



Cannabis : A Less Dangerous Drug

 sanskritiias.com/current-affairs/cannabis-a-less-dangerous-drug

Context: United Nations commission reclassifies cannabis plant from risky narcotic into non risky.



Background: The UN

Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) took a number of decisions, including changed the way on which the cannabis is internationally regulated, including its reclassification out of the most dangerous category of drugs. In reviewing a series of World Health Organization (WHO) recommendations on marijuana and its derivatives, the CND removed cannabis from Schedule IV of the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, where it was listed alongside deadly, addictive opioids, including heroin.

Experts say that the vote will have no immediate impact on loosening international controls because governments will still have jurisdiction over how to classify cannabis. But many countries look to global conventions for guidance, and United Nations recognition is a symbolic win for advocates of drug policy change who say that international law is out of date.

In Detail

In a decision that could influence the global use of medicinal marijuana, the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), voted to remove cannabis and cannabis resin from Schedule IV of the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, decades after they were first placed on the list.

At its ongoing 63rd session, the 53-member CND has chosen to affirm a World Health Organisation (WHO) recommendation from 2019 to remove cannabis from its ‘most dangerous’ category, with 27 Member States voting in favour, 25 against, and one abstention.

India was part of the voting majority, along with the US and most European nations. China, Pakistan and Russia were among those who voted against, and Ukraine abstained.

Cannabis Plant

Cannabis is a generic term used to denote the several psychoactive preparations of the plant *Cannabis sativa*. The major psychoactive constituent in cannabis is Delta-9 Tetra

hydro-cannabinol (THC). The Mexican name ‘marijuana’ is frequently used in referring to cannabis leaves or other crude plant material in many countries.

Most species of cannabis are dioecious plants that can be identified as either male or female. The unpollinated female plants are called hashish. Cannabis oil (hashish oil) is a concentrate of cannabinoids — compounds which are structurally similar to THC — obtained by solvent extraction of the crude plant material or of the resin.

The WHO confirms that cannabis is by far the most widely cultivated, trafficked and abused illicit drug in the world.

International Law

Cannabis has been on Schedule IV—the most dangerous category of the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs for as long as the international treaty has existed.

Since, it was first scheduled, however, global attitudes towards cannabis have changed dramatically, with many jurisdictions permitting cannabis use for recreation, medication or both, despite it remaining on Schedule IV of the UN list.

Currently, over 50 countries allow medicinal cannabis programs, and its recreational use has been legalised in Canada, Uruguay and 15 US states, as per UN News.

In January 2019, the WHO made six recommendations related to scheduling of cannabis in UN treaties. The proposals were to be placed before the CND's session in March that year, but members overwhelmingly voted to postpone the vote, requesting additional time.

Then, at its currently ongoing session, the CND rejected five of the six proposals, but approved the key one to remove cannabis and cannabis resin from Schedule IV. However, both substances will continue to remain on Schedule I, the least dangerous category.

The proposals CND rejected on Wednesday included removing extracts and tinctures of cannabis from Schedule I and adding certain preparations of dronabinol to Schedule III of the 1961 Convention.

Impact on Cannabis Industry

The reclassification of cannabis by the UN agency, although significant, would not immediately change its status worldwide as long as individual countries continue with existing regulations. Still, Wednesday's vote could impact this process, as many nations follow the lead of international protocols while legislating.

As per drug policy experts, the CND decision would add momentum to efforts for decriminalising cannabis in countries where its use is most restricted, while further legalising the substance in others. Scientific research into marijuana's medicinal properties is also expected to grow.

Conclusion

India has voted with the majority at the United Nations to remove cannabis and cannabis resin from the list of most dangerous substances in the flagship international Convention on narcotic drugs.

Under India's Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985, the production, manufacture, possession, sale, purchase, transport, and use of cannabis is a punishable offence.

Charas, defined as "the separated resin, in whatever form, whether crude or purified, obtained from the cannabis plant", is also covered by the NDPS Act.

The reclassification of cannabis by the UN agency, although significant, would not immediately change its status worldwide as long as individual countries continue with existing regulations.

Connecting the Article

Question for Prelims : Consider the following statements:

India is a signatory to which of the following conventions ?

1. UN Single Convention on Narcotics Drugs 1961
2. Convention on Psychotropic Substances, 1971
3. Convention on Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1988

Select the correct answer using code given below:

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Question for Mains : Discuss the various laws existing in India which prohibit a person for the production, manufacturing and cultivation of dangerous category drugs.

United Nations WHO



IAS / PCS
Online Video Course
सामान्य अध्ययन
+
वैकल्पिक विषय
(इतिहास एवं भूगोल)
**15% Discount for
Next 500 Students**

Online Learning Programme
संस्कृति IAS
JOIN NOW

IAS / PCS
Pendrive Course
सामान्य अध्ययन
+
वैकल्पिक विषय
(इतिहास एवं भूगोल)
**15% Discount for Next
500 Students**



<< >>

- SUN
- MON
- TUE
- WED
- THU
- FRI
- SAT

•

•

- 01
- 02
- 03
- 04
- 05
- 06
- 07
- 08
- 09
- 10
- 11
- 12
- 13
- 14
- 15
- 16
- 17

- 18
- 19
- 20
- 21
- 22
- 23
- 24
- 25
- 26
- 27
- 28
- 29
- 30
- 31
-
-