

COMBATING DRUG ADDICTION: LEGAL, SOCIAL, AND PREVENTIVE MEASURES

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Abstract: Drug addiction is one of the most dangerous social problems of the modern world, posing serious threats to public health, social stability, and legal order. The spread of narcotic substances, particularly among young people, has become a critical issue requiring urgent and comprehensive solutions. This scientific article analyzes the main causes of drug addiction, its social, legal, and health-related consequences, as well as effective national and international strategies for combating drug abuse. Special attention is given to preventive measures, legal regulation, and the role of education in reducing drug addiction. The study emphasizes that only a coordinated approach involving the state, society, family, and educational institutions can ensure effective prevention and long-term results in the fight against drug addiction.

Keywords: Drug addiction, prevention, youth, legal regulation, public health, education, social responsibility

Drug addiction has become one of the most serious challenges facing modern society. It affects not only individuals but also families, communities, and the state as a whole. The increasing availability of narcotic substances, illegal drug trafficking, and the influence of globalization have significantly contributed to the spread of drug abuse worldwide. According to international statistics, millions of people suffer from drug dependence, and a large percentage of them are young individuals.

In Uzbekistan, combating drug addiction is considered a priority direction of state policy. A number of laws, preventive programs, and educational initiatives have been introduced to protect public health and ensure the safety of society. Despite these efforts, drug addiction remains a serious threat, especially among adolescents and youth. Therefore, studying the causes and consequences of drug addiction and developing effective preventive strategies is of great importance.

This article aims to examine drug addiction as a complex social and legal phenomenon and to analyze effective measures for combating it through prevention, education, and legal regulation.

The causes of drug addiction are diverse and interconnected. They include social, psychological, economic, and environmental factors that influence individual behavior.

Social factors play a major role in the development of drug addiction. Family problems, lack of parental control, domestic violence, and poor social support often push young people toward harmful behaviors. Peer pressure is another significant factor, as adolescents tend to imitate their friends in order to gain acceptance and recognition.

Psychological factors such as stress, anxiety, depression, and emotional instability also increase the risk of drug use. Some individuals turn to drugs as a means of escaping

personal problems or emotional pain. Low self-esteem and lack of life goals further contribute to vulnerability.

Economic factors, including unemployment, poverty, and limited opportunities, may also encourage drug use. In some cases, individuals become involved in the illegal drug trade as a source of income. Additionally, lack of awareness about the dangers of drugs and insufficient preventive education play a critical role in the spread of addiction.

Drug addiction has severe consequences for both individuals and society. From a health perspective, drug abuse leads to serious physical and mental disorders. Long-term drug use damages vital organs such as the brain, liver, and heart, weakens the immune system, and increases the risk of infectious diseases. Mental health problems, including depression, anxiety, and cognitive impairment, are also common among drug-dependent individuals.

Social consequences of drug addiction are equally destructive. Addiction often leads to family breakdown, neglect of parental responsibilities, and domestic conflicts. Drug-dependent individuals may drop out of educational institutions or lose their jobs, resulting in social exclusion and marginalization.

Drug addiction is closely linked to crime and violence. Many drug users commit crimes to obtain money for drugs, which leads to increased crime rates and insecurity in society. As a result the state faces significant economic losses related to healthcare costs, law enforcement, and rehabilitation programs.

Legal regulation is a key component in the fight against drug addiction. Most countries, including Uzbekistan, have established strict laws against the production, distribution, and possession of narcotic substances. Criminal liability is imposed on individuals in drug trafficking and illegal drug trade.

At the same time, modern legal approaches emphasize a balanced strategy that combines punishment with rehabilitation. Drug-dependent individuals are increasingly viewed as patients who need medical and psychological assistance rather than solely as offenders. This approach helps reduce recidivism and supports social reintegration.

International cooperation is also essential in combating drug addiction. International organizations such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) coordinate global efforts to combat drug trafficking and promote effective drug control policies.

Prevention is the most effective method of combating drug addiction. Preventive measures aim to reduce demand for drugs and protect vulnerable groups, especially young people.

Educational institutions play a crucial role in prevention. Schools and academic lyceums should provide students with accurate information about the dangers of drug use and promote healthy lifestyles. Legal education is also important, as it helps young people understand the legal consequences of drug-related offenses.

Families have a strong influence on children's behavior. Supportive family environments, open communication, and emotional care significantly reduce the risk of drug abuse. Community programs, sports activities, and youth organizations also help young people develop positive interests and life skills.

In conclusion, drug addiction is a complex and dangerous problem that affects all aspects of society. Its causes are rooted in social, psychological, and economic factors, while its consequences threaten public health, social stability, and legal order. Combating drug addiction requires a comprehensive and coordinated approach involving prevention, education, legal regulation, and rehabilitation.

Strengthening preventive education, improving legal frameworks, and enhancing cooperation between state institutions and society can significantly reduce the spread of drug addiction. By investing in youth development and social support systems, it is possible to protect future generations and build a healthier and safer society.

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