



Drug abuse and juvenile delinquency: A critical study of India

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Abstract

Significant neurological changes take place during adolescence, a time of transition from childhood to maturity. Experiencing trauma at this time of development might be particularly taxing on the nervous system because of how fragile it is. Substance addiction, especially the use of alcohol and psychostimulants, is something that many teenagers go through.

The National Cancer Institute (NCI), which is the United States government's primary activity for cancer research, defines drug abuse as "The use of illegal drugs or the use of prescription or over-the-counter drugs for purposes other than those for which they are meant to be used, or in excessive amounts." Further, the agency adds "Drug abuse may lead to social, physical, emotional, and job-related problems^[1]."

The present research paper studies the relation between drug abuse and Juvenile delinquency in the Indian setup.

Keywords: Juvenile delinquency, drug abuse, adolescence, substance use disorder, psychological trauma

Introduction

Nearly 7.5 lakh individuals died in 2017 due to drug overdoses, leading to the Global Burden of Disease Study^[2]. Over 2,300 individuals lost their lives in India as a result of drug overdoses between 2017 and 2019, with the greatest number of casualties happening in the 30-45 age bracket, according to statistics from the National Crime Records Bureau^[3].

According to a recent analysis, ingredient exploitation is widespread in Indian society and millions of Indians are dependent to opiates, cannabis, and alcohol. India's Ministry of Social Justice and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime collaborated to develop the study^[4].

In India, alcohol, cannabis, opium, and heroin are the most often abused substances, according to the statement. Heroin, propoxyphene, and buprenorphine are the three maximum often used injectable drugs^[5].

The vicious cycle of drug misuse and juvenile crime is a major social problematic in India, where the epidemic of substance abuse is taking hold. The drug abuse epidemic among India's youth has become a national emergency. Substance abuse initiation is on the rise as a result of changing societal views, worsening economic conditions, and fewer social supports.

One million heroin users are legally recognised in India, with an estimated 5 million more using the drug in an illegal capacity, according to UN research^[6].

The poll estimated that among India's population of over one billion, 62.5 million consume alcohol, 8.75 million use cannabis, 2 million utilise opiates, and 0.6 million employ downers or hypnotics^[7].

The research indicates that between 17% and 26% of these individuals are dependent users in dire need of treatment. Approximately one-quarter of alcoholics and one-quarter of opiate and cannabis users will seek therapy^[8].

"The idea that drug usage is solely a city problem is a lie," said Gary Lewis, the UN Office of Drugs and Crime's regional representative for South Asia^[9]. He further added that vaccination drugs and high-risk behaviours can be found in both urban and rural areas.

Contrary to popular assumption, drug injection is rather common nationwide, not only in the northeast. "It's worth

noting that heroin abuse and injecting drug users have also been recorded from rural India," Distribution needles is widespread and on average, one needle is shared by at least three injecting drug abusers.

The approximate quantity of people looking for action is 0.5 million opiate addicts, 2.3 million cannabis users, and 10.5 million alcoholics in different government, private or non-governmental rehabilitation centres^[10].

Low treatment program enrolment and lengthy drug use before seeking treatment are major concerns. Neither the national nor the local levels of drug abuse monitoring are in place in India at present. Both the Juvenile and Criminal Justice systems are concerned about drug usage.

Types of drugs and their usage

In India, drug usage has skyrocketed in the last many years. The demand for narcotics of all kinds is at an all-time high, from more conventional plant-based narcotics like cannabis, cocaine, and heroin to more modern synthetics like tramadol.

Opioids and cannabis are the most popular illegal narcotics in India, according to users. In India, bhang, a kind of cannabis, is legal^[11]. According to the AIIMS report, nearly 3.1 crore people in India are projected to be cannabis users^[12]. of them, 1.3 crores (1.2 per cent) use ganja and charas, however the rest devour bhang^[13]. Moreover, as per the government statement, India had 2.3 crore opioid users, in 2018, a five-fold jump in 14 years^[14]. The following Figure 1 shows the state-wise consumption of opioids.

Further, as per the findings of AIIMS National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre, the use of heroin saw the most significant increase.

Opium users numbered 20,000 in 2004, which was over double the number of heroin users at 9,000. Data published by AIIMS National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre shows that the number of heroin users reached 2.5 lakh in 2016, roughly double the number of opium users^[15].

The following figure 2 shows the percentage of charas/ganja consumption.

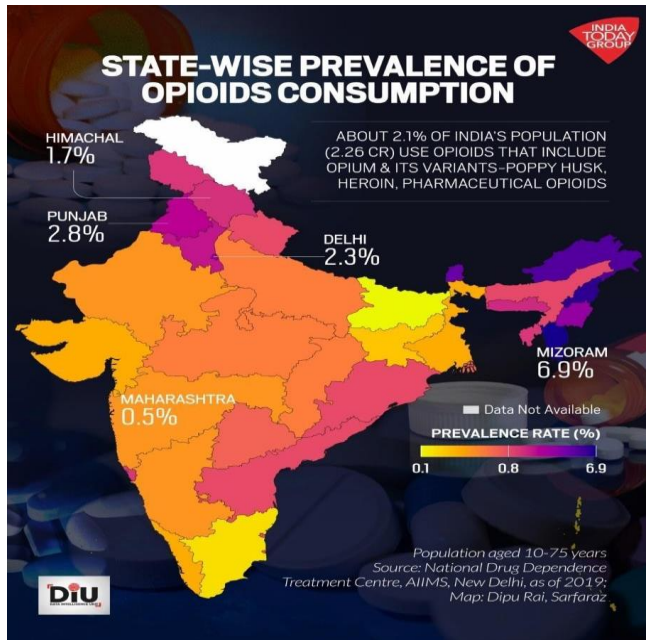


Fig 1

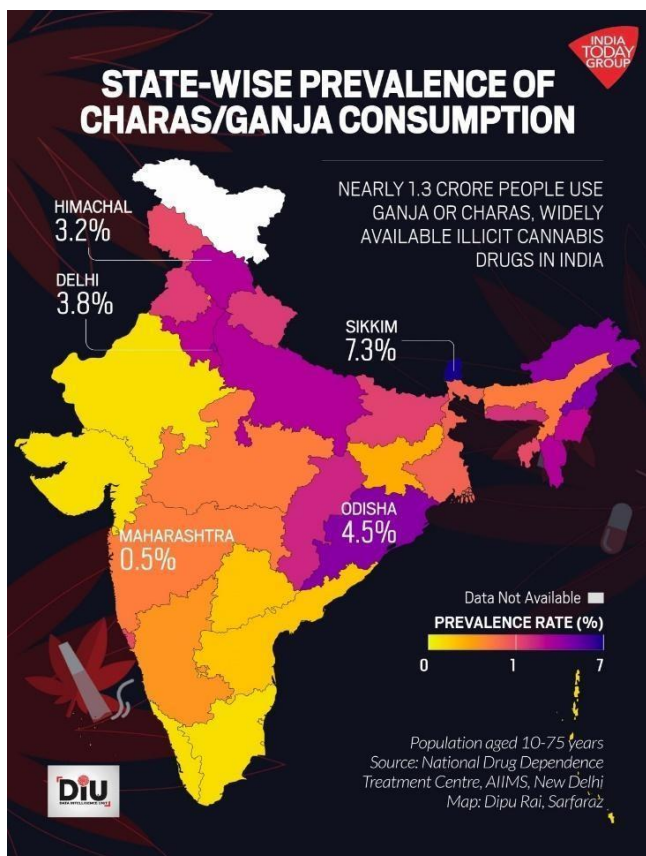


Fig 2

The sedative properties of several pharmaceuticals make them popular. Nearly 1.08 crore people in the nation take sedatives; the states of Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, and Andhra Pradesh have the highest concentrations [16].

A greater prevalence rate relative to the native populace is observed in the northeastern states of Sikkim (8.6%), Nagaland (5.4%) and Manipur (4.3%) [17]. There are around 11.8 lakh dangerous or dependent calming users in India [18].

The inhalational route is used by a small percentage of drug users for psychoactive substances.

Only inhalants are commonly used by children. While only 0.58 percent of adults use inhalants, 1.17 percent of youngsters do so [19]. The AIIMS study found that among the Indian states, the most cannabis users are in Uttar Pradesh, then in Punjab, Sikkim, Chhattisgarh, and Delhi.

India has lower-than-average rates of illegal cannabis consumption. Opioid usage, though, is threefold more in this region. Excessive usage has put over 77 lakh, or more than one-third, of opioid users into the hazardous or drug-dependent group. About a third of these occurrences occur in the states of Delhi, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Punjab [20]. But when looking at population proportion, the states in the northeast are way up there.

For example, the AIIMS data shows that opioid consumption is nearly 7% in Mizoram, 6.5% in Nagaland, 5.7% in Arunachal Pradesh, and 5.1% in Sikkim [21]. The following Figure 3 shows the global average of opioid usage.

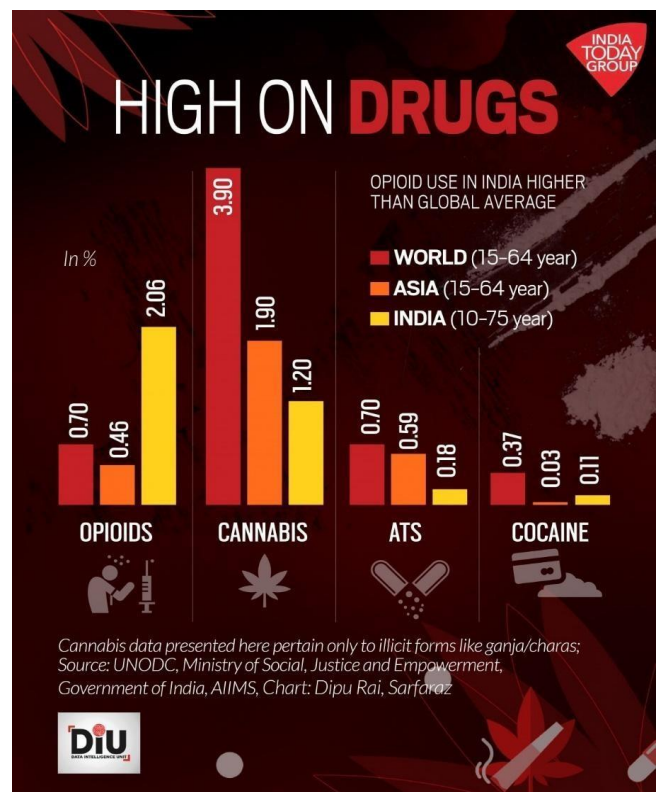
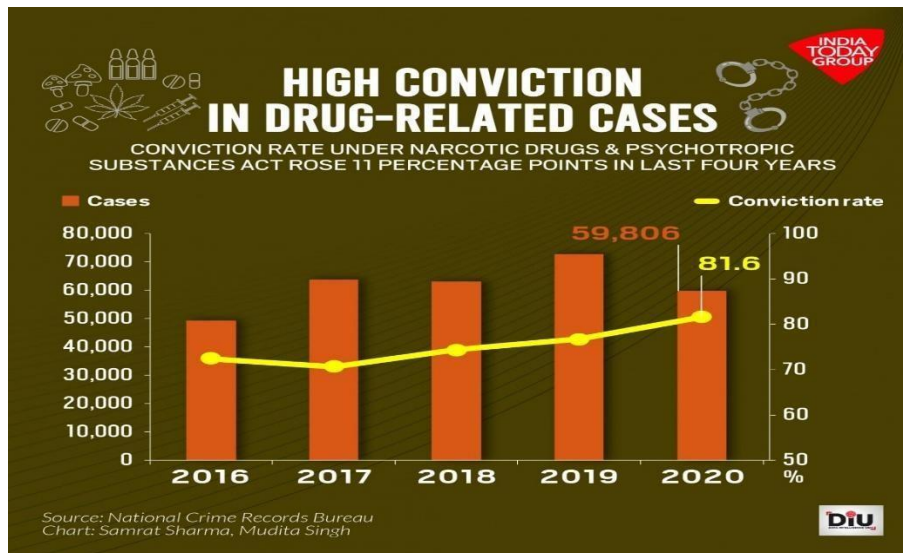


Fig 3

Drug Abuse and Juvenile Delinquency

A common factor contributing to delinquency is substance addiction within families or by children themselves. The lack of basic resources and the subsequent pressure to pursue alternative means of subsistence are common among children whose parents engage in substance misuse. Some people who develop a drug dependency may resort to criminal activity to support their habit.

Both drug usage and drug-related felony convictions have increased in recent years. The following Figure 4 shows that, there has been 11% increase in drug-related cases since 2017 [21].



Juveniles found guilty of rape were more likely to have used inhalants or solvents such as typewriter thinners and whiteners than those found guilty of other offences^[23].

Similarly, among individuals found guilty of murder, cannabis consumption was widespread^[24]. The use of opiates and heroin was also more prevalent among offenders convicted of offences including robberies and muggings^[25]. Nevertheless, the use of psychotropic medicines was prevalent only in cases involving more severe crimes like homicide, rape, snatching, and burglary^[26].

According to a 2016 review, this involved more than 500 male convicts from the Prayas Observation It was carried out in the Home for Boys by the Institute of Human Behaviour and Allied Sciences (IHBAS), New Delhi, the Pushpawati Singhanian Research Institute, and the Department of Psychiatry at Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital^[27].

"It was found that out of the total juveniles under-enquiry booked under different crimes, over 87 per cent had a history of substance use," said Shridhar Sharma, a member of, the management group of Prayas^[28]. Ingesting of tobacco and cannabis were higher when

likened to other drugs. While the amount of psychotropic drug consumption was small, it was associated with more significant criminal offences^[29].

Conclusion with Suggestions

Delinquency among juveniles because of drug abuse is quite rampant. There can be different ways through which the effect of drug abuse among juveniles can be monitored and reduced.

Individual programmes incorporate educational initiatives, psychotherapy, and counselling into their strategies for reducing juvenile delinquency.

Environmental programme in which strategies are used to recover the economic and social standup of adolescent offenders by providing them with job opportunities.

Clinical Programme, wherein mental health specialists, including psychiatric social workers, clinical psychologists, and psychiatrists, help young offenders understand their personality disorders.

Educational Programme, where schools have a major impact in shaping students' personalities. In order to meet the difficulties of life, youngsters are shaped by their teachers or mentors.

Mental Hygiene, wherein mental conflict and mental diseases can be curbed by mental therapy. Numerous fields, including academia, the legal system, healthcare, public health, and business, place a premium on mental cleanliness. Additionally, this approach is useful for dealing with and preventing juvenile delinquency.

Recreational programmes, help maintain a low rate of juvenile delinquency while providing an opportunity for kids to meet and form relationships with people of all ages in the community. Children may benefit in the long run from these kinds of supportive friendships. Activities in youth programs might range from sports and dance to music and rock climbing to theatre and karate to bowling and art, all tailored to the interests and abilities of the kids that participate. Many feel that participation in organised sports and other extracurricular activities is a great way to keep kids from acting out. To prevent juvenile delinquency, youth organisations and clubs should spearhead the development of such programs.

Removal of inferiority complex: Children with anxiety, a lack of self-confidence, or a history of trauma may commit crimes as a means of gaining acceptance from others. Encouraging children to develop self-assurance is important. Because of their low self-esteem, they are unable to handle challenges well. It is important to shower children with love, encouragement, empathy, and praise.

Community Programmes: Community programs' primary objective is to assist those in need, rather than having those in need contact service providers and agencies. Participation in the local community inculcates leadership among the younger generation and thus brings positive changes in the personality of the youth.

Parental love and affection: Parents should love, nurture, and defend their children no matter what. Without this kind of nurturing environment, a child may grow up dissatisfied and angry, which can lead to criminal behaviour. Therefore, the youngster cannot avoid criminal behaviour without the love, care, and protection of his parents.

Family Environment: Excessive discipline, lack of parental supervision, conflict between parents or separation and disrespectful parent-children relationships lead children

towards delinquency. When people are going through tough times, it can undermine their sense of self-worth and lead them to do things they wouldn't normally consider. The most well-known methods for helping adolescent offenders are counselling and treatment.

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