




## Be Mains Ready

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**Q.** Establishing the link between terrorism and drug trafficking, enumerate challenges illicit drugs pose to the society. Discuss the steps taken to curb the menace. (150 words)

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### Approach / Explanation / Answer

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- Bring out the challenges posed by illicit drugs in the society
- Mention its nexus with terrorism
- Draw a picture of its effect on global arena in general and on India specifically
- Steps taken by the government and various agencies to curb the menace globally.

### Answer

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As per the global terrorism Index “The sale and trafficking of opium is the largest source of revenue for the Taliban, estimated to generate up to US\$200 million a year or more.” FARC, LTTE, Boko Haram etc have drug smuggling as their primary source of income.

Narco-Terrorism is defined as the ‘use of organised terror to secure control over a state by another state or organise criminal network/s by the insurgents or by a combination of any or all of them to achieve fixed political, economic or social objectives based on organisational and financial empowerment through drug trafficking. The terrorist groups may be involved in both drug cultivation and in drug trafficking, as in the case of Shan United Army in Myanmar.

#### Challenges of illicit drugs:

**Political:** The Taliban uses its profits from the opium trade to buy weapons, food and technology to support their insurgency in Afghanistan. The economic losses are hefty too as they are mainly financed by hawala, Eg: Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in the southern Philippines and the FARC in Colombia.

**Environment:** “The war against illegal drugs would be completely justified on environmental grounds alone.” Firstly, the poppy growers clear the land in the mountains. The poppy and coca growers, further, do not allow any other plants to grow near the poppy and coca plants, since the narcotics plants will not produce to their maximum, if other plants nearby are competing for nutrients.” This affects other legal occupations such as coffee growing and banana plantations.

**Social:** Adverse health outcomes in illicit drug users can cause mental disorders, psychosis, road traffic accidents, violence, drug overdose, suicides and even death. WHO estimated that 0.7 percent of the global burden of disease in 2004 was due to cocaine and opioid use, with the social cost of illicit substance use nearly two percent of Gross Domestic Product in those countries that have measured it.

School children who use drugs often suffer from impairment of short-term memory and other intellectual faculties thus generally impaired classroom performance. At the same time, education is one of the principal means of preventing drug abuse. Drugs increase the likelihood of many kinds of criminal activity. Drug-related crime occurs primarily in the form of trafficking, including violent conflicts among trafficking groups. It also results from the need of drug consumers to finance their addiction through theft and prostitution.

**Steps taken to combat drug trafficking:**

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) helps Member States address the issues of illicit drugs, crime and terrorism.

**Steps taken by India to tackle narco-terrorism:**

- India has entered into various arrangements like bilateral agreements, Memorandum of Understandings, Joint Working Groups on Counter-Terrorism and Judicial Cooperation with the countries in the South Asian region.
- Besides, there is a nodal drug law enforcement and intelligence agency, Narcotics Control Bureau, to fight drug trafficking.
- Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 criminalizes the possession of illicit drugs.

**Following recommendations of the World Summit for Social Development can be adopted to gradually reduce the impact:**

- Recognize the seriousness and increase the priority placed on drug abuse as a social problem, develop a series of drug indicators.
- Develop an information base for national and international planning on the costs of drug abuse, prepare estimates of costs of drug abuse and its impact.
- Increase knowledge of drug abuse problems and effective interventions
- Increase international collaboration on drug abuse