

## **“PERCEPTION ABOUT DRUGS OF ABUSE AMONG PEOPLE OF CENTRAL INDIAN POPULATION”**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Understanding public perception of drug abuse is crucial for developing effective prevention and intervention strategies. This study investigates the perceptions about drugs of abuse among the Central Indian population, focusing on attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge regarding these substances. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining surveys and qualitative interviews to gather comprehensive data. Findings reveal a complex interplay of cultural, social, and individual factors shaping perceptions. While some substances are perceived as culturally acceptable or even beneficial, others are viewed negatively due to their perceived impact on health and societal norms. The study highlights the need for targeted education and culturally sensitive interventions to address misconceptions and promote healthier attitudes toward drug use in the region.

Quantitative findings indicate a spectrum of attitudes towards various drugs, with differences observed based on age, education, and socioeconomic status. While traditional substances like cannabis are often perceived as relatively benign or culturally acceptable for medicinal and recreational use, newer synthetic drugs are viewed more negatively due to their perceived association with crime and health risks. Qualitative data further elucidate these perceptions, revealing nuanced views influenced by family upbringing, peer influences, and media portrayals.

With their consent, approximately one hundred male and female samples of varying ages were gathered for a survey at the Shri Vaishnav Institute of Forensic Science in Indore. The samples were examined and compared properly according to the respective criteria. This study found that, of the 100 samples taken from various individuals, the majority were aware of drugs and had used them at least once in their lives.

Keywords: drugs, perception, drug abuse

## INTRODUCTION

The history of India has seen the utilisation of various substances with mind-altering effects, both for medicinal and recreational purposes. Ancient Indian texts like the Vedas mention "soma," a mysterious plant-based substance thought to induce an altered state of consciousness during religious rituals. The identity of soma remains uncertain, with some scholars speculating that it might have been a psychedelic mushroom or a plant with psychoactive properties. The use of such substances is deeply intertwined with religious and spiritual practices, reflecting an intricate relationship between drugs and culture in ancient India. During the medieval period, Islamic influences introduced new substances to the Indian subcontinent. Opium, for instance, gained recognition for its medicinal purpose and was used in traditional remedies. The opium poppy plant became a fundamental part of Indian pharmacology, and opium trade routes emerged across the region. Notably, the use of opium was not limited to the medieval period; it endured and evolved over centuries, eventually becoming a significant economic commodity during the British colonial era. In the colonial and post-colonial periods, western influence, including the British opium trade, introduced opium cultivation in India, resulting in widespread addiction issues with opium. This historical context set the stage for subsequent drug-related challenges in India, as the nation grappled with issues like addiction, trafficking, and the regulation of controlled substances. The term drug abuse refers to the use of certain chemicals to create pleasurable effects on the brain. Drug abuse is mainly the usage of psychoactive drugs for reasons cited as peer pressure, curiosity, and also as a means of recreational purposes. Drugs were first intended to cause pain relief, and finally, they turned to recreational use and became addictive. Cannabis, marijuana, and hashish are the most widely abused drugs in the world. Around 141 million people in the world consume drugs. Drugs refer to individuals based on differences in gender and their preferences.

Drugs of abuse fall into three categories and include depressants, stimulants, and hallucinogens. Some examples of drugs are alcohol, tobacco, and cocaine from coca, opium and opioids from poppy plants, and hashish or marijuana from cannabis. Synthetic drugs like heroin, LSD, and ecstasy. Drugs of abuse are consumed in different ways, including orally as pills, in the form of injection through veins, or by inhaling in the form of smoking or snorting so that they are absorbed into the blood vessels of the nose. Drug abuse is seen in various age groups, and it is observed in all social and economic forms of life. Drug abuse in India is a widespread concern about the consumption of drugs, as reflected by its high status on health, educational, and political agendas in many countries (8). In India, drug abuse is a common phenomenon enjoyed by both youngsters and adults. India has a population of over a billion, out of which 62.5 million people use alcohol, 8.75 million use cannabis, 2 million use opiates, and 0.6 million use sedatives or hypnotics. The states that contribute the largest number of cannabis users are Uttar Pradesh, which accounts for first (20.8%), then Bihar (18.6%), Kerala (15.8%), West Bengal (7.4%), Maharashtra (7.0%), and many more. Harmful effects of drug abuse include changes in heart rate, changes in blood pressure, heart attack, stroke, psychosis, changes in appetite, cancer, lung disease, and hepatitis. In 2008, the Childline India Foundation published a study on drug abuse among children in Manipur. This study concluded that there is an availability of drugs, from heroin to spam proxies. There is a high chance of HIV/AIDS, which is accompanied by the use of intravenous.

In India, the problem is that there is no substance abuse policy. There is also a high number of children under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act of 1985. The use of tobacco is relatively high in India. As per the 2019 report, the magnitude of drug abuse in India is as follows: 72 lakhs of people need treatment for using cannabis, and 11 lakhs of people need treatment for using sedatives. 60 lakh people need treatment for using opioids. It was estimated that there are around 16 crore alcohol consumers in the 10-75-year-old age group in India, and 5.7 crore people require treatment for using alcohol. (11)

According to the report provided to ministries of health and social justice, the more the consumption of these drugs of abuse, the more serious crimes are committed by a person. The crime rate has considerably increased these years, and punishments like fines and acts have been enacted numerous times. The relationship between drug abuse and crime is that people also commit crimes under the influence of drugs. drug addicts commit crimes to pay for their costly narcotics. And people also commit crimes under the influence of drugs. Drug dependence is a complex issue with social, cultural, biological, geographical, historical, and historical branches. The sale, manufacture, consumption, or distribution of drugs is illegal and hence a crime. Some crimes include prescription forgery, illegal online behaviour and drug theft. Drugs indirectly affect a user's behaviour and their association with violence and other illegal activities in drug manufacturing, distribution, purchase, and consumption. A third study to discuss is the case of Chandrasekharan vs. The State in 2010. Both here, accused and victim in this case were drug substances, are the accused injected the victim with illegal substances and the victim died. Based on the facts and circumstances of the case, the court over the IPC, and convicted the accused under sections 302 and 120 B of the IPC citing the criminal on December 7,1987, the victJuneT26N General Assembly on 7th December 1987 declared 26th June initiatives Drug Day. The government has taken many initiatives in Bharat. programs against drug abuse, include detention Mukht Bharat". The plan included the building of addiction facilities in 272 districts identified as very much accessible to drugs.

This plan is an initiative by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. This study was conducted to determine the perceptions of people about drug abuse. This includes the sensitization of drugs to abuse among youth, adults, and other vulnerable groups, as well as the availability of drugs in our day-to-day lives. The different perceptions of people about drug abuse and what leads people to drugs. The ultimate aim of the study is to understand and analyse the depth of drugs in our contemporary Indian society.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY**

### **1. SAMPLE SIZE**

The sample was collected by using a questionnaire filled out by 100 people in the Indore region of central India.

### **2. SAMPLE COLLECTION**

The sample is collected from different areas of Indore, Madhya Pradesh. Indore is the most populous city in the state of Madhya Pradesh. The current estimated population of Indore in 2023 stands at 3,302,077, whereas back in 1950, it was recorded at 302,233. Over the past year, Indore has witnessed a growth of 93,355 individuals, reflecting an annual change of 2.91%.

The samples were collected from regions of Aurobindo, Vijay Nagar, and areas around Shri Vaishnav Vidyapeeth Vishwavidyalaya College using google forms. The analysis has been done using Excel software

## RESULT

The survey was based on drug abuse among people of the Indore region of Madhya Pradesh state India. In my survey, a study was conducted among people to understand and analyse their perceptions about the usage of drugs and their abusive character. The study was focused on localities and peer groups that have an abundant contribution towards drug abuse. Different age groups of people were taken to give their perceptions of drug abuse. Around 100 samples were taken and analysed.

- I. Among the samples taken the result showed that the majority of people who are vulnerable to drug abuse are from the age group of (21-35) years of age (Fig 1).

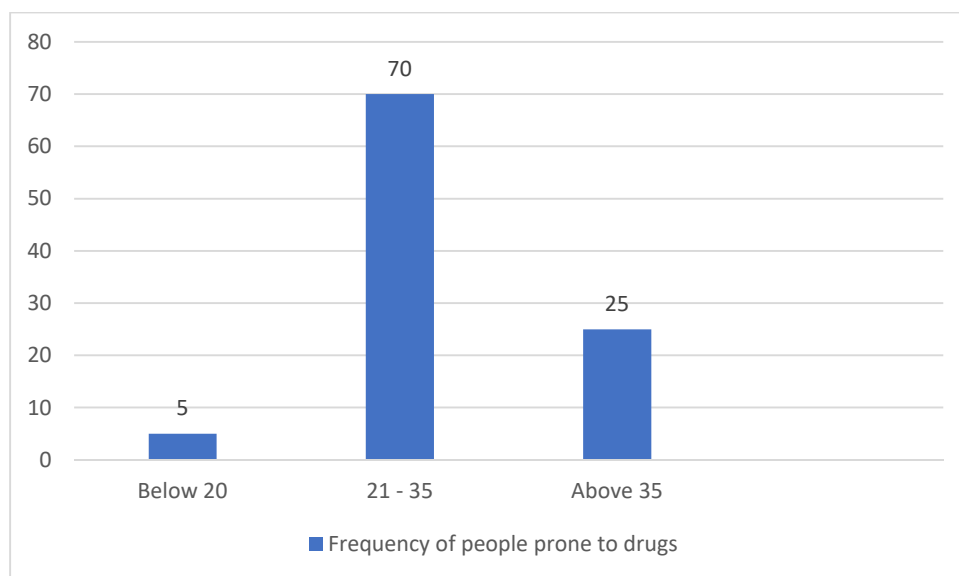


Fig 1: Graph depicting the correlation between age group and drug abuse

- II. As per the result the frequency of males is more in number in abuse of drugs (Fig 2).

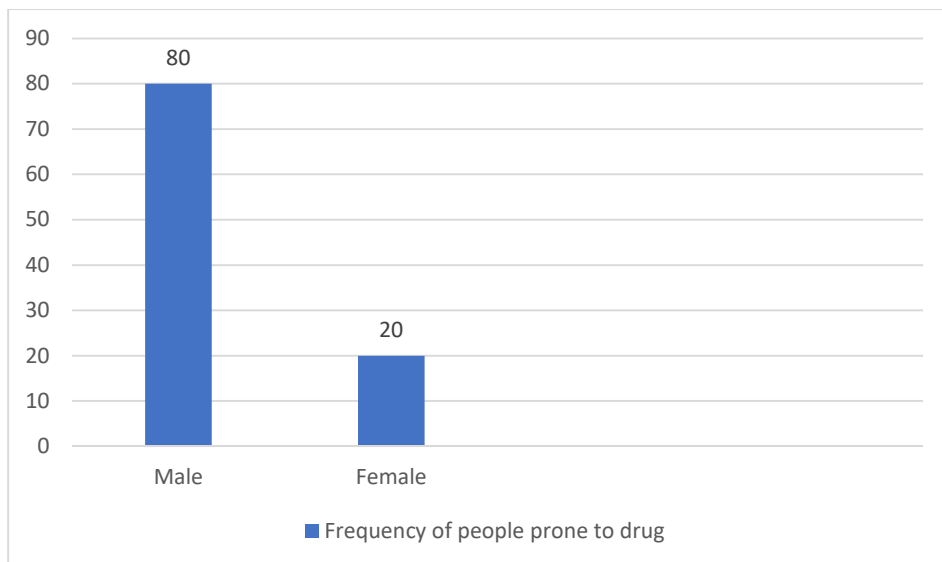


Fig 2: Graph depicting the correlation of gender and drug abuse

III. Concerning social background people from urban areas are vulnerable to drug abuse as compared to rural areas (Fig 3).

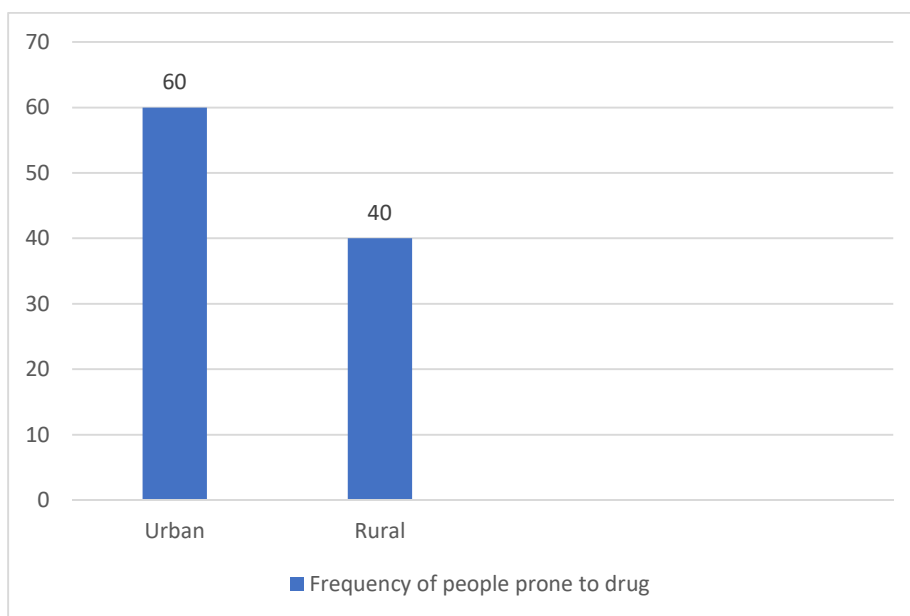


Fig 3: Graph depicting the correlation of social backgrounds and drug abuse

IV. Concerning socio-economic status middle-class people are common users of the drug (Fig 4).

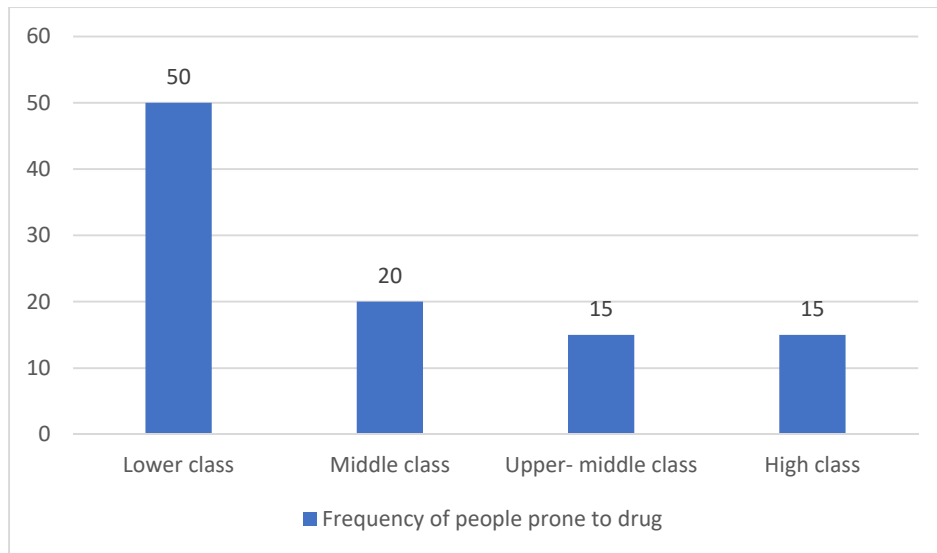


Fig 4: Graph depicting the correlation of socioeconomic status and drug abuse

V. Concerning educational qualifications, literate people are more prone to drugs (Fig 5).

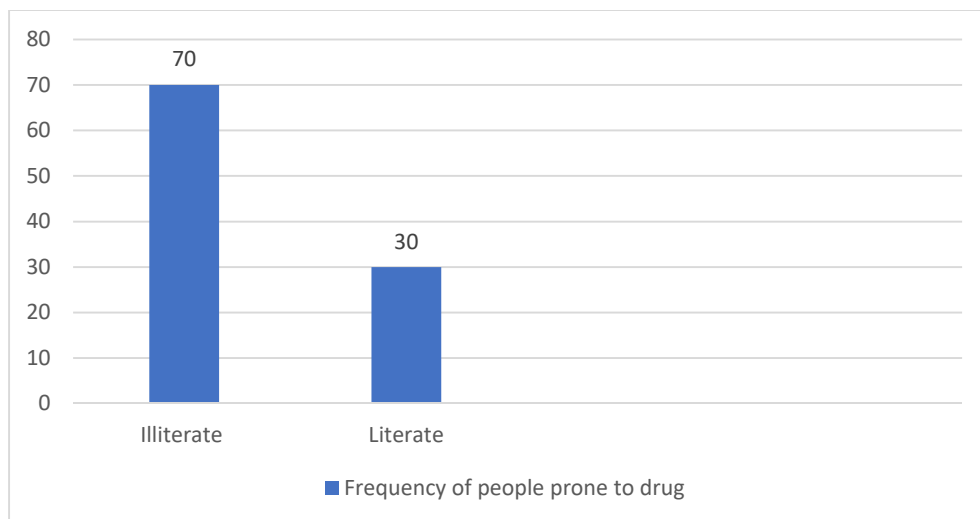


Fig 5: Graph depicting the correlation of various educational qualifications and drug abuse

VI. Concerning the survey, people's knowledge regarding drugs in all aspects (Fig 6).

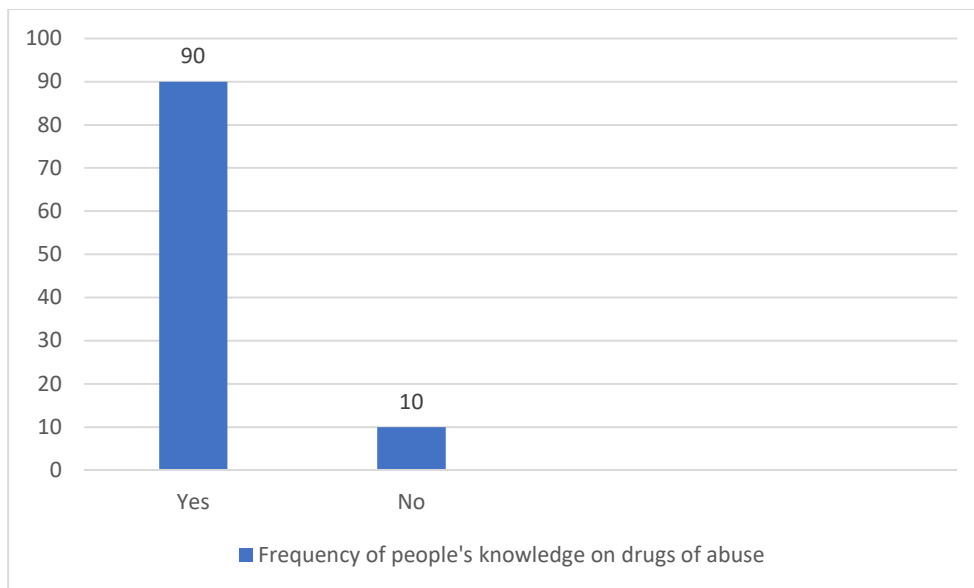


Fig 6: Graph depicting the frequency of people’s knowledge of drugs of abuse

VII. With reference to the survey, alcohol is more consumed, followed by tobacco and weed (Fig 7).

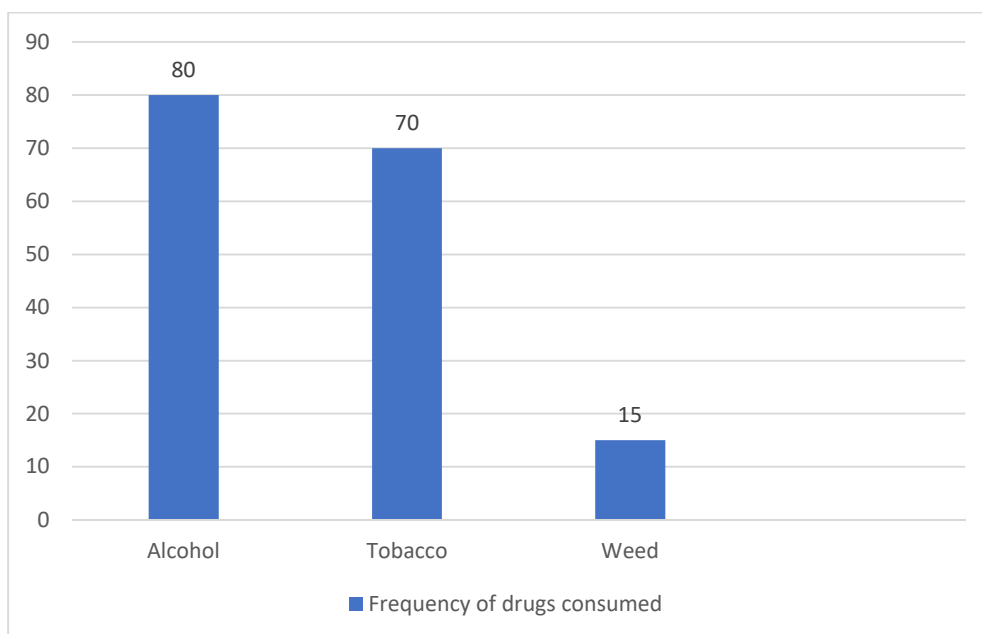


Fig 7: Graph depicting the frequency of people consuming various drugs

VIII. Concerning the frequency of consumption daily users are more in numbers (Fig 8).

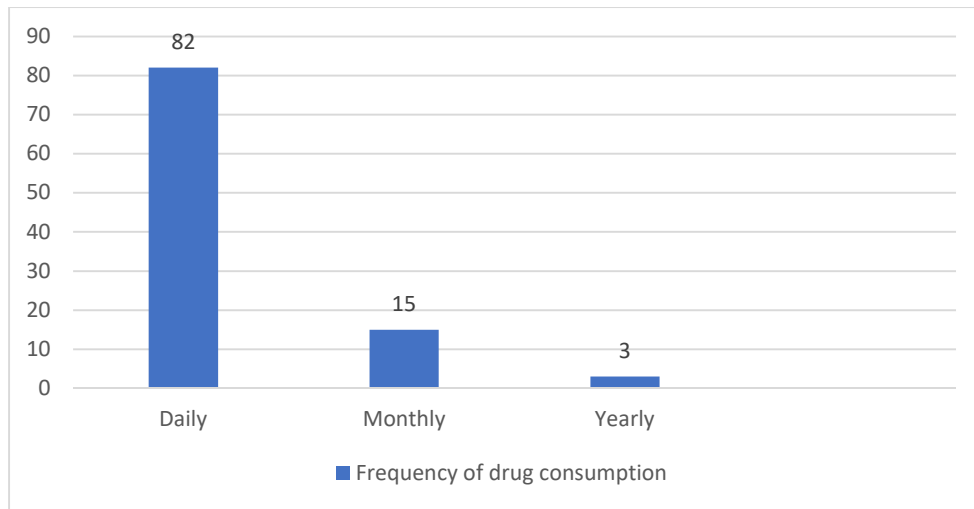


Fig 8: Graph depicting the frequency of people consuming drugs regularly

IX. Concerning the frequency of the yearly consumption people are getting addicted to specific drugs by using more than 3 years (Fig 9).

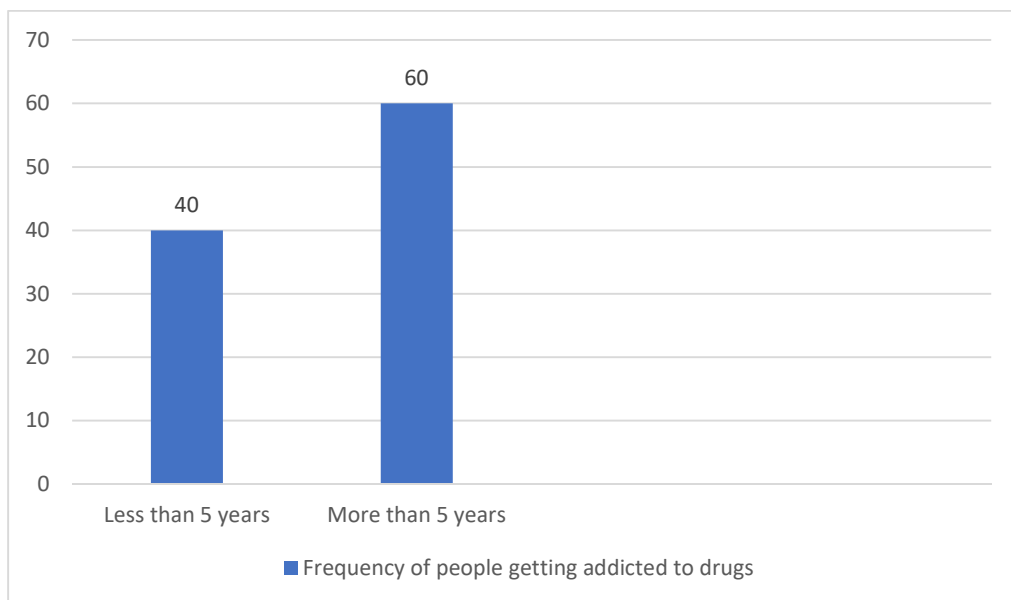


Fig 9: Graph depicting how fast people get addicted to drugs

X. Concerning the survey oral consumption is more prominent (Fig 10).



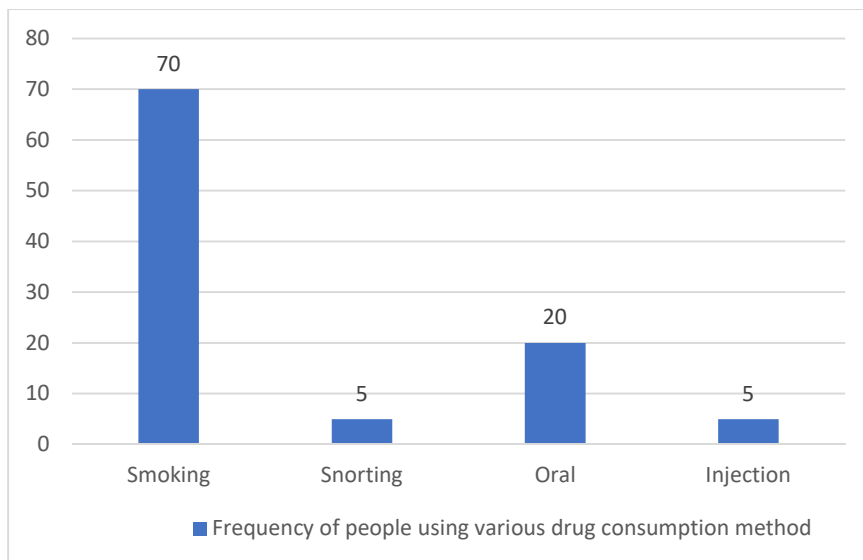


Fig 10: Graph depicting the frequency of people using various means of drug consumption

XI. Frequency of perception about side effects while or after consumption like dizziness, sense of well-being, and other series health issues including cancer are analysed (Fig 11).

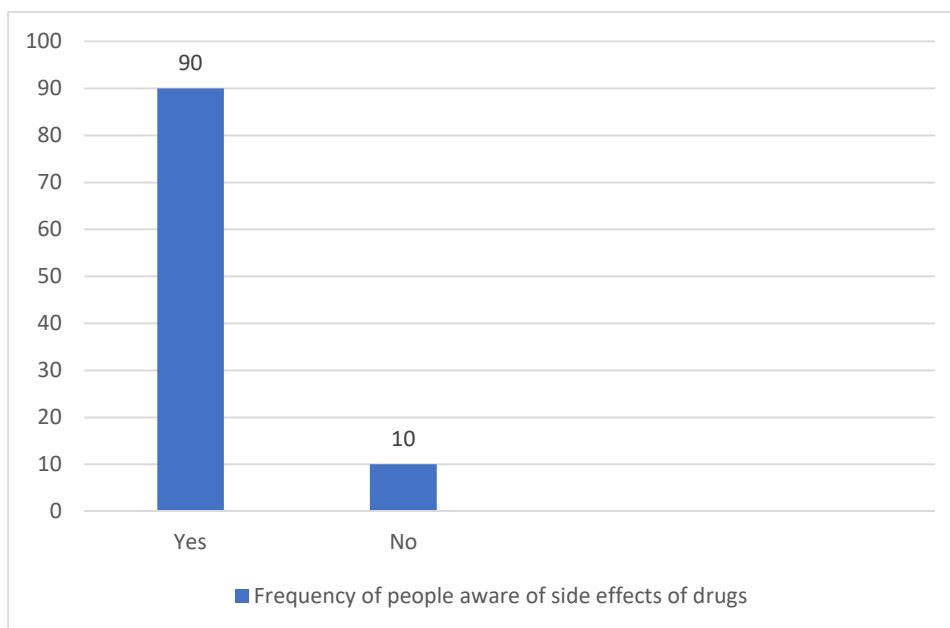


Fig 11: Graph depicting the frequency of people’s perception of side effects of drugs

**DISCUSSION**

In recent years, the city of Indore in central India has witnessed a concerning rise in drug abuse, posing a significant threat to the well-being of its residents. The abuse of drugs, ranging from commonly abused substances like marijuana to more potent and addictive drugs such as opioids

and synthetic drugs, has permeated various strata of society. The accessibility of these substances, coupled with the lack of effective preventive measures, has contributed to the alarming prevalence of drug abuse in the region. A survey of 100 samples was conducted in the form of a questionnaire, and the data was collected from the Indore region. "Perception is reality to the one perceiving it." The perception of people about drug abuse was studied, and from the collected data, it seemed that the majority of people think drugs are not good for life; they are standing in the shadow of the negative effects of drugs, and they strongly disagree with the use of drugs. Most of them have experienced harmful effects based on drug addiction. The consumption of drugs can result in serious medical conditions like cancer, lung disease, and HIV (while sharing the same needles during intravenous consumption). Some people perceive that drugs are acceptable to consume only within limits. A limited quantity of drugs is tolerable, as too much consumption is harmful to the person. A few think that drugs are stress bursters. Some advise consuming drugs when feeling lonely and depressed, whereas others advise using drugs for enjoyment and vibe. Alcohol is the most commonly consumed drug. "No alcohol, no fun" is the slogan of today's peer group. A certain number of people are not even aware of the drug, and there is a need for awareness programs among individuals about drug abuse. Drugs are also consumed in the form of medications. Several people consume drugs despite knowing they're harmful, but because of addiction, they cannot resist themselves. Certain people who believe in religion are forced to consume drugs in rituals. Cannabis sativa is used as bhang in temples of Lord Shiva. India has a very long history of drug use among the people. In the survey, one percent of the people gave their opinion that drugs have to be legalized and should be controlled. Legalizing drugs is the only way to control the production and distribution of drugs. When the survey was completed, it was understood that only destroying the need for drugs would end drug consumption. The rest of them gave their full potential support to the use of drugs, and they are claiming that drugs have a lot of benefits and are fun for loved ones. This is caused by not giving proper awareness classes. Without knowing the depth of the well, people are jumping into it. The drug can and will destroy people slowly. One of the primary factors that fuels the drug abuse epidemic in Indore is the socioeconomic disparity prevalent in the city. The marginalized sections of society often find themselves vulnerable to the lure of substances as an escape from their harsh living conditions. Additionally, a lack of awareness and education about the consequences of drug abuse has left many individuals uninformed about the risks they face. The absence of comprehensive rehabilitation programs further exacerbates the problem, as those struggling with addiction find themselves without adequate support to break free from the cycle of substance abuse. In another

sense, the government is making more and more money from opium cultivation in the country. From the analysis, the rate of drug dependence is more prominent in the Indore region. People of different age groups, especially peer groups, are the main consumers. From the study, it is understood that a drug-free society is way too far away, and more policies and implementations have to be done globally. The perceptions about drug abuse among people in the Indore region are collected and discussed. The rate of drug consumption is also discussed. Out of the 100 samples collected from different people, the majority of the people are aware and have at least once used drugs in their lifetime.

## CONCLUSION

This study sheds light on the varied perceptions regarding drug abuse among the central Indian population. Our findings indicate a complex interplay of cultural, social, and economic factors influencing these perceptions. While some view drug use as a social norm or a coping mechanism, others perceive it through a lens of moral judgment or health risk. Understanding these diverse viewpoints is crucial for designing targeted interventions and policies that effectively address substance abuse issues in this region. Further research should explore how these perceptions evolve and assess the impact of educational and awareness programs on shaping healthier attitudes towards drug use.

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