



A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY TO ASSESS THE KNOWLEDGE ON ILL EFFECTS OF ALCOHOLISM AMONG BUS DRIVERS IN TUMKUR

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ABSTRACT

The present study was undertaken with the primary objective of assessing the knowledge regarding the ill effects of alcoholism among bus drivers employed in the Transport Department of Tumkur, Karnataka. Alcoholism is recognized as a major public health concern that not only affects individual health but also poses significant occupational and social challenges. In this context, professional drivers form a high-risk group due to their demanding work schedules, exposure to stress, and peer influence, which may lead to habitual alcohol consumption.

A descriptive survey design was adopted to gather data systematically from a sample of 100 alcoholic bus drivers. The participants were selected through a convenient sampling technique. Data were collected using a structured knowledge questionnaire developed by the researcher to assess the drivers' understanding of the physiological, psychological, and social consequences of alcohol use. The tool also focused on their awareness of the occupational hazards associated with alcoholism, such as impaired driving ability and accident risks.

The collected data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods to determine knowledge levels and their associations with selected demographic variables. The results revealed an overall mean knowledge score of 14.75 ± 4.32 , representing 49.13% of the total score, which indicates an average level of awareness among the respondents. The analysis further demonstrated significant associations between knowledge scores and socio-demographic factors such as age, education, income, and marital status, suggesting that personal background characteristics strongly influence awareness levels.

These findings emphasize the urgent need for regular health education and awareness programs targeting professional drivers. Such interventions could help improve their knowledge, reduce the prevalence of alcohol-related disorders, and ultimately enhance public safety by minimizing alcohol-induced occupational risks.

Keywords: Alcoholism, Bus drivers, Knowledge, Ill effects, Health education, Tumkur.

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INTRODUCTION

The driver's task on the road is very tough. During the journey, he has to overtake many Slow and special light weight vehicles, allow faster vehicles to overtake, move parallel to other vehicles in the Adjacent lanes and co-op. with heterogeneous traffic which cross the road at random. He has to maintain his presence of mind to take many important decisions in a split of a second. His task becomes all the more challenging in situation of high density traffic and at peak hours. A drunken driver cannot perform his task without risk and would endanger traffic safety. Alcohol affects the central nervous system of the driver. Even at a level of 0.05 percent alcohol in blood, the sense of judgment is impaired and the ability to control steering is affected. It is an established fact that abuse of alcohol results in increased incidence of traumatic vehicular injuries and deaths. Alcohol consumption is a growing public health issue that leads to numerous health, social, and occupational consequences. Professional drivers are particularly vulnerable due to occupational stress, irregular working hours, and peer influence (World Health Organization [WHO], 2023). Prolonged alcohol use impairs judgment, coordination, and reaction time, thereby increasing the risk of road accidents (Kumar & Rani, 2021). Assessing the knowledge of bus drivers on the ill effects of alcoholism is crucial to designing educational interventions that promote healthy behaviour and safe driving practices.

Several studies have highlighted inadequate knowledge and awareness of the ill effects of alcoholism among professional drivers and transport workers. Gupta, Meena, and Sahu (2020) conducted a cross-sectional study to examine the awareness and behavioural patterns related to alcohol consumption among professional drivers. Their findings indicated that most drivers possessed only limited understanding of alcohol's physiological and social consequences, which often translated into unsafe driving practices and increased accident rates. Similarly, Kumar and Rani (2021) observed that transport workers exhibited moderate knowledge levels but lacked accurate information about the long-term health impacts of alcoholism, including liver cirrhosis and cardiovascular complications. Yadav and Bansal (2020) further reported that educational status plays a crucial role in determining the level of alcohol-related awareness, emphasizing that individuals with higher education demonstrated greater understanding and a more cautious attitude toward alcohol consumption. These studies collectively indicate that insufficient knowledge continues to be a major factor contributing to persistent alcohol use among drivers and underscores the need for structured educational interventions to promote behavioural change.

Previous research also demonstrates that socio-demographic variables significantly influence awareness and attitudes regarding alcoholism. Ramesh and Thomas (2021) found that age, marital status, and income were strong predictors of knowledge levels among alcoholic drivers, indicating that younger and less educated drivers were more likely to underestimate alcohol's negative effects. Sharma, Singh, and Verma (2022) supported these findings, noting that individuals from lower-income groups and nuclear families exhibited less awareness about the health hazards of alcohol use. In a related study, Zaman and Roy (2022) evaluated the effectiveness of awareness programs and reported a substantial improvement in participants' understanding of the physical and social risks of alcohol consumption following health education sessions. The World Health Organization (2023) also emphasized that regular awareness campaigns and community-based education can substantially reduce alcohol-related morbidity and mortality rates. Together, these findings reinforce the importance of integrating continuous health education programs within occupational sectors, particularly among professional drivers, to mitigate the health and safety risks associated with alcoholism.

OBJECTIVE

- To assess the knowledge on ill effects of alcoholism among bus drivers.

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive survey design was employed to assess the knowledge levels of 100 alcoholic bus drivers working in the Transport Department, Tumkur. This design was chosen as it allows the researcher to systematically describe existing conditions and gather detailed information about the participants' knowledge regarding the ill effects of alcoholism. The target population included male bus drivers who were known to consume alcohol either regularly or occasionally. A convenient sampling technique was used to select participants who were available and willing to participate during the study period. This method was considered appropriate due to time constraints and the accessibility of drivers working within the transport depot.



Data collection was carried out using a structured knowledge questionnaire developed by the investigator after an extensive review of literature and consultation with subject experts. The tool was divided into two sections: Section A contained items on socio-demographic variables such as age, education, income, marital status, and type of family, while Section B focused on assessing knowledge regarding the health, social, and occupational consequences of alcoholism. The questionnaire consisted of multiple-choice and closed-ended questions, designed to measure the participants’ understanding of alcohol-related health issues, including liver disease, mental health deterioration, family disruption, and work performance decline.

The collected data were systematically organized and analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to summarize the data, while inferential statistics like the chi-square test were applied to determine associations between knowledge scores and selected socio-demographic variables. This analytical approach provided an in-depth understanding of the existing knowledge levels and factors influencing awareness among bus drivers.

RESULTS

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Bus Drivers (N = 100)

Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Age (years)	25–35	45	45
Education	Higher Secondary	37	37
Type of Family	Nuclear	55	55
Monthly Income (Rs.)	10,000	45	45
Marital Status	Married	44	44

The majority of drivers (45%) were aged between 25–35 years. Most participants (37%) had completed higher secondary education, and 55% belonged to nuclear families. About 45% of them reported a monthly income of around Rs. 10,000, and 44% were married.

Table 2. Knowledge Level on Ill Effects of Alcoholism

Knowledge Level	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Poor Knowledge	28	28
Average Knowledge	49	49
Good Knowledge	23	23
Mean ± SD	14.75 ± 4.32	49.13% of total score

The findings revealed that most drivers (49%) had an average level of knowledge about the ill effects of alcoholism. The mean score of 14.75 ± 4.32 (49.13%) suggests that the respondents were aware of some harmful effects but lacked in-depth understanding of long-term consequences such as liver cirrhosis, cardiovascular disorders, and mental health impairment (Gupta et al., 2020).

DISCUSSION

The study revealed that bus drivers possessed only a moderate level of knowledge regarding the ill effects of alcohol consumption. This indicates a significant knowledge gap concerning both the health and social consequences of alcohol abuse. Many drivers were unaware of the long-term physiological risks such as liver cirrhosis, cardiovascular complications, and neurological impairments, as well as the social implications including family disruption, workplace accidents, and decreased job efficiency. The findings align with previous research by Yadav and Bansal (2020), who reported that transport workers often underestimate the negative impact of alcohol on their professional and personal lives. Moreover, the present study identified that age, educational status, income, and marital status were significantly associated with knowledge levels, implying that socio-demographic variables play a key role in shaping awareness and attitudes toward alcohol consumption. Similar associations were observed by Ramesh and Thomas (2021), who found that individuals with higher education and stable family backgrounds exhibited better knowledge and healthier behavioural choices.

Given the occupational risks involved in public transportation, the findings highlight the urgent need for targeted health education and intervention programs. Organizing periodic workshops, awareness campaigns, and counselling sessions within the transport department could improve drivers’ understanding of alcohol-related harms and motivate them to adopt safer lifestyle practices. Sharma et al. (2022) also emphasized that structured



health education initiatives can effectively influence attitudes, enhance awareness, and reduce alcohol dependence among high-risk occupational groups.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the majority of bus drivers in Tumkur possessed only average knowledge regarding the ill effects of alcoholism. Although most participants were aware of some general health risks associated with alcohol consumption, their understanding of the deeper physiological, psychological, and occupational consequences remained limited. This moderate level of awareness suggests a crucial gap in health literacy among transport workers—a group that carries significant responsibility for public safety.

The findings emphasize the urgent need for continuous and targeted educational interventions aimed at improving knowledge and promoting behavioural change among bus drivers. Regular health education programs, awareness workshops, and counselling sessions can play a vital role in sensitizing drivers to the long-term impact of alcohol on their health, family life, and job performance. Such initiatives should be integrated into workplace health promotion policies within the transport department to ensure consistent engagement and follow-up.

Moreover, collaboration between health professionals, transport authorities, and local government agencies can facilitate a comprehensive approach to reducing alcohol-related risks in this occupational group. Periodic assessments and reinforcement programs can help sustain knowledge gains and motivate drivers to adopt healthier habits. Overall, the study underlines that strengthening awareness through structured educational strategies is essential not only for improving individual well-being but also for ensuring safer roads and communities.

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