

National Alcohol Policy and a Model Alcohol Control Bill
Public Health Foundation of India
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Social Justice and
Empowerment / World Health Organization



Substance Abuse Disorder Policy Brief
Global Challenges Research Fund: ‘The Big Picture’ Assam

Project overview <https://projectresilience.co.uk/projects/the-big-picture/>

‘The Big Picture’ is a Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) project supported by UK Research & Innovation (UKRI: ES/S00047X/1, September 2018-February 2021). This project seeks to understand the experience of **young Assamese people** around risk, recovery and resilience in relation to **substance use disorder** (SUD) and mental health. The goal is to increase knowledge, enhance the voice of young people, and inform practice through impacting policy and promoting public awareness¹.

We are learning from two groups of young Assamese people who show **resilience** to SUD. The first group are **fifteen 15-18 year olds** (7 male, 8 female) at increased risk of substance abuse but who have managed to stay clean. The second group are **fifteen 19-24 year olds** (11 male, 4 female) who have engaged successfully in drug rehabilitation. Participants were invited to bring photos to interview to convey their experience of risk, resilience and recovery². Participants created a poster from their photos (<https://projectresilience.co.uk/outcomes/?project=47-1>) and some took part in film-making to convey their stories of resilience and recovery (<https://projectresilience.co.uk/projects/the-big-picture/>). Many of our younger participants experienced first-hand the devastation of **alcoholism** on family and friends. Alcohol was the main addiction for five of our 15 young adult participants, and **an element of their addiction experience for all but one**.

Interim outcomes

To date our analysis has focused on the young adult addicts-in-recovery. From analysis of the participant interviews, we created a multi-route, multi-directional pathways to recovery model of youth substance abuse in Assam

(<https://projectresilience.co.uk/outcomes/?project=47-3>). The model has three phases, Recreational Use, Addiction (Relaxed, Chaotic, Strategic), and Supported Recovery. Each phase consists of a cycle between, or transition through, a series of stages. The model enhances psycho-socio-cultural insights into the experience of risk, resilience and recovery, and informs prevention and treatment for youth SUD. This is the first model of its kind and an important public health resource. We present the model in a table and as an image³.

Phases	Phase 1	Phase 2 Addiction			Phase 3
	Recreational Use	Phase 2a Relaxed Addiction	Phase 2b Chaotic Addiction	Phase 2c Strategic Addiction	Supported Recovery
Stages	Stage 1 Not using	Stage 3a In addiction	Stage 3a In addiction	Stage 3a In addiction	Stage 3a In addiction
	Stage 2 Casual use	Stage 3a In addiction	Stage 3b Abstinence	Stage 3c Strategic self-management	Stage 4 Supported treatment Stage 5 In recovery



Policy implications

- Preventing SUD in young people must be a public health priority to avoid a potentially lifelong trajectory of devastation for the individual, their family, and the community.
- The phase of addiction a young person is in must be recognised in order to determine the most effective intervention:
 - In Addiction, interventions are best geared towards encouraging a young person to accept support to quit. Chaotic Addiction, in which a young person cycles between substance use and abstinence without support, can be particularly destructive and lead to hopelessness.
 - Strategic Addiction occurs when a young person colludes with treatment to actually sustain their addiction. This is particularly the case with medicalised-only interventions. Medicalised interventions require also long term psycho-social support to have the best chance sustaining sobriety.
- Positive peer role models and peer-to-peer education and support are likely a cost-effective and productive means of preventing SUD in young people and essential to sustaining sobriety when young people are in recovery from addiction⁴.
- Family education and support is vital to preventing addiction in young people and to obtaining their successful engagement with rehabilitation in SUD.

Policy Brief Authors

Professor Anna Madill, School of Psychology, University of Leeds, UK

a.l.madill@leeds.ac.uk, <https://medicinehealth.leeds.ac.uk/psychology>

Dr Sangeeta Goswami, President MIND India, Guwahati, Assam sangeetamind@gmail.com,

<https://mindindia.org/>, Member of Healthy India Alliance for NCD

References

1. Madill, A., Cooke, P., Duara, R., Graber, R., Hugh-Jones, S., & Mirzoev, T. (2019). The Big Picture: Preventing youth substance abuse in Assam. Dialogues: Wellbeing, Lifespan Perspectives and Practices for Sustainable Communities. International Conference Booklet, Assam, India.
2. Duara, R., Hugh-Jones, S., & Madill, A. (2021). 'Forced adulthood': An aspect of 'quarterlife crisis' suffered by young English and Assamese adults, *Qualitative Studies*, 6.1, 11-37. .
3. Madill, A., Duara, R., Goswami, S., Graber, R., & Hugh-Jones, S. (in submission). Pathways to recovery model of youth substance abuse in Assam.
4. Graber, R., Turner, R., & Madill, A. (2015). Best friends and better coping: Facilitating psychological resilience through boys' and girls' closest friendships. *British Journal of Psychology*, 107, 338-358.