Chapter 5

GUIDELINES FOR PRINT MEDIA SUPPORT IN DRUG ABUSE CONTROL

Having examined the drug abuse coverage in print media in North India and after deliberating on the role of print media in checking the malady of drug abuse, now we try to thrash out suggestions for framing up dynamic, comprehensive and detailed guidelines for print media support in checking the threat of drug abuse. These guidelines are based on the sample clippings of the study as well as on the existing literature available. However discussions with few selected media persons were also carried out. Briefly, various media persons reflected on the following themes:

- Drug abuse is a serious issue or not?
- Be it tackled at priority and conspicuously than other social evils or not?
- Frequency of reporting on this issue, if any?
- Satisfied with the present coverage about drug abuse control or not?
- The newspapers exceedingly have a civic duty of prevention in the fight to contain and defeat the phenomenon of drug addiction or not?
- Print media has done very less in this field than it could have done…
- A victim of drugs no longer makes news for main editions of the newspapers…
- Drug abuse is a behavioral and lifestyle disease that can be controlled but only if people make changes in their behaviour?
- How should print media cover this issue?
- Can the print media play a decisive role in the process of controlling fast spiraling drug abuse in the country?
- Has there been any print media campaign to seed future growth of the substance abuse prevention field?
- Do you agree that the newspapers speak about drugs only in political terms or in terms of ostensible contrasts between the supporters of permissive legislation and those of further restrictions?
- How can media help in breaking the inertia and silence of society about the drug abuse?
- Do you agree that the main role of the media is not for preventing alcohol, tobacco, and other drug problems through building general awareness of the problem and to direct messages at the individual to change behaviour regarding alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use? Media advocacy, however, shifts the message from individual behaviour change to collective behaviour change; that is, to norms and policies.
- Do you agree that the current media coverage also causes the public to develop some extremely negative ideas about addicts?
- Do you agree that the percent of news items referring to seizures and drug trafficking reinforced images of criminals as drug-pushers, thieves or troublemakers?
- Drug addiction is over-publicized and over-publicity promotes drug abuse?
- How can we establish clear policies against alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) use in the media offices?
- Do you share helpful information and success stories with the public to inspire community leaders, teachers, and parents to take action?
- Covering drug-related topics media should avoid placing them adjacent to paid advertising for tobacco products so as not to deliver a "mixed" message.
- Frequency of editorials by a newspaper on this issue?
- The mass media must play an important role, not only by simply providing information, but also in the development of scientifically based methods of intervention?
- How can the print media assist in the establishment and maintenance of the drug problem on the national agenda?
- How can the print media provide balance and informed reporting and can provide simple and easily understood messages?
Print media should stop glamorizing the drug abuse in any form?

Print media is also to be blamed for spread of drug abuse?

How can the print media stop overplay of adventurism after addiction?

Suggest a simple media design to curb this menace.

Suggest role of print media in the fields like Awareness building, Treatment, Rehabilitation, Trafficking, Parental/Teachers sensitization

Does our media makes it clear that illegal and unwise drug use is unhealthy and harmful for all and gives a clear message that "risk" is associated with using any form or amount of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs?

Media emphasize that abstinence is the best viable choice?

Newspapers check for cultural and ethnic biases and sensitivity while publishing drug abuse related stories?

Press persuades the reader for the need to change, and engage the reader with a call for action?

Need to gear the format (type, size, layout, style) to spread the message to target audience?

Expectations of print media from social workers, GOs, NGOs etc.

Specialization/separate beat for drug abuse and whether journalists need special training for the better coverage of this beat?

Before we jump on to formulating guidelines, it is imperative to know the existing generalizations about health communication campaigns along with basic principles of media coverage.

5.1. Generalizations About Health Communication Campaigns

There were no planned programs on drug abuse, alcoholism or tobacco in India in the health sector till 1986, barring occasional references in a program on mental health (Sharma 2000). Occasional reporting by the media on particular days seems to have little impact. In fact, public awareness campaigns are required. Such campaigns by the media can be a popular vehicle for drug prevention. These provide an opportunity to send a clear message being repeated at frequent intervals that is likely to be retained by the audience. However, Backer (1992) presented some generalizations about health
communication campaigns. It stated that more effective campaigns use multiple media (television, radio, print and so on) and combine mass media with community, small group and individual activities, supported by an existing community structure. The effective campaigns carefully target or segment the audience that the campaign is intended to reach. Celebrities can attract public attention to a campaign issue. Public attention can be achieved by embedding a campaign’s message in an entertainment program. Repetition of a single message makes for a more effective campaign. Campaigns for preventive behaviour are more effective if they emphasize positive behaviour change rather than the negative consequences of current behaviour. Arousing fear is rarely successful as a campaign strategy. Campaigns are more effective if they emphasize current rewards rather than the avoidance of distant negative consequences. More effective campaigns involve in their design and operation key power figures and groups in mass media organizations and in government bodies. Similarly, the timing of a campaign helps to determine campaign effectiveness and utilize formative evaluation techniques to appraise and improve the campaigns during planning and while they are in operation. Set fairly modest, attainable goals in terms of behaviour change. The use of commercial marketing and social marketing strategies has potential for increasing the effectiveness of campaigns. Utilize educational messages in entertainment contexts and direct messages to people linked to targeted individuals, especially individuals with direct interpersonal influence, such as peers and parents. More effective campaigns choose their positive role models for social learning carefully, as these individuals may become negative role models through their personal actions (e.g., celebrities involved in substance abuse campaigns who later are discovered to have substance abuse problems themselves).

Also if fear appeals are used in campaign messages, they should be coupled with mechanisms for reducing the anxiety that is created. Public service announcements (PSA) alone generally do not effectively bring about behaviour change. PSAs should be combined with other campaign activities. More effective campaigns use the news media as a means of increasing their visibility. The role of the government in campaigns is mainly to provide (a) funding for campaign activities and (b) appropriate leadership on controversial issues. Such campaigns address the existing knowledge and beliefs of target audiences that are impeding adoption of desired behaviours and communicate incentives
or benefits for adopting desired behaviours that build on the existing motives, needs, and values of target audiences. More effective campaigns focus target audiences’ attention on immediate, high-probability consequences of healthy behaviour and use protesting to ensure that campaign messages have the expected effects on target audiences (Backer, 1992).

In addition, it would be pertinent to encourage young people to address young people on this subject. Focus on all levels of risk, with special attention to those exposed to high risk and low protection. Prevention programs and policies should focus on all levels of risk, but special attention must be given to the most important risk factors, protective factors, psychoactive substances, individuals, and groups exposed to high risk and low protection in a defined population. Population assessment can help sharpen the focus of prevention. Use approaches that have been shown to be effective. Some tested strategies that are widely accepted call to reduce the availability of illicit drugs, and of alcohol and tobacco for the under-aged. Community-wide laws, policies, and programs can reduce the availability and marketing of illicit drugs. They can also reduce the availability and appeal of alcohol and tobacco to the under aged. Strengthen anti-drug-use attitudes and norms. Strengthen environmental support for anti-drug-use attitudes by sharing accurate information about substance abuse, encouraging drug-free activities, and enforcing laws, and policies related to illicit substances. Strengthen life skills and drug refusal techniques. Teach life skills and drug refusal skills, using interactive techniques that focus on critical thinking, communication, and social competency. Reduce risk and enhance protection in families. Strengthen family skills by setting rules, clarifying expectations, monitoring behaviour, communicating regularly, providing social support, and modeling positive behaviours. Strengthen social bonding and caring relationships with people holding strong standards against substance abuse in families, schools, peer groups, mentoring programs, religious and spiritual contexts, and structured recreational activities.

To carry on all these strategies, various studies have revealed that there is an overwhelming opinion to accord the highest priority to the dissemination of information. It is necessary to publicize the damage caused by addiction on body and mind. It is imperative to carefully devise the strategy for imparting information on drugs in keeping
with the specific characteristics of the target groups, the factors associated with drug abuse and types of drugs being abused. The problem has to be tackled on its growth continuum, starting from the use of socially acceptable drugs and leading to prohibited drugs. In this connection, a thorough understanding of the conditions and circumstances that induce individuals to take to addiction, and to turn them into hard-core addicts, is considered imperative. Information on the personality make-up and background of addicts abundantly reveals as to how and why an individual renders himself vulnerable to addiction under various kinds of pressures both from within and outside. Therefore educational interventions through media have not only to forewarn individuals about the pitfalls in experimenting with drugs but also to enable them to overcome situations leading to addiction.

Effective drug demand reduction campaigns must take into account the social and cultural concerns of the given target groups. A community-based approach targeting the family may be most useful, since the family bond is still fairly strong in this region. The messages should also be target group oriented - women, children, specific minorities etc. It is also useful to deal with an individual drug in one program or message, as information that is too general may be useless for a potential drug user. The purpose of a drug prevention message is to prevent non-users from starting to consume drugs. The practice, however, is far from simple and is a long way from being perfected in any country or setting. Drug prevention messages can inform, warn, shock or frighten; they can raise awareness of specific problems and offer ways of dealing with them. The effectiveness of a message may be judged by how it affects knowledge, attitudes and behaviour, and each requires a different type of message input.

The vital factor for the knowledge input of a drug prevention message is the provision of clear, and correct information. Exaggerating the danger of drugs undermines the credibility both of the message and the message giver, especially when information is available from many sources. The attitude and behaviour components take into account a natural human curiosity about drugs and the fact that in certain moods or circumstances the individual may be tempted to take risk and experiment. The message inputs have to pinpoint these crucial moments and instill the skills and the will power that, together with knowledge will deflect the individual from that course of action. On the other hand, the
necessity of addressing a general audience of mixed cultural, educational and social backgrounds may cause a lack of focus. Also, the message is delivered without any interaction between the message giver and audience and therefore without the possibility of direct feedback (Sharma, 2000).

Further, in order to suggest guidelines for the role of media, first let us ponder over the recommendations to counter drug abuse. Veeraghavan (1992) suggested that incentives should be given to those who apprehend the addicts for peddlers and bring them to hospital for treatment or inform the police about peddlers. Free treatment should be made available for drug addicts. Hawkers should be removed from the school and college premises. Borders from where the drugs enter should be checked and kept on vigil. Ensure interstate cooperation. Police patrolling in the drug-prone areas in civil dress should be started. Total ban on drug production and distribution be executed along with effective implementation of the law and punishment of the offender. The drug problem prevails because of corrupt police; corrupt officials who patronize the evildoers and bad characters in the society who are allowed to go scot-free despite offences committed by them. Change laws so that all those guilty are punished mercilessly and permit death sentence to peddlers/pushers/dealers. Improve the police force and change the police set-up. A devoted team comprising people from all walks of life should be constituted which can control the drug problem effectively. Sincere efforts by government and voluntary agencies should be ensured to combat this problem. The youngsters should be helped and educated towards high thinking, moral values, simple living and health values. Change in the values system for the better and organizing youth power to combat the drug problem would provide a lasting solution. The courts should not insist on public witness for drug cases. Procedures for the trial of drug peddlers/dealers/addicts should be simplified and there should be a time-limit trial for these cases so that there is no delay in punishing the guilty. Diagnostic counseling for drug addicts, treatment and rehabilitation facilities should be improved and expanded both in hospitals and voluntary organizations. There should be greater involvement of voluntary agencies dealing with the drug problem. Economic development, providing more employment opportunities, removal of poverty etc, would help reducing the drug problem.
Srivastava (2000) too while recommending about campaign strategy for tobacco states that it is important that multi-media campaign strategy be used to:

Educate the public about the harmful effects of tobacco; Educate the policy makers about the deception behind the tobacco industries arguments; Involve the medical community and the entertainment industry to appeal to the youth to support the cause of the anti-tobacco campaign.

He further calls to run an aggressive media advocacy campaign not just to counter the arguments of the tobacco industry but also to pre-empt them. The press and television can be motivated to run programme content and editorial that raises the awareness of the issues related to tobacco. A print version of the tobacco death clock can be run in newspapers in every country to remind people on a regular basis, in television a programme on the lines of South Africa’s Soul city can be introduced to take on the health argument. Mobilize support of NGO’s to activate ground level support for the campaign. Parents and guardians must assume responsibility for preventing the use of illicit drugs by all persons within their family or Household. Public and private organizations should establish mechanisms to give recognition to Youngsters who are drug-free and who promote a drug-free lifestyle.

The White House Conference for a Drug Free America (1998) noted that the media must work together with the industry to help protect youth. These guidelines are:

To ensure that no advertisement has appeal to persons below the legal drinking age, by using models and personalities who appear well over the legal drinking age; not appearing in youth-oriented magazines, newspapers, television programs, radio programs, or other media specifically oriented to youth; not suggesting that the alcoholic product resembles or is similar to any nonalcoholic product; not presenting alcohol as necessary for, or associated with, “rites of passage” to adulthood; and not using current or traditional heroes of the young, or amateur or professional sports celebrities, in alcohol advertisements.

To ensure that there is no relationship suggested between alcohol consumption and success, happiness or achievement, by not depicting alcohol as vital to social acceptability and popularity; not suggesting that alcohol is important for successful entertainment’ and not suggesting that alcohol is essential to personal performance, social attainment, achievement, success, or wealth. To encourage the proper use of alcohol by not depicting excessive drinking (or not depicting it as amusing); discussing the effects that alcohol may produce; and
ensuring that alcohol advertising is adult-oriented and socially responsible.

Similarly, there were recommendations for media and entertainment which stated that every segment of the news media and entertainment industries must ensure that its programming avoids any positive portrayal of illicit drug use, and that responsible industry executives reject as unacceptable any programming that does not meet this standard. Every segment of the media must establish a comprehensive public campaign against illicit drug use. Media employers must adopt for all media workplaces a strong anti drug work policy that covers every employee. Local media must work closely with community leaders and citizen groups to combat the use of illicit drugs. Media messages must also increasingly target people who do not now use illicit drugs and minority populations. The movie rating system must take a stronger stance against illegal drugs. The media must adhere to existing guidelines restricting alcohol and tobacco advertising that target youth. Student-run media, including high school newspapers and college print and broadcast outlets, must actively disseminate accurate information about illicit drug use.

Chhabra (1992) observed that it was crucial that an extensive publicity campaign be launched through the public media, radio, television and the press regarding (i) the ill consequences-socio economic, psychological and physical-or drug addiction, (ii) the provisions of law, highlighting the severe punishments against trafficking in the contraband and (iii) the availability of the clinical and counseling services for the treatment and social rehabilitation of the addicts detoxified. It is also necessary to create general awareness about the indications and the common causes of addiction and the possible sources of supply. The radio and T.V. programmes should be adjusted/scheduled keeping in mind the particular classes of listeners or viewers likely to be available before the sets at the particular time. Best possible results may be achieved by interjecting these programmes in between the popular serials. Education publicity should also cover the danger involved in the casual administration of small quantities of drugs like raw opium to small children by elders to relieve pain. Need for seeking advice from qualified medical practitioners for the ailment of children should be stressed.
5.2. Role of Journalists

Journalism is made up of people who write about many different things; consequently it is difficult for a journalist to equip himself with a suitable cultural background to be able to deal with every problem in a precise and perfect way. It is often emphasized that it's not the reporter's job to educate; reporter's job is to report. In addition, journalists were simply unprepared for the phenomenon of drug abuse assuming nefarious proportions. Some of them had no idea of the tragedy behind drugs and the subsequent massive increase in consumption. The present study has revealed an appalling lack of awareness in the public about the crisis. Informed persons interviewed including some senior journalists who are supposed to be alive to all the public issues, had scanty or vague information about the extent of drug addiction and little knowledge about the law on the subject and its success or failure in curdling the evil and the existence of any de-addiction center in the city. If this is the state of awareness of the informed persons, one could well imagine the position in this regard of the general public. It is also true that the media tends to sensationalize and even exploit the traumas of the affected for the sake of good copy. The journalists also brought up the many limitations they had to cope with while dealing with this issue. Of deadlines that left them no time for research or to check details and procure informed consent, and of the rush, especially among television channels, to be the first to flash the news which made it well nigh impossible to maintain confidentiality. Paucity of updated statistics and the reluctance of officials and those in the know to reveal details were also seen as a problem.

Anyhow, commitment of the journalist to any cause certainly shows good results. The pre-requisites of any successful intervention program is the complete understanding into the phenomena of addiction, its causes as well as phenomenology of dependence. Addiction is certainly a result of interaction among socio psychological and physiological factors. The search for a single cause of addiction may be unrealistic goal. The extent and pattern of interaction of different factors is unique because of individual differences in personality characteristics. Virk (2002) believed that currents of change mark the progress of media and communication today. Journalists have no formal training in specialized fields such as agriculture and food reporting etc what to talk about drug abuse. Whatever professional training is available is confined to an exclusive fortunate
elite. Many newspapers do not exploit even these skimpy journalistic jaunts. After their return, these journalists do not receive assignments that are a challenge to the specialized training they have received, assignments, for instance, that combine research and investigative reporting, or even passing on their newfound experience and skills to junior members of the editorial staff.

Bruno (1990) argues that the world is changing and the subjects of journalistic interest are changing. For example, let us take economics; 25 years ago economic journalists could be counted on the fingers or one hand, now there are hundreds of them. Clearly attention to economic affairs has created a school of economic journalists. Likewise, earlier, there weren’t any drugs in the country and it was therefore logical that we didn’t know anything about the problem. Nowadays, unfortunately, our young colleagues have to be made aware of this problem and have to develop sufficient knowledge to be made aware of this problem and have to develop sufficient knowledge to be able to communicate with the readers. We should introduce a compulsory oral test in the journalism examinations, which are held every six months, with an average of 500-600 participants. The editorial groups that organize course for aspiring journalists ought to dedicate some lesson time to the problem.

Scientists are frequently making noteworthy new discoveries about the addictive drugs, their effects, treatment interventions etc. Every day substance abuse and drug addiction pervades the news. Journalists need the latest scientific knowledge to write their best stories. There is an imperative need for such programmes, which are designed to give journalists the latest scientific information about drugs and addiction. For building relationships between journalists and addiction scientists, there should be recurrent interactions through workshops, seminars etc. This will not only transmit latest information but will help in an interactive, problem-based format that engages the skills and knowledge of working journalists. A website (www.addictionstudies.org) under the title ‘Addiction Studies Program for Journalists’, reported that journalists who want to give an extra edge to their stories and set themselves apart from competitors, to understand why addicts can’t stop using drugs or looking for new approaches to stories and seeking information about how drugs change the brain and change behaviour can join such interactions. Such congregations can offer an intensive introduction to the scientific
basis of addiction, information about the latest advances in the field of drug-abuse research, story ideas, ways to deal with the constant flow of information -- and misinformation -- about drug abuse and addiction, ways to better convey accurate information so that readers or viewers can make better decisions about drug policy, and a bank of resources for future reference etc. Journalists can know and understand how challenging it can be to 'kick a habit.' ‘Why addiction happens’ etc. The program can give ideas for new questions to be asked which can put both drug users and policy makers on the spot for better explanation. Also, the process will make journalists more sympathetic to the struggle to beat addiction. As they will encounter addiction subject matter, they will have the basic scientific understanding to fairly present addiction as more than mere ‘bad choices.’

International Center for Journalists (2001) reported that in Kenya journalists launched an educational outreach campaign to fight drug abuse in the country's educational institutions. The program was a joint venture of the National Agency for the Campaign against Drug Abuse (NACADA), the Kenya Union of Journalist (KUJ) and the Nation Newspapers Division. It involved countrywide “sensitization” programs, using the mass media to illustrate the effects of drug abuse. Schools, colleges, polytechnics and universities were the main targets. Journalists also attempted to convince parents to help teachers fight drug abuse among young people. The campaign also included concerted editorial “power of the pen" rallies urging Kenyans to fight the drug problem. Journalists believed that the media could no longer afford to sit back and merely report on the devastation drug abuse was causing to Kenyans. Everyone has to be pro-active and fight drug abuse more decisively. The initiative disseminated information, provided platforms to drug advisors, suggested treatment for drug addicts, and helped those willing to kick the habit find employment.

Ethical guidelines ought to be evolved for both reporters and copy editors and that trained and specialist writers should cover the drug abuse beat. Journalists could be put through an intensive training before they write. There is a need for the media to partner the work being done by governments and NGOs and to see whether "our preoccupation with a different kind of journalism deters us from bringing these issues to centrestage." The positive groups, however, have their own experience of how the issue should be
centrestaged with sensitized and focused handling of the concerns of the affected, rather than just dealing with the seizures or on the spot coverage.

Exaggerated and outdated statistics often create stigma and discrimination. Understatements and sensationalized reports result in shying away from the media. Addicts fear that they would lose what little support they had if they disclose their status. It is wondering why the media rarely came to their rescue by focusing on the positive rather than the negative aspects of drug abuse. Particularly harmful is the use of wrong terminology for those leading full and useful lives.

The media persons were of the opinion that this was an issue that should be reported without bias to any particular community or way of life. Facts and details should be checked and rechecked because any distortion, misinterpretation, breach of confidentiality or sensationalism could result in untold harm to the affected. Charges are often made against the media of "false, inaccurate, uninformed and insensitive reporting". Anyhow, it is a fact that there is much the media can do about the kind of positive, correct, sensitive reporting that reflects there is feeling behind it. It is felt that the focus should be on individuals and "the human dimension of the issue". It may be cautioned that talking about larger issues like, poverty, malnutrition and ignorance, which cannot really be resolved in the near future, may not obfuscate the issue.

A further suggestion is to write editorials at least twice a year on the problems of drugs in order to reason with those people who are a part of the tragedy or could fall into the same drugs trap. It does not seem too much to ask for two editorials a year on the drugs problem.

Hence, briefly, what is needed is a common sense approach with a lot of dedication. There is need to step up awareness programs and go beyond carrying advertisements on national television that usually present a ghoulish picture of the problem. The process of education must start in schools and colleges where a majority of the victims come from. Just like sex education, information about the various types of drugs and the harmful effects must be made available; parents can be called in to tell them how to recognize symptoms and how they should handle problems of addiction. Similar courses can be held in factories and other workplaces. Employers too need to be sensitized so they can begin to deal with the problem more effectively and responsibly.
Provide on-going technical assistance to writers and producers; convene periodic meetings of technical advisors to review program content; conduct on-going data collection to provide feedback to producers/writers. Hence, this analysis of the press coverage of drug abuse control in the newspapers during 2001 can result in the creation of a 'campaign dataset', which can enable movements in opinion during the campaign to be related to press coverage of the campaign.

5.3. Basic Principles/Guidelines for better Media Coverage

On the basis of foregoing discussion, it is crucial to formulate some fundamental doctrine for better media mapping for drug abuse control. This may include objectives like increasing media coverage of issues of vital impact, stories highlighting tragedies of untreated addiction or recovery with human face, failures of punitive legal measures or gaps in treatment. Messages should be that recovery from addiction is possible and happening. ‘Millions have quit drugs, so can you’, should be the dominating theme for addressing the addicts. Apart from reporting, latest reports or data on extent or prevalence of drug abuse, covering sports events or meetings of officials, the focus of media stories could be: compelling individual success stories or persons ruined by drugs, tragedies or crisis of drug abuse etc. Timely new stories with unusual, distinct, unexpected revealing hit close to home. The goals of such media coverage could be mobilizing support for prevention pursuits, reducing stigma and discrimination, building visibility and strength of the individuals or organisations etc.

Of all the factors responsible for efficient media support in drug abuse control, message designing is paramount. An unclear message or a message depicting how to use drugs or where and how to procure drugs at what cost etc can actually be counter-productive. Such media coverage is sure not to serve the purpose of drug abuse control. Besides it can boomerang. Some prevention resources at times contain subtle messages that run counter to the intent of the objectives. Persons inclined to smoke, abuse alcohol, or use other drugs look for justifications for their behaviour. Here are a few principles in this regard:

Exclude information about modes to prepare, obtain, inhale, inject or ingest drugs. Several media reports or write-ups, at times, carry information, photographs or illustrations etc of drugs that may convey the message never intended by the author or
contributor. Resources anticipated to caution against drugs may unintentionally teach someone how to use drugs. Pictures of people injecting drugs, sniffing cocaine, or drinking alcohol may stimulate the behaviour. Especially regarding cocaine, it is said that the sight of this drug and objects, people, paraphernalia, places can easily trigger a powerful craving for cocaine, and emotions associated in the addict's mind with this drug.

A recent story titled, "Students flying high on wave on new addictions" in The Times of India (August 11, 2003), reported mode of drug use, names of drugs and their combinations etc which can be used otherwise also. The story goes as:

When Ashish Wadhwan talks of submarines on the MS University campus in Vadodara, he isn't actually discussing sea-borne vessels. Neither is Santosh talking about the anatomy of reptiles when he refers to lizards with his friends at the Gujarat University.

Campuses across the state are on a new high, literally, as Ashish and Santosh ride the wave of "new addictions," trying different concoctions and beyond-your-comprehension methods to "attain a new state of mind", which may even put the Hippies of yore to shame. If Ashish uses a 'submarine' to get a bigger kick out of the traditional 'ganja' and Santosh can't sleep if he doesn't "eat" a lizard every night, parents of another student were horrified when they discovered their son getting a high eating bread and lodex sandwiches.

Sociologists and counsellors say it is alarming how the age-old problem of drug abuse on campus is taking horrifying proportions. Late in the night, lights are dimmed in hostel rooms on many a campus as boys get their heads together to create their "submarine."

"It's a popular method to smoke marijuana. Cut out the lower portion of a mineral water bottle, cork it and let the smoke from a chillum enter it from below through a pipe as the bottle is immersed in a bucket of water. We wait till the smoke is concentrated and then inhale it. It is an out-of-the-world experience," says Ashish.

Another method, codenamed 'swift,' can give you a high, with a flavour of your choice! "If someone wants a flavoured swift, he can use a coconut kernel, perforating two holes, one to allow the smoke to go in and the other to inhale from, for the 'swift," says Ashish.

"A new obsession among addicts is to try out a combination of drugs. We have had patients who have mixed tranquilisers with cough syrup. This is a disturbing trend," says Ankur Dave of the Sardar Patel De-addiction Hospital in Ahmedabad. Doctors and psychologists point out that such dangerous practices can cause serious damage to one's health.
Students also admit preparing concoctions of psychotropic drugs like Lorazepam, Benzodizapine, Paxil and painkillers like Tedigesic injections and Spasmo Proxyvon with cough syrups and even alcohol.

Sharma (2000) also mentioned that there was a series (fiction) in the late seventies that incorporated popular misconceptions about drugs in a provocative manner, which may have glamorized drugs and drug taking. Similarly, movies like ‘Hare Rama Hare Krishna’ may have glamorized drugs (especially cannabis).

Hence, while designing the messages media must remain conscious of the dangers of creating inquisitiveness and a desire to try drugs especially amongst young people seeking sensational experiences. It should not express about drugs that are not used or available in the local situation and avoid giving information on where to buy or how much may be earned by participating trafficking. Also avoid use of illustrations or descriptions providing instruction on how to use drugs. Illustrations of drugs or drug paraphernalia should be used only when they serve a specific purpose as facilitating parents or teachers to recognize signs of drug use by children.

Emphasize total abstinence. Messages focusing on moderation, controlled use or drinking within reasonable limits; restricted use of tobacco; or intermittent popping of prescription or nonprescription pills, in fact, send mixed meaning to the readers that these drugs are acceptable. Rather the media should emphasize on total abstinence as feasible choice. In addition, recommending alternatives to drug-reliant behaviours needs to be emphasized. Media must come down heavily on the thoughts that the only solution for a headache is an over-the-counter analgesic or that the only way to celebrate a special event is with an alcohol beverage. Furthermore, media can propagate a clear message that any form or amount of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs is full of perils. Although alcohol consumption and tobacco use may be legal for individuals after certain age, yet these drugs have severe adverse end results. Even small amounts of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs can increase injury or health risks. The public health principle, rather, maintains that illegal and injudicious drug use is unwholesome and unsafe for people of all age groups. Media need to take a clear stand against use of any legally prohibited drug; use of a drug for a purpose other than its prescribed use; employing any product or substance that can produce a drug-like effect; utilizing any legal drug, including alcohol or tobacco,
by individuals legally underage for its use; illegal or unwise use of a legal drug. Even a slight this acceptance of such drug use may send the message to many that such drug use is "normal."

Role models should be upright and perfect. A number of celebrities who have had problems with alcohol or other drugs are eager to use their celebrity status to help others. But the message the celebrity intends to convey may not be the message that teenagers and preteens receive. While the superstar may be saying, "Don't do it," but if in the real life he had been on drugs then the youth are hearing, "I did it, and I'm okay now. Taking drugs is part of being famous." Hence, Alcoholics or recovering addicts should not be taken as role models.

No glamorization of drugs should be there. In the effort to be informative about drugs, sometimes prevention materials detail the effects of the drug on the user. Even though most prevention materials focus on the negative effects, even a brief description of a drug's positive or euphoric effects might attract a potential user. Sharma (2000) also observed that most prevention messages contain a combination of positive value promotions with negative consequence warning. Once again, to be credible, the message needs to be as objective as possible. Messages which contain only negative, gloom and doom warnings, depicting drug dealers and consumers as miserable drop-outs languishing in sordid, self-inflicted misery are sometimes felt to be counterproductive. Many young people know from direct experience, or from their circle of acquaintances, that drugs are not always incompatible with success and vitality and may see illegality as superficially attractive.

Bruno (1999) called for establishing clear policies against alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) use in the media office. He suggests: Know the potential risks that alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs pose for business: absenteeism, loss of productivity, loss of income, insurance liability, mistakes, reduced morale, and illness. Be aware of the connection between alcohol and other drugs and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS. Make the public aware that alcohol and other drugs can lead to unplanned and unprotected sex. Many drugs, including alcohol and tobacco products, interfere with the body's immune system. Share helpful information and success stories with the public to inspire community leaders, teachers, and parents to take action. When covering
ATOD-related topics or depicting them in programming, avoid placing them adjacent to paid advertising for alcohol and tobacco products so as not to deliver a "mixed" message. When reporting crimes, fires, car crashes, and tragedies, question law enforcement, hospital, and rescue personnel about the possible role of ATOD and include findings in your coverage. Be an in-house advocate for donated print space or air time for public service messages supporting ATOD prevention. Remind those in charge that ATOD prevention deserves top priority among many deserving requests for public service attention. Provide balance for pro-ATOD use messages with positive reporting of ATOD-free adult and youth role modeling, community activities, etc. Portray abstinence as one "normal" option many adults choose regarding alcohol and tobacco products. Ensure that your prevention messages are culturally relevant and sensitive to the needs of your viewing/listening public. Promote an ATOD awareness week or month, or sponsor sports events to raise money to treat disadvantaged youth with alcohol and other drug problems. Host editorial briefings on ATOD-related problems with local ATOD prevention representatives. Encourage community affairs, talk shows, and news programming producers and directors to be proactive in developing ATOD-related programs. Volunteer with community-based ATOD prevention groups; advise and assist in their public information and media relations efforts; write information materials, news releases, scripts for public service announcements, etc. Counter and challenge stereotyping and glamorization of members of the journalism and entertainment professions as heavy-smoking, hard-drinking "heroes" by identifying leaders of your profession who do not engage in these practices and by reporting the lost health, careers, and lives of those who do.

Hence it will be good to acknowledge and propagate the new trend of moving away from the purely negative image of the drug user towards a positive portrayal of the non-user as a healthier, happier, more attractive and successful individual. Lack of conclusive evidence is foundation for greater caution rather than for lighter restrictions. While working from hypotheses, theories, or models but not from statistically significant, conclusive, and replicated research, be especially careful that assumptions will not increase drug use and that application will not result in misperception or other harm. If media is reporting that research has not yet conclusively proven a link between a drug...
and a suspected health hazard, it may imply that the drug has been proven harmless. Promoters of some substance (e.g., the tobacco industry) have use a "lack of conclusive scientific evidence" as an argument against restrictions imposed on their products. Message should be update, scientifically significant, based on valid assumptions, accurately referenced, and appropriately used.

Sharma (2000) also advocated that each message must be part of a well-planned, long term, overall strategy and not just a flash in the pan. If messages are not updated keeping in mind the changing patterns of abuse and addiction as well as treatment and rehabilitation facilities available, the abuser of chemical substances may look for alternative sources of information that may be misleading or inaccurate.

Likewise many media reports give relevant information but fail to identify the source of that information. Hence, while presenting information derived from scientific research, media must make it certain that the information is adequately referenced and appropriately applied to the issue at hand. While some readers may be convinced that a statement is true simply because it appears in print, others demand and deserve to know the source of the findings that are being presented. If evidence is derived from sound scientific experiments conducted by respected individuals at reputable institutions, citing the source of the evidence can only help to make the prevention message more convincing.

Make the Message Relevant. Even though message is clear and accurate, it will serve no purpose if intended audience ignores the message. In order to reach their targets, prevention messages must be relevant. That is, they must appeal to the values and interests of the audience. Prevention messages must be cast in a language and at a level of diction that is understood by the audience. However, prevention workers should be careful when attempting to use the dialect or slang that is associated with the target audience. Such attempts may be perceived as inauthentic and pompous. Furthermore, imitations of a group's dialect may reinforce negative stereotypes. Prevention messages should include appeals that the target audience will perceive as personally relevant. The producers of prevention messages may strive to keep teens from becoming addicted to drugs or facing other risks, including injuries or health problems. Yet teens who perceive themselves to be immortal may turn off messages that emphasize effects they don't
believe they are at risk for. Rather, appeals should be based on something that teens value or consider important, such as peer pressure or looking good and feeling good.

Enlighten readers about the seriousness of the crisis, persuade for change, and engage with a call for action. Messages should make the reader aware of the need for change, the need for further information, or the seriousness of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug problems. Materials must not preach but rather find positive appeals that engage and motivate the target audience. And finally, materials must present a desired behaviour so the message is not merely negative. Positive actions called for in prevention materials might include seeking treatment, calling a referral number, confronting a drug-using spouse or friend, or joining a parent group.

Verify for cultural and ethnic biases and sensitivity. Many of the negative stereotypes associated with minority groups involve perceptions of their alcohol- or other drug-related behaviours. Media messages addressing alcohol, tobacco, and other drug abuse problems within a specific minority should avoid reinforcing those negative stereotypes. Information about any group's pattern of alcohol, tobacco, or other drug use should be presented objectively -- and based only on scientific and demographic research findings. Presenting role models from a targeted minority can be an effective means of appealing to that audience. But program developers should avoid limiting their chosen spokespersons to minority athletes and entertainers. Community leaders, teachers, doctors, lawyers, educators, military personnel, writers, parents, and many others can help to demonstrate the variety of opportunities open to minority youth.

Media messages must reflect the cultural norms of the audience. It is not enough simply to include images of an ethnic or economic group in the prevention materials. Be sure to reflect the social, economic, and familial norms and symbols of audience as well as their physical appearance. For example, groups are more important than individuals among some populations; spiritual symbols are important among others. You may also want to reflect such cultural factors as the importance of the extended family, the key role of grandparents, and religion.

Do not "censure the victim." Addiction is an illness. Therefore, media should focus on preventing and treating the disease and not on berating the individual. Using negative terms to describe an addict may send the message that the individual is not
worth helping. Media must never use insulting terms about the victims of alcohol, tobacco, or other drug abuse. Likewise, it should not focus on an individual's shortcomings as a reason for use or addiction. Media write-ups may encourage the person to take responsibility for seeking help for their alcohol, tobacco, and other drug problems.

Sharma (2000) as well suggested that while media programming, certain principles are to be kept in mind: viz Avoid using fear strategies, give factual information. Handle one drug in each program. A general message may be imparted in spots/quickies during initial stages of the campaign if there is shortage of funds. Avoid scapegoat, stereotyping or stigmatizing. Adapt your material to the local culture. Using former drug abusers should be avoided in primary prevention programs. Facilitate participation - encourage more information to be sought through phone calls or letters from the audience. Integrate HIV related messages. Don't create a need for facilities if none exist within the larger social context. Provide facilities before showing their usefulness.

Hence, in the conclusion, it can be summed up that one should always give a clear no-use message for any illegal drug use, anyone under 21 years of age, pregnant women, recovering alcoholics or drug addicts. Ensure that scientific findings do not encourage drug use, are up to date and adequately referenced. Make the write-ups relevant to the targeted audience, free of negative stereotypes, appealing. In addiction to being clear, media messages must be accurate and based on solid evidence derived from the latest scientific research. Unjustified claims can undermine the credibility of a media message. Furthermore, outdated information may fail to contain important findings. It is observed that occasionally some media write-ups even suggested that as much as two drinks a day was a safe level of alcohol consumption even for pregnant women. Besides these broad principles, it is obvious that media take care of presentation. Do all to make product professional and attractive in appearance by gearing the format, screens, using photographs, figures, and bullets etc. When developing publications or other products relying on the written word, use white space generously to keep the text from becoming dense and the heading and photo captions to impart essential information. In addiction, use a large typeface for materials that will be read by young children, people with low literacy level, or the elderly.
Having discussed all these, it must be kept in mind that media should not be considered as an alternative to work. The growing importance of media does not mean organizers should abandon direct contact with masses. Even good media exposure, will not build an organized base of support nor create an analysis of the issue at hand. Though, our society is heavily media-dependent it can’t be expected that the media will organize the community. The media is not a substitute for active participation. It creates passivity and isolates people.

Success comes not simply because of a good media strategy, but because a good media strategy operated in combination with an organizing strategy. In USA, Communities Against Substance Abuse launched an intensive media campaign to expand program that successfully rehabilitates nonviolent criminal drug offenders. This led to the achievement of the lowest recidivism rates in the nation. Organizers thanked the media advocacy efforts, which included news events, feature stories, opinion-editorials and letters to the editor, etc. Similarly, the organization waged an aggressive media campaign to increase funding for California’s Drug Endangered Children Program. They held an official press conference, authored opinion-editorials, letters to the editor, and pitched numerous feature stories to San Diego media on the benefits of the program. The media campaign created favorable public opinion that encouraged California State Legislators to approve increased funding. Similarly, Anheuser-Busch, a beer company, launched a promotion plan for underage youth, but the advocacy organisations raised such public concern using contacts with the media that the company had to cancel its campaign. This is one way of focusing on alcohol policy through the media in a way that contrasts with the traditional focus on behaviour change. It focused public attention on the policy issues.

In media advocacy, challenging conventional wisdom and public thinking is important. Mass media become the arena for contesting public policies and for shifting emphasis from individual behaviour change to collective behaviour change and policies. Media advocates ask themselves how a media opportunity can best advance policy goals and shift the debate from individuals to the collective decisions of policies and norms. Using contacts with electronic or print media editors and reporters, advocates can generate public interest in changing industry promotional practices, media policies, tax laws, law enforcement practices, labeling laws, school rules, workplace policies, health
care policies, community norms, or other factors that may contribute to youth alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use. Reporters may not be aware of factors in their communities that promote alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use. By using specific media-related skills, prevention practitioners can provide them with interesting information and stories that further prevention agendas. Those skills include research, creative use of statistics, issue framing, and gaining access to media outlets. Research is important for those using media advocacy to have current, relevant facts and figures on hand and be able to discuss their implications for alcohol, tobacco, and other drug issues. Reporters and editors are more likely to contact people they know who have access to reliable facts when they are researching a story. It is important to be able to back up positions with concrete information and data. Solid research in the alcohol, tobacco, and other drug field should be readily available to prevention practitioners interested in media advocacy.

In addition to gathering research on topics of specific interest, media advocates must also understand how local media operates. Which reporters are most likely to cover health issues? What are the names of relevant news editors? Who should receive a news release? This information can be obtained by studying local media outlets and by telephoning the news departments and asking for names. Learning how the media prefers to receive information pays off by making the media advocate appear more professional and, therefore, more trustworthy.