

Drugs Related Crimes

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Abstract: *Drug use is endemic within offender populations and, as a result, considerable heterogeneity can be found in drug-related crime. Expertise in drug-related offending covers an equally broad base from internal mental processes through skill acquisition to social interactions. This review considers decision making and expertise for crimes in the domains of direct causal effects (e.g., burglary) and non-causal relationships (e.g., apprehension avoidance, detection). Also considered is the notion of expertise as it applies to addiction, in particular the conscious and unconscious goal-directed behaviors articulated in the Selfish Goal model (Huang & Bargh, 2014) and a cool cognition/hot affect dual processing model of criminal decision making (Van Gelder, 2013). The review findings would suggest (a) the need for more focused research into whether expertise differs as a function of drug use and (b) a paradigm shift in terms of treatment for drug-using offenders. Although valuable crime information is available in human-readable form in online newspapers and electronic archives, software systems that can extract and present relevant information are limited and are of significant interest to researchers in the field of information extraction. This work aims to extract available drug crime information from online newspaper articles. This work has the following subtasks: assess where and how drug traffickers hide drugs, identify the nationalities of drug dealers, identify the types (names) of drugs, and assess the quantity and prices of drugs in the local market. This paper presents a rule-based approach to extract information on the basis of a set of drug crime gazetteers and on a set of grammatical and heuristic rules. This work is validated through experiments*

Keywords: NDPS, Drugs, Narcotic, Heroine, Cocaine, Prevention.

I. INTRODUCTION

Drug-related crime has emerged as one of the most complex and challenging issues confronting modern societies, and India is no exception. The steady rise of narcotic drug abuse, illicit trafficking, and the infiltration of organized criminal networks into the drug trade prompted the Indian government to enact a strong legal framework capable of addressing these challenges. This culminated in the implementation of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 (NDPS Act)—a landmark legislation designed to comprehensively regulate, control, and prohibit all operations associated with narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.¹

The NDPS Act was introduced at a time when India was witnessing increasing incidents of drug addiction, cross-border smuggling, and the emergence of drug trafficking as a major source of illegal revenue for criminal groups. Prior to 1985, India's drug laws were fragmented, inadequate, and unable to deal with the scale of the problem. The NDPS Act consolidated these laws and introduced a unified, stringent legal regime that empowered the state to take decisive action against drug offenders.

Under the Act, a wide spectrum of activities including cultivation, production, manufacture, possession, sale, purchase, transportation, import, export, consumption, and financing of drugs—is brought under strict regulatory control. The legislation adopts a zero-tolerance approach, reflecting the seriousness with which drug-related offences are treated.

¹ The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, No. 61 of 1985, Statement of Objects and Reasons, India.



Penalties for violations are severe, with provisions for long-term imprisonment, substantial fines, and even the death penalty in certain cases of repeated trafficking involving commercial quantities.

Beyond its punitive framework, the NDPS Act also recognizes the need for a balanced approach that addresses drug dependence as a public health issue. Provisions for treatment, rehabilitation, and social reintegration of addicts are included to encourage a shift from purely punitive measures to more compassionate and corrective strategies. Amendments over the years have further refined the Act, focusing on proportionality in sentencing, improved investigation mechanisms, and better international cooperation.

Overall, drug-related crime under the NDPS Act represents a complex intersection of criminal law, public health, social welfare, and international commitments. By providing stringent controls and strong enforcement mechanisms, the Act aims to curb the spread of drug abuse, dismantle trafficking networks, and safeguard society from the devastating consequences associated with narcotics.²

II. DRUGS AND CRIME

Drug abuse and addiction is associated with drug-related crimes. In the U.S. several jurisdictions have reported that benzodiazepine misuse by criminal detainees has surpassed that of opiates. Patients reporting to two emergency rooms in Canada with violence-related injuries were most often found to be intoxicated with alcohol and were significantly more likely to test positive for benzodiazepines (most commonly temazepam) than other groups of individuals, whereas other drugs were found to be insignificant in relation to violent injuries.³

Research carried out on drug-related crime found that drug misuse is associated with various crimes that are in part related to the feelings of invincibility, which can become particularly pronounced with abuse. Problematic crimes associated include shoplifting, property crime, drug dealing, violence and aggression and driving whilst intoxicated.⁴ In Scotland among the 71% of suspected criminals testing positive for controlled drugs at the time of their arrest benzodiazepines (over 85% are temazepam cases) are detected more frequently than opiates and are second only to cannabis, which is the most frequently detected drug.

Research carried out by the Australian government found that benzodiazepine users are more likely to be violent, more likely to have been in contact with the police, and more likely to have been charged with criminal behavior than those using opiates. Illicit benzodiazepines mostly originate from medical practitioners but leak onto the illicit scene due to diversion and doctor shopping.

Although only a very small number originate from thefts, forged prescriptions, armed robberies, or ram raids, it is most often benzodiazepines, rather than opiates, that are targeted in part because benzodiazepines are not usually locked in vaults and or do not have as strict laws governing prescription and storage of many benzodiazepines. Temazepam accounts for most benzodiazepine sought by forgery of prescriptions and through pharmacy burglary in Australia.⁵

Benzodiazepines have been used as a tool of murder by serial killers, and other murderers, such as those with the condition Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy. Benzodiazepines have also been used to facilitate rape or robbery crimes, and benzodiazepine dependence has been linked to shoplifting due to the fugue state induced by the chronic use of the drug. When benzodiazepines are used for criminal purposes against a victim they are often mixed with food or drink

Temazepam and midazolam are the most common benzodiazepines used to facilitate date rape. Alprazolam has been abused for the purpose of carrying out acts of incest and for the corruption of adolescent girls. However, alcohol

² United Nation *Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961; Convention on Psychotropic Substances, 1971; United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1988.*

³ Macdonald, S., et al., "Drug Use and Violence Among Emergency Room Patients," *Journal of Trauma and Injury Prevention.*

⁴ Bennett, T. & Holloway, K., *Drug-Crime Connections*, Home Office Research Study.

⁵ McGregor, C., et al., "Patterns of Benzodiazepine Diversion in Australia."



remains the most common drug involved in cases of drug rape⁶. Although benzodiazepines and ethanol are the most frequent drugs used in sexual assaults, GHB is another potential date rape drug that has received increased media focus. Some benzodiazepines are more associated with crime than others especially when abused or taken in combination with alcohol. The potent benzodiazepine flunitrazepam (Rohypnol), which has strong amnesia-producing effects can cause abusers to become ruthless and also cause feelings of being invincible. This has led to some acts of extreme violence to others, often leaving abusers with no recollection of what they have done in their drug-induced state. It has been proposed that criminal and violent acts brought on by benzodiazepine abuse may be related to lowered serotonin levels via enhanced GABAergic effects.

Flunitrazepam has been implicated as the cause of one serial killer's violent rampage, triggering off extreme aggression with anterograde amnesia. A study on forensic psychiatric patients who had abused flunitrazepam at the time of their crimes found that the patients displayed extreme violence, lacked the ability to think clearly, and experienced a loss of empathy for their victims while under the influence of flunitrazepam,⁷ and it was found that the abuse of alcohol or other drugs in combination with flunitrazepam compounded the problem. Their behavior under the influence of flunitrazepam was in contrast to their normal psychological state.⁸

III. MEANING OF DRUG RELATED CRIME

A drug-related crime is a crime to possess, manufacture, or distribute drugs classified as having a potential for abuse (such as cocaine, heroin, morphine and amphetamines). Drugs are also related to crime as drug trafficking and drug production are often controlled by drug cartels, organised crime and gangs.⁹ Some drug-related crime involves crime against the person such as robbery or sexual assaults.¹⁰

Drug related Crime may be used as a Justification for Prohibition but in the cause of systemrelated Crime, The Acts are only Crimes because of prohibition Economic related aspects of crime as Symptomatic of a broader problem.

Drug-related crime includes illegal acts involving the possession, manufacturing, and distribution of controlled substances.¹¹ This type of crime is often connected to the illegal drug trade, which is frequently controlled by organized crime and drug cartels. Crimes can range from simple possession to large-scale trafficking and production.

Example-Methamphetamine and crack abusers are often associated with violent crimes including domestic violence and child abuse :abusers also often commit property crimes such as Burglary, Forgery, Fraud ,larceny and identity theft to support their addictions.

Offenses: Crimes include a wide range of activities such as cultivating, producing, manufacturing, possessing, selling, purchasing, transporting, storing, and consuming illegal drugs.

Underlying crimes: Drug-related crime is frequently associated with other crimes like theft and violence, which may be committed to support a drug habit or to profit from the illegal drug trade.

Organized crime: The illegal drug trade is often run by organized criminal groups and drug cartels, leading to violence and instability in communities where they operate.

⁶World Health Organization, Violence and Injury Prevention Studies.

⁷ Dagerman, A.M. & Lidberg, L., "Flunitrazepam and Violent Criminal Behavior Among Forensic Psychiatric Patients."

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), *Transnational Organized Crime in the Globalized World* (United Nations Publications, Vienna, 2010).

¹⁰ Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, *Drugs and Crime Facts* (Washington D.C., 2023).

¹¹ United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1988.



Legal status: Laws are in place in many countries to criminalize the production, sale, and possession of illegal drugs (e.g., the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act in India).

Section-37 of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act says that Drug-related Offences are to be Cognizable and Non-Bailable.¹² This means that if you are accused of Drug related crime, you can be arrested even without the Warrant. Once you have been arrested, you can only get Bail if you apply for it in court and it is granted by the Court. If you are accused of an offence that involves commercial quantities of a Drug, then the conditions for getting Bail are very Strict. These all come under NDPS Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substance Act of 1985. It was Introduced in the Lok Sabha on 23rd August 1985. It was passed by both the House of Parliament and received Presidential assent on 16th September 1985 and it came into force on 14 November as the NDPS Act. It is illegal for a person to Produce, Manufacture, Cultivate, Possess, Sell, Purchase, Transport, Store or consume any Narcotic Drug /Psychotropic Substance.

IV. CRITICISMS

The concept of drug-related crime has been criticized for being too blunt, especially in its failure to distinguish between three types of crime associated with drugs:

- Use-Related crime: These are crimes that result from or involve individuals who ingest drugs, and who commit crimes as a result of the effect the drug has on their thought processes and behavior.¹³
- Example- Violence under the influence, Disturbing Public Peace, Accidents caused by impaired judgment
- Economic-Related crime: These are crimes where an individual commits a crime to fund a drug habit.
- Example-Theft, Prostitution, Burglary, Robbery
- System-Related crime: These are crimes that result from the structure of the drug system.¹⁴

Example- Drug Trafficking, Smuggling across borders, Gang Violence, Corruption of officials, Money laundering
Drug-related crime may be used as a justification for prohibition, but, in the case of system-related crime, the acts are only crimes because of prohibition. In addition, some consider even user-related and economic-related aspects of crime as symptomatic of a broader problem.¹⁵

V. OFFENCES INVOLVED ILLEGAL DRUGS

Drug -related Offences that involve illegal Drugs directly or indirectly they can be grouped into several categories:

- Drug Possession
- Drug Trafficking
- Drug Manufacturing
- Drug Paraphernalia Offences
- Crimes committed under the influence
- Crimes committed to support Drug use
- Organized Crime

¹² Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985, s 37.

¹³ Paul J. Goldstein, *The Drugs/Violence Nexus: A Tripartite Conceptual Framework*, 15 J. Drug Issues 493, 493–506 (1985).

¹⁴ Id. at 498–500.

¹⁵ Wayne Hall, *The Relationship Between Illicit Drug Use and Crime*, in *The Oxford Handbook of Criminology* (5th ed. 2012).



DRUG POSSESSION:

Holding or having control if illegal drugs for personal use -Penalties depends on the types of drug i.e.

1. Heroine, Cannabis .¹⁶
2. Quantity
3. Local State/Country Laws

A person cannot face prosecution for the status of being under the influence or addicted to illegal drugs. There must be some nexus to criminal behavior. In 1962, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a statute criminalizing addiction as unconstitutional in the landmark case *Robinson v. California*

The most basic drug charge is Possession of illegal drugs. This crime punishes defendants who have illicit substances on their person or in their control. This charge only requires knowledge of the drug's nature and its presence on or near the person. The issue does not turn on ownership, so holding onto someone else's cocaine or heroin could result in criminal charges.

The law permits people to have possession of a controlled substance when they have a valid prescription from a doctor, but the government may bring drug possession charges against ¹⁷those in possession of prescription drugs without a prescription. Because abuse of prescription drugs is a public health crisis, some states may prohibit possession of lawfully prescribed medications outside their original pharmacy packaging.

Illegal possession of drugs often results in a felony drug conviction. In cases involving drug abuse that aligns with personal use, most courts offer diversion and treatment programs instead of punishment. The development of drug court programs represents a major reform from the "War on Drugs" of the 1970s and 1980s.¹⁸

A person in possession of illegal drugs can face charges of simple possession. They may also face an enhanced charge for possession with the intent to distribute based on the quantity of drugs. The intent to distribute can appear from the amount or weight of the drugs. The greater the quantity of drugs, the more likely an inference that it pertains to more than personal use.

The Legalization and Decriminalization of marijuana continues to expand at the state level. As a result, in many states, possessing a small amount of marijuana for personal or medical use is not a crime. Many states where marijuana remains illegal have lowered the criminal penalties associated with it. Offenders may face only a fine or suspended jail time and probation.

Marijuana possession remains illegal under federal law, but federal authorities often defer to state jurisdiction on such matters. The exception would be large-scale illegal trafficking of marijuana, especially when it crosses state lines.

PUNISHMENT DEPENDS ON QUANTITY: Small Quantity-Up to 1 year Imprisonment or fine /More than small but less than commercial- Up to 10 Years/ Commercial Quantity-10-20 years+ Heavy fines

DRUG TRAFFICKING:

It includes Producing, transporting, selling or distributing illegal drugs, usually punished for more severely than Possession, because it involves supply chains, organized groups & larger quantities.¹⁹

Drug dealing and drug trafficking laws make it illegal to sell, trade, or otherwise exchange scheduled drugs. Some state laws differentiate offenses for selling drugs for value from providing or sharing drugs. Drug Trafficking is generally a felony offense. It becomes more serious when a case involves a large amount of drugs, or when a person's death results from drug trafficking.

Even small-time drug dealing, such as one person selling an amount of scheduled drugs for personal use, can result in a felony conviction. In such cases, the type of drug and the defendant's criminal record may affect the sentence.

¹⁶ Wayne R. LaFare, *Substantive Criminal Law* (3d ed. 2018).

¹⁸ U.S. Department of Justice, *Drug Courts Program Office*; National Association of Drug Court Professionals.

¹⁹ United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1988.



According to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), federal law provides the potential penalties for drug trafficking charges. For example, 21 U.S.C. Section 841 provides that selling 100 grams of heroin can result in a minimum sentence of five years in prison. That same law provides for a minimum sentence of 10 years for selling 50 grams of methamphetamine.²⁰

PUNISHMENT: 10to20 Years =fine (Rs.1-2 Lakhs or more)

DRUG MANUFACTURING:

Another type of drug crime is Drug Manufacturing. This may involve any step of the production process of an illegal drug. Federal drug laws prohibit the cultivation of marijuana, which might be entirely legal under state law.

The federal government has resisted punishment of state marijuana cultivation at present. It recognizes medical and personal use in state law in a limited sense. Given the tension in federal and state laws, state regulation of the cannabis industry can be quite complicated.²¹

Another form of drug manufacturing is the production of methamphetamines, commonly known as a meth lab. This crime is especially dangerous because of the harmful chemicals involved in the production process and the risk of fire. A conviction for running a drug manufacturing operation may result in a lengthy prison term.

Creating or Cultivating illegal Drugs such as:

Growing Marijuana

Operating Methamphetamine labs

Producing Synthetic Drugs

PUNISHMENT:

Cannabis Cultivation-Up to 10 years,

Opium/Coca Cultivation-10-20 Years

DRUG PARAPHERNALIA:

In general, Drug Paraphernalia describes any equipment that is used to prepare, inject, or inhale illegal drugs. It also refers to any equipment used to conceal, produce, or package drugs.

According to the National Drug Intelligence Centre, it is against federal law for anyone to sell, import, or export any type of drug paraphernalia.²² Many states also prohibit possession of paraphernalia as a misdemeanor offense.

Examples of drug paraphernalia include but are not limited to:

- Pipes and bongs
- Baggies, scales, cutting agents
- Rolling papers
- Syringes and injection kits

Drug paraphernalia can have legitimate purposes. For example, pipes, bongs, and rolling papers often include labeling stating their design for use with tobacco products. Despite such a label, circumstantial evidence can support charges of illegal possession of drug paraphernalia. Police will look for drug residue or evidence of use in conjunction with illegal drugs to bolster claims of a criminal purpose.

Although possession of drug paraphernalia is most often a [misdemeanor](#), states may enhance the crime for sale or transfer of drug paraphernalia to a minor.

²⁰ DEA, *Drug Trafficking Penalties*; 21 U.S.C. § 841.

²¹ Controlled Substances Act, 21 U.S.C. § 802.

²² National Drug Intelligence Center, *Drug Paraphernalia Guide*; 21 U.S.C. § 863.k



CRIMES COMMITTED UNDER THE INFLUENCE:

Crimes committed under the Influence is a secondary drug related offences:
DUI/DWI [Driving under the influences of Drugs], [Driving While intoxicated]
(Police Fraud, Motor Vehicle)
Disorderly conduct or Assault committed while intoxicated.²³

CRIMES COMMITTED TO SUPPORT DRUG USE:

To acquire Money or Property to Finance costly substance Abuse
Economic Compulsive Crimes such as theft , Burglary, Robbery

PUNISHMENT:10-20 Years +Fine

ORGANIZED CRIMES:

Organized Crimes is also known as Systematic Crimes, Violence and Crimes stemming from drug markets such as
Gang or Cartel Violence
Territorial disputes
Money laundering
Corruption tied to drug trade operation

VI. PROVISIONS RELATED TO DRUGS CRIME

Section-8: Prohibition of certain operation
Section-20: Punishment for contravention in relation to cannabis plant and cannabis
Section-21: Punishment for contravention in relation to Manufactured drugs and preparations
Section-22: Punishment for contravention in relation to Psychotropic Substances
Section-23: Punishment for illegal import in to India, Export from India or transshipment of Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.
Section-27: Punishment for Consumption of any Narcotics Drugs or Psychotropic Substances.
Section-27A: Punishment for Financing illicit traffic and harbouring offenders.
Section-28: Punishment for attempts to commit offences.
Section-29: Punishment for Abetment and criminal conspiracy
Section-30: Preparation
Section-35: Presumption of Culpable mental state.
Section-37: Offences to be cognizable and non-bailable
Section-42: Power of entry, search, seizure and arrest without warrant or Authorization.
Section-44: Power of entry, search, seizure and arrest in offences relating to coca plant, opium poppy and cannabis plant.
Section-50: Conditions under which search of persons shall be conducted.
Section-52: Disposal of person arrested and articles seized.
Section-54: Presumption from Possession of illicit articles.
Section-60: Liability of illicit drugs, substances, plants, articles and conveyances to confiscation.

²³ Paul J. Goldstein, *The Drugs/Violence Nexus: A Tripartite Conceptual Framework*, 15 J. Drug Issues 493 (1985).



VII. CASE LAWS RELATED TO DRUG RELATED -CRIME

E. MICHEAL RAJ V. NARCOTIC CONTROL BUREAU (2008) 5 SCC 161

FACTS:

The appellant ,E. Micheal Raj ,was arrested in 2001 for possessing more than 4 kilograms of a brown powder mixture containing 60 grams of heroin.

The Prosecution argued that the total weight of the mixture should determine sentencing ,under the NDPS Act, Possession of 250 grams or more of heroin (a commercial quantity) attracts a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years

ARGUMENTS:

The defence argued that sentencing should be based on the actual narcotic content (60 grams of heroin)rather than the total weight of the mixture.

They relied on Section 21 of the NDPS Act, which specifies punishment based on the "quantity of the narcotic drug," arguing that "narcotic drug" refers to the pure substance, not the adulterated mixture.

DECISION:

The Supreme Court ruled in favor of the accused, holding that only the weight of the pure narcotic substance (heroin) should be considered for sentencing. The Court clarified that the "quantity" under Section 21 refers to the drug's actual content, not the entire seized material. Therefore, the sentence was reduced from 10 years to the minimum 6 months, as 60 grams fell below the commercial threshold.²⁴

2. S MOHAN V. STATE (2024) CRL.O.P.(MD) NO.19504 OF 2024(MADRAS HIGH COURT)

FACTS:

S. Mohan was arrested for possessing 60 grams of dried magic mushrooms that is scientifically called as Psilocybe Cubensis, which contain psilocybin that is a banned psychotropic substance.

The prosecution argued that the mushrooms fell under the NDPS Act's definition of "psychotropic substances."

ARGUMENTS:

The defence argued that magic mushrooms are natural fungi and are not explicitly listed as a banned substance under the NDPS Act. While psilocybin is prohibited, the mushrooms themselves are not.

They cited E. Micheal Raj to argue that the total weight of the mushrooms (60 grams) could not be equated to the psilocybin content, which was negligible and unspecified in forensic reports.²⁵

DECISION:

The Madras High Court ruled in favour of the accused and asserted that magic mushrooms do not qualify as a "psychotropic substance" under Section 2(xxiii) of the NDPS Act. The Court stressed that the Act criminalizes specific chemical compounds such as psilocybin, not their natural sources, unless explicitly mentioned.²⁶

3. TOOFAN SINGH V. STATE OF TAMILNADU (2023) SC 684

FACTS:

Toofan Singh was convicted based on a confessional statement made to a Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) officer under Section 67 of the NDPS Act.

The prosecution treated this confession as conclusive evidence of guilt.

²⁴ *E. Micheal Raj v. Narcotic Control Bureau*, (2008) 5 SCC 161.

²⁵ *S. Mohan v. State*, CRL.O.P.(MD) No. 19504 of 2024 (Madras High Court).

²⁶ NDPS Act, 1985, Schedule of Psychotropic Substances.



ARGUMENTS:

The Defence argued that confessions to police officers are inadmissible under Article 20(3) of the Constitution, which protects against self-incrimination.

They contended that NCB officers, being "police officers" in substance, could not extract legally valid confessions.

DECISION:

The Supreme Court held that confessions to NCB officers are inadmissible, as they function as police officers for the purposes of investigation. The Court ruled that such confessions violate Article 20(3) and cannot be used as sole evidence for conviction.²⁷

KARNAIL SINGH V. STATE OF HARYANA (2009) 8 SCC 539

FACTS:

Karnail Singh was sentenced to 10 years of imprisonment for possessing 50 kg of poppy husk, which is considered as a commercial quantity.

The trial court refused to consider mitigating factors like his age (65) and lack of criminal intent, citing the NDPS Act's mandatory minimum sentencing.

ARGUMENTS:

The Defense argued that judicial discretion must apply even in mandatory sentencing regimes. They cited the appellant's age, poverty, and absence of Mens rea (intent to traffic) as the grounds for leniency.

DECISION:

The Supreme Court upheld the conviction but reduced the sentence to 7.5 years, recognizing that mitigating circumstances could justify deviations from mandatory minimums. The Court affirmed that judges retain limited discretion to consider factors like age, health, and socioeconomic background.²⁸

VIII. CONCLUSION

Drug-related crime remains a complex challenge that affects individuals, families, and communities on multiple levels. It is driven not only by the availability of illegal substances but also by deeper social issues such as poverty, unemployment, lack of education, and limited access to mental-health support. Effective solutions therefore require more than strict law enforcement they demand a balanced approach that includes prevention, rehabilitation, and community intervention. Strengthening education, expanding treatment programs, and creating economic opportunities can significantly reduce both drug abuse and the crimes associated with it. Ultimately, addressing drug-related crime is not just about reducing criminal activity; it is about promoting safer communities and giving people the support and resources they need to build healthier, more stable lives. One of the most significant realizations in recent years is that drug-related crime is not merely a criminal issue; it is equally a public-health and social-welfare concern. Many offenders are driven by addiction, desperation, trauma, or a lack of support systems. Without addressing these underlying vulnerabilities, criminal penalties alone often fail to break the cycle of substance abuse and repeated offending. This is why comprehensive strategies such as rehabilitation programs, counseling services, and harmreduction initiatives are essential. These approaches not only help individuals overcome addiction but also reduce the likelihood that they will return to drug-related activities upon release or recovery. Moreover, drug-related crime thrives in environments where opportunities are limited. High unemployment, poverty, lack of education, unstable family structures, and exposure to violence all increase the likelihood that individuals will engage in drug use or

²⁷ *Toofan Singh v. State of Tamil Nadu*, (2021) 4 SCC 1.

²⁸ *Karnail Singh v. State of Haryana*, (2009) 8 SCC 539.



participate in drug-related trade. Investing in youth development, community outreach, education, and economic opportunities can significantly reduce the pressures that lead to substance abuse and criminal behavior. Prevention, therefore, becomes just as important as enforcement. Communities that offer support, resources, and hope are far less likely to experience high rates of drug-related activity. At the same time, governments, schools, and communities must work together to provide accurate information about the dangers of drug abuse and to promote healthier alternatives. Public awareness campaigns, school-based prevention programs, and mental-health services can play a crucial role in changing attitudes and reducing the demand for illegal substances. When the demand decreases, the incentive for drug trafficking and supply-driven crime also diminishes. Ultimately, reducing drug-related crime requires a balanced and coordinated approach. Law enforcement, public health agencies, educational institutions, and community leaders must collaborate to create a society where people are supported, informed, and given real opportunities to thrive. Strict enforcement alone may provide temporary relief, but lasting change comes from addressing both the symptoms and the causes of drug-related behavior.²⁹

Drug-related crime is not an issue that can be solved overnight, nor can it be addressed through punishment alone. A holistic, long-term strategy one that combines enforcement with education, rehabilitation, social support, and economic development is essential. By focusing on prevention, treatment, and community empowerment, societies can reduce the harms of drug-related crime and pave the way for safer, healthier, and more resilient communities.³⁰

SUGGESTIONS

Strengthen Prevention and Awareness Programs

Creating strong educational programs in schools and communities can help young people understand the dangers of drug abuse early on. Awareness campaigns that show real-life consequences health risks, legal penalties, and social impact can reduce the likelihood of drug involvement.

Improve Access to Rehabilitation and Treatment

Many people involved in drug-related crime struggle with addiction. Providing affordable, accessible, and community-based rehabilitation centers can help individuals recover instead of returning to criminal activity. Treatment is often more effective than punishment in preventing reoffending.

Promote Rehabilitation Over Incarceration for Minor Offenders

For users or low-level offenders, treatment programs, counseling, community service, or supervised release can be better solutions than long jail sentences. This reduces overcrowded prisons and helps individuals reintegrate into society.

Improve Mental Health Services

Many drug users struggle with trauma, stress, or mental-health issues. Providing access to counseling, psychological support, and crisis intervention can reduce drug dependency and prevent related criminal behavior.

Encourage International Cooperation

Drug trafficking is often a global issue. Countries should work together to share intelligence, strengthen border security, and disrupt international drug networks.

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