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1.1 INTRODUCTION

Hi Students, Good Evening.

Now we will discuss about a socially relevant topic called Alcoholism. In this session we will talk about certain salient features about alcoholism. That is the definition of alcoholism, the nature of alcoholism, the causes and what are the effects it may produce and finally what are the treatment methods which are available to come out of this disease called alcoholism.

1.2 DEFINITION

When I say how to come out of this disease, that itself will give you an orientation that it is a treatable disease. People earlier thought that alcoholism means simple consumption of certain beverages. So that it may affect the individual and the society. The recent definition as given by American Psychological Association has made it that it is a treatable disease only. Alcoholism is a disease with some progressive cause. This is the most acceptable definition nowadays.

1.3 COMPOSITION AND NATURE OF ALCOHOLISM

Now moving to the second aspect that is the Nature of alcoholism, that is how an alcoholic will have a episodic period of the consumption of this beverage.

A scientist by name Jellinek has provided a much comprehensive view about the alcoholism. That is he first proposed the composition of alcohol. Normally we mention a term called alcohol, it represents usually to the concept called the composition of alcohol or the content of alcohol in the beverage that we consume.

1.3.1 Composition

The normal one which we consume is commercially called as Beer which may have a content of about 5% of Ethanol. Ethanol is the chemical compound which is present in these alcoholic beverages. Then next comes the wine which may have at least 9 -12%. Next comes the Liquor. It is one of many types and it may have 40% and above in some cases. So this is the basic composition of the alcohol beverages. This detail is available in the wrapper of the bottle itself.

1.3.2 Nature

The next condition is about the nature of alcoholism. When he was dealing with the nature of alcoholism, he took a scientific orientation from Latin as follows:

- 1) *Alpha*
- 2) *Beta*
- 3) *Gamma*
- 4) *Epsilon*

What do you mean by Alpha type? In this alpha type a person may consume excessive beverages with alcoholic content and then inappropriate drinking practice. He may consume at any time plus with some control over the consumption process. This is called alpha pattern.

Second one is the same as above, the Beta type, that is inappropriate drinking and excessive drinking sometimes he may develop some sort of physical complaints. Like the common complaints are *Cirrhosis*, *Gastritis* and some kind of *skin diseases* also in the extraordinary cases.

Next comes the Gamma type of alcoholism. This refers to the excessive and inappropriate consumption of alcohol along with some physical dependency is developed. Here the physical dependency means the body adapts to the presence of alcoholic level in the blood stream itself. So when there is any reduction in this alcoholic content or in the percentage of alcohol in the blood stream, the person may develop some symptoms which we call as withdrawal symptom.

The next salient feature of this gamma type of alcoholism is the development of tolerance level. Normally if a person consumes more than a particular level of alcohol, he may lose his balance. Whereas when he proceeds to gamma type of alcoholism, excessive tolerance is there. That is to a certain major extent of consumption he may be tolerant and he may not lose his balance.

The last one is Epsilon type of alcoholic consumption. That is episodic pattern of alcoholic consumption. People may consume alcohol at some point of time. For example, a person might start with episodic then he will change gradually, he will start consuming weekly, then weekly may become daily, and daily will become hourly. Whereas when he

is coming to this gamma alcoholism, he may be under continuous influence of alcohol but he will never lose his balance. All these starts with this epsilon alcoholism.

1.4 EFFECTS

Now we will go to the salient feature called the effects of alcoholism. What are the effects that are produced by the alcohol consumption.

1. *Excitement*
2. *Euphoria*
3. *Lessen the Inhibition*
4. *Sedation*

The first one is Excitement. The increased presence of alcohol in our blood stream may raise up the other body component and he might feel elated and excited. In the initial stage he may feel a little bit uncomfortable but later on he may be craving for this kind of excitement.

Euphoria refers to a state of overall well being. He feels he is very much elated and feel joy.

The next one is Lessen the inhibition. Many people may have some sort of inhibited tendency in expressing some thoughts and some ideas that may come to their mind. They may feel very shy. So when they consume alcohol this may lessen the inhibition. So that they may talk more fluently.

The last one is Sedation. Sedation means the person may go to a sleeping stage because of excessive consumption. This excessive consumption will affect our central nervous system. So he is coming to a silence stage and then he will pass on to the sleeping stage. That is the effect we call it as a sedation effect.

1.5 CAUSES OF DRINKING

Now let us think about the next one. Why do we go for this drinking? The prominent causes for alcoholism may be:

1. Biological Conditions
2. Psycho Social Conditions
3. Psychiatric Conditions

1.5.1 Biological conditions

a) Gene

That is some people may feel that they are predisposed to alcoholism. It is being formulated that the gene which we inherit from our parents has a major role in the

consumption of alcohol. They say it is a genetically carried one which means it is passed on from the ancestors.

b) Hormone & Vitamins

Then comes the presence of certain hormones. There is one interesting finding which is given by the recent research, that is the vitamin deficiency. So take care of your vitamin intake. So that any vitamin deficiency may also produce some sort of craving for alcoholic consumption.

1.5.2 Psycho Social Conditions

The second one is Psycho Social Condition. Of course the biological cause also places a crucial role. The significance of the biological factors for the consumption of alcohol is lesser when compared to the psycho social and psychiatric conditions.

a) Experimentation

Now turning our attention to the psycho social factors, the first factor that which we go is the experimentation. Experimentation here is just about the try out. People want to know what it will be, how it will be, when they see others consuming they want to try how they will feel. So this experimentation is the first cause.

b) Group Pressure

Second one is Group pressure. The presence of peer pressure just to gain a status in the group or to gain an identity in the group they may yield to the pressure of the group that may lead to the consumption of alcohol.

c) Lessen the pain & Anxiety

Third one is to lessen the pain. The pain here refers not only to the physical condition but also to the psychological condition. That is it is purely a subjective orientation not an objective orientation. There may not be any real cause for the pain but they themselves feel that they have some pain. Adding to this pain is to lessen the anxiety. This is the next most major reason why people consume alcohol. To reduce their anxiety people may consume alcohol. That is they are having a perception that by consuming alcohol they can come out of this anxiety.

d) Stress or Fear

The last condition is the stress or fear. Even some students nowadays are resorting to alcoholism as they have fear over their examination or about their interviews. So they feel that if they consume this alcohol it may reduce that fear. But in real condition it is not the correct fact.

e) Availability

The next major reason under the psycho social condition is availability of the alcohol. By mere possession or the availability of the alcohol may stimulate a person to consume the alcohol. This is being facilitated by the family condition. If there is a known history of consumption of alcohol with the parents and the siblings, it may increase the availability of alcohol within the premises of the patient or the client so that the easy availability may stimulate a person to consume alcohol. Next condition about the family is any broken family or any disorganized structure of the family conditions may also lead the client towards consumption of alcohol. But there are some more can be added.

f) Cultural Factors

Most significant one is the cultural factors. In some culture, taking alcohol before food has become a daily routine. So that the client may initially consume alcohol as a daily ritual or as a single aspect in the daily routine. Later on, this single episode will become a continuous condition in his whole life. These are some of the psycho social condition which may favour towards the alcoholism.

1.5.3 Psychiatric conditions

Next comes to the psychiatric conditions. These people consume alcohol not only due to the physical conditions but also due to their psychiatric conditions. They embraced alcoholism not because of these conditions but it is a reaction of these psychiatric condition or the illness they are having.

- a) Attention Deficit Disorder
- b) Personality disorders
- c) Panic disorder
- d) Schizophrenia

a) The first one is Attention Deficit Disorder. That is some of us would like to gain attention among the group. The most favoured way to gain attention of other people whether it is right way or wrong way is by consumption of alcohol.

b) Second one is personality disorders. The major component of this personality disorder is the anti-social personality. Some people by nature they gain some pleasure by destroying others property.

c) Next comes Panic disorder. By nature they panic for small stimulation or small instigation. To reduce this condition they may resort to alcoholism.

d) Finally we got this last one, Schizophrenia. In this case the client may not know what he is consuming. He will be in that extreme condition. In that case he may resort to alcoholism. These are some of the conditions which may favour the alcoholism.

1.6 CONCLUSION

Now can we recollect what all we have discussed are,

We have seen in the topic alcoholism

- Its definition
- Its nature
- The composition of alcoholic content in the beverages
- Then the causes that leads to this alcoholism

In the next session we will discuss about the treatment aspect of a client who is affected with this disease called alcoholism.