

(Research/Review) Article

Law Enforcement Against Drug Abuse in Society: Implementation of Indonesian Law Number 35 of 2009 on Narcotics

Yuanita Mayangsari^{1*}, Noenik Soekorini², and Vieta Imelda Cornelis²

¹ Student, Faculty of Law, Universitas Dr. Soetomo, Indonesia

²⁻³ Lecturer, Faculty of Law, Universitas Dr. Soetomo, Indonesia

* Corresponding Author: e-mail: ayuant@gmail.com

Abstract: Drug abuse constitutes a serious threat to public health, social stability, and national security. This study examines law enforcement mechanisms against drug abuse under Indonesian Law Number 35 of 2009 on Narcotics and evaluates preventive measures implemented to combat this phenomenon. Employing a normative juridical approach through a comprehensive literature review, this research analyses the implementation of both penal and non-penal approaches in addressing narcotics-related offences. The findings reveal that law enforcement practices predominantly emphasise punitive measures, despite legislative provisions accommodating rehabilitation for drug users. The dual approach integrating criminal sanctions with social and health services remains suboptimal due to institutional constraints, limited rehabilitation facilities, inadequate training for law enforcement personnel, and weak inter-agency coordination. Preventive efforts through education, family empowerment, school-based programs, community engagement, and media campaigns have been implemented but continue to face challenges, including social stigma and insufficient public awareness. This study recommends strengthening restorative justice implementation, expanding rehabilitation service capacity, and enhancing cross-sectoral collaboration to build societal resilience against drug abuse while ensuring that users receive appropriate treatment rather than mere criminalisation.

Keywords: Drug Abuse; Law Enforcement; Narcotics; Prevention; Rehabilitation

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1. Introduction

Criminal law enforcement in Indonesia possesses unique and complex characteristics that occasionally yield unintended consequences. This complexity manifests in the handling of various criminal cases, including corruption, illegal logging, and drug abuse. In practice, deviations in criminal law application frequently occur, resulting in innocent individuals becoming suspects while actual perpetrators evade legal accountability (Satjipto Rahardjo, 2009).

As society evolves, criminal activities have become increasingly sophisticated and organised. Drug abuse represents one of the most pressing issues confronting contemporary Indonesian society. Law Number 35 of 2009 defines narcotics as substances or drugs derived from plants, whether synthesised or semi-synthesised, capable of altering or diminishing consciousness, eliminating pain sensations, and inducing dependency. The negative impacts of drug abuse extend beyond individual harm to encompass broader societal consequences affecting public health, social order, and economic stability (Setiyawati, 2015).

In the contemporary era, narcotics-related crimes have evolved into transnational issues executed through sophisticated methods and advanced technologies. Law enforcement agencies are expected to possess the capability to prevent and address these crimes while simultaneously improving the moral quality of Indonesian human resources, particularly among younger generations. The increasing prevalence of drug-related criminal cases, despite existing regulatory frameworks, demands serious attention and comprehensive analysis (Ahmad Farid, n.d.).

Drug abuse prevention requires collaborative efforts extending beyond law enforcement agencies to include community participation. Community involvement may take various forms, including providing information regarding narcotics-related criminal activities to the police. Law enforcement encompasses all institutions tasked with upholding the law, including judicial bodies, law enforcement agencies, and supervisory bodies. In the narrow sense, law enforcement in Indonesia comprises police, prosecutors, and judges (Muhammad Hatta, 2022).

This research focuses on the necessity for continued measures in law enforcement processes against drug crime perpetrators and the effective implementation of criminal eradication efforts. The current drug situation in Indonesia has reached alarming proportions, affecting all societal strata, including minors who have been exposed to and consumed narcotics. Consequently, law enforcement faces the challenge of determining appropriate legal responses to narcotics-related offences (Zakky Maulana Afizuddin et al., 2025).

This study addresses two primary research questions: first, how does law enforcement handle drug abuse based on Law Number 35 of 2009 on Narcotics; and second, what preventive measures are implemented to combat drug abuse. The objectives of this research are to analyse law enforcement mechanisms against drug abuse and to identify effective prevention strategies.

2. Literature Review

Law Enforcement Conceptualisation

Law enforcement constitutes the process of implementing legal norms within societal life. This process extends beyond mere execution of written regulations to encompass social justice considerations in application. The objectives of law enforcement include establishing order, justice, and legal certainty (Satjipto Rahardjo, 2009). Law enforcement encompasses a series of actions undertaken by law enforcement apparatus, including police, prosecutors, judges, and correctional institutions, in supervising criminal acts in accordance with applicable law (Moeljatno, 2008).

Effective law enforcement necessitates inter-agency synergy among police, prosecutors, courts, and correctional facilities. Without such cooperation, functional fragmentation and incoherence toward the ultimate objectives of the legal system may occur, potentially compromising public rights protection and justice administration. The absence of such synergy frequently impedes or entirely halts enforcement processes (Akbar & Hadi, 2022). Low public legal awareness further hampers community participation in law enforcement, underscoring the importance of legal education as a strategic measure to strengthen societal legal foundations (Khumaeroh Azzahro & Putri Setianingsih, 2025).

Drug Abuse Understanding

Drug abuse refers to the utilisation of narcotics inconsistent with established medical and legal purposes. Based on Law Number 35 of 2009, narcotics are defined as substances or drugs derived from plants or non-plants, whether synthesised or semi-synthesised, capable of altering or diminishing consciousness and inducing dependency. Drug abuse negatively impacts not only individuals but also broadly affects families, communities, and nations through disruptions in social, economic, and security aspects (Mardani, 2008).

Drug abuse constitutes a complex, multidimensional issue affecting not merely individual users but also families, social environments, and community economic conditions. Psychologically, abusers experience emotional disturbances including anxiety, depression, and personality changes, subsequently affecting their social interactions, employment, and economic productivity, potentially creating financial burdens related to treatment and family care costs (Ramadhan & Darwis, 2024). Sociologically, Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory is frequently employed to understand how environmental influences such as family, peers, schools, and culture drive individuals toward substance abuse.

Casual Factors of Drug Abuse

Factors contributing to drug abuse include social environmental influences, peer pressure, insufficient knowledge about drug dangers, and unstable mental conditions. Environments tolerating drug use possess significant potential to lead individuals toward substance abuse. Additionally, economic factors, childhood trauma, and identity exploration frequently motivate drug use (Lidia Harlina Martono & Satya Djoewana, 2006).

Drug abuse in society is influenced by various interrelated internal and external factors. Internal factors encompass individual characteristics, psychological conditions, and family circumstances. External factors include social environment, peer association, and drug availability in society. Adolescent characteristics such as high curiosity, need for group acceptance, and unstable personality serve as entry points for substance abuse (Fitri & Asra, 2023). From the family aspect, conditions such as broken homes, parental drug use, and minimal parental supervision constitute primary triggers. Family environments chronically filled with emotional instability drive individuals to seek escape through addictive substances (Hamonangan Pane et al., 2021).

3. Research Methods

This research employs a normative juridical approach focusing on positive legal norms currently in effect. The study analyses existing legislation and connects it with legal theories and expert opinions to understand and examine law enforcement related to drug abuse in society. The legislative approach is utilised by examining applicable legal regulations concerning drug abuse, including Law Number 35 of 2009 on Narcotics and provisions within the Criminal Code. Additionally, a conceptual approach examines legal theories and expert opinions to strengthen the analysis of law enforcement roles and community involvement in drug abuse prevention efforts.

This research utilizes three types of legal materials: primary legal materials comprising Law Number 35 of 2009 on Narcotics, the Criminal Code (KUHP), the Criminal Procedure Code (KUHP), and Law Number 2 of 2002 on the Indonesian National Police; secondary legal materials including legal science literature, research results, and scientific articles; and tertiary legal materials encompassing legal dictionaries and encyclopedias. Legal material collection procedures are conducted through literature studies by identifying, collecting, and analysing legal documents and academic literature related to drug abuse law enforcement. Legal material analysis employs qualitative-descriptive techniques to answer the research questions.

4. Results and Discussion

Law Enforcement Against Drug Abuse Under Law Number 35 of 2009

Narcotics abuse constitutes an extraordinary crime threatening various life aspects, from public health, social stability to national security. In Indonesia, the drug abuse problem has become increasingly complex with rising user numbers and rampant internationally organised illegal drug trafficking. As a legal response to this issue, the government enacted Law Number 35 of 2009 on Narcotics as the primary legal basis for handling narcotics crimes. This law not only regulates narcotics classification but also establishes prevention, enforcement, and rehabilitation mechanisms for drug abusers.

Law enforcement in this context is not merely interpreted as criminal sentencing but encompasses the entire process from investigation, prosecution, trial, punishment, to rehabilitation. The law replaces previous legislation and introduces various updates in approaches toward narcotics criminal offenders. Article 4 of this law explicitly states that the state bears responsibility for ensuring narcotics availability for health services and scientific development while preventing and eradicating abuse and illegal trafficking.

Law enforcement is based on role division among police institutions, prosecution offices, courts, and other agencies such as the National Narcotics Agency (BNN). Additionally, the law provides space for non-penal approaches, such as medical and social rehabilitation for drug abusers. Law enforcement in handling drug abuse is implemented through several main stages, including investigation, prosecution, trial, and sentence execution. The investigation stage represents the beginning of the law enforcement process. Police and BNN possess the authority to conduct investigations of suspected narcotics crimes.

However, implementation challenges arise concerning weak coordination between the Police and the BNN. Although both institutions have similar tasks in addressing drug

abuse, a lack of role synchronisation frequently creates authority conflicts in the field. Overlapping task execution slows case handling processes and creates confusion in authority delegation between agencies (Haqni et al., 2025). Furthermore, prosecutorial discretion regarding rehabilitation has not operated optimally due to limited technical regulations and a lack of uniform understanding among law enforcement agencies (Intan Dian Vitaloka et al., 2023).

This research finds that law enforcement practices still predominantly emphasise punitive measures despite legislative provisions for rehabilitation. Drug users who should receive treatment are frequently subjected to criminal sanctions, although the law has opened space for rehabilitation. The dual approach encompassing legal efforts along with social and health services has not been optimally integrated due to institutional constraints, limited rehabilitation facilities, lack of law enforcement training, and weak inter-agency coordination.

Preventive Measures Against Drug Abuse

Drug abuse prevention requires a comprehensive approach encompassing legal, social, and health aspects. From the legal perspective, repressive actions against perpetrators must be balanced with rehabilitative approaches, especially for users who are victims of dependency. National policy in drug abuse prevention must involve three main aspects: primary prevention (education), secondary prevention (early detection), and tertiary prevention (rehabilitation). Additionally, community participation in providing information to the apparatus and creating drug-free environments is essential (Nurfaiza, 2002).

First, education and youth character strengthening constitute the primary foundation in early prevention efforts. Nanang & Pristiwiyanto (2024) demonstrate that interactive educational programs using lecture, discussion, and case study methods successfully increased student understanding about drug dangers by up to 40% based on pre-post measurement. This reflects how participatory approaches and character building significantly change youth perceptions and attitudes toward narcotics.

Second, collaboration among families, schools, and communities has proven effective in minimising abuse risks. The importance of synergy among these three parties through socialisation, group discussions, and the presence of resource persons from BNN and medical personnel strengthens supervisory networks and builds supportive educational environments for youth (Supartin & Kurniasari, 2022). Third, local community empowerment also shows positive results. Socialisation and awareness enhancement successfully increase community understanding of narcotics and foster a law-abiding culture (Kamal & Sejati, 2023). This underscores the urgency of community-based approaches in preventing narcotics spread.

Additionally, peer education approaches and social skills enhancement have also proven effective. Immawati Asniar et al. (2024) state that social skills training through role-play and interactive workshops not only reduces bullying risks but also enhances the youth's ability to resist peer pressure to try drugs. This comprehensive approach is considered most effective compared to purely repressive strategies. Measures including legal socialisation, emergency counselling, and youth leadership training form collective awareness and shared responsibility.

5. Conclusion

Based on the analysis of law enforcement and drug abuse prevention efforts as regulated in Law Number 35 of 2009 on Narcotics, several conclusions emerge. First, law enforcement in handling drug abuse based on the law has a strong legal foundation encompassing both penal (criminal) and non-penal (rehabilitation) approaches. However, in practice, implementation still predominantly emphasises enforcement and punishment aspects compared to rehabilitative and preventive approaches. Drug users who should receive treatment are frequently subjected to criminal sanctions, although the law has opened space for rehabilitation. The dual approach encompassing legal efforts along with social and health services has not been optimally integrated due to institutional constraints, limited rehabilitation facilities, insufficient law enforcement training, and weak inter-agency coordination.

Second, preventive measures against drug abuse have been implemented through various national strategies, including regulatory and policy strengthening, education and socialisation to communities, family empowerment as the frontline, school and educational institution involvement, community-based prevention, and media and information technology utilisation. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of these efforts still requires consistency, reach expansion, human resource capacity enhancement, and stronger cross-sectoral collaboration. Prevention has not fully reached vulnerable groups such as youth, informal workers, and rural communities. Additionally, rehabilitation and social reintegration programs for former drug users remain suboptimal, leaving them vulnerable to relapse due to stigma and lack of social support.

This study recommends strengthening restorative justice implementation in law enforcement against drug users so that law enforcement agencies not only emphasise punishment aspects but also prioritise rehabilitation for drug abuse victims not involved in illegal trafficking networks. The government should enhance rehabilitation service capacity by expanding medical and social rehabilitation facilities across regions, providing adequate professional personnel, and encouraging community-based rehabilitation system strengthening that is more accessible to society. Educational and socialisation programs on drug dangers must be intensified through various media to build collective awareness that drug abuse is not merely an individual problem but a social issue requiring involvement of all parties.

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