

# DRUG ADDICTION AS A SERIOUS SOCIAL PROBLEM IN THE SOCIETY

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**Abstract :** Financial resources intended for essential needs such as rent and food are often diverted towards drug use, resulting in increased food insecurity and a rise in homelessness. The repercussions of drug abuse on families are numerous, including heightened family conflict that may involve physical or emotional abuse and neglect, as well as loss of employment and income. Drug addiction poses a significant challenge in the Indian region, affecting various facets of society. Recently, this issue has garnered increased attention due to its escalating prevalence and the evolving patterns of drug use, particularly among the youth. A distinct sub-culture surrounding drug use has emerged, characterized by its own norms, values, behaviors, and symbols. This crisis adversely impacts the health and well-being of individuals, families, communities, and society at large. No region in the world remains untouched by the scourge of drug trafficking and addiction. Drug addiction transcends individual circumstances and geographical boundaries, affecting people of all ages, genders, ethnicities, social classes, and religions. The pervasive nature of this issue is fueled by various factors, including peer pressure, high societal aspirations, unemployment, and shifting social dynamics. This study aims to explore the unique consequences of drug addiction on individuals and society, addressing its physical, psychological, economic, and social impacts. Additionally, it will propose potential solutions that families, communities, friends, and society can implement to combat this pressing issue.

**Keywords:** Social problem, Drug and society, Drug addiction, Drug abuse, Drug usage, Drugs impacts, Drug scenario

## 1.0 Introduction:

In both our nation as a whole and within the specific boundaries of our state, the problem of drug-related crimes and the prevalence of drug addiction are escalating at an alarming pace. It is vital to understand that addiction is categorized as a brain disorder. This condition is marked by an individual's compulsive engagement in activities or behaviors that provide rewarding or pleasurable stimuli, even in the face of negative consequences that may arise. Drug addiction specifically refers to the excessive use of psychoactive substances, which include not only illegal drugs but also legal substances such as alcohol and prescription pain medications. This form of addiction inflicts serious harm across various dimensions—physical, social, and emotional—impacting the lives of individuals and their communities.

Commonly abused illegal narcotics and psychotropic substances encompass a range of drugs, including cocaine, hashish, thebaine, opium, morphine, heroin, codeine, and ganja, which is also known as marijuana. These substances, among many others that are restricted or prohibited, contribute significantly to the ongoing crisis of drug abuse. Currently, no corner of the globe is immune to the pervasive issues related to drug trafficking and addiction. Across continents, millions of individuals who are caught in the web of drug dependence are leading lives filled with despair, often teetering on the brink between life and death.

The World Health Organization (WHO) highlights that drug abuse can be defined as persistent or intermittent use of drugs that is not associated with accepted medical practices. When one examines global statistics related to drugs,

the situation appears increasingly dire. The illicit drug trade generates an estimated turnover of approximately \$500 billion annually, ranking it as the third largest industry worldwide, following only the petroleum and arms trades. Disturbingly, it is estimated that around 190 million people globally are users of various types of drugs, further illustrating the widespread nature of this issue. This growing crisis calls for urgent attention and significant action to address the deep-rooted challenges posed by drug addiction and trafficking.

### **1.0 2.0 Why is drug abuse a Social Problem in Human Society**

When you consider the topic of drug abuse, what images or ideas come to mind? For a significant number of individuals, the visualization often centers around the image of a person grappling with substance addiction. This person may be someone familiar, such as a friend, a family member, or even a colleague at work. In some cases, this individual could be ourselves, highlighting the personal nature of addiction. It is common to view addiction primarily as a personal sickness, one that inflicts harm not only on the individual suffering from it but also on their close family members who may witness the struggle.

However, the impact of drug abuse reaches far beyond the confines of personal relationships and family dynamics. It casts a wide net over various sectors of society, exerting substantial pressure on healthcare systems that are tasked with addressing the medical needs of those affected. The economic repercussions can be felt in the workplace, where drug abuse can lower productivity, increase absenteeism, and lead to higher rates of workplace accidents. Furthermore, the criminal justice system bears an immense burden from the consequences of drug-related offenses, as prisons and jails struggle to contain the growing number of individuals incarcerated for drug-related crimes.

In essence, drug abuse serves as a common thread that intertwines the lives of many Americans, cutting across socio-economic boundaries and affecting communities nationwide. This is a pervasive issue that cannot be easily ignored or hidden away. Addressing the broader implications of drug addiction is crucial for the well-being of society as a whole, as it affects not just the individuals involved but the collective fabric of our communities.

### **3.0 Global Scenario of Drug Addiction:**

The global landscape of drug addiction has become a widespread concern, transcending geographical boundaries and social contexts. This pressing issue is not limited to specific regions or to particular groups defined by caste, class, or race. In fact, the pervasive nature of drug addiction has spread across the entire world, affecting every country and population. The production and abuse of illegal drugs, including narcotics and psychoactive substances, have been steadily increasing, particularly in areas such as South Asia and Southeast Asia.

For instance, data indicates that the global production of opium poppy rose significantly within a short time frame, jumping from an estimated 4,700 tons in 2010 to about 7,000 tons in 2011. This alarming increase highlights a growing trend in the production of illicit drugs, which poses serious challenges for public health, safety, and law enforcement efforts worldwide. The spread of drug addiction is not just a local issue; it is a complex problem that requires international cooperation and comprehensive strategies to combat its far-reaching effects on society.

In 2012, reports indicated that the area dedicated to poppy cultivation in Afghanistan reached an unprecedented 154,000 hectares, which further increased to 209,000 hectares in 2013. Additionally, the number of households cultivating cannabis as a cash crop surged by over one-third, rising to approximately 65,000 from 47,000 in 2010. According to estimates from the Afghan government, around 191,500 rural households relied on the cultivation of illicit drugs, primarily opium poppy, for their livelihoods in 2011. Beyond Afghanistan, Myanmar saw about 51,000 hectares of opium cultivated illegally in 2012, marking a 17 percent rise from the previous year. The illicit cultivation of cannabis in Indonesia and the Philippines, along with significant seizures of methamphetamine in China, Thailand, Cambodia, and Myanmar in 2011, also highlighted the regional drug issues. In East and Southeast Asia, substances such as heroin, amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS), and pharmaceutical drugs have emerged as major concerns. Furthermore, certain South American nations are involved in the production, consumption, and

trafficking of cocaine and cannabis, while countries like Morocco, Congo, Ghana, Nigeria, Egypt, and South Africa engage in the trade of cannabis herb, cannabis resin, and ATS. The World Health Organization reports that nearly 50 million individuals globally are addicted to drugs, with 30 million using marijuana, eight million consuming cocaine, 1.7 million using opium, and 700,000 using heroin, while others consume various narcotics. In the United States, drug abuse has become the leading health crisis, with increasing numbers of Americans using drugs, developing addictions, and succumbing to overdoses. Numerous cities in the United States, notably Detroit, Texas, Miami, Boston, and Los Angeles, experience significant levels of drug use and related criminal activities. In Africa and the Middle East, cannabis is the most prevalent drug, despite its introduction to the region only around 1940. The subcontinent, particularly Pakistan and Bangladesh, has witnessed a dramatic increase in drug abuse. Similarly, drug abuse is escalating in Gulf and West Asian countries, with cannabis and opium being the most commonly consumed substances. Pakistan serves as a key transit point for the smuggling of large quantities of drugs, including opium, heroin, smack, and mandrax. Latin America remains a major hub for drug trafficking, with Bolivia and its neighboring countries involved in the cultivation and processing of cocaine. The cocaine trade in South America is substantial, with the drug primarily transported from Colombian Pacific ports through Costa Rica to Mexico and ultimately to California. Additionally, drugs are trafficked through Chile to Asian markets and via Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina to Europe.

#### **4.0 Drug abuse and its impact on society:**

Drug addiction and abuse have profound effects that extend beyond the individual struggling with these issues; they impact several critical aspects of life, including physical health, psychological well-being, financial stability, and social interactions. Physically, individuals who are addicted may experience a range of health problems, such as the deterioration of bodily functions and the risk of infectious diseases. The toll on mental health can include anxiety, depression, and other serious psychological conditions, which often exacerbate the addiction. Economically, addiction can lead to significant financial strain. Individuals may find themselves facing high medical costs related to health issues caused by substance abuse, alongside potential job loss due to erratic behavior or absenteeism. This financial burden extends to families, as loved ones may be forced to support the addict or bear the consequences of decreased household income. Socially, addiction can erode relationships with family and friends, leading to feelings of isolation for the addict and emotional distress for those around them. As social ties weaken, the addict may become further entrenched in their substance use, creating a vicious cycle that is difficult to escape.

Moreover, the effects of drug addiction ripple through the fabric of society. Employers face challenges related to decreased productivity, increased healthcare costs, and the need for workplace policies to address substance abuse. Communities experience higher crime rates, increased demand for healthcare services, and the strain of supporting affected families. In summary, drug addiction is not solely an individual issue; it influences physical health, psychological stability, economic situations, and social structures, thereby threatening the well-being of families, communities, and society as a whole.

- a. In marriages: The presence of a drug addict in a relationship can create significant challenges for the other partner. The addicted individual may experience unpredictable mood changes and aggressive outbursts, showing little regard for familial and social obligations. This disregard fosters ongoing tension within the marriage, potentially resulting in its dissolution.
- b. At home: A drug addict can severely strain relationships with family and friends. Their addiction often transforms them into a liability, as they fail to contribute to the family's welfare or responsibilities. The frequent episodes of violence and the financial strain caused by their addiction impose considerable stress on family members.
- c. In education: Drug addiction has a detrimental impact on an addict's educational pursuits, often resulting in cognitive impairments. They may lose interest in their studies and exhibit restlessness, leading to poor academic performance due to memory loss. Their erratic behavior and tendency to fabricate excuses can result in avoidance of educational settings.
- d. In employment: Employers face challenges with employees who struggle with drug addiction. Such individuals may shift from being reliable, punctual, and effective workers to those who arrive late, neglect

- their appearance, and exhibit a decline in personal hygiene. This behavioral change often results in decreased productivity, loss of confidence, and overall underperformance.
- e. Health and wellbeing: Substance abuse can lead to severe health deterioration, including the risk of cancer and infectious diseases. Drugs such as heroin, cocaine, and amphetamines can alter the behavior of users significantly. Additionally, drug overdoses can result in tragic outcomes, including suicide, death, or lasting physical harm.
  - f. Personality: Drug addiction can lead to significant mental health issues, including anxiety, restlessness, paranoia, and diminished self-worth. Certain substances can disrupt brain function, resulting in profound changes in behavior. Symptoms such as reduced appetite, weight loss, and impaired concentration can further compromise mental health, potentially leading to disorders, affecting psychomotor skills, and causing hallucinations and neglect of personal hygiene.
  - g. Financial issue: The financial burden of addiction extends beyond the individual, impacting family members and friends as well. An individual struggling with addiction may resort to stealing from loved ones, which can escalate to more serious criminal activities over time.
  - h. Law and order: Individuals with drug addictions frequently engage in theft, fraud, and other illegal activities. They may become involved with organized crime to fulfill their needs. Additionally, they often partake in excessive drinking, contributing to societal law and order issues. Activities such as prostitution, extortion, kidnapping, vehicle theft, illegal sales, and smuggling are commonly linked to substance abuse, and there is also an increased risk of suicidal behavior among addicts.

Individuals engaged in the production of illegal drugs, the transshipment of narcotic and psychotropic substances, and the trafficking of drugs internationally, as well as those who permit their premises to be used for such activities, harbor offenders, or finance illicit drug trade, are subject to legal action. Licensees or their employers found participating in such illegal activities may be prosecuted under the NDPS Act of 1985. For offenses involving small quantities of narcotic substances, the penalty can be up to one year of rigorous imprisonment and/or a fine of up to Rs 10,000. Offenses involving quantities that are less than commercial but greater than small can result in up to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment and/or a fine of up to Rs 1 lakh. For offenses involving commercial quantities, the punishment ranges from a minimum of 10 years to a maximum of 20 years of rigorous imprisonment, along with a fine that is not less than Rs 1 lakh and can go up to Rs 2 lakhs.

## **5.0 Conclusion**

The state government is making significant efforts to reduce illegal drug trafficking and aims to eliminate it entirely from the region. The Arunachal Pradesh Police, as the primary law enforcement agency, possesses the necessary capabilities to tackle the drug issue and consistently confronts those involved in drug smuggling. It is crucial to raise awareness about the detrimental effects of drugs. This includes fostering individual understanding of the harmful consequences, as well as encouraging support from parents and relatives. The involvement of non-governmental organizations, local panchayat representatives, municipal authorities, women's groups, student organizations, traditional councils, and village leaders is essential in combating the drug problem at the community level. Drug addiction is a multifaceted disease that adversely affects both individuals and society as a whole. The widespread nature of drug addiction is a significant concern for the nation. Drugs are often trafficked from neighboring countries across the border, and factors such as unemployment, social unrest, the easy availability of narcotics, and the sale of prescription medications at pharmacies contribute to high levels of drug consumption in India. While every challenge has potential solutions, addressing this issue requires the collective support of individuals, society, and government.

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