

INDIAN HEMP DRUGS COMMISSION

1893-94



The Indian Hemp Drugs Commission Report (1895)

Key recommendations

1. Total prohibition of the cultivation of the hemp plant for narcotics, and of the manufacture, sale, or use of the drugs derived from it, is neither necessary nor expedient in consideration of their ascertained effects, of the prevalence of the habit of using them, of the social and religious feeling on the subject, and of the possibility of its driving the consumers to have recourse to other stimulants or narcotics which may be more deleterious (Chapter XIV, paragraphs 553 to 585).
2. The policy advocated is one of control and restriction, aimed at suppressing the excessive use and restraining the moderate use within due limits (Chapter XIV, paragraph 586).
3. The means to be adopted for the attainment of these objects are:
 - adequate taxation, which can be best effected by the combination of a direct duty with the auction of the privilege of vend (Chapter XIV, paragraph 587).
 - prohibiting cultivation, except under license, and centralizing cultivation (Chapter XVI, paragraphs 636 and 677).
 - limiting the number of shops for the retail sale of hemp drugs (Chapter XVI, paragraph 637).
 - limiting the extent of legal possession (Chapter XVI, paragraphs 689 and 690). The limit of legal possession of ganja or charas or any preparation or mixture thereof would be 5 tola (about 60 grams), bhang or any mixture thereof one quarter of a ser (a quarter of a litre).

The chapters and paragraphs indicated are those used in the Report of the Indian Hemp Drugs Commission (1895). In 1893 the British government charged the Indian Hemp Drugs Commission with examining the extent of the use and cultivation of 'ganja' in colonial India. The resulting eight-volume report is one of many fascinating reports about cannabis. Ganja is a term of Sanskrit origin for cannabis, charas is a type of hashish and bhang is a preparation from the leaves and flowers (buds) of the female cannabis plant with a low THC content, smoked or consumed as a beverage.

The report is available online at the India Papers Collection of the National Library of Scotland
<http://digital.nls.uk/indiapapers/browse/pageturner.cfm?id=74908458>