INTRODUCTION

Say NO to DRUGS and young children are the future of any nation.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines substance abuse as: “the harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs.” Criteria for diagnosis include an inability to control alcohol intake, developing a tolerance, and/or developing withdrawal symptoms.

The epidemic of substance abuse in young generation has assumed alarming dimensions in India. Changing cultural values, increasing economic stress and dwindling supportive bonds are leading to initiation into substance use. Cannabis, heroin, and Indian-produced pharmaceutical drugs are the most frequently abused drugs in India. Drug use, misuse or abuse is also primarily due to the nature of the drug abused, the personality of the individual and the addict’s immediate environment. The processes of industrialization, urbanization and migration have led to loosening of the traditional methods of social control rendering an individual vulnerable to the stresses and strains of modern life.

The incidence of drug abuse among children and adolescents is higher than the general population. This is notably because youth is a time for experimentation and identity forming. In Asia figures of drug abuse are hard to find but after cannabis, amphetamine-type stimulants are the most commonly used amongst children and youth. In India an NGO survey revealed that 63.6% of patients coming in for treatment were introduced to drugs at a young age below 15 years. Heroin, opium, alcohol, cannabis and propoxyphene are the five most common drugs being abused by children in India. A survey shows that of all alcohol, cannabis and opium users 21%, 3% and 0.1% are below the age of eighteen.

Substance abuse refers to the harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs. Psychoactive substance use can lead to dependence syndrome - a cluster of behavioural, cognitive, and physiological phenomena that develop after repeated substance use and that typically include a strong desire to take the drug, difficulties in controlling its use, persisting in its use despite harmful consequences, a higher priority given to drug use than to other activities and obligations, increased tolerance, and sometimes a physical withdrawal state.

Psychoactive substances are substances that, when taken in or administered into one's system, affect mental processes, e.g. cognition or affect. Substance abuse affects every part of your life. It
can hurt you and the people around you. It can ruin relationships and your financial health. Abusing drugs can also lead to addiction and cause serious health problems and even death.

Commonly abused substances and drugs

Alcohol
Alcohol affects everyone differently. But if you drink too much and too often, your chance of an injury or accident goes up. Heavy drinking also can cause liver and other health problems or lead to a more serious alcohol disorder.

Heroin
This illegal drug is the natural version of manmade prescription opioid narcotics. Heroin gives you a rush of good feelings at first. But when it wears off, everything slows down. You’ll move and think more slowly, and you may have chills, nausea, and nervousness. You may feel a strong need to take more heroin to feel better.

Cocaine
This drug speeds up your whole body. When you use cocaine, you may talk, move, or think very fast. You may feel happy and full of energy. But your mood may then shift to anger. You may feel like someone is out to get you. It can cause you to do things that don’t make sense.

Marijuana
A growing number of states have legalized medical uses of marijuana. A handful of states also allow recreational pot. But in most states, it’s still illegal. Marijuana can make you feel silly and laugh for no reason. Or you may feel sleepy and forget things that just happened. Driving while high on pot is just as dangerous as drunk driving. And heavy marijuana use can leave some people “burned out” and not think or care about much.

Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products
You may not think of these as drugs. But tobacco has chemical called nicotine that gives you a little rush of pleasure and energy. The effect can wear off fast and leave you wanting more. You can abuse and get addicted to the nicotine in cigarettes, just like other drugs.

Signs of a Substance Use Problem
When you first start taking a substance, you may think you can control how much you use. But over time, you may need more of the drug to get the same feeling or effect. For some people, that can lead beyond abuse to addiction.
Signals that you may have a problem with substance abuse include if you: Lack interest in things you used to love, Change your friends a lot, Stop taking care of yourself, Spend more time alone than you used to, Eat more or less than normal, Sleep at odd hours, Have problems at work or with family, Switch quickly from feeling good and bad.

Drug addiction causes immense human distress and the illegal production and distribution of drugs have spawned crime and violence worldwide. June 26 is celebrated as International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking every year. It is an exercise undertaken by the world community to sensitize the people in general and the youth in particular, to the menace of drugs. Today, there is no part of the world that is free from the curse of drug trafficking and drug addiction. Millions of drug addicts, all over the world, are leading miserable lives, between life and death. India too is caught in this vicious circle of drug abuse, and the numbers of drug addicts are increasing day by day. According to a UN report, One million heroin addicts are registered in India, and unofficially there are as many as five million. What started off as casual use among a minuscule population of high-income group youth in the metro has permeated to all sections of society? Inhalation of heroin alone has given way to intravenous drug use, that too in combination with other sedatives and painkillers. This has increased the intensity of the effect, hastened the process of addiction and complicated the process of recovery. Cannabis, heroin, and Indian-produced pharmaceutical drugs are the most frequently abused drugs in India. Cannabis products, often called charas, bhang, or ganja, are abused throughout the country because it has attained some amount of religious sanctity because of its association with some Hindu deities [3]. The International Narcotics Control Board in its 2002 report released in Vienna pointed out that in India persons addicted to opiates are shifting their drug of choice from opium to heroin.

**Conclusion:**

In this world most of the children have access for anything just in their finger tips and several factors have influenced their lifestyle. Substance and drug abuse has become a menace in the present young generation which affects their quality of life all around. So the country and society needs some serious strategies to combat it. This study helps to provide information to young children about substance abuse and its effect on quality of health which will make the person to lead their remaining life satisfactorily.