

# Etiology Model of Substance Use in Punjab and their effects

Submitted by Chetan Chauhan



## NASHA MukT BHARAT ABHIYAAN

### CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINALITY

This is to certify that the project titled “ Etiology Model of Substance Use in Punjab and their effects ” is an original work of the Student and is being submitted in partial fulfillment for the award of the internship certificate of Nasha MukT Bharat Abhiyaan initiative by Ministry of Social Justice and empowerment New Delhi.

This report has not been submitted earlier either to this Organization or to any other University/Institution for the fulfillment of the requirement of an internship report.

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink. The signature appears to be 'Chetay' with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

An individual may have some limitations, but with the association and cooperation from thought provoking people he can achieve his otherwise difficult dreams. Exchange of ideas generates a new object to work in a better way. Whenever a person is helped or co-operated by others, his heart is bound to pay gratitude to them.

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Name: Chetan Chauhan  
Ahmedabad Gujarat



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## Introduction

Punjab ranks among the top five states that reported the biggest drug seizures in 2014. The other four were Mizoram, Manipur, Assam and Uttar Pradesh. Despite its political sensitivity, little scientifically valid evidence on the prevalence, pattern and treatment needed of substance use in the northern border state of Punjab, India is available till date.

Drug abuse is a global phenomenon, affecting almost every country, but its extent and characteristics differ from region to region. India too is caught in this vicious circle of drug abuse, and the numbers of drug addicts are increasing day by day. The bane of drug abuse in Punjab has acquired the proportions of a pestilence that has shaken the entire society in the state. It is observed that in Punjab “drug abuse” is a raging epidemic, especially among the young.

## Methodology

The present paper compiles findings of the study that was conducted on 400 adolescents and young adults (11–35 years) from 15 villages of Jalandhar District using systematic sampling by the researchers. A significant association of drug abuse was observed with male gender, illiteracy, and age above 30 years. Conclusions: The problem of drug abuse in youth of Punjab is a matter of serious concern as every third person is hooked to drugs other than alcohol and tobacco. The other striking observations were the high prevalence of heroin and intravenous drug abuse. Overall, substance use was predominant in men and significantly more common in rural areas. Majority (81%) of the tobacco users, and 51% each of alcohol and opioid users needed intervention. However, merely one in six subjects sought any professional help. Punjab has a substantive problem related to substance use. Though alcohol and tobacco are by far the major substances of use and dependence, the large number of opioid users also raises concern. Treatment services need scaling-up.

Drug abuse is a global phenomenon, affecting almost every country, but its extent and characteristics differ from region to region. Illicit drug abuse not only affects the health and lives of individuals but also undermines the political, social, and cultural foundation of all countries. Problems of drug



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dependence produce dramatic costs to all societies in terms of lost productivity, transmission of infectious diseases, family and social disorder, crime, and excessive utilization of health care.

The Punjab Opioid Dependence Survey, found that 230,000 people in the state were drug users. That translates to 836 drug users per 100,000 people in the state. The All India number is 250 per 100,000 (for 2012), according to the ministry of social justice and empowerment. Consider the number of crimes reported under the Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act. There were on average 7,524 instances of crimes related to drugs in Punjab annually between 2005 and 2014. That's second only to Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state. Look at the rate of crime per 100,000 population — Punjab fares far worse than any other state. In 2014 alone, the rate of reported NDPS crimes jumped to 50.5 per 100,000 population — four times that of second ranked Maharashtra with a rate of 12.4.

Punjab ranks among the top five states that reported the biggest drug seizures in 2014. The other four were Mizoram, Manipur, Assam and Uttar Pradesh. Here's another statistic that places Punjab on top: about 44.5% of total convicts under the NDPS Act in India at the end of 2014 were in Punjab, and the figure has consistently increased over the years. While this could mean that the state is fighting hard to combat this problem, it also highlights the extent of the drug abuse menace in that state.

Suicides due to drug abuse or addiction made up 2.8% of all suicides in India in 2014. In the case of Punjab, this stood at 4%. Drug-related suicide deaths in Punjab have decreased between 2011 and 2014, but it still figures among the top five states.

The Punjab Opioid Dependence Survey found that 89% of opioid dependents in Punjab were literate and educated, 83% were employed and they were mostly male. Chart 6 has the details of the survey.

### Recommendations

Government should plan to increase the number of de-addiction and rehabilitation centers with recreational facilities for these addicts. Various nongovernment organizations and nonprofit organizations can be involved to



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initiate vocational training and other employment programs for unemployed addicts. Appropriate linkages between health workers, community leaders, religious leaders, and teachers for planning prevention and rehabilitation activities for drug abuse should be established. Periodic outreach awareness camps for anti drug abuse activities in the community and government schools should be undertaken.

### Drug Abuse: Causes, Effects & Solutions

There are several reasons why drug usage soon gets changed to drug abuse. At a very basic level this happens because the person concerned feels a desperate need to deal with stress, to get a momentary high or to just 'fit in' with his or her peers, as happens in the case of youngsters. It soon reaches a stage where this need becomes much more than other needs in life and the person begins to believe their survival depends on those drugs.

One of the major reasons for drug abuse – and this is especially applicable for youngsters doing drugs – is its presence, and at times glorification, in popular media such as television series and films. Quite often it so happens that doing drugs is romanticized and some fictional positive aspects of the same are shown. Thus it becomes a thrilling and seductive affair for youngsters who can be misguided easily because of their relative lack of experience in life. At times, the knowledge of risk factors related to drug abuse can also lure people into using these harmful substances. In certain instances people gain this knowledge from their own families or immediate surroundings and are obviously driven – due to some reason or the other – to give it a try and before they know it, it becomes an addiction.

### Effects of drug abuse

- The most major impact of drug abuse is on the brain, which consequently affects every other aspect of life of the person addicted to drugs. Drugs are primarily chemicals that affect the communication system of the human brain. They disturb the ways in which nerve cells send, process and receive information. There are a couple of ways in which drugs achieve this – they copy the natural chemical messengers of the human brain and they overstimulate the brain's reward circuit. Drugs such as heroin and marijuana are structured in the same way as chemical messengers known as neurotransmitters.



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- These neurotransmitters are produced naturally by the human brain. As a result of this similarity, the drugs can fool the receptors of the human brain and activate the nerve cells in such a way that they send some abnormal messages. In case of drugs like methamphetamine and cocaine, the nerve cells get activated and they release extraordinarily large volumes of neurotransmitters. They are also capable of preventing the brain from recycling these chemicals in a normal manner. A normal level of production is necessary in order to end the signal between neurons.

### Solution to drug abuse

- Prevention is one of the ways in which drug abuse can be dealt with. In fact it is one affliction that can be easily prevented according to medical experts and practitioners. Prevention programmes involving entities such as families, schools and the immediate communities are important in this regard. Media – especially the entertainment segment – also needs to understand its role in this context and play a positive role by resisting the urge to earn millions by romanticizing and glorifying drug abuse. It needs to highlight the damaging consequences of drug abuse. It is important that the youth are made to feel that drug usage itself is harmful in every conceivable way and only then will they stop using them and prevent others in their peer group from doing the same.
- Sustained treatment is the only option for people who have already gone down the road of drug abuse and are highly into it. The treatment for a drug abuser normally depends on the kind of drug that the person has been using. It is said that the best treatments normally emphasize phenomena related to the individual's life. This includes areas such as medical, psychological and work-related needs as well as issues in relationships with other people in the person's life. The treatment sessions combine medication and behavioral therapy so that the victim of drug abuse gradually stops feeling the urge to do drugs. These treatment programmes also impart the skills and capability required in order to say no to drugs in the future, which is highly critical for a complete cure to drug abuse.





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## Major contributing factors towards Drug Abuse

- A major factor making India vulnerable to drug trafficking and consequent drug abuse is its geographical location- it lies in close proximity to the major opium producing regions of South West and South East Asia known as the 'Golden Crescent' and the 'Golden Triangle', respectively. It makes India vulnerable to transit, trafficking and consumption of Opium derivatives in various forms along the known trafficking routes. Further cannabis (ganja) also grows unaided in many parts of the country. It has also been reported that it is cultivated in hilly terrains in some parts of the country drug trafficking.
- Cheap and easy availability due to cross-border smuggling of drugs is a major reason for increasing drug abuse in India. For example, according to the UNODC World Drug Report 2016, the retail prices of cannabis is the lowest in India.
- Unstable home environment; poor relationship with family members Behavioral problems combined with poor parenting Depression, stress.
- Peer pressure: Use and availability of drugs from peers
- Glorification of drug abuse in media such as in series and movies- Popular media romanticizing drug use/abuse largely influences adolescents Poor implementation of the NDPS Act and law and order

## Impact of Drug Abuse

- Health Impacts: Damage to organs, such as the heart, brain, and liver Diseases, such as heart disease, HIV, and cancer Development of mental illnesses, suicides Permanent changes to hormonal or nervous systems.
- Family disputes; mental trauma for family members, Domestic violence-



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adverse effect on women and children Societal Loss of reputation, social stigma, isolation Lack of Societal acceptance after rehabilitation.

- Occupational: Lack of focus on task at hand leading to poor performance Absenteeism, loss of job
- Financial: Incrementally high expenditure on drugs Increasing Debts, Crime: Resorting to monetary crimes to pay for drugs Increasing Incidences of teasing, group clashes, assault and impulsive murders

### Awareness and Prevention

- Primary Prevention envisages preventing non-users from starting drug use. It includes raising awareness on drug related harm, specially health and social effects.
- Since Children and young adults are most vulnerable to drug abuse measures should be taken to aware children on myths surrounding alcohol and other drug use which leads to the glamorization of these substances
- Mass media should play an important role in spreading awareness about menace of drug abuse and not glorifying drug abuse
- For example: In Sri Lanka, a drug abuse preventive unit has been established in the Ministry of Education. The Ministry runs programmes targeting both children and teachers.
- The Anti-Narcotic Squads and Drug Enforcement Agencies should be more vigilant in controlling drug trafficking
- There should be more counseling and rehabilitation centers. Further, these centers should be equipped with trained health workers to ensure sustained de-addiction of addicts.
- The government should apply harm reduction principles to drug policy formulation. India can consider experiences from European and Latin American countries while formulating and implementing legislation to stop drug abuse. In Europe and Latin American countries, it was found that non-punitive measures improved the health and well being of drug addicts.
- Example: In Portugal, overdose and drug related HIV infections got



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reduced after the decriminalization of drug use.

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