



Fighting Drug Addiction

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Why in News

Recently, people in a few villages of **Jodhpur district's Bilara block, Rajasthan** have come together to tackle **Drug Addiction** among the youth.

Key Points

- **Steps Taken By the Villagers:**
 - **Boycott** of persons consuming **liquor, tobacco and narcotics.**
 - **Imposition of a penalty** on the **sellers and buyers** of these **substances.**
- **Drug Addiction:**
 - It refers to the **condition of being addicted to a drug**, particularly narcotic drugs.
 - These are **generally illegal drugs** that **affect the mood and behaviour of a person.**
 - **Drug abuse** refers to the **use of certain chemicals for the purpose of creating pleasurable effects on the brain.**
 - There are over **190 million drug users around the world** and the problem has been increasing at alarming rates, especially among young adults under the age of 30.

- **Drug Menace In India:**

- The menace of drug addiction has **spread fast among the youth of India.**
- India is sandwiched between two **largest Opium producing regions** of the world that is **the Golden triangle on one side and the Golden crescent on**

other.



- The **golden triangle** area comprises **Thailand, Myanmar, Vietnam and Laos.**
- The **golden crescent** area includes **Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran.**
- As per the report **Magnitude of Substance Use in India** released by **All India Institute Of Medical Science (AIIMS)** in 2019:
 - **Alcohol** is the most abused substance in India.
 - Around **5 crore** Indians reported to have **used cannabis and opioids** at the time of the survey (conducted in the year 2018).
 - It has been estimated that there are about **8.5 lakh people who inject drugs.**
 - Of the total cases estimated by the report, **more than half** of them are contributed by states like **Punjab, Assam, Delhi, Haryana, Manipur, Mizoram, Sikkim and Uttar Pradesh.**
 - About 60 lakh people are estimated to need help for their opioid use problems.
- More and more children are taking to alcohol consumption and the **highest percentage of children who are addicted to alcohol are in Punjab followed by West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh.**
- **Major Reasons for Drug Abuse:**
 - To be accepted by the peers.
 - Increasing economic stress.
 - Changing cultural values.
 - Experimentation.
 - Neurotic pleasure.
 - Ineffective Policing.

- **Impacts of Drug Abuse:**
 - Higher risk of unintentional **injuries, accidents, domestic violence incidents, medical problems, and death.**
 - **Economic potential** gets wasted.
 - **Affects relationships** with family, friends creating emotional and social problems
 - Increases **financial burden.**
 - Drug abuse seriously **affects our health, security, peace and development.**
Increase in **diseases like Hepatitis B and C, Tuberculosis**
 - Drug dependence, low self esteem, hopelessness can **lead to criminal action and even suicidal tendencies.**
- **Challenges to Curb the Drug Menace:**
 - **Legally Available Drugs:**
Such as **tobacco** is a huge problem which is usually seen as a **gateway drug** which children take just to experiment with.
 - **Lack of Availability of Rehabilitation Centres:**
There is a lack of rehabilitation centres. Also, NGOs operating de-addiction centres in the country, have failed to provide the required kind of treatment and therapy.
 - **Smuggling of Drugs:**
Smuggling of drugs through the states like Punjab, Assam and Uttar Pradesh which share the border with neighbouring countries.

- **Government Initiatives to Tackle Drug Addiction:**

- It constituted the **Narco-Coordination Centre (NCORD)** in November, 2016 and revived the scheme of “**Financial Assistance to States for Narcotics Control**”.
- Narcotics Control Bureau has been provided funds for developing a new software i.e. **Seizure Information Management System (SIMS)** which will create a complete **online database of drug offences and offenders**.
- The government has constituted a fund called “**National Fund for Control of Drug Abuse**” to meet the expenditure incurred in connection with combating illicit traffic in Narcotic Drugs; rehabilitating addicts, and educating the public against drug abuse, etc.
- The government is also conducting a **National Drug Abuse Survey** to measure trends of drug abuse in India through the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment with the help of **National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre of AIIMS**.
- '**Project Sunrise**' was launched by the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in 2016**, to tackle the **rising HIV prevalence** in north-eastern states in India, especially among people injecting drugs.
- **The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, (NDPS) 1985**: It prohibits a person from producing, possessing, selling, purchasing, transporting, storing, and/or consuming any narcotic drug or psychotropic substance.
 - The **NDPS Act** has since been **amended thrice** – in **1988, 2001** and **2014**.
 - The Act extends to the whole of India and it applies also to all Indian citizens outside India and to all persons on ships and aircraft registered in India.
- Government has also announced the launch of the '**Nasha Mukh Bharat**', or **Drug-Free India Campaign** which focuses on community outreach programs.

- **International Treaties and Conventions to Combat Drug Menace:**

India is signatory of the following International treaties and conventions to combat the menace of Drug Abuse:

- **United Nations (UN) Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961)**
- **UN Convention on Psychotropic Substances (1971)**.
- **UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1988)**
- **UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) 2000**

Way Forward

- Addiction should not be seen as a character flaw, but as an ailment that any other person could be struggling with. Therefore, **the stigma associated with drug taking needs to be reduced.** Society needs to understand that drug-addicts are victims and not criminals.
- Certain **crop drugs** which have more than 50% alcohol and opioids **need to be contained. Strict action is required from police officers** and the excise and narcotics department to **curb the problem of drug menace in the country.** There is a need to **strictly implement the NDPS Act.**
- **Radical political decisions** like that one of alcohol prohibition in Bihar may be another solution. When people do not exercise self-control, a state has to step in, as part of the **Directive Principles of State Policy (Article 47).**
- **Education curriculum should include chapters on drug addiction,** its impact and also on de-addiction. Proper Counselling is another alternative.

Source:TH