

PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES FACED BY FEMALE SPOUSE DUE TO CRITICAL ALCOHOL ADDICTION OF THEIR MALE PARTNER: A CASE STUDY OF PUNJAB

***Dr. Honey Kumar**

Assistant Professor of Sociology
Himachal Pradesh National Law University Shimla
Near Ghandal, Shimla-Mandi National Highways, Shimla
Ph. 9915788355
Email. Honeymalik111@gmail.com
honeykumar@hpnlu.ac.in

Abstract

Critical alcohol addiction has severely affected the institution of family in different parts of this world. It has disturbed all members of family however, the situation of female spouses in such families has found more vulnerable. They face multiple problems and challenges due to their partner's critical addition. To validate this fact and to identify some new related facts the main objective of this study has decided to understand how and to what extent critical alcohol addiction of husband ruins the life of female spouse. To reach at this objective, the research questions framed in the present study are; What kind of problems female spouses face due to critical addiction of their husband? Whether socio-economic status has any relationship with problems and challenges faced by female spouses due to critical addiction of their partner?

This study is based on primary data collected from female spouses of alcoholic husband by keeping in mind the sociological definition of alcoholic. For this study, Punjab state was selected and in order to generate the primary data, the methods like snowballing technique, semi-structured interview schedule, participant observation etc. have been used. The study has found that in most of the cases critical drinking affects the behavior of alcoholic partner to an extent that it creates multiple social problems and challenges for female spouses such as violence, divorce, suicide attempts, abuse, role shifting, social stigma and labelling etc. The study also found that these

problems are more common among families belongs to lower socio-economic strata. *The study concludes that critical drinking of husband derails the life of female spouse which further put an institution of family into crisis.*

INRODUCTION

Critical alcohol addiction¹ and its consequences have been a long-standing issue in this world (World Health Organization, 2018). Studies reveals that it has emerged as serious social problem in modern society due to various reasons. Literature also reveals that no society has been left where the complications related to critical Addiction of alcohol are not visible. Further, alcohol related consequences have undergone change according to different cultural, social and historical circumstances. Amongst, one of the most important social consequence is the change in the structure and function of family. It has also affected the status and roles of family members.

Addiction of alcohol among any of the family members has highest probability for causing troubles to whole family. The consequences of critical addiction are not only restricted to alcoholic but also to the associated members. Further, it is not only restricted to health conditions of an alcoholic and associated members but with the social conditions too such as family violence, role shifting, social stigma and labelling etc. Further, the relationships within family such as relationship of husband and wife, alcoholic and his children, alcoholic and parents can be significantly affected. Within family some members face more complications than others depending upon the circumstances and social conditions of the family in which they are living.

¹Critical alcohol addiction is a social ill (Straus, 1950) or disorder of behaviour (Fox & Lyon, 1955) which is a result of repeated drinking of alcoholic beverages to an extent that exceeds customary dietary use or the socially approved drinking customs of the community or suggested limits (Straus, 1950, 1966; Fox & Lyon, 1955; Keller, 1962; Robinson, 1976; Bucholz & Robins, 1989; WHO, 2011) which has capacity to damage the health of individual (Jellinek, 1960) and impair the social functioning of all the family members. In a well conducted sociological study by Roman (2007) entitled *Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism*, he defined critical alcohol addiction in terms of individuals social role performance and others definition of the extent to which this performance, due to repeated episodes of drinking, fails to meet social expectations.

Existing studies and reports shows that males are more addict to alcohol as compare to females in most parts of this world (WHO 2011, 2014, 2018). As drinking and addiction of alcohol is more prevalent and common among males, therefore, female spouses are more susceptible to face problems due to the addiction of their male partners (Clinebell, 1956; Gupta et al., 2003; Suman, 2011; WHO, 2011, 2014), Other than this, due to patriarchal structure females are also victim of male supremacy in India. Under patriarchal society, female spouses are religiously, morally and socially attached with their male partner who are supposed to spend all their life with their partner, irrespective of the prevailing circumstances and hardships of life. Therefore, the patriarchal structure and problem of critical alcohol addiction among male partner increases the problems of female spouses. They are supposed to full fill family obligations such as taking care of family members, education of children, household works etc under such circumstances. Moreover, most of the time other family members such as parents also put the burden of addiction of alcoholic on female partner. Keeping in mind all such facts the present study was designed and focused around female spouses, mainly to identify the challenges and problems faced by them under such circumstances.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies conducted in different parts of world have identified various social implications of critical drinking and alcoholism on family. Some of these studies have focused on the problems of female spouses due to critical addiction of their husband/male partner. Bhatt (1998), Subhadra and Rahul (1999), Saxena (1999) Rao (2004), Khosla et al. (2005), Choudhury (2009) describe addiction to alcohol as one of the significant factors that lead to family violence which sooner or later ruins and de-regulates the social life of family members, especially the wife and children. Bhatt (1998) observed that the incidence of family violence was higher in those families where the use of alcohol was a part of routine and the risk of spousal violence increased when the husband was an alcoholic. Similarly, Gelles (1972) observed a close association between alcohol and violence in his study of 80 families. One crucial observation he made in his study was that alcohol related violence was exclusively violence perpetrated by males and wife beating was common corollary. He also found that the problem of alcoholism was more critical among lower-socio economic families who were less educated and lower occupational strata. Further, Saxena (1999) and Choudhury (2009) observed that approximately

50% of deaths caused by domestic violence were under the influence of alcohol or other drugs and among these deaths, 95% victims were women (Choudhury, 2009). Varma et al. (2007) noted that among pregnant women, 14% were reported to have experienced physical violence, 9% encountered sexual coercion and 15% underwent an ordeal of psychological abuse due to alcohol consumption by their husband. Kantor and Straus (1987) mention that the use of alcohol may not be an instant cause of violence in most of the families however, the extreme use of alcohol disrupts the nervous and cognitive system of an individual leading to [mounting of aggressive behavior which eventually becomes one of the primary factors for increasing the probability of abuse. Khosla et al. (2005) observed it also happens during pregnancy. Choudhury(2009) stated that the use of alcohol can intensify the user's sense of personal power and domination over others which can, in turn, make it more likely for an abuser to attempt exercising his power and control over other family members that will spur violent behavior in the family (Subhadra & Rahul 1999; Kantor & Straus 1987; Choudhury, 2009). Further, Rao (2004) observed in his study that the risk of spousal abuse increases significantly with an alcoholic husband. Sahoo (2009) observed that in a patriarchal society spousal violence is higher against those whose husbands pander to alcohol and it is five times higher against those whose husbands consumed alcohol very often. Thus, the consumption of alcohol has been identified as a significant menace in family life which often leads to spousal violence mostly among illiterate and lower socio-economic groups (Kantor & Straus 1987; Chavan et al., 2007; Sahoo, 2009). He also stated that spousal violence prove to be baleful to the self-respect of women and puts them at greater risks of depression, suicide, and drug abuse.

Excessive use of alcohol can become the cause of other social problems in the family such as divorce. Levitt (1974) observed that people who give in to alcohol abuse are about seven times more likely to be divorced or separated than non-abusers cited in Suman (2011). Divorce is viewed as the only option by women experiencing ferity by drunkard husbands. However, at times, woman living with her abusive partner vacillates between the dual nature of her partner, who is caring when not drunk and barbaric when drunk (Gelles, 1972; Nayer et al., 2012).

Jackson (1958) mentioned that the problem of alcoholism in the family has a tendency to change the roles played by family members in relation to one another and outside the family premises. In most of the families, there is some form of division of labor as one member

controls the family economy; some manage the household while others take care of children and so on. This form of division, according to Durkheim, is beneficial for society as it increases reproductive capacity, establishes social and moral order and creates a sense of social solidarity among the member of family, community, and society (Lemert, 2010). But as one member of the family becomes alcoholic, rest of the members are likely to find themselves gradually taking over the roles of such a member. Eventually, one member may have to perform the roles of others like management of finances, performing all the rituals even those associated with the drinker. (Velleman&Templonton, 2007). In some studies, these changes has been found among wives in the family as they are supposed to perform inside and outside tasks such as earning livelihood for the family members.Malik et al. (2012) in their survey on rural Punjab noted that 77.5% families were found to have a disruption in routine activities, family leisure and family interactions. This problem is mostly recurrent among wives followed by parents and children etc.

Choudhury (2009) observed that the most common corollary in the most of alcoholic families is poor emotional health. Due to the problem of alcoholism, family members perticularlywives, tend to become socially isolated. They feel ashamed of the alcoholic character of their family member. In a community survey, Ray (2004) found that besides poor emotional health, the roles and social relationship of alcoholic and other family members gets impaired. Similarly, Jackson (1958) and Johnson (2000) observed harmful use of alcohol disrupts the functional properties of family system and in turn provides a favorable environment for dysfunctional behavior. It also affects the image, status, and prestige of alcoholic and other family members. They have observed social stigma to be one of the main repercussion faced by children and spouse of alcoholic that further, affects their social relationships.

Besides the money spent on alcohol, an alcoholic and his family also suffer other adverse economic effects such as insufficient wages due to lowered efficiency at the job or loss of business and employment, increased medical expenses for chronic illness and accidents etc. (Saxena, 1999; Velleman&Templonton, 2007). Saxena et al. (2003) found that those families in which individuals consumed alcohol very frequently spent 14 times more on alcoholic beverages per month and had significant financial debt. Similarly, Malik et al. (2012) found that 77.5% families were facing financial problem due to alcoholism and among these majority belonged to lower socio-economic groups. The study conducted by Benegal et al. (2000) in Bangalore

indicates that an average income of a person in family is Rupees 1660.95 and the income spent on alcohol was Rupees 1938.40 which was higher than per capita earning. They also observed that 18.1 percent people lost their jobs every year, 59.4 percent families took financial support from other families and 9.7 percent sent their children, below 15 years of age, to work for supplementary family income. Similarly, Saxena et al. (2003) found in his study that those households in which an individual consumed alcohol at a very high level spent 14 times more on alcohol per month and had significant financial debt. Benegal et al. (2003) reported that near about 40% of alcohol dependents did not contribute to their family income and nearly one-third of individual's salary was spent on alcohol. Some of the studies found that health problems or deaths occurred due to alcoholism also contribute the economic pressure on other family members too.

Some of the studies revealed that alcoholism acts in multiple ways to create a situation that forces an alcoholic and his family members to commit suicide. Gururaj et al. (2011) observed that alcohol consumption leads to economic hardships such as indebtedness that may ultimately lead to suicide. Similarly, Gururaj and Isac (2001) and Sahoo (2009) found that the violence and abuse perpetrated by alcoholic often drive other family members including children to the state of despair, helplessness and frustration etc. that often results in suicidal attempts. Gururaj et al. (2011) revealed that according to police records among 2652 suicide attempt cases 15% men and 1.5% women were regular and chronic alcohol users.

WHO (2011) reveals the fact that harmful use of alcohol results in approximately 2.5 million deaths which accounts for 4% of total deaths each year in the world and causes illness and injury to many more. Globally, 3,20,000 young people aged 15-29 years die annually due to excessive alcohol intake, accounting for 9% of deaths in that age group. The report also reveals that harmful use of alcohol is also associated with many serious social issues including family crises like domestic violence, divorce, child neglect, splits in social relationships, financial problems and many more. Thus, alcohol abuse results in enormous cost not only to the abuser but also to his or her family.

By keeping all these implications in mind it can be said that alcoholism has become a family disease that requires a scientific investigation to comprehend the issue and chalk out scientific solutions for curbing this menace in the society.

Gururaj et al. (2011) discovered a nexus between alcoholism and failure in social roles. They found that due to addiction to alcohol, majority of alcoholics find themselves unable to contribute to the effective socialization of their children and are insufficient in helping them to fulfill their goals or settle in life, experience poor health status, problems at work place, unemployment, lowered efficiency, involvement in violence against spouse, children and parents, dementia, legal hassles, isolation, guilt feeling, social boycott etc.

The National Household Survey found that 27% of alcohol users complained of inability to visit friends and relatives due to their addiction. Similarly, many of them were unable to perform their duties as father and husband due to their addiction. Shah et al. 1996 in their study of alcohol addict found that out of 100 alcoholics dependent nearly about 66% had social and recreational problems. The Bangalore based study 2006 observed that 18% of the total study population stayed away from home at least once in the last one year and majority of them reported it to be due to a alcohol addiction.

Moreover, greater proportions of alcohol users ran away from home as compared to non-users. Likewise in some studies, it was found that among male alcohol users pre-marital sex, unprotected sex, and extra-marital sex was common (Sarkar, 2001).

In that framework, work related problems were also found among alcoholics in many studies. Murthy (2015) found that the consumption of alcohol is inversely proportional to working capacity. It generates unemployment, results in reduction of wages and increased chances of injuries and accidents. Furthermore, they found some of the employees came drunk at work and there were many incidents of violence at work due to alcohol intake. Gururaj et al. (2006) found in their Bangalore based study that 7% of the respondents were under the influence of alcohol during their working hours/period. They also found that most of the alcohol users missed going to work due to their addiction. Similarly, depending upon the nature of work Chitra (2000) found in her study on city sanitary workers in Bangalore that about 90% of sanitary workers were habitual and chronic alcohol users.

Thus, it can be safely concluded that implications of alcohol are extremely adverse and cannot be ignored. However, there are various studies on family which further reflect how

alcohol deprecates the institution of family and is derogatory to the family members of the alcoholic.

OBJECTIVE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

While looking at existing studies it has been found that very few studies has given complete emphasis on the problems faced by female spouses due to critical addiction of their male partner. Moreover, Indian society is largely a patriarchal society where the women are supposed to perform many obligatory roles under the dominance of males. The combination of both, patriarchy and alcoholism, pose high pressure on women because of which they suffer many hidden problems. Without direct interaction it was not possible to understand their problems therefore, in the present study an attempt has been made for direct interaction with female spouses of alcoholics so that the problems faced by them can be understood directly.

Thus, the main objective of the present study is to understand the problems faced by female spouses of alcoholics. Further an attempt has been also made to understand their venerable position and their life patterns that how they are surviving and living their life in such circumstances? By keeping in mind, the above objective, following research questions have been framed. The study tries to identify whether critical addiction is responsible for partner violence and other complications? What kind of problems female spouses face due to critical addiction of alcoholics? Whether, socio-economic status matters for more critical complications? How society respond to such women? Whether it a one of the major reasons for venerable position of women in society.

METHODOLOGY

The study is based on Punjab region of India and the sample was selected from Ludhiana and Tarn Taran District of Punjab by keeping in mind the highest and lowest consumption area. To get overall picture, the sample is taken from both urban and rural area. The families are sampled on the basis of a definition of alcoholic² which is framed in the beginning of study by keeping in

²In sociological terms if one's drinking is deviant in the eyes of another then it may be said that the person is an alcoholic. In addition to this, other symptoms which define person's deviant drinking are, slurred speech, inability to walk strait, continuous laughing, hooting, aggression, fighting and impaired judgment after the use of alcohol. In short, Alcoholic, also known as critical drinker, is one who cannot stop himself from using alcohol and carry out

mind the existing literature. In other words, only those spouses are selected for interview whose partner is alcoholic or whose partner meet all the characteristic of alcoholic.

More than 400 families are visited with the help of snowballing technique. Amongst, many refused to interact for various reasons and many of them could not meet the definition of alcoholic. Those alcoholics, who meet the criteria of definition, 219 of them are married male. Therefore, overall 219 case studies of female spouses whose partner is critically addict to alcohol selected for depth interview. Thus, the total number of sampled female spouses and case studies are 219. For Collection of data, both qualitative methods such as case study, observation, focused group discussions and quantitative methods such as semi-structured interview schedule, attitudinal scales etc. are used. While conducting case studies, the stories or narrative related to incidence of problems faced by female spouses were recorded and mentioned to retain the naturalistic essence.

Results and Discussion

SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENTS

Socio-economic background of respondent is very important indicator which help us to understand the problem under study, minutely and in detail.

TABLE 1: SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF THE RESPONDENT

	Number	% (Percentage)
Age		
Below 25	12	05.48
25-34	60	27.40
35-44	75	34.24
45-54	54	24.66
55-64	12	05.48
65 and above	06	02.74

binge type of drinking i.e. drinking large quantity of alcoholics beverages at a single time or whole the day and whose behavior largely affects others.

Income		
<10000	144	65.75
10001- 20000	39	17.81
>20000	36	16.44
Type of House		
Pucca	90	41.09
Semi Pucca	81	36.99
Kutchra	48	21.92
Family Size		
Nuclear	99	45.20
Quasi Joint	69	31.51
Joint	51	23.29
Educational level		
Illiterate	42	19.18
Up to Matric	159	72.60
Higher Secondary	12	05.48
Graduate	6	02.74
Primary Occupation		
House Maker/House Wife	87	39.73
Private Employee	27	12.33
Small Business	9	04.11
Maid/Domestic Worker	96	43.84
Total	219	100.0

Source: Primary Data

Table 1 depicts that majority of spouses (34.25%) belongs to younger age group (35-44) and they were spending their prime period of young age in problematic situations caused by alcoholics. Table 1 also depicts that majority spouses (65.75%) belongs to families whose combined monthly income is up to 10000. The income of family also attached with other household conditions such as the type of house, possession of household amenities etc. Table 1 indicates

that 41.09% spouses lives in pucca³ houses with limited basic amenities. Thus, it can be concluded that majority of spouses belongs to low-income families and they are facing economic problems due to addiction of their husband which further force them for dual job such as work inside the house as well as outside the house. This dual responsibility also affects the social life of spouse as they were not able to spend proper time with their children, friends etc. Data presented in table 1 clearly unveils that the problem of alcohol addiction is more prevalent in nuclear families and in such families the whole responsibility stands on the shoulder of husband as main earning members. However due to critical addiction of their husband, this responsibility found on the shoulder of female spouse. Table 1 also depicts that majority of spouse i.e. 72.60 % have completed studies up to 10th grade only and 19.18% are illiterate. Therefore, overall educational level of the spouses is comparatively less due to which majority of the spouses are unable to tackle the problem of alcoholism in their family. Due to less education they were working on low paid professions such as house maid, caretaker, sales person at small shops, animal care at nearby places, owner of small-scale shops etc. It can be concluded that most of the spouses belongs to lower socio-economic strata which is a big hurdle for them as discussed above.

MAIN PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES FACED BY SPOUSES OF ALCOHOLICS

There are multiple problems which are faced by female spouses in a family due to critical drinking and addiction of their husbands. Amongst, the majors once are violence by alcoholic, financial burden, mental disturbance, co-dependency, social stigma, isolation, neglect by friends, relatives, neighbors etc., work outside to earn livelihood for family members, playing dual roles, sacrifice of their personal needs and many more. The detailed discussion over these major problems areas follows;

³Made with concrete/cemented

Graph 1: Problems Faced by Female spouse of Alcoholics

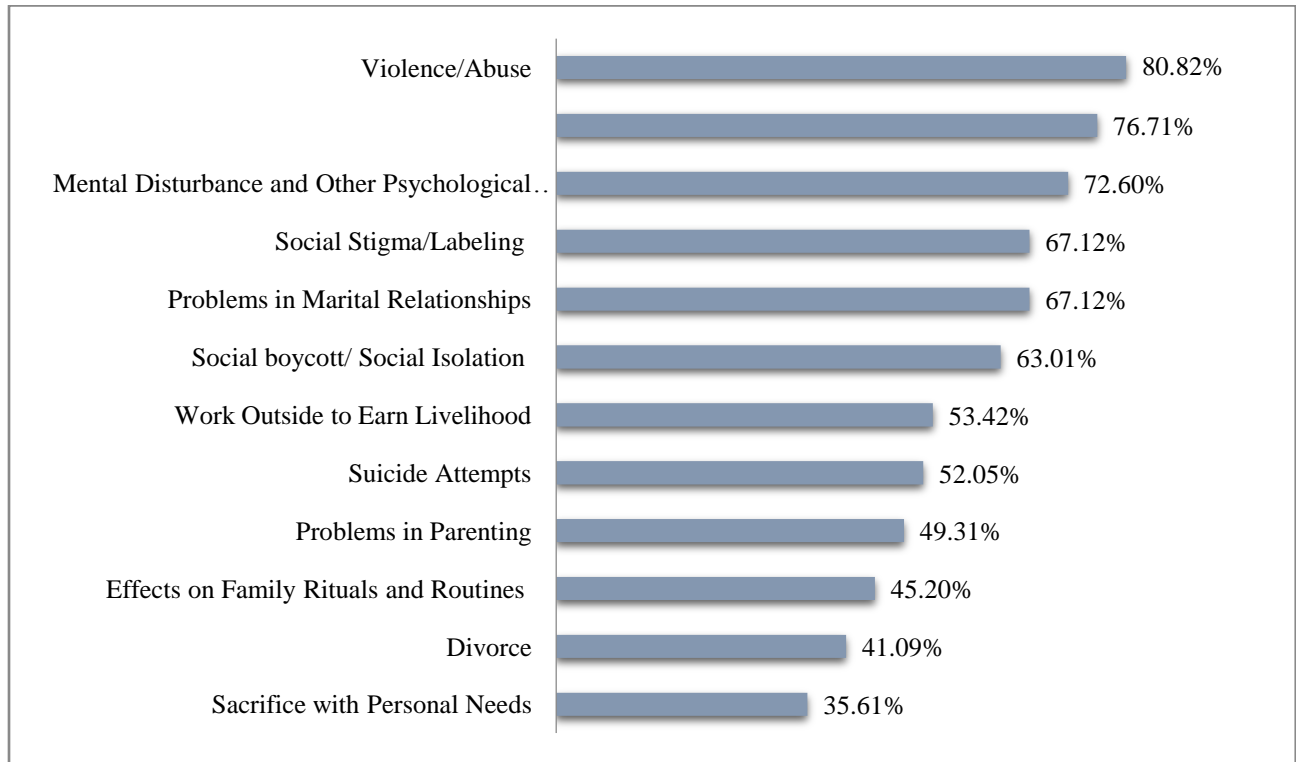


Table 2 Problems Faced by Female Spouse of Alcoholics

S. No.	Problematic Behavior	Frequency	Percentage
1	Violence/Abuse	177	80.82
2	Financial Difficulties and Over Burden of Work	168	76.71
3	Mental Disturbance and Other Psychological Disorders	159	72.60
4	Social Stigma/Labeling	147	67.12
5	Problems in Marital Relationships	147	67.12
6	Social boycott/ Social Isolation	138	63.01
7	Work Outside to Earn Livelihood	117	53.42
8	Suicide Attempts	114	52.05

9	Problems in Parenting	108	49.31
10	Effects on Family Rituals and Routines	99	45.20
11	Divorce	90	41.09
12	Sacrifice with Personal Needs	78	35.61

Violence/Abuse by Alcoholic Partner

The present study reveals that violence against a spouse is more common in alcohol affected families. Data depicts that 80.82% spouses are facing partner violence due to the critical addiction of their partner. Many spouses reported that their partner abuses them after drinking so that he can impose their dominance over them. The use of alcohol intensify the user's sense of personal power and domination which can, in turn, make it more likely for an abuser to attempt exercising his power and control over other family members which further spur violent behavior in the family. The present study found that in most of the cases during intoxication most of the spouse like to remain quiet in front of alcoholics so that they can protect themselves from angry and abusive behavior of alcoholic. While interaction, a spouse also narrated an incident of violence as follows;

Rojsharab pee kegharwichkalesh panda....kadimainutekadibachya nu marda...sara din sharab pee keroobmarda.....koi ehdesamnebolnisakda....saadi ta jindinarakkardities ne (Respondent said, after consuming alcohol, every day he disturbs the peace of the house. Sometimes he physically abuses me and my children. He dominates over all the family members after drinking. No one in the family can speak in front of him. Our life has become hell. The spouse started crying after the above statement.)

The above story shows that family members are living their life under pressure and their life has become almost a hell. During interaction with female spouses it is observed that spousal violence frequently disrupts the self-respect of women which forces them to take harsh steps in their life. Many of the spouses have tried to end their life due to their partner's persisting addiction to alcohol. An attempt has also been made to assess which type of abuse is more common. Data presented in table 3 reveals that spouse of alcoholics are more affected by verbal abuse (91.78%)

followed by physical abuse (69.86%) and mental abuse (63.01%). The respondents also narrated that most of the time their partner get highly intoxicated and more they get intoxicated the more likely they are to be verbally and physically violent toward them. Sexual abuse is also faced by 4.10% indicating that the condition of such female spouses is much more critical. Violence create many other types of social complications which ultimately disorganizes the whole life of person (Kumar, 2018). Due to regular habit of violence some of the spouses also thought of opting for divorce as a solution to the entire problem and some of them also tried to commit suicide to get rid of the problem. Thus, alcohol consumption, especially a critical alcohol consumption is a major contributor to the occurrence of intimate partner violence⁴ in the family premises.

Table 3: Type of Violence Faced by Female Spouses

Sl. No	Type of Abuse	Number (Percentage)
1	Verbal Abuse	201 (91.78%)
2	Physical Abuse	153 (69.86%)
3	Mental Abuse	138 (63.01%)
4	Sexual Abuse	9 (4.10%)

Source: Primary Data

Financial Difficulties and Over Burden of Work

The present study also reveals that due to critical addiction of alcohol among male partner majority of female spouses (76.71%) are found to be facing financial constraints such as lack of money for subsistence food, lack of money for education and marriages of children, problems in attending festivals, ceremonies, asking financial help from others, selling household amenities for survival etc. Many of the spouses reported that due to the addiction of the alcoholic their children had to quit studies and had to join some profession along with them. Thus, unemployment and extra expenditure on alcohol by alcoholic husband forces the wife to join work and earn a livelihood for other family members. Data reveals that 53.42% were working outside the home for fulfilling basic

⁴**Intimate partner violence** refers to any behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological or sexual harm to those in that relationship. It includes acts of physical aggression (slapping, hitting, kicking or beating), psychological abuse (intimidation, constant belittling or humiliation), forced sexual inter- course or any other controlling behaviour (isolating a person from family and friends, monitoring their movements and restricting access to information or assistance). (WHO, 2006)

needs of the family. The financial burden has also caused many other complications to the spouses such as disturbance in social and routine life due to dual job as housekeeper and employee. Some of them reported due to the busy schedule they did not find time for their personal and social life such as sitting and gossiping with their friends, attending ceremonies and festivals etc. Some of the spouses narrated their stories as follows: -

Kyi waarpaisenah hon karkelokan to mangkegujarakari da hai. Kyi waarhaalatkharb hon karkeghar da saman (gold, furniture, motor cycle etc.) v vechnapeya(Sometimes due to absence of money we have to seek it from other people for subsistence. Sometimes bad circumstances force us into selling household articles like gold, furniture, motorcycle etc)

Ghar da gujarakarnasteghargharja kekamkarnapainda. Pichle 8 saal to loka de bhade, kapdedhokeghar da gujarachalarahihan (In order to maintain the house, I have to work in the houses of other people. For the past 8 years, I have been washing utensils and clothes in the houses of other people and that's how I am running my house)

Sara din kadibachya nu sambhal,kadiehna nu (Alcoholic), kamte v janahunda.Apne waste sara din time nahimilda (I remain busy all the time and do not find any time for myself as I have to look after my children, take care of my alcoholic husband, go to work etc.)

The above stories shows that the addiction of alcoholic has made the life of spouse full of struggle and hardships. Their life is like a tunnel at the end of which no light can be spotted. They don't celebrate their lives as it is full of pains and crying due to addiction of their husband. It also shows that an alcoholic is a burden on the spouse as, during functions or ceremonies, someone has to remain at home for taking care of the alcoholic.

Mental Disturbance and Other Psychological Disorders

Excessive drinking among alcoholic partner has the tendency to affect the mental state of spouses which further give rise to set of problems in their lives. In the present study majority (72.60%) spouses are found mentally disturbed due to critical drinking and abusive behavior of their partner. Critical drinking affects the behavior of alcoholic and it has a direct relationship with violence and abusive behavior. Further, any form of violence or abusive behavior becomes

as major reason for mental disturbance and other psychological disorders. Except this, financial burden, lack of proper parenting, busy life etc. due to critical drinking of partner also create psychological disorders. Thus, the harmful use of alcohol disrupts the functional properties of family system and in turn provides a favorable environment for dysfunctional behavior. It also affects the image, status, and prestige of alcoholic and other family members.

Labeling and Social Stigma

The issue of labeling and social stigma is also found in the present study. Graph 1 shows that 67.12% spouses were facing the problem of labeling and social stigma because of which most of them tried to end their life. A prominent sociologist and founder of labeling theory, Howard S. Becker (1963) in his book *Outsider* states that those who get labeled by others due to their deviant behavior or their circumstances has a tendency to act further as deviant because of which they face multiple problems and develop suicidal tendency. In the present study, it has been found that due to critical addiction among alcoholic and their deviant behavior, the spouses get labeled by others and due to this, intentionally or unintentionally, get themselves into deviant act as they try to end their life to get rid of this problem. During interaction with respondents it was found that whenever they go to market or to their friend's place or in neighbor's house they would listen to people talking about the behavior of their alcoholic husband. Many a times they heard the usage of worst kind of words for them which force them to end their life. Many a times, people also extend their sympathies and while giving sympathy they use such kind of words which put them under more distress.

Suicide Attempts Under Pressure

The study exhibits that under pressure of such problems 52.05% spouses tried to commit suicide to get rid of this problem. After interaction it is found that in most of the cases the abusive behavior of alcoholic has disrupted the self-respect of female spouses in front of their family members, relatives, friends, neighbors etc. because of which they turned into situations like social stigma, depression etc. Consequently, this all lead them to commit suicide. Most of the spouses belong to lower socio-economic strata (see table 1) and the trend to commit suicide among female spouses was found more in lower socio-economic strata. Durkheim a famous sociologist said the external social conditions are responsible to force an individual to commit

suicide. Here the external conditions are socio-economic status, critical drinking among alcoholics etc. which lead to other set of conditions. Thus, critical addiction and its outcome create a situation that forces a female spouse to commit suicide. The similar fact has been seen in other studies too.

Effects on Martial Relations and Divorce

Critical Drinking increases the feeling of marital distress and possibility of divorce (Levitt, 1974; Suman, 2011; Gelles, 1972; Nayer et al., 2012). In the present study, most of the female spouses (67.12%) reported about disturbance in marital relationship because of critical drinking of their male partner. Many of them (41.09%) have also tried to opt for leaving house or divorce as a solution of this problem. Marital relationship is strongly related to the ability of a couple to communicate effectively and understand the feeling of one another to fulfil the basic needs and desires. Literature shows that critical drinking is associated with negative outcomes such as hostile communication, more expressions of anger, violence, lack of attachment, less warmth and less unity in the relationship. All these factors decrease a couple's satisfaction in their married life and create a marital distress. With the passage of time, depending upon a situation, this all turned up into a trend and which ultimately increases the chances of separation and divorce. Similar trends have been found in some other studies too.

Social Boycott and Social Isolation

Other than this, 63.01% female spouses were facing problem of social boycott and social isolation. They feel isolated in the society. In most of the social gatherings, people avoid them and their other family members. Because of this the spouses of the alcoholics feel socially isolated. Thus, it can be said that people don't like to speak or build up or continue a relationship with members of family where the problem of alcoholism exist. They ignore them in social gathering as speaking with them affect their reputation in society. Because of this, female spouse doesn't like to go to events to avoid contact with people. Social boycott affects them a lot because of which they feel socially isolated which gives birth to problems like mental stress, depression etc.

Problem in Parenting and Effects on Family Rituals and Routines

Critical drinking of male partner also affects parenting and routines of female spouses. The study reveals that 49.31% spouses reported that due to addiction to alcohol and busy schedule their parenting capacity has suffered immensely. Thus, due to busy schedule and over burden on female spouses they hardly find any time for the effective socialization of their children. Due to affected parenting capacity, there is high possibility of deviant behavior among children in such families. Moreover, it has affected their routine life as 45.20% spouses reported that addiction of the alcoholics has affected the routine activities. Many of them reported that they are unable to attend marriages or arrange any function at home. Further, 35.61% sacrificed their personal needs such as purchasing of clothes, medicines and other essential things, they have to give up going to the city, avoid family functions and rituals, avoid celebrating festivals etc.

TABLE4 : YEARS SPENT BY SPOUSE OF AN ALCOHOLIC FACING PROBLEMS DUE TO CRITICAL ADDICTION

S. No.	Period (in years)	Frequency	Percentage
1	0 to 5	87	39.72%
2	6-10	51	23.28%
3	11-15	30	13.69%
4	16-20	33	15.06%
5	21-25	12	5.47%
6	More than 25 years	6	2.74%
	Total	219	100%

Source: Primary Data

An attempt has also been made to identify that since how long the spouses were suffering from the addiction of their partners. Data presented in table depicts that 39.72% spouses were facing the problems from 1 to 5 years followed by 23.28% from 6 to 10 years, 13.69% from 11 to 15 years, and 15.06% from 16 to 20 years. Therefore, it can be concluded that due to the critical addiction of alcoholics most of the spouses were bearing up with this addictive behavior since long back.

CONCLUSION

In nutshell, by looking at objectives, research questions, data and the stories narrated by the spouses of alcoholics, it can be concluded that strong links have been found between critical drinking of alcoholic husband and the problems faced by female spouses. The major problems and challenges reported by spouses are violence, financial burden, mental disturbance, social stigma and labeling, social boycott and social isolation, work outside for earning livelihood etc. There are many other facts that were found and which explained the vulnerable condition of spouses. Study shows that one problem is related to other set of problems which affects the life of spouses. Dominance and fear of an alcoholic partner, futility of responding to the violent behavior and fear of aggravating the problem were the major reasons due to which many of the spouses did not try to respond to the violent behavior of alcoholics. Once a problem starts it increases day by day and affects the social life of spouses. It affects them both physically and mentally, which further produces a series of problems to the whole family such as, disturbance of home environment, suicide, murder, problem in education of children, job loss, social stigma, health complications and many more. All these problems combine to strengthen the problem called “alcoholism”. Thus, in contemporary society, the problem of critical addiction of alcohol has become one of the major concerns not only in Punjab but in different parts of India. Its implications are extremely adverse and cannot be ignored as it ruins and de-regulates the life of family members, especially the life of female spouse. Therefore, to protect them from such troubles it requires immediate attention.

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