Syllabus subtopic: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Context: The National Crime Record Bureau under the Ministry of Home Affairs has informed that a total number of 874,750 and 778 people have died during 2014, 2015 and 2016 respectively due to drug overdose in the country.

Background:
The national survey was conducted to generate estimates for eight categories of psychoactive substances: Alcohol, Cannabis, Opioids, Cocaine, Amphetamine Type Stimulants (ATS), Sedatives, Inhalants and Hallucinogens.

Extant of Drug and substance abuse in India- survey findings:

India is home to six crore alcohol addicts, more than the population of 172 world nations including Italy.

Alcoholism is a condition that requires medical attention, but unfortunately only less than 3% of the people with drinking problem get any treatment.

Addictions: More than 3.1 crore Indians (2.8%) have reported using cannabis products, Bhang, Ganja, Charas, Heroin and Opium, in last one year. Unfortunately only one in 20 drug addicts gets treatment at a hospital.

Country liquor accounts for 30% of the total liquor consumption, and Indian made foreign liquor also account for the same amount.

In Punjab and Sikkim, the prevalence of cannabis use disorders is considerably higher (more than thrice) than the national average.

At the national level, Heroin is most commonly used substance followed by pharmaceutical opioids, followed by opium (Afeem).
Less than 1% or nearly 1.18 crore people use sedatives, non medical or non prescription use. However, what is more worrying that its prevalence is high among children and adolescents. This problem of addiction of children is more prevalent in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Delhi and Haryana.

**What has the government done in this regard?**

It constituted Narco-Coordination Centre (NCORD) in November, 2016 and revived the scheme of “Financial Assistance to States for Narcotics Control”.

In 2017, the government approved new Reward Guidelines with increased quantum of reward for interdiction or seizure of different illicit drugs.

For effective coordination with foreign countries, India has signed 37 Bilateral Agreements/Memoranda of Understanding.

Narcotics Control Bureau has been provided funds for developing a new software i.e. Seizure Information Management System (SIMS) which will create a complete online database of drug offences and offenders.

The government has constituted a fund called “National Fund for Control of Drug Abuse” to meet the expenditure incurred in connection with combating illicit traffic in Narcotic Drugs; rehabilitating addicts, and educating public against drug abuse, etc.

The government is also conducting National Drug Abuse Survey to measure trends of drug abuse in India through Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment with the help of National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre of AIIMS.

The **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** has drafted National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (2018-2023) for addressing the problem of drug and substance abuse in the country, dumping a long-pending draft policy on the matter.