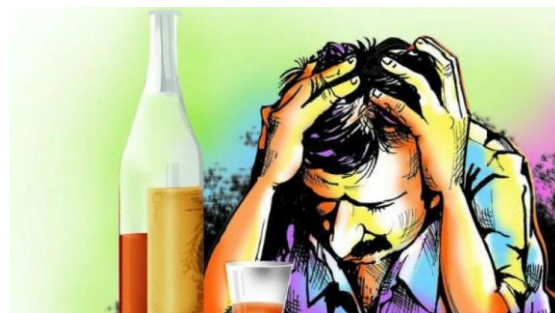


POVERTY DUE TO ALCOHOL ADDICTION

A 27-year-old woman waiting for her husband till 11 pm in the night. The whole day children were crying and waiting for their food. Its lockdown time, for months no proper work. The House owner keeps on pestering for the rent, no creditors left to take loans on interest. At 11 pm in the night, the husband comes home fully drunk, after seeing their father's condition, the kids ran to their mom in fear. With a feeble voice, the women ask for the money to buy food for her kids. In anger the man smashed his wife; blood covered her face, no one wipes her tears or to take her to the hospital. The hungry kids got up with loud cry and fear. Whom should we blame for this?



A maximum number of homeless people suffer from alcohol addiction. I used to think, these homeless men wantingly came away from home to live on the streets to drink. But I am not right in all the causes. Fifteen years back, I meet a policeman, who cried like a baby at these words. He said to me, Sir I just started drinking for fun once in a while, but now it



became part of my life. Even if I want to leave, my body doesn't cooperate until I drink, I can't think normally. For this I have been punished by my higher authorities, promotion stopped. I deny my family and their happiness, even though I have a comfortable bed at home but yet I sleep on the roadside like an animal. Poverty preventing my children's education, society doesn't respect me or accepts me as a police officer. I don't know when I will lose my job or my life. Can you help me please? With this ask I went to the higher authority of the Police and explained his condition, took three months of medical leave, and put him in a de-addiction centre. After three months, he came out as a new person to live with his family happily.

What do the addicts lose?

Self-respect: The respect that a person had in society, family, the workplace will be wiped off, due to his habit. Everyone would look at him as a useless person.

Family: One life, one family would be destroyed only because of the unwanted habits of addiction. The joy of children is taken away, more pressure on the wives. Women struggle alone in feeding kids and in providing basic needs.

Employment: This habit leads to addiction, soon losing employment.

Habits: life pattern changes, once a respected person but now begging for liquor and food on the streets. No clean clothes, sleeping anywhere and anytime.

Health: The self-created habit gives short time enjoyments but kills before time.

Poor: You make yourself poor by your habits.



Pondicherry being a liquor hub for South Indians and the locals, they easily get entangled to get drunk. Even 12 years old boys get into drugs because they are very much influenced by the cinema stars.

Alcohol abuse is a major public health problem across the globe. Globally, about 50% of the population takes alcohol and about 20% smokes tobacco. Besides alcohol and tobacco, cannabis, heroin, cocaine, sedatives, and various stimulants are used across the globe. In India, various forms of addictive substances such as tobacco, alcohol, cannabis, opium, and opiates, and cough syrups are abused orally and some are used parentally. Tobacco and alcohol abuse is very high in some of the states of Northeast India. Adolescence being the formative period of life, boys and girls start the habit under peer pressure, household influence, parental influence, and by dint of inquisitive mind and experimentation. In many parts of India, including the northeast, alcoholic drinks are prepared in households taking rice as the main ingredient or other available ingredients by fermentation while some people use these alcoholic drinks for religious and social functions. Further, homemade alcoholic drinks are used in front of parents and elders in social functions without inhibition. As such, in most cases, adolescent boys and girls get the taste of alcoholic drinks in the early part of life. They continue intolerable doses; later, some of them shift to commercially available alcoholic drinks, and gradually, they become habitual drinkers or addicts.

Substance abuse is reported to be more in industrial towns. Especially, easy access to illicit substances, available pocket money, and other factors make youth and adolescent boys and girls vulnerable to these habits.

Is it possible to come out of this situation?

Yes, is it possible only for the self-motivated person who really wants to change! By force nothing would work, after some time they would go back to the place where they have been.

It's huge challenging to work with alcoholic patients but defiantly we need it to save them and their families.

I CAN SEE NOW!

A 64 years old Mr. Cinthol Samuel was living a bachelor life because his family left him to be alone. In the beginning stage it was hard for him to live without the family but as the days went by he encouraged himself to be braved person to live a happy single life. During the day he would purchase snacks from the wholesale market and go around selling on the streets by foot. With his hard labor work, he earned decent money to live a happy independent life. Little by little, he started saving money with the shopkeeper; one fine day came where the shopkeeper cheated him completely.

The hard time

During Covid-19, he became unemployed for several months; poverty hit him hard, he could not pay rent for his little room again he is back on the streets with empty pockets.



Survival on the streets

He would sit under the tree along with other beggars for his survival. He would get two-time food and some coins for his expenses. In the initial stage, he would feel uncomfortable because all his life he worked for his bread. As the days passed by his eyesight became dull. He really struggled with his daily functional needs. During the night local boys would come

and take the little that he has with him, if he refuses to give, these boys would beat him or break his head.

Good Samaritan's support

Mr.Salim, a compassionate person, who comes every day to give him food decided to support him for Samuel's eye operation, then met Snehan founder Mr. Anumuthu to help him for operation. Snehan staff had taken him to hospital got him operated, now he can see with one eye as before. Very special thanks to our Government Hospital Doctors for their life-saving work.

WHO WANTS DISABLED AT HOME?

When I was growing up in the hostel, I was asked to help a 65 years old man; I would take three times food from the kitchen and serve him in his room. He would give Rs.5 every month when he receives his salary. I am so happy with Rs.5 rupees and would render the best of my care, also he was having my grandfather figure. One particular day I was taking breakfast to his room, I heard hitting sound from inside, it was unusual but I also knocked from outside his door, after some time with much difficulties he opens his door. I looked at him, he was struggling to stand or use one of his hands. I didn't know what to do but all the same, it was time for me to go to school, so I kept the food on the table and rushed to school. When I came back in the



evening, he was already admitted to the government hospital. I hurried to see him when I saw his condition in the hospital, I started to cry. Within a few days, he was discharged from the hospital, lost his job and throughout of the campus. He became homeless, without any ones help. The way he was treated, pained me so much but that time I was too small to support him.

What happens if an adult becomes sick or bedridden?

1. Depression

The worst enemy of every individual is depression. Depression is a complex



disease. Some people have depression during a serious medical illness. Others may have depression with life changes such as a move or the death of a loved one. Still, others have a family history of depression. My distant relative uncle became paralyzed; he has four children and a wife. He was a king in the family, children would obey him in every act, the wife would not give reply even in high pitch but when he became disabled nobody bothered to talk to him nor gave him any respect. In society, he was a highly regarded person for many years but now no one comes to neither talk with him nor consults with him anymore. This hurt filled up, depression overpowered him and at last, he killed himself.

2. Dependent

What happened to my uncle? He lived an independent life, he would work where he wanted, he would go where he wanted, and he would eat what he wanted but know? Even to go to the toilet, he can't go without anyone's support. Well, a grown-up person all of sudden became a baby! There should be always someone to feed, give medicine, and many more. For his family he became a big stumbling block; children don't want him at home and for a wife is a big burden.

Rejection

The family has no other way than to corner him. He was not included in any decision-making. In fact, the family members would scold him and ask him when would you die? These kinds of hateful words show how much a disabled person is valued at the family.

Discrimination

This disabled uncle faced discrimination with his own children, wife, relatives, and society. When he was well, he was among an elder members of the society, where every decision that the village would take would consult him but now? No one comes even to talk. All the friendship is gone with his disability, now everyone looks at him as an unwanted person.

Domestic violence

His disability doesn't stop in rejection and discrimination but in violence. When a child gets angry in the family, they show it to him. If the wife is angry, the anger is shown at him. For every little miskick or difficulty in the family, the blame would be on him. When all these anger files upon a person, they start to let it out on the feeble people like this uncle. Because he can't defend himself or beat them back. If disabled people are pressured so much what will they do?

Conclusion

After reading so much about this disabled uncle, what do you think?

Would that uncle stay with them anymore?

Will, he not run away from them?

Or will he not think to end his life?

Or are there any possibilities for his own family to kill him?

Or with much pity can this family take him somewhere far and leave him on the street? Can we answer for ourselves?

THE MISERY OF HOMELESS SICK

A 65 year old Mr. Murugasan from Panruti, a city in Tamil Nadu became homeless after the death of his wife. He has two sons but they never wanted Murugasan to be with them. Therefore, he left his village and came to Pondicherry to survive. He



knew no one in Pondicherry, so he took the streets as his shelter to live. During the day he used to go for labour work and in the night he used to sleep along with other homeless people on the streets. One day while at work a stone hit his left leg and made him disable. The little wounds grew big due to the unhygienic environment. At the beginning stage, he went to the government hospital for the treatment but nothing was done to treat the wounds rather gave him a few basic tablets and sent him back to the streets. This feeble old man would scream in pain.



He passed many nights without sleep. Looking at his painful struggle, a fellow homeless man took him to the Government Hospital for the treatment, this time also the same thing happened in the hospital. The nurses did not touch his wounds nor did they give any injection but sent him back without admission with a few basic tables. He became helpless.

Day by day the wounds enlarged and he was no longer able to walk. Now he took a roadside tree as a shelter, all these days he ate with his earnings but now he literally begged. 24 hours sitting and laying in one place looking at his wound, feeling helpless, even to go to the toilet, what a miserable feeling it could have been to Murugasan.

One day at night Mr.Anumuthu Snehan, founder happened to travel that road, this is what he described.

From a distance, I heard the groaning sound of a person. I stopped my bike and went near the tree to find where the sound was coming from. I saw one boney old man, named Murugasan, holding his left leg with his left hand. As I went near him, the “rotten smell” pierced my nose, he was groaning in unbearable pain. After seeing his condition, I rushed to the medical store and bought a painkiller tablet and bottle of water.

Next day morning I went with a first aid kit, and did dressing for his wounds, even though I am not a medical person, but little that I know is to clean the wounds and give basic tablets. As I was cleaning, I saw hundreds of maggots coming out of his open wound. It took two hours to clean but still I could not succeed in removing all of them. But managed to clean, hoping that he would get well. Next day morning, I came again to do dressing hoping that



maggots would have died, but to my amazement it multiplied more than yesterday. As I was removing the banded foot skin along with his nails came out, worms were coming out and claiming up and down. I didn't know what to do, but did not give up. I kept cleaning, the outer skin was falling off, I took scissors and trimmed out the skin. This time, I took my 12 year old elder daughter to support me in cleaning. By looking at the open wound, worms, falling skin, my daughter was in tears. After 2 hours of cleaning, I came back home. That night I had a sleepless night thinking about poor Murugasan and his suffering.

Pleading for medical admission

I know it's not in my range to get medical treatment for Murugasan, so I took one of Snehan's staff and went straight to the government hospital. I explained Murugasan's condition to one of the duty doctors, after listening, he told me that they can't admit a patient without blood relatives but however you can talk to the director. But on that particular day, the director was on leave. Again I went to the doctor and told him that the director is not on duty, therefore, hurry to help us. But the doctor would not listen, he asked me to come tomorrow. By the time I came out of the hospital, it was lunchtime, so I bought lunch and a tablet for Murugasan and went back home.



The next day morning again I went to the hospital to meet the director; luckily he was at the office. I went and told him about Murugasan's emergency medical need, he too told me the same thing that it's a policy that without blood relatives they are not admitting any patient for the treatment. Then I asked him, what if the patient is an orphan? He didn't answer my question. He started telling me, why don't you admit him in the old age home? I answered him and said, at present, he needs immediate medical treatment. If you

don't admit him, how would you expect old age homes to keep him forever with his rotten leg? But then i said if you know any such home please recommend him for admission. Then he told me to meet PRO in the hospital, but on that day he was on leave therefore he asked me to come on the next day. Again the second day and third day wasted in meeting officers after officers thinking they would help. At last nothing happened, it was 2 pm in the afternoon, I went to Murugasan, and told him nothing is working out to put you in the hospital, because you don't have relatives and added to that due to Covide cases hospital beds are full. He could not answer me, I looked at him and said, i am going, he looked at me, waving his hand and saying bye. I came back home saying I did all that I could but in vain, so I am going to leave him, to suffer and die like many, this is what I was thinking in my mind for " I am helpless as he is".

The helpless look of Murugasan

That night, I could not get sleep, again and again, Murugasan's face appeared before me. His look, suffering, rejection, again made me decide to go to the police station and ask for help in admitting him in the hospital.

The next day morning, I went to the police station and explained the condition of Mr.Murugasan and requested the inspector to recommend the hospital for

Murugasan's treatment. The inspector started telling me that the doctor doesn't listen to us, but will try admitting him in the old age home. I said ok because all that he needs at the moment is proper medical care. So the inspector asked me to come at 6 pm in the evening, I went and waited for almost two hours with no sign of him coming to the office, then one of the police constables told me that he went on special duty, he may come very late therefore he asked me to come in the morning. I was a bit discouraged by seeing all the hurdles but still went to the police station the next morning. The inspector came around 10.30 am to the station. After half an hour the inspector called me and said no homes were willing to admit him, then I said, please recommend him in the government hospital. He accepted my request and sent two police officers along with me. I rushed to the spot, quickly changed his dresses, meanwhile, the police officers also arrived at the spot with the doctor's permission, when police began to take his basic details for record purposes, Murugasan got frightened, and in the end, he was not willing to go to the hospital. Then the police got upset and started shouting, I didn't know what to do. The police told me to go back home. I came back home trying all the possible ways.

The organization support

Through constant phone calls, two NGO personnel arrived to support Murugasan. They arrived in the evening with empty hands, they asked me to bring a first aid kit to dress Murugasan wound, I rushed and bought the medical things they asked for, an enthusiastic woman asked me for water and Dettol soap to wash his wounds, it's quite strange for me, for I never heard washing decaying flesh with water, but I brought the water and soap because she told me that she is a medical professional. She took soap in her hand, she asked me to pour the water on the soap, she rubbed the soap on her hand and distilled it on the wounds, after few seconds she took dettol liquid and poured it on the wound than after few minutes poured water on the wound and wiped with cotton and added to that, did miserable banded with empathy cotton. The event was very strange to me, but I thought she knew better than me so I kept quiet. Meanwhile live video shooting was going on, taking hundreds of photographs, one person uploading in the social media on the spot. I felt more than service, advertisement was going on. I ignored all their drama, thinking that they would help Murugasan. Meanwhile, they asked me to come for a photograph; I said I don't want it. Anyhow after a long time, they went home ensuring they would come and shift Murugasan to an old age home or they

would find his sons to reunite him in the family.

Mr.Murugasan's death



On the next day early in the morning, Mr.Murugasan died on the street like an orphaned animal. It broke our hearts to see a life dying little by little because of negligence by the doctors. How can a sick destitute person bring his/her blood relatives, to get medical treatment? When he/she is well, the family does not bother to keep them at home. Now when they are sick, disabled, doing everything in one place, will the family come to help them in the hospital? This is a strange policy; it doesn't help the deprived in any way.

Conclusion

Who can take the blame for Murugasan's death? Family, society, doctors, NGO's or the government!

THE UNIMAGINED DISTRACTIONS IN INDIA

"Do not be distressed, do not despond or give up in despair, if now and again practice falls short of precepts".

The Covid 19 pandemic, looking back as numbers of affected and dying have decreased, can be called more of a pandemic as all of the state's and central governments made a mess of the whole accord, disgraceful to say the least, (that's my view and assessment of the handling of human dignity which I will share)

Definitely the poor, marginalized, sick & dying, Covid-19 doesn't really scare them as much as hunger and starvation do.



Covid-19 created the global pandemic, and it has very unpredictable impacts on all sectors, economic and livelihood of the poor and marginalized of Pondicherry.

Though the lockdown may help in the spread of the virus, it still has a chronic impact on vulnerable populations. Thousands of poor lost their employment and suffer inequality and poverty. Especially the people who wait for tourists to buy handmade products, balloons, fruits, snacks, bags, cloths, a rickshaw puller, auto drivers, and beggars.



Particularly hit hard are the most important food systems (beggars, street poor, marginalized, handicapped, disabled dying...) Storage, market chains locally and marginally. Besides these, the public outcries are the images, news info. Of corpses drifting down the Ganges River, which Hindus consider holy! Have shocked us and the nation, reeling under the worst surge, since April, May 2021.

There was a video on news channels that was shot by someone driving on the bridge from where a dead body was dumped seemed startling. Why dead bodies were floated on the river is still being investigated.



Besides, there were the bodies buried, usually overnight, along the river beds. This is just some of the disaster I've been able to see I'm confident there are more.

Sadly enough there are some of the most painful instances that came to me. Covid-19 relatives, refusing acceptance of their own dead family members from hospitals. Bodies piled up in crematoriums, many deaths not officially recorded. The shortage/ short supply of gas and firewood, our age-old customs being pushed aside as crematoriums workers/employees most operating without a break, watch some of the frames of the crematoriums melt due to the rush, dumping of the dead.

Long and shot the people whom I have seen yesterday, they are no more today. This is life and it has no guarantee. How I wish, we humans share each other, care for each other for we brought nothing to this world and we will take nothing from this world. Come let's reunite once again to rebuild our nation, state, community, and family.

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

"World Environment Day" has been celebrated every year on 5 June, engaging governments, businesses, and citizens in an effort to address pressing environmental issues.

For too long, we have been exploiting and destroying our planet's ecosystems. Every three seconds, the world loses enough forest to cover a football pitch and over the last century, we have destroyed

half of our wetlands. Ecosystem restoration means preventing, halting, and reversing this damage – to go from exploiting nature to healing it. This World Environment Day will kick off the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, a global mission to revive billions of hectares, from forests to farmlands, from the top of mountains to the depth of the sea.



Only with healthy ecosystems can we enhance people's livelihoods, counteract climate change and stop the collapse of biodiversity. For a long time, plastic bags were used as a free and painless solution for carrying your weekly groceries and for a range of other purposes. A lot of people think that paper bags are a good alternative, but unfortunately, this isn't true as they still negatively affect the environment.

We can stop the collapse of biodiversity in many ways. The best alternative to plastic bags is reusable bags, which save 11 barrels of oil. At Non-Plastic Beach, we feel we do our bit to discourage plastic bag usage, by offering our customers organic cotton, reusable shopping bags. Snehan has taken a step to do this

by training & manufacturing reusable bags with the mission to Say no to plastic, yes to eco-bags.

Dear Friends,

The Snehan activities would not be possible without your help and contribution. Therefore, on behalf of all our beneficiaries and board members, we say thank you very much for your support. Do share our quarterly newsletter with your friends...

We need your financial support to start Snehan home for the neglected old and sick adults on streets. Do support us to bring values and save lives of old people.

We are looking for committed and likeminded volunteers to support us in Snehan activities, interested candidates can apply through Snehan

website. <http://snehan.org/volunteer/>

With warmest regards,

The Snehan team and Anumuthu.

Our Postal Address:

Goodwill Mission - Snehan
No.4, Rose Garden, E.C.R. Road,
Lawspet, Pondicherry – 605008.
India. Mobile: +91 8124725737

If you wish to support the Snehan activities,

You can contribute online from our website: <http://snehan.org/make-a-donation/>