

PAKISTAN MEASURES IN CONTROLLING NARCOTICS TRADE

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Abstract: *Pakistan is one of the world's top producers of narcotics. Pakistan neighbors Afghanistan, the world's top producer of opium. Pakistan faces a task of controlling, cultivating, producing and trafficking narcotics within its territory (World Drug Report, 2005). Riddled with corruption, poverty, high unemployment rate amongst its population, the government of Pakistan has invested much resource in the fight to the social vice inflicting its population (Niazi et al, 2009). This paper seeks to identify and analyze the measures the Pakistan government has been implementing in curbing the problem. Strategies implemented by the government of Pakistan such as supply reduction by eradicating cultivation of opium poppy, reducing the demand through mass awareness campaigns, and cooperation with the international community in the fight against drugs. The effectiveness and challenges faced in the process have also been well analyzed, revealing whether any advancement is being made or not. Various agencies and departments put in place by the Pakistan's government have also been reviewed, together with their responsibilities. The causes of such extensive abuse of narcotics in a society are reviewed, revealing in a way the susceptibility of Pakistan as a country to narcotics (Drug Abuse Control Master Plan, 2008). The usefulness of the information contained in this paper cannot be overemphasized. Governments facing a similar problem, or willing to install preventive mechanisms can benefit a lot from the information herein. The various agencies involved in narcotics control within Pakistan can also benefit from the information by getting an outsiders viewpoint of the conditions influencing Pakistan's case. The paper information is based on empirical data collected by various agencies in relation to abuse of narcotics in the world and specifically in Pakistan, and its neighbor Afghanistan. In conclusion, a review of the whole Pakistan case in regard to narcotics production, abuse, and trafficking has been done. Recommendations and improvements, and corrective measures to identified weaknesses have been presented for consideration.*

Keywords: *Narcotics; Trafficking; Drug; Opium; Cultivation; Abuse; Pakistan; UNDOC.*

JEL classification; *A19*

1.0 Introduction: Background to Narcotics in Pakistan.

Narcotics refer to any psychoactive compound or addictive drug that induces a morphine-like effect, that is, reduction of pain, behavioral and mood alteration, and usually induces stupor or sleep. The use of narcotics, especially opium has been practiced for a long time in Pakistan (UNDC Pakistan, 2008). The online Merriam Webster Dictionary defines narcotic as "a drug (as opium or morphine) that in moderate doses dulls the senses, relieves pain, and induces profound sleep but in excessive doses causes stupor, coma, or convulsions" (Merriam Webster Dictionary, Narcotic, 2013). According to Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT), Opium is not new in Pakistan, but its use and export went

on even during the reign of the Mughal and British empires. Since 1979, opium was produced in large scale in Pakistan, however, following Hadd Ordinance enforcement in 1979 the production decreased until 1980s (Anwar, 2006).

Afghanistan is one of the causes of the extensive production and abuse of illicit opium in Pakistan's. Pakistan's closeness to Afghanistan, the largest producer of illicit opium in the world facilitates the drug trafficking and abuse in the country (UNODC, 2009). The global security organization adds that in the late 1980s, Afghanistan and Pakistan supplied almost half of the entire world's heroin (Global Security Organization, 2013). Today, Afghanistan's and Pakistan's share of the drug market has decreased although they remain among the top producers of narcotics in the world. Despite the local production of narcotics in Pakistan, the problem is primarily because Pakistan serves as the primary transit route for opiates produced in Afghanistan. Also, most of the region's growing poppy in Afghanistan share the border with Pakistan. For instance, according to a 2009 Afghanistan poppy survey by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 74% of the poppy cultivated in Afghanistan covered five provinces bordering Pakistan (UNODC Pakistan, 2008).

However, in the 1990s, opium poppy cultivation in Pakistan dropped to almost zero nearing the year 2000. The Pakistan government had committed itself to fighting the vice by implementing measures aimed at eliminating the cultivation of opium poppy in the country. Alternative development projects also, funded by the international community as well as local government led to decreased poppy cultivation though this trend did not continue for long (UNODC Pakistan, 2008). The prohibition of poppy cultivation in Afghanistan by the Taliban's in the year 2001 led to increased opium prices in the world market, and hence re-emergence of large scale cultivation of poppy in Pakistan. According to the Global Security Organization, the main problematic areas in relation to poppy cultivation are the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). The problem in these areas persists due to lack of enough security forces to concentrate on limiting poppy cultivation and due to the persistent counter terrorism activities being carried out in the Pakistan-Afghanistan border by the government of Pakistan (Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development, 2010). The following table shows the extent of opium cultivation, eradication and potential harvest in Pakistan from the years 2003 to 2007 in hectares.

Table 1: Opium cultivation, eradication and potential harvest in Pakistan between years 2003 to 2007.

All the values are in hectares.

Year	Cultivation	Eradication	Harvest
2003	6,702	4,181	2,521
2004	6,694	5,199	1,495
2005	3,145	706	2,439
2006	1,909	356	1,553
2007	2,306	608	1,698
2008	1,956	56	1,900
2009	1,779	16	1,763

Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. County Office Pakistan

The figures above indicate that the gravity and extent has fluctuated over the period of time indicated. The values indicate a decline in the harvest of poppy from the peak of 9,441 ha seen in 1992 to poppy free in the years 2000-01. The year 2003 indicated an increase in poppy cultivation. The rate of cultivation and eradication has been declining since the year 2003 but a rise was seen in 2007. It is suspected that unless proper efforts are applied by the Pakistan authorities, cultivation will continue to go up. Anti- poppy campaigns are being made by provincial and federal authorities by means of fines, forced eradication and arrests. The rate of eradication is going down showing how the government is losing the battle against the cultivation of poppy.

2.0 Individual and Social Effects of Narcotics Abuse in Pakistan

Narcotics abuse has overwhelming negative effects in the societies involved. Pakistan has been long exposed to the consequences resulting from unlawful cultivation, trafficking and abuse of opium (Ryan, 2008). The commonly abused drugs in Pakistan include hashish, cocaine, heroin, opium, and cannabis (Kazmi, 2005). A survey conducted by the UNODC that ended in the year 2000 revealed that more than half a million Pakistanis are chronic users of heroin. A National Assessment Report on the Problem of Drug Abuse in Pakistan estimated an approximate of 628,000 users of opium. Among this, 77% (482,000 peoples) of these users were found to abuse heroin. The number of users who injected the drugs in 2006 was estimated to be 125,008, which was double the number documented in the year 2000.

Despite declaration that Pakistan is a poppy-free state in the year 2011, problems of addiction and drug abuse exacerbate along the routes of trafficking and imminent spread of HIV. One of the major concerns is the rate of HIV/AIDS transmission, especially considering the large number of injecting drug users in Pakistan. The Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) estimated that HIV cases in Pakistan are between 46,000 and 210,000 in adults. The Pakistan National AIDS Control Program (PNACP) estimates 3,328 HIV cases within Pakistan with 27% of these cases amongst the injecting drug users. Narcotics users are also characterized by indulging in riskier sexual behaviors hence increasing the risks of contracting the virus. The other common problem in relation to the narcotics abuse and trafficking in Pakistan is the drug related crimes and offenses (Trends in Organized Crime, 1995). These cases increased tremendously such that, in 2000 and 2001, the Pakistan government sets up five courts dedicated to drug related crimes and offenses.

The abuse of the narcotics has profound and severe implications on the health of the users. The individuals' proper functioning is impaired by poor health as well as loss of income to the indulgence at the expense of basic needs (Narcotics in Pakistan, 2013). The families of the users also are largely affected, as they watch a member of their own struggle with addiction and other consequences related to the abuse. On the other side, the society loses largely since it has to put up from the unemployed users and idlers who could be productive and beneficial to the society. Finally, the fight against the production, usage, and trafficking of these narcotics has immensely sapped vast resources from the government of Pakistan, and also the loss of personnel (The Social Impact of Drug Abuse, 1995).

2.1 Causes of the Extensive Abuse of Narcotics in Pakistan

Based on the extensive cultivation, production, and trafficking of narcotics in Pakistan, it is vital to familiarize with some of the causes and or reasons behind the phenomena. Although ranging from pharmacological, social, psychological and environmental factors, some outstanding cases are apparent in Pakistan (World Drug Report, 2006). One of the factors behind the trend as earlier mentioned is the relative closeness of Pakistan to Afghanistan, the leading producer of opium in the world (Taylor, Dr. L, 2009). The poor control of the Western border coupled with the traffickers' ability to evade the authorities has resulted to the too much trafficking of the drug through Pakistan (Norman, 1959). However, the commonest causes of abuse of the drugs, also apparent in Pakistan, include:-

- The economic imbalance in Pakistan. Poverty is highly prevalent in Pakistan, especially due to joblessness. Poverty has led people to involve themselves in the narcotics trade to raise money for their needs (Economic Survey of Pakistan, 2007).
- The ineffective legal system in Pakistan facilitates the ease of access to the drugs, therefore promoting the continuity of the vice.
- The false pleasure derived from the use of the narcotics.
- The social media also plays a critical role in promoting narcotics use.
- Peer pressure, especially among the younger generation facilitates the abuse (Niaz U. et al., 2005).
- Social-Political disruption, common in Pakistan especially due to terrorism and anti-terrorism activities create the environment suitable for the narcotic trade (Niklas, 2007).
- The religious values are being gradually eroded, leaving a liberal society eager to indulge in everything available.
- The teaching methods and curriculum are outdated; hence it does not help in curbing the vice.
- Prescription pain relievers in some cases lead to addictions, and hence the abuse of the drugs (Brown, 2002).

3.0 Narcotics Control Measures by the Government of Pakistan

Despite the relative shortage of resources in the government of Pakistan, much effort and commitment has been invested in fighting narcotic production, trafficking, and abuse. The international community and for instance the United States have contributed hugely in controlling the vice. In battling the social menace, the government of Pakistan came up with a strategy intended to address the narcotics problem (Rensselaer, 1991). The Narcotics Control Strategy as it was known aimed at reducing both the narcotics demand and supply using law enforcement mechanisms and agencies, as well as developing alternative projects for people to engage. The strategy also involved cooperating with the international community in the global fight against drugs and substance abuse (Ministry of narcotics control, 2009). Pakistan's President Zardari has shown the importance of curbing the drug menace both locally and globally. During his United Nations General Assembly speech in September 2012, the leader said that unrestricted cultivation and sale of illegal drug funds illegal groups such as terrorists not only in Pakistan but also globally. He stated that the country was on an agenda to control the vice.

In the year 2010, the Government of Pakistan developed the Anti-Narcotics Policy 2010. The policy was made to address the prevailing situation and global narcotic environment changes. The Drug Control master Plan 2010-2014 was initiated to reduce social, economic and health problems associated with substance abuse and drug trafficking in Pakistan. In the regional ministerial conference attended by various leaders such as from Afghanistan, India, china and many others aimed to enhance regional cooperation leading to an integral way of fighting narcotics. The policy consists of four main features namely:-

- Drug supply reduction: This involves poppy cultivation elimination in the country, effectively checking trafficking of the narcotics, building the capacity of Anti-Narcotics forces among others.
- Prevention of the Narcotics demand: This involves the creation of mass awareness campaigns to the entire population, treatment, and enhancement rehabilitation services hence facilitating a society which is drug free (United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, 2000).
- Promoting and enhancement of cooperation with the international community in fighting drug and substance abuse.
- Formation of the parliamentary committee tasked with monitoring and reviewing the policy, as well as the National Anti-Narcotics Council (NANC).

According to the UNODC, the Government of Pakistan and the Government of the United States signed a five year agreement on September 2007. The agreement was to see a \$750 million US aid package incorporated under a \$2.3 billion FATA Sustainable Development Plan. The aim of the aid was to facilitate capacity building programs, promote agriculture, development of alternative venture such as small and medium enterprises, infrastructure development, and livelihood improvements among others. Through these activities, livelihoods would be improved hence leading to the elimination of cultivation of opium poppy (Rydell and Everingham, 1994).

The government of Pakistan also established several agencies and narcotics control departments, as a measure of curbing the vice. These bodies play an extremely crucial role in controlling production through cultivation, narcotics flow by trafficking, as well as an abuse of the drug in the country.

The law enforcement agencies include:-

- *The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF)*

This is the primary drug law enforcement agency in Pakistan, tasked with collecting drug related intelligence, arresting offenders with drug related offenses and crimes. The Task Force is also tasked with investigating and prosecuting the offenders. The demand reduction program is charged to this body, which also delegates its mandate to the Pakistan Rangers and Coast Guards (Narcotics Control Division, 2000).

- *Frontier Corps (FC).*

This body is commissioned with the primary responsibility of guarding the Afghanistan and the Iran borders, as well as carrying out operations involving counter drug trafficking. Members of this body are primarily drawn from the tribal areas, but they are led by the Pakistan Army.

- *The Pakistan Coast Guards.*

The coast guards are tasked with the responsibility of securing the coastline of Pakistan, covering an axis of 30 to 120 km inland.

- *The Airport Security Force (ASF).*

Apart from performing other airport duties, the ASF is charged with countering trafficking of the narcotics by screening baggage as well as using other mechanisms at the airport.

- *Pakistan Rangers.*

The rangers' duties include maintaining internal security in Punjab and Sindh provinces, as well as covering the border with India. Their responsibilities include interdicting psychotropic substances, as well as narcotic drugs.

- *Police.*

The police force duties and responsibilities in regards to the control of the narcotics involve checking internal trafficking and distribution, mostly to the consumers.

- *The Pakistan Customs.*

Divided into Pakistan Customs Collectorate and the Intelligence and Investigation Division, both arms are mandated with narcotics control responsibilities.

- *Federal Investigation Agency.*

Under the Federal Investigation Agency, the Anti-Corruption and Economic Crime Wing is assigned with the function of monitoring production of spurious drugs. The wing has taken up the task of fighting illicit drug trades, and made numerous commendable recoveries (The United Nations International Drug Control Program, 1994).

- *The Narcotics Interdiction Committee.*

The committee was established in 1997, with the mandate to ensure proper coordination of narcotics control by various enforcement agencies and ensuring that the federal government roles are more effective.

In 2000 - 2001, the Government of Pakistan set up five courts, which were dedicated to hearing of narcotics cases. This was in accordance with the Control of Narcotics Substances Act (CNS) of the year 1997 (International Narcotic Control Board, 2001). The courts were set up to speed up handling of the cases and also to facilitate effective use of the judicial manpower. Following this, number of registered narcotic cases and convictions increased from 2002.

3.1 Effectiveness of the Control Measures Implemented by the Government of Pakistan

The efforts of the Government of Pakistan in the "Anti-Narcotics" war have been bearing fruits, although much still remains to be done (Hussain and Naqvi, 2007). The highest success seen so far is in the grasp of the narcotics. However, despite the reduction in the production and cultivation of the narcotics in Pakistan, indications are that trafficking has gained more strength. The growth of trafficking has, however, been countered by an equal strength in the counter narcotics agencies as shown by the number of seizures in the country (Trends in Organized Crime, 1995).

The following table shows the seizures of the common narcotics in Pakistan between the years 2003 to the year 2009.

Table 2: Annual Seizures of Narcotics in Pakistan in metric tones

Year	Opium	Morphine Base	Heroin	Hashish
2003	5785.710	27777.550	6363.931	99123.245
2004	2495.112	21256.000	3487.550	135638.674
2005	6447.682	22196.800	2144.497	93994.402
2006	8997.380	32657.600	2819.072	115443.699
2007	15368.594	10989.000	2873.857	109530.453
2008	27242.620	7324.890	1896.465	134620.525
2009	6081.322	1353.000	433.531	124000.295

Source: Ministry of Narcotics Control Yearbook 2008-2009, Government of Pakistan.

The control strategy targets to reduce supply and demand through enforcing law. The control trend shows inconsistency in the drug control. Since the year 2003, Pakistan indicated the greatest number of seizures of morphine base/heroin values compared to Afghanistan. This indicates that the control agency is not as effective as it was projected because the drug abuse keeps on changing inconsistently.

4.0 Conclusion

Despite the relative progress Pakistan has achieved in fighting cultivation, production, and trafficking of narcotics, the government of Pakistan dedicates itself in the fight of the vice though; still much needs to be done. The country is likely to continue serving as a primary narcotics transit option country, due to the continuous production of the narcotics in Afghanistan, its neighbor. The volatile border between Pakistan and Afghanistan remains one of the biggest challenges in controlling the narcotics flow through Pakistan. Pakistan is a country already struggling with poverty and internal security problems, the narcotic problem notwithstanding (Zinberg, 1974).

The other threat and challenge to the narcotics control issue is the widespread corruption in the country. Corruption poses as one of the biggest challenges to law enforcement agencies, due to some untrustworthy senior officials. Despite the executive branch agencies and the oversight committee's persistent work against corruption, effectiveness cannot be assured due to their involvement in the vice. Judicial systems serially investigated and exposed corruption, but with little or no action being taken against the culprits. Bribery to officials is apparent posing a challenge to fight against the menace in Pakistan's societies. For instance, many of the strongest cases with regard to narcotics have been witnessed to be appealed often and reversed. This does not mean that narcotics control in Pakistan is a lost course. On the other side, policies and agencies commissioned to fight the menace seem to be gaining strength as time erupts. In anticipation, stability within Afghanistan with the development of a functional government, coupled with Pakistan's anti-narcotics mechanisms, better results may be realized in the near future.

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