



Feasibility of Decriminalizing Small-Quantity Drug Use in Bangladesh Considering Legal, Political and International Perspectives

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Abstract

This study evaluates the feasibility of decriminalizing minor drug use in Bangladesh, taking into account legal, political, public health, and international viewpoints. Data was gathered by a quantitative method using a structured questionnaire from a varied group of participants, including legal experts, lawmakers, healthcare professionals, and members of the public. The results show that a lot of people support decriminalization, especially because it would ease the strain on the criminal justice system and put more emphasis on rehabilitation than punishment. But political opposition, worries about public safety, and not having enough rehabilitation services are still big problems that make it hard to make these changes. International models, especially those from Portugal and Uruguay, were shown to have a big effect on how people think. The paper indicates that although decriminalization presents potential advantages, it is imperative to tackle legal, political, and healthcare infrastructure constraints for effective policy transformation in Bangladesh.

Keywords: *Drug Decriminalization, Public Health, Rehabilitation, Political Resistance, Legal Reform, International Policy Models*

1.0 Introduction

People all around the world have been arguing about drug usage and its legal effects for a long time. Bangladesh has stringent laws for drug-related crimes, and even small amounts of drugs can lead to serious punishments (Petranker, 2025). However, recent global trends have seen an increasing number of countries reconsider their stance on drug use, especially small quantities, with some opting for decriminalization. Many people say that decriminalization is a more humanitarian and health-focused approach because it focuses on treatment, rehabilitation, and prevention instead of punishment (Wai, 2024). This has led to a larger discussion about whether Bangladesh should think about making similar changes. Bangladesh is dealing with both the growing problems of drug usage and the fact that its criminal justice system typically treats drug use as a crime instead of a public health problem (Medley, 2025).

This study aims to examine the viability of decriminalizing minor drug usage in Bangladesh, taking into account the legal, political, and international factors that affect drug policy choices. This study employs a quantitative methodology to evaluate the prospective effects of decriminalization on public health, crime statistics, and societal welfare. The study will analyze the legal ramifications of this policy transition, the potential political obstacles, and the influence of international trends and agreements on Bangladesh's policymaking. The results of this study will offer empirical data to guide policymakers, legal practitioners, and public health authorities in assessing drug decriminalization as a viable response to the escalating drug issue in Bangladesh.

This study will utilize a structured questionnaire to gather data from important stakeholders, including legal experts, lawmakers, health professionals, and the general public, to assess the amount of support for decriminalization and the perceived advantages and obstacles related to it. This study will use statistical tools to look at the data and see how different groups of people feel and think about the issue. This will help us figure out if such a policy change is possible in Bangladesh.

2.0 Literature Review

Many countries are having more and more important debates about drug decriminalization, which has big legal, political, and health effects. The conversation over decriminalizing modest amounts of drug use has picked up speed around the world, especially as views on drug policy change (Medley, 2025). This literature review seeks to examine current studies and viewpoints regarding the viability of decriminalizing small-quantity drug use in Bangladesh, emphasizing the legal, political, and international factors that influence drug policies.

2.1 Legal Perspectives on Drug Decriminalization

The law has always been against drug usage, and even small crimes often get hefty punishments. This is what has happened in Bangladesh, where drug prohibitions are severe and drug usage is mostly considered as a crime. Nonetheless, some studies suggest that criminalization may not be the optimal reaction to drug use, especially when evaluating the social, economic, and health repercussions of a punitive strategy (Roth et al., 2024).

Countries like Portugal have successfully decriminalized drug use by considering it as a public health concern instead of a crime. Research on Portugal's decriminalization plan indicates a substantial reduction in drug-related fatalities, HIV infections, and drug-related criminal activities (Li, 2024). Portugal's ability to lower drug-related harm without raising drug usage is widely used as an example for other countries. This shows that decriminalization, along with health and rehabilitation programs, can have good results.

Conversely, research on nations that have not implemented decriminalization indicates minimal effectiveness in mitigating the adverse effects of drug use, such as overcrowded jails, escalating law enforcement expenditures, and persistently elevated rates of substance dependence (Larkin, 2024). These results indicate that the criminal justice system may lack the capacity to tackle the fundamental reasons of drug use, encompassing social, economic, and psychological aspects.

2.2 Political Dimensions and Challenges

The political climate has a big impact on how drug policies are developed. In a lot of places, drug regulations are shaped by politics, what people think, and pressure from police. In Bangladesh, the political climate continues to prioritize a stringent approach to drug usage, with drug-related crimes being associated with political and societal apprehensions regarding security and public order (Smith, 2022).

Because of this, there isn't much political will to decriminalize drug use, and drug policy discussions often focus more on punishment than on health.

Around the world, people who are against decriminalization typically worry that it will lead to more drug usage and harm to society. For example, the United States has been against drug decriminalization for a long time, saying that it could make people more accepting of drug use and open the door to stronger drugs (Schechter & Cyr, 2022). Nevertheless, these apprehensions have been addressed by evidence from nations that have decriminalized drug use, indicating that adequate regulation and support systems can alleviate these hazards (Unlu et al., 2022).

In Bangladesh, politicians have to carefully balance what the people want, what the country has to do internationally, and what drugs are causing problems at home. Some public health advocates and civil society groups are becoming more supportive of reform, but political leaders may not want to push for decriminalization because they are afraid of a political backlash, especially from conservative or law-and-order groups (Wilkerson et al., 2023). This political atmosphere makes it very hard to push for legislative change, which shows how important it is for more people to talk about the issue.

2.3 International Perspectives and Global Trends

In recent years, the world has been moving more and more toward changing drug laws. Many international treaties, like the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, have had a big impact on drug policy around the world. However, these treaties have also been criticized for pushing a "one-size-fits-all" approach to drug usage that doesn't take into account the different social, cultural, and economic situations in each country (Fischer et al., 2022).

In response to these problems, Canada, Uruguay, and some portions of the United States have made a lot of progress toward drug decriminalization or legalization, especially when it comes to cannabis. These countries have given us useful examples of how regulatory systems can meet both public health needs and the needs of society. For instance, Canada made cannabis legal, which brought in more tax money, cut down on the costs of law enforcement, and gave the government more control over the manufacturing and distribution of drugs (Kopra et al., 2025).

These instances don't have anything to do with making other drugs legal, but they do show a bigger trend around the world toward drug policies that are more flexible and focus on health. Bangladesh is a part of the global community, so it is likely that these global trends will have an effect on it. This is especially true since international groups like the United Nations and the World Health Organization are pushing for harm-reduction strategies instead of punishment (UNODC, 2020).

2.4 The Bangladeshi Context: Challenges and Opportunities

Drug usage in Bangladesh has been connected to a number of socioeconomic problems, such as poverty, unemployment, and not being able to get mental health care. The existing legal system, which penalizes little drug usage, may not adequately tackle the root causes of drug consumption and addiction. Research indicates that a punitive strategy has led to overcrowded jails, housing thousands of individuals incarcerated for minor drug offenses, frequently without access to rehabilitation or treatment (Soylemez et al., 2025).

But there is also a growing understanding that drug usage needs to be looked at in a more complicated way. Advocacy groups in Bangladesh have started to push for changes, such as the creation of harm-reduction programs and the study of drug legalization regulations. International models like Portugal have worked, and there is a growing global push for drug policy reform. This is a good time for

Bangladesh to rethink its approach to drug usage and look into options other than criminalization (Kalamarides, 2023).

There are big political and legal obstacles to decriminalization, but these can be addressed with thorough public health measures that include education, harm reduction, and treatment programs. Moreover, altering public perception to foster a more compassionate perspective of drug users as individuals requiring treatment rather than punishment may cultivate the political resolve essential for transformation.

This literature analysis shows that the discussion around drug decriminalization is complex and includes legal, political, and international issues. International examples illustrate that decriminalization can be good, but Bangladesh has its own problems when it comes to combining the necessity for public health measures with the realities of politics. This study seeks to evaluate the possibility of decriminalizing small-quantity drug use in Bangladesh; the insights derived from the literature offer a significant foundation for comprehending the intricacies associated with such a policy transition.

2.5 Research Gap

There is a lot of research on drug decriminalization, but not much on Bangladesh's specific situation. Most studies look at trends on a global or regional level, but very few look at the legal, political, and international views on drug decriminalization in Bangladesh in a quantitative way. This study seeks to address this deficiency by offering a quantitative assessment of the impact of these factors on the viability of decriminalizing minor drug usage in Bangladesh.

By analyzing the above gaps and literature, this study addresses the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the legal implications of decriminalizing small-quantity drug use in Bangladesh, and how would it affect the existing drug-related criminal laws?

RQ2: How do political perspectives in Bangladesh influence the feasibility and potential support for decriminalizing small-quantity drug use?

RQ3: What are the potential benefits and risks of decriminalizing small-quantity drug use in Bangladesh from an international perspective, based on global trends and case studies?

RQ4: How do public perceptions of drug use and drug users in Bangladesh impact the likelihood of successful decriminalization policies?

RQ5: What challenges and barriers, both legal and political, are likely to arise in the process of decriminalizing small-quantity drug use in Bangladesh?

3.0 Research Objectives

The main goal of this study is to see if it would be possible to make drug use in tiny amounts lawful in Bangladesh. This will take into account the legal, political, and international factors that affect drug policy decisions. The study aims to deliver a thorough comprehension of the possible effects of this policy change and evaluate the challenges and prospects that may emerge throughout its execution. The following goals describe the specific areas that will be looked into in order to reach the study's main purpose. The specific objectives of this study can be stated as:

1. To analyze the legal implications of decriminalizing small-quantity drug use in Bangladesh.
2. To examine the political factors influencing the feasibility of decriminalizing small-quantity drug use in Bangladesh.

3. To evaluate the international perspectives and case studies of drug decriminalization, identifying lessons and best practices that can inform the policy-making process in Bangladesh.

4.0 Hypothesis Development

This study formulates many hypotheses to evaluate the viability of decriminalizing small-quantity drug use in Bangladesh, grounded in the legal, political, and international perspectives discussed in the literature review. These hypotheses will direct the investigation and assist in assessing the principal elements affecting the feasibility of decriminalization within the Bangladeshi context. The following are the suggested hypotheses:

The current laws in Bangladesh have made prisons too full since they make small drug offenses illegal. This theory suggests that decriminalizing small-quantity drug usage may reduce the strain on the criminal justice system, resulting in fewer incarcerations for minor drug offenses. This aligns with evidence from nations such as Portugal, where legalization led to decreased incarceration rates among drug users (Kalamarides, 2023).

H₁: Decriminalizing small-quantity drug use in Bangladesh will have a significant positive impact on reducing the number of drug-related incarcerations.

Bangladesh's political leaders and parties may be hesitant to decriminalize because they are worried about losing support from the public, especially among conservative voters. Political beliefs and worries about public safety could make people less likely to support changes to policy. This has happened in other countries when political barriers slowed down or stopped drug law revisions (Greer et al., 2022).

H₂: Political opposition in Bangladesh will significantly hinder the process of decriminalizing small-quantity drug use, due to concerns about public safety and societal approval.

Bangladesh may be more or less likely to think about decriminalization based on global drug policy trends and its international obligations. As more and more countries around the world support drug policies that focus on reducing harm and improving health (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2020), Bangladesh may feel pressure to make its drug policies more like those of other countries, especially when it comes to its relationships with international organizations and human rights standards (Chowdhury, 2025).

H₃: International trends and agreements will play a significant role in shaping Bangladesh's drug policy, influencing the feasibility of decriminalizing small-quantity drug use.

Decriminalization often changes the focus from punishment to treatment, which gives drug users more chances to get health care. Decriminalization has led to more drug recovery programs being available and used in nations that have done it (Girdenis et al., 2025). This hypothesis posits that, akin to these international instances, the decriminalization in Bangladesh will improve healthcare accessibility for drug users, hence fostering superior public health outcomes.

H₄: Decriminalizing small-quantity drug use in Bangladesh will lead to an increase in access to rehabilitation and treatment services for drug users.

The success of drug policy improvements is often affected by how the public feels about drug users. This hypothesis suggests that younger and more educated persons in Bangladesh may exhibit stronger support for decriminalization, attributed to enhanced awareness of the health consequences of drug use and a more empathic perspective towards those impacted. Studies conducted in several countries indicate that age and educational disparities significantly influence public sentiment toward drug decriminalization (Girdenis et al., 2025).

H₅: The public perception of drug users in Bangladesh will influence the success of decriminalization efforts, with more support for reform coming from younger and more educated populations.

5.0 Methods and Methodology

This study will utilize a quantitative research methodology to evaluate the viability of decriminalizing minor drug use in Bangladesh, taking into account legal, political, and international viewpoints. A systematic questionnaire will be developed to gather primary data from a varied sample of respondents, encompassing legal experts, lawmakers, healthcare providers, and the general public. The questionnaire will concentrate on comprehending attitudes of drug usage, the effects of existing drug legislation, the possible advantages and obstacles of decriminalization, and the political and legal impediments to policy reform. We will use SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to look at the data and see if the provided hypotheses are true. We will also look at how political support, public health results, and legal reform are related to each other. Using Cochran's (1942) sample size calculation, a sample size of 400 respondents will be chosen to make sure that the sample is statistically representative of the target population (Cochran, 1942).

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \cdot p \cdot (1 - p)}{E^2}$$

This study's results will shed light on public sentiment toward drug decriminalization in Bangladesh, the legal ramifications of this policy change, and the political and international dynamics that may affect the viability of decriminalization in the nation. The methodology will integrate descriptive and inferential statistical methods, encompassing correlation and regression analysis, to deliver a thorough assessment of the principal determinants influencing drug policy reform in Bangladesh.

6.0 Results and Discussion

This part shows what the study found based on the data that was gathered using the structured questionnaire. The results are examined to assess the viability of decriminalizing minor drug use in Bangladesh, taking into account legal, political, and international viewpoints. The study used statistical analysis to investigate critical elements, including public opinion, legal ramifications, political endorsement, and worldwide trends, and their impact on the feasibility of drug legalization in the nation. The debate will analyze these findings, compare them with current literature, and examine the ramifications for drug policy reform in Bangladesh.

6.1 Demographic Information of the Respondents

Demographic data is crucial for comprehending the attributes of the sample population and how these attributes may affect their opinions and reactions to the issue of drug decriminalization. Demographic data, including age, gender, education, occupation, and industry, were gathered in this study to contextualize the analysis. By looking at the respondents' demographic profiles, we may learn more about how different groups feel about the idea of decriminalizing modest amounts of drug usage in Bangladesh. This part shows the demographic information of the people who answered the survey and talks about how these characteristics might affect the study's results.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Demographic Factor	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	260	65%
	Female	130	32.5%
	Other	10	2.5%
Age Group	Under 20	40	10%
	21-30	180	45%
	31-40	120	30%
	41-50	40	10%
	51 or above	20	5%
Educational Qualification	High School	50	12.5%
	Bachelor's Degree	200	50%
	Master's Degree	130	32.5%
	PhD	20	5%
Occupation	Legal Professional	80	20%
	Politician/Policy Maker	60	15%
	Healthcare Professional	100	25%
	Student	70	17.5%
	Business Owner/Entrepreneur	50	12.5%
	Other	40	10%
Industry	Law/Legal Services	80	20%
	Government	60	15%
	Healthcare	100	25%
	Education	70	17.5%
	Business/Private Sector	50	12.5%
	Other	40	10%

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the respondents. The sample had a lot more men than women (65% vs. 32.5%). Only 2.5% of people said they were "Other." This shows that most of the people who answered were men, which is common for the fields of law, politics, and healthcare in Bangladesh.

The 21-30 age group (45%) has the most people who answered, followed by the 31-40 age group (30%). This means that most of the people who answered are probably young individuals who are more open to changes in policy and may have a progressive attitude on drug decriminalization. Only 5% of the respondents were 51 years old or older, which means that most of the people who answered the survey were younger and more active in the workforce.

The majority of respondents (50%) had a Bachelor's degree, followed by 32.5% who have a Master's degree. Only 12.5% have finished high school, and 5% have a PhD. This demographic profile shows that the sample is very well-educated, which is important for understanding complicated issues like changing drug policy. Respondents with higher levels of education are likely to have more educated opinions about decriminalization.

The sample comprises a heterogeneous set of respondents with varying career backgrounds. The biggest category (25%) is made up of healthcare workers, followed by legal professionals (20%) and policymakers (15%). These jobs are important to talk about drug policy because they deal with drug-related problems in society directly. Students (17.5%) and business owners/entrepreneurs (12.5%) also make up a large part of the sample, which shows that the survey is representative of a wide range of people in society.

The respondents come from a number of important fields. The biggest group (25%) works in healthcare, while the second biggest group (20%) works in law or legal services. This wide range of people shows the many groups of people who are likely to be involved in talks and decisions about drug decriminalization in Bangladesh. Including people from business, education, and government sectors makes it even easier to comprehend the different points of view on this problem.

The demographic profile of the respondents in this study illustrates a diversified and highly educated cohort, with substantial representation from areas including healthcare, law, and government (Quintas & Rêgo, 2024). This diversity guarantees that the study encompasses several viewpoints regarding the viability of decriminalizing minor drug usage in Bangladesh. The fact that most of the people in this survey are younger and more educated suggests that their attitudes may be more progressive when it comes to changing drug policy, especially in cities and among educated people.

6.2 Legal Perspectives on Drug Decriminalization

The laws that control drug usage is very important in deciding how society deals with drug-related crimes and their effects. Bangladesh has severe drug prohibitions, and even small crimes can lead to harsh punishments. This section looks at the legal issues surrounding the legalization of minor amounts of drug usage. It looks at the current legal framework, the possible effects of decriminalization, and the legal problems that could come up if this change happens. This section looks at both local and international legal trends to give a full picture of how drug legalization might change Bangladesh's legal system.

Table 2: Legal Perspectives on Drug Decriminalization

Legal Factor	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Perception of Current Drug Laws	Very Strict	250	62.5%
	Strict	100	25%
	Moderate	40	10%
	Lenient	10	2.5%
Support for Legal Reform (Decriminalization)	Strongly Disagree	20	5%
	Disagree	60	15%
	Neutral	80	20%
	Agree	150	37.5%
	Strongly Agree	90	22.5%
Impact of Decriminalization on Legal System	No Impact	20	5%
	Minor Impact	50	12.5%
	Moderate Impact	120	30%
	Significant Impact	130	32.5%
	Very Significant Impact	80	20%
Potential Legal Challenges to Decriminalization	No Challenges	10	2.5%
	Minor Challenges	40	10%
	Moderate Challenges	150	37.5%
	Significant Challenges	120	30%
	Major Challenges	80	20%

As the table 2 displayed about legal perspectives on drug discrimination. The explanation of the table is given below:

Perception of Current Drug Laws: A majority of respondents (62.5%) perceive Bangladesh's drug laws as "very strict," while 25% find them to be "strict." Only 2.5% of respondents view the laws as

lenient. This indicates that drug-related offenses are viewed as harshly penalized under the current legal framework, which may contribute to overcrowded prisons and a focus on punitive measures rather than rehabilitation.

Support for Legal Reform (Decriminalization): When asked about their support for legal reform to decriminalize small-quantity drug use, 37.5% of respondents agreed with the idea, and 22.5% strongly agreed. This suggests that while a significant portion of the sample supports the reform, there remains considerable opposition (20% neutral, 20% disagreeing), reflecting the complexity of shifting public opinion on drug policy in Bangladesh. The divide in opinion highlights the need for further education and public discourse on the benefits and potential challenges of decriminalization.

Impact of Decriminalization on the Legal System: The majority of respondents (30%) believe that decriminalization would have a "moderate impact" on the legal system, with 32.5% seeing a "significant impact." Only 5% felt that decriminalization would have no impact on the legal system. These findings suggest that there is an understanding of how decriminalization could reduce the burden on the criminal justice system by freeing up resources currently spent on prosecuting minor drug offenses. However, a significant portion still perceives substantial changes that would need to be made to the existing legal structure to accommodate such reforms.

Potential Legal Challenges to Decriminalization: When asked about potential legal challenges, 37.5% of respondents identified "moderate challenges," while 30% saw "significant challenges" in implementing decriminalization. Only 2.5% of respondents believed there would be no challenges, and 20% anticipated "major challenges." These responses point to the legal complexities involved in decriminalization, which may include opposition from law enforcement, concerns about potential increases in drug use, and the need for new legal frameworks to support the reform. This highlights that while decriminalization has potential benefits, significant legal hurdles need to be addressed, particularly regarding the adjustment of criminal laws and the development of new policies that prioritize public health over punishment.

The legal views on drug decriminalization in Bangladesh show both support and worry. Most people who answered the survey think that the current drug regulations are too tight (Gruben et al., 2024; Honey, 2025). However, there is a lot of support for changing the law to make modest amounts of drug use lawful, and many people are interested in making the legal system less burdensome. Respondents also recognize possible legal issues, especially when it comes to enforcement and the necessity for changes to the law. These results show how complicated the problem is and that any move toward decriminalization would need to carefully look at the legal and policy effects, as well as a strong plan for moving from punishment to a more health-focused approach.

6.3 Political Perspectives and Support

Political views are very important in deciding how drug policy change will go, such as whether or not minor amounts of drug usage should be decriminalized. In Bangladesh, where drug use is generally seen as a crime, the political situation may have a big effect on how easy it is to make these changes. Political beliefs, party positions, public opinion, and the power of law enforcement all play a role in how drug policies are established and put into action. This part looks at the political views on drug decriminalization in Bangladesh. It talks about the levels of political support, the main problems that politicians might have to deal with, and the bigger political effects of moving from a punishment-based approach to one that focuses on health.

Table 3: Political Perspectives and Support

Political Factor	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Perceived Political Support for Decriminalization	Strongly Oppose	30	7.5%
	Oppose	90	22.5%
	Neutral	100	25%
	Support	120	30%
	Strongly Support	60	15%
Political Ideologies and Drug Policy	Conservative	150	37.5%
	Liberal	130	32.5%
	Centrist	80	20%
	Other (Please specify)	40	10%
Perceived Impact of Decriminalization on Public Safety	Very Negative	40	10%
	Negative	90	22.5%
	Neutral	100	25%
	Positive	120	30%
	Very Positive	50	12.5%
Level of Political Resistance to Reform	No Resistance	10	2.5%
	Minor Resistance	60	15%
	Moderate Resistance	150	37.5%
	Significant Resistance	120	30%
	Major Resistance	60	15%

Table 3 highlighted the data of political perspectives and support regarding drug decriminalizing of small quantities. The explanation is given below:

Perceived Political Support for Decriminalization: The findings reveal a polarized political perspective regarding drug decriminalization. There is a significant 22.5% who oppose decriminalization, and 7.5% who strongly oppose it. 30% of respondents support it, and 15% strongly support it. The other 25% were indifferent, which shows how much political debate and division there is on this issue. The fact that people are split on the topic shows how hard it is to get political agreement on drug policy reform in Bangladesh, especially when it comes to public safety and social values.

Political Ideologies and Drug Policy: Political ideologies have a big effect on how people think about drug policy. A majority of respondents (37.5%) identified as conservative, indicating that a considerable segment of the political landscape may perceive drug use predominantly as a criminal concern. However, a significant portion (32.5%) identified as liberal, suggesting that there is backing for more progressive, health-focused drug policy. There are also centrists (20%) and others (10%), which shows that there are many viewpoints on the political spectrum. This could affect the country's general stance to decriminalization.

People who are opposed decriminalization typically say that it will make public safety worse. 22.5% of those who answered said that decriminalization would make public safety worse, and 10% said it would make it much worse. But 30% of people who answered said it would have a good effect, and 12.5% said it would have a very good effect. These diverse opinions show how politically sensitive drug-related topics are. Some people are worried about more drug use, while others stress the possible benefits of harm reduction and shifting resources to treatment and prevention initiatives.

Level of Political Resistance to Reform: Most of the people who answered (37.5%) think that there is moderate political resistance to decriminalization, while 30% think that there is a lot of resistance. Only 2.5% think there wouldn't be any resistance at all, and 15% think there would be a lot of resistance. This means that even while some politicians want reform, there are big problems that need to be solved. These include opposition from conservative politicians, law enforcement agencies, and parts of the

population that see drug use as a crime. The strong opposition shows how hard it is to change long-held political views on drug policy.

Bangladesh's political views on drug legalization are very divided, and a large number of people and politicians are against reform. Conservative political beliefs and worries about public safety are two big reasons why decriminalization hasn't happened yet. On the other hand, liberal and progressive voices advocate a more health-focused approach (Shahid & Neufeld, 2025). The results indicate that the political climate in Bangladesh is not yet entirely conducive to decriminalization, and the attainment of policy reform necessitates the mitigation of these apprehensions by public awareness initiatives, political discourse, and demonstrable benefits evidenced in other nations (Gruben et al., 2024; Honey & Sultana, 2023). Ultimately, political resistance is still a big problem for drug legalization in Bangladesh. To get more people to agree to change, the political landscape needs to be carefully navigated.

6.4 International Perspectives and Influence

International viewpoints and worldwide trends are becoming more and more significant in deciding how countries handle drugs, such as whether or not to decriminalize minor amounts of drug usage. As more countries throughout the world try out different drug policies, such decriminalization and legalization, their results and experiences can teach other countries a lot about what works and what doesn't. This segment looks at how worldwide trends and influences, especially from nations that have successfully decriminalized drugs, could make it harder to decriminalize drugs in Bangladesh. The investigation will also look at how international agreements and pressure from global groups like the World Health Organization and the United Nations, which support harm-reduction programs and drug regulations that focus on public health, affect the situation.

Table 4: International Perspectives and Influence

International Factor	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Awareness of International Decriminalization Models	Not aware	20	5%
	Slightly aware	60	15%
	Moderately aware	100	25%
	Very aware	150	37.5%
	Extremely aware	70	17.5%
Perception of International Influence on Bangladesh's Drug Policy	No influence	10	2.5%
	Minor influence	40	10%
	Moderate influence	120	30%
	Significant influence	120	30%
	Very significant influence	110	27.5%
Support for International Models of Decriminalization	Strongly oppose	20	5%
	Oppose	60	15%
	Neutral	80	20%
	Support	150	37.5%
	Strongly support	90	22.5%
International Pressure for Drug Policy Reform	No pressure	30	7.5%
	Minor pressure	60	15%
	Moderate pressure	120	30%
	Significant pressure	120	30%
	Very significant pressure	70	17.5%

Table 4 presents the results show that international perspectives and influence. Most of the people who answered (37.5%) said they were "very aware" of international models of drug decriminalization. 25% said they were "moderately aware," and 17.5% said they were "extremely aware." This indicates that a considerable segment of the sample is cognizant of the worldwide success narratives from nations like Portugal and Uruguay, where decriminalization has been associated with less drug-related damage and enhanced public health results. However, 5% of those who answered said they didn't know about these models, which suggests that there may be gaps in their awareness of global drug policy trends. 30% of those who answered said they thought international factors may have a "moderate" effect on Bangladesh's drug policy, while another 30% said they thought they could have a "significant" effect. This shows how important it is for countries to think about the world when making drug regulations. This is especially true when international groups like the World Health Organization and the United Nations are pushing for harm-reduction techniques more and more. Only 2.5% of those who answered thought that international influence would have no effect. This suggests that the worldwide trend toward decriminalization may lead Bangladesh to think about making similar changes in the future.

When asked if they favored worldwide decriminalization models, 37.5% of people said yes, and 22.5% said yes firmly. But 20% of people were still ambivalent, and 15% were against or extremely against these models. This suggests that international drug policy reforms are being accepted and recognized to some extent. However, it also shows that there is still some resistance, probably because people are worried about local values, public safety, and the fear of setting a precedent that could lead to more drug usage.

People who answered the survey said they thought Bangladesh was under different levels of foreign pressure to embrace more progressive drug policy. About 30% thought that Bangladesh was under mild pressure, and 30% said that it was under a lot of pressure. This shows that more and more people around the world agree on harm-reduction techniques and drug decriminalization. However, 7.5% said that Bangladesh wasn't under any international pressure. This suggests that some people could think that global organizations or outside players don't have much of an effect on drug policy in Bangladesh.

The results show that foreign views and trends have a big impact on how people in Bangladesh feel about drug decriminalization. A significant percentage of respondents are familiar with international decriminalization models, especially those from Portugal and Uruguay, and many hold these models in a favorable light. There is a lot of demand for drug policy reform in Bangladesh, which is considered as an important factor in shaping future decisions (Shahid & Neufeld, 2025). This is because people believe that international organizations and global trends have a big impact. There is a lot of support for worldwide models of decriminalization, but there are still some people who are against them and are worried about how they will affect the local area (Khondkar & Honey, 2022; Rahman et al., 2021). These findings indicate that although international pressure is expected to impact Bangladesh's drug policy, local political and cultural considerations will remain essential in assessing the viability of implementing analogous measures.

6.5 Public Health and Rehabilitation

The public health consequences of drug use and the function of rehabilitation services are pivotal to the discourse on drug decriminalization. In Bangladesh, the emphasis has always been on punitive measures rather than preventive or rehabilitative strategies regarding drug usage. As international drug policy trends move toward a health-centered, harm-reduction paradigm, the possibility of changing Bangladesh's drug policies to focus more on rehabilitation becomes more important. This section looks at how important public health views are when it comes to drug decriminalization. It focuses on the possible benefits of rehabilitation services, the current condition of healthcare for drug users, and how decriminalization is expected to affect public health results.

Table 5: Public Health and Rehabilitation

Public Health Factor	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Importance of Rehabilitation over Punishment	Strongly Disagree	20	5%
	Disagree	40	10%
	Neutral	70	17.5%
	Agree	150	37.5%
	Strongly Agree	120	30%
Current Availability of Rehabilitation Services	Not Available	30	7.5%
	Limited Availability	100	25%
	Moderately Available	130	32.5%
	Widely Available	90	22.5%
	Very Widely Available	50	12.5%
Impact of Decriminalization on Public Health	Very Negative	30	7.5%
	Negative	60	15%
	Neutral	100	25%
	Positive	150	37.5%
	Very Positive	60	15%
Perceived Effectiveness of Rehabilitation Programs	Not Effective	10	2.5%
	Slightly Effective	30	7.5%
	Moderately Effective	100	25%
	Effective	180	45%
	Very Effective	80	20%
Support for Expanding Rehabilitation Services	Strongly Oppose	10	2.5%
	Oppose	30	7.5%
	Neutral	70	17.5%
	Support	180	45%
	Strongly Support	110	27.5%

Table 5 explain about the issues of public health and rehabilitation. The explanation is given below:

Importance of Rehabilitation over Punishment: Most of the people who answered (37.5%) agree, and 30% strongly agree, that rehabilitation is more important than punishment when it comes to drug usage. Only 5% of those who said strongly disagree, which shows that most people feel that a health-focused strategy is better in the long run. This indicates increasing endorsement for transitioning from punitive measures to a more rehabilitative and therapeutic framework for drug users, in alignment with international harm-reduction programs.

Availability of Rehabilitation Services: A large number of respondents (32.5%) said that rehabilitation services for drug addicts are "moderately available," while 25% said that services are "limited." However, just 12.5% of people said that rehabilitation programs are "very widely available." These results show that there is some infrastructure in place, but it is not enough to meet the demands of drug users in Bangladesh as they expand. To sustain a concept of decriminalization, it is apparent that rehabilitation programs need to grow.

Impact of Decriminalization on Public Health: 37.5% of respondents think that decriminalizing modest amounts of drug use would be good for public health, and 15% think it would be very good. Nevertheless, apprehension persists, with 15% perceiving decriminalization as detrimental to public health. This split shows that people are worried about drug use going up, but the larger group sees decriminalization as a chance to focus on prevention and health measures instead of punishment.

Perceived Effectiveness of Rehabilitation Programs: 45% of those who answered said they thought rehabilitation programs were helpful at stopping drug use, and 20% said they were "very

effective." Only 2.5% of people who answered said these programs were "not effective," which shows that most people believe that rehabilitation is helpful. This means that making it easier and better to get to rehabilitation programs in Bangladesh would probably have a favorable effect on public health.

Support for Expanding Rehabilitation Services: 45% of people who answered the survey support the extension of rehabilitation services, and 27.5% strongly support it. This shows that a lot of people want more money to be spent on treatment and rehabilitation options for drug users. Only a tiny number (10%) were against extending services, which suggests that most people want to improve support systems for people who use drugs.

The results show that a lot of people in Bangladesh agree that rehabilitation should come before punishment when treating drug users. A lot of people also agree that a health-focused approach is better. Even though there are rehabilitation programs accessible, people think that the existing number of these services is not enough, and there is a lot of support for expanding them. Respondents think that decriminalizing minor amounts of drug use would be good because it would move the focus to treatment and prevention, which would benefit public health (Rahman et al., 2021). These results show that Bangladesh has to spend more on public health measures, such as increasing rehabilitation facilities and starting harm-reduction programs, to make sure that drug users have enough assistance when the country moves toward decriminalization (Honey & Hossain, 2024).

6.6 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing is a fundamental component of this work, facilitating the empirical assessment of the provided hypotheses concerning the viability of decriminalizing minor drug use in Bangladesh. We will use SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to look at the data from the structured questionnaire and see how different aspects, such political support, public health effects, and legal consequences, are related to each other. This part shows the results of the hypothesis testing and explains if the data backs up the suggested hypotheses. The hypotheses developed in this study are evaluated using the subsequent steps:

Descriptive Statistics: Descriptive statistics (such mean, standard deviation, and frequency) are used to give a basic picture of the data by summarizing the survey responses.

Correlation Analysis: Pearson's correlation coefficient is used to find out how strong and in what direction the links are between variables like political support, public health outcomes, and legal views on drug decriminalization.

Regression Analysis: Multiple regression analysis tests how well different elements (such legal, political, and public health points of view) can predict how likely it is that decriminalization will work. This will assist figure out which factors have the biggest effect on whether people in Bangladesh support or oppose drug decriminalization.

Table 6: Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Test Result	Conclusion
Decriminalizing drug use reduces incarcerations	Rejected H_0 , Accepted H_1	Decriminalization significantly reduces incarcerations.
Political opposition hinders decriminalization	Rejected H_0 , Accepted H_1	Political opposition significantly hinders decriminalization.
International trends influence Bangladesh's drug policy	Rejected H_0 , Accepted H_1	International trends and agreements influence Bangladesh's drug policy.
Decriminalization leads to increased access to rehabilitation	Rejected H_0 , Accepted H_1	Decriminalization leads to increased access to rehabilitation.
Public perception influences decriminalization success	Rejected H_0 , Accepted H_1	Public perception significantly influences decriminalization success.

Hypothesis 1: Decriminalizing small-quantity drug use in Bangladesh will have a significant positive impact on reducing the number of drug-related incarcerations.

Null Hypothesis (H₀): Decriminalizing small-quantity drug use will not significantly reduce drug-related incarcerations.

Alternative Hypothesis (H₁): Decriminalizing small-quantity drug use will significantly reduce drug-related incarcerations.

The Pearson correlation between support for decriminalization and perceived impact on incarceration rates was found to be -0.72, indicating a strong negative correlation. Regression analysis confirmed that 52% of the variation in incarceration rates could be explained by decriminalization ($R^2 = 0.52$), with a p-value of 0.001, which is statistically significant.

The results support the alternative hypothesis (H₁), indicating that decriminalization would significantly reduce drug-related incarcerations in Bangladesh.

Hypothesis 2: Political opposition in Bangladesh will significantly hinder the process of decriminalizing small-quantity drug use, due to concerns about public safety and societal approval.

Null Hypothesis (H₀): Political opposition will not significantly hinder the process of decriminalization.

Alternative Hypothesis (H₁): Political opposition will significantly hinder the process of decriminalization.

The regression analysis found that political opposition explained 45% of the variation in the likelihood of decriminalization being implemented ($R^2 = 0.45$). The p-value for political opposition was 0.002, indicating a significant relationship between political opposition and the feasibility of decriminalization.

The results support the alternative hypothesis (H₁), confirming that political opposition significantly hinders the process of decriminalizing small-quantity drug use in Bangladesh.

Hypothesis 3: International trends and agreements will play a significant role in shaping Bangladesh's drug policy, influencing the feasibility of decriminalizing small-quantity drug use.

Null Hypothesis (H₀): International trends and agreements will not influence Bangladesh's drug policy.

Alternative Hypothesis (H₁): International trends and agreements will influence Bangladesh's drug policy.

The Pearson correlation between international trends and support for decriminalization in Bangladesh was found to be 0.65, indicating a moderate positive relationship. The regression analysis showed that international influence accounted for 42% of the variance in public support for decriminalization ($R^2 = 0.42$), with a p-value of 0.004.

The results support the alternative hypothesis (H₁), suggesting that international trends and agreements significantly influence Bangladesh's drug policy and the feasibility of decriminalization.

Hypothesis 4: Decriminalizing small-quantity drug use in Bangladesh will lead to an increase in access to rehabilitation and treatment services for drug users.

Null Hypothesis (H₀): Decriminalizing small-quantity drug use will not lead to an increase in access to rehabilitation and treatment services.

Alternative Hypothesis (H₁): Decriminalizing small-quantity drug use will lead to an increase in access to rehabilitation and treatment services.

Descriptive statistics showed that 67% of respondents believed that decriminalization would lead to increased access to rehabilitation services. The Pearson correlation between support for decriminalization and perceived improvement in treatment access was 0.74, a strong positive relationship. Regression analysis showed that decriminalization explained 55% of the variation in access to rehabilitation services ($R^2 = 0.55$), with a p-value of 0.001.

The results support the alternative hypothesis (H_1), indicating that decriminalization would likely lead to increased access to rehabilitation and treatment services for drug users in Bangladesh.

Hypothesis 5: The public perception of drug users in Bangladesh will influence the success of decriminalization efforts, with more support for reform coming from younger and more educated populations.

Null Hypothesis (H_0): Public perception of drug users will not influence the success of decriminalization efforts in Bangladesh.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): Public perception of drug users will influence the success of decriminalization efforts in Bangladesh.

The regression analysis found that public perception (measured by education level and age) accounted for 38% of the variation in support for decriminalization ($R^2 = 0.38$). Respondents under 40 years old and with higher educational qualifications showed stronger support for decriminalization. The p-value for this relationship was 0.005, indicating statistical significance.

The results support the alternative hypothesis (H_1), confirming that public perception, particularly among younger and more educated populations, significantly influences the success of decriminalization efforts in Bangladesh.

The results of the hypothesis testing back up most of the given hypotheses. They show that decriminalization has a big effect on lowering the number of people in jail, making it easier for people to get help, and changing drug policy through political and international pressures. Public perception, especially among younger and more educated groups, was also found to be a key factor in the success of decriminalization efforts in Bangladesh. These findings offer empirical evidence to guide future drug policy reforms in the country, underscoring the necessity for political, legal, and public health considerations in any progression towards decriminalization.

7.0 Findings

The results of this study provide significant insights into the viability of decriminalizing minor drug use in Bangladesh, including legal, political, public health, and international viewpoints. Most of the people who answered (62.5%) said that Bangladesh's present drug laws were "very strict," and they were in favor of moving toward a public health strategy. Many people agree that decriminalization could help the criminal justice system by reducing the number of people who go to jail for drug offenses. But the legal problems, like changing current laws and making new rules for drug usage, were seen as possible roadblocks to reform. Different political groups have different views on drug decriminalization. 30% of people who answered said they were in favor of decriminalization, but 22.5% were against the policy change, showing that there is still a lot of political opposition. Bangladesh's traditional politics and worries over public safety make it hard to adopt decriminalization. But some thought that international pressures and more talk about public health could push the political agenda toward reform. The survey indicated that 37.5% of respondents agreed that rehabilitation is more essential than punishment. This shows that people strongly favor putting rehabilitation ahead of punishment. A lot of people think that decriminalization would make it easier to get rehabilitation services. In fact, 67% of people who answered the question thought that decriminalization would help people get treatment. People think that rehabilitation services are somewhat available right now, but there is a lot of support for making these

services more widely available after decriminalization. Most of the people who answered (37.5%) said they were "very aware" of overseas decriminalization models, especially those in Portugal and Uruguay. They thought these examples might be used in Bangladesh as well. The study indicates that international trends and global pressure from entities like the United Nations may profoundly impact Bangladesh's drug policy, with 30% of respondents asserting that international influence will be pivotal in the country's decriminalization strategy. Public opinion, particularly among younger and more educated demographics, emerged as a critical determinant in the prospective success of decriminalization in Bangladesh. Younger and more educated people were more likely to favor decriminalization, whereas older and less educated people were less likely to do so. This means that a public education campaign that talks about the benefits of decriminalization and the necessity for a health-focused strategy could get more people from diverse demographic categories to embrace and support it. Overall, the results show that more people in Bangladesh are interested in changing drug laws. There is a lot of support for decriminalization from legal, public health, and international points of view. Political opposition and worries about public safety, on the other hand, are still big problems. The study indicates that transitioning to a health-oriented, rehabilitation-centric drug policy may yield more favorable results for both individuals with substance use disorders and society, contingent upon the resolution of legal and political obstacles.

8.0 Recommendations

This study's results suggest numerous recommendations to make it easier to decriminalize minor amounts of drug usage in Bangladesh. These suggestions are meant to deal with the legal, political, public health, and international issues that could affect how well this policy change works:

1. A major outcome of this study is that most people support rehabilitation over punishment. To make this happen, we need to improve public health infrastructure and rehabilitation services. Bangladesh should put money into strengthening its drug user rehabilitation services and treatment programs to make sure that decriminalization works. This includes making recovery centers easier to get to, hiring more qualified specialists to help people with addiction, and encouraging harm-reduction techniques (Husain, 2024). To lessen the bad effects of decriminalization, it would be important to create broad public health programs that focus on drug use (Halimuzzaman & Sharma, 2024a; Sohel et al., 2022).
2. How people feel about decriminalization is very important, and younger and more educated people are more likely to favor it. We need a national effort to teach people about the benefits of decriminalization, the significance of rehabilitation, and how well decriminalization models have worked in other countries, such Portugal and Uruguay. This will help change how people think and make the reform more acceptable in politics and society (Basak et al., 2020; Halimuzzaman & Sharma, 2024b; Md. A. Islam et al., 2025).
3. Even though many people want to decriminalize drugs, the law is still very strict. The government should start a full review of current drug laws to look for modifications that are in line with international trends and public health strategies. This would mean changing the legislation to make drug use in tiny amounts not a crime, doing rid of criminal sanctions for possession, and focusing on education, treatment, and harm reduction (Arif et al., 2025; Imran et al., 2024; Sharfuddin et al., 2025). The new laws should make sure that drug users may get health care and that people who are found guilty of minor drug offenses can get help to get better.
4. In light of the considerable political opposition to decriminalization, it is essential to promote dialogue among political leaders, policymakers, law enforcement agencies, and civil society. Setting up a place for people to talk about the possible pros and downsides of decriminalization will assist create political support and lessen opposition (Bhuiyan et al., 2025; Halimuzzaman, Sharma, & Khang, 2024; Halimuzzaman et al., 2025). Policymakers should be urged to embrace a balanced strategy that weighs the necessity of public safety against the health advantages of decriminalization.

5. Bangladesh should keep a careful eye on changes and trends in drug policy around the world, especially the successful decriminalization models in places like Portugal, Uruguay, and some states in the US. Bangladesh can strengthen its standing in the world, make sure it follows human rights norms, and get help and resources from other countries by making its policies more in line with best practices around the world. The government should also collaborate with global groups like the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to develop rules that encourage harm-reduction methods and make it easier for countries to work together.
6. The government of Bangladesh should think about starting pilot projects in some locations or cities to make sure that decriminalization fits well with the country's laws and public health systems. These projects can be used as test cases to see how well decriminalization works, gather data to improve policies, and deal with logistical and operational issues (Halimuzzaman, Sharma, Hossain, et al., 2024; Halimuzzaman, Atif, et al., 2024; M. S. H. Islam et al., 2024). A staggered approach would let officials keep an eye on results and make changes before the policy goes into effect across the country.
7. Police departments will have to take on new roles as the system changes from one that punishes people to one that helps them become better. Police personnel should be trained to help with public health efforts, like sending drug addicts to treatment clinics instead of filing criminal charges. Law enforcement should be part of the bigger national plan to cut down on drug-related harm. Instead of punishing people, the focus should be on stopping drug use and helping people get better.

Bangladesh can move toward a more progressive, health-focused drug policy that puts rehabilitation and harm reduction first while still dealing with the problems that drug use causes in the country by following these suggestions. These changes, along with a robust public health system and support from the government and society as a whole, can help lessen the social, economic, and legal problems that come with drug use, making life better for everyone.

9.0 Limitations

This study offers significant insights into the viability of decriminalizing little drug usage in Bangladesh; nonetheless, it is not devoid of flaws. First, the study uses self-reported data from a structured questionnaire, which could be biased by things like wanting to look good or not being accurate about how people feel about drug policy and change. Second, the sample size, while statistically significant, may not comprehensively represent the range of opinions across all areas and populations of Bangladesh, potentially constraining the generalizability of the findings. Furthermore, the study predominantly examines perceptions and attitudes, lacking comprehensive investigation of actual outcomes or thorough cost-benefit evaluations of decriminalization. Lastly, the political, legal, and social conditions around drug policy are changing quickly, which could make the findings less useful as time goes on. These constraints indicate that additional study, encompassing qualitative studies and pilot program assessments, is essential for a more thorough comprehension of the ramifications of decriminalization in Bangladesh.

10.0 Conclusion

This study examined the viability of decriminalizing minor drug use in Bangladesh, emphasizing the legal, political, public health, and international dimensions that influence drug policy. The results show that a lot of people support decriminalization, especially because it would ease the strain on the criminal justice system and put rehabilitation ahead of punishment. Political opposition and worries about public safety are still major obstacles to reform. Conservative views on drug usage are also affecting the political debate. Many people in Bangladesh think that the current legal system is too harsh, and many people agree that decriminalization could lead to fewer people going to jail and better access to

rehabilitative services. International trends and models, notably those from Portugal and Uruguay, have impacted public opinion and policy discourse. Even though people throughout the world are starting to recognize the benefits of decriminalization, Bangladesh's political and cultural issues make it hard to adopt similar legislation. The dearth of adequate rehabilitation services in Bangladesh underscores the necessity for substantial investments in healthcare infrastructure to assist drug addicts.

In conclusion, there is a lot of support in Bangladesh for making small amounts of drug use legal, but getting over the political, legal, and public safety issues will take a lot of thought and discussion. A gradual approach, with experimental initiatives and better public health infrastructure, could help people agree and make it easier for bigger changes to happen. In the end, decriminalization could be a better way to deal with drug use that is more humanitarian and effective, leading to better public health and lower costs for society as a whole.

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