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**ABSTRACT**

As drugs had been abused for loads of years around the world, their consequences had been felt for just as long. Since drugs were used, there have always been those who abused them, resulting in total addiction and a multitude of side effects that they see with it. People should be aware of drug abuse and need to know the side effects of drug abuse so that drug-related crimes do not occur. Consumption of narcotic drugs by children and youngsters have been an exclusive topic among the countries in recent days. Consequently, drug abuse results predominantly in drug addiction but also in crimes such as drug trafficking and surprisingly it is used in rape and robbery and also used as a tool to murder people. Recent studies show that narcotic addicts are often involved in criminal behaviour and that as a result some of them commit thousands of crimes during their addiction careers. To prevent children and youngsters from using drugs, laws relating to drug abuse should be strict and authorities should take necessary steps to prevent it.

KEYWORDS

Drug abuse, addiction, health problems, crimes and law.

INTRODUCTION

In India, surveys and statistics show that the use of drugs and alcohol has been on the rise especially among the youth. Curiosity, need for adventure and excitement and experimentation constitutes common causes, which motivate youngsters towards drug use. According to a UN report, 1 million heroin addicts are registered in India and unofficially there are as many as 5 million. Abuse of narcotic drugs and alcohol is quite common in India. Drugs such as heroin, marijuana and cocaine are the major drugs misused in India. Drug abuse is really a cause of concern as it could result in many harmful effects. The immediate adverse effects of drug abuse are manifested in the form of reckless behaviour, vandalism and violence which may ultimately lead to committing a crime. Drug-related crimes such as drug trafficking and rape, murder and robbery that are committed by the influence of drugs are the most common crimes associated with drugs. In India, there are laws relating to drug abuse and steps that have been taken by appropriate authorities in cases of drug abuse

DRUG ABUSE

Drug abuse or substance abuse means using illegal drugs or using drugs for purposes other than intended or consumption of drugs in excessive amount which can lead to social, physical and professional problems. Apart from the long term damage to the body drug abuse causes, drug addict those who take drugs intravenously (direct injection to the vein using a needle and syringe), are much more likely to acquire serious infections like AIDS and Hepatitis B.

Millions of Indians are addicted on alcohol, heroin, hashish and cocaine and drug abuse is pervasive phenomenon in Indian society, says a new report published jointly by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime and India's Ministry of Social Justice. A Survey had been conducted and it was estimated that in India, whose population is just over a billion, 62.5 million people use alcohol, 8.75 million use cannabis, 2 million use opiates and 0.6 million use sedatives or hypnotics.¹

5 main reasons for the cause of drug abuse:

- Peer pressure
- Out of curiosity or experimentation
- Self-medication and to escape facing problems
- Performance Improvement

¹ Available at: <https://thehealthcaredaily.com/2020/07/drugs-over-food> (last visited Oct 8, 2021)

- Unsupportive family structure

MAJOR MISUSED DRUGS IN INDIA AND ITS EFFECTS:

Alcohol: According to a study, India's annual alcohol intake increased by 38% between 2010 and 2017. Alcohol (Ethanol) is a toxic drink which can affect our brain, heart, liver and pancreas. Drinking too much of alcohol can weak our immune system making our body, a much easier target for disease. In India, about 14.6 % of the total population (approximately 16 crore people) are users of alcohol. Alcohol kills 2.6 lakh Indians every year either by causing liver cirrhosis or cancer or leading to road accidents caused by drunk driving.

Cocaine: Cocaine is a powerful addictive stimulate drug which is obtained from coca plant *Erythroxylum coca*, native to South America. Cocaine commonly called coke or crack is usually snorted. It interferes with the transport of the neuro-transmitter dopamine, increases its level and prevents it from being recycled. The short-term effects of using cocaine includes feelings of euphoria, increased energy and elevated mood. Excessive dosage of cocaine causes hallucinations and can even result in sudden cardiac death. Recent studies had concluded that in India, 0.11% of people aged between 10-75 years are users of cocaine.

Opiates: Opioids are the drugs, that are extracted from the poppy seed as well as semisynthetic and synthetic compounds with similar properties, which bind to specific opioid receptors present in our central nervous system and slows down body functions. Heroin (a depressant) is one of the world's most dangerous opioids, abused all over the world. Prescription opioids are mostly used to treat moderate to severe pain, although some can be used to treat cough and diarrhoea. Overdose of opioids can result in serious side effects that can be life-threatening. Nearly 2.06% of an Indian population (aged 10 to 75 years) are users of opioids.

Marijuana: Marijuana is one of the most abused drugs in the world. It is extracted from the Indian hemp plant, (*Cannabis sativa*) and the part that contains the 'drug' is found in the flower tops, leaves and stems of the plant. Generally taken by inhalation and oral ingestion, these are known for their effects on cardiovascular system of the body. It can also be smoked as a cigarette (joint). Marijuana smoke contains 50% to 70% more cancer-causing substances than tobacco smoke. According to 2019 study by the Social Justice Ministry, nearly 31 million people in India were reported to have consumed marijuana in a year.

MOST COMMON DRUG-RELATED CRIMES

Drug trafficking: Drug trafficking is the most serious one, out of all the drug crimes. Drug trafficking (referred to as drug distribution) includes the unlawful sale, transportation and unlawful importing of controlled substances.² Controlled substances are regulated via way of means of nation and federal legal guidelines as to their use and distribution. Marijuana, cocaine, LSD, methamphetamine and heroin are some of the illegal controlled substances. Poverty, unemployment and peer pressure are the main reasons for drug trafficking.

Drunken driving accidents: Even a small quantity of alcohol consumption can have an effect on driver's judgement, coordination, response time and more. The end result is that under the influence of alcohol drunk driver makes poor decisions and also it reduces the person's visibility and therefore leads to accidents.³ The major accidents can lead a person to paralysis, disfigurement, brain damage and even death. As per the National statistics, an average of nearly 12,000 people dies every year.

Theft crimes: Many theft crimes are drug-related crimes. The reason for this is that many people who have become addicted to illegal drugs cannot afford them by the usual means and try to commit theft in order to maintain their drug addiction. Petty theft, Credit card fraud, burglary and prescription drug fraud are some of the common drug-related theft crimes.⁴

Date rape: Date rape drugs are any sort of drug or alcohol used to make rape or sexual assault easier. It can make a person confused about what is happening, less capable to defend themselves against unwanted sexual contact, or unable to remember what happened. Most often people use alcohol alone for sexual assault or sometimes, they may mix it with other drugs which makes the victim not remember an assault.

Chandru @ Chandrasekaran vs. The State of Tamil Nadu⁵

In this case the two accused and the victim were drug addicts. The accused injected the victim with illicit drugs due to which the victim died. Looking at the facts and circumstances of the case the court came to a conclusion that the two accused had criminally conspired to cause death of the victim and hence upheld the judgment of the trial court convicting them under sections 302 and 120B of IPC.

² Rhea Chakraborty vs Union Of India And Anr

³ Available at: <https://pib.gov.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1577134> (Last visited Oct 8, 2021)

⁴ Section 378 of the IPC Act, 1860

⁵ AIR 2010 [Madras High Court]

LAW RELATING TO DRUG ABUSE IN INDIA

- Dangerous Drugs Act,1930 – Enacted to strengthen the control of drugs made from coca, cannabis and to regulate the cultivation, possession, manufacture and sale of drugs.
- Drugs and Cosmetics Act,1940 – Adopted to regulate the manufacturing and sale of medicinal drugs which includes cannabis and opium.
- Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 - enacted to establish appropriate penalties for drug trafficking, strengthen enforcement powers, implement international conventions to which India is a party, and enforce controls on psychotropic Substances.

CONCLUSION

Drug abuse or substance abuse is a complex problem that affects the lives of its victims as a whole. Whether you drink alcohol, smoke marijuana or snort cocaine, there are risks involved with using drugs that can range from addiction to death. Overcoming addiction requires major changes that affect all aspects of the victim's life. Given the current conditions in India, the harm reduction principles of drug policy are the only way to curb drug abuse in our society. From now on, the authorities must aim to implement strategies to curb the demand for drugs. More intervention strategies and models that view the drug addict as a victim rather than a perpetrator should be implemented to reduce the overall impact of drug addiction.

Policymakers must adopt several different prevention approaches to reduce the risk of drug use disorders. The needs-based design of research-based prevention programs would also help contain the threat of drug abuse. It is still not too late to take action against the evils of substance abuse, and if things go well, you could easily be banished from society.⁶

⁶ Legal Service India, <https://www.legalserviceindia.com/legal/article-2844-drug-addiction-and-crime.html> (Last visited Oct 9, 2021, 11.12 P.M).