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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by "ECO-FAWN" (Environment Conservation Organization - Foundation for Afforestation Wild Animals and Nature), a non- governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[27 May 2024]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



Alcohol Addiction and Abuse in Rural India – A Social Barrier Impede Development and Abuse Human Rights - Initiatives Supported by the Government of India to NGO's to Arrest Alcohol and Drug Abuse Lead to Wellbeing of Physical and Mental Health

Toddy is an alcoholic beverage imbibed with customary habits practiced since generations as soothe drink, offered as welcome gesture to relatives, family and friends, exchanged in social get-together, birth ceremony, funeral calming, and as daily stress reliever enhancer in south Indian villages. Tribals of indigenous community and Particularly Vulnerable Groups decoct a distinct and strong alcoholic beverage from flowers of *Madhuca Longifolia* called 'sara' in remote parts of tribal habitats.

Of late, rural India saw decline of palm trees, source of fresh, pure and unadulterated toddy, few left over trees don't cater to the needs of growing population, hence toddy pullers found way to add Alprazolam drug into water and turn into artificial toddy, Alprazolam, known by various trade names, is the most commonly prescribed psychotropic medication in the United States of America. Alprazolam is frequently prescribed to manage panic and anxiety disorders and has also been misused for recreational purposes because of its disinhibition, euphoria, and anxiolytic effects.

It is common knowledge among daily laborers and toddy consumers the liquid they consume as toddy is not natural drawn toddy from trees but artificially chemicalised water with additive like Alprazolam and harmful chemicals, despite being aware of the fact consumers take in for the calming effect it offers post laborious work, which they believe relieves from stress, body ache and mental agony.

The state governments that pledged effective and comprehensive control were driven aback by the consumers' needs backed by doctors themselves medically, abrupt stoppage of the adulterated toddy with drug had psychological consequences on consumers. When arrested the sale of spurious toddy for consumers, developed tendency of habituation and addiction which led the governments to give up the policy on drug free society in different states.

The Ministry for Social Justice & Empowerment launched the *Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan* (NMBA) on the occasion of International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking on 26 June 2021, which is observed worldwide to strengthen action and cooperation in achieving the goal of a sustainable world free of substance abuse. The entire world is facing the menace of drug addiction which has a devastating impact on the addict, individual, family and a large section of society.

The launch of *Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan* (NMBA) in 272 Districts across 32 States/Union Territories identified as the most vulnerable in terms of usage of drugs in the country. These vulnerable districts were identified on the basis of findings from the Comprehensive National Survey and the inputs provided by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB). According to the National Comprehensive Survey conducted by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, there are more than 60 million drug users in the country of which a large number of users are in the age group of 10-17 years.

Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan intends to reach out to the masses and spread awareness about substance abuse through various activities like: Awareness generation programmes

Focus on higher educational Institutions, university campuses and schools

Reaching out to the Community and identifying dependent population

Focus on counselling and treatment facilities in hospitals and rehabilitation centres that have been geo-tagged

Capacity building programmes for service providers

Initiatives

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has been mandated to reduce drug demand. It coordinates and oversees all aspects of drug abuse prevention including assessment of the extent of the problem, preventive action, treatment and rehabilitation of addicts, dissemination of information, and public awareness and is mandated to run de-addiction centres through many established NGO's in the country with financial assistance from the government. Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyaan is operational with the involvement of more than 500 voluntary organizations across the country, which are assisted financially under the National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (NAPDDR) scheme of the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment.

These NGOs have been actively involved in the implementation of Drug-Free India campaign. Nearly 8000 youth volunteers and outreach workers of these institutions/organizations have gone from door to door, village to village and nearby localities, etc. to educate the people about the ill effects of drug abuse and have assisted in the rehabilitation of victims of substance abuse.

The Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyaan website provides detailed information about the Abhiyaan and its activities, gives glimpses through the Photo & video gallery, provides IEC resource material and information on the institutions set up by the Ministry with the aim of Drug Demand reduction.

<https://www.undp.org/publications/international-guidelines-human-rights-and-drug-policy>
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-health/drug-policy-and-drug-use>
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2023/11/drug-policies-will-be-more-effective-human-rights-approach-turk-says>
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