

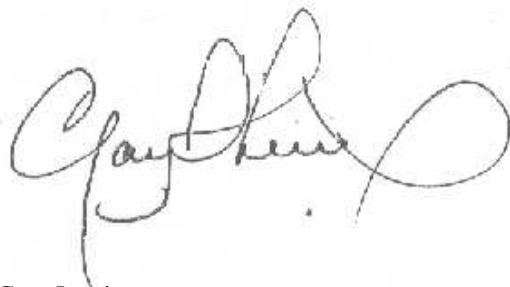
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The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, takes great pleasure in introducing this survey on the extent, pattern and trends of drug abuse in India.

Aside from its already high cost to social fabric and the economy, illicit drug use in India has come to represent yet another danger over the past decade. This comes from the role which drug use plays in the spread of HIV/AIDS. The fact that a significant number of Indian citizens have contracted HIV by using and sharing contaminated drug injecting equipment only serves to illustrate the need to have accurate knowledge of this and other high-risk behaviour related to illicit drug use.

The National Survey therefore has three main objectives. The first of these is to attempt to establish a national baseline for the problem of drug abuse. Second, through the use of multiple study components, it aims to shed light on the drug use problem by looking at specific recent trends and vulnerable groups. Finally, it seeks to highlight some of the options available for addressing these problems. Most of the information was collected during 2000-2001 and there is consequently a time lag between the data collection and the publication of this survey. However, sentinel surveillance and more recent research has generally served to confirm the trends indicated in this report, which, in terms of its scope and depth, is the first of its kind in India.

It is our hope that the document will prove useful for planners, policy makers, researchers and academicians alike in order to allow them to have a better understanding of the current situation, the means of intervention and a yardstick against which progress may be measured. Having accurate knowledge on the extent, patterns and trends on drug use in India is a significant first step in working together to address and ultimately resolve this serious social health problem in India. UNODC is extremely pleased to have been able to serve the citizens of its Member State in this manner.



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