

# Social Media: A bane or boon for youth of India with reference to Drug abuse

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## Abstract

Drugs or substance abuse is global problem. Drug abuse effects individual as well as the family. The Article 47 of Indian Constitution has given responsibility on the State to protect the people from the consumption of drinks and drugs which are injurious to health. However the current scenario in the country and the world is that youngsters are misusing the social media platform for drugs abuse. The statistical data which is showing percentage of the young generation using social media is alarming. Infact its not about the no of youngsters using the social media but what alarming is how much time and on what they are spending their time is alarming. The maximum youngsters are addicted to social Media. The life style is changing and everyone is happy in the virtual world thinking it to be real. The young generation unfortunately becoming victim of the concept "Fear of Missing Out i.e. FOMO". Social media platform is revolutionary development in technology but it is making youngsters virtually attached and not emotionally. Social media is glorifying the parties where in drugs and alcohol is taken by the people. Such activities on social media is setting wrong standard in front of the young generation. Basically the social media is a fun platform and it is expected to be used as the medium interaction and fastest mode of communication and not to use as the place to sell the illegal substances or drugs.

## Key Words

Drug Abuse, Young Generation, Social Media, Impact, illegal substance

## Introduction

Social Media has become indivisible part of everybody's life, especially many young generations. The entire world is under influence of social media and its impact can be seen. The young ignited minds are spending their time and energy on the social media so regourously that they are not even bothered by its harmful impact on life. No doubt the effects of social media are positive as well but by and large they are negative. The user must understand that if the use of social media is done mostly for the commerce, trade or business then it is fine but if it is not used for the above referred purposes or to achieve any professional goal then certainly it is of great concern.

Even if you look at the statistics, you will come across the same story. Social media is continuing to gain popularity every day. Impacts of Social Media on youth are also quite evident in different frames of our lives.

It is very important to note here that the young generation is spending their maximum hours on these social sites which are actually for the entertainment for few minutes but unfortunately the young generation is busy in uploading their photos on Instagram or uploading their videos on TIKTOK by which they think that their video will be viral and they will be famous on social media platform. The social media has changed the way of communication and world has come closer. People are happy to be in touch through social media platforms to whom they cannot meet personally. When we are discussing this bright side that people have come close and can be in touch with anyone who is sitting in another corner of the world but we cannot forget the dark side of this. This is very much disastrous. Social media is the platform which can expose people to drug abuse i.e substance abuse very easily. Therefore whenever the topic of drug abuse is discussed, social media has so many hidden secrets where in we can see the reasons behind drug abuse and how young generations are victims of the use of social media. This Article is focusing on the darker side of impact of Social media and drug abuse.

### **Nexus between Social Media and Drug abuse**

There is a life risk in drugs and alcohol addiction but the latest addiction is of social media which is equally hampering mental health of the addicted.. The social media is now a dyas used for selling drugs especially through instagram, tinder etc. This social media addiction is creating peer pressure specifically on young generation by which they are prone for abusing drugs. Social media glorifies taking alcohol and drugs taken by teens and unfortunately young generation is falling for that glorification and feel abusing drugs or taking alcohol is normal thing. In the beginning they may not feel any danger but it takes toll on life of the young social media users.<sup>1</sup>

In our Indian culture drug abuse or alcohol is considered as a negative, in the sense the person who is having habits of drinking alcohol or involve in drug abuse is considered as a person with bad habits or it was considered as offensive. But with the development in new technology and this virtual world taking alcohol and involved in drug abuse is considered as normal thing rather it is considered that one who does this belongs to high status. It is important to note that why this sudden change is been seen especially in young generations.

Earlier when social media was not present to such extent that time television was the attraction. During this phase the advertisements of alcohol was shown carefully that to following the sensor norms. The use of drugs or alcohol was never glorified on television or any other medium like radio

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<sup>1</sup><https://novarecoverycenter.com/drug-use/social-media-contributes-drug-abuse/>

etc. However with the development of social media through the different social sites like Instagram, Facebook, TIKTOK, Snap chat etc, the young generation is exposed to such things very fast. The problem with these social network sites is that unfortunately the drinking alcohol and taking drugs is showed in positive way. It showed in such a glamorous way that the young generation finds it very interesting and get desperate to try this. In addition to that the celebrities also post their videos on social sites while partying. It is already proven aspect of human psychology that if the boys or girls of your age are involved in something u get attracted to that rather gets desperate to do so because you start thinking the thing which all these people are doing is normal and I should also try this irrespective of the fact that such activity will have negative impact on your life.

Current scenario is that the one who is not involved in such drug abuse or taking alcohol is not considered to be of progressive thoughts. Rather they are considered to be having low status or low profile life style. The one who is watching all these regularly on social media is definitely feeling to experience it because it is glorified and shown that it's a real fun and exciting too.

Further now the young generation is facing the problem of FOMO i.e. fear of missing out.

FOMO, or "fear of missing out," is a trend that is progressively rising. It is creating a pressure in day to day life. So far research on this concept of "Fear of missing out" reveals that any body is at risk and it affects your mental peace, happiness negatively Dr. Dan Herman, coined the term "fear of missing out" in his research paper on marketing.<sup>2</sup>

Especially youngsters may feel FOMO and feel pressured to experiment with drugs and alcohol just to keep pace with what his/her friends are doing or to carry on with that to follow super stars of bollywood or anyother on social media. However, when they can not keep pace with what their friends are experiencing and showing on social media they start feeling low and dissatisfaction towards life. This is when their mental health starts detoriorting and they may lost interest in their life due to deep frustration, mood swings etc.<sup>3</sup>

Now we could see from above that there is some clear nexus between social media and drugs abuse. Social media is recent concept or recent platform on which no extensive research is done. Therefore, to comprehend the nexus between social media and drug abuse we need to understand as social media glorifies and glamorizes the drug abuse and alchol boosing which ultimately affects mental health. Because regrettably now a days social media is the medium to sell the drugs and giving exposure to youngsters to buy drugs. There are few more ways where we could trace the impact of social media on drug abuse. On Social media the one who posts regarding drug abuse does not post the bad side i.e effects of such abuse. Therefore, social media shows only one side picture and not the other which is dangerous.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.verywellmind.com/how-to-cope-with-fomo-4174664>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.projectknow.com/teen/fear-of-missing-out/>

Then one more aspect is that people are not comfortable in expressing their willingness to take drugs or alcohol in-person or in face to face conversation. Where as experts says that on social media people feel more comfortable to discuss and encourage about drugs and alcohol use. Survey shows that addiction of the drug abuse or alcohol has more bad effects than the addiction of social media. But the impact of social media is also notabely increasing in India.<sup>4</sup>

### **The statistics about the use of social media networks in India.**

#### **Whatsapp use in India**

Whatsapp has more than 340 Million users in India. India is a leading country as far as audience size is concerned.<sup>5</sup>

#### **Survey on Time spent on social media: as source of happiness for Indians (2019)**

It is note worthy that Ipsos (multinational market research and consulting firm) survey reveals that 43 % of Indians feel that source of their happiness is social media, where as globally 42% people believe that their source of happiness is social media.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup><https://www.byantreatmentcenter.com/2020/06/04/dangerous-connection-between-social-media-and-drug-abuse/>

<sup>5</sup>Published by [H. Tankovska](#), Jan 28, 2021

<sup>6</sup>Published by [Statista Research Department](#), Oct 16, 2020 [https://www.statista.com/topics/5113/social-media-usage-in-india/#dossierSummary\\_\\_chapter3](https://www.statista.com/topics/5113/social-media-usage-in-india/#dossierSummary__chapter3)

### **Survey regarding Facebook online reach in India (FY 2015-2023)**

In 2018 only 20 % Indians were using Facebook. By 2023 the network site's use was expected to reach to 31 %. By 2023 The estimated total population of India will be around 1.42 billion which indicates that Facebook will be having high user base.<sup>7</sup>

### **Statistics: Social media users in India till January 2021**

Till January 2021 there were 448.0 million social media users in India. In between 2020 -2021 number of social media user is increased by 78 millions.<sup>8</sup>

Mr. Ravi Shnakar Prasad ( Union Minister) while announcing social media rules declared that whatsapp users in India are more than 53 Crores, YouTube HAS OVER 44.8 Crores, Facebook around 41 Crores and Instagram 21 Crores.<sup>9</sup>

### **Social media and online Marketing of the Drugs like weed, marijuana etc.**

We all know that how social network sites work. It is the fastest mode of communication. The social media is a platform which has huge marketing potential. Th people use it to launch their brand to render the good and services to the other users of social media .The popularity is capitalized by these established sellers on social media due to the size of the social media. The crowd is already there and you need to display your goods or services in attractive way to bring more and more clients and customers towards you. We can not post all posts freely on social platform. The algorithm on social media is different. Sometimes you could see that some posts gets viral so fast like fire when it gets clicked thousand times by user.<sup>10</sup>

The social media has many suitable ways for buyers and seller to get connected and preview the product and this doesn't require any expert knowledge which is required in the Dark Web.

Privaetly theses social media sites are used for advertising and selling of drugs.

All these activities are done in dark web which are very difficult to trace. Drug dealers involved in such selling activities do not sell the product the way we commonly see on Amazon or flip cart like " Drug for sale". They use images or hashtags to attract fascinated or interested buyers and then use some apps like KiK or some similar app to crack the deal. <sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup>Published by [Sandhya Keelery](https://www.statista.com/topics/5113/social-media-usage-in-india/#dossierSummary__chapter3), Oct 16, 2020 [https://www.statista.com/topics/5113/social-media-usage-in-india/#dossierSummary\\_\\_chapter3](https://www.statista.com/topics/5113/social-media-usage-in-india/#dossierSummary__chapter3)

<sup>8</sup>[ps://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2021](https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2021)

<sup>9</sup><https://www.indiatoday.in/technology/news/story/government-reveals-stats-on-social-media-users>

<sup>10</sup><https://rapidboostmarketing.com/online-marketing-101-for-cannabis-marijuana-and-weed-industry-social-media>

<sup>11</sup><http://observer.com/2014/05/heres-every-statistic-you-could-want-on-instagram-drug-dealers/>

Unfortunately the young generation is victim of drug abuse in India. The percentage of drug abuse involvement of young generation is increasing day by day. In 2015, a 34-year-old software sector employee who was trafficking drugs via social media has been arrested by the Central Crime Branch (CCB) police in Bengaluru. He was using a Facebook page to attract buyers of narcotic substances.<sup>12</sup> Then recently in 2017 weed from Himachal sold on Instagram! Marijuana on sale via social media and delivered by speed post.<sup>13</sup>

Further a 35-year-old neurologist has been arrested by Hyderabad Police for allegedly making and selling chocolates laced with marijuana on social media through Instagram for the last two years<sup>14</sup> These are few incidences im mentioning here just give the idea what and how things are changing in our country due to over and uncontrolled use of social media especially by young generation.

### **India and drug abuse policy**

India has signed few International Conventions in 1961,1971 & 1988 to fight against traffic in Narcotics drugs.

Therefore to control such illegal activities relating to drug abuse, in India we have enacted following laws :

The *Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985* has replaced the Opium Acts and the Dangerous Drugs Act. The objective behind passing this enactment was to provide ample penalties for trafficking in drugs, make strong enforcement powers, execute international conventions to which India is signatory. and impose controls over psychotropic substances. In 1989, 2001 and most recently in 2014 few amendments were made in the Act.<sup>15</sup>

The *Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985* is pthe narcotics drugs and psychotropic substances. Other than prohinition on cultivation this act bans the sale purchase, import-export and consumption of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and trats it as serious as crime in India. *The use of such drus can be permitted only for scintific purpose only.*<sup>16</sup>

Irrespective of the enforcement of laws regarding drugs abuse in India, many aspects are not covered in these enactments. There is no express provision as to restrict the advertising of these drugs like heroin, hash , weed, marijuana etc indirectly on the social platforms like Instagram, facebook, Tinder. The youth is getting exploited due to this uncontrolled social media activities. The dark web is going

<sup>12</sup> <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.india.com/viral/weed-from-himachal-sold-on-instagram>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/hyderabad-doctor-held-for-selling-marijuana-laced-chocolates>

<sup>15</sup> <http://lawtimesjournal.in/drug-abuse-and-crimes>

<sup>16</sup> <http://probono-india.in/blog-detail.php?id=188>

to create big problem for the Drug law enforcement agencies in coming future. Recently the Indian apex court as well observed the necessity of stringent punishment in case of crimes relating to Drugs.<sup>17</sup>

## Conclusion

The drug abuse is disgrace for every country especially a country like India. Recently entire nation was shattered with the Death of the Actor Sushant Singh Rajput. The prima facie reason is drug abuse. Many aspects were unfolded regarding drug paddling, involvement of bollywood actors and actresses in drug abuse which is shocking. India is a developing country and we can't afford to see the young generation is spoiled due to this addiction. The developed nations are still facing problems and trying to combat the issue of drug abuse which is taking toll on the life of the youth in their country. We do have Constitutional Mandate to safeguard people from drug abuse. Irrespective of these preventive measures we are still facing the problem of drug abuse and unable to find concrete solution on it. In India Every third person in city today is a youth. . In coming years, the median individual in India will be 29 years, and soon India will become youngest country in the world. It means that the development of the nation is in the hands of youth of the Nation. Swami Vivekananda once said that India will become global leader. He was having faith on the youth of the nation that they will lead the world in spirituality and brotherhood. But unfortunately the young generation has forgotten our moral values and culture. It really disheartening to see the youth of the nation is unnecessarily wasting their time on social media and involved in such illegal activities like drug abuse.

Our government does have strategies and policies to control the drug abuse but it seems that the provisions are not up to the mark to prohibit the drug abuse. The social media is leaving great negative impact on the young generation by which the young generation is forgetting the correct path. It is important to note here that now a days everyone is busy in uploading their videos, their family problems, issues faced by them on social platforms like Instagram, facebook etc. Indirectly the people involved in illegal activities like drugs paddling gets attract towards such post and unknowingly u get involved in drug abuse.

The need of an hour is Government should take the cognizance of the misuse of the social platform and should have preventive measures too specifically for social media. We need national action plan on substance abuse. Further parents should pay attention towards social media activities of their ward. Now young generation is more keen about their privacy and can't even tolerate the interference of

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<sup>17</sup>*Hira Singh v. Union of India* Criminal Appeal no 722/2017

their parents. But this trend is indirectly heading towards the problem like drug abuse. The youngsters do not understand that the so called personal space or privacy will drag them into dangerous situation and may be it will be difficult to get normal life.

The use of social media is for fun and entertainment and not to involve into activities which may take a toll on your life. Government is required to take prohibitory measures to control such illegal activities on social media. National awareness campaign, counseling centers for the youngsters are the measures which can implemented from ground level. The open discussion forums for youngsters who are addicted to social media can also be helpful. It is important to hear the alarming sound and focus on the career and positive things in life. The users must know that the constructive use of social media is best and will make you successful in your life but unfortunately the use is growing towards the destructiveness. Youngsters must understand that it's better to share their feelings to friends and family, instead of being active or getting engrossed into virtual world which is ultimately not real world but mirage.