

# Drug Addiction among Youngsters in Himachal Pradesh: Challenges and Issues

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## Abstract:

Addiction of drugs is a type of disorder in which one's drug seeking behavior persists despite of negative consequences. Many people become addicted to drugs which are not meant for human consumption like LSD, marijuana etc. However addiction of drugs is a successfully treatable problem. However to overcome this problem major role is played by teachers, parents and health care workers. Teenagers who start consuming these drugs at an early age are more prone to develop addiction rather than those who start it at an adult age. Addiction is a brain based disorder which ultimately leads to serious disorders in one's life. Therefore this research paper is devoted to highlight the causes, symptoms and trend of drug addiction among youngsters.

**Keywords:** Addiction, Drug, Challenges, Issues, Youngsters

## Introduction:

Dependency on drug substance that causes chronic psychological cravings, disturbed social behaviour, spiritual and mental health can be called as addiction. If someone is exhibiting personality traits, behaviour, appearance and habits that are more irrational than usual, then they could be suffering from chronic addiction. Drug addiction can also be defined as a condition in which any person believes that a sense of wellbeing is achieved only through drug consumption. Drug dependency is a complicated neurobiological disorder that calls for included remedy for the mind, frame and spirit. It should be taken into consideration that a mind disorder due to fact capsules alternates the mind which ultimately alternate its shape and the way it works. Addiction is a combined disorder characterized with aid of using drug in search of and use this is compulsive or tough to manipulate notwithstanding dangerous results. The primary intake of capsules is voluntary for maximum human beings, however repeated drug use can result in mind adjustments that task and addicted individual's self-discipline and intrude with their capacity to withstand excessive urges to take capsules. Drug dependency or addiction is not only simply heroin, cocaine or different unlawful capsules but also include alcohol, nicotine, opioid painkillers and different prison materials.

In the previous three decades, the ministry of social justice and empowerment has carried out drug surveys. The outcome of those surveys advocated that drug abuse in India is growing rapidly. The uses of different artificial pills and cocaine have multiplied significantly. According to national survey on drug use disorders, only five percent people with illicit drug use disorders received impatient care, which indicates

poor accessibility, utilisation and quantity of health care. There is a requirement of expansion of treatment and rehabilitation facilities for substance use disorders. Thus the present paper is an attempt to study the growing problem of menace or drug addiction in Himachal Pradesh. The young generation is particularly vulnerable to drug abuse. One third population of the state is young which is highly vulnerable to drug addiction.

### **Study Area:**

Himachal Pradesh is a hilly state of union of India located in north-western Himalayan region of the country. It is known for its wide diversity of vegetation and plants. The total area of the state is 55673 km square with total population of 68, 56,609. The state is endowed with a high diversity of medical and aromatic plants. Himachal Pradesh shares its border with union territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh to the north, state of Punjab to the west, Haryana to the south west and Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh to the south. It also shares international border with Tibet, autonomous region in China (Map 01). Present study is concentrated in this state because the production and abuse of illegal drug substances have been increased in last few years. Therefore this study is aimed to study the pattern of symptoms, and causes of drug addiction in the state.

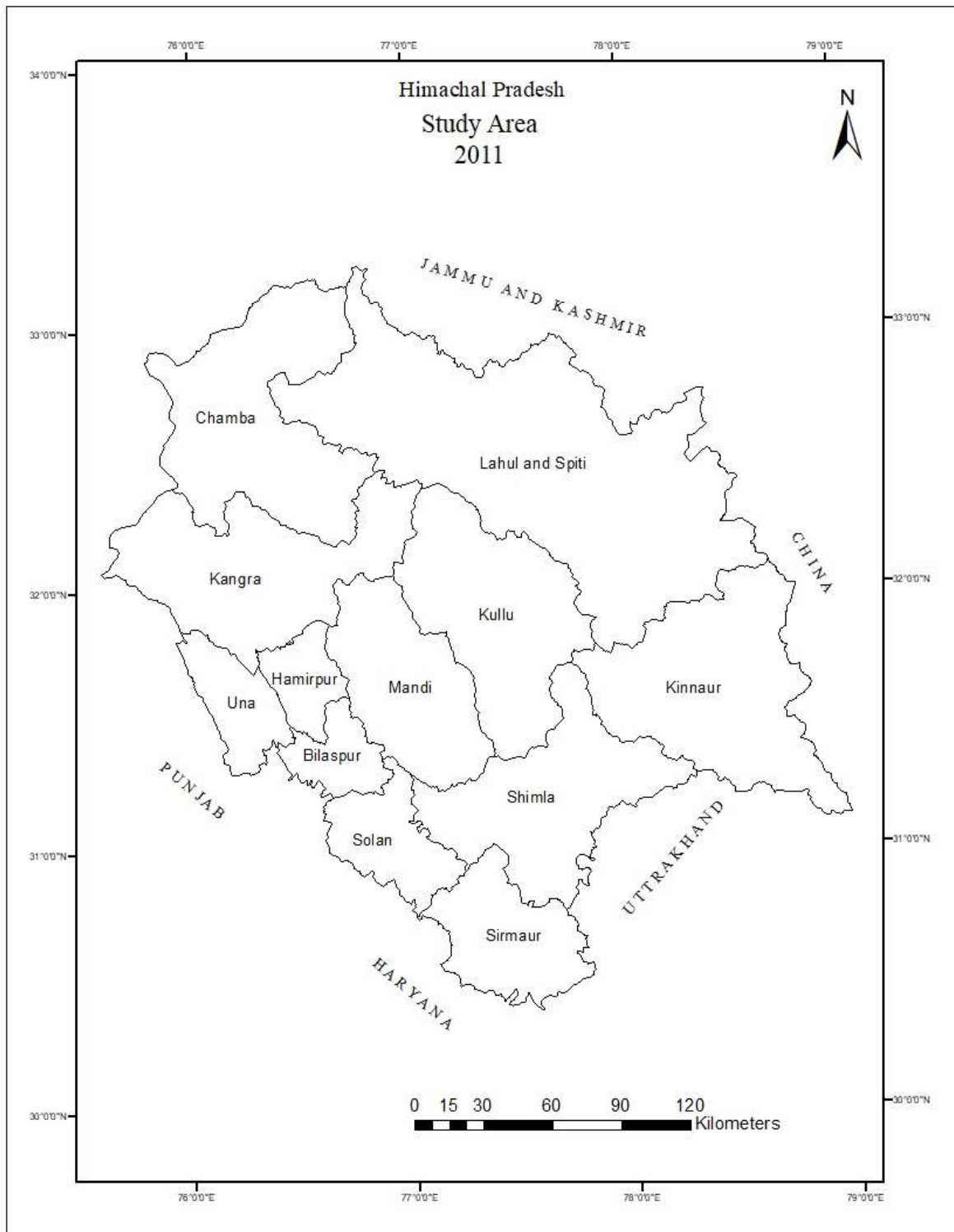
### **Objectives:**

- To study the causes and symptoms of drug addiction among youth and children.
- To analyse the trend of drug addiction in Himachal Pradesh.

### **Data Sources and Methodology:**

This study is based on secondary data sources in which different reports and articles on drug addiction have been reviewed.

**Map: 01**  
**Location of Study Area**



Source: Census of India, 2011

## Results and Discussion:

### 1. Causes and Symptoms of Drug Addiction

Different items such as Cocaine, Opiates, marijuana, Hallucinogens, Bath salts, Benzodiazepines, Crystal Meth, Ecstasy, Heroin, Methadone, LSD, Mushrooms and PCP etc. potentially addictive which are harmful can be considered as drugs. All of these are illegal and overdose can lead to negative consequences. There are some drugs which are obtained legally after prescription. These drugs include opioid painkillers, benzodiazepines, stimulants, antidepressants, anti-obsessive agents and mood stabilizers. There are numerous causes which are responsible for making a person drug addict. Various factors make sudden changes in mind that support one's psychological dependency on mind-altering substances. These factors are:

- Biological variables like, genes, gender, ethnicity and the pressure of other mental disorders may influence risk for drug use and addiction.
- Family background is also responsible for drug addiction. If one's parents or siblings are suffering with the problems of alcohol or drugs then he is more likely to become addict. Both male and female are equally vulnerable to be addicted. According to some studies genetic factors are 50 percent responsible for drug addiction.
- Environment also plays an important role to make a person drug addicted. It includes influences from family and friends. Economic status, quality of life, parental guidance, stress, early exposure to drugs, physical and sexual abuse etc. greatly affect one's likelihood of drug use. However conservative or reluctant behaviour of the family towards one's problem plays vital role in the addictive behaviour.
- Frequently missing school or disinterest in school activities dropping in marks or grade, decreasing performance in school activities also leads to drug use which results into addiction.
- If someone is depressed and having trouble on concentrating or worried constantly, have a high chance of addiction. He will turn towards drugs as an alternate ways to feel better. Number of people with mental health issues moved to drugs and alcohol to get rid of disability symptoms. Some studies also shows that 40 percent drug addicts have at least one co-occurring mental health disorder.
- Financial issues at home in some cases also causes to support drug abuse.
- In some cases it is observed that if a person using drugs in early age, more likely they are to become addicted to any type of drug.

## Symptoms of Drug Addiction

- Drug overdose symptoms includes, difficulty in breathing, bluish tint to the skin, restlessness, dizziness, confusion, strange behaviour, aggression, signs of internal bleeding etc.
- Conservative nature.
- Negative approach towards everything.
- Mood swings.
- Physical changes.
- Socially inactive.
- Increased excuses towards saying no.
- Decreased mental sharpness.
- Spending more time alone.
- Dry mouth.
- Increased blood pressure and heart rate.
- Spending money on drugs even though you can't afford it.

## Growing Drug Problem in Himachal Pradesh

The problem of drug abuse is not specifically concentrated in a particular region or state, it is widely spread around the globe within a small or large extent. The north-western Himalayan state of Himachal Pradesh is not untouched with this problem. In last few years, the consumption and supply of drug substances in the state has grown up. These substances like alcohol, cannabis, heroin etc. are supplied secretly in the state. The natural growth of cannabis and illicit cultivation of cannabis, opium poppy in some districts of the state like, Kullu, Mandi, Shimla, Kangra, Chamba and Sirmaur is a matter of concern. This illicit production of drugs in the state attracts tourists for consumption of narcotic drugs. A cannabis product grown in Kullu known as “Malana Cream” is a famous brand not only in Indian drug trafficking circles but also at international level. Use of drugs in “Rave Parties” is also reported in some areas of Kullu and Kangra districts. Increase in the cases of drug addiction is posing a big challenge to not only human life but also to the law and order situation in the state.

According to a report of state government, the recovery of drug substances from the year 2015 to 2018 has increased by 51 percent in the state (Table 01).

Table: 01

**Himachal Pradesh: Cases Registered under Various Drugs**

Substance Category	Number of Cases Registered (2015-2018)		
	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
<b>Opium</b>	15	30	22
<b>Other Opiates</b>	6	17	24
<b>Cannabis</b>	391	663	536
<b>Heroin</b>	52	131	150
<b>Brown Sugar</b>	2	9	6
<b>Cocaine</b>	1	0	3
<b>Multiple Drugs</b>	20	41	34
<b>Alcohol</b>	1694	2370	2571
<b>Others</b>	150	165	187
<b>Total</b>	<b>2331</b>	<b>3417</b>	<b>3533</b>

Source: Department of Social Justice and Empowerment, 2019

It is clear that alcohol, cannabis, opium, heroin etc. are the major drug substances used in the state. Drug addiction problem among children and youth have increased in the state due to the easy availability of these substances. Not only young boys and men indulged in substance abuse but girls and women are also indulging in substance abuse. According to another study the most common substance abuse used in state is alcohol and tobacco smoking. Mostly youngsters are practising all these for fake show off.

Himachal Pradesh was not famous for being north India's biggest producer of marijuana, however today the situation is alarming, where a large number of youth have become drug addicts, abusers and paddlers. A lot of deaths due to drug overdose in previous years are revealing the fact that Himachal Pradesh is becoming drug capital. The most dangerous form of drug addiction is teenager addiction. The school going boys and girls are totally unaware of drugs consequences and become drug addict after three to four dose consumption as they find it very satisfying and stress relieving .

The spatial distribution is also important to analyze in this context. Cannabis is grown in the districts of Kullu, Mandi, Shimla, Chamba and Sirmaur. On the other side 'chitta' comes to the state from way of Punjab to Una and other districts. The direct supply from Delhi and Chandigarh goes to Shimla and Solan districts and Punjab supplies drugs to Una, Chamba, Kangra, Kullu and Mandi Districts.

## Conclusion:

The state police are working on drug demand supply reduction but still the drug addiction among children and youth raises in the state. The awareness programmes for youngsters on prevention of drugs abuse are not adequate. Rehabilitation centers for drug de-addiction are either inaccessible or not sufficient to cater the needs of growing number of addicts in the state. Central government initiative to open only one integrated rehabilitation center in the state is also not adequate as it does not cater the growing number of addicts in the state. State government on the other hand has no scheme to provide financial assistance to private de-addiction centers, and these private de addiction centers are not affordable to most of the addicts as they belongs to poor families. To control drug addiction among youth in the state there is a need to formulate a policy for rehabilitation of drug addicts in the state. Six states and one Union Territory i.e. Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, Delhi and Chandigarh respectively have taken some combined initiative to keep an eye on the progress in the war against drugs and to deal with this problem. However education regarding drug abuse is urgently required at school level because the students at early age easily become addict of drugs. Therefore there is a need to aware students with the effects of drug addiction. If the youth in the state will be awaked at an early age there are fifty percent less changes of their drug addiction.

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