

# Marital Adjustment and Depression between Habitual Alcoholics and Non-alcoholics in Context of Socio-economic Status

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## ABSTRACT

The present investigation intended to compare habitual alcoholics (N = 100 : 50 HSES + 50 LSES) and non-alcoholics (N = 100 : 50 HSES + 50 LSES) male respondents of Patna in context of marital adjustment and depression. It was hypothesized that alcoholics and non-alcoholics will differ significantly in terms of (i) marital adjustment and (ii) depression respectively. The respondents were selected using systematic sampling. They were administered Marital Adjustment Questionnaire, Depression Scale, SES Scale along with PDS and data were obtained. The obtained data were treated using t-test. The obtained results supported the hypotheses. It was found that alcoholics belonging to high and low SES groups excelled over their non-alcoholic counterpart groups in terms of marital maladjustment and depression scores respectively. Thus, it was concluded that habitual alcoholism is the function of marital maladjustment and depression.

## Introduction

Alcoholism is a condition in which the drinker has serious problems. It causes damage to the individual and society. Alcoholism is defined as an excessive drinker whose dependence on alcohol is so strong that it interferes with the performance of socially appropriate behaviour. When alcohol content of blood reaches 1 percent, the individual is considered to be intoxicated. Speech and vision are impaired and thought processes are confused. When the blood alcohol reaches .5 percent, the neural balance is upset and the individual is dead. Alcohol is a high caloric drug. One peg of whiskey provides 1200 calories which is approximately half the calories requirement for a day, thus reduces the drinker's appetite for food. The excessive drinker suffers from malnutrition. The alcoholic assumes less responsibility, loses pride, neglects his family, becomes touchy and irritable and is unable to maintain employment. His general health is weakened.

Every aspect of alcoholism presents difficulties to scientist who seek to understand the condition or to help its victims. There is even disagreement over the definition of alcoholism. The definition used by

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) an organization of alcoholics who desire to 'stay sober' may be accepted here. The AA definition of alcoholism is simple and to the point. Alcoholics are people who are "powerless over alcohol" and who, as a result of drinking have found that lives have "become unmanageable. Whatever the definition of alcoholism may be it appears to be a multi-factorial Polygenic disorder (Schuckit, 1985). It has become one of the most serious health problems in modern society. The disability involves severe social, physical and psychiatric complications (Knot, 1985). Hence it is essential to understand different aspects associated with problem of alcoholism. They are discussed here as undernoted.

Drugs or alcohol change our experience of ourselves and of the world. They do so by speeding up, slowing down or disrupting and confusing the normal functioning of brain. Drugs or alcohol do not add anything to the user that was not there before, but by altering brain activity it releases what is already in the mind. It is like a key that can open door to our sub-conscious.

It review of literature is reviewed it is evident that there are some Indian studies (Dube and Jindal, 1977; Lal and Singh, 1977) and foreign studies (Domenio and Windle, 1993; Churchil et al., 1990) lining the variables under study indirectly. This justifies undertaking of the present problems.

**Objective**

The study intended to compare alcoholic and non-alcoholic males belonging to high and low SES in terms of marital adjustment and depression.

**Hypotheses**

1. Alcoholics and non-alcoholics of high SES groups would differ significantly in terms of marital adjustment.
2. Alcoholics and non-alcoholics of low SES groups would differ significantly in terms of marital adjustment.
3. Alcoholics and non-alcoholics of high SES groups would differ significantly in terms of depression.
4. Alcoholics and non-alcoholics of low SES groups would differ significantly in terms of depression.

**Method of Study**

**Sample Used**

The sample comprised of 100 alcoholics (N= 100: 50 Male HSES + 50 Male LSES) and non-alcoholics (N= 100: 50 Male HSES + 50 Male LSES) selected from Patna using systematic sampling. The respondents were matched so far as practicable.

**Research Design**

Causal comparative research design (ex-post-facto) was preferred.

**Tools Used**

- PDS was used to seek the personal information of the respondents.
- Marital Adjustment Questionnaire by Pramod Kumar and Kanchan Rohatogi was used to measure marital adjustment maladjustment of the respondents.
- IPAT Depression Scale by Krug, S. and Laughlin, J.E. was used to measure depression of the respondents.
- Kurshreshta’s SES Scale was used to measure SES of the respondents.

**Results and Discussion**

**Table-01**

Mean, SD, SE and t-ratio showing the effect of marital adjustment on alcoholic abuse amongst high SES respondents.

Subjects	N	Mean	SD	SE	t-value	df	P
Alcoholics	50	11.26	6.13	0.87	5.69	98	<.01
Non-alcoholics	50	18.37	6.40	0.91			

It is evident from table-01 that there is a significant difference between alcoholic and non-alcoholic group of respondents in terms of marital adjustment. The alcoholic group of respondents showed higher degree of marital maladjustment than their counterparts belonging to non-alcoholic groups. In other sense marital maladjustment is found one of the major causes of alcoholic or addictive behaviour. It is found that alcoholic group of respondents showed lower value of mean (M=11.26) than their counterparts belonging to non-alcoholic group (M=18.37) both belonging to high SES group. The difference between the means was found significant beyond 0.01 level of confidence (t = 5.69; df= 98; p < .01). Thus hypothesis no. 3 was confirmed. It was hypothesized that alcoholic and non-alcoholic groups would differ from one another in terms of marital adjustment which was fully supported. This finding is interpreted on the ground that poor marital maladjustment are conducive to more intolerance of ambiguity, insecurity, poor ego-strength and self-concept leading to stress and anxiety. As a consequence of this stress there is a danger that person might become alcoholics. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Singh (1988).

**Table-02**

Mean, SD, SE and t-value showing the effect of marital maladjustment on habitual alcoholic abuse amongst alcoholic and non-alcoholic group of respondents belonging to low SES group of respondents.

Subjects	N	Mean	SD	SE	t-value	df	P
Alcoholics	50	10.51	5.97	0.84	5.46	98	<.01
Non-alcoholics	50	17.33	6.53	0.92			

The results of table 02 clearly revealed that there is a significant effect of marital adjustment on alcoholic behaviour. It is clear that alcoholic group of respondents showed poor marital adjustment (M=10.51) as compared to their counterpart non alcoholic respondents (M=17.33) each belonging to low SES group. The variability are also found different (s = 5.97) and (s = 6.53). The difference between the two means was found significant (t = 5.46; df= 98; p < .01). Thus, hypothesis No. 3 was fully supported. It was hypothesized that marital adjustment would have significant effect on habitual alcoholism, was supported. This finding might be interpreted on the ground that people having poor socio-economic condition do not get opportunity to avail each and every facility needed for proper development. This leads to frustrate the respondent as a result the person might get depressed. To minimize stress he is likely to be victimized with alcoholism. This is in agreement with the study Hall (1994).

**Table-03**

Mean, SD, SE and t-ratio showing the effect of depression on alcoholic abuse amongst high SES respondents.

Subjects	N	Mean	SD	SE	t-value	df	P
Alcoholics	50	36.37	13.14	1.86	6.31	98	<.01
Non-alcoholics	50	20.59	11.78	1.67			

It is clear from table 03 that alcoholic and non-alcoholic group of respondents also differ from one another in terms of depression. The alcoholic group of respondents showed higher degree of depression (M= 36.37) and compared to their non-alcoholic counterpart respondents (M=20.59) both belonging to high SES group. The difference between the means was found significant (t= 6.31; df = 98; p < .01). Thus hypothesis no. 4 was retained. It was hypothesized that habitual alcoholic would show more depression than their counterparts i.e. non-alcoholic groups. This hypothesis was fully retained. This finding might be interpreted on the ground that high depression is full of stress and anxiety. The person with high level of stress is more likely to become the victim of alcoholism. This is in agreement with the study of Kuhns (1997), Chunkapura et al. 1987), Mathur et al. (1992).

**Table 04**

Mean, SD, SE and t-ratio showing the effect of depression on alcoholic abuse amongst low SES respondents.

Subjects	N	Mean	SD	SE	t-value	df	P
Alcoholics	50	42.37	14.26	2.02	6.64	98	<.01
Non-alcoholics	50	23.11	12.92	1.83			

The results of table-04 clearly indicated that respondents of alcoholic group excelled (M=23.37) over their non-alcoholic group (M=23.11) in respect of depression. The alcoholic group of respondents was found more prone to depression than non-alcoholic group. The difference between the means (t = 6.44; df=

98;  $p < .01$ ). was found significant. Thus, hypothesis no.-4 was also confirmed in case of low SES people. This finding might be interpreted on the rational that person with high level of depression and low level of SES face a series of serious problems leading to higher level of stress. So, there is a danger that such people might become the victim of alcoholism. This finding is in agreement with the previous finding of Malhotra et al. (1977), Hussong et al. (2004), Jacob et al. (2000).

### Conclusions:

- Alcoholic males of both high and low SES groups manifested poor marital adjustment as compared to non-alcoholic male married respondents. So, habitual alcoholism is the function of marital adjustment / maladjustment.
- Alcoholic married males belonging to high and low SES groups excelled over their non-alcoholic counterpart married males groups in terms of acute depression. So, habitual alcoholism is the function of depression.

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