



## **DESCRIPTIVE STUDY ON DRUG ABUSE AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS (IN THE CONTEXT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS)**

**Md. Habibur Rahman<sup>1\*</sup>, Anshul Tiwari<sup>2</sup>, Mani Bharti<sup>3</sup>, Himal Adhikari<sup>4</sup>, Dr. Harpreet Singh<sup>5</sup>**

### **Abstract**

Drug abuse may be a critical issue among undergraduate understudies, and it has negative impacts on their academic, social, and individual lives. The inquiry covers mental and environmental variables intricately connected to undergraduate students' health and well-being. Psychologically, components such as stress, anxiety, sadness, low self-esteem, and peer pressure play a critical part in drug abuse among undergraduate students. Stressful occasions, such as academic pressure, relationship issues, and money-related challenges, can lead students to resort to drugs as a coping mechanism. Moreover, the craving to fit in with peers and social desires can lead students to engage in drug use. Environmental components such as easy access to drugs, accessibility of drugs on campuses, and the impact of family and companions moreover contribute to drug mishandling among undergraduate students. Social and cultural norms that advance drug use and glamorize drug culture can moreover impact understudies to utilize drugs.

**Keywords:** Drug abuse, Substance abuse, Addiction, Risk factors, Peer pressure, Student, Behavioral patterns, and Health outcomes.

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<sup>1\*,2,3,4,5</sup>Associate Professor, Lovely Professional University, Phagwara

**\*Corresponding Author:** Md. Habibur Rahman

\*Associate Professor, Lovely Professional University, Phagwara

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## **Introduction**

Drug abuse among undergraduate students is a growing concern worldwide, with serious consequences for both the individual and society. A descriptive study on drug abuse by undergraduate students aims to provide a detailed and comprehensive understanding of the prevalence, patterns, and factors associated with drug use among this population. Descriptive studies involve the collection and analysis of data to describe and summarize the characteristics of a specific group or phenomenon. In the case of drug abuse among undergraduate students, a descriptive study would typically involve gathering data through surveys, interviews, or other methods, and analyzing the results to provide an overview of the nature and extent of drug use among this population.

The study may investigate various aspects of drug use among undergraduate students, such as the types of drugs commonly used, the frequency and duration of drug use, the reasons for drug use, the sources of drugs, and the consequences of drug use on academic performance and social functioning. The study may also explore factors associated with drug use, such as demographic characteristics, personality traits, social and environmental influences, and mental health status. The findings of a descriptive study on drug abuse by undergraduate students can provide valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and healthcare professionals in developing effective prevention and intervention strategies.

### **Factors Affecting Drugs Abuse:**

Several factors may have an impact on college students use of drugs and other substances. Peer pressure is one of the most important aspects since drug users frequently push their friends to use drugs with them to feel accepted. This component is fueled even more by the desire to blend in and have a distinctive experience. Since most university students have unfettered freedom, the lack of guardianship is another element that makes them more likely to experiment with drugs. As parental drug usage and substance addiction can affect their children's attitudes and behaviors, upbringing also has a big impact on drug and substance misuse. Drug addiction is also influenced by cultural identity and social media, especially among African and African American university students who look up to rappers and entertainers as role models. Students in universities, particularly those studying health and science, are susceptible to stress and academic challenges that

result in drug and substance abuse. Students may be more susceptible to drug and alcohol abuse as a result of childhood trauma like abandonment, physical abuse, sexual assault, and emotional abuse.

Substance misuse may also be influenced by the ease of access to and availability of drugs and other psychoactive substances in the neighborhoods near universities. Students can more easily use and abuse drugs since private hostels outside of schools frequently have laxer rules addressing drug and substance abuse on their premises. Given that some religious practices involve the use of alcohol and other substances, religion can also have a big impact on drug use and substance abuse. Evidence-based research, however, indicates that students attending religious universities are less likely to develop a drug or substance addiction.

### **Impacts on the life of the students**

Drug abuse among undergraduate students can have a significant impact on various aspects of their lives, including physical health, mental health, academic performance, relationships, and prospects. Here are some of how drug abuse can affect the lives of undergraduate students:

**Physical health:** Drug abuse can lead to a range of physical health problems, such as respiratory problems, cardiovascular disease, liver damage, and infections. Drugs like cocaine, amphetamines, and ecstasy can cause dehydration, overheating, and even death in extreme cases. Long-term drug use can also result in chronic health conditions, such as addiction, neurological damage, and hormonal imbalances.

**Mental health:** Drug abuse can affect mental health by increasing the risk of anxiety, depression, psychosis, and other mental disorders. Drugs like marijuana and hallucinogens can cause hallucinations, paranoia, and delusions, while stimulants like cocaine and amphetamines can cause agitation, irritability, and mood swings. Long-term drug use can also lead to a decline in cognitive function and memory.

**Academic performance:** Drug abuse can have a significant impact on academic performance by impairing cognitive function, memory, and concentration. Students who abuse drugs may experience a decline in grades, miss classes, or drop out of school altogether. Drug use can also lead to disciplinary problems, such as being suspended or expelled from school.

**Relationships:** Drug abuse can strain relationships with friends, family, and romantic partners. Students who abuse drugs may become isolated or withdrawn from others and engage in risky behaviors that put themselves and others in danger. Drug use can also lead to conflict and violence in relationships.

**Prospects:** Drug abuse can have long-term consequences for the prospects of undergraduate students. Students who abuse drugs may find it difficult to obtain employment or pursue higher education and may face legal consequences that limit their opportunities. Drug abuse can also lead to financial problems, such as debt and bankruptcy.

### **Types of Drugs**

Drug usage is a complicated problem with effects on people and society as a whole that are both beneficial and bad. Understanding the many drug types, their effects, and the motivations for their usage has garnered increasing attention in recent years. This study paper seeks to present an overview of numerous drug categories, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, psychotropic compounds, and legal and illicit narcotics. The pharmacological characteristics of each drug class, the physiological and psychological impacts they cause, and the social and cultural aspects that affect drug usage will all be covered in this essay.

**Alcohol:** Alcohol is a commonly consumed beverage around the world, known for its ability to produce a sense of relaxation and euphoria. It is a depressant drug that affects the central nervous system and alters the brain's chemical balance. It is produced through the fermentation of sugars and grains, and it comes in various forms such as beer, wine, and spirits. While alcohol can be enjoyed in moderation, excessive drinking can have harmful effects on one's health and well-being. Long-term heavy drinking can lead to serious health problems such as liver disease, pancreatitis, and some types of cancer. It can also contribute to mental health issues such as anxiety and depression.

**Nicotine:** Nicotine is a naturally occurring chemical found in tobacco plants, and it is responsible for the addictive properties of tobacco products. When tobacco is smoked or chewed, nicotine is absorbed into the bloodstream, where it travels to the brain and activates reward pathways, leading to feelings of pleasure and a desire to repeat the behavior. Nicotine is a highly addictive substance, and many people who use tobacco

products struggle to quit due to the withdrawal symptoms that occur when they try to stop. These symptoms can include irritability, anxiety, and difficulty concentrating.

**Hallucinogens:** The drug class known as hallucinogens, commonly referred to as psychedelics, affects a person's perception, thoughts, and feelings. They can be obtained naturally from plants like cacti, mushrooms, and some types of plants, or they can be created in a lab. Depending on the substance and dosage, hallucinogens can have a variety of effects, but they typically cause substantial changes in sensory perception, including visual and aural hallucinations. Additionally, they may result in feelings of exhilaration or altered mood, as well as modifications to thought and behavior.

It's crucial to remember, though, that hallucinogens can also be harmful to a person's health and well-being. They may result in a variety of adverse psychological and physical reactions, such as nausea, vomiting, anxiety, and paranoia. Rarely, they may even result in a condition called hallucinogen persisting perception disorder (HPPD), which alters visual vision long after the effects of the drug have worn off.

### **Government initiative**

Drug abuse is a serious social and public health problem in India that has an impact on communities, families, and people. The Indian government has initiated several measures to combat this issue, prevent drug abuse, and treat and support people who are impacted by it. These programs put a strong emphasis on lowering the supply and demand for drugs as well as spreading knowledge and educating people about drug usage. Those Major initiatives are:

**National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (NAPDDR):** The Indian government launched the NAPDDR in 2018, which aims to reduce drug demand and supply by addressing drug abuse comprehensively. The plan includes preventive, curative, and rehabilitative measures to tackle drug abuse among undergraduate students.

**Drug-Free India Campaign:** The government launched the Drug-Free India Campaign in 2019, which aims to create awareness among the public, particularly young people, about the dangers of drug abuse. The campaign includes the dissemination of information and education materials, as well as outreach programs to schools and colleges.

**National Institute of Social Defense (NISD):** The NISD is a government agency that works to prevent drug abuse and provide support to drug-dependent individuals. It provides training, research, and counseling services to stakeholders, including undergraduate students.

**Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports:** The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has taken several initiatives to prevent drug abuse among young people, including undergraduate students. It has launched campaigns and programs that promote healthy lifestyles and discourage drug use, such as the "Fit India Movement" and "Khelo India".

**University Grants Commission (UGC):** The UGC has issued guidelines to universities and colleges to prevent drug abuse among students. It has also established counseling centers and rehabilitation facilities on campuses to support undergraduate students who are struggling with drug abuse.

**Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB):** The NCB is a government agency that is responsible for enforcing drug laws and preventing drug abuse. It works closely with universities and colleges to conduct awareness programs and training workshops for students and faculty members.

#### **Other Actions to Address Drug Abuse**

Drug abuse among undergraduate students is a serious issue in India, and the government has taken several measures to address this problem. Here are some of the key steps taken by the Indian government to resolve the situation of undergraduate students' drug abuse:

**Strengthening the legal framework:** The Indian government has strengthened the legal framework to control drug abuse. The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, of 1985, was enacted to control drug trafficking and drug abuse in the country. The government has also introduced amendments to the Act to make it more effective in preventing drug abuse.

**Awareness campaigns:** The government has launched several awareness campaigns to educate undergraduate students about the dangers of drug abuse. These campaigns aim to sensitize students about the physical and psychological effects of drugs and encourage them to stay away from drug use. The campaigns are conducted through various media, including television, radio, and social media platforms.

**Rehabilitation centers:** The government has established several rehabilitation centers to provide treatment to undergraduate students who are addicted to drugs. These centers provide detoxification, counseling, and other therapies to help students overcome their addictions.

**Counseling centers:** The government has set up counseling centers on college and university campuses to provide support to undergraduate students who are struggling with drug abuse. These centers offer confidential counseling services and help students access the resources they need to overcome their addiction.

**Collaborations with NGOs:** The government has collaborated with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to address drug abuse among undergraduate students. These collaborations involve joint awareness campaigns, training workshops, and rehabilitation programs for affected students.

#### **Solutions to Drug Abuse**

The first step in addressing the problem of drug abuse among undergraduate students is to identify the root causes. According to research, some of the factors that contribute to drug abuse among students include depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, and personality disorders. Additionally, peer pressure, stress, and easy access to drugs are also significant contributors to the problem. Therefore, addressing these underlying factors is crucial in finding a lasting solution to drug abuse among undergraduate students.

One solution to address drug abuse among undergraduate students is to increase awareness of the dangers of drug abuse. Educational programs and campaigns can be organized to educate students on the risks and consequences of drug abuse. Another solution is to provide support and counseling services to students who struggle with drug abuse. Colleges and universities can have on-campus counselors who specialize in substance abuse counseling to provide students with a safe and supportive environment where they can receive help without fear of stigma or judgment. Additionally, support groups can be created to offer students a platform to share their experiences and encourage each other to overcome their addiction. Furthermore, universities and colleges can collaborate with law enforcement agencies to crack down on drug trafficking and sales around their campuses. Increased police patrols and drug-sniffing dogs can help prevent the sale and distribution of drugs on campus.

To prevent drug abuse among undergraduate students, it is also essential to promote healthy habits and lifestyles. Institutions can provide resources for students to participate in extracurricular activities, sports, and other healthy social activities that promote physical and emotional well-being.

### **Conclusion:**

Drug misuse is a significant issue that harms a person's emotional and physical well-being, family relationships, and community at large. Drug misuse is influenced by psychological and environmental factors, including peer pressure and stress. Abuse of drugs damages the brain and increases the risk of major illnesses, injuries, and accidents. Additionally, it destroys families and has a bad effect on neighborhoods. The core causes of drug misuse must be addressed, and healthy behaviors and coping skills must be encouraged.

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