

## **ABSTRACT**

*Cannabis in India is used .in three forms — ganja, bhang, and charas. Bhang is obtained from the dried leaves of Cannabis sativa or Cannabis indica. The oleo-resinous exudate of the plants is called charas and the flowering tops are called ganja. Ganja and charas are mixed with tobacco and smoked in clay pipes; bhang is eaten orally in the form of small balls or used as a beverage called thandai. While alcohol is generally looked down upon in Hindu society as it is tabooed to the Brahman and Bhagats (devotees), the use of cannabis is socially sanctioned and is associated with religio-social ceremonies of the Hindu god, Shiva. Cannabis is offered to Shiva on Shivaratri day in temples as "food of god." This paper examines what role cannabis plays in the social life of the people particularly in villages, and whether freedom to obtain and use these drugs results in addiction as a massive problem.*

## Social Aspects of the Use of Cannabis in India

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Plate 1. Smoking *ganja* in a funnel-shaped clay pipe

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Table 1. Number of respondents (caste-wise) showing no objection to using one or more forms of intoxicants in Chinaura (1959-1960)

	(total)	No. of respondents having no objection to using				
		Wine	Country liquor	Denaturated spirit	Toddy	Hemp drugs
1. Ahir	12	4	4	2	3	8
2. Lodh	10	7	7	7	7	9
3. Pasi	14	12	12	12	12	12
4. Chamar	12	12	12	12	12	12
5. Dhobi	4	4	4	4	4	4
6. Kumhar	2	1	1	Nil	Nil	2
7. Marau	1	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	1
8. Nau	1	1	1	1	1	1
9. Bhujwa	1	1	1	1	1	1
10. Kayastha	1	1	1	Nil	Nil	1
11. Teli	1	1	1	1	1	1
12. Lohar	1	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	1
13. Kurmi	1	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
14. Dom	1	1	1	1	1	1
15. Muslim	18	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
<b>Total Hindu Caste</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>54</b>

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