were living with HIV in 2013.

This places a heavy burden on public health systems in terms of the prevention, treatment and care of drug use disorders and their health consequences. Only one out of every six problem drug users in the world has access to treatment as many countries have a large shortfall in the provision of services. The annual number of drug-related deaths (estimated at 187,100 in 2013) has remained relatively unchanged. An unacceptable number of drug users continue to lose their lives prematurely, often as a result of overdose, even though overdose-related deaths are preventable.

The UNODC normally covers the drugs falling under narcotics act of various countries. In India it is NDPS ACT 1985, as per this act consumption of narcotics drugs and psychotropic substance attract one year penal provision and fine. It does not include smoking and drinking alcohol, which are the largest killer in the world. It is spread across the globe for our young generation. The consumption of these substances is considered cool, which is resulting into an unhealthy workforce, premature deaths, family discords and various other issues affecting the general well being of the society.

So substance abuse is affecting badly to organizations and nations. Let's first see what are the substances (Drugs) of substance abuse are,
general definition of drugs.

“Drugs are chemical substances with a capacity to affect the Central Nervous System by producing a state of intoxication or a similar change in mental functions.”

So anything which affects the activities of our central nervous system by creating a euphoria or similar change can be said drug. Substances of abuse include tobacco and it all products, alcohol, cannabis, opiates, coca and cocaine, synthetic drugs, misuse of prescription medicine, general anaesthetic, volatile substances.

What are the costs of drug abuse ?

Social Cost

- Broken families
- Loss of reputation
- Peer group pressure
- Social stigma

- Drop outs

Legal Cost

- Road accidents
- Domestic violence
- Crimes
- Aggression and violence
- Insurgency and anti national activities
- Arrest, imprisonment

Health Cost

- HIV, hepatitis B and C and tuberculosis
- Infertility
- Psycho-somatic disorders
- Reduced immunity levels
- Premature death
- Miscarriage and still birth
- Unprotected sex and Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD)

Economic Cost

- Productivity suffers at workplace and home
- Loss of job – human capital
- Loss of earnings – financial burden
- Cost of treatment – medical care and rehabilitation
- Corruption and Black money

Psychological Cost

- Low self esteem
- Feeling of loneliness, guilt, helplessness
- Fear of abandonment and chronic depression
- Poor mental health
- Suicides

Harmful effects of substance abuse on work culture

Issues related to work culture due to substance consumption:-

1. **Absenteeism:** Normally when the employees are on binge on Sunday, it becomes very difficult for them to report next day which very important decision or work suffer at the critical point.
2. **Negative impact on efficiency:** Substance abuse badly impacts the efficiency part of employees. Since alcohol and other drugs do not allow users to sleep properly, it results in poor performance.
3. **Decision taken in closed group of users:** Normally people those who smoke, drink or do some kind of substance abuse, they make a close comity and decision are taken by them only, resulting, poor, biased decision.
4. **Health related issue like stamina is reduced:** Substance use results in many kind of serious health issues which badly affect the employees and their overall well being. Their work capacity and stamina is reduced which affects the productivity very badly.
5. **Aggressive reactions and behaviour:** The entire mind altering drugs results the person behaving in different way which many a time aggressive and not logical.
6. **Problem solving limited to small group only:** When certain peer group at particular level indulge in substance abuse, they don't allow others to be part of that and important decisions of an organisation are taken by them.
7. **Time waste:** A lot of time is waste in drug, alcohol and in some other substance consumption and that very time could have been used for the well being and other productive thins of the organisation.
8. **Productivity suffers:** All the above mention factors affects the quality and productivity very badly.
9. **Family discord:** Lots of problems are happening in the families such as divorce, domestic violence and argumentative behaviour.
10. **Stimulus to other things decreases:** During the talk with some of the employees, they reveal that libido takes a toll when someone is on smoke or drug.

Ultimately the health of an organisation is directly related with the health of its human resources, poor human resources, poor the health of an organisation. The kind of training, expenditure on training and development

avail no value when the person is on drugs. Organisation suffers immense loss because of these kinds of employees.

II. Methodology

Scope of Study

The scope of study is to find out about the habit of substance abuse by employees in Vodafone at Ahmedabad office and its effect on the work culture. The study will also find out the number of substances which are abused by the employees. The study will find out the ways and means to improve the work culture also. The study will find out the damage caused by these substances. The position of legal framework dealing with this issue will be studied. The remedy and framework of bringing the employees into mainstream would be part of project. Agencies working in this field would be studied and their efforts and impact would be analysed. Though the scope is confined to Vodafone mobile company based at Ahmadabad only, nevertheless impact on other organizations in general also would be discussed during the course of study.

Rational for Case Study

In present times, Substance abuse is becoming very common at work place. After 1991, i.e., post liberalization, many international companies are setting their office in different cities of India, which also has brought the western culture with them, including rampant substance abuse. This study is being done to study the impact of substance abuse done by human resources on their work environment and their satisfaction with the work culture. This study also wants to establish a link between substance abuse and deteriorating work culture.

Objectives

The objective of study is to find out the root cause of substance abuse in corporate culture and its effect on work environment and employee satisfaction with work culture. At the same time this study will be working on the solution to have safe campus in the corporate world so that employees remain fit and healthy away from substance abuse. After 1991 liberalization many international companies have set their office at different cities of India, which also has brought the western culture also, which include rampant substance abuse. This study is being done to measure the impact of substance abuse to human resources, productivity and finally to work culture. This study also wants to establish a link between substance abuse and deteriorating work culture.

Significance

The study is very significant from the point of view of overall development of humankind. It poses challenges to human resources managers who are day to day dealing these kinds of problems like absenteeism, erratic behaviours, and poor mental and physical health of workers of their organizations. This study finally gives the tools to human resources manager to deal with above problems and make the work place more healthy and powerful. At the end the dream of making our country as developed country is the core theme of this study by focusing on substance abuse.

Sampling Unit

124 Employees working on various designations of Vodafone India (Ahmedabad head office) which were selected using Non-probability (Convenience Sampling) method.

Data Collection

Questionnaire filled in through Personal Interview. Apart from the filled forms and a detailed talk was also conducted with them in order to fetch deeper outcome as, keeping in mind the sensitivity of the topic, we expected lesser information on paper. UNODC report and various reports would be used for getting the secondary data during the course of study.

Limitations

Majority of them were not willing to divulge the details of their consumption of these substances officially on record, but many of them off the records mentioned about the substances which they have tried once or while or using it occasionally.

III. Analysis

The study at Vodafone

The task of conducting a survey on such a sensitive topic was a bit challenging. Although some of them accepted that they smoke or drink, acceptance of drug use was not seen as far as questionnaire is concerned. Still, during informal conversations with the same respondents, few admitted to use drugs like cannabis once in a while. Another remarkable observation was that the prevalence of substance abuse was found more in night shift employees those who are in call centre job. Among the reasons a peer pressure, curiosity, experimentation, boredom, enjoyment, stress, and old habit were found to be very common. Different people narrated various effect of substance abuse.

Substance Consumption Details

	Yes		No		Total
	Number	%	Number	%	
Male	49	84	42	64	91
Female	9	16	24	36	33
Total	58	47	66	53	124

As clearly evident, 47% of the employees were found to be involved in some sort of drug abuse either presently or in the past and it can be said that more male employees are active drug users. And almost 84 % of them are males proving that male employees are more involved in substance abuse.

Events that usually lead to Substance Abuse

Various reasons cited by employees for consuming substances were as follows:

- 1) Stress
- 2) Enjoyment and relax
- 3) To give the company to bosses- On drink and drugs, employees get the chance to go to closer to boss if he is into smoke/drink or drug.
- 4) Overburden of work and chasing the targets
- 5) Peer pressure
- 6) To get themselves noticed- They feel that by using these things they get the entry to elite club.
- 7) Staying away and alone from families
- 8) Night shift duties
- 9) Many have a misconception that drug, specially smoking help to maintain lean figure.
- 10) Lots of employees feel that marijuana is helpful in creativity.
- 11) Some feel that once or twice try is not harmful and there are no chances of getting addicted as they can easily control their craving
- 12) As a curiosity
- 13) Risk taking and rebellion
- 14) Imitate friends

Has Substance abuse something to do with age?

Age	Total	Yes		No	
		Number	%	Number	%
<20	2	0	0	2	100
20-25	47	24	51	23	49
25-30	46	19	41	27	59
30-35	18	10	56	8	44
35-40	4	2	50	2	50
40-50	7	3	43	4	57
Total	124	58		66	

It seems that employees falling between the age brackets 20-25 and 25-30 are mostly into substance abuse and the problem of drug abuse seems to reduce after a certain age as very few of those who have crossed 35 years are involved in it. However employees in none of the age brackets are away from it. It may be very much possible that younger ones might be more fearful of publically accepting as many are still dependants while the more seniors are usually the bread winners and therefore more open about their habits.

Educational background and Substance Abuse

	Yes	No
High School	30%	70%
Graduate	52%	48%
Post Graduate	44%	56%

Only those employees who have studied only upto high school level are less into substance abuse due to the fact that most of these have just started their jobs after completeing their 12th and are still quite young. But still 30% of them consume substances.

Shifts and Substance Abuse

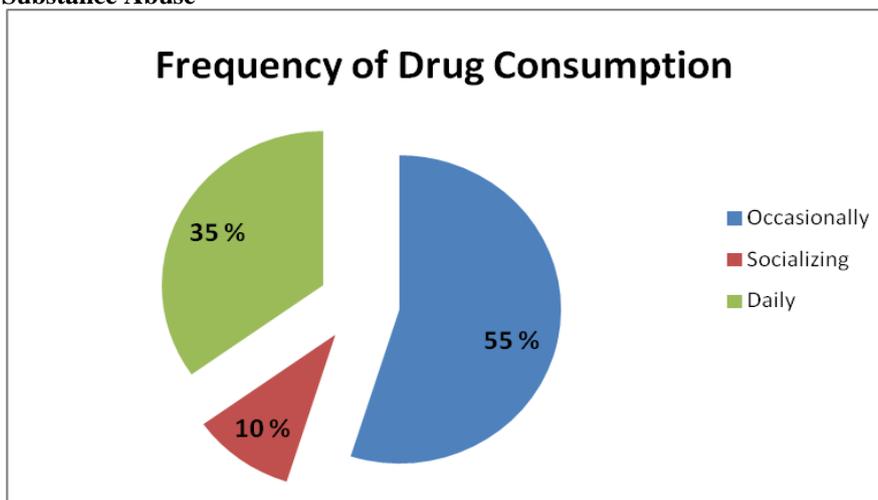
Shifts	Yes		No		Total Number
	Number	%	Number	%	
Day	24	41	47	71	71
Night	7	12	0	0	7
Rotational	27	47	19	29	46
Total	58	100	66	100	124

The results clearly indicate that all of those working in the night shifts are into substance abuse. This was also observed during informal talks with the employees that working in night shifts is stressful and they take support of substances to keep awake or keep of boredom.

Substance Abuse as a Stress Buster

In the survey, when asked about what helps them to get rid of stress 20% of the employees confessed that they take support of some or the other kind of substance to become stress-free. This also means that the stress created by the corporate culture’s work environment contributes towards increase in substance abuse. This is because when asked about their stress, employees said they feel pressurized working under high targets, office politics, etc., which creates lot of stress in their life. It was also noted that for those who took substance as stress busters, all of them tried to quit, but only 2 could quit.

Frequency of Substance Abuse



To gauge the frequency of substance abuse, 3 options were given to the employees, a) Occasionally-for those who did it once-in-while, b) Socializing-for those who did only in parties or to accompany bosses/colleagues; and c) Daily-for addicts. Most of them are into a daily habit of it. Thus, 35% were found to be actually addicted to it.

Quitting

We asked some questions like have they ever tried to quit and whether they have been successful and if they were what kind of support system they had which helped them to quit. Below are some of the results about quitting ratio..

Tried Quitting	Number	%
Yes	39	67
No	19	33
Total	58	100

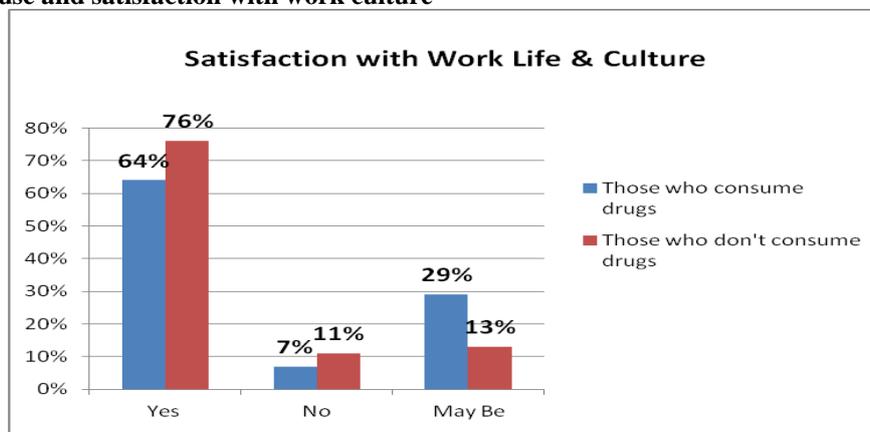
Successful	Number	%
Yes	29	74
No	10	26
Total	39	100

If we compare the first table with the second one, it is clearly evident that although a good percentage of people tried quitting their habits but unfortunately all of them couldn't quit. It should also be noted here that even for those who said that they were successful in quitting, many started again after 2-3 months so the actual % of people who quit substances are very few. Apart from this there were a good number of people who have never tried quitting nor do they feel the need to do so.

Support Structure

Quitting any drug, especially for those who are addicted is never an easy task. During my survey I also asked them about what helped some of them to quit and almost all replied that it was their family. Now it's quite obvious but the ratio of quitters could have been higher if some kind of organizational support is extended to the victims. Many said that they didn't have any support system, may be because they couldn't share it with their family or maybe they stay away from home, which again makes them more prone to get into substance abuse. It is in such cases that the organization can play an important role. Today many of the MNC's are extending such support to their employees by making a stress free work environment, hiring counsellors for them, and even going to the extent of keeping them in rehabs for a couple of months. Presently any such practice isn't there at Vodafone.

Substance Abuse and satisfaction with work culture



Although the graph indicates that most of them are satisfied with their work culture, results could be biased as the survey was conducted at company premises and the employees might be conscious about their responses on such a matter or hesitate to give their honest feedback. However one interesting thing to note here is that 13% of those who are into substance abuse did actually confess that they aren't satisfied with the work culture and none of those who do not consume substances are dissatisfied. Thus those who lead a happy life free of drug abuse, enjoy work better and feel more comfortable with work culture.

Working Environment and Culture

	Number	Percentage
Equal Growing Opportunities	39	32 %
Friendly	71	57 %
Hostile	4	3 %
Accomodative	10	8 %
Total	124	100

Most of the employees are of the opinion that Vodafone provides them a friendly work environment and some also believe in the equality of growth opportunities. It is quite surprising that inspite of this fact so many employees need to consume substances to get rid of the stress. It is possible as the survey was undertaken in the company premises itself, employees were bound to give positive feedback about the work culture. So it cannot be concluded that all employees work in a healthy work environment. Moreover the increments, promotions, perks and perquisites in these type of companies are always tied to performance putting a burdern on the employees to achieve higher and higher targets.

IV. Findings

Some of the main findings are listed below:

- ✓ 47% of the employees were found to be involved in substance abuse. Out of those who consumed any form of substance, 84% were males and 16% females.
- ✓ Of those who consume, 55% take occasionally, 10% during parties and socializing events and 35% on a daily basis.
- ✓ It was observed that all of those serving in the night shifts are into substance abuse. When asked they gave the reason that it helped them to get rid of sleep and boredom.
- ✓ 20% of the people are into substance abuse as they feel that it acts as a stress buster for them and very few of them are able to quit.
- ✓ 39 out of 58 employees into substance abuse tried to quit it but only 29 of them were successful.
- ✓ Although employees at all age seemed to be involved in substance abuse, those between the age brackets 20-25 and 25-30 are most into it.
- ✓ Those who were successful in getting rid of their addiction held their family support responsible for being able to do so.
- ✓ Among the reasons quoted by employees for starting substance abuse were stress, enjoyment, peer pressure, overburden of work and pressure to meet targets, give company to bosses, staying away from home/family, night shift duties, acceptance and approval in friend circle.
- ✓ Younger employees and those who have just passed their high school and started working are comparatively less involved in substance abuse, but considering the present work environment in corporate and the amount of work stress along with peer pressure, for how long the younger generation would be able to stay away from it is a question mark.

V. Recommendations

Remedies to get rid of these kinds of addictions:

- i. Counselling
- ii. De addiction centre-It has been noticed that very few employees goes for rehab or counselling since they have the fear that if the company bosses come to know about their drug problem, they might lose the job. But there are some of the companies providing extensive support to their employees in getting rid of their addiction by allowing paid leaves during rehabilitation, counselling services, etc.

Remedies to improve the work culture

I recommend an initiative under this project for Vodafone and other companies that can be started. The initiative called “healthy campus” is to be implemented for this purpose which will address the root cause of drug abuse. The initiative comprises of six components which are not only solutions for drug abuse but they can even help in increasing productivity to higher levels.

These six components are:

1. Promoting healthy life style
2. Promoting the stress management
3. Promoting the soft skills
4. Developing the critical thinking
5. Building the self esteem
6. Developing the social consciousness

This has the solution for drug abuse and working on the above six pointers, an individual may lead to a healthy , confident and powerful life which will make a powerful work culture and the productivity of work force would go up, it will bring the harmony at work place and at the personal front of employees

How the initiative will be done

The company management will be encouraged to start this activity in their campus by forming a committee of various levels of employees. They will be making program for the entire year comprising the certain number of events. Inter group meets would also be organised on periodic interval and a study on impact measurement would be conducted. The so called activities would be having above mention six components of healthy campus initiatives. Finally the impact of substance abuse on work culture would be minimized.

Desired result

The project would be taking Vodafone Company as a role model or rather a lab for this project and the outcomes would be used for other companies as role model. Involvement of other agencies, help of social media, print and electronic media will be taken for this would be taken to promote the initiative.

VI. Conclusion

The study has been successful in establishing the substance abuse and its effect on work culture. it has shown that employees who are not in any kind of drugs are more satisfied and more productive compare to employee who are in some kind of substance abuse. Whereas work culture and productivity is adversely affected , the serious effects are far more harmful , like the impact on family , aggression , divorce, impact on children and society are more alarming. All the drugs are not cheap once a person into drugs , he become addicts and require more quantity of that substance , and chances of going into crimes increases manifold . as we know Afghanistan is world largest producer of heroin having market value 65\$ billion dollar and most of the proceed of this goes to Taliban, the same way cannabis cultivation area falls under the naxal affected belt . Almost same scenario is with other drugs which directly established connection between narcotics and terrorism.

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