THE LEGALIZATION OF ILLICIT DRUGS

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The legalization of illicit drugs has been a popular topic of debate. There is often concern about the toxic nature and the negative reviews it gets due to the habits and effects that may follow. However, I personally feel that drugs aren’t the root cause of this. It may be observed that the behavior shown by one as well as the society in response to drugs is a major problem which is being faced.

Drugs are unhealthy and unsafe if not used properly, though a ban or prohibition is not the solution to some place’s drug problem. A country could solve many of its drug related problems with the legalization of illicit drugs given that they save money, they can be made safer and would reduce drug related crime

 First of all, drugs should be legalized to save money. Billions of dollars are spent every year fighting an unsuccessful drug war. Legalizing illicit drugs should be followed by taxing them through which the government can use the money to fund many government programs. The money could be used for treatment programs to get users off drugs and education programs to prevent children and others from using drugs in the first place. As a replacement for building and funding prisons for inmates convicted of drug-related crimes, the money could be used to build schools and fund the educational needs of children. This is how the country would save money if drugs were legalized.

Second of all, after years and years of global prohibition of almost all drugs except alcohol, it is quite visible that major drug laws need to be reformed in various places. There is a general awareness among various scientists, law makers and medical experts that the current system of prohibition of drugs has failed miserably. Due to the technological advancements all around the world, the increased efficiency of creation of various chemicals and distribution of drugs has led us to a very interesting question yet to be answered. The serious question being imposed here is whether the capability of law enforcement to keep up with various criminal outlets is being executed efficiently.

Certain examples help us understand the reason why there should be legalization of illicit drugs needs to be done. In the 1920’s, the United States happened to ban the sale of alcohol. This led to a wide range of illegal bars being opened across the country and the rise of the mafia. This failed experiment later gave rise to the criminal outlets shifting their focus onto illicit drugs and other substances.

Furthermore, evidence from various countries has shown the repercussions and dangers of trying to tackle the gangs who control the market of illicit drugs. In large parts of Mexico, the ongoing drug war launched by President Felipe Calderon in 2006 has resulted in the collapse of law and order, with tens of thousands of people having been killed since. This is a grave issue which could have been solved with the legalization of illicit drugs.

With the failures of drugs prohibition being more and more visible, there have been certain tentative calls and demands of big changes at the higher level. Foremost, in this agenda of reforming the drug policies all around the world, attempts have been made to shift this control of drugs from the hands of criminal outlets into the use of medication and health. Among the first steps in solving this drugs and drug law related problems are the above mentioned ways in which regulations and certain restrictions related to medical and pharmaceutical purposes are kept.

The legalization of drugs does not mean a free market where anyone can buy whatever quantity they like. It means that there will be a regulation in the amounts just like alcohol or pharmaceutical products, where the control of drugs will be snatched away from the hands of criminal gangs and outlets and handed over to medical organizations and governments. Being handed over to the control of government will allow taxation by which money can be used for various constructive social and economic programs of the state. Also, it will allow the quality of the drugs to be controlled which reduces the risk of harm to the users of the drugs.

In my opinion, the most effective and bold step taken by a country till date is Portugal. In the 2001 change in drug policy which saw the possession and use of illicit drugs in small quantities was barely regarded as a criminal offence. This was done alternative to treatment and remedies and well being programs. Surprisingly, due to the change in this policy, Portugal saw a huge decrease in the number of adolescent and problematic drug users as well as in the number of HIV cases all over the country, given the fact that it was the most affected country for HIV all over European Union.

Furthermore, some drugs, including cannabis, have medical applications. These include reduction in chronic pain, increase in lung capacity, regulates and prevents diabetes, helps fight cancer,etc. These could potentially be explored more without political interference if the drugs were legal to use in other settings. The potential in the research of drugs in a regulated way is immense and should not be wasted at all

People who are criminalized by their addictions may feel they have less stake in society and may slip more easily into other problematic behaviors. Addicts will also have to deal with criminals in obtaining their drugs. Legalization would undermine existing drug gangs and could reduce drug related violence

Over the period of time, of course, calls for liberalization have not been as forthcoming from serving politicians, though notable exceptions have arisen. Nevertheless, serious change is still some distance away.

We are likely still some way off from any government experimenting with the broad regulation of illicit drugs. Yet the situation is starting to change, and with that, the change of the law following suit will surely accompany in the near future. Hopefully then, we might see legalization of illicit drugs which will open up a new world for research and a better functioning society.