

Drug Abuse in India

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Drug abuse is a very serious public health and social issue which affects not only the user but also his/her family and society to a large extent. Recent times have seen a surge in reporting of such cases and has become a tool for crime organizations. Hence it is important to know various laws, schemes dealing with the issue.

In news: National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (NAPDDR) has been prepared for 2018-2023 which aims at the reduction of adverse consequences of drug abuse.

Placing it in the syllabus: Society

Static dimensions

1. Drug menace and its spread in India
2. Reasons for Drug abuse
3. Laws, schemes, institutions to counter drug abuse

Current dimensions

1. NAPDDR
2. Drugs legalized for purposes for health and provisions related to them
3. Steps needed to address the issue

Content:

Drug menace and its spread in India:

- Drug abuse can be defined as a **pattern of use of some specific drugs in much higher quantities and with a deferent method than specified for a prolonged period** which is harmful to the user.
- Some **examples** of the common drugs which are commonly abused are 'ganja', 'Alcohol', 'opium', 'hashish',

'heroin' etc...

- India is located between the **two largest opium-producing areas** of the world, i.e. the **Golden Triangle in the east and Golden Crescent in the west.**
- In a report conducted by AIIMS called "Magnitude of Substance Use in India" which was sponsored by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, it was revealed that the **most abusive substance in India is Alcohol.**
- In the survey, it was revealed that **approximately five crore Indians reported having used opioids and cannabis,** and around 60 lakh people need help for their opioid problems.
- Nationally around 8.5 lakh people were found to be injecting drugs.
- More than half of them belong to the states like Assam, Haryana, Delhi, Manipur, Mizoram, Uttar Pradesh and Sikkim.
- In most of the surveys, Punjab ranks in the top five and hence is very vulnerable in this regard.

Reasons for Drug Abuse:

- The **process of urbanization, industrialization, and migration** to different places led to the loosening of the traditional methods of control in society.
- The higher ratio of drug abuse in children and adolescents is due to **changing cultural values and low priority of ethical values** in our education system.
- The glorification of drug use in **Cinemas, television, and media** attracts the young generation and results in misuse.
- **Stress in daily life** is also a big reason due to which an individual starts using drugs and at a later stage, becomes addicted.

Laws, schemes, institutions to counter drug Abuse:

Governments initiatives:

- The Government has enacted the **Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act** in the year 1985.
- The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has been implementing a **Central Sector Scheme of Assistance for Prevention of Alcoholism and Substance (Drugs) Abuse** since 1985-86 for identification, counseling, treatment, and rehabilitation of addicts through voluntary organizations.
- A **National Centre for Drug Abuse Prevention (NCDAP)** has been set up since 1998 to **provide technical support** to the Government on policies relating to substance abuse prevention.
- The Government has also brought out a **National Policy on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS)** in 2012 to **serve as a guide** to various Ministries/ Departments, State Governments, International Organisations, and NGOs.
- In 2016 **(NCORD) Narco-Coordination Centre** was constituted **for reviewing the financial assistance granted to states for Narcotics Control.**
- Govt of India has signed 37 bilateral ties/agreements/MoUs for effective coordination with foreign countries.
- Funds have been provided by the Govt of India to the **Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB).**
- The Govt of India has constituted a fund to meet the expenditure requirement required for combating the illicit trafficking of drugs called the **“National Fund for Control of Drug Abuse.”**

India is a signatory to the three UN Conventions namely

- **Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961**
- **Convention on Psychotropic Substances, 1971**
- **Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and**

Psychotropic Substances, 1988.

NDPS Act:

- The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act **prevents and prohibits a person from any possession, production, sale, purchasing, transport, storage, and/or consumption of any narcotic drug or psychotropic substance.**
- According to NCRB's data, 81,778 persons were arrested under NDPS Act in 2018.
- The data also claims the **highest consumption of drugs in Punjab and Maharashtra.**
- It was **amended in 1988, 2001, and 2014.**
- The NDPS (Amendment) Act, 2014 relaxed restrictions placed by the Act on **Essential Narcotic Drugs (Morphine, Fentanyl and Methadone)**, making them more accessible for use in pain relief and palliative care.
- The Amendment also contained measures to improve treatment and care for people dependent on drugs, opened up the processing of opium and concentrated poppy straw to the private sector.
- It strengthened provisions related to the forfeiture of property of persons arraigned on charges of drug trafficking.
- It **removed the NDPS Act's imposition of a mandatory death sentence in case of a repeat conviction for trafficking large quantities of drugs** and gave courts the discretion to use the alternative sentence of 30 years imprisonment for repeat offenses.
- It increased the punishment for "small quantity" offenses from a maximum of 6 months to 1-year imprisonment.

Narcotics Control Bureau:

- The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) is Indian federal law enforcement and intelligence agency under the **Ministry**

of Home Affairs, Government of India.

- The agency is tasked with combating drug trafficking and the use of illegal substances under the provisions of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985.
- It was established in 1986 and headquartered in Delhi.
- It works in close cooperation with the Customs and Central Excise/GST, State Police Department, CBI, Central Economic Intelligence Bureau (CEIB), and other Indian intelligence and law enforcement agencies both at the national and states level.
- It provides resources and training to the personnel of India's Drug Law Enforcement Agencies in fighting drug trafficking.
- It monitors India's frontiers to track down points where smuggling activities take place with foreign traffickers.
- It is **outside the ambit of the Right to Information Act** under Section 24(1) of the RTI act 2005.

National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (NAPDDR):

The **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** has prepared NAPDDR for **2018-2023** so as to focus on preventive education, awareness generation, identification, counseling, treatment, and rehabilitation of drug-dependent persons and training and capacity building of the service providers through collaborative efforts of the Central and State Governments and NGOs. The **National Institute of Social Defence (NISD), New Delhi**, an autonomous body under the administrative control of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is the implementing agency.

Objectives:

- Create awareness and educate people about the ill-effects of drugs abuse on the individual, family, workplace, and the society at large;

- Reduce stigmatization of and discrimination against, groups and individuals dependent on drugs in order to integrate them back into society;
- Develop human resources and build capacity for working towards these objectives;
- Facilitate research, training, documentation, innovation, and collection of relevant information to strengthen the above-mentioned objectives;
- Provide for a whole range of community-based services for the identification, motivation, counseling, de-addiction, aftercare, and rehabilitation for Whole Person Recovery (WPR) of addicts;
- Formulate and implement comprehensive guidelines, schemes, and programmes using a multi-agency approach for drug demand reduction;
- Alleviate the consequences of drug dependence amongst individuals, family, and society at large;

The following components are **eligible for financial assistance**:

- Preventive Education and Awareness Generation
- Capacity Building
- Treatment and Rehabilitation
- Setting quality standards
- Focussed Intervention in vulnerable areas
- Skill development, vocational training, and livelihood support of ex-drug addicts
- The survey, studies, evaluation, research, and innovation on the subjects covered under the Scheme.
- Programmes for Drug Demand Reduction by States/UTs
- Programme Management
- Any other activity or item which will augment/strengthen the implementation of NAPDDR

Drugs legalized for purposes for health and provisions related to them:

1. **Marijuana** and other such drugs are used to treat diseases such as:
 - Glaucoma,
 - prevents cancer from spreading to other parts of the body,
 - reduces anxiety,
 - slows the progress of Alzheimer's disease,
 - improves metabolism
2. Magic **Mushrooms** are professed to treat Alcoholism and reduce anxiety.
3. **Ketamine** is used to treat Bipolar Disorder.
4. **Heroin** is said to reduce Opiate addiction.
5. **MDMA** is at times prescribed to patients to combat Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders.
6. According to a WHO report **cannabidiol** can be used as an effective treatment of epilepsy.

Steps needed to address the issue:

- Drug abuse prevention programmes need to be strengthened at the local, state, and national levels.
- These prevention programmes should involve friends, families, and society at large for getting better results and eradication of this social evil for once and all.
- Media, Cinema, and television may be used for awareness about the consequences of drug abuse.
- Media, Cinema, and television must not glorify the use of any sort of drugs. Much more control is required in this regard.
- NGOs established in this field have a greater role to play and need to handle the issue accordingly.
- The acts/laws made for control of drug menace needs to

be effective implementation.

- All international efforts need to be coordinated for stopping drug trafficking in the country from neighboring countries.
- The use of international organizations for awareness and control of drug abuse needs to be enhanced.
- It is argued that legalizing drugs would help combat the issue of drug abuse at certain levels as legalization can assure that good quality drugs are supplied to the users and the production and supply would come under the surveillance of the Government of India.