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RESEARCH ARTICLE

DRUG ADDICTION IN INDIA: IT'S CONSEQUENCES AND EFFECTIVE MEASURES ON CHILDREN

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Abstract

Drug addiction is not a new concept. It often begins with experimental consumption in social settings. Some people are used gradually become more frequent, and such a pattern may develop into a habitual condition. Drug use started in ancient India such as soma, cannabis and sura. These substances are mentioned in religious texts like the Vedas, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Today, we can see that among the children, youths including women, every corner of the country. Drug addictions are hazardous to the mind and body of the consumer. It is classified as a neurological disorder since drugs alter the structure and function of the brain. Drugs produce harmful as well as beneficial effects, and decisions about the uses of the same. This study focused on the rising trends of drug abuse and drug addiction among children.

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Introduction:-

Drug, Intoxicants, or any substances of alcohol are hazardous to human health and mind. Drugs are chemical substances that produce known biological effects in humans or other animals. It is also used for treatment, cure, mitigation, prevention, or diagnosis of diseases. In some cases, a drug is used to enhance physical or mental well-being.¹ Section 3(b) of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act 1940 provides a broad definition of "Drug". It includes medicines for internal or external use in humans or animals. It also covers substances used for the diagnosis, treatment, mitigation, or prevention of disease or disorder. It also includes substances other than food that are intended to affect the structure or any function of the human body. Further, it encompasses substances used for the destruction of disease-causing vermin or insects. In addition, it includes substances used as components of a drug, such as empty gelatine capsules and medical devices.² The apex court has expanded the meaning of "Drug" to include not only medicines but also substances used for treatment and prevention of disease in humans or animals.

¹Hatem Amin Hejaz & Rafik Karaman (2015) Drug Overview Nava Science, 1st Edit, Pp1-40.

² Available at: <https://www.cyrilshroff.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/A-Guide-to-Prosecutions-under-the-Drugs-and-Cosmetics-Act-3.pdf>. Last visited on 17-3-2026 at 9.15 p.m.

Drug Addictions:

Drug means the use of medicine or a substance used in the making of when used within the context of illegal drug. It has been interchanged freely with the term narcotics.³ Drug misuse can show negative impact on the body and mind of the user⁴. Smoking of cannabis has been known in India since 2000 BC⁵. Drug abuse refers to the use of any substances for purposes other than medical or scientific ones. It includes consumption without a prescription in excessive doses or for an unjustified period of time. Addiction refers to the repeated use of drug or substance. The user becomes periodically or chronically intoxicated. There is a strong compulsion to take the preferred substances. The person has enormous difficulty in stopping or controlling its use. They may use almost any means to obtain psychoactive substances. Drug addiction or drug abuse is the chronic habitual use of substance for altering the state of the mind or the body other than for any medical indication. Generally, drug addiction causes immense human distress. It affects the physical and mental health of individuals. It also disrupts families and communities. The illegal production and distribution of drugs promote crime and violence worldwide. These activities are often linked to organized crime and social instability.⁶ Currently there is an increasing trend of substance abuse in India. According to NGO Survey revealed that 63.6% of patients coming in for treatment were introduced to drugs at a younger age below 15 years.⁷

Table 1: Number of street children across 16 cities in India.

S.L	Name of the state	Name of the city	No of drug addiction of street children
1.	Kerala	Trivandrum	140
2	Manipur	Imphal	851
3	Goa	Goa	1287
4	Telangana	Hyderabad	1797
5	Andhra Pradesh	Vijayawada	2238
6	Tamilnadu	Chennai	2374
7	Gujarat	Boroda	2428
8	Assam	Guwahati	5534
9	Tamilnadu	Salemi	5752
10	Karnataka	Bangalore	7523
11	West Bengal	Kolkata	8287

³P. Nararajan, S.A.Mrithavarshini, G.J.Dheetchana, J.Sivagurunatham & Taniya Susan Raji (2023) Factors Influencing Alcoholism and Drug Abuse among College Students with Special Reference to Coimbatore District, International Journal of trend in Scientific Research and Development, 7(3)183-187.

⁴Rhythm Patel (2021) Drug Addiction and its Impact on Indian Society and the Laws Related to Drug Usage, International Journal of Law Management & Humanities, (04)950-966.

⁵Available at: <https://www.scribd.com/presentation/321885917/deaddictionproginindia>, Last visited on 18-03-2026 at 4.35pm.

⁶Mridula Sharma & Moni Choudhury (2016) A Study of Drugs and Substance Abuse among Adolescents of Slum Dwellers, The International Journal of Indian Psychology, 3(4) 21-27.

⁷Available at: <https://www.childlineindia.org/a/issues/addiction>, last visited on 8-04-2026 at 12.00pm.

12	Maharashtra	Mumbai	16059
13	Delhi	New- Delhi	69,976
14	Chandigarh	Chandigarh	2374
15	Nagaland	Dimapur	2428
16	Meghalaya	Shelling	872

(Sources: DrugAbuse among street children in Delhi, www.vidhilegalpolicy.in.)

Consequences of Drug Addiction:-

India has estimated 62.5 million alcohol users. There are about 8.7 million cannabis users in the country. Around 250 million people use opioids. Approximately 250 million people aged about 10 and above use tobacco, in total nearly 300 million people are affected by different kinds of substance use in India.⁸ The incidence of drug abuse among the children and adolescents is higher than the general population. As for the report of the NGOs 63.6% of patients are drug addicts. The age groups of patients are around 15 years.⁹

- **Physical Consequences:** The physical impacts of drug addiction vary among users. Drug addiction changes how the brain and body feel pleasure. A person under the influence of drugs may behave differently and not normally do anything. An addicted person is more likely to suffer physical injury or accidents. Sometimes, addicted person may attempt suicide or commit violent acts at any time or place. Drug addiction can also cause internal damage to the body. It can harm organs such as the heart, liver, and other parts of the body. There is also a major risk of infections, and diseases among drug users.¹⁰
- **Psychological Consequence:** Substance use has significant psychological effects that can alter an individual's mood and overall mental state. It may contribute to increased stress levels and the development of mental health disorders. Furthermore, drug use is associated with various behavioural issues, including heightened aggression, impaired judgment, mood instability, anxiety, and memory loss. It also increases the likelihood of violent behavior. Consequently, individuals struggling with drug addiction often exhibit patterns of deviant behavior, frequently disregarding established social norms.
- **Economic Consequences:** Drug abuse has significant economic consequences. It affects individuals, families, and communities. Individuals with drug addiction may experience a loss of earnings and reduced productivity. At the firm level, it leads to increased costs and lower efficiency. It also raises public expenditure on healthcare, law enforcement, and social services. At the household level, spending on alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drugs competes with essential needs and savings. This reduces financial stability. As a result, households become more vulnerable to poverty and economic shocks.¹¹
- **Social Consequences:** Drug addiction affects all sections of society. The substance of abuse varies across regions and social layers in each Indian state, reflecting diverse patterns of addiction. On the other hand, the increasing influence of social comparison and the tendency to emulate certain lifestyles have further fuelled the vulnerability of youth to substance abuse.¹² Drug abuse is a serious social issue among the children, bringing harmful effects to victims, families, and as well society.

Law Related To Drug Usage:

• The Constitutional provision and policy:-

According to Article 47 of the constitution of India, state has a duty to improve public health. It is also required to work towards the prohibition of intoxicating drinks and harmful drugs. These substances are injurious to health.

⁸Kamlesh Kumar Sahu & Soma Sahu (2011) Substance Abuse Causes and Consequences, Bangabasi Academic Journal (9)53-59.

⁹Available at: <https://www.childlineindia.org/a/issues/addiction>, Last visited on 20-3-26 at 9,20am.

¹⁰Amandeep Kaur & Arshi Pal Kaur (2024) Menace of Drug Addiction In India: An Analysis, International Journal Of Novel Research and Development, 9(3)1499-1504

¹¹ Sameer Maqbool Wani & S. Allah Baksh (2025) Drug Abuse and its Socio- Economic Consequence In India, Prismatic Horizons Journal of Social Science and Humanities ,3(3) 36-43.

¹²Srinivasan Gopal (2025) Social Consequences of Drug Abuse, International Journal of Law Management & Humanities, 8(3) 3210-3226.

Their use should be restricted except for medical purposes.¹³ But the numbers of drug addiction patients are growing in every part of the nation. The state plays a primary role in addressing issues related to substance use, both within and beyond its boundaries. It holds the main responsibility for regulation and control. Alcohol is classified as a state subject under the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India. Therefore, the state government has the authority to make laws on alcohol.¹⁴

- **The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act 1985:-**

The Narcotic Drug and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 was enacted to control the sale and cultivation of Narcotic drugs. It provides strict provisions for the regulation of activities related to narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. The punishment provision of this Act is 10 years and may be extendable 20 years and is provided for a fine of 100000/- to two lakh rupees as for the quantity of the contravention involvement of the perforators. This Act is amended due to its erroneous sentencing policies from time to time.

Policies are made by the Government of India:-

- **National Mental Health Program (NMHP) 1982:-**

The basic strategy of the National Mental Health Program (NMHP) is to integrate basic mental health care with general health services. According to the World Health Report, the prevalence of mental disorders is around 10%. It is predicted that the burden of these disorders could increase to 15% by 2020¹⁵. The National Mental Health Program (NMHP) was developed by expert committees. These committees included some prominent medical officers in India. The aims of the (NMHP) are to regulate the availability & accessibility of minimum mental health care for all. It aims to support the application of mental health knowledge in general health care and social development. This program also seeks to promote group participation in the mental health services' development. Additionally, it aims to provide a self – help support within the community and other sectors of living people.

- **Drug- De- Addiction program of India 1988:-**

The Government of India established a cabinet Sub –committee recommendation to provide accessible, affordable, and evidence- based treatment for substance use disorders. The program provides grants to government institutions for detoxification and treatment, operating over 120 centers across the country. In 1985—86, the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare started this program across the country. Later, it was modified in 1994 and revised in 1999. The budget allocated to the (DDAP) is also modest and its approved budget outlay for 5 year in the 12th five years plan from 2012 to 2017 was rupees one hundred and fifty- one crores¹⁶.

- **National Action plan for Drug Demand Reduction (NAPDDR) 2018:-**

The Ministry of Social Justice launched this action plan in 2018. Despite the stringent Act, like the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substance Act 1985, drug addiction incidence is growing rampantly in each and every part of the nation. The main function of this plan is to ban the use of drugs. It aims to raise awareness among students. The plan provides counseling, treatment, and rehabilitation for individuals with substance dependence. It also focuses on training and capacity building for service. These efforts are carried out collaboratively by the central, state, and Non-Government Organizations.¹⁷

- **NashaMukt Bharat Abhiyan:-**

Drug free India Campaign (Nashamukti Abhiyan) is a transformative initiative at eradicating substance abuse and aims to eliminate drug addiction in India. Given the alarming rise in drug addiction this movement has initiated in

¹³Abhishek Arun Kumar, (2024) Drug Addiction: A Growing problem in Youth, Indian Journal of Integrated Research In law(2)1-6.

¹⁴Ranjana Rajasri R(2025) India's War on Drugs: A Historical and Legal Examination of National and International Strategies for Prevention and Rehabilitation, Indian Journal of Legal Review (5)765-780.

¹⁵Sarbjeeet Khurana & Shweta Sharma (2016), National Mental Health Program Of India: A review of the history and the Current Scenario, International Journal of community Medicine and public Health, 3(10), 2696-2704.

¹⁶ANJU DHWAN, RAO RAVINDRA, ATUAL AMBEKAR, AMAL PUSP AND RAY RAJAT (2017) TREATMENT OF SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS THROUGH THE GOVERNMENT HEALTH FACILITIES: DEVELOPMENTS IN DRUG DE- ADDICTION PROGRAMME OF MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, INDIAN JOURNAL OF PSYCHIATRY, 59(3), 380-384.

¹⁷Available at: <https://www.pib.gov.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1842702®=3&lang=2>, last visited on 18-03-2026 at 3.20pm.

different part of the country.¹⁸This program is launching awareness campaigns on various social media platforms as well as in local communities' teenagers and young adults.¹⁹

• **Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan ArogyaYojna 2018:-**

The Ayushman Bharat scheme is a flagship public health care initiative by the Government of India. The aim of the scheme is providing Universal Health coverage (*UHC*). It protects economic backwards families from high medical expenses by offering free hospital treatment worth. Up to 5 lakh annually through the Pradhan Mantri Jan ArogyaYojana. This scheme continues to operate effectively in 2026 and ensuring that no one is left behind in accessing health care services²⁰.

• **Non- Communicable disease (NCD) controlsPrograms:**

Non-communicable diseases (*NCDs*)are a major global health concern, responsible for approximately 41 million deaths each year. Among these, 15 million of deaths are considered premature, occurring before the age of 70.²¹ These highlights are the significant burden of (*NCDs*) on younger population and underscores as the need for early prevention and intervention strategies. This mortality from (*NCDs*) reflects not only life style and behavioural risk factors but also gaps in health care access and disease management.

• **National Tele Mental Health Program (NTMHP) 2022:-**

The program was launched in 2022 as part of the National Mental Health Program provides 24/7 free, accessible and quality mental health care through the Tele – MANAS Initiative. It is fact that due to over burden one in seventh people estimated to be suffering from a clinical diagnosable mental disorder²². In 2022-23, the government of India placed aspecial union budget to provoke for the said program. The government also established 23 Tele Mental Health Centers of Excellence. These centers areprovidedbetter service to well mental health counseling and care services to patients.

Impact of Drug Addition:-

Drug addiction is one of the crucial issues from the last three decades. It also increases at an alarming rate in every corner of the country. Generally, drugs are used for medical purposes, but nowadays it seems for every step of life of the human door. It is a fact that, there is no part of the world is not free from drug addiction. Drug abuse is the repeated use of illegal drugs or the misuse of prescription or over the counter drugs. It leads to negative consequences. These problems can occur at the workplace, home, or in relationships. Therefore several factors are directly or indirectly responsibleforsuchheinous crime.

- **Personal factors:**There are multiple individual risk factors for drug addiction. Children and adolescents under 18 may try to substances for several reasons. They may seek new experiences, or adventure, or cope with interpersonal trauma. For young adults aged 18-25, academic stress is a major play factor in substance abuse.
- **Family Factors:** Family factors are one of the paths of drug addiction. Accordingto Glynn, the most influential factor affecting a person's substance use is the parent's own use of substance.If parents consume alcohol, tobacco, or drugs, their children are more likely to adopt similar behaviors. Parental habits, attitude, and the home environment play a key role in shaping a child's choice regarding substances. In short, parents' behaviors can strongly influence whether a person starts using substances.²³Family economic conditions have played an important role in affecting of person's drug use. According tothe United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

¹⁸Ganer JM &Baragi UC (2025) NashaMuktBharatAbhiyan: Harnessing Ayurveda, Yoga and Spirituality for a HealththeirIndia, Journal of Ayurveda andIntegratedMedical Sciences, (10)1-3.

¹⁹Abhishek Anand and ShambhaviMishra (2024) Law against Substance Abuse in India, International Journal of Multidisplinary Trends, 6(5) 12-18.

²⁰Aviable at :

AyushmanBharatPradhanMantri Jan ArogyaYojana AB-PMJAY Services | National Government Services Portal. Lastvisited on18-03-2026 on 9-30pm.

²¹Ishu Kataria, Mariam Siddiqui, Theresa Gillespie, Michael Goodman Preet K. Dhillion Carla Bann and Linda Squiers (2020) A Research Agenda for Non-Communicable DiseasePrevention and Control in India, HealthResearchPolicy and Systems, (18)3-7.

²²Sagar Rajesh & Singh Swarndeep (2022) National Tele- Mental Health Program in India: A step Towards Mental Health Care for All? Indian Journal of Psychiatry, 64(2)117-119.

²³ Foo YC, Tam CL, Lee TH. (2012) Family Factors and Peer Influence in Drug Abuse: A Study in Rehabilitation Centre. International Journal of Collaborative Research on Internal Medicine & Public Health, 4(3):190-20

(UNODC, 2021) children from households with a history of substance abuse or poor parental supervision are more likely to develop addiction issues.²⁴

- **Social factors:** The gendered dimensions of alcohol and opioid addiction are complex and warrant critical examination. Substances such as cigarettes and alcohol are often socially acceptable when consumed by men, yet they are stigmatized when used by women.²⁵
- **Gender Factors:** Gender differences also play a role in the tendency toward drug abuse. Girls are a common gender factor for drug addiction and often a hidden concern. Particularly, college-going girls and youth are addicted to the drugs. Students who are facing the high demands of coursework or social obligations or both turn to drugs as a way to cope.
- **School Factors:** Schools are the temples of knowledge and wisdom. During the ancient times there were Gurukuls where student and teacher were in close contact and supervision of their Guru in a Vedic family environment. The role of Guru was important and Guru helped the student on their all-round development. Now, schools do not have a power to closely monitor the student and teacher. Due to such gaps, students are addicted to smoking, drinking, and sex or poor eating patterns and other influencing agents like parents, relative's peers, social and electronic, media and over-powering of his mind, time decisions and faith.

Conclusion:-

Drug addiction is one of the most concerning and major problems in India. Large number of people are dying because of drug addiction. It shows not only crime rate but also the impact on the family members of the deceased. On the other hand, it has alarmed the root of domestic violence and financial crisis in every family of any society as such it does uproot highly necessary. Drug addiction disproportionality affects young people, children, and women being particularly vulnerable to its adverse consequences. It is imperative for society to recognize that drugs are inherently harmful and can lead to fatal outcomes. Furthermore, the use of alcohol and other substances tends to escalate over time, often contributing to increasingly dangerous behaviors. These may include involvement in criminal activities, as well as the exhibition of aggressive, violent, or erratic conduct.

²⁴ ARDRA PP, Ranalin, V.P & Raga Jyoti (2025) Alcohol and Drug Abuse among Youth: Causes, Effects, and Control, International research Journal, 12(3), 123-126.

²⁵ Shahid Iqbal (2020) Children's Drug Abuse: A Growing Challenge in India, International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts, 8(2) 2076-2080.