

## Cannabis in India

*Prelims: Current events of national and international importance*

### Why in news?

*Experts stress the need for research and physician training to expand medical uses of cannabis in India.*

- The **Cannabis or hemp flower** has many names (colloquially known as ganja, charas or maal).
- **Family** - Canabenaceae.
  - Cannabis is mainly associated with 3 species of flowering plants, namely sativa, indica, and ruberalis.
- **Distribution** - The plants are indigenous to Central Asia and the India, which have been growing freely along the Himalayan foothills and adjacent plains of India for centuries.
- **Laws on Cannabis in India - NDPS Act** - The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act in 1985, effectively **banning** the **cultivation, production, and consumption** of cannabis along with 70 other narcotic and psychotropic drugs.

*India is a signatory to the UN Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961)*

- **Section 10 of NDPS act** - Empowers state governments to regulate, permit, or prohibit the cultivation of cannabis for these uses.

**Uttarakhand** - *The first state to permit the commercial cultivation of hemp plants, followed by Madhya Pradesh, and other states are conducting controlled cultivation for research purposes.*

- **Legal in many countries** - Canada, Thailand, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, much of Latin America, and several American states, etc.

- **Argument for legalizing** - Cannabis can relieve people from pain, especially in cases of cancer patients who need palliative care.
- **Medicinal uses** - To help relieve lifelong ailments, cancer treatments, chronic pain, and digestive problems, full-spectrum cannabis extracts are now available in India.
- **Risk** - Short-term side effects include drowsiness, dizziness, dry mouth, increased appetite, mood changes, and forgetfulness.
- Long-term or uncontrolled use can affect memory and concentration, and increase the risk of dependence.
- Pregnant or breastfeeding women, people with psychiatric illnesses such as schizophrenia, patients with uncontrolled heart problems, and those with substance-use disorders are advised not to use.

## References

1. [The Hindu | Cannabis in India](#)
2. [National Library of Medicine | Cannabis in India](#)