



India's Push to Eradicate Drugs

For Prelims: [NDPS Act](#), [NCB](#), Golden Crescent and Golden Triangle, National Fund for Control of Drug Abuse, [National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction](#)

For Mains: Drug: Extent of usage, Challenges, Initiatives, Problem of drug abuse and related Initiatives.

Why in News?

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is making an aggressive push to eradicate drugs in the country. In the past three years, over 89,000 football fields of [opium](#) and [cannabis](#) cultivation have been destroyed across several states in the country.

- The **government aims to make India “drug-free” by 2047.**

What is the Extent of Drug Abuse in India?

- India is facing a serious challenge of **drug abuse and trafficking**, which affects the health, well-being, and security of millions of people, especially the youth.
- According to [World Drug Report 2022](#), India has the **4th largest quantity of opium seized in 2020** at 5.2 tons, and the **3rd highest amount of morphine was also seized in the same year at 0.7 tons.**
 - According to the [United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime \(UNODC\)](#), India accounted for **7% of the global opium seizures and 2% of the global heroin seizures** in 2019.
- India is also situated between **two major drug-producing regions, the Golden Crescent (Iran-Afghanistan-Pakistan) and the Golden Triangle (Thailand-Laos-Myanmar)**, which makes it vulnerable to illicit drug trafficking.



What are India's Efforts in Eliminating Opium and Cannabis Cultivation?

- **Opium and cannabis** are **two of the most commonly cultivated and consumed drugs** in

India.

- **Opium is derived from the poppy plant and cannabis from the hemp plant.** Both have **psychoactive effects** and can cause **addiction and health problems.**
- The government has **intensified its crackdown on drugs** with various measures such as destroying **illegal crops, seizing drugs, arresting traffickers and creating awareness.**
- Some of the achievements of the government in this regard are:
 - According to the [Narcotics Control Bureau \(NCB\)](#), opium and cannabis cultivation in area the size of over 89,000 football fields has been destroyed in the past three years.
 - The NCB said that in the past three years, **35,592 acres of poppy cultivation and 82,691 acres of cannabis cultivation have been destroyed** across the country.
 - The States where the crops were destroyed are Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Odisha, Tripura, and Telangana.
 - The NCB also said that it has seized over **6.7 lakh kilograms of drugs worth over Rs. 3,000 crore in the past three years.**
 - The seized drugs include **heroin, opium, cannabis, cocaine, methamphetamine, MDMA (ecstasy), ketamine, etc.**

How is the Government Tackling the Drug Problem?

- **Legislative Measures:** The government has enacted various laws such as the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940; the [Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances \(NDPS\) Act, 1985](#); and the **Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act (PITNDPS), 1988**
 - To regulate and prohibit the manufacture, distribution, possession, and consumption of drugs.
 - The NDPS Act provides for **stringent penalties for drug offenses.**
- **Institutional Measures:** The government has created institutions such as the NCB, the [Directorate of Revenue Intelligence \(DRI\)](#), the **Customs Department**, etc.
 - These institutions enforce drug laws and coordinate with other agencies at national and international levels.
 - The NCB is also part of various bilateral and multilateral initiatives such as the [SAARC Drug Offences Monitoring Desk \(SDOMD\)](#).
- **Preventive Measures:**
 - The government has launched various schemes and programmes such as [National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction \(NAPDDR\)](#), [Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan \(NMBA\)](#), etc. to
 - These schemes prevent drug abuse and provide treatment and rehabilitation services to drug addicts.
 - The NAPDDR aims to reduce drug demand **through awareness generation, capacity building, de-addiction and rehabilitation.**
 - The NMBA aims to **create awareness about harmful effects of drugs among school children.**
- **NIDAAN and NCORD Portals:**
 - It is a **database that contains the photographs, fingerprints, court orders, information and details of all suspects and convicts** arrested under the NPDS Act which can be accessed by State and Central law enforcement agencies.
 - On the **National Narcotics Coordination portal (NCORD)**, the source and destination of drugs are highlighted and information up to the district levels is maintained.

What are the Challenges Associated with Drug Controlling in India?

- **Lack of Adequate Infrastructure:**
 - There is a **shortage of trained personnel, specialized equipment, and proper infrastructure** to effectively combat drug trafficking and abuse.
- **Proliferation of New Psychoactive Substances:**
 - The use of **new psychoactive substances is on the rise in India**, and these drugs are **often not covered under existing drug control laws**, making it difficult for law

enforcement agencies to regulate them effectively.

- **Dark Net Easing Drug Trafficking:**
 - As per NCB, the use of the '[dark net](#)' and [cryptocurrency](#) in illegal drugs is increasing, and in 2020, 2021 and 2022, the agency investigated 59 such cases.
- **Poor Awareness and Education:**
 - There is a **lack of awareness and education about the dangers of drug abuse** and addiction, **especially in rural areas.**
- **High Demand:**
 - India has a large population, and **there is a high demand for drugs, which fuels the drug trade.**
- **Social Stigmatization:**
 - Drug addiction is still highly **stigmatized in Indian society, which makes it difficult for individuals to seek help and treatment.**

What Measures can be Taken to Eradicate Drug-Abuse?

- **Strengthening Law Enforcement:**
 - Strengthening the implementation of the NDPS Act and PITNDPS Act by providing adequate resources, training and modern equipment to law enforcement agencies.
 - Creating a more **robust surveillance and intelligence gathering system to effectively curb drug trafficking** along with improving coordination between agencies.
- **Enhancing Preventive Measures:**
 - Increasing the **availability of affordable treatment and rehabilitation facilities for drug addicts** and scaling up **awareness campaigns to educate people** about the dangers of drug abuse and the importance of seeking help.
- **Addressing Supply Reduction:**
 - Increasing the focus on **intercepting drug supply chains by improving border controls**, using advanced technology and increasing international cooperation.
 - Reducing drug production through **alternative livelihood programs for farmers engaged in illicit cultivation.**
 - Jharkhand State has launched an alternate livelihood scheme for farmers growing poppy illegally and provides cash incentives to destroy the illegal crops.
- **Strengthening International Cooperation:**
 - Strengthening cooperation with neighboring countries, **especially those in the Golden Crescent and the Golden Triangle, to effectively curb drug trafficking.**
 - Strengthening partnerships with **international organizations such as the UNODC and Interpol to exchange information and best practices.**
- **Use of Technology:**
 - **Big Data and analytics and AI** to identify and **track drug trafficking networks, monitor drug movements**, and identify patterns related to drug abuse and trafficking.
 - **Drones and satellites, to monitor and detect illegal drug cultivation and provide high-resolution images of suspected areas.**
 - Develop an **online reporting system where citizens can report drug abuse and trafficking activities.**

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Mains

Q. India's proximity to the two of the world's biggest illicit opium-growing states has enhanced her internal security concerns. Explain the linkages between drug trafficking and other illicit activities such as gunrunning, money laundering and human trafficking. What counter-measures should be taken to prevent the same? **(2018)**

Q. In one of the districts of a frontier state, narcotics menace has been rampant. This has resulted in money laundering, mushrooming of poppy farming, arms smuggling and near stalling of education. The system is on the verge of collapse. The situation has been further worsened by unconfirmed reports that local politicians as well as senior police officers are providing surreptitious patronage to the drug

mafia. At that point of time a woman police officer, known for her skills in handling such situations is appointed as Superintendent of Police to bring the situation to normalcy. If you are the same police officer, identify the various dimensions of the crisis. Based on your understanding, suggest measures to deal with the crisis. **(2019)**

[Source: TH](#)

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