

NATIONAL SERVICE SCHEME(NSS)

Bridging the Gaps: Law, Mental Health & Society Against Narcotics

Date: 26.06.2025

Venue: Gokul Krishna Hall

Theme: Bridging the Gaps: Law, Mental Health & Society Against
Narcotics

Overview

To observe the *International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking*, the Centre for Clinical Legal Education and Legal Aid Clinic, **Amrita International School of Law** in association with the **National Service Scheme (NSS)** of **Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham** organized a comprehensive awareness programme on the theme *“Bridging the Gaps: Law, Mental Health & Society Against Narcotics.”* The event emphasized a multidimensional approach toward addressing the drug crisis — integrating legal education, mental health awareness, and community responsibility — while encouraging student engagement in building a safer and more compassionate society.

Inaugural Session

Time: 9:35 AM – 11:10 AM

The programme commenced with the arrival of the dignitaries at **9:35 AM**, followed by a **welcome address** by NSS volunteers. A

prayer was offered at **9:45 AM**, and the **felicitation ceremony** began at **9:50 AM**, expressing gratitude to the invited guests for their presence and continued commitment to public service.



Special Addresses:

Hon. Thiru. G. Narayanan

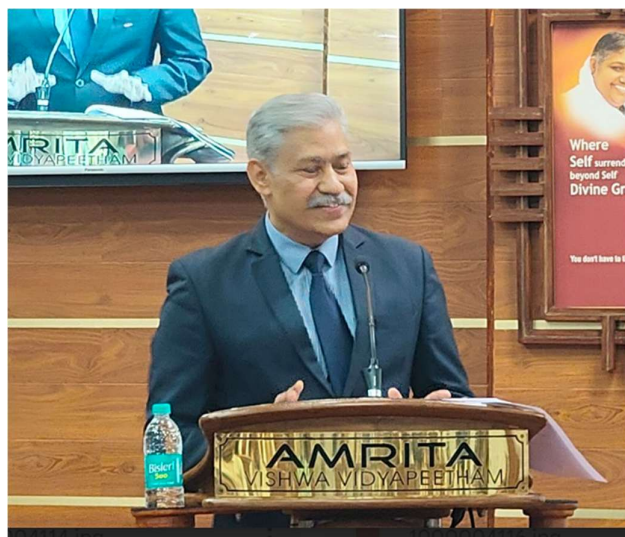
Chairman / District Judge, Permanent Lok Adalat, Coimbatore

In the opening address, Judge Narayanan presented an alarming statistical overview of narcotics-related cases. In 2024, 374 cases were registered, resulting in 180 arrests and the seizure of 442 kg of ganja. Even more concerning, within the first half of 2025 alone, 250 cases had already been registered.

He emphasized that students — particularly those living away from their families — are targeted by drug dealers. These individuals are often introduced to narcotics through free samples, which lead to addiction and dependency.

He urged students to stay vigilant, not only for themselves but also for their peers, stating: “Don’t Walk into trouble.

Avoid even passing through danger zones. Be alert and safeguard your surroundings.”



Hon. Thiru. K. Ramesh

Secretary / Sub-Judge, District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Coimbatore

Sub-Judge Ramesh commended the initiative and encouraged students to stand united against substance abuse. He stated: “*Say yes to life and no to drugs.*” He elaborated on how drug peddlers create a cycle of addiction, eventually drawing students into their networks as both users and dealers. He highlighted the physical and psychological harm caused by narcotics and emphasized the need to direct youth energy toward awareness, resistance, and positive social change.



Justice (Retd.) A.P. Ajith Kumar

Former Judge, High Court of Kerala

Justice Ajith Kumar delivered a powerful and insightful keynote, addressing the deeper implications of drug addiction and societal neglect. He spoke about:

- The **cycle of addiction**, from first use to dependency
- The **global drug trade**, which rivals the scale of arms trafficking
- **Kerala's drug crisis**, particularly among students under the age of 15
- The role of the **NDPS Act**, and the need for stronger and more effective enforcement
- The **Constitutional guarantee of the Right to Life and Health**, and the duty of the state to protect its citizens

He concluded by reinforcing that **prevention is the most effective solution**, and that students, parents, and institutions must work together to prevent addiction before it begins. *"Once you're in, there's no easy way out. Protect each other,"* he said.



Vote of Thanks.

The session concluded with a formal **vote of thanks** delivered by **Prof. (Dr.) Anil G. Variath, Dean, Amrita International School of Law, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham**. He acknowledged the contributions of all dignitaries and volunteers. The inaugural session ended at **11:10 AM**, followed by a short break.



Panel Discussion & Awareness Session

Time: 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM

Session Title: Awareness Session on Drug Abuse, Adolescence, and Legal Framework

The second part of the programme featured a panel discussion with experts from the legal and healthcare sectors.

Panel Speakers

- **Dr. Santosh Gandhi** – *Senior Consultant Neuropsychiatrist, Donthams Specialty Clinics*
- **Advocate Madhivanan** – *Representative, District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Coimbatore*
- **Advocate Steffinarose** – *Panel Advocate for SC/ST Matters*



Key Highlights

1. Adolescent Brain and Addiction

Speaker: Dr. Santosh Gandhi

- Early emotional neglect increases the risk of substance abuse.
- Adolescents are especially vulnerable due to **identity struggles** and **peer pressure**.
- The **teen brain is still developing** — introducing substances at this stage has long-term effects.

Substance Use Pathway:

- *Misuse* → *Abuse* → *Addiction*
- Stages: **Intoxication, Withdrawal, Preoccupation/Craving.**
- While boys are more likely to experiment, girls suffer **greater emotional impact**.
- Influences: **Genetics, peer pressure, media exposure**



2. Social and Legal Frameworks

Speakers: Advocate Madhivanan & Advocate Steffinarose

- The **NDPS Act** outlines strict penalties, including up to **20 years in prison** for trafficking.
- Even **first-time possession** carries legal consequences.
- Discussions are ongoing globally on **decriminalizing minor users** and prioritizing **rehabilitation**.
- Students were advised to stay informed and make use of available **legal and mental health helplines**:
 - **Women: 181**
 - **Senior Citizens: 14567**
 - **Child Helpline: 1098**
 - **Cyber Crime: 1930**
 - **Police: 100**
 - **Fire: 101**



3. Practical Awareness

- Early signs of addiction include **emotional withdrawal, aggression, and social changes**.
 - Addiction often starts with **legal substances** like alcohol and tobacco.
 - A **family history** of addiction increases risk.
 - **Behavioural addictions** (phones, gaming, gambling) are becoming more common among youth.
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4. Technology and Digital Exposure

- The **internet and social media** are major gateways to drug exposure.
 - The **dark web** enables illegal purchases.
 - Excessive screen use is linked to **emotional and cognitive delay**.
 - Students were urged to practice **digital discipline**, and parents to stay engaged.
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After the panel discussion, a brief interactive session was held where around five students posed thoughtful questions. One notable query focused on the difference between a planned murder and an intoxicated accident — how investigations are carried out and justice is served. **Advocates Nirmala and B. Guruprasath** addressed this in detail, explaining the role of intent and legal procedures. Their interaction with the students was insightful, offering practical perspectives and encouraging awareness of legal rights and responsibilities.

Takeaways:

- Prevention is **more effective** than cure.
- **Emotional support, positive peer groups, and early help-seeking** are key
- Avoid drug exposure at home and maintain open dialogue with family.
- Use technology **mindfully** and report any suspicious behaviour.



Pledge Ceremony & Conclusion

At **1:25 PM**, students, faculty, and staff took a collective **anti-drug pledge**, vowing to lead drug-free lives and support peers in distress. This symbolic gesture reaffirmed the campus community's commitment to awareness and action.

A final **thank-you note** was delivered, followed by the **National Anthem** at **1:30 PM**, marking the conclusion of a powerful, reflective, and informative event.





Conclusion

The NSS event succeeded in bringing together judiciary, healthcare, legal services, and student communities to address the growing concerns of drug abuse. By promoting awareness, encouraging prevention, and sharing actionable knowledge, the event empowered students to act as change-makers in building a resilient and drug-free society.
