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Drug Abuse Youth in India: A Problem to be Tackled

SRINIVASAN GOPAL¹

ABSTRACT

The youth form the backbone of the country and provide not only political leadership but also shape the future of the country as a whole. The youth, of late, has drifted from the mainstream and have started indulging in the illicit trafficking of drugs, illicit export of drugs and the youth lured by western influences have taken to consumption of drugs to greater heights without knowing the ill effects not only to them but also to their family, society and the nation as a whole. This article attempts to explore drug abuse and suggests remedial measures to be implemented.

With a burgeoning population pegged at 1.4 billion +, the youth aged between 19-29 constitutes a chunk of the population – 22% to be precise and the youth form a distinct class in India having the power to change the landscape of India and hence it is for this reason India is a hot destination for multinationals as they see a potential market in the youth. It is for the youth population, India is referred to as a young country and its demographic dividend can make the country attain great heights. It is seen that with a fast-rising ageing population especially in countries like the Far East, Europe and an increase in longevity in these parts of the world, the youth of our country can shape the future of the world. However, it is seen that a sizeable portion of the youth, especially college-going, have drifted away silently from the mainstream and have started indulging in activities prejudicial to their own lives and hence to their family and in turn to society and the nation. The situation can turn for the worse if remedial measures are not taken immediately keeping in view the number of persons bracketed as a youth being booked under the stringent provisions of NDPS Act, 1985(hereinafter referred to as the Act). Hence, there is a requirement of sensitization right from the school level onwards in our country to desist the youth from indulging in any of the banned/prohibited activities under the provisions of the Act.

India is sandwiched between Golden Crescent & Golden Triangle and for a long time, India has been a transit country for narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances with the passage of

¹ Author is a Superintendent of Central Tax Office of Pr. Chief Commissioner of CGST & CX (DZ), New Delhi, India.

time, it has emerged as a big consumer of the same and the increase in demand can be directly attributed to the youth of the country. With the growth of technology, we see that the supply has been upped through the use of drones is not only dropping narcotics but also arms, ammunition and Fake Indian Counterfeit Notes(FICN). In short, there is a reduction in human intervention from across the border with the increased use of drones in the west of the country and the involvement of clandestine labs on the eastern porous borders. The recent record seizure of 2900 kilograms of heroin at Mundra Port in the year 2021 is an example of unscrupulous persons proliferating the supply and increasing the consumer base.

Traditionally, India has a long history of cultivation and usage of cannabis. However, readers may note that the leaves and seeds of the cannabis plant fall outside the purview of the NDPS Act, 1985 but shall form within the definition of ‘Ganja’ when they are accompanied by fruiting tops and flowering tops. India is also a country where the legal cultivation of opium is undertaken under the supervision of the officers of the Central Bureau of Narcotics falling under the administrative control of the Ministry of Finance, Department of Revenue of the Government of India and the legal cultivation of cannabis for medicinal purpose in Jammu under one of the CSIR labs. Cultivation of cultivation(hemp) for the purpose of clothing, etc. have been permitted by some of the State Governments in the exercise of the powers conferred upon them under the NDPS Act, 1985. Cases have been recorded to the fact that there has been an illegal diversion of excess production of opium and many cases have been booked. Hence, with the fuelling of demand, especially from the youth, we are confronted with activities detrimental to the interests of the country.

With a spate of seizures effected by the empowered agencies, especially the Narcotics Control Bureau, State Police, Customs and the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, it categorically emerges from these seizures and arrests of the persons that many young people have started associating with the illicit trafficking and supply chain. The primary reason for this appears to be to get rid of the stress level in a highly competitive environment.

During the pandemic, it was noticed that young persons were involved in the hydroponic cultivation of cannabis. Hydroponics is a method of growing plants without soil, by using mineral nutrient solutions. Readers can easily correlate the growth of money plants in homes to hydroponics technology. On account of the COVID pandemic, some Tech graduates in the IT sector were given pink slips. As a result of the unemployment, these Tech graduates ventured into hydroponic cultivation of cannabis. The Narcotics Control Bureau, Mumbai Zonal Unit and the Mumbai Police had busted the hydroponics cultivation of cannabis illegally in the year 2021. Youth of the country are also known to be involved in the use of the darknet

and deep web for ordering and effecting transactions through bitcoins and other cryptocurrencies and use of specialized APP such as VICKR, etc. Apart from these direct modes of sourcing, the procurement of drugs takes place as under:

- From peddlers, who entice, lure, entrap the youth with initial free supply and thereafter on payment;
- From peers, whom they idolize;
- Friends introducing drugs to other friends as a stress-buster;
- Friends introducing drugs to other friends organizing birthday parties
- Easy access to outlets for organizing parties (also called rave parties) gives exposure and the contacts of the contact are put into action and this takes a domino effect;
- Use of International Courier, Foreign Post Office to source and obtain drugs of their choice and to remain anonymous;
- Use of hydroponic cultivation to grow high-quality cannabis for self-consumption and for sale.

The commonly abused substances are heroin, ganja, cocaine, hashish, charas, ketamine, methamphetamine, mephedrone, LSD, methadone, poppy husk, tramadol, not in any particular order. The effect of drug abuse on the youth leads to loss of coordination, slowed reflexes, loss of appetite, change in behaviour heading for the worse, irritable character and loss of friends & relatives and above all, an increase in requirement of the dosage over a period of time. With these symptoms, they are cut off from normal activities leading a secluded life and becoming a burden not only to the family but to society and the nation.

The recent cases booked by the various empowered department only reveal that the student community has taken the lead not only in indulging in consumption, illicit trafficking but also in illicit export for monetary gains. The details of the cases, which are illustrative in nature, can be treated as a harbinger for the things to come if action is not taken immediately.

Title of the case	Nature of offence committed
Syed Afsar @ Syed Axsar, Age: 22 years, Occ: student vs. The State of Karnataka	The petitioner, a student, along with the other two accused, was found transporting wet ganja, weighing about 28.720 kilograms in a car and the same was seized.

in criminal petition no. 101370/2021 decided on 23.8.2021 by the Dharwad Bench of the Hon'ble High Court of Karnataka	
1. Rajini K., 23 Years 2. Nelson Joise, 24 Years vs. The State of Karnataka in Criminal Petition No.2976 of 2021 decided on 03.08.2021 by the Hon'ble High Court of Karnataka	The Petitioners are college going students and the college did not permit them to write the examination. They pleaded that the college may be directed to allow them to write examinations. Panchanama shows that the petitioners were caught selling ganja. The quantity of ganja seized is shown as 3.460 kilograms
Bala Subramaniyan aged about 31 years, vs. the Intelligence Officer, DRI, Bangalore Zonal Unit in Criminal Petition no.7669/2020 decided on 28.7.2021 by the Hon'ble High Court of Karnataka	Information received categorically indicated that the petitioner was trying to export Contraband Narcotic drugs by concealing the same in the kitchen utensils. On the opening of the boxes, the same was found to contain 'Pseudoephedrine' - 526 grams in one packet, 215 grams in the second packet, 222 grams in the third packet and 818 grams in the fourth packet. The investigation further revealed that the petitioner was exporting the same to his own brother and had done so in the past using fictitious names and addresses to Australia.
Intiyaz @ Imthiyaz, age: 26 years, vs. State of Karnataka in criminal petition no., 101337/2021 decided on 30.7.2021 by the Dharwad bench of the Hon'ble High Court of Karnataka	Acting on specific information disclosed by two accused, from whom ganja was recovered and seized, that the present petitioner was involved in the sale of ganja, he was arrested for the same and incriminating evidence were recovered from him.
Anirudh venkatachalam	The petitioner, a student, is arrayed as accused

<p>Aged about 23 years</p> <p>Bengaluru</p> <p>vs.</p> <p>State of Karnataka</p> <p>In Criminal Petition No.4612 of 2021 decided on 29.7.2021 by the Hon'ble High Court of Karnataka</p>	<p>No.9. He was apprehended on 29.05.2021. The total quantity of contraband i.e. 30 MDMA ecstasy pills said to have been recovered is the subject matter of investigation</p>
<p>Harsh Shailesh Shah</p> <p>Ghatkopar West, Mumbai.</p> <p>Niraj @ Aarav Lalit Surana</p> <p>Jawahar Nagar, Bandra (E), Mumbai.</p> <p>vs.</p> <p>The State of Maharashtra and</p> <p>The Senior Inspector of Police,</p> <p>Igatpuri Police Station</p> <p>In bail application no.2471 of 2021 and bail application no.2565 of 2021 decided by the Hon'ble Bombay High Court on 24.8.2021</p>	<p>The two Applicants, in a surprise raid conducted in a private bungalow located at Igatpuri, Nashik, were found to be in possession of cocaine, ganja, charas and the supporting materials enabling its consumption during the party, which was attended by 27 persons.</p> <p>On behalf of both, the Applicants learned senior counsel requested the court to adopt a reformatory approach as there are no criminal antecedents to their credit. He submitted that this is a case where the Applicants, young in age, were lured by the temptation and their curiosity about the prohibited substances, which has landed them in trouble.</p>
<p>Jude Perera, Aged about 32 years,</p> <p>Hoondri, Pune dist.,</p> <p>2. Shankar Shanthanu</p> <p>Aged about 29 years,</p> <p>Bandra, Mumbai</p> <p>3.Eshwara M. P.</p> <p>Aged about 33 years,</p>	<p>On the intervening night of 12/13.01.2019, the Inspector of Police, on credible information that a rave party was organized by one Jude Parera and Shankar, raided the said place and seized ganja weighing 106.48 grams and charas weighing 33.09 grams</p>

<p>Bengaluru</p> <p>4.Appanna M A</p> <p>vs.</p> <p>State of Karnataka</p> <p>In the criminal petition, no.3943 of 2021 decided on 19.7.2021 by the Hon'ble High Court of Karnataka</p>	
<p>Anirudh V. Konnur Age 20 years</p> <p>v.</p> <p>State of Karnataka</p> <p>In Criminal Petition, No.5460 of 2021 decided on 29.7.2021 by the Hon'ble High Court of Karnataka</p>	<p>Based on specific information, the raid resulted in the recovery of MDMA ecstasy tablets, LSD tablets and ganja from the petitioner, a student, who was found on the premises.</p> <p>While rejecting the bail, the petitioner was ordered to be released on bail for a limited period to enable him to write his VI Semester examination till 09.08.2021, on executing a bond in a sum of Rs.2,00,000/- (Rupees Two Lakhs only) with two sureties for the like sum to the satisfaction of the jurisdictional Court.</p>
<p>Khalid Riyaz Momin age 29 years</p> <p>vs.</p> <p>State of Karnataka</p> <p>in Criminal Petition, No.101183 of 2021 decided on 08.7.2021 by the Dharwad Bench of the Hon'ble High Court of Karnataka</p>	<p>The seizure of 3.141 kilograms of Ganja from the petitioner along with other evidence has been contested in the criminal petition before the Hon'ble High Court.</p>
<p>Aayush Ajit vs. Inspector of Customs, Headquarters Preventive Unit (HPU), Bengaluru City Customs, 2020 SCC OnLine</p>	<p>Petitioner placed the order for purchasing 'MDMA' drugs through his friend in the Netherland and he himself paid the said</p>

<p>Kar 1940</p> <p>Aayush Ajit vs. Inspector of Customs, Headquarters Preventive Unit (HPU), Bengaluru City Customs,</p> <p>2021(4) TMI 362-Karnataka High Court</p>	<p>amount through Darknest.com. Once the transaction was held through Darknest.com. it cannot be logged in once again, thus maintaining secrecy. If logged again, it will show some other address.</p> <p>The investigation clearly revealed that the said drugs were purchased and ordered by the petitioner through a parcel from the Netherland.</p>
<p>Sri Arjav Deepak Mehta vs. the State of Karnataka in Criminal Petition No. 8065 of 2020 decided on 29.3.2021 by the Hon'ble High Court of Karnataka</p>	<p>A case came to be registered on a specific complaint that some people were purchasing MDMA Crystals, Ecstasy Pills, Hash, LSD Strips through Post from the Netherland, Poland, Germany and other countries and were selling the same to college students. The petitioner was apprehended while receiving the parcel from the Postman. Thereafter, 200 LSD Strips were seized</p> <p>The petitioner purchased the drugs through online booking by opening the Play Store and creating a Dark Web and through Dark Web, he had placed the order of purchase of these contraband articles and paid money through BitCoins.</p>
<p>Royden Harold Buthello,</p> <p>aged about 29 years,</p> <p>Mumbai</p> <p>vs.</p> <p>State of Chhattisgarh,</p>	<p>Secret information received by the Police of Police Station City Kotwali, Raipur that accused Shreyansh Jhabak and Vikash Banchore were standing and waiting for customers to sell cocaine near Govt. Polytechnic College, Byron Bazar, Raipur. Searched, resulted in the illegal possession of 7 gms. cocaine from Shreyansh Jhabak whereas</p>

<p>Through - Station House Officer, Thana/P.S. - Kotwali, Raipur (C.G.) In Criminal Revision No. 468 of 2021 Decided on 15.9.2021 by the Hon'ble Chhatisgarh High Court</p>	<p>Vikash Banchore was found in illegal possession of 10 gms. of cocaine, which were wrapped in a polythene sheet in their trousers' pocket. On being interrogation & verification of their mobile phones and call details, it was found that the accused persons are part of a drug cartel/mafia, who are engaged in the illicit trade and trafficking of cocaine and MDMA [Methylene-dioxy-methamphetamine] throughout the country including in several districts of the State of Chhattisgarh.</p> <p>During further investigation, it was revealed to the police that co-accused persons namely Abdul Azim, Mohammad Minhaz, Rohiz Ahuja, Laxman Gain, Rakesh Arora, Allen Soren, Gaurav Shukla, Ashish Joshi, Nikita Panchal, Sambhav Parak, Harshdeep Singh Juneja and present petitioner - Royden Harold Buthello were also involved in illicit trade and trafficking including sell, transportation and possession as also consumption of cocaine and MDMA. It was also found that the illicit drugs were brought to Raipur from Mumbai & Goa and consumed at the drugs party by the accused persons and is also sold to other intending customers</p>
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In order to effectively control the mushrooming growth of consumption and allied prohibited activities under the Act, it is essential that the supply chain is cut off. Automatically, there would be a reduction in supply. Furthermore, there should be adequate programmes on substance use prevention to protect the youth of the country. De-addiction centres in adequate numbers are made available for the youth willing to undergo treatment. The stigma attached to drug addiction should be equally addressed and coupled with the deployment of youth, who

have undergone de-addiction, in spreading awareness. In order to make an effective impact on drug reduction, all the stakeholders should join together and address the concerns effectively and in a coordinated manner. The stakeholders should focus on the Causes of drug-taking behaviour, treatment programmes, rehabilitation of the 'recovered and de-addicted 'youth, empowering and educating the youth on the Drug Laws in India.

There should be a renewed focus on the source of illicit traffickers, especially in Golden Crescent and Golden Triangle and the conspirators, masterminds, kingpins, peddlers, etc., should be proceeded with with a heavy hand. The empowered officers should also further ensure that their aim should not be to book the offenders and seize the contraband but to secure the conviction of the accused involved in illicit trafficking so as to disable such accused to conduct their illicit and illegal business.

The remedies to drug abuse are

- Containing all illicit sources of drugs including illicit cultivation where they are planted.
- Strict and effective border controls on illicit drug trafficking including the use of measures to spot the use of drones and neutralize them by empowered departments/officers.
- Strict control over the chemists/distributors/wholesale sellers and manufacturers of pharmaceutical drugs and the unearthing of clandestine manufacture of drugs for illicit trafficking of drugs into the market and export thereof.
- Catch them young. Teaching the bad and harmful effects of drug abuse, cigarette and alcohol right from the school level.
- Continuous and long-time campaign against the abuse of drugs at the national, regional and local levels.
- Monitoring the activities of the children and the kind of friends their children have and imparting proper guidance to their children against the ill effects of bad company.
- De-addition and rehabilitation of the youth

With a phased and targeted intervention, it is hoped that the youth of the country come out of the mess and do not fall prey to the ill effects of drugs abuse.
