



CONCEPT OF DANGEROUS DRUG AND LEGAL LIABILITY: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

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Abstract

The concept of a "dangerous drug" refers to any substance that poses a significant risk to public health, safety, and welfare due to its potential for abuse, addiction, or harmful side effects. This paper examines the various definitions and classifications of dangerous drugs under international and national laws, exploring the implications for legal liability across different jurisdictions. Legal liability related to dangerous drugs encompasses both criminal and civil responsibilities for individuals and entities involved in their manufacture, distribution, prescription, and consumption. Key legal frameworks, such as the Controlled Substances Act in the United States and the Misuse of Drugs Act in the United Kingdom, highlight the legal obligations and potential penalties for violations. The paper also analyzes recent case law and regulatory changes, emphasizing the evolving nature of liability as public health priorities and societal attitudes towards certain drugs change. By exploring the interplay between legal definitions, enforcement practices, and public policy, this paper aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the legal landscape surrounding dangerous drugs and their associated liabilities.

Key word: Dangerous drugs, Legal liability, Controlled substances, Drug regulation, Criminal liability, Civil liability, Drug enforcement, Public health, Drug policy, Substance abuse laws.

Introduction

The Dangerous Drug Act typically refers to legislation or legal frameworks enacted by governments to control and regulate the production, distribution, possession, and use of substances deemed to be dangerous or harmful to individuals and society. These substances are often categorized as illicit drugs, narcotics, or controlled substances. The **Dangerous Drugs Act** has been enacted in various countries to regulate and control the use, possession, and trafficking of drugs.

In UNITED KINGDOM The **Dangerous Drugs Act 1920** transformed drug addiction, previously treated as a medical issue, into a **criminal offense**. It shifted the focus from medical treatment to penal consequences.

India enacted the **Dangerous Drugs Act 1930** to regulate drugs materials derived from *Papaver somniferum* (poppies), *cannabis sativa* which called Indian marihuana (hemp), and coca. This act licensed legal activities related to these drugs while penalizing unlicensed actions. Additionally, India has the **NDPS Act 1985** which improve laws related to narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. The **Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940** in India also addresses drugs regulation. These acts play a crucial role in maintaining public health, safety, and combating drug-related issues.

In order to govern and manage the production, manufacture, possession, sale, purchase, transit, import, export, and use of narcotic narcotics and psychotropic substances, India passed the NDPS Act 1985. It seeks to stop drug trafficking, stop the usage of these substances, and advance public health and safety. The act imposes severe penalties for actions relating to the unlawful possession, manufacture, and distribution of drugs and places them into distinct schedules according to their potential for misuse and medicinal use. It also enables international collaboration in the fight against drug trafficking and organized crime and establishes regulatory bodies at the federal and state levels to enforce its provisions.

OBJECTIVE

The primary objectives of the Dangerous Drugs Act typically include:

Controlled Substance Regulation: The act outlines specific drugs considered dangerous and subject to stringent regulations. It defines the legal status of these substances and establishes penalties for their unauthorized manufacture, distribution, possession, or use.

Law Enforcement Measures: The act empowers law enforcement agencies to enforce drug-related laws, conduct investigations, and prosecute individuals involved in illicit drug activities. This may involve measures such as surveillance, undercover operations, and drug interdiction efforts.

Prevention and Education: Many versions of the Dangerous Drugs Act incorporate provisions for drug abuse prevention programs and public awareness campaigns. These initiatives aim to educate individuals, particularly youth, about the dangers of drug abuse and promote healthy lifestyles.

Treatment and Rehabilitation: In addition to punitive measures, some iterations of the act emphasize the importance of providing support and assistance to individuals struggling with drug addiction. This may include access to drug rehabilitation programs, counselling services, and medical treatment for substance abuse disorders.

International Cooperation: Given the transnational nature of the illicit drug trade, the Dangerous Drugs Act often includes provisions for international cooperation and collaboration among law enforcement agencies and governments to combat drug trafficking and related crimes.

DEFINITIONS

Narcotic Drugs:

Narcotic drugs, as defined in the act, include substances of natural origin or those derived from natural sources that have psychoactive effects and can lead to dependence or abuse. These substances typically have analgesic (pain-relieving) properties and include opium and its derivatives, such as morphine and heroin, as well as synthetic opioids like methadone.

The act regulates narcotic drugs under different schedules based on their potency, medical use, and potential for abuse. Offenses related to narcotic drugs, such as possession, trafficking, and production, carry severe penalties under the act.

Psychotropic Substances:

Psychotropic substances, on the other hand, refer to drugs that affect mental processes, behaviour, or perception, and may alter consciousness or mood. These substances include a wide range of drugs such as hallucinogens, stimulants, depressants, and other psychoactive compounds.

Like narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances are classified into different schedules based on their pharmacological effects and potential for abuse. The act regulates the production, sale, possession, and use of psychotropic substances and imposes penalties for violations.

Addict:

An addict is an individual who is physically or psychologically dependent on a substance, often a narcotic drug or psychotropic substance, due to prolonged use. Compulsive drug-seeking behavior, even in the face of unfavorable outcomes, and a lack of control over drug use are hallmarks of addiction.

Coca Derivative:

It alludes to crude cocaine, which is a coca leaf extract that can be used directly or indirectly to make cocaine. Ecgonine and all of its compounds that allow for its recovery. Cocaine and its salts (methyl ester of benzoyl-ecgonine). any concoction that has more cocaine than 0.1%.

Coca Leaf:

This alludes to leaves of the genus *Erythroxylon* cocaine plants, excluding those that are free of cocaine, ecgonine, and its alkaloids. Any mixture, whether made with or without neutral materials, with the exception of those that contain no more than 0.1% cocaine.

Coca Plant:

Any species of plant in the genus *Erythroxylon* is referred to by this term.

Commercial Quantity:

It denotes any quantity that exceeds the quantity that the Central Government has specified through notification in the Official Gazette.

Controlled Substance:

It refers to any substance that the Central Government may believe could be used in the manufacturing or production of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances based on information currently available or the provisions of any international convention announced by notification in the Official Gazette.

Illicit Traffic:

It alludes to, any variety of coca plant grown or any part of it harvested Growing opium poppies or any other type of cannabis plant narcotic drug and psychotropic substance production, manufacture, possession, sale, purchase, transit, warehousing, concealment, consumption, interstate import, export, export from India, or transshipment Engaging in any activity related to narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances that isn't included in the points above.

Manufactured Drugs:

It includes all derivatives of coca, medicinal cannabis, derivatives of opium, concentrate made from poppy straw, and any other narcotic material or preparation that the Central Government may designate as manufactured drugs by publishing a notice in the Official Gazette.

Medicinal Cannabis:

It alludes to therapeutic hemp, which is a cannabis extract or medicine.

Narcotic Drug:

It includes all produced narcotics, opium, cannabis, and poppy straw.

Opium:

It refers to opium poppy coagulated juice or any combination of coagulated opium with or without neutral ingredients; formulations with more than 0.2% morphine are not included.

Opium Derivatives:

It refers to medicinal opium that has undergone the required processing in compliance with the Indian Pharmacopoeia's guidelines or any other pharmacopoeia that the Central Government notifies in order to be fit for use as medicine. Any opium product obtained by a series of procedures intended to turn it into an extract fit for smoking, or the residue left behind after opium extraction is smoked, is referred to as prepared opium. Codeine, morphine, thebaine, and its salts; diacetylmorphine (heroin).

Opium Poppy:

It alludes to the plant of the Papaver somniferous species, which is a member of the Papaveraceous family.

The Central Government will publish notice in the Official Gazette regarding any other species of Papaver plant from which opium or any other phenanthrene alkaloid can be derived.

Poppy Straw:

It refers to every portion of the harvested opium poppy (seeds excepted), whether it is in its natural state or has been crushed, powdered, or juice extracted.

Poppy Straw Concentrate:

It describes the substance that is left behind when poppy straw is subjected to an alkaloids concentration process.

Psychotropic Substance:

It refers to any item or substance, manufactured or natural, as well as any salt or preparation of the material or substance listed in the Schedule's list of psychotropic substances.

Small Quantity:

This term describes any amount that is less than the amount that the Central Government has announced in the Official Gazette.

SCHEDULES UNDER THE ACT AND RULES:

The Schedule of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 contains a list of 76 psychotropic substances including their salts and preparations. Some of them are listed below.

Amphetamine, Amobarbital, Barbitol, Benzphetamine, prod Bromazepam, Chlordiazepoxide, Camazepam, Dexamphetamine, Diazepam, Ethchlorvynol, Estazolam, Flurazepam, Fludiazepam, Haloxazolam, Halazepam, (+) Lysergide, Loprazolam, Methaqualone and Phencyclidine.

The NDPS Rules, 1985 consists of the following Schedules.

Schedule 1

It includes a list of 41 psychotropic and narcotic medications that are illegal to import or export into India.

1. List of Narcotic Drugs

Acetomorphine, Cocaine, Coca leaf, Desmorphine, Diacetylmorphine (Heroin). Ketobemidone and etrophine, together with any salts, preparations, admixtures, extracts, and other materials containing any of these medications.

AUTHORITIES AND OFFICERS

For the purposes of the Act, the Central Government appoints a Narcotics Commissioner and other officers of similar caliber. The Act requires the State Government to appoint any officials it deems appropriate to regulate the production of opium, the cultivation of opium poppies, prohibit or address the illegal trafficking of narcotic narcotics and psychotropic substances, and carry out other Act provisions. The Central Government has overall authority over and direction over these officers.

Narcotics Commissioner

The Narcotics Commissioner is empowered to carry out any tasks assigned to him by the Central Government from time to time that are associated with the production of opium and the growing of opium poppies.

He may delegate some or all of the authority vested in him by the Act's Rules to any subordinate Officer.

According to the Act's rules, he is free to exercise any or all of the authority granted to the Officer who reports to him.

Prohibition of Certain Operations

The Central Government has the authority to forbid the use of narcotic medicines and psychotropic substances for anything other than legitimate medical and scientific purposes, including production, sale, import, transport, possession, export, and importation. Complete Prohibition of Operations As per the Act, any variety of coca plant grown or any part of the plant harvested Growing opium poppies or any other type of cannabis plant Manufacturing, possessing, selling, buying, using, transporting, storing, importing, exporting, or transshipping any psychotropic substance or narcotic medicine that isn't intended for medical or scientific purposes. These restrictions would only take effect on the day the Central Government notifies the public in the Official Gazette.

Operations Exempted from Prohibition by The Central Government

Export of poppy straw for decorating purpose.

cultivation of any coca plant, collection of any part of it, production, ownership, sale, acquisition, transportation, import, and export of coca leaves for use in the preparation of any flavoring agent that either has a stipulated amount of alkaloids or none at all. any cannabis plant grown for horticulture or industrial uses in order to produce seed or fiber. Control and Regulation of Specific Activities that the Central Government Approves and Oversees cultivation and harvesting of any part of the coca plant, as well as the sale, manufacture, acquisition, import, export, and use or ingestion of psychoactive drugs and coca leaves. cultivation of cannabis plants and opium poppies.

Selling opium and its derivatives to state governments, producing chemists, or exporting them from India through Central Government facilities. production of poppy straw as well as the manufacturing of opium. Manufacturing "Manufactured drugs" does not include prepared opium, medical opium, or any preparation incorporating manufactured drugs made from ingredients whose producer is legally permitted to have them. import, export, and transshipment of psychoactive and narcotic pharmaceuticals. establishing requirements, licenses, and other clauses pertaining to the production, import, export, and other activities of narcotic drug manufacture. Regulate ports and other locations where the import and export of psychotropic substances and narcotic drugs takes place.

PRODUCTION OF OPIUM FROM OPIUM POPPY

The cultivators, during harvesting, are required to produce each day's collection to the Lambardar. The Lambardar would then weigh the produce and record it in suitable registers maintained by him. Every entry of the register should be attested daily by both the Lambardar and the cultivator. In case, if any discrepancy is found by a senior officer regarding the amount entered in the Lambardar's register and that which is actually found by him, then an enquiry may be initiated. All the opium that has been produced should be forwarded to the District Opium Officer by the cultivators. The officer would then weigh the produce in his presence or any person authorized by him and the Lambardar, followed by its examination and classification. If any cultivator is dissatisfied with the classification, then he can forward his produce to the Government Opium Factory where it is required to be classified only by the General Manager. The produce of a cultivator can also be forwarded to the Government Opium Factory by the District Opium Officer if he suspects that the opium has been adulterated. The produce should be separately sealed in the presence of both Lambardar and cultivator and then sent to the factory.

The Central Government periodically sets the price that must be paid to the cultivators for the opium crop. The entire amount to be paid to the cultivator would then be determined by the District Opium Officer using this price as a base. After that, he pays 90% of the estimated cost. The growing of opium poppies may also be permitted by the Central Government, but only in order to produce poppy straw. In this case, the Central Government issues the license and stipulates restrictions that must be met, which are published in the Official Gazette. If any cultivator is aggrieved by the decision of an officer of Narcotics Department with respect to cancellation or withdrawal of licences can appeal to the Narcotics Commissioner. Those who are aggrieved by the order or decisions of the General Manager of Government Opium Factory can appeal to the Chief Controller of Factories.

MANUFACTURE OF PSYCHOTROPIC SUBSTANCES

Manufacture of psychotropic substances is regulated by the concerned authorities as they are liable for abuse when used for medicinal purposes. Schedule of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 contains a list of 76 psychotropic substances including their salts and preparations, which are categorised as follows,

Psychotropic Substances whose Manufacture is Strictly Prohibited Schedule I of the NDPS Rules, 1985 enlists all the psychotropic substances whose manufacture is strictly prohibited. Psychotropic Substances whose Manufacture is Permitted but Only for Export Schedule III of NDPS Rules, 1985 enlists the names of psychotropic substances which can be manufactured in India but only for export. It implies to certain psychotropic substances which have no medicinal use in India but are used in other countries.

PSYCHOTROPIC SUBSTANCES WHICH CAN BE MANUFACTURED FOR SALE IN INDIA OR FOR EXPORT

Only those psychotropic substances that do not find a mention in the Schedules I and III of NDPS Rules, 1985 can be manufactured in India for sale or export. For such manufacturing, it is necessary to obtain a license from the State Drugs Controller under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act and Rules. Licensing authority while issuing the licence to the licensee conveys the maximum quantity of psychotropic substances that can be manufactured by him in a year. Moreover, the manufacturer should also register himself with the Narcotics Commissioner of India, Gwalior. Any individual attempting to manufacture any psychotropic substance with/out a license is liable for punishment under the NDPS Act.

MANUFACTURE OF OPIUM

Only the Central Government may manufacture opium from poppy plants at its two opium factories, which are situated in Ghazipur, close to Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, and Neemuch, close to Udaipur, Madhya Pradesh. Nonetheless, an individual who is legally permitted to possess opium may create opium mixture in accordance with the regulations established by the state government for that specific reason.

IMPORT, EXPORT AND TRANSSHIPMENT

It is illegal to import or export any of the narcotic medicines and psychotropic substances listed in Schedules I and II into or from India unless an import certificate or export license has been granted in compliance with the Act and Rules.

IMPORT

The only establishment permitted to import morphine, opium, codeine, poppy straw concentrate, thebaine, and their salts is the Government Opium Factory. It is strictly forbidden to import any drugs into India, including heroin, coca leaf, and cannabis, as listed in Schedule I of the Regulation. Only imports of narcotic medications and psychotropic substances listed in Schedule II into India are permitted with an import certificate obtained by the relevant authority in compliance with the Act and Regulations. Every shipment of medications intended for importation must have an import certificate. A copy of the exercise permit provided by the relevant State Government should be included with the importer's application for an import certificate, which must include the information required by the Narcotics Commissioner. The import certificate must be provided in seven copies by the foreign country's issuing body. The issuing authority keeps one copy, while the importer receives the original and duplicate copies. The Excise Authority, State Government, Drugs Controller, Government of India, and Customs Authority receive the remaining copies. The importer delivers the original copy to the exporting nation, and the duplicate copy is delivered to the post office to retrieve the package, the Customs House, the Land Customs Station, or the airport where the shipment arrives. The importer will

next note on the form that he has received the items. The customs collector or postmaster will sign the copy, indicating that the consignment has been imported. Ultimately, the importer gives the issuing authority back the copy of the import certificate that has been endorsed.

EXPORT

It is possible to export narcotic medications and psychotropic substances listed in Schedule II of the Rules provided you get export license in Form 5 from the issuing authority. The exporter's application for export authorization should include the following: original copy of the import certificate that was granted by the importing nation's government original copy of the excise permit that the relevant State Government issued. If someone plans to export any of the psychotropic substances listed in Schedule III, they must send the Narcotics Commissioner both original and duplicate copies of their Form 6 declaration. The Narcotics Commissioner then delivers the duplicate copy to the relevant authority of the importing nation. The precise amount of the psychotropic substance that has been imported must be specified by the relevant importing country authorities and returned to the Narcotics Commissioner. The exporter sends the third copy to the importing nation with the drug shipment, while the exporter keeps the fourth copy for themselves. The export authorization granting authority is required to create five copies and handle them in the manner described below.

The consignor receives the original copy, which they must deliver with the shipment. A duplicate copy is sent to the port, who transmits it to the issuing authority after noting the date and quantity of export on it. A third copy is sent to the importing nation's government. The exporter's company excise authority in the state receives a fourth copy. The issuing body keeps the fifth copy. Extra copies of the export permission should be generated and sent to the relevant country if the export of psychotropic substances and narcotic medications is to occur through two or more countries.

It is forbidden to export opioid medications and psychotropic substances or preparations listed in Schedule IV to the nations listed there. However, only a limited amount of certain drugs or substances may be exported with the Narcotics Commissioner's approval if the relevant national government of the country requesting the import has approved a special import license. Along with the shipment, the exporter must provide a copy of the special import license that has been duly signed by the Narcotics Commissioner.

OFFENCES AND PENALTIES

A thorough framework for policing and managing narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances in India is provided by the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985. These are the acts' listed offenses and punishments. Narcotic drug and psychotropic substance production, manufacture, possession, sale, purchase, transit, import, export, and use without authorization are all considered

offenses. imprisonment for a minimum of 10 years, with a maximum term of 20 years, and a fine of at least 1 lakh (Indian Rupees), with a maximum fine of 2 lakhs.

growing cannabis plants or opium poppies without a permit or against license restrictions. imprisonment for a minimum of 10 years, with a maximum term of 20 years, and a fine of at least 1 lakh (Indian Rupees), with a maximum fine of 2 lakhs. Illegal import, export, and transshipment of psychotropic and narcotic narcotics are among the offenses. imprisonment for a minimum of 10 years, with a maximum term of 20 years, and a fine of at least 1 lakh (Indian Rupees), with a maximum fine of 2 lakhs. financing the trafficking of illegal drugs or conducting financial transactions while being aware that the money is coming from such operations. imprisonment for a minimum of 10 years, with a maximum term of 20 years, and a fine of at least 1 lakh (Indian Rupees), with a maximum fine of 2 lakhs. Abetting or conspiring with others to commit any of the offenses under the act. Penalties for abetment or criminal conspiracy are typically the same as those for the principal offense. Committing a subsequent offense under the act after having been previously convicted. Enhanced penalties may be imposed for repeat offenses, including longer terms of imprisonment and higher fines.

Conclusion

The concept of "dangerous drugs" refers to substances that pose a significant risk to public health and safety, often due to their addictive properties, potential for misuse, or harmful side effects. These drugs are regulated by stringent laws, and their manufacturing, distribution, and consumption are controlled to prevent abuse and associated social harm. Legal liability concerning dangerous drugs arises in various contexts, including criminal law, civil liability, and regulatory frameworks.

Legal liability in the realm of dangerous drugs primarily addresses two aspects:

1. **Criminal Liability:** This includes the illegal manufacturing, trafficking, distribution, and possession of controlled substances. Offenders are subject to criminal prosecution and can face penalties ranging from fines to imprisonment, depending on the severity of the offense and jurisdictional laws.
2. **Civil Liability:** In cases where dangerous drugs cause harm, manufacturers, distributors, or healthcare providers can face civil lawsuits for negligence or failure to warn consumers about the risks. Courts may award compensation to individuals harmed by dangerous drugs, particularly when pharmaceutical companies fail to adhere to safety standards or fail to inform users about potential dangers.

In both cases, legal frameworks are designed to mitigate harm, deter drug-related crimes, and ensure that those responsible for producing or distributing dangerous drugs are held accountable.

Suggestions

1. **Enhanced Regulatory Oversight:** Regulatory bodies such as the FDA or equivalent organizations in other countries should continue improving drug approval and monitoring processes to ensure that only safe drugs are marketed. Stricter scrutiny, particularly of opioids and other high-risk drugs, can prevent their widespread misuse.
2. **Clear Labeling and Public Awareness:** Drug manufacturers should be mandated to provide comprehensive warnings about the potential risks associated with drugs, including their addictive properties, side effects, and contraindications. Public awareness campaigns can also help educate people on the dangers of misuse and addiction.
3. **Stricter Penalties for Violations:** Governments should consider imposing more severe penalties for illegal drug production, distribution, and trafficking to deter individuals and organized crime groups involved in dangerous drug activities. Stricter laws and penalties can be an effective deterrent against drug-related crimes.
4. **Support for Harm Reduction Programs:** Governments and organizations should continue to support harm reduction strategies, such as supervised drug consumption rooms, access to addiction treatment services, and needle exchange programs. These initiatives help to minimize the adverse effects of drug misuse and reduce the societal burden.
5. **Pharmaceutical Company Accountability:** Pharmaceutical companies must be held accountable for the drugs they market, particularly if they misrepresent the safety or risks associated with a drug. Stricter enforcement of product liability laws can ensure that victims of dangerous drugs receive compensation, and companies are incentivized to prioritize consumer safety.
6. **Global Cooperation:** Given the global nature of the drug trade, international cooperation is crucial in curbing the spread of dangerous drugs. Strengthened international treaties, joint law enforcement efforts, and global regulatory standards can help combat cross-border trafficking and ensure global safety.

In conclusion, addressing the issue of dangerous drugs and legal liability requires a multi-faceted approach involving stronger regulatory frameworks, legal enforcement, and public health initiatives to protect society from the risks posed by these substances.

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