

Socio-Economic Impact of Drug Trafficking on Youth in Urban Slums: A Case Study of Odisha:

Advocate Shruti Lenka

LLM Scholar, Advocate, Law

ABSTRACT

Currently there is an increasing trend of substance abuse in developing countries like India. This study attempted to identify the different predisposing factors, associated psycho-social and medical problems, prevalence and types of substance abuse in students. The study covered a cross-section of 720 students with an overall male to female ratio of 4.1:1. The majority of the sufferers were from middle socioeconomic class, aged between 15 and 19 years. Common substances of abuse were chewable tobacco and cannabis. The risk of abuse was more in hostellers hailing from broken families (62.5%). Friends had the highest influence (59%). Most of them (49.4%) tried multiple times to give up, but peer pressure (53%) compelled them to restart. In 60.8% cases the parents were completely unaware about this behaviour. The commonly associated problems were psychological (34.3%) and medical (29.5%). This research examines the prevalence and types of substance abuse among adolescents in urban slums of Sambalpur, Orissa, identifying key predisposing factors. A cross-sectional study was conducted, surveying 502 adolescents, revealing a 43.4% rate of substance abuse, with male adolescents being more affected than females. The study highlights the influence of family structure and peer pressure on substance use, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions and awareness programs.

INTRODUCTION

Drug is a chemical substance that affects the structure and functioning of living organism. It causes changes of working of mind and body, physical changes and psychological change while some drugs are used for medicinal purposes, their illegal production, sale and consumption creates serious social and legal problems. Drug trafficking has become a major challenge throughout the world.

Effects of Drug Abuse

- **Physical effects**
 - Deterioration of health
 - Weakness and fatigue
 - Damages to organs
 - Increased risk of diseases
 - In severe cases, death.
- **Psychological effects**
 - Depression
 - Anxiety and irritability
 - Loss of self control
 - Reduce will power
 - Mental disorder
- **Social effects**

- Family dispute
- Unemployment
- Criminal activities
- Social Isolation
- Breakdown of social values

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISION

Entry 19, Schedule 7 of Constitution of India gives the power to State and Centre to legislate upon matters relating to drugs and poisonous and **Entry 59, List I**, which is withdrawal, manufacture and sale for export of opium. **Article 47 directs** the State shall raise standard of people and improve public health as well as endeavour to stop the consumption of intoxicating drinks and drugs which can be injurious to health except those which are made for medicinal purpose.

According to NDPS Act, 1985 provides certain provisions regarding drug trafficking under Sec. 2(via) or Definition. Illicit drugs means narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances prohibited by control or use for medical and scientific purpose.

Drug trafficking refers to illegal cultivation, production, manufacture, transportation, distribution, sale, purchase and smuggling of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. It is one of the most profitable forms of organised crime in the world and poses a serious threat to public health, national security and social stability. The illegal drug trafficking trade generates huge profits for criminal organizations and encourages violence, corruption, terrorism and money laundering. Due to globalization, improved drug trafficking networks has expanded rapidly across international borders. It not only affects individuals through addiction but also weakens political institutions, damages economy and disrupts social harmony.

OBJECTS / PURPOSE OF DRUG CONTROLS

1. To protect public health from harmful effects of drugs.
2. To prevent drug abuse and addiction.
3. To curb illegal production, sale and trafficking in drugs.
4. To maintain law and order in society.
5. To prevent organised crimes and terrorism financed through drug trade.
6. To ensure that narcotic drugs are used for only medical and scientific purpose.

ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS OF DRUG TRAFFICKING

- a. Illegal possession of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances.
- b. Production or manufacture of prohibited drugs.
- c. Transportation or movement of drugs from one place to another.
- d. Sale, purchase, distribution of illegal drugs.
- e. Import or export of narcotic substances.
- f. Financing or assisting drug trafficking activities.
- g. Knowledge or intention regarding illegal nature of activity.

CAUSES OF DRUG TRAFFICKING

- a. Desire for quick and easy money.
- b. Poverty and unemployment.

- c. Weak border control and law enforcement.
- d. Growing demand for narcotic drugs.
- e. Involvement of organised criminal groups.
- f. Corruption among public officials.
- g. Political instability in certain regions.

DRUG TRAFFICKING IN INDIA

India has become both a transit hub and a destination for illegal drugs during last 3 decades. Due to its geographical location between Golden Crescent (Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan) and Golden Triangle (Myanmar, Thailand, Laos), India is vulnerable to drug trafficking. Various drugs like heroin, hashish, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals are trafficked through Indian territory.

Drug trafficking poses a serious threat to national security, like organised crime, money laundering, insurgency and terrorism. Drug money have often being used to finance terrorist and militant activities in different part of country.

The Government of India combats drug trafficking through NDPS Act, 1985, border security measures, intelligence gathering and international cooperation.

INDIA–NEPAL–BHUTAN BORDERS

Open borders facilitate trafficking of marijuana, hashish and synthetic drugs.

LEGAL PROVISIONS UNDER THE NDPS ACT, 1985

The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act 1985 is the principle legislation dealing with drug trafficking in India. The Act prohibits-cultivation of coca, opium poppy and cannabis plant production and manufacture of narcotic drugs possession, sale, purchase, transportation, storage, import and export of drugs. Financing or assisting illegal drug activities. Punishment under NDPS Act 1985Rigorous punishment for any person violates this act and if person is caught peddling drugs for second time death penalty could be awarded to offender. A minimum punishment of 10 years rigorous punishment and fine of ₹ 1 Lakh, extend to 20 years rigorous imprisonment and fine of ₹ 2 lakhs is handed to person caught possessing small to commercial quantity of drugs In case of repeated offences, minimum 15 years...

If 1 lakhs death penalty is mandatory for second offence and fine ₹ 1.5 lakhs may extend 30 years imprisonment with fine10 Lakhs The NDPS Act provides for forfeiture of property acquired through illicit trafficking in drugs.

DEFINITION OF SOCIAL IMPACT

- a. Social impact can be both positive and negative.
- b. Social impact is defined as
- c. "Any significant or positive changes that solve or at least address social injustice and challenges"
- 2. Social impacts have been continuously bringing changes in many parts of our lives
- 3. Social impacts can be derived from many sources such as business, science and technology, politics and climate changes etc. Say, use of mobile phone has brought many social changes. A student can write 500 words on impact of mobile phones on the society.
- 4. Drug abuse directly affects the society and destroys the family life. Thus, young men should protect the family life by creating awareness and preventing drug addiction.

WHAT IS SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF DRUG?

In simple terms socio-economic impact of drug abuse means undesirable or negative changes in the social fabric due to drug abuse; it also includes negative economic impact on individual, society and Government. It has many aspects. Use of drug by common people leads to many social consequences such as Instability in family relationship, Domestic Violence, Crime prone life, Reduction of sense of belongingness to the family and the society. There is also lack of social harmony and happiness within the family. On the other hand, family plays an important role in the life of an individual. Family members have a strong bond with each other, they support each other, face crisis together and affect the behaviour and attitude of each other. Once any member becomes a drug addict the entire family is negatively affected. The family can play a major role in preventing drug addiction within the family. Further even if unfortunately a member becomes a drug addict, de-addiction is impossible without the support of the family. Doctors alone cannot cure a drug addict without the support of the family. Use of drugs by any family member particularly the parents and the elders negatively affect the young ones. Weak family link also reduces its influence for preventing drug abuse. It has been found that use of drugs by elders leads to use by youngsters. Use of drugs by a family member creates a vicious

A.IMPACT OF DRUG ABUSE ON FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

Family Disruption Family is the basic unit of society, and its harmony depends on every member. When one member becomes a drug abuser, they disturb the entire family harmony, affecting the life style, behaviour, personality formation of children, and the family's financial condition. Money spent on drugs deprives others of food. **Social and Economic Consequences** Drug abuse leads to: Absenteeism and lack of performance at work. Accidents at the workplace. Criminal attitudes and the breakdown of family bondage. **Impact on Parents and Children** Parents of young abusers suffer greatly, often facing shame, fear, and embarrassment. Younger children observing elders using drugs may wrongly assume it is accepted behaviour. This creates a vicious circle where children grow up to become addicts themselves, suffering from loss of identity, depression, and low self-esteem. Only a healthy family creates a healthy society.

B.IMPACT OF DRUG ABUSE ON HEALTH

Health is the most important indicator of a healthy family and society. Drug abuse leads to physical and mental illness, destroys brain cells, and weakens the immune system. The level of damage depends on factors such as: Drug intake quantity and type Period and frequency of use Method of consumption Presence of high-risk chemicals Reports indicate that drug abuse causes approximately 200,000 deaths annually worldwide. Long-term use results in addiction, weak cognitive functioning, and potentially untimely death. **Impact of Drug on Education** Drug abuse negatively affects students by causing: Irregular attendance in college and university. Loss of concentration and learning ability. Poor performance in examinations. Education and awareness are vital tools for prevention. Schools and colleges play a key role in creating awareness and educating students about the risks of addiction to promote a healthy, drug-free society.

C.IMPACT OF DRUG ON CRIME

Crime and drugs are deeply interconnected. Illegal production, distribution, and consumption lead to various criminal offenses. Between 1975 and 1989, drug-related crimes were among the fastest-growing categories. Key types of crime include: **Acquisition Crimes:** Committed by users to fund their addiction. **Trafficking Crimes:** Committed by peddlers and suppliers. **Business Protection:** Violence used by drug lords to protect their interests. **Financial Crimes:** Money laundering and robbery. **Illegal Manufacturing:** The actual production and trade of substances.

D.IMPACT OF DRUG ON EMPLOYMENT AND PRODUCTIVITY

Drug abuse significantly impacts the workforce, particularly those aged 15 to 35. The relationship is cyclical: unemployment can lead to drug use, while drug use often leads to job loss. **Statistics:** A 1992 British Crime Survey

found drug prevalence was 60% higher among the unemployed than the employed. Workplace Consequences: Organizations often dismiss addicted employees due to poor performance. Drug abuse reduces competitiveness, lowers productivity, and increases production costs, creating additional pressure for all colleagues.

E.IMPACT OF DRUG ON ENVIRONMENT

The production of illicit drugs causes severe environmental damage: Deforestation: Opium poppy cultivation often involves "slash and burn" techniques, leading to the clearing of large forest areas. Toxic Waste: The chemical processing of drugs generates hazardous waste that is rarely disposed of scientifically. Chemical Pollution: In the Andean region, cocaine processing results in millions of liters of Sulfuric Acid, Acetone, and Kerosene being dumped into waterways. Ecological Damage: These chemicals poison aquatic life, reduce soil fertility, and lower oxygen levels in water, ultimately posing a major threat to human health and water resources.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF DRUG

A . IMPACT OF DRUG ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Drug abuse has direct effect on public health and safety. It hampers the peaceful development and smooth functioning of the society. The safety of the society is negatively affected as drug abuse leads to crimes (as explained earlier). Even road safety is compromised due to addiction. Most of the road accidents occur due to consumption of alcohol and drugs. Drug consumers as drivers are a threat on the roads. Pedestrian drug consumers are also victims of accidents. In work place (i.e. factories, offices and hospitals etc.) drug abuse leads to accidents and other unfortunate incidents. Even in home an intoxicated person may cause fire and their action leads to accidents. All these involve a high cost for the individual, family, society and the State. The economic burden of maintaining safety measures is high, requiring policymakers to calculate the costs of controlling drug supply and abuse. Significant public resources, which could otherwise be used for economic development, are diverted to manage the consequences of drug abuse. Therefore, ensuring public safety and societal functioning requires tackling the challenges posed by drug abuse.

B . IMPACT OF DRUG ON GOVERNANCE

All over the world the Governments find it difficult to implement the rules and laws relating to drug abuses. Corrupt officials at all levels of law enforcement throughout the world make it difficult to implement laws. Political patronage and muscle power of drug mafia hampers implementation of laws. In some countries the drug mafia are so strong even politicians are not able to govern the country. Illegal cultivation, drug trafficking and such other activities are not easily controlled by governments. The financial implication is a burden on the government. In nutshell the government incurs lot of expenditure on the following heads:

1. Regulating the drug consumption
2. Drug abusers treatment
3. Rehabilitation centres
4. Absenteeism at work place
5. Poor and unhealthy work force
6. Training centres for professionals
7. Substance abuse data base preparation
8. Protecting the public
9. Deployment of human resources for the public safety
10. Operating counselling centres
11. The economic impact of drug abuses can be reduced by the following steps:
12. Increasing tax on drugs

13. Preventative measures and strict policies
14. Controlling the numbers of sale outlets in specific areas
15. Time restriction on opening and closing of the shop
16. Strict policy for the specific age group
17. Accountability of the drug seller
18. Provision for treatment of drug abusers
19. Massive awareness programs among the students and in alcohol prone areas.
20. These are the preventive steps which will reduce the cost of expenditure of the government.

CASE STUDY OF ODISHA

1. DRUG TRAFFICKING AND ITS IMPACT ON YOUTH IN URBAN SLUMS OF ODISHA (BHUBANESWAR)

The capital city of Bhubaneswar has witnessed a significant increase in drug trafficking, particularly in urban slum areas such as Haldipadia, Salia Sahi, Mali Sahi, Phuleswari Basti, Patia, and Shikharhandi. These localities have emerged as hotspots for the illegal sale of brown sugar, adulterated cough syrup, and other synthetic drugs.

One of the most alarming trends is the widespread use of adulterated brown sugar, which has become a cheaper alternative to cocaine. While a gram of brown sugar costs around ₹700–₹1,000, cocaine is priced above ₹5,000 per gram, making brown sugar more accessible to economically weaker sections, especially youth living in urban slums. Young people are often introduced to drugs out of curiosity, peer pressure, the desire for excitement, or experimentation. Many first-time users gradually become addicted, leading to serious physical, psychological, and social consequences. Drug peddlers have admitted that a large number of their regular customers are college students and young adults.

To address this growing menace, the Odisha Police intensified enforcement under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985. During 2016–17, over 634.5 grams of brown sugar were seized in Bhubaneswar, and several drug trafficking cases were registered, resulting in numerous arrests. Law enforcement authorities have pointed out that many addicts eventually become drug peddlers themselves to finance their addiction, creating a vicious cycle of crime and substance abuse.

Investigations also revealed that the drug supply network extended beyond Odisha, with traffickers allegedly procuring drugs from West Bengal and distributing them through organized networks operating mainly via mobile phones. This demonstrates the organized and interstate nature of drug trafficking, making enforcement more challenging. This case highlights the severe impact of drug trafficking on the youth of Odisha's urban slums, including increased addiction, criminal activities, school and college dropouts, poor health, unemployment, and social instability. It also underscores the need for stronger law enforcement, rehabilitation programmes, community awareness campaigns, and educational initiatives to protect vulnerable young people from the dangers of drug abuse.

2. RISING SUBSTANCE ABUSE AMONG YOUTHS IN ODISHA

Odisha has witnessed a sharp increase in substance abuse among young people over the last five years. According to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, 48,306 youths were admitted to drug de-addiction centres in the last year, compared to 24,497 admissions in 2020, indicating a worrying rise in drug addiction. Most of the affected individuals belong to the 18–30 years age group and are addicted to brown sugar, Ganja, alcohol, and sedatives.

The growing problem has placed Odisha fourth in India in terms of admissions to drug de-addiction centres. Experts have observed that the use of brown sugar ("powder") has spread from urban areas to rural villages, making drug abuse increasingly common among young people. Recently, law enforcement agencies also seized LSD in

Bhubaneswar and cocaine near Utkal University, highlighting the emergence of more dangerous synthetic drugs in the state.

Psychologists identify peer pressure, emotional distress, and easy availability of drugs as the major reasons behind rising addiction among youths. The problem is no longer limited to men, as an increasing number of women are also seeking treatment for substance abuse.

In response, the Odisha Government has strengthened anti-drug initiatives through the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan, established de-addiction centres across the state, and introduced the MANAS portal, Umang mobile app, and 1933 helpline to encourage students to report drug-related activities in educational institutions.

This case study demonstrates that substance abuse has become a serious social and public health issue in Odisha, requiring coordinated efforts in law enforcement, education, awareness, counselling, and rehabilitation to protect the youth from drug addiction.

3. DRUG TRAFFICKING IN ODISHA – MALKANGIRI GANJA SEIZURE

In a significant crackdown on drug trafficking, the police in Malkangiri district of Odisha seized 1,250 kg of Ganja (cannabis) during a special anti-drug operation. The contraband, transported for illegal trade, was intercepted by the police, and the accused were arrested. A case was registered under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985, and further investigation was launched to identify the larger trafficking network.

This operation highlights that Malkangiri, due to its dense forests and remote location, continues to be a vulnerable area for illegal cannabis cultivation and trafficking. The seizure reflects the proactive efforts of the Odisha Police to curb drug trafficking, dismantle criminal networks, and prevent the spread of narcotic substances. It also demonstrates the importance of strict law enforcement, intelligence-based operations, and inter-agency cooperation in combating the drug menace in Odisha.

4. THE ODISHA CLOTH-BUNDLE GANJA BUST

THE INCIDENT WHAT HAPPENED: Interstate drug cartels attempted to smuggle commercial quantities of Ganja (cannabis) by hiding it deep inside bundles of ready-made clothes and fabric pieces. The Seizure: Law enforcement intercepted two pickup trucks carrying 12 quintals (1,200 kg) of high-grade Ganja valued at approximately ₹12 Crore. The Route: Sourced from the Koraput-Malkangiri and Kandhamal tribal belts of Odisha, the contraband was hidden under clothes to bypass state checkpoints on its way to Delhi.

RELEVANT LEGAL IMPACT (NDPS ACT CONTEXT) PROPERTY SEIZURE

LIMITATION: The Orissa High Court ruled that if legal items (like clothing or textiles) are used as a cover, they cannot be permanently confiscated by the state unless they were structurally altered specifically to hide the narcotics. Legal goods must be returned to the rightful owners. **Strict Search Procedures:** Because police are searching ordinary items like clothes, they must strictly follow Section 42 of the NDPS Act. Failure to document the secret tip-off before searching the cloth bundles results in the immediate acquittal of the accused.

MEASURES TO CONTROL DRUG TRAFFICKING

1. Strengthening boarder security
2. Strict enforcement of NDPS Act
3. public awareness programme
4. International cooperation
5. Intelligence sharing among agencies
6. Rehabilitation of drug addicts
7. Alternative employment for farmers cultivating illegal crops

CONCLUSION

Drug trafficking has emerged as a serious socio-economic and legal challenge in Odisha, particularly affecting the youth living in urban slums. The easy availability of narcotic drugs, unemployment, poverty, lack of education, family instability, peer pressure, and weak community support have made young people increasingly vulnerable to substance abuse and criminal activities. As reflected in the case study of Odisha, several districts have witnessed a rise in drug trafficking and drug-related offences, posing a significant threat to public health, social stability, and economic development.

The socio-economic consequences of drug trafficking are far-reaching. It contributes to poor physical and mental health, school dropouts, unemployment, domestic violence, poverty, social exclusion, and increased criminal behaviour among youth. These effects not only destroy the future of individuals but also weaken families and hinder the overall development of society.

Although India has enacted stringent laws such as the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 (NDPS Act), legal measures alone are insufficient to address this growing problem. A comprehensive approach involving strict law enforcement, awareness programmes, quality education, employment opportunities, community participation, rehabilitation services, and effective coordination among government agencies, educational institutions, NGOs, and local communities is essential.

In conclusion, combating drug trafficking in Odisha requires both preventive and rehabilitative strategies. Protecting the youth from the harmful effects of drug trafficking is not merely a legal obligation but also a social and developmental necessity. Ensuring a safe, healthy, and drug-free environment for young people will contribute significantly to sustainable development, social justice, and the overall progress of Odisha and the nation.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS

1. M.P. Jain, Indian Constitutional Law (LexisNexis).
2. K.D. Gaur, Textbook on the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 (Universal Law Publishing).
3. P.S.A. Pillai, Criminal Law (LexisNexis).
4. Ratanlal & Dhirajlal, The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 (LexisNexis).

STATUTES

Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985. 2. Constitution of India, 1950.

GOVERNMENT REPORTS

1. Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (NAPDDR).
2. Disability Empowerment Dept +1
3. National Crime Records Bureau, Crime in India (Latest Edition).
4. odisha.data.gov.in
5. Ministry of Home Affairs, Drug Trafficking in the Country (Parliament Reply, 2024).
6. Ministry of Home Affairs +1
7. Odisha Police, State Crime Records Bureau Reports.
8. Odisha Police

WEB SOURCES

1. Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India.
2. National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).
3. Odisha Police Official Website.

4. Department of Social Security & Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SSEPD), Government of Odisha.
5. Disability Empowerment Dept +1
6. Newspaper Articles
7. The New Indian Express, "Odisha witnessing surge in substance abuse among youths."
8. The Times of India, "Malkangiri police seize 1250 kg ganja, intensify anti-drug operations."
9. The Times of India, "Drug trafficking and anti-drug enforcement in Odisha."