

War on drugs

[Science](#), [Social Science](#)



War on Drugs A “ War on Drugs” was declared by The US President, Nixon, in June 1971 and increased the number and sizes of the federal drug control agencies. The laws that were put in place during this time have since undergone so many changes, relieving some then perceived bad drugs like tobacco and adding others like marijuana to the list of banned substances. The War on Drug seemed to be effective in the 20th century but proved to have some ‘ unintended consequences’ especially in the 20th century, a fact that has led to various criticisms labeled against it.

The major unintended consequences of the war on drugs include the criminalization of drug users, death penalty; punitive sentencing practices such as mandatory sentencing; excessive levels of imprisonment and the enforced drug detention centers. The drug policy directly affected the poor, vulnerable and the socially excluded groups, particularly the women and ethnic minorities. Generally, a larger percentage of the small scale drug offenders exhibit no history of criminal acts such as high level drug selling activities or violence. However, illegal drug perpetrators make up a large percentage of arrests; in the US, marijuana made up 40% of total drug arrest in 2005 (Penal Reform International, 2010).

The US has been largely criticized for racially molding the War on Drugs. Even though the rate of marijuana use is evenly spread across the population, the Native American users seem to be favored by the law with Blacks and Latinos disfavored in the process. For instance, among the inmates incarcerated in prisons for drug related offences, 37% were Blacks, 31% Hispanics and only 28% were Whites in 2007 (Pew Research Center, 2009).

In conclusion, the War on Drug initiative has proven ineffective in controlling the production, trafficking and consumption of the illegal drugs. It is also associated with numerous other impacts such as criminal justice system overload, overwhelmed courts, and overcrowded prisons exacerbated health problems. This, therefore, would suggest the need for trial of alternative measures such as legalization of drug use.

References

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