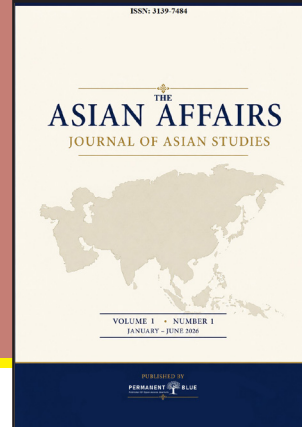




A Proposal on 'Disability and Substance Addiction: Nature and Nuances'

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Abstract: Disability and substance addiction is a vital and a multi-faced topic to be researched on in the contemporary times. The number of disabled people is rising along with their participation is abuse and addiction of substances and drugs related activities. This paper is a guide for the forthcoming post-doctoral scholars to secure a post in ICSSR's fellowship and research. The article is a complete guide in preparation of a proposal systematically for the ICSSR's post-doctoral fellowship for coming year or so on. This research bases Siliguri, a city of North Bengal, with in the state of West Bengal. Existing literature and contemporary empirical reality make the topic emerging and a matter of concern in recent times for the government as the addiction and crime rate is rising rapidly. This paper could be a manual for upcoming aspirants of post-doctoral with in Indian context and could encourage and retain researchers in research even after PhD.

Keywords: Addiction, Disability, ICSSR, Substance, Post-doctoral

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Introduction

Educational learning is a lifelong process if someone wishes to acquire not as only a formal institutional way or otherwise but for those who are into academics and want to secure their position into research knowledge and qualification after doctors of philosophy in social sciences need to start preparing a proposal for the post-doctoral research and its fellowship obviously. This paper is a piece that could guide aspirants of PDF (post-doctoral fellowship) especially for Indian Council of Social Sciences to proceed systematically for the preparation of a proposal. The domain of research of this paper is Sociology and the priority area of the research is, development and empowerment of vulnerable sections of society. A complete structure will be given by the ICSSR for the preparation of the proposal concerning limited word count. A scholar has to follow the instructions laid by the organization in each step of preparation of the proposal. This paper will be shown from abstract to the reference to grasp the pertinent points to be actualized in respective proposal of the aspirant. Now, we will have the complete structure instructed by ICSSR in detail as a paper is as follows-

The term ‘disability’, whether physical or psychological make an individual vulnerable to the society. This makes the situation very fragile for the survival as it put disabled in a struggling life where ignorance, stigma, marginalization are the common issues to be experienced in every day. The topic is emerging in Indian perspective and still neglected which needs a keen understanding of scientific research to unravel many facets attached with the issue in Siliguri. This research aims to focus on the everyday life of the disabled individuals who are in substance addiction. This empirical research will help to understand major causes that are guiding disabled towards unhealthy consumption of substances along with its pattern and consequences. To get the data from the field different qualitative methods will be applied and detailed description of the data will be based on the ethnography and phenomenological understanding. This study would be very beneficial to the agencies that are directly attached with the wellbeing and welfare of the disabled in Siliguri as it will bring pertinent information about the disability and substance addiction and could culminate fruitful results for persons with disability to perceive their productive qualities that they are wasting by indulging in the behaviour.

Conceptual Framework

Substance addiction amongst youth is vital and a matter of concern nowadays, but addiction among disabled people is emerging and a growing concern in contemporary times worldwide. However, the issue is still ignored and overlooked in Indian research. Some of the crucial works have been done abroad, and a few indigenous scholars extended their focus to shed light on the ripple effect of the activity on the addicts and the greater society of India.

This proposed research considers Siliguri, a city of North Bengal, as the field of the research. The city is a rapidly growing and unprecedented in its expansion and growth, which impacts the behaviour of its people significantly. Modern civic amenities and changes accelerate illegal activities to flourish and enhance the chances of getting involved in illegal activities. Normally, social processes directly impact the existing rules and regulations of a society until development occurs and new rules step in. This gap lures the young to be a part of the changing phase. Several factors work together to make such activities a prevailing trend in society. The scholar will try to accommodate vital reasons that contribute to the addiction of the disabled in contemporary society, as it impacts the minds and health of the disabled who are already restricted in full functioning compared to the non-disabled or normal people.

The proposed study will examine the issue in the light of a few theories, which could generate some fruitful results in contemporary times. Stigma Theory of Goffman that based upon spoiled identity, Social Learning Theory is developed by Albert Bandura which says that, individuals learn behavior by observing and imitating others., Liquid Modernity, Social Exclusion, and, Intersectionality are a few theories that are being considered by the scholar for the study in initial stage. Existing literature is limited on the use of different theories aiming to assess disability and substance addiction and the relevant impact of the behaviour on the everyday life of the abuser.

Review of Literature

Several research papers, books, and reports have been reviewed to gather information relating to the problem and categorized regionally.

National works

In 'Substance Use Disorders: A 'Disguised Disability' Sidhana and Kaur specifically dealt self-reported disabilities, which also help in identifying how individual health declines the standard and impacts public health by consuming drugs and substances regularly. They have talked about the welfaristic approach to lessen the problem, which will support the disabled through inclusive and non-discriminatory measures.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration produced an annual report where they have tried to secure measures to fulfill the special needs of this group specially and to prevent them from these unhealthy activities which could lead them to chronic pain and sufferings.

Jayesh Patidar, 2022; Nita and Julie, 2021, shows intensive works done by several scholars who mainly dealt with the major causes of substance abuse by the disabled young individuals and also, the treatment procedure and availability. He showed a gist of the opinion and findings of different scholars from different point of view on the current issue.

International Works

McCrystal, Higgins and Percy worked on 'Substance use behaviours of young people with a moderate leaning disability: a longitudinal analysis' that examines the major space and situations in which disabled participate in consumption of various substances.

'Substance use and misuse patterns and disability status' where Reif et al. shows the participation of persons with disability in addiction of substances with related causes and the participation is higher in substance abuse which could lead them towards choric pain and struggle.

Chapman and Wu in their seminal work 'substance abuse among individuals with intellectual disabilities', they find that disabled persons are prone to substance addiction along with more sufferer than other group members of the society. Reis, Wetzel et al. 2017; Eisenbaum, 2018 convey that, Intellectual Disabled are more vulnerable and faces lots of problem regarding mental, physical, and social consequences, while McGillivray and Moore, 2009 focused on mild intellectual disability with drug abuse based on offending and non-offending individuals.

Salaver et al. 2018; Kerr et al. 2017 in a cross-sectional analysis finds, lack of treatment facilities for disabled push them at a verge of health consequences as they are emerging population in the addiction space. Levy, 2020 showcases that binge alcohol drinking sets a pattern and maximizes the risk of life situation.

Identification of Research Gap

The proposal has reviewed a couple of national and international works done by eminent scholars on the issue, despite they have assessed the problem from different viewpoints and perspectives, there remains a notable gap in understanding addicts every day encounter with substance, family and society. This issue should be studied to understand the pattern and magnitude as a structural process, addict's initiation and through. This will justify proper linkages between major causes and consequences for the initiation and everyday sufferings of those who attached themselves with it.

The study intends to examine the relationship between disability and substance addiction, along with seeking to investigate the major causes that drive the disabled toward addiction and the greater impact of the behaviour on the addicts concerning everyday life. The research will try to

explore the background story of addicts' disability (inborn disability or accidental effect) and the connection of vital substances with which they are associated.

Usually, in addiction people get scolded, ignored, stigmatized, cut off from participating in social gatherings or discarded from the productive activity by himself or by the society only after having an addiction towards one or more drugs or substances but in case of disabled, they are experiencing such events or situations immediate after their disability which gradually provokes them to be in the arena of addiction of different substances only to exert their frustration and distress.

As the problem is still neglected and ignored in Indian research therefore, inclusion of any research work in this area should be encouraged to enrich the field. Unavailability of authentic research works would automatically leave a suffering for the gateway scholars and discourage them to understand the problem systematically.

These are the major gaps that the scholar considered to be accounted in this research and also, leave a space for the future scholars to examine the gendered roles or perspectives in substance addiction by the disabled individuals.

Objectives

The major objectives of the study are as follows-

1. To assess the major causes that guides the disabled toward substance use, abuse, and addiction.
2. To know about the pattern, magnitude, and extent of the activity.
3. Will try to locate the specific impact of the behaviour on the everyday lives of the addicts.
4. To brief the socio-economic situation of the addicts
5. To find the relation between existing disability and specific substance, if it exists.
6. To justify the role of non-disables (marginalization and stigma) in leading disables toward addiction through stigma, bullying, ignorance, and underestimation in participation in different productive activities.

Major Research Questions and Hypothesis

The aim of selecting the topic is to explore the question, what could be the chances of indulgence in the behaviour compared to the non-disabled persons, as disabled persons are emotionally vulnerable, thereby they are more prone to engage in the activity, while non-disabled persons are emotionally stronger compared to the disabled ones. To show the strength to society or for other reasons, non-disabled individuals participate and leads toward addiction but hypothetically disables are more prone and fragile to involve into the behavior compared to the non-disables, thereby the researcher is proposing this study which needs to be happen to assess and realize the actual scenario of the problem scientifically.

Framework and Methods Proposed for Research

The study will be based on qualitative and quantitative information on the issue. Primary information on the problem will be collected from the field by applying different methods, and for secondary

data, the study will consult different books, journals, published and unpublished theses, different governmental and non- governmental reports, and news articles, which are available online and offline. Different social media platforms could be helpful for the study in getting information relating to the problem.

For quantitative data, the survey method will be applied to get the exact information about the type of disability, age, and gender, along with the type of substance they are obsessed with or attached to from different resource centres; it could be a health centre or a school or at the community level.

For qualitative data, the research will rely on the ethnographic and phenomenological understanding of abusers' everyday lives. To get the primary data semi-structured questionnaire will be prepared to get in- depth experiences of the abuser through personal interviews. As the fact appears clear that disabled respondents will not be found in a single space, the snowball technique could be useful to extract data from the field. If resource centres could provide respondents at once, then the simple random sampling method would be applied to get data relating to the behaviour in detail. As the study universe (number of total population) is indefinite, thereby, to consider a proportion as a sample becomes impossible for the study. In this case, the number of respondents will be considered afterwards with a consultation with the supervisor of the study.

Observation method will help in identifying respondents as well as to understand the problem at the individual, family, and community levels. This method also contributes to cross-checking the data that will be collected from the field of the concerned study.

To get exact qualitative data on the issue, group discussions with addicts, along with different officials who are dealing with the issue in the region, will be conducted.

Data analysis will follow a thematic approach to categorize the experiences if found based on the stigma, ignorance, and exclusion. For quantitative data, statistical tools will be applied and showcased through tables and charts as per the convenience of the study.

To detail the study, report writing will be based on thick description and descriptive phenomenological analysis of the problem to portray the exact situation that the respondents of the study are facing.

Innovation/Path Breaking Aspects of the Proposed Research

In Indian context, the issue is still neglected academically to be researched on. The group is vulnerable and the population of the group is increasing rapidly in contemporary times which make it a very sensitive issue to understand systematically. Substance abuse by the non-disabled is very different than that of the disabled ones. The whole life journey and the situation are different. Therefore, knowing the situations of the disabled will be a new understanding rather what people normally understood about the abuse of substances by the young or the adults.

Proposed Outcomes

The study anticipates several key findings:

- Identification of specific risk factors that associate disability to substance addiction.
- To evaluate the mainstream response to the disabled with addiction in everyday life.

- Insights into the emotional, social, and systemic challenges faced by disabled individuals dealing with addiction.
- The following study will be an important sociological analysis to understand the specific behavioural issues relating to the problem and marginalisation of a particular group and its dynamics academically.

Any New Data to be Generated where Data Deficiency is Felt

As the field of the study had grown in a unprecedented way which made it a sensitive in every respect and illegal activities are the crucial ones. The field has rich existence of data on the issue but lacks systematic and scientific research work on the current topic of the study.

Relevance of the Proposed Study for Policy Making

The research on the proposed issue could generate fruitful results to understand the recent trends, patterns of the activity. This understanding could easily help the policy makers to take some good policies to provide safeguards to the individuals who are already suffering with disability and could be spared from drugs or substance abuse. Also, it would be a great chance for the policy makers and administrators to reduce rate of criminal activities done by the disabled in the form of illegal abuse of substances, selling and other crimes like, theft, stealing, road accidents, rape, murder etc. by implementing some good initiative against such unwanted activity.

Relevance of the Study for Society

In contemporary times, addiction to substances is very common and prominent amongst youth, but here we are specifically talking about a section of people who are disabled, and this is not very common in society, yet too dangerous. The number of persons with disability is a proportion compared to the total number of normal individuals; however, one of the studies has shown and claimed that persons with disability have higher exposure to substance addiction compared to normal people (SAMSHA, 2024). Though several factors work differently in attracting the young towards the behaviour, nevertheless, the fact is that the disabled are into addiction, and what could be the impact on their mental and physical health as they are already in a crisis. The topic of research has a widespread area to be researched, as the issue is still neglected in the Indian context in a broader perspective.

Current proposal aims to conduct the research in Siliguri Sub-Division which is surrounded by the national and international borders, thereby, the region under study is always in a high tempted ground for drugs and different substance smuggling, storing and distribution amongst the minor along with different vulnerable section only to spread a good business with high margin of profit. This situation makes the topic very important to be researched and this will explore different dimension that are attached with the issue in relation to the field of the study.

Milestone Set for the Study for each Successive Quarter

- **First Quarter (1-3 months):** Defining research problem, review existing literature, identifying theoretical framework, formulate research questions and hypothesis.

- **Second Quarter (4-6 months):** Preparing research design and, methodology formulation.
- **Third Quarter (7-9 months):** Pilot study and tool and techniques validation, and a paper publication in a peer reviewed journal.
- **Fourth Quarter (10-12 months):** Fieldwork and primary data collection.
- **Fifth Quarter (13-15 months):** Data compilation, clean and organize data for analyses.
- **Sixth Quarter (16-18 months):** Data analysis and interpretation, publication of another paper in a peer reviewed journal.
- **Seventh Quarter (19-21 months):** Writing and drafting of the research.
- **Eighth Quarter (22-24 months):** Revision, finalization and submission of the research.

Conclusion

The concluding remarks of the study suggests that, the aspirant should be focused in following the steps that suggested by the ICSSR to get the fellowship to be in the research arena. All the points need to be described precisely within their word limits to present a proposal to secure the fellowship successfully.

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