Addiction And Rehabilitation In Malaysia

A general way to define addiction is the need of an individual to engage in rewarding stimuli, despite adverse consequences that on a long run can have a damaging effect on the general well-being.

Addiction, as we know it today, comes in many forms, some being less harmful than others. In many countries, people that suffer from an addiction are seen as lacking of will power, and are usually isolated from the rest of the society.

Malaysia and drug abuse

Malaysia is one of the world's toughest countries when it comes to drugs, as the possession of is seen as a serious offence, being governed by the Dangerous Drugs Act 1952 that regulates the import, export, manufacture, sale and use of opium, dangerous drugs and related materials. Capital punishment is the highest punishment one can receive for this offence. Under section 39B of the Dangerous Drugs Act, those in possession of 15 gm or more heroin and morphine; 1,000 gm or more opium (raw or prepared); 200 gm or more cannabis; and 40 gm or more cocaine will receive the mandatory sentence of death by hanging. Punishment for lighter offences (those that are not considered drug trafficking) can range from imprisonment, rehabilitation to fines depending on the amount of drugs possessed and degree of offence.

The number of executions carried out in Malaysia has declined markedly in the last decade despite there being no changes in the scope of capital punishment in law or any reform of the system which mandates the death penalty as the only punishment for murder, trafficking narcotics in various amounts and for discharging a firearm with intent to cause death, whether or not any hurt is caused. Moreover, this punishment does not apply only to Malay people, because there are no regulations regarding the statue of foreigners. Basically, they receive the same treatment.

Malaysia and cigarette consumption

Malaysia is ranked 71st in per capita cigarette consumption, with an average of 646 cigarettes smoked per adult annually. Smoking in Malaysia was first dealt with in legislation requiring a general warning message on all Malaysian cigarette packaging in 1976. Smoking bans in public places started to be implemented in the 1980s (well yeah, but actually no). Selling of cigarettes to persons under the age of 18 has been forbidden since May 14, 1994. Tobacco advertising was outlawed in 2003.Smoking is technically banned in hospitals/clinics, airports, public lifts and toilets, air-conditioned restaurants, public transport, government premises, educational institutions, petrol stations, Internet cafes, shopping complexes and private office spaces with central air-conditioning; however, enforcement is an issue and is often very lax; many simply ignore the rule.

Malaysia and alcohol regulations

Although Malaysia is a Muslim majority country, the selling of alcohol is permitted to non-Muslims. In the regions of Terengganu and Kelantan the alcohol consumption is absolutely banned. Based on a report released by International Organisation of Good Templars in 2016, Malaysia has the third highest tax on alcohol worldwide at 15%, behind Norway and Singapore and they are predicted to keep increasing. The World Health Organization reports show that over 80% of the population are lifetime abstainers, while the Confederation of Malaysian Brewers estimates the drinking population at 3.5 million out of Malaysia’s total population of 29 million.

The high tax on alcohol has led to the increase price of alcoholic drinks in Malaysia, this has contributed to alcohol-related harm as many indigenous people smuggle counterfeit beverages from neighbouring countries. In 2018, around 45 people died in the country's worst methanol poisoning involving foreign workers and several Malaysians due to the consumption of cheap fake liquors acquired from the country's black markets.

Rehab facilities

There is not much information to indicate how successfully death punishment deters drug traffickers. However, it was revealed in Parliament on March 2012 by Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein that the mandatory death penalty has failed in stemming the drug trade in Malaysia. In fact, police statistics for the arrests of drug dealers under Section 39B of the Dangerous Drugs Act 1952 for the past three years (2009 to 2011) have shown an increase. For this reason, Malaysia is slowly but surely trying to reduce the cases in which capital treatment is to be applied(yeah lol not really).

Malaysia has rowed back on an earlier plan to repeal the death penalty, saying that while the government will abolish mandatory capital punishment, it will leave it for courts to decide whether a person convicted of a serious crime will hang. The decline in executions has been accompanied by a growing public debate on whether or not the death penalty should be abolished completely, either for all crimes or at least for drugs trafficking and firearms offences not leading to injury.