



Fighting Drug Addiction

Why in News

Recently, the Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry has recommended that the [National Fund to Control Drug Abuse](#) should be used to carry out **de-addiction programmes**, rather than just policing activities.


- A proposal to **decriminalise possession of small quantities of drugs**, as defined in the [Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances \(NDPS\) Act, 1985](#), had also been sent to the Department of Revenue under the Finance Ministry.
 - Once it is approved, **persons caught with small quantities of drugs** for personal use **can be directed to rehab**, instead of being prosecuted and sent to jail.

Key Points

▪ National Fund to Control Drug:

- The fund was created in accordance with a provision of the **NDPS Act** and had a nominal corpus of **Rs. 23 crore**.
- Under the NDPS Act, the **sale proceeds of any property forfeited**, grants made by any person and institution, and income from the investments of the fund, go towards the fund.
- The Act states that the **fund would be used to combat illicit trafficking of narcotics, rehabilitating addicts, and preventing drug abuse**.

▪ Drug Addiction in India:

- The menace of [drug addiction](#) has **spread fast among the youth** of India.
 - India is sandwiched between two largest Opium producing regions of the world that is the [Golden triangle on one side and the Golden crescent on other](#). // 
 - The **golden triangle** area comprises **Thailand, Myanmar, Vietnam and Laos**.
 - The **golden crescent** area includes **Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran**.
- According to the [World Drug Report 2021](#), prescription drugs and their ingredients or 'precursors' are being increasingly diverted for recreational use in India--the largest manufacturer of generic drugs in the world.
 - **India is also linked** to shipment of drugs sold on the **19 major darknet markets** analysed over 2011-2020.
- According to the [National Crime Records Bureau's](#) Crime in India 2020 report, a total of **59,806 cases were lodged under NDPS Act**.
- According to the Social Justice Ministry and [All India Institute of Medical Sciences](#) (AIIMS) report on magnitude of substance use in 2019, there were:
 - **3.1 crore cannabis users** (of which 25 lakh were dependent users).

- **2.3 crore opioid users** (of which 28 lakh were dependent users).

▪ **Other Related Initiatives:**

- **Narco-Coordination Centre:** The [Narco-Coordination Centre \(NCORD\)](#) was constituted in November, 2016 and the scheme of “Financial Assistance to States for Narcotics Control” was revived.
- **Seizure Information Management System:** Narcotics Control Bureau has been provided funds for developing a new software i.e. **Seizure Information Management System (SIMS)** which will create a complete online database of drug offences and offenders.
- **National Drug Abuse Survey:** The government is also conducting a **National Drug Abuse Survey** to measure trends of drug abuse in India through the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment with the help of National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre of **AIIMS**.
 - **Project Sunrise:** It was launched by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in 2016, to tackle the [rising HIV prevalence](#) in north-eastern states in India, especially among people injecting drugs.
- **NDPS Act:** It prohibits a person from producing, possessing, selling, purchasing, transporting, storing, and/or consuming any narcotic drug or psychotropic substance.
 - The NDPS Act has since been amended thrice – in 1988, 2001 and 2014.
 - The Act extends to the whole of India and it applies also to all Indian citizens outside India and to all persons on ships and aircraft registered in India.
- **Nasha Mukht Bharat:** Government has also announced the launch of the '[Nasha Mukht Bharat](#)', or [Drug-Free India Campaign](#) which focuses on community outreach programs.

▪ **International Treaties and Conventions to Combat Drug Menace:**

- India is signatory of the following International treaties and conventions to combat the menace of Drug Abuse:
 - [United Nations \(UN\) Convention on Narcotic Drugs \(1961\)](#)
 - [UN Convention on Psychotropic Substances \(1971\)](#).
 - [UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances \(1988\)](#)
 - [UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime \(UNTOC\) 2000](#).

Way Forward

- The **stigma associated with drug taking needs to be reduced**. Society needs to understand that drug-addicts are victims and not criminals.
- Certain **crop drugs** which have more than 50% alcohol and opioids **need to be contained**. **Strict action is required from police officers and the excise and narcotics department to curb the problem of drug menace** in the country.
- Radical political decisions like one of **alcohol prohibition in Bihar** may be another solution. When people do not exercise self-control, **a state has to step in, as part of the [Directive Principles of State Policy \(Article 47\)](#)**.
- Education curriculum should include chapters on drug addiction, its impact and also on de-addiction. Proper Counselling is another alternative.

[Source: TH](#)

