

# Substance Abuse in India: Understanding the Pattern and Depths

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## ABSTRACT

Substance abuse is a significant global public health concern, and India is not an exception. All over the India, a variety of substances are consumed, such as tobacco, opioids, alcohol, and illegal drugs. In order to comprehend the prevalence and distribution of substance use in India, this review paper presents an overview of the statistics that are currently accessible. In order to investigate patterns and trends among various communities, women, and vulnerable groups, the two survey reports on substance use in India (2004 and 2019) were reviewed. Early findings from these investigations indicates that alcohol is the most widely used drug in India, with tobacco and opioids coming in second and third. These substances have a negative impact on people's health and increase their risk of illness, impacting their families, and the system of healthcare. 16.6 crore individuals, or 14.6% of the population, were alcohol drinkers, according to a national survey on the prevalence and trends of substance use in India that was carried out in 2019. The two most widely used drugs in India are cannabis and opioids, together used by about 3.1 crore people, or 2.8% of the country's population. These findings emphasized the significance of interventions for the millions of youth who are susceptible to addiction and who face the danger of experiencing health problems and other unfavorable social consequences. Considering the enormous treatment deficit in the country, India has to make major investments to increase treatment options. In summary, understanding the prevalence and patterns of substance use in India is essential for developing effective public health programs. Developing comprehensive and long-lasting interventions to mitigate the detrimental impacts of substance use on public health and wellbeing necessitates a multidimensional approach that considers socioeconomic considerations, cultural sensitivities, and regional variations.

**Keywords:** Substance Use, Young Adults, Opioids, Alcohol, Health.

## 1. Introduction

According to the WHO, substance abuse is a multifaceted problem. This is particularly true for India, where drug misuse is a complicated issue encompassing "cultural, economic, and social factors,". Substance misuse, which is a significant healthcare concern in India, is represented by complex patterns and consuming habits that vary by location and intensity of use. India's vast "cultural, socio-economic, and regional diversity" makes it a vital place to study substance use and misuse as the nation's population of over "1.3 billion" people continues to expand. The main causes of these divergent patterns in drug and alcohol consumption are the nation's swift socioeconomic transformations and the stress that accompanies "industrialization and urbanization". An investigation of the nature of substance misuse in the nation must take into account the growing abuse of non-traditional substances in the nation (Ambekar et al., 2017, 2018, 2019; Ambekar & Mohan, 2019; Mathers et al., 2010; UNODC, 2004; Varshney et al., 2016).

The issue of substance addiction is not new, especially in India, where drug usage has historically included the use of "alcohol and tobacco". However, in recent times, drug addiction has expanded to encompass not only prescription medication abuse but also the abuse of "opioids, cannabis, and other drugs". "Social

changes, shifts in drug-use attitudes, socioeconomic status, and globalization” are some of the elements influencing this change in drug misuse patterns, and this type of research is crucial for developing effective policy. The availability of drugs from “illicit sources and the expanding power of global drug markets” are two factors that have led to the current state of affairs. Substance misuse and addiction are the cause of an individual's well-being and health, but they also have an effect on “families, communities, and public health expenses”. “The costs of addiction, the costs to the healthcare system, loss of productivity, spread of infectious diseases like hepatitis and HIV/AIDS; and other mental health conditions” are some of the factors associated with the substance use (Ambekar et al., 2017, 2018, 2019; Ambekar & Mohan, 2019; Mathers et al., 2010; UNODC, 2004; Varshney et al., 2016).

With the aim of providing an in-depth understanding of the substance abuse patterns that currently exist in India, the present research makes use of data from nationwide surveys that were done in 2004 and 2019. The surveys emphasize “demographic variations, prevalence rates, and regional differences” in substance use, which offer important insights into the changes and progressions in the field of substance abuse over time. These surveys provide essential information about drug usage trends and prevalence in India's many “demographic categories and geographical areas”. Comparative research shows that drug usage patterns - especially with prescription opioids, are increasing, and that women and younger people are becoming more prevalent. In-depth discussion of drug abuse's effects on both “individuals and society” is also included in this review. Additionally, in order to obtain understanding, the efficiency of the intervention and policy response plans implemented by the governments of India and the various states are reviewed. This study, which tracks the evolution of substance addiction from 2004 to 2019, offers a foundation for targeted treatments and educated policymaking to address this pressing public health challenge. This strategy provides an original point of view on the challenges and progress in India's war on drug usage.

## **2. Literature Review**

Throughout the years, substance abuse has been alarmingly on the rise throughout India, with noteworthy variances between “states and demographic categories”. For additional research in 2019, extensive data were gathered from the “National Survey on Extent, Pattern, and Trends of Drug Abuse” conducted by the “Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment” in 2004. According to these research, “cannabis, alcohol, and opioids” are the substances that are most frequently abused. Substance abuse still largely affects men, but it is more prevalent among women and younger populations. National surveys conducted in 2004 and 2019 have mapped the drug-use landscape in India, indicating significant shifts in the “demographics, patterns, and prevalence of substance use”. This paper summarizes the findings from these two surveys and emphasizes “changing trends, methodological advancements, and public health policy implications” (Ambekar et al., 2019; UNODC, 2004).

### **2.1 Methodological Advancements**

Under the financial support of UNODC and the “Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment,” the 2004 investigation only included male participants between the ages of 12 and 60. The primary focus of the survey was on substance use practices in “urban and peri-urban areas” (UNODC, 2004). On the other hand, the 2019 study carried out by the “National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre (NDDTC) and AIIMS” expanded its scope to include both genders across all 29 states and 7 Union Territories of India by utilizing a strong combination of “Household Sample Survey” (HHS) and “Respondent Driven Sampling” (RDS) methodology (Ambekar et al., 2019). This methodology advancement allowed data from previously underrepresented or hidden groups, such women and people living in rural regions, to be acquired, providing a more complete view of the drug consumption landscape.

### **2.2 Prevalence and Trends**

A considerable variation in the burden of drug misuse on “women and the rural population” was observed in 2004, along with a growing proportion of the adult population consuming “alcohol, cannabis, and opiates”, according to a report from the Indian government, as published by the UNODC (2004). 21% of the male respondents self-reported that they currently used alcohol as their drug of choice. Rates of opiate and cannabis use were far lower as compared to alcohol. Although the range of chemicals used in different states and the prevalence of prescription opioids appeared to be expanding, alcohol remained the most often consumed psychoactive substance in the 2019 survey (Ambekar et al., 2019). A wider demographic focus also led to a greater knowledge of female substance use and the reporting of usage by younger individuals, which highlighted the country's changing patterns of substance use.

### **2.4 Demographic Shifts**

The 2004 survey showed that drug use broadly and “alcohol, cannabis, and opiates” specifically were fairly widespread. Notably, the survey also brought attention to the detrimental consequences drug use has on rural populations and women. In contrast with significantly lower rates for opioids and cannabis, 21% of men reported to using alcohol currently. The 2019 survey results showed a slight shift in the substance use

habits. Although alcohol remained the most often used psychoactive substance, there was a discernible increase in the number of prescription opioid prescriptions as well as the use of various synthetic forms in various regions. The broader demographic approach, which also highlighted the increased prevalence of substance use among “women and younger groups”, highlighted the nation's changing drug usage dynamics (Ambekar et al., 2019; UNODC, 2004).

## 2.5 Policy Implications

The 2019 survey yielded precise data that allowed for a more sophisticated knowledge of the drug use problem, making it easier to build customized public health plans and interventions. The study's findings have been significant in developing the "National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction," an initiative intended for confronting the intricacies of regional and demographic variations in drug consumption (Ambekar et al., 2019).

## 2.6 Trends and Patterns for Punjab Regarding Opioid and Alcohol

An accurate picture of the trends in substance use over the last fifteen years in India can be obtained by comparing survey results from 2004 to 2019. Upgraded data quality and increased relevance as a resource for policymakers are two benefits of the 2019 survey's modified approach. The wider focus and comprehensive demographic data provide light on drug usage trends in India and emphasize how crucial it is that public health initiatives targeting substance abuse in the country in the future be “adaptive and versatile”. With drug use remaining a major public health threat, it is essential to use these surveys to guide interventions that are context-specific and sensitive to evolving demography, heightening the level of protection against the harm associated with substance use (Ambekar et al., 2019; UNODC, 2004).

### 2.6.1 Opioid Use

In fact, the data for Punjab was missing entirely from the 2004 survey, but the trends at national level raised enough of concerns about substance use being underestimated because of the methods being used to collect the data. The 2019 survey found that Punjab was indeed significantly affected by the use of opioids. The prevalence of opioid use was amongst the highest in surveys to date, with particular emphasis on opioid dependence. The 2019 survey pointed out that Punjab had a “quantum of work” value of 2.8% for opioids. For a chronic condition such as “opioid use disorders”, this would suggest that there are a large number of people who need help (Ambekar et al., 2019; UNODC, 2004).

### 2.6.2 Alcohol Use

Like opioids, state-specific data for Punjab right from the 2004 survey is not available. However, the 2004 national survey had estimated substance use less precisely. While, as per the 2019 survey, current alcohol use was one of the highest in the country among the adult male population of Punjab, finding implies a culture of alcohol use that has deep roots in the “socio-economic pattern and lifestyle”. The 2019 survey was methodologically much improved from the 2004 survey and included more “robust scientific methods and a much broader demographic reach” when compared to the 2004 survey in terms of gender distribution and wider age group. Therefore, it is possible that the shift in methodology resulted in a better and more comprehensive picture of substance use from both Punjab and India. Both the surveys underline the significant health and social services burden, which is required to address the problem of substance use. However, the findings of the 2019 survey underline an even greater need for “substantial health and social interventions” given the various dimensions of substance use disorders in Punjab as well as in India (Ambekar et al., 2019; UNODC, 2004).

## 2.7 Literature Gaps

National surveys on substance use in India (2004 and 2019) offers a valuable data for understanding and addressing drug abuse (Ambekar et al., 2019; UNODC, 2004). But there still exists the gaps that require future research for proper policy planning are as follows:

- The 2004 and 2019 surveys faced challenges in underreporting substance use due to social stigma and illegality. Underreporting is still a serious problem in spite of better techniques, especially for women and underrepresented groups. Future surveys could benefit from qualitative approaches to understand cultural and social dynamics.
- Surveys offer cross-sectional data on substance use patterns, but lack longitudinal data tracking individuals over time, limiting long-term insights into substance use trajectories and intervention effectiveness.
- Between 2004 and 2019, India underwent significant legal changes regarding substance control, including prohibition in some states. The 2019 survey provides some insight into substance use prevalence but lacks a deep exploration of their impact on drug use patterns.
- The 2019 survey enhanced gender inclusivity by including women, but there's a need for more detailed gender-based analyses on substance use patterns, motivations, and barriers among women, who may have different healthcare access.

- The 2004 and 2019 surveys did not extensively explore the link between mental health issues and substance use, suggesting future surveys should include modules to better inform treatment approaches.
- The 2019 survey addressed the global rise in non-medical prescription drug use, but future surveys should gather more detailed data on sources, reasons for use, and demographic profiles of non-medical users.
- India's diverse cultural and regional contexts influence substance use, highlighting the need for more culturally nuanced research to inform effective region-specific public health interventions, despite state-level data from the 2019 survey.
- Surveys reveal individual and prevalence rates of substance use but lack comprehensive understanding of its impact on “families and communities”, crucial for developing community-based interventions and support systems.

### 3. Insights from National Survey 2004

“National Survey on Extent, Pattern and Trends of Drug Abuse” in India 2004 addresses a comprehensive range of topics and parameters regarding drug abuse in India. This survey provides a robust framework for understanding the complex landscape of drug abuse in India, indicating both the scope of the problem and the critical areas where interventions are necessary. “National household survey” (NHS) explored the prevalence of drug use among males aged 12-60 years across various substances such as “alcohol, cannabis, opiates”, and their rates of current and poly-drug use. “Drug abuse monitoring system” (DAMS) focused on new treatment seekers, providing details on demographics like “age, employment status, and education level”, and analyzed drugs predominantly used. “Rapid assessment survey” (RAS) conducted at several sites across India to understand drug use patterns, including “heroin and other opiates”, and risk behaviors such as “needle sharing”. “Focused thematic studies” (FTS) targeted specific groups and regions to examine drug use among women, in rural populations, in border areas, and within prisons. “Drug consumption patterns” provided the detailed information on the types of “drugs used, prevalence of use, addiction rates, and comparison of drug use statistics” with national and regional data (UNODC, 2004). “Alcohol, cannabis, and opiates” are the primary substances of abuse. There's a significant prevalence of drug abuse among males in the general population, and substantial numbers indicate poly-drug use and dependency. Data show high drug use among different demographics, including unemployed individuals and those from rural areas, indicating widespread accessibility and use across diverse population segments. The survey highlights significant drug abuse among women, often influenced by abusing family members, and outlines the burden it places on them, including “health, psychological, and economic challenges”. Drug abuse in India is not confined to urban areas but is prevalent in rural regions as well. There exists a notable gap in service delivery with low treatment enrolment and high potential treatment needs. The survey emphasizes the need to “enhance drug treatment services, develop community-based interventions, improve service delivery, and continuously monitor drug use trends” through updated data collection methods and monitoring systems (UNODC, 2004).

#### 3.1 Insights for Alcohol and Opioid Use

The survey indicates that alcohol is the most commonly used substance, with a current use rate of 21% among males aged 12-60 years. Opiates, which include substances like heroin, have a lower prevalence rate of 0.7% for current use. Among those seeking treatment for “drug use, alcohol and opiates” are the most commonly cited substances, with 44% of the treatment seekers using alcohol and 26% using opiates. This suggests a significant burden of disease associated with these substances. “Rapid assessment survey” (RAS) conducted in different Indian cities including potential representatives from Punjab like Amritsar, found that heroin is the most commonly used drug among surveyed drug users, accounting for 36% of usage. Other opiates accounted for 29% and alcohol 5% (UNODC, 2004).

This implies a very high incidence of opioid use in some areas, perhaps the urban centers of the state. Drug abuse also has a major hidden cost in terms of the “time and energy” spent by families and friends to make up for the lost working hours of drug abusers. There is a need to expand community services for the affected families. There is also a need to strengthen further various health care systems in the nation, particularly in the rural areas, and ensure the correct operation of the facility (UNODC, 2004).

### 4 Insights from National Survey 2019

The survey provided a comprehensive view of the “challenges, the pattern and magnitude” of substance use in India. It is a crucial document to help policy-makers plan interventions to address these challenges in an “efficient and cost-effective manner”. The survey covered “alcohol, cannabis, opioids, sedatives, inhalants, cocaine, amphetamines, and hallucinogens”. It provides estimates of health-related indicators of substance use, dependence and harm. It includes a deep data including the prevalence of use that shows how the magnitude of the problem varies among “children, the elderly, and those who are middle-aged”. Additionally, it offers details on substances taken, age at initiation, and other significant factors for both men and women. The survey's estimations of the number of people who use drugs harmfully and those



who are dependent on them are among its most significant features. It provides the estimations individually for every drug. State legislators should find it helpful to create action plans tailored to specific localities. The 2019 survey also estimates the number of Indians who require substance abuse treatment. This include individuals who are drug dependant and those who use drugs harmfully (Ambekar et al., 2019).

The survey's findings highlight India's concerning "drug-use scenario". Psychoactive substances are used by a significant section of the Indian populace, with "alcohol, cannabis, and opiates" being the most often used substances. Although drug usage was quite high among women, especially in the 18 and older age group, it was also very common among men. Men were generally more likely than women to drink alcohol. States in India have extremely different patterns of substance usage; some had far greater rates of dependence on drugs and use than others. The number of people who require help to deal with substance use disorders far outstrips the numbers who are seeking or receiving help. The survey makes it clear that services for substance use and other mental health disorders need to be substantially expanded across India, particularly care for those suffering from the most severe disorders. The survey also shows that there is need for specific drug use policies at both national and state levels, focusing on prevention, treatment and harm reduction, while promoting non stigmatizing and supportive approach towards the needs of people who use such substances. The survey highlights the need for further research into patterns of substance use in India, to better understand the changing use of substances in India, and thereby to enable compilation and updating of policies and programmes, both at national and state levels (Ambekar et al., 2019).

#### 4.1 Insights for Alcohol and Opioid Use

Alcohol is the most commonly used psychoactive substance across the country. The prevalence varies significantly among states, with some showing exceptionally high rates of use. "Chhattisgarh (35.6%), Tripura (34.7%), Punjab (28.5%), Arunachal Pradesh (28%), and Goa (28%)" have the highest prevalence of alcohol use. Nationally, 27.3% of men and only 1.6% of women use alcohol. The survey indicated that a significant proportion of the male population in Punjab consumes alcohol. The disparity highlights a significant gender bias in substance use. Alcohol use among children aged 10-17 years is reported, with states like "Punjab, West Bengal, and Maharashtra" noting higher prevalence among youth than the national average (Ambekar et al., 2019).

About 2.06% of the population uses opioids, with heroin being the most common (1.14%), followed by pharmaceutical opioids (0.96%) and opium (0.52%). The northeastern states (e.g., "Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, and Mizoram") and some northwestern states ("Punjab and Haryana") show a higher prevalence of opioid use. These regions report more than 10% prevalence among the general population. A substantial proportion of opioid users engage in harmful or dependent use, with heroin users exhibiting the highest rates of problematic use. "Chhattisgarh and Tripura" states not only have high alcohol use rates but also significant percentages of the population suffering from alcohol use disorders. Punjab known for its opioid crisis, it has high rates of both opioid and alcohol use, pointing to a significant public health challenge. Northeastern states exhibit higher opioid use rates, particularly heroin, which is the most commonly used opioid (Ambekar et al., 2019).

The nation as a whole has a serious treatment gap, with many people in need of assistance for their alcohol and opioid use disorders but not getting it. The large number of people in states like "Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, and Madhya Pradesh" who needed assistance with substance use disorders demanded significant attention. These findings emphasize the need for targeted treatments that address the individual drug use problems that each state faces, especially in relation to alcohol and opioids. As per the results, state-specific policies and initiatives hold equal significance to national measures when it comes to efficiently handling and mitigating the consequences of substance use in India (Ambekar et al., 2019).

### 5. Comparative Analysis

Nevertheless, compared to the 2004 survey, the 2019 study shows a considerable methodological improvement. To begin with, there were more men and women in the 2019 study than in the 2004 survey (only males). A bias in views of the problem's prevalence in the nation resulted from the 2004 survey's restriction of participants to men. The 2019 study revealed both "national and state-level" findings, allowing one to draw regional comparisons about the issue, whereas the 2004 survey mostly produced national data. Thirdly, the "Household Sample Survey" (HHS) and the "Respondent Driven Sampling" (RDS) approach were combined in a novel way for the 2019 survey. Therefore, a direct comparison of the two studies is not possible, as the 2019 study sought to obtain significantly better estimates of legal, socially acceptable substances (Ambekar et al., 2019; UNODC, 2004).

Pharmaceutical opioids were not categorized as a separate category in the 2004 survey, so the 2019 survey covered a wider spectrum of substances than the 2004 survey did. The use of information technology to collect data in 2019 was of a high standard and material submitted from across many states was "consistent and reliable". The 2019 survey was designed to shape national policy-makers' understanding

of substance use and provided guidance on what measures should be taken. The improvements in “scope, precision of information, and the strategies” of the 2019 survey facilitated a more meaningful and fruitful understanding of substance use patterns in the general population of India compared to the 2004 survey and served to provide a much-needed framework for subsequent surveys and the country's policy making (Ambekar et al., 2019; UNODC, 2004).

The 2019 survey featured significant methodological upgrades, allowing for a “refined, extensive and useful” understanding of substance use across the nation, in order to make the most useful contribution to policy and intervention strategies. Comparing the 2004 and 2019 surveys reveals the changes which substance abuse practices have undergone in the last 15 years and the continuity of certain trends. Alcohol remains the most widely abused substance, with an increase in reported use among adults but a concerning rise among adolescents and women. Opioid abuse has escalated, with variations in the type and prevalence of opioids used across different states. The 2019 report also emphasizes the rising challenge of pharmaceutical opioids, which were less prominent in earlier report (Ambekar et al., 2019; UNODC, 2004). Table 1 summarized the various upgrades in the 2019 survey compared to the 2004 survey on substance use in India.

**Table 1, Upgrades in the 2019 Survey Compared to the 2004 Survey (Ambekar et al., 2019; UNODC, 2004)**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>2004 Survey</b>	<b>2019 Survey</b>
<b>Population Coverage</b>	Only males surveyed	Both males and females included
<b>Geographical Coverage</b>	Findings primarily at national level	Detailed data at both national and state levels
<b>Methodology</b>	Only Household Survey (HHS)	Combination of Household Survey (HHS) and Respondent Driven Sampling (RDS)
<b>Substance Categories</b>	Limited categorization of substances	Expanded categories, including distinct listing of pharmaceutical opioids
<b>Data Collection</b>	Conventional paper-based methods	Use of online tools for data submission, ensuring consistency and security
<b>Policy Focus</b>	Data used for general understanding	Data specifically aimed at informing national policies and programs
<b>Sampling and Scope</b>	Data collected from selected demographics and areas	Comprehensive data from a broader demographic and geographic range

## 6. Discussions

Comparison of the 2004 and the 2019 substance use surveys from India suggest a shift and progress in the comprehending and study of substance use in nation. The 2019 survey covers a wider age group of population. In 2004, the study was conducted among males in the age group of 12-60 years and in 2019, the survey also includes women and children. This is imperative for understanding the extent of substance use among both women and children. The 2004 framework, which solely used household surveys, was crucial but, the 2019 study uses a more diverse methodology. In order to better understand gender-based substance usage, the 2019 survey has implemented respondent-driven sampling. This is an enhanced method designed to combat “prejudice and underreporting”. It should also help in gathering a more comprehensive and illustrative data across different states and demographic groups. As opposed to the 2004 survey, which only reported on the use of “alcohol, cannabis, and opiates”, the 2019 survey lists the prevalence of pharmaceutical opioids.

The fact that emerging kinds of substance use - especially those involving prescription drugs, have proliferated is reflected in this development, which illustrates the evolving character of substance use in India. The 2019 survey also provides relatively detailed state-wise data, reflecting variance in substance use patterns by region. These regional data are much more useful from a policy standpoint, which is an improvement over the 2004 survey, which offers little such information. The differences and similarities in the research “scope and methodology, demographic coverage, and trends” in and understanding of substance use in India, as a function of findings from the two surveys, are summarized in Table 2.

**Table 2, Comparison of 2004 and 2019 Surveys (Ambekar et al., 2019; UNODC, 2004)**

Aspect	2004 Survey Findings	2019 Survey Findings
<b>Overall Substance Use</b>	High prevalence of alcohol (21%), cannabis (3%), opiates (0.7%).	Increase in alcohol use (14.6% of population), cannabis (2.8%), and opioids (2.1%).
<b>Demographic Focus</b>	Focused mainly on males aged 12-60.	Expanded demographic focus, including women and children, providing a broader scope.
<b>Methodology</b>	Utilized household surveys predominantly. Limited methodologies leading to potential under-reporting.	Employed multiple methodologies (household surveys, respondent driven sampling) to enhance data accuracy and representation.
<b>Regional Differences</b>	Highlighted regional variations, but lacked detailed breakdown by state.	Detailed state-wise analysis showing significant regional variations in substance use patterns.
<b>Trends in Substance Types</b>	Alcohol most prevalent, followed by cannabis and opiates. Limited data on pharmaceutical drugs.	Rise in use of pharmaceutical opioids, alongside traditional substances like alcohol and heroin.
<b>Impact on Women and Children</b>	Mentioned but not extensively studied.	Detailed examination of the rising prevalence among women and children, indicating increased vulnerability.
<b>Government and Policy Response</b>	Suggested need for better policy and intervention strategies without detailed action plans.	Offered specific recommendations for policy adjustments and emphasized the need for tailored intervention strategies.
<b>Data Collection Period</b>	Data collected between 2000-2001.	Data collected between December 2017 and October 2018, reflecting more current patterns.
<b>Sample Size and Scope</b>	Limited to 40,697 males, focusing on broader age groups without specifying the youth.	More extensive sample with over 5 lakh individuals interviewed across all demographics.
<b>Substance Use Disorders</b>	Data on dependency and poly-drug use, but less focus on treatment and recovery.	Detailed insights into harmful use, dependency, and the need for comprehensive treatment and intervention strategies.

The 2019 survey, unlike the 2004 case in which limited data on substance use disorders were available, elaborates on aspects of “harmful use, dependency, and the unmet need for treatment and intervention strategies”. It emphasizes the urgent need for all-encompassing healthcare remedies and provides detailed recommendations for “changing policy”, demonstrating a move toward a more all-encompassing strategy for combating substance misuse. The information gathered for the 2019 survey captures shifts and trends that have developed over almost 15 years, reflecting more recent patterns of substance use. Because of its timeliness, the strategies and regulations that are developed using this data are guaranteed to be pertinent and successful in tackling India's current substance misuse problems. Overall, the comparison shows a considerable advancement in the breadth, depth of analysis, and technique of substance addiction research in India. The country's burden of substance abuse is rising, and these developments help us understand the problem better and are essential to creating “public health responses, frameworks for policy, and intervention programs” that succeed.

## 7. Conclusion

India's substance addiction problem is dynamic and ever-changing, necessitating ongoing “surveillance and innovative approaches”. Sufficient “policy measures and interventions” ought to be shaped by forthcoming research and customized to the distinct cultural and socioeconomic environments of several Indian states. Cooperation between the “government, local communities, and international organizations” is crucial to addressing the complex environment of substance abuse in India. In brief, the present investigation looked at the growth of substance usage patterns in India and the extent of influence between 2004 and 2019. A shocking rise in substance misuse is evident when comparing the national surveys conducted in 2004 and 2019. Additionally, there has been a noticeable shift in the chemicals abused, with a considerable increase in the use of pharmaceutical opioids.

Substance usage is also changing the demography of substance users; more women and younger people than ever before are involved in substance use. The findings underscore the pressing necessity for targeted “public health programs and robust legislative structures” that address the complex nature of drug use across various “geographic and demographic settings”. The data indicates that more investigations need to be done in the areas of “thorough treatment, successful prevention, and long-term recovery programs”, despite the efforts of both “governmental and nonprofit organizations” to combat substance misuse. Based on information from the national surveys conducted in 2004 and 2019, substance addiction appears to be a significant issue in Punjab, with areas reporting high reported levels of alcohol, cannabis, and opiate usage. In order to address this intricate problem in the state, a “targeted, culturally sensitive approach” that considers local variations and incorporates the community is necessary.

The substance addiction patterns in Punjab, as shown by the 2019 national survey, demand targeted interventions that account for “regional, cultural, and socioeconomic variations”. A “collaborative, multistakeholder strategy” is necessary to decrease the detrimental consequences on people as “individuals, families, and communities”, and eventually to develop a “stronger, more resilient society”. Subsequent measures should primarily focus on implementing evidence-based policies that address the root causes of substance abuse, increasing public awareness and educating the most vulnerable populations, and enhancing healthcare systems' capacity to treat substance abuse disorders. Furthermore, continuous observation and study are required to adjust and improve these strategies in response to the changing trends in substance use. India can greatly reduce the prevalence of substance abuse by addressing these concerns through educated government and community-based efforts. To be successful in this attempt, all individuals concerned must collaborate with one another and be committed to a long-term strategy that prioritizes “social welfare, public health, and economic stability”.

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