

Opium Addiction among Rural Population in Desert Districts of Western Rajasthan: Some Observations from the Study

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KEYWORDS Opium Addiction. Desert Population. Rural Areas. Western Rajasthan

ABSTRACT A house to house survey was done in 45 rural villages of Barmer, Jaisalmer and Bikaner districts of Rajasthan. A total of 1200 house holds were screened interviewed and data was collected on schedules. The analysis revealed that there were 1200 opium or doda addicts in the rural population of 3640. The over all addiction rate was 8.4 % in Barmer , 79% in Jaisalmer and 6.9% in Bikaner districts of Rajasthan. The addicts were all males and a negligible number of females (0.3%) in the surveyed villages. The rate of addiction was increasing as age is increasing and showed significant increase ($P < 0.05$) in consumption there by more population is getting addicted to the substance. The addiction was highest in the age group 40-50 years compared to the other age groups. The literacy and low socioeconomic status are the major causes for addiction ($P < 0.05$) which is statistically significant, as they were having poor knowledge of its ill effects over time. The reasons for consumption are to work more in the fields and to get rid of minor ailments and in due course of time they become addicts. The significance of these findings and factors causing a grate concern, about the opium or doda addiction in the rural villages and measures to de-addict the rural population, recurrence rates are discussed.