

alcohol (A)

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THE SCOURGE OF ALCOHOLISM

" The statistical evidence of the last 25 years, suggests that the ill-effects of alcohol are reaching levels which can no longer be ignored by society" writes the London British Medical Journal of 10th Feb- 1979.

Supplying the statistics of alcoholics in Britain and describing the enormous harm done to the society as a whole, the said journal further adds:

" There are believed to be atleast 300,000 alcoholics in Britain and that figure takes no account of the immense harm done to families in divorce, violence, related illness and attempted suicide. Alcoholics themselves suffer not only from the effects of their addiction but from a wide variety of physical and mental damage, which considerably imperils their social usefulness and their life expectancy. Offences connected with drunkenness have doubled in the last two decades, so that there are currently more than 100,000 arrests taken through the courts. The annual cost of society of drunken driving is put at £100 million."

Citing example of the health hazard caused by alcoholism, the London British Medical Journal of 23-30 Dec- 1978 writes:

" Alcohol damages individual constituents of the liver cells to a varying degree. The damage is believed to be caused by impaired oxidisation which is probably the most important reason why fat becomes deposited in the liver"

What are the causes of this widespread level of alcoholism and the resulting hazards to the society? The British Medical Journal thinks they are the environmental factors such as occupation, affluence and social permissiveness. There is no difference of opinion today in the world that alcoholism entails great risks for human health, security and social well-being. Multitude of remedies for the addicts being offered and repeated propaganda being made against alcoholism, yet the scourge is on the increase instead of decrease. Why? Because it is so deeply rooted and with vested financial interests at stake, the sale and supply is made so intensely easier and widespread.

One reason of the increase in alcoholism is explained to be political. The imperialists and colonialists have for hundreds of years been ruling on vast empires and distant lands in the world profiting a great deal from their natural resources. In order to maintain their hold, they greatly encouraged the drinking habits of the indigenous people by providing facilities of bars and clubs. This was done deliberately to lull the minds of the people so that ~~think~~ less and less of rebelling against their rulers. It might be of interest to quote here an incident at Arusha in Tanzania just after independence. In one of a lavish sundowner in honour of a visiting British politician, an African local official when invited to speak said that although the British had left, they left behind for them a legacy of drinking, dancing and compartmental divisions ~~among~~ <sup>of the</sup> people.

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