Name of Student

Name of Professor

Name of Class

Day Month Year

**Underage Alcoholism**

For my research, I intend to focus on the social menace of underage alcoholism. People who engage in drinking before reaching the maximum legal age necessary for consuming the alcoholic beverage constitute the practice of underage drinking. It is imperative to deliberate the manifestations and implications of the issue in society because it affects not only the individual but also the pertinent members of the community. Underage drinking can cast adverse impacts on health and can potentially impair neurological activities and the brain. Besides, the age limit in the past was 18 which has been increased and made 21. Several experts assert their views that it was a flawed policy and the youth has advanced to drink alone and regularly. Comprehending the menace of alcohol abuse is necessary to be assessed with a sociological perspective. It will require empirical research and analysis of manifestations of the framework associated with alcoholism in the underage. The facts and figures offer an intriguing reality. One in six teenager drinks and there are 10.9 million underage drinkers, approximately in the United States of America (USA) (Bonnie et al.). The society plays an instrumental role to shape the attitude of the teenager toward alcohol. The prominent reasons I researched and found are the role models of teenagers, the pressure of friend and social circle, stress or anxiety and the influence of pop culture. Irrefutably, the peril of underage alcoholism lies at the very heart making the youth addicted, desecrating their nourishment and destroying the society. These were the results extracted from the research I conducted and I shall critically elaborate them in the research.

**Discussion**

When teenagers are permitted to drink, it causes a flood of pertinent activities which harm society. For instance, suicides, homicides, vehicle crashes, and unintentional injuries are the eminent implications of underage drinking. In comparison to the licensed drivers, the adolescents under 21 who have been drinking persistently are involved in severe crashes twice the rate of mature drivers(Stephenson and Health). However, these car crashes represent a modicum of social issues associated with underage consumption. The rest of the impediments comprise detrimental sexual practices which lead to both unwanted pregnancies and serious diseases. The most threatening aspect is the likelihood of teenagers to become dependent on alcohol in their life. It is essential to highlight the statistics to supplement the argument.

As per the reports published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDS), people below 21 years drink 11% of alcohol wherein 90% of alcohol is consumed as binge drinks. In 2013, instances revealed that approximately more than 118,000 emergency cases were reported for other conditions and injuries associated with alcohol. Moreover, the number of drinkers is staggering among high school students(*Underage Drinking Research Initiative | National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA)*). As per Youth Risk Behavior Survey conducted in 2017, 30% of high school children drank alcohol, 6% drove after drinking, 17% rode with drivers who had been drunk and 14% advanced to binge drink.

In addition, it is imperative to assess the social factors which influence the inclination of children or adolescent to drink alcohol. Educational failure is one of the common factors found among high school children to urge them to drink. The impact of the company and friends plays an instrumental role. They begin drinking for fun or coping with poor academic performance but they get addicted. Meanwhile, they suffer from cognitive complications, the threat of adopting a ruthless behavior, not acting upon the advice of their parents and get involved in heinous crimes. Such radical are the implications of underage drinking in society. If a parent is involved in substance abuse, it is likely that children will establish a similar behavior because of the stress, fear and harsh treatment(*CDC - Fact Sheets-Underage Drinking - Alcohol*). Similar is the case with the influence of community, neighbors and peers on the adolescent. It is worthwhile to mention the youth requires persistent and thorough inspection in the contemporary era. The influence of pop culture is another dominant factor which pushes the youth to emulate their favorite movie stars and act them the way they do.

**A Critical Appraisal**

A critical appraisal of the matter reveals the social structure and social norms impact the habit of underage drinking underage which has become pervasive. It will require a keen approach and systematic delivery in order to curb the menace of underage drinking in society. There exist a wide range of ways to prevent the radical culture of alcoholism in the youth. One of the primary ways is “Promote an understanding of underage alcohol consumption in the context of human development and maturation that takes into account individual adolescent characteristics as well as environmental, ethic, cultural and gender differences(Reboussin et al.).” In addition, the cultural forces that are supporting and encouraging underage drinking may also contribute to preventing the youth from drinking. It may seem a petty matter but, in essence, is of foremost significance. Social culture defines the manner wherein cultural norms are advanced in society. If these values are apparent and the society accepts them, the youth will also follow the path. Moreover, another crucial component to prevent alcoholism in youth is the responsibility of society, parents and political stakeholders. The youth ought to be encouraged to stay away from drinking alcohol through the prudent campaign, making them aware of the adverse long-term and short-term impacts in schools through empirical evidence and demonstrations.

**A Social Perspective**

The conflict approach will assess the issue of underage drinking in a critical and intriguing manner. The perspective views society from a communist lens where several factions engage in potential competition for the acquisition of power and money. For instance, the religious factors who refrain from drinking and condemn it will strive to use the power and money to impede the spread of alcohol in society and prevent others from consuming it. Consequently, a cultural and class struggle will take place between these cultures comprising alcohol consumption that often belong to the lower class against the white Protestants who do not drink alcohol. Primarily, the underage youth should be kept in mind while assessing the spread and prevention of alcohol as per the perspective of conflicts. Furthermore, it is assumed the police and other law enforcement agencies belonged to the similar lower class and thus turned a blind eye toward the menace of underage drinking or took bribe as a means of their share.

However, the conflict view ought to be enhanced critically to structure it specifically for the underage alcoholism. In essence, the complex social structure as the parents themselves indulging in alcoholism cannot prevent their children or in the other case, the children will never pay heed to them. If campaigns are launched to abrogate the peril of underage drinking from society, it needs to be done in true letter and spirits. However, it becomes very challenging in the presence of the pop culture, television and popular trends on social media where underage children are often glorified to be drinking alcohol and engaging in crimes. Such critical is the association of the conflict perspective with the problem of underage drinking. It is the conflict of interest that surfaces and impedes the eradication of alcohol and consequently the underage alcoholism. Despite causing 100,000 deaths in the United States of America (USA), the relationship between the alcohol treatment industry and the alcohol beverage industry has served the interest of the larger population(*Explaining Drug Use*).

The association of conflict theory with the matter never implies it reflects the actual picture. The peril of underage alcoholism pertains to various cultural, social and economic paradigms. The youth below 21 seeks guidance and assistance. If the parents offer them physical, emotional and financial assistance, the children may not become depressed or stressed. However, the negligence of parents or guardians essentially fuels the aspect of alcoholism in the youth.

**Healthy Relationships and Self-Esteem**

As discussed in the research above, the United States of America (USA) is replete with the youth which is on the wrong track and indulged in drinking. They begin as binge drinkers but later establish it as a habit. The onus lies on the elder members of the community to assist the teen to establish their self-esteem against the peer pressure. Since society establishes the trends observed and followed by others, a potential condemnation of alcohol distribution to the youth is essential. The sellers or manufacturers ought to be dealt with strictly regardless of their intentions if youth can have access to alcohol from them. It is a universal reality that the company and friends cause the other person to absorb their traits or habits inadvertently. Rules and regulations can keep the youth away from finding themselves amid the radical elements of society. However, none can deny the significance of school and teachers in preventing underage youth from drinking. Schools should set a firm base of children. Unless they are comprehensively guided about the potentially detrimental consequences of drinking, they may not find any motivation to leave or prevent from drinking alcohol. Conducting activities in schools and keeping a close eye on the activities and habits of the youth in high school and colleges can alleviate the pervasive existence of underage alcoholism.

The critics have raised the emblem of liberalism and independence by stipulating that the minimum age should be reduced and hence the youth should not be prevented from drinking. It is an irrational argument devoid of empirical or any kind of evidence. Both the body and the mind of the underage drinkers experience the development phase which is desecrated once they advance to feed alcohol to their bodies. Social factors are the key to propagate and establish the widespread practice of underage drinking. With the passage of time, the practice has accelerated in the absence of potential prevention and awareness.

**Conclusion**

To sum up, underage drinking has reached an alarming rate in the United States of America motivated by several social and cultural influences. The youth has not been made aware of the detrimental consequences of binge drinking at such an early age which has caused them to suffer grave implications as deaths, accidents, crimes, sex and other drugs. Researches and statistics have proved the peril is likely to expand in the absence of prudent implementation of policies by the government and critical assistance from the parents, guardians and teachers. In addition, the association of the conflict perspective highlights the conflicts of interest causing the destruction in the youth and society. Until parents, guardians and stakeholders advance to make a collective effort to prevent the youth from drinking, the youth will continue to get influenced by the pop culture. Essentially, a strong force of resistance is necessary to combat the protracted social evils to protect the youth and save the future of the state and generations.

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