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Social Consequences of Drug Abuse

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ABSTRACT

India is facing a growing problem with drug addiction, especially among young people. Families suffer because addiction causes emotional and financial stress. Many students drop out of school, and people struggle to find jobs. Drug dealers use sneaky tricks like selling chocolates with drugs inside and making secret online deals to spread addiction. This crisis hurts the economy because addicted people cannot work properly, crime rates go up, and hospitals become overwhelmed. Many people also develop serious mental health issues like depression and memory problems. More women are getting involved in drug trafficking, making the situation even worse. To solve this, stronger laws, better rehab centers, and more awareness programs are needed.

Introduction

1. Over the past two decades, India has undergone a drastic transformation—from a mere transit hub for narcotics to a growing consumer state. The surge in demand, particularly among the youth, has fuelled not only the use of traditional narcotics i.e. heroin, cannabis but also powerful synthetic drugs, escalating the crisis to unprecedented levels

Impact on Families and Relationships:

2. Drug addiction is a growing crisis in India, cutting across all social and economic backgrounds. The youth, in particular, are highly vulnerable, often lured by temptation and curiosity about prohibited substances. The senior counsel, during the proceedings of Bail Application No. 2471 of 2021 decided on 24.08.2021 in the case of **Harsh Shailesh Shah & Ors vs. State of Maharashtra and Another [2021:BHC-AS:10637]** emphasized the vulnerability of youth in falling prey to narcotics due to “*lured by the temptation and their curiosity about the prohibited substance*”, a sentiment echoed in judicial observations

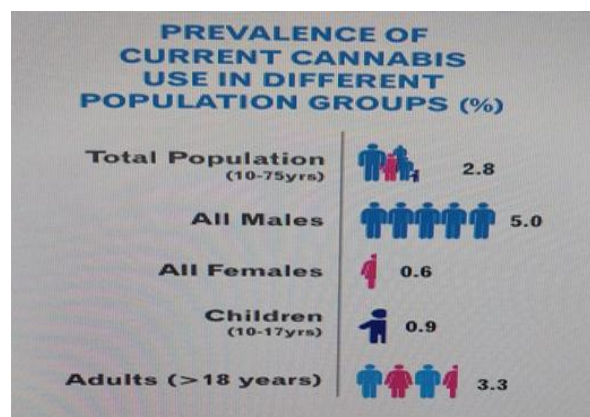
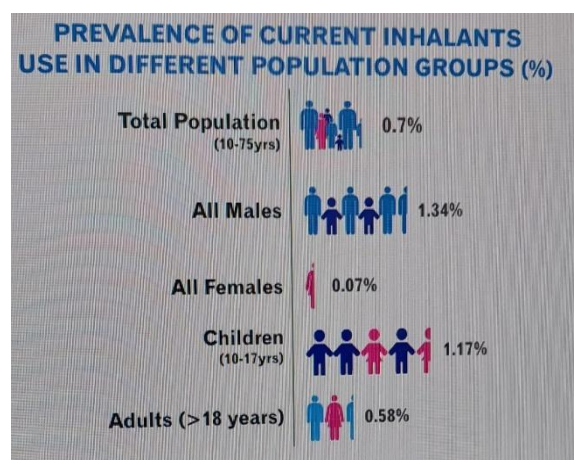
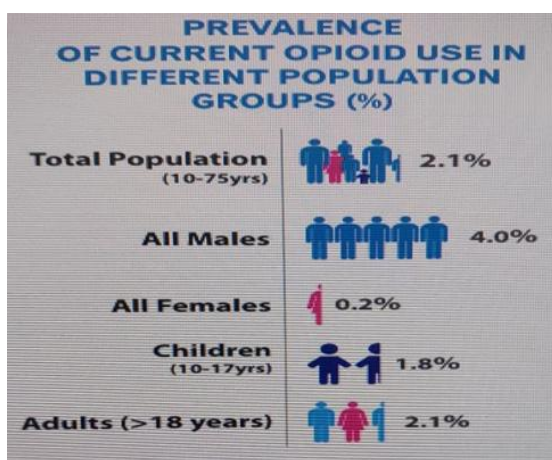
“17.. The challenge of today mainly focuses on the issue of drug addiction in youth and how to tackle it. Experimentation with alcohol and drugs is common. Unfortunately, the youths do not foresee the link between their action today and its consequences tomorrow.”

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The counsel's submissions, echoed by the Hon'ble High Court, highlight the alarming rise of drug addiction among India's youth.

2.1 Drug addiction affects all sections of society, varying in form and intensity across different social and economic backgrounds. The substance of abuse varies across regions and social layers in each Indian state, reflecting diverse patterns of addiction.

2.2 A deeper delve into national data highlights the extent of the crisis. The 'Magnitude of Substance Use in India' 2019 report by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India provides critical insights into the prevalence of opioid, inhalant, and cannabis consumption, as reflected in the following images.



© Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India.

2.3 A closer look at the above three images clearly reveals that children between the ages of 10 and 17 are increasingly affected by substance abuse, falling prey to addiction at an alarmingly young age. The reality of drug addiction reflects a far-reaching societal challenge. It affects not only individuals but entire families, leading to emotional trauma, financial strain, and fractured relationships.

2.4 It is essential to examine the underlying factors contributing to drug addiction. India, as a

rapidly growing economy, has witnessed significant shifts in living standards, marked by the rise of a burgeoning middle class. With both parents engaged in full-time work, the breakdown of the traditional joint family system has left many adolescents without strong familial oversight. Additionally, the increasing influence of social comparison and the tendency to emulate certain lifestyles have further fuelled the vulnerability of youth to substance abuse. Affluent children often spend exorbitant amounts to fuel their addictions, as seen in Vaibhav Gupta's case, where he had spent Rs.1,14,57,000/-. His addiction remained hidden until 5th October, 2019, when he collapsed from a seizure, sustaining injuries. Only after a bystander informed his mother—who rushed him to Mallya Hospital—did she learn the shocking truth.

Chocolates laced with substance of abuse

Deceptive Drug Packaging & Distribution Methods

2.5 Furthermore, in order to push drugs into the supply chain, especially amongst the children, a lot of new tricks are deployed. On 14th May, 2025, officers from the Thiruvananthapuram Customs Zone seized 34 kilograms of hydroponic weed and 15 kilograms of chocolates infused with amphetamine-like substances. Intercepted from three Indian women arriving on international flights, the contraband highlights a new illicit drug trafficking trend—drug-laced chocolates emerging as a deceptive *modus operandi*.²



2.5.1 It was also reported that Cyberabad police seized ganja-infused chocolates marketed as ayurvedic medicine. The chocolates, which contained ganja, were deceptively marketed as Ayurvedic remedies for indigestion. The Telangana anti-narcotics bureau notified UP and Rajasthan police about manufacturers in these States producing similar drug-laced products³. In the past too, ganja infused chocolates were seized by the officers of Palnadu Prohibition and

Excise, Andhra Pradesh.⁴

2.5.2 Addiction often begins with social exposure at parties, campuses, or digital platforms. Students have been arrested in drug peddling networks operating within university hostels, as seen in the Amity University case. Law enforcement records show widespread use of substances such as ganja, MDMA, LSD, and pseudoephedrine.

2.5.3 Before we venture into dissecting the common reasons for addiction, we take a look at some of the cases under the NDPS Act, 1985 being booked against the youth by different empowered agencies, which throws good insights into the type of drugs, age, occupation, etc.

S. No.	Case Title & Court	Age / Occupation	Nature of Offence	Type & Quantity of Drug
1	<i>Syed Afsar @ Syed Axsar vs. State of Karnataka</i> (Criminal Petition No. 101370/2021)	22 / Student	Transporting contraband in a car	Wet Ganja – 28.720 kg
2	<i>Rajini K. & Nelson Joise vs. State of Karnataka</i> (Criminal Petition No. 2976/2021)	23 & 24 / Students	Caught selling drugs; pleaded for exam permission	Ganja – 3.460 kg
3	<i>Bala Subramaniyan vs. DRI, Bangalore</i> (Criminal Petition No. 7669/2020)	31	Exporting drugs in kitchen utensils to Australia	Pseudoephedrine – 1.781 kg
4	<i>Intiyaz @ Imthiyaz vs. State of Karnataka</i> (Criminal Petition No. 101337/2021)	26	Arrested based on disclosure by co-accused	Ganja (quantity not specified)
5	<i>Anirudh Venkatachalam vs. State of Karnataka</i> (Criminal Petition No.)	23 / Student	Possession of ecstasy pills	MDMA – 30 pills

S. No.	Case Title & Court	Age / Occupation	Nature of Offence	Type & Quantity of Drug
	4612/2021)			
6	<i>Jude Parera & Others vs. State of Karnataka</i> (Criminal Petition No. 3943/2021)	29–33	Rave party organizers; seized drugs on-site	Ganja – 106.48g, Charas – 33.09g
7	<i>Anirudh V. Konnur vs. State of Karnataka</i> (Criminal Petition No. 5460/2021)	20 / Student	Seized at premises with narcotics	MDMA, LSD, Ganja
8	<i>Khalid Riyaz Momin vs. State of Karnataka</i> (Criminal Petition No. 101183/2021)	29	Seized from the petitioner	Ganja – 3.141 kg
9	<i>Royden Buthello vs. State of Chhattisgarh</i> (Criminal Revision No. 468/2021)	29	Part of cocaine & MDMA trafficking network	Cocaine – 7g & 10g
10	<i>R. Gopala Reddy vs. State of Karnataka</i> (WP No. 13943/2024 GM-Res)	—	Consumption during a birthday event; petitioner had no direct role	MDMA pills, Ganja, Cocaine, Hydro Ganja [The petitioner is the owner of the premises, who had let out the premises and was granted bail.]

Key Drivers Behind Substance Abuse Among Youth

2.5.4 The above cases are only illustrative in nature and only exhibit the consumption pattern. Drug addiction among Indian youth is a growing concern, with several contributing factors

driving substance abuse trends. While these cases represent only the tip of the iceberg, they highlight the various elements influencing consumption patterns:

A. Peer Pressure – The most significant factor, as peer influence plays a major role in substance initiation. Information about drug use spreads rapidly in educational institutions and at rave parties, leading to experimentation.

B. Establishing secret drug laboratories under the pretext of academic research¹ - Chennai Police uncovered a clandestine drug lab operated, in a residential premises, by a group of highly educated individuals. Among those arrested were a postgraduate chemistry student, four engineering students, and two others, all accused of manufacturing crystal meth under the guise of academic research.

C. Curiosity – Adolescents often experiment with drugs out of curiosity, unaware of the long-term consequences. The allure of trying something new and the influence of social media amplify this factor.

D. Fear of Isolation – Many individuals turn to substance use as a coping mechanism for loneliness and social exclusion. The lack of emotional support and societal pressure often push youth toward addiction.

E. Accessibility & Availability – The ease of access to narcotics has increased, with digital platforms facilitating distribution. Many drug suppliers operate through apps, ensuring discreet transactions, making acquisition effortless for users.

F. Affordability – The cost of drugs is often manipulated to attract new consumers. At the user level, substances are frequently adulterated, making them more affordable and accessible to a broader demographic.

G. Policy of ‘First Dosage Free’ – Drug suppliers strategically introduce first-time users to substances by offering free initial doses. Once addiction takes hold, subsequent doses are priced significantly higher, ensuring sustained demand and financial dependency.

H. Use of social media & cryptocurrencies – The rise of the internet and mobile technology has enabled anonymous transactions. Auto-destruct apps facilitate drug orders, cryptocurrency payments ensure secrecy, and the decline in parental supervision further emboldens young users.

Academic Consequences of Drug Addiction

2.55. A cursory glance at the cases listed, which are illustrative in nature, reflect that the addicts are students and in prime of their youth. Drug addiction significantly affects their academic

success and career prospects, often leading to dropouts and long-term unemployment.

A. Rising Dropout Rates:

- Substance abuse severely impairs focus and academic performance.
- Many cases booked by enforcement agencies reveal widespread addiction among youth. Noida Police arrested University Students in Drug Peddling Case that used to sell drugs to hostel students in the varsity. As per the reports, the cops have arrested 8 accused in the case and seized drugs in a large quantity. According to the DCP Noida, the gang leader's wife is in Taiwan and used to supply Ganja from there. Another accused supplied indigenous Ganja from Rajasthan and sell it to University Students⁵.



Three University students, who were suspended, were sent to Judicial Custody as the jurisdictional Court declined to extend the bail. The three students were among the four arrested⁶. The Delhi Police have also caught students indulging in drug pedalling.

Frequent absenteeism due to addiction leads to failure in meeting coursework requirements.

- Expulsions from institutions due to drug-related incidents permanently derail education.

B. Employment Challenges Due to Addiction

- Drug addiction lowers workplace productivity, reduces concentration, and increases absenteeism.
- Many companies conduct drug tests, reducing job opportunities for individuals struggling with addiction.
- Addiction-related financial instability often forces individuals into crime, further decreasing employability prospects.

Economic Fallout of Drug Addiction in India

3. Drug addiction in India creates serious financial problems for both individuals and the country. People struggling with addiction often spend large amounts of money on drugs (Refer Vaibhav Gupta's in para *supra*), leading to financial difficulties, debt, or even illegal activities. It also affects their ability to work, reducing productivity and weakening the economy.

3.1 The Government has to spend a lot of money on healthcare, rehabilitation centres, and law enforcement to fight drug abuse and trafficking. Businesses also suffer, as addicted work force may struggle to perform well, leading to lower efficiency and frequent absences. The diversion of resources for avoidable work by the Government halts the progress and development of the country. Additionally, drug-related crimes increase the burden on Courts and police, requiring more public funds. To tackle this issue, strong focus on prevention, treatment, and support for affected individuals are needed to reduce the economic damage caused by drug addiction.

3.1.1 The impact of economic consequences is detailed below:

A. Healthcare System Strain – The rising number of addiction cases has led to a proportional increase in the demand for treatment facilities, for those opting to undergo rehabilitation instead of prosecution under the NDPS Act, 1985, in both Government and private hospitals. Rehabilitation programs and medical care require substantial resources including beds, escalating healthcare costs and straining existing infrastructure.

B. Decline in Workforce Productivity – Addiction severely hampers employability. Individuals struggling with substance abuse often exhibit absenteeism—either to procure drugs or due to impaired functionality—reducing overall productivity. This negatively affects businesses, slows economic growth, and may lead to termination of employment, as seen in the **2016 Madras High Court case of Sanjiv Bhatnagar vs. Union of India through NCB, CZU.**

C. High-profile Cases of Cocaine Use – The growing prevalence of drug addiction extends to influential individuals. A notable instance includes **Anant Satish Pathak**, a 25-year-old **President of a group of companies controlled by Yash Birla**, whose case reached the Hon'ble Bombay High Court for bail, as reported in **2020-(5)TMI 534.**

D. Rise in Crime Rates – As financial resources deplete, addicts resort to theft and other criminal activities to sustain their habits. This escalation not only increases law enforcement costs but also burdens the judicial system with drug-related offenses.

E. Financial Struggles for Families – Addiction-related expenses—including medical costs, rehabilitation, and substance procurement—cause financial instability. Families often

support addicts only for a limited period, beyond which the individual is ostracized, leading to social alienation.

F. Inability to contribute: An addict's inability to contribute economically diminishes both their societal value and national productivity. The fruits of demographic dividends cannot be reaped, if the substantial number of the population is under addiction

G. Impact on Industry – Drug-related activities and unsafe environments deters Foreign Direct Investments and that in turn affects the technology infusion into key sectors and reforms that can be effected in various key sectors. It also deters domestic and foreign tourists infested with addiction, hampering the growth of the tourism sector and affecting revenue generation. Overall, Government revenue is affected.

H. Social Welfare Burden – Government resources allocated for addiction-related programs divert funds from essential services such as education, infrastructure, and healthcare, imposing an economic strain on public finances.

I. Prison Overcrowding & Rehabilitation Costs Increased drug-related arrests lead to overcrowded prisons, requiring higher expenditure on inmate maintenance and rehabilitation programs instead of focusing on judicial reforms or crime prevention initiatives.

J Law Enforcement & Judiciary Costs – Increase in the number of cases booked would result in the overburdening of the judiciary. Additional Special Courts have to be set to cater to the needs of the cases being booked, significantly siphoning significant manpower, and money in tackling the cases at the judicial level. These efforts divert law enforcement focus over other crimes under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023.

K. Social Welfare Programs – In view of the drug addiction, legitimate demands of the citizens cannot be met, which could otherwise be used toward creation of world class institutes like IITs/IIMs/AIIMs, creation of infrastructure, and poverty alleviation.

L. Long-Term Economic Consequences – Addiction reduces life expectancy, leads to chronic unemployment, and restricts economic contributions from affected individuals, ultimately slowing national progress, leading to an unproductive workforce

Mental Health Consequences of Drug Addiction

4. Another important aspect which requires our attention beyond its social and economic impact, is the mental health, often leading to serious psychological disorders and emotional distress. Substance abuse disrupts brain chemistry, exacerbating conditions such as depression, anxiety, and various impairments.

A. Depression and Anxiety:

- Addiction fuels **chronic anxiety and depression**, driven by social isolation, financial stress, and deteriorating health.
- Withdrawal symptoms can trigger severe mood swings, emotional instability, and panic attacks.

B. Self-Harm and Suicidal Tendencies:

- Many addicts experience **feelings of hopelessness and guilt**, leading to increased risks of self-harm.
- Studies have linked substance abuse with **high suicide rates**, particularly among youth struggling with addiction.

C. Psychosis and Paranoia:

- Certain substances, such as synthetic drugs, induce **hallucinations, paranoia, and delusions**, leading to irrational or violent behaviour.

D. Cognitive Decline and Memory Loss:

- Prolonged drug use damages neural pathways, causing **difficulty in concentration, memory lapses, and impaired decision-making**.
- This cognitive decline further diminishes employability, worsening financial instability.

E. Emotional Instability and Aggression:

- Mood swings, impulsive behaviour, and heightened aggression are common, especially during withdrawal periods.
- Family relationships suffer, with addicts often displaying unpredictable and abusive tendencies.

F. Social Withdrawal and Broken Relationships:

- Addiction weakens emotional connections, causing individuals to **withdraw from family and friends**, deepening their mental struggles.
- Shame and stigma further prevent addicts from seeking timely help.
- To address the emotional issues, adequate number of psychologists are also required to be deployed, which further adds to the cost.

5. Data and Global Comparisons

Drug Category	World (15-64 years)	Asia (15-64 years)	India (10-75 years)
Cannabis	3.9	1.9	1.2
Opioids	0.70	0.46	2.06
Cocaine	0.37	0.03	0.11
ATS	0.70	0.59	0.18
Report on Magnitude of Substance Use, 2019 of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India			

- A. Based on the data, it can be safely concluded, that India's **opioid usage (2.06%)** is **significantly higher** than both the global average (**0.70%**) and the Asian average (**0.46%**).

Tramadol is an opioid that is used to treat moderate to moderately severe chronic pain in adults. Vide S.O. 1761(E) dated 26.04.2018 issued by the Department of Revenue, it has been classified as a psychotropic substance. In the State of Punjab, a lot of cases of Tramadol have been booked, which only goes to establish the fact that apart from heroin, there is a sharp rise in the consumption of Tramadol. Tramadol is used as a recreational drug due to its euphoric effects, leading to addiction and large-scale illicit drug trafficking operations have been uncovered

- B. Cannabis is widely used globally (3.9%), India's consumption (1.2%) is **significantly lower**.

However, of late there has been huge seizures of hydroponic ganja, involving Thai nationals and Indian nationals being caught at international airports such as Delhi, Mumbai, Cochin, Bangalore, Bhuvanesar, Lucknow, Amritsar, etc.

- C. Cocaine use in India (0.11%) is much lower than the global average (0.37%).

This indicates that **cocaine is not a major substance of abuse in India**, possibly due to high costs and limited availability.

However, subsequent to the 2019 report, there have been significant seizures of cocaine at major international airports illicitly attempted to be made part of supply chain by way of ingestion and concealment in the baggage being carried by international passengers.

D. ATS use in India (0.18%) is lower than global (0.70%) and Asian (0.59%) averages.

Post the publication of the 2019 report, there have been heavy seizures of methamphetamine by empowered agencies in the North-east, particularly by the Assam Rifles, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, Narcotics Control Bureau, State Excise Departments of Mizoram, Manipur, to name a few. Incidentally, pseudoephedrine, a controlled substance under the NDPS Act, 1985, gets illegally diverted into Myanmar, which in turns pumps in methamphetamine into India through the porous borders. Instances of legal export of pseudoephedrine, having valid authorisation issued by the Narcotics Commissioner, Gwalior, to Bangkok, Thailand have been attempted to be diverted to Myanmar. Even 194 kilograms of pseudoephedrine tablets destined for Myanmar were seized in Mizoram in January 2023 from which extraction of pseudoephedrine is possible.

The following seizure of methamphetamine given an indication of the methamphetamine coming into India and then distributed across India:

Sl. No.	Date of seizure of methamphetamine	Quantum of seizure during December 2024 to date to April 2025
1	NCB seizes methamphetamine in two cases	30.4 kg Methamphetamine Tablets (YABA) ⁸
2	Gujarat ATS and Indian Coast Guard	300 kilograms ⁹
3	Directorate of Revenue Intelligence inter alia, seized 32 kg methamphetamine tablets in two cases in North East Region	32 kg methamphetamine tablets ¹⁰
4	Indian Coast Guard	5,500 kg of Methamphetamine ¹¹
5	Directorate of Revenue Intelligence ¹²	
	First half of FY 2024-25	23 kg of methamphetamine
	FY 2023-24	136 kg of methamphetamine
	2021-22	884.7 kg of methamphetamine

	2022-23	249 kg of methamphetamine
	2019-20	143 kg of methamphetamine
6	Assam Rifles and Mizoram Police	57.9 kg of Methamphetamine tablets ¹³
7	Greater Chennai Police	16 kg of methamphetamine ¹⁴
8	Chennai Police	17.815kg of methamphetamine ¹⁵

6. Women & Drug Trafficking: Emerging Trends

While substance abuse has long been viewed through a male-centric lens, recent trends reveal a growing vulnerability among women—not only as users but also as active participants in drug trafficking networks. Enforcement data indicates a notable rise in the number of women booked under the NDPS Act, reflecting this evolving landscape.

What is particularly concerning is the emergence of women as peddlers—often operating under the radar by assuming traditional domestic roles that deflect suspicion. In States like Punjab, multiple cases have come to light involving women acting as couriers and distributors.

One illustrative case involved a **mother-daughter duo from an economically vulnerable background**, arrested by the **Delhi Police**. During the investigation, the daughter claimed she had no role in the operation and stated that it was her mother who managed the drug trade. Notably, the mother had been using **popular social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook** to advertise, connect with buyers, and arrange deliveries of narcotic substances.

This case exemplifies a growing trend: the **digitalization and domestication of drug trafficking**, where social media acts as both a marketplace and a shield for criminal activity, and family members are enlisted—willingly or otherwise—into the distribution chain.

Now, we take the case booked by the Narcotics Control Bureau wherein the accused preferred a bail application 2109/2022, which was decided on 25.08.2023 by the Hon'ble High Court of Delhi [**Neutral Citation: 2023:DHC:6108**]. The WhatsApp chats, for the purpose of analysis, extracted in the impugned judgment, reveal as under:

6.1 Key take aways from the extracted WhatsApp chats

- Increasing use of **digital direct marketing** via encrypted platforms like WhatsApp for discreet drug trafficking.

- **Artificial demand creation** through persuasive sales tactics, sustaining customer loyalty and consistent sales.
- Steady **availability of imported substances of abuse** to meet customer requirements.
- Import of **cookies and chocolates containing THC (Tetrahydrocannabinol)**, a psychotropic substance under the NDPS Act, 1985.
- Use of **professional packaging and courier logistics** to evade law enforcement detection.
- Adoption of **pseudonyms** to conduct illicit drug trade.
- Digital payment systems facilitate **seamless transactions** while ensuring traffickers maintain anonymity.
- Digital transactions do not **legitimize illicit proceeds**—the mode of exchange does not alter the illegal nature of the funds received.
- Traffickers exploit **digital financial systems to launder crime proceeds**, converting black money into legal revenue.
- Without enforcement action, illicit proceeds would **flow through legitimate business channels**, effectively disguising crime-generated funds as lawful income.
- The accused being a woman highlights how **female traffickers can exhibit exceptional intelligence and strategic acumen**, often surpassing male counterparts by skilfully navigating social perceptions and leveraging digital tools.

Note: In this case, the drug syndicate carried out its operations *via* the Darknet and the Orient Express Group on the Telegram app.

The rulings of the Hon’ble Punjab and Haryana High Court from February 2025 to April 2025 indicate a significant involvement of women in substance abuse, as outlined in the following Table:

Sl. No.	Case Details (decided by the Hon’ble High Court of Punjab and Haryana) and Neutral Citation	Title of the case	Name of the narcotic drug or psychotropic substance involved in the subject case
1	CRM-M-55120-2024 decided on 10.02.2025	Paramjit Kaur vs. State of Punjab	Etizolam

	CRM-M-6755-2025 decided on 11.02.2025 2025:PHHC:019776	Manpreet Kaur @ Beanti vs. State of Punjab	1. Tramadol Prolonged-release Tablets IP TRAMWELL 100-SR 2. Alprazolam Tablets IP 0.5 mg ALPRASAFE-0.5
2	CRM-M-65646-2024 decided on 17.02.2025	Jaswinder Kaur @ Jasvinder Kaur vs. State of Punjab	Heroin
3	CRM-M-59440-2024 (O&M) decided on 25.02.2025 2025:PHHC:026871	Veerpal Kaur vs. State of Punjab	CLOVEDOL-100 SR Tramadol Hydrochloride Tablets USP 100 mg
4	CRM M-38998 of 2024 (O&M) decided on 05.032025 2025:PHHC:033381	Pardeep Kaur vs. State of Punjab	1.Heroin 2.Tramadol Prolonged- Release tablets IP TRAMWEL SR-100
5.	CRM M-10079 of 2025 decided on 05.032025 2025:PHHC:033514	Kulwant Kaur vs. State of Punjab	Colovidol-100 SR
6	CRM-M-29352-2024(O&M) decided on 19.032025 2025:PHHC:037402	Amandeep Kaur vs. State of Punjab	Poppy husk
7	CRM-M-7291-2025 decided on 19.032025	Jaswinder Kaur @ Seema @ Jassi vs. State of Punjab	Codeine Phosphate
8	CRM-M-10843-2025 decided on 25.032025	Lakhwinder Kaur @ Neeru @ Lok vs.	Heroin

		State of Punjab	
9	CRM-M No.18810 of 2025 decided on 04.042025	Kamal @ Kamaljeet Kaur vs. State of Punjab	1.Tramadol Hydrochloride 2.Alprazolam.
10	CRWP-1749-2025 decided on 09.042025 2025:PHHC:049887	Balvir Kaur vs. State of Punjab & Ors	Psychotropic substance
11	CRM-M-45190-2024 decided on 22.042025 2025:PHHC:051777	Kamlesh Rani @ Kamlesh Kaur @ Babbu vs. State of Punjab	Alprazolam in powder form
12	CRM-M-55954-2024 decided on 23.042025 2025:PHHC:051949	Harbans Kaur @ Mado vs. State of Punjab	Psychotropic substance

G. Drug Trafficking Trends

The cases referred reveal evolving trafficking methods:

- Drug-laced Chocolates & Edibles – On 14th May, 2025, **Thiruvananthapuram Customs** intercepted 34 kg of hydroponic weed and 15 kg of drug-infused chocolates carried by three women arriving on international flights.
- Fake Ayurvedic Medicines – Telangana’s anti-narcotics bureau discovered ganja-infused chocolates marketed as medicinal remedies—a deceptive strategy targeting unsuspecting consumers.
- Packaging Innovations – Traffickers use professional packaging and courier logistics to avoid detection, often disguising narcotics in consumer goods.
- Rising Use of Digital Marketplaces – Encrypted messaging platforms like WhatsApp facilitate direct drug marketing, enhancing secrecy.

H. Conclusion:

Ultimately, drug addiction is not merely an individual crisis—it is a societal concern that demands immediate attention. The strain on families, financial repercussions, and emotional toll makes it imperative to implement stronger prevention and rehabilitation measures. Through

a balanced legal framework and social intervention, we can try to mitigate the long-term impact of substance abuse.

I. Recommendations:

- **Strengthen Early Intervention:** Implement drug education programs in schools and colleges as part of the curriculum.
- **Enhance Surveillance and Enforcement:** Upgrade capabilities of empowered agencies, particularly in border areas.
- **Improve Rehabilitation Infrastructure:** Expand access to affordable, quality rehab centres.
- **Integrate Mental Health Support:** Recruit more trained psychologists into public systems.
- **Strengthen International Cooperation:** For transnational tracking of drug flows.
- **Strengthen Digital Surveillance** Empower cybercrime cells and narcotics enforcement with tools to monitor and act against drug trafficking on social media platforms, particularly family-based or influencer-style operations.
