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**THIS STORY IS FROM DECEMBER 19, 2012**

## ãTipsyã teens blame it on peer pressure

Shanu Vashishtha / TNN / Updated: Dec 19, 2012, 00:39 IST

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PATNA: Anti-tobacco campaigns notwithstanding, [tobacco](#) consumption among students is on the rise and [peer pressure](#) is the prime, albeit not the only, reason. Random talks with Patna-born collegians enrolled on various courses in different colleges of the country revealed most of the smokers were tempted to go for a smoke or two during their college days. "At least 80% of boys in my college are teetotalers who haven't ever taken a puff on Day 1 in the college. After a year or so, most of them end up either smoking or boozing while a few among others get into drugs," said Krish, a Kankarbagh resident who is doing law at a university in Gujarat. Krish will not like to let the name of his university go in print for it will bring disrepute to his campus. But, the fact is the "adventurous generation" isn't only into cigarettes. At times curiosity gets the better of them and they even turn to cigars, beedi, hookah and gutka.

Govind Girish, of Patliputra Colony, smokes tobacco or cannabis once or twice every month. "I attribute my first smoke to boredom. Then, I started finding nicotine relaxing and cannabis made me go through phases of alternate levels of consciousness. I still smoke for the same reason," said the mathematics student of one of the statistical institutes in the south. According to Shaguna Morás Abhijay Sen, an engineering student of Manipal Institute of Technology, smoking or boozing is a means to escape from the real into a different world. "Students know it is not a solution to any problem, but under its influence they don't really care about the problem," he said.

Are the parents in the know of their fondness for what was banned for them at home? The answer is usually in the negative. "I started smoking when I was in Class VII. But my parents don't know about it even now when I am in college," said an engineering student, preferring anonymity. However, a few of them claim they do everything in open. "Dad and I take alcohol together. We entered into a pact when I was 16. I guess that's his way of monitoring my bad habits," said Rohit Ranvijay. Not that it's only a boys' thing. "Two-three friends of mine do take gin," Boring Road's Akshara, a student of Nirma University-Ahmedabad, said and added mostly break-up with boyfriends prompted girls to gulp a couple of pegs. While Akshara admitted that alcoholism among girls was now increasing, Abhijay pooh-poohed the concern. "Why single out girls? Aren't they equal to boys?" he asked. Most of the smokers and boozers among students are aware that it's a "bad habit" not only because it adversely affects health but also because the manufacturing of cigarettes and liquor spawns rise in child labour. Making it a habit or saying a firm "no" to it, however, depends on the individual concerned. "My friends kept telling me I should do alcohol and tobacco and that I will eventually do them. But no one will force me to do anything. And, I have resisted the temptation so far," said [DPS-Patna](#) alumnus Mukul, who studies in National Academy of Legal Studies and Research, Hyderabad. Experts take on temptations Anisha Anand Most of the teens give in to the temptations of alcohol or drug because of peer pressure, says Dr Mukesh Kishore of Assistance in Modification of Behavioural Aspects. According to him, habits and preferences of friends become of utmost importance at one point of time for every child, and s/he becomes the odd one out by not conforming to them. Hence, s/he follows what the friends do. Also, the anxiety related with joblessness makes the youth look for an escape route. "Besides, children who suffer from parental indifference become psychologically weak and vulnerable to drug or alcohol abuse," Kishore added. Dr Vivek Vishal, MD of "Hitishi Happiness Home" at Buddha Colony advised that the parents should prepare their children to face adverse situation in future at an early stage itself. According to him, cordial environment at home can protect the child from all adversities in future during the physical absence of the parents as their all-pervasive guidance remains forever with the child. "When the child is about to leave the home for the first time and study being away from the parents, h/she should be taken to a clinical [psychologist](#) so that the parents should come to know what is going on in the mind of their child," said Dr Vishal.

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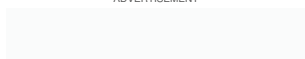
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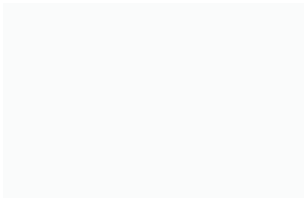
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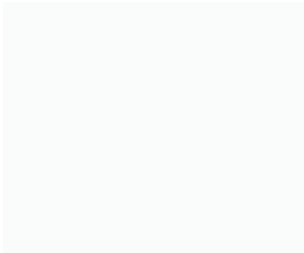
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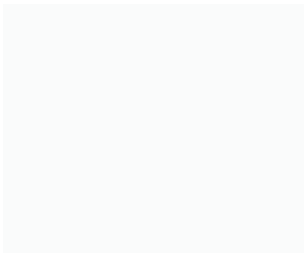
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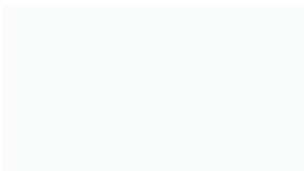
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