

Delhi-based NGO tries a rescue act

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A Delhi-based NGO has launched a five-day mass awareness and education campaign "Nasha Mukht Punjab" - (Punjab da josh - Punjab di shaan) after it carried out a survey and found 10.77 per cent and 17.03 per cent people in Amritsar's urban and rural areas, respectively, are regular users of alcohol.

The campaign aims to reach out to the youth of Amritsar and make them active promoters of health. A series of street plays in the form of nukkad natak would be staged across the city enumerating the ill-effects of

Substance Abuse

To carry out a campaign 'Nasha Mukht Punjab' to tackle the problem with the help of street plays

alcohol, tobacco, substance abuse and its adverse impact on the society as a whole.

In its survey, Chronic Care Foundation, a charitable trust, found that 26.3 per cent of regular users were in the age bracket of 40-49 while 71.4 per cent in 50-59 age group.

It stated that 30.9 per cent of these regular users in

urban and 52.1 per cent in rural areas had their first drink at 20-29 years of age while 93.75 per cent and 79.71 per cent of the persons from these categories were married.

The NGO said majority of the regular users consumed or preferred to consume alcohol of a particular brand. More than three-

fourth of these in urban (87.5 per cent) as well as in rural (82.9 per cent) areas consumed alcohol daily.

Substance abuse, which includes individual dependence on alcohol, drugs and tobacco, is emerging as a major health and social problem in Punjab. The NGO buttressed its point by quoting an epidemiological survey conducted by the Department of Psychiatry, Government Medical College, Chandigarh, the minimum age of exposure to drugs is 20 years in the rural population and 19 years in the urban slums. The prevalence rate of alcohol consumption stood at a high of

25.11 per cent in urban areas and at 60 per cent in the rural areas of Amritsar.

Due to the heavy dependence on drugs and alcohol, majority of the people involved in substance abuse reported chronic health complications followed by family problems.

The Chronic Care Foundation through "Nasha Mukht Punjab" campaign aims to promote good health by educating the citizens on ways of prevention of chronic diseases by avoiding any form of substance (tobacco, alcohol and drug) abuse and minimising the incidence and effects of substance abuse among the people of Punjab.