

# Date Rape Drugs in Sexual Assaults: A Threat to Indian Society

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## **Abstract:**

*The increasing cases of sexual assaults and rape worldwide have made it very challenging for the various nations to deal with it. We are witnessing a huge technological advancement all over the seas. But so far, we have not been able to find any proper solution to deal with these types of crimes. If we talk about India, one of the fastest growing crimes are rape and sexual crimes of women and children. Rape is prevalent in both rural as well as urban areas, and now the cases of sexual assaults are being increasing in the group of high class and literate people.*

*One of the major reasons for that is the increasing drug and alcohol abuse, which have a direct relation with increasing cases of sexual assault cases in the nation. About 70% of the sexual assault cases in India are reported which is committed while the Accused, victim or both are under the intoxication of some kind of drug or alcohol. The use of one such drug called the 'Date Rape Drugs' is becoming very prevalent in India. These drugs are used for exploiting the victim for the drug facilitated sexual intercourse. The reason why these drugs are becoming very popular among such abusers is that, these drugs produces effects which makes the victim physically helpless by reducing their physical strength so that they become unable to refuse the situation. Also, one more reason is that, this drug also affects the mental capability of the victim, thus the victim can't remember and recall the situation. It is very easy for the perpetrators to mix these drugs in food and drinks of the possible victims because these drugs don't have any smell, taste or any color. Thus, the date rape drugs are the perfect tool for such perpetrators.*

*So, in this paper we will be discussing about such types of Date rape drugs which are being used at an extensive level in India, there mechanism that how they affect a person and its consequences.*

**Keywords:** Sexual assault, Rape, Drugs, Alcohol, Date Rape Drugs

## **1. INTRODUCTION:**

Sexual crimes are a serious problem growing uncontrollably over the globe. Sexual assault can occur under various circumstances. One area of sexual abuse is rape, specifically that specialize in drug-facilitated rape. First, one must understand the definition of sexual abuse to conclude rape as a sort of sexual abuse. Sexual assault can be defined as such an act in which the person is sexually harassed by sexual & physical contact without the consent of the other

person.(Verberg et al., 2000) There is a huge difference between the consent and forced sexual contact. So, they must not be confused with each other.

But the problem is that consent can be impaired when the person is under the influence of or intoxicated by any kind of drugs. So, the person loses ability to understand the situation and also the ability of saving themselves. That's why it becomes really important during the investigations to check for any kind of drug intoxication to acknowledge that the consent might not be present during such sexual situations. And on the other hand, forced sexual intercourse is one where one utilizes any psychological and emotional pressure or violence to the opposite sex. Thus, it becomes significant during the investigation to find out whether it's a drug facilitated sexual assault or a forced assault. (Benak, L. D. (2001)). And if there is any drug intoxication, then the investigation must have to answer some questions like, what drug it was, what is its mechanism of action, how it may have affected the person and most importantly to find out the actual connection between the sexual assault and the drug.

Five drugs are going to be discussed in this paper that are specifically related to rape and sexual assaults resulting in the accusation of sexual abuse.

#### *Date Rape Drugs:*

Rape is a kind of sexual abuse. "Date rape or non-consensual sex is a major social problem today. Date-Rape-Drugs are the kind of drugs which causes sedation, so that the person becomes unconscious and becomes helpless as they cannot fight or counter back. These drugs or substances enhance the chances of unwanted sexual activity. Currently, the use of such kind of drugs in sexual assaults has increased. So, this paper mainly focuses on such rape associated drugs and issues related to it.(K. et al., 2011)(3).

It becomes really important to see for such kind of drugs which may have been utilized for the commitment of rape or the non-consensual sex. (K. et al., 2011)Because mostly in such drug facilitated rape or sexual act, the victim might not actually remember about the happening of the whole sexual situation. So, in this paper, we will be focusing on these kinds of drugs to better understand the incongruity of such situation where the person loses the ability to form the decision in such sexual acts and becomes victim of such sexual assaults.

#### *Alcohol:*

Alcohol is one of the major drugs which can be used in non-consensual sexual activities, thus it must be acknowledged as a date rape drug, as its intoxication may lead to unconsciousness which may increase the chances of person being sexually assaulted. Now-a-days Alcohol is most widely utilized in clubs, during date and parties. Thus, it has become one of the commonest substances which can be used for such purposes by the perpetrators. A number of studies have revealed that more than 50% of sexual assault cases are reported in which either the accused or victim or both are under the influence of alcohol.(Broach, J. L. (2004).) Alcohol consumption leads to various psychological effects which causes cognitive and physical disability. It has been noted that, alcohol consumption causes impairment of perception and physical and cognitive disability in women, which causes them to interact in such type of sexual activities by themselves. Thus, alcohol consumption may increase the risk of being sexually abused. Also, because of the alcohol intoxication, the victim loses the ability to counteract against such activity. Also, the alcohol intoxication limits the physical strength of the victims so they could also be forced into sexual abuse.(Abbey, A.,et al., (1994).)

Alcohol and drugs are also used in the sense, to extend the sexual availability of the women and also to decrease the chance of proper justification about the accused or the perpetrator. That means it becomes difficult for the women to properly recognize the perpetrator because of the decreased sense and perception. Thus, there's a sort of consent thought to possess occurred with women using alcohol or drugs which makes it hard for the victims to recognize that they actually have been sexually abused or not.(Seto et al., 1997)These consequences lead to the anomaly of whether the sexual interaction was consensual, or a sexual abuse. Thus, alcohol is most widely used by such perpetrators.

#### *Club Drugs:*

Club drugs are those drugs which are very much prevalent at clubs, parties etc., hence the name Club drugs. There are a number of club drugs like, Rohypnol, ketamine, GHG, alcohol, MDMA etc. These drugs are used specifically as date rape drugs because they influence closeness physically and induces euphoria which makes them more favorable than any other recreational drug for sexual interaction.(K. et al., (2016))These club drugs affect the perception and thinking ability of victim, which make them potential threats of sexual abusers.

MDMA is drugs which is almost similar like the mescaline and amphetamine and have characteristics of a hallucinogen. Rohypnol as well as the GHB are potent sedative drugs which have a strong anesthetic and tranquilizing characteristics. These drugs are very much potent and strong and they may cause serious effects on any individual's perception and cognition. Also, there is always a high risk of overdose too. (Volkow, N. D. (2011)). As very small doses can also lead to fatality. These drugs induce high risk of undesired consequences. Thus, it becomes really important to study every drug individually in detail.

#### *MDMA (3,4-Methylenedioxy methamphetamine)*

Molly or Ecstasy is the other name of MDMA. These drugs has now become one of the most used club drugs and are sold as small tablets of various colors. Thus, making them difficult to recognize at the first site. That way they become more dangerous. MDMA causes various adverse and dangerous effects to the body like increased secretion of nor epinephrine, dopamine, and serotonin. Which leads to loss of hunger and appetite, loss of thirst, increased agitation, distorted sense, which is followed by sense of well-being and euphoria. (Jansen, K. L et., al., (2006).)(10) There are many serious adverse effects of MDMA on the body like serotonin syndrome and hyperthermia. These all effects put the person dangerously potential for non-consensual sexual contact.(Gahlinger, P. (2004).)

So how to stay safe from such perpetrators. Actually, there are several ways through which we can differentiate normal person from the MDMA users. By knowing the looks of users, one could also be ready to recognize between people they want to socialize and to whom not to interact. MDMA user are often recognized is by wearing fluorescent necklaces, bracelets, other accessories, applying mentholated ointment on their lips, or using menthol spray etc.(Jansen, K. L et., al., (2006).)

#### *GHB (Gamma Hydroxybutyrate)*

G, soap, blood heat, sleep cycles are the other names of GHB. Y-aminobutyric acid is a inhibitory neurotransmitter, which mediates the cerebral glucose metabolism and the memory. GHB is actually a derivative of y-aminobutyric acid. This aminobutyric acid causes adverse effects on the body like depression of the CNS and Respiratory system. It is widely used by the perpetrators because of the fact that it potentially affects the memory of an

individual.

First ever GHB was produced in France, and was first banned in the United States because of its dangerous effects they produce on the human body. GHB can be easily manufactured within the premises of a laboratory from various industrial chemical substances. That's why it is very easy for the users to get this drug. Due to this, GHB becomes even more dangerous for the consumer, as mostly it is manufactured straightforward without any reference quantity and dosage. Thus, it causes dangerous consequences to the victim as there is always a high risk of overdose. The overdose may cause serious respiratory failure, coma and death. (Snead, O. C. et., al., (2005)).

So how to recognize if any person has consumed GHB. GHB actually has a strong salty and soapy taste which can easily be detected. But mostly GHB is given mixed with alcohol or soda, which may cover its soapy taste. Thus, the general population should always be aware about the taste of such drugs so that one can easily identify between normal drinks and potential GHB mixed drinks. (Medicine Net. 02-Mar.(2020))

*Rohypnol (Flunitrazepam):*

Rohypnol or flunitrazepam is a date rape drug which usually comes in the form of pills and is usually ingested orally. It can also be snorted. It is known by a wide variety of names like, roche, circles, rope, forget-me pills, rib etc. Rohypnol is a benzodiazepine which was earlier manufactured by the Roche laboratories, hence its common name Roche. Now it's available worldwide. But in countries like Latin America and Europe, this drug is also used as a sedative, anesthetic drug for the treatment of insomnia. But in the United States it is considered illegal. It's a cheap sedative and recreational drug used most commonly as a Date rape drug.

Rohypnol is a tasteless and odorless drug which can be easily dissolved in drinks, thus mostly the perpetrators try to mix this in the drinks of the possible targets or victims. This drug was abused by cocaine and heroin addicts also. Its increased use by the abusers had created problems. That's why Hoffman-La Roche, the manufacturer of Rohypnol is now mixing a blue colored dye in the pill. So, whenever the pills are added to any drink it becomes visible, indicating that the drink may have the presence of Flunitrazepam.

Flunitrazepam is a GABA agonist, because it mediates the inhibitory neurotransmission in the brain and medulla spinalis. When consumed, the binding of the GABA receptors and benzodiazepines takes place which leads to decreased cell excitation further leading to decreased anxiety, anti-convulsant activity and sedation. However, it has similar effects like that of the benzodiazepines but even more potent than the benzodiazepine itself. It has a synergistic effect when consumed with some other drug or alcoholic drinks. Thus, it is very dangerous. (Miller, et., al., (2002)).

Rohypnol is highly abused, in all of the benzodiazepines. It also produces drug dependence on regular use. The withdrawal syndrome includes headache, tension, anxiety, restlessness, muscle pain, photosensitivity etc. Overdose can cause serious respiratory depression, which may lead to coma and death. Instant supportive measures include the use of activated carbon to soak up drug within the alimentary canal also as respiratory support. Flumazenil can be used as the antidote for the Flunitrazepam intoxication. Unlike benzodiazepines, flunitrazepam is not easily detected by urine screening tests. But Flunitrazepam can be detected in urine and blood by typical toxicological analysis within 72 hours after the ingestion. (Gahlinger, P. (2004).)

### *Ketamine:*

Ketamine is also a potent date rape drug which is known by various names like vitamin K, K, Special K. Earlier the ketamine was prepared from phencyclidine. One major use of ketamine during 1960's was as an anesthetic drug. Ketamine does not cause any respiratory problems but instead it causes extreme hallucinations. Which limited its use in the medical field and the drug users started using this drug for recreational purposes. This drug is not manufactured easily, but is easily available to the abusers. It can be injected or ingested as it is both available in powder and liquid form, also it can be smoked.(Ledray, L. E. (2001)). However, it's difficult to use because an individual must have to inhale the drug as its just can't be mixed with any alcoholic drink.

Ketamine does produce a wide range of adverse effects like increased pulse, post-traumatic amnesia, extreme hallucinations, hypertension, delirium etc. The fact that it produces dream like hallucinogenic effect, it is considered a potent date rape drug. However, there is a high risk of overdose.(Ledray, L. E. (2001)).

### *Club drugs: Scenario in India*

In India, there is only a limited data about the club drugs or the date rape drugs are present. No systematic collection of data regarding these drugs is made on large scale. However, some nationwide surveys are being carried on about these drugs and substances. These surveys are conducted to study the magnitude and most importantly the emerging patter of drug abuse in India. Studies have shown that drug like amphetamine is utilized mostly in places like Ahmadabad, Gujarat and Goa. Most reports regarding club drugs are from newspaper articles; hence there's an urgent need for verified, authentic research data. The drug markets have become very prominent in Asia in the past few decades. With huge technological advancement and growing urbanization drug abuse in India has been increased over the past few years. The drug abuse is mostly prominent in the younger generation. Particularly in India, where the drug licensing and control authorities focus on the controlled, illicit, and traditional drugs and drinks, which lead the use of date rape drugs, have elevated over past years. Thus, the emerging use of these drugs are now creating problems for the Drug related authorities to combat the situation.(Van E., et., ,al., (2001)).

The culture of rave parties was introduced by the Hippies in Goa. Earlier these parties were a platform for foreigners to enjoy music, cannabis and alcohol. Later on, the culture changed and now mostly it meant for the substance abuse equally for men and women. The bars and clubs which offer such kind of rave parties also sell LSD, Ecstasy, Rohypnol etc. In recent years, the rich people of India are more involved in such type of clubbing and drug abuse, including younger ones and women. But now, because of interference of the government, such substance abuse has started to decrease. Police organization of Goa has admitted that in Goa there are a number of unorganized as well as organized channels through which one can easily get special K. The use of some locally made drug pills like the CK1 is very prominent in Goa. This pill is actually made by the combination of ketamine and the cocaine, commonly known as Klein.

In northern India, the Kullu-Manali of Himachal Pradesh is mostly famous for its Rave parties organized in the jungle, on the full-moon-night. Also, hashish smoking is very prominent in this part of northern India. The Silicon Valley of Bangalore has become a hot-spot for rave parties. The spot lights within the clubs create an environment mostly suited for smoking, drinking and drug usage. Most of these rave parties are the raid targets for the police. 280 people were taken into the police custody during a raid on such a party in Pune, in March of 2007. In that rave party California drop was being used. A California drop is an

acid drug which is dropped on a stamp piece, and then it is chewed. Mostly these types of parties are prevalent in foreigner tourists who are taken into custody for abusing drugs like, cocaine, ecstasy and LSD. The persons arrested from these rave parties are booked under section 27 of NDPS Act (Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substance Act)1985 and also under section 294 of the Indian legal code.

*Prevention & Safety Measures:*

Education is the main key in prevention from such drug facilitated crimes. As knowledge about such drugs may help any individual to maintain the safety themselves. Proper sex education is also necessary for the society. Also, it is necessary to create understanding among the people that alcohol and drugs are associated with increasing sexual crimes as they facilitate in pressurizing any individual to consent otherwise non-consensual sexual interaction is a crucial topic of education.(Jansen, K. L et., al., (2006).)Also, a proper education should be provided to the society about such date rape drugs and also how to identify them, that way we can prevent such drug facilitated crimes. One must be aware about the drugs which can be used for rape, how to protect the drinks by watching nothing is poured on it, keeping eye on the drink and not dinking drinks with strangers. One should also have the knowledge about the signs and symptoms these drugs cause. This will help prevent and minimize such crimes. Every school, colleges and institutes must make it necessary to teach and aware the students about these types of drugs and drug related crimes.

## **2. CONCLUSION:**

Sexual assaults and sexual abuse are really a vast topic in any social situation. More specifically rape is a growing problem in today's world. As we discussed in this paper that how some drugs facilitate such sexual activities with ease and makes the investigation more difficult. And the use of such date rape drugs has elevated in recent years. The perpetrators are gaining confidence to commit such more crimes. However, such drugs are really dangerous to the consumer and cause serious health issues. The chances of overdose are always high and may lead to coma and eventually death.

Such drugs are widely used because the victims lose their ability to recall or memorize the whole situation and fail to recognize the perpetrator as because these drugs impair the cognitive perception and thought process and senses of the victim.

In this paper we discussed about 5 major and most common date rape drugs used worldwide, like MDMA, ketamine, Rohypnol, GHB, and most commonly alcohol. This facilitates the perpetrator for easy control over the victim, and even they can easily sexually abuse non-consensual victims too. These drugs create life threatening situations for the victims. Thus, it's really vital to aware the public and society about such kind of rape drugs to counteract against such type of drug facilitated crimes. This paper has mainly focused on the effects these drugs cause to the human body and also how to identify such drugs from normal beverages. After all it's in the hands of the person itself to be aware and be safe.

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