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Pak-Afghan Drug Trafficking and Its Impacts on Pakistani Youth

Abstract

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Keywords: DRUG Trafficking, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Youth Addiction, Addiction Impacts, Law Enforcement Agencies

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Abstract

The complex issue of Pak-Afghan drug trafficking and its devastating impacts on Pakistani youth have been examined in this research study. The drug trafficking problem was exacerbated due to the strained relations, such as mistrust, negligence on the border lines, and external pressure between the countries. The aim of this study is to highlight the critical need to address the issue of drug trafficking and its repercussions on the young generation of Pakistan, who are increasingly vulnerable to substance abuse. In this study, the root causes and consequences of this issue are explored for a deeper understanding of the Pak-Afghan drug trafficking nexus and to inform effective policy interventions to mitigate its impact on Pakistani youth.

Keywords:

DRUG Trafficking, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Youth
Addiction, Addiction Impacts, Law
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Introduction

Afghanistan is called the cockpit of Asia. Pakistan cannot be negligent of its significance, as it has strategic, cultural, geographical, and psychological bonds with Afghanistan (Felbab-Brown, 2009). Both countries are Muslim and enjoy ethno-cultural bonds, religious identity, traditional affinity, and strategic partnership. A cordial bilateral relationship between both countries is an essential condition for the development of both countries and for promoting peace worldwide. As both countries not only

share a border but also circumstances as well. There is a great misfortune that, due to multiple issues, the relationships between the countries have been strained. Such as mistrust between Kabul and Islamabad, border management issues, issue of Durand Line, exchange of blame and allegations from both sides, political influence of India in Afghanistan, unjust role of US, skirmishes on the border between the security forces of the two countries, emergence of Daesh (ISIS), and drug trafficking, etc. (Fox News, 2010).



This research study intends to highlight the issue of drug trafficking that has damaged the relations between the two countries, and also shed light on the impacts of drug trafficking on the youth of Pakistan. The youth of Pakistan is indulging.

Back Drop

Afghanistan is the topmost cultivator of illicit opium and Hashish across the world. The major part of the land of Afghanistan is used for the cultivation of opium. After exporting opium, a fourth of it goes to the farmers, while the rest of the earnings transfers to warlords, drug smugglers, militants, and district officers in the context of ushar (Hussain, 2005). As per the United Nations, Afghanistan not only cultivates opium, but it is the largest producer of Hashish worldwide. It has been estimated by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime that the growth of cannabis is larger in Afghanistan than in other countries, and cannabis is the main component that is used in the production of Hashish (Mairaj, 2017).

Russia decided to invade Afghanistan after Soviet Soviet-backed left-wing government in Afghanistan failed to gain popular support from the nationals. For financing their operations, the resistant leaders, mainly Ismat Muslim, Gul Buddin Hikmat Yar, and Nasim Akhonzada, turned their attention towards the production of opium regardless of it being Haram (forbidden) in Islam. From 1982-1983, the production of opium reached 575 metric tons and which was double its first production. That time United States wanted to withdraw Soviet Union slowly instead of taking decisive action against it. Almost six refineries of Heroine were installed by Hikmat Yar Khan in Koh-e-Sultan, located in the Southern West of Pakistan, by receiving aid from Pakistan and the CIA, being at the forefront. Likewise, in Northern Helmand, the cultivation of traditional poppy was controlled by Nasim Akhonzada. He forcibly established the quota system for maximizing the production of opium. In case of failure, farmers were liable to death or castration. (Alcohol and Drug Foundation, n.d.) For this purpose, an office was established in Zaidan, Iran (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2007). While the other warlords were satisfied with the sale of opium. It was alleged by the Soviet Union that the CIA was assisting in the smuggling of opium out of Afghanistan so that more funds could be raised by Afghan fighters against the Soviet Union. (Medical News Today, 2012)

On the one hand, Pakistan wanted to eradicate the curse of opium with the coordination of USAID in the area of the NWFP (KPK) bordering Afghanistan. For this purpose, in 1980, the opium industry was shifted from Pakistan to Afghanistan. On the other hand Intelligence Service of Pakistan was supportive of the Mujahedin in Afghanistan for the withdrawal of Russia,

and the source of fundraising for the Mujahedin was none else than the cultivation of opium and Hashish. In 1989, with the effort of Mujahedin, the CIA of America and ISI of Pakistan, the Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan. After the withdrawal West discontinued its financial aid to Afghanistan. Pakistan also went into a position of rest. This whole situation created a power vacuum. A war among various factions of Mujahedin started over gaining power. In order to enhance their power, these warlords started cultivating opium more and more.

Thus, the political history of Afghanistan witnessed the rule of the Taliban from 1994 to 2001. A bumper opium crop of 4500 metric tons was seen in Afghanistan during the Taliban rule. In 2001 with the collaboration of the UN, Taliban leader Mullah Umar launched a successful anti-drug campaign. Under this campaign ban was imposed on Heroine, and it was declared Haram (Un-Islamic). To make this campaign successful Taliban used their power. They forcibly eradicated the cultivation of opium and awarded punishment to the producers and users of opium. Resultantly, the cultivation of opium poppy declined by 99% in Taliban controlled areas. But this ban became ineffective after the fall of the Taliban regime. The fall of the Taliban caused a massive increase in the poppy cultivation and its trafficking. It is the biggest challenge for Afghanistan. In Afghanistan, various laboratories have been set up for converting opium into Heroin. Military and local administrative officials receive profit, as narcotics are trafficked to the international market from their provinces. Drug trafficking has imparted negative impacts on the social, economic, and political sectors of Afghanistan. (Khan, n.d.). It has fuelled the fire of Pak-Pak-Afghan conflict. In the wake of this insurgency, warlords increased and strengthened due to the drug trafficking system.

Engagement of Pakistan and Afghanistan in Drug Trafficking

Drug trafficking between Afghanistan and Pakistan has become a lucrative business. Both countries are involved in the trade of drugs. Afghanistan is the major producer of opium, and Pakistan is its major consumer. Pakistan accuses Afghanistan of drug trafficking, and this accusation strains the relations of the two countries, which are already spoiled due to the flow of miscreants across the border.

The market of drugs can be categorized into four parts.

Cannabis/marijuana is a mood-altering illicit drug by which all organs of the body are affected. It is brewed as a tea, smoked, inhaled by vapor, applied like a balm, and used in many eating products, such as brownies.

Cocaine: - cocaine powder is snorted through the nose by people, or it is injected into the bloodstream. Currently, it is used in the form of a crystal, known as crack.

Amphetamine is found in the form of tablets, powder, crystals, and capsules. Its work is to speed up the message traveling from the brain to the body. In illegal sell it is sold illegally in small balloons or bags. It is inhaled, injected, and smoked as well (Tahseen & Minhas, [2013](#)).

Opiates: Its fourth category includes opium and its derivative, heroin.

So, coming to the point, Iran was the main market of Afghanistan. After the revolution of 1979, the poppy cultivation was banned in Afghanistan. The West demanded Afghan drugs. It was a very good opportunity for Afghan drug smugglers to choose the way of Pakistan for their drug business. The business of poppy and heroin was set up in Pakistan. Afghanistan and Pakistan became the main suppliers of drugs to the International market. Thus, the business of drugs shifted from Afghanistan to Pakistan. In the wake of this, Afghanistan, with the collaboration of Pashtuns of NWFP, recently known as KPK, started to produce the world's high-grade opium and Hashish. Thus, both countries became the world's largest suppliers of drugs. It caused severe results, and the image of Pakistan was tarnished before the international community (Hafeez & Tayyaba, [2018](#)).

In the south Eastern Asia, Laos, Myanmar, and Thailand earned the title of Golden Triangle, while in Southwest Asia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran earned the title of Golden Crescent in the late 1980s.

It has been witnessed that the opium poppy is grown in financially poor areas. Even Peasants and local middlemen are indulged in the production and supply of opium for gaining profit and are involved in this abominable business regardless of their country's anti-drug efforts. Opium is mainly grown in remote areas. The region is covered with mountains and deserts. Thus, it is very difficult for the law enforcement agencies to find the culprits and to destroy the opium cultivation. In this scenario, Iran and Pakistan are becoming the favorite drug route from Afghanistan to the international market through land and sea routes (Parenti, [2015](#)).

In Pakistan, two types of narcotic plants, opium and cannabis, are cultivated. The growth of cannabis is wild in the northern part of Pakistan. In this way, cannabis (Hashish and chars) is sold in various parts of Pakistan, and illicit money is earned. Strategically, three types of areas of KPK are very significant, which are geographically close to the Soviet and Afghan border. These areas are,

- Settled Districts
- PATA (Provincially administered tribal areas)
- FATA (Federally administered tribal areas)

PATA and FATA both produce a major chunk of the world's opium. FATA enjoys a special status, and it is governed by tribal customs and traditions. The law of Pakistan is not applicable there. Similarly, PATA is beyond the jurisdiction of central law and law enforcement agencies. National law is being gradually extended in PATA.

Apart from this, in Baluchistan, the first poppy cultivation was recorded in 2003. Around 6,703 hectares of poppy cultivation were reported in Baluchistan, KPK, and FATA. In 2010, UNODC expressed its concerns that Pakistan is expected to face a serious threat of the increase in the ratio of opium cultivation, and this threat will not go away unless Farmers are prevented from planting opium or, before harvesting, the crop of opium is destroyed.

Definition of the Term Drug and Drug Addiction

As per the definition of the American encyclopedia (Desert 1987), the term of doors was used in Zoroastrian for the word drug. The term Doors was basically applied to the principle of evil. In this connection, drug addiction has become a huge issue in society. This has had devastating effects on society. The young generation uses it without knowing its harmful consequences, and this badly affects their mental state, and thus they become abnormally addicted.

Most people use drugs to keep themselves away from psychological and emotional distress. Drug use gives them temporary relief and boosts their confidence, and takes them out of a state of despair. They use sleeping pills in some cases so that they can sleep comfortably and sleep longer, and they also use painkillers to relieve severe back pain. Thus, prolonged use of drugs adversely affects their normal routine of life. The use of drugs affects their physical, psychological, and social activities. As the use of drugs increases, it begins to have detrimental effects on their lives.

Causes of Drugs

There are so many causes of drugs, which are listed below.

Lack of Awareness

It has been observed that people who are drug addicted keep insufficient knowledge about drug though they use drug for acquisition of temporary relief but with the passage of time they become so addicted that even if they want to get rid of it they cannot get rid of it.

Smooth Access

People, particularly young people, have easy access to

drugs. The drug is available on every street corner. Young people use drugs in the company of bad friends. The police are also involved with the drug mafia.

Pressure of Friends

Young people use drugs in the company of bad friends. If their friends are drug addicts, they will pressure their non-addicted friends to use drugs.

Feeling of Destitution and Joblessness

It is the dilemma of third-world countries that people suffer from poverty and are deprived of employment. In order not to get a job, they are prey to despondency. Thus, they use drugs to get rid of this condition.

Symptoms of Drug Addiction:

When the person becomes addicted,

- He doesn't demonstrate responsibility, and he is found to be indulging in illegal activities.
- At a friend's gathering, he behaves abnormally and doesn't show normal behavior like old days when he was not addicted to drugs. He misbehaves, and his mood alters quickly.
- A clear change is reflected in his eating, sleeping, and other routines as compared to the schedule of his normal life.
- Without any justification, he demands money from his family, friends, and relatives. For the acquisition of money, he is compelled to commit theft. From that money, he satisfies his desire for drugs.
- His personality changes after using of drug. He loses weight, and his eyes are red. He considers despair his destiny. Most of the time, he remains unconscious. He doesn't care about cleanliness. He suffers from anxiety and physical pain if he tries to leave the drug (Talat, 2009).

Impacts of Drug Trafficking on Pakistani Youth

According to the report of (UN Population Fund Report 2017, Pakistan was ranked as the 5th largest country that possesses a young population from 15 years to 33 years old. In other words, 63% population of Pakistan is comprised of young people (14). It is a fortune for Pakistan that the Pakistan population's major part is covered by youth and the young generation, by their ability can give fame to their country across the world. But unfortunately, drug addiction prevents a large part of the population from playing any positive role in the progress of the country.

As per the calculation of UNODC that on a regular basis, around eight lakh Pakistanis use heroin. Such drug addicts are in the age group of 15 to 64 years old. It has been further added by UNODC that annually 44 tons of processed heroin is consumed by the people of Pakistan, and the situation becomes more aggravated when

morphine, around 110 tons, is supplied from Afghanistan by using the routes of Pakistan to the international market (Younis & Abbas, 2016).

In Pakistan use of drugs is rising to an alarming level among the youth. Around 40000 drug and alcohol addicts are increasing annually. This situation has made Pakistan the most affected country by drugs, and it's very worrying that under 24 years youngsters are addicted to drugs. This trend is prevalent in schools, colleges, and universities. It has been observed that mostly elite youngsters are addicted to drugs because they can afford to buy them.

On 26th June, the day is observed at the international level against drug trafficking and addiction. On this occasion, Dr. Mohammad Ashraf Chaudhry, who is the community head of medicines, stated that the mental and physical health of the students of schools, colleges, and universities is being affected by the use of drugs. They are moving away from studies. He further added that due to the large availability of drugs, the souls of Pakistani youth are becoming lifeless. He said this while making the government realize that this serious situation should be redressed, and if this threat is not addressed adequately, Pakistan's future will be darkened with regard to the young generation. Their social life seems to have been destroyed. They lack the efficiency to do any work. Addiction slows down their body organs. In a state of intoxication, they remain unconscious most of the time. They breach the rules of social life and cut themselves off from the people. They lose their social status and start to commit crimes. They commit theft to buy drugs. The people of society abstain from them and are always fearful of their habit of committing theft. They lose their dignity. For buying drugs, they don't hesitate to beg. Often they beg on street corners and in public transport. They do not contribute to boosting the economy of the country. In fact, they are treated as a burden on society. Their families are also reluctant to accept them, as they cause mental anguish to their families. Instead of boosting the economic condition of their family, they are a burden to them in all respects.

At the same time, the habit of drugs has adversely affected their health. Mostly, drug addicts take drugs through smoking, which destroys the entire bodily system. Their lungs are damaged due to smoking drugs in the form of nicotine, marijuana smoke, and opioids etc. Due to addiction to these drugs, breathing slows down and the way of air is blocked from entering the lungs. Likewise worst asthma signs appear. After taking drugs through smoking, they suffer from cancer and chronic diseases. Besides this, it is often observed that their central nervous system slows down. Their blood pressure becomes low and heart heartbeat slows down (Browne, 2014). Apart from this, there is a trend of using drugs via injections. Drug addicts inject themselves and share injections with one another. By sharing injection, there is a high risk of HIV transmission. Thus, there is a dire need for time to prevent drug prevalence among the youth. (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2008)

Behavioral impact is another significant impact that lies on the lives of drug addicts. They adopt odd behavior towards their social gathering, such as changing friends very quickly. They avoid living with a crowd and prefer to live alone. They leave the physical care of themselves. I.e., they do not bathe, nor do they care for the cleanliness of their clothes. Their teeth remain dirty, and they always live in dirty places. After the drug, they feel temporary energy, and in the wake of this, they talk fast and make illogical statements. The quantity of their meal becomes unusual. They don't eat normally; either they eat less or too much. Their mood changes very quickly. Most of the time they spend in a bad mood. Their relationship with their family, friends, and relatives remains strained. Their memory becomes weak, while speaking, they mumble and do not pronounce words properly. Thus, slurred speech becomes a part of their personality. Drug addicted persons are not able to get good educational records. They do not maintain good grades and lack concentration in their studies (Younis & Abbas, 2016).

Alcohol, methamphetamine, cocaine, hallucinogens, and marijuana are kinds of drugs. These kinds of drugs affect the person's psychological condition. Along with other impacts, psychological impacts also emerge in the character of drug users. A drug addict loses interest in his family and friends. He becomes negligent of the power of pain and touch. In the wake of this, there is great apprehension that causes him injuries. Furthermore, research shows that cocaine addicts are failed to perform sexual activity and thus they lose sexual interest. Using of drug decreases the level of testosterone, and sperm counts come down. Thus, the ratio of infertility is high in drug users. Drug users 'lust for drugs never diminishes. They are found searching for more drugs.

Likewise use of marijuana has been found among youth. Use of marijuana prevents the messages from having access to the brain. After using this drug on a regular basis, it changes the thoughts and emotions. Using drugs impairs the ability of vision, hearing, and coordination.

Similarly hallucinogen is a kind of drug. Under the influence of hallucinogens, senses of direction, time, and distance are disordered. The behavior of drug user becomes violent, and the anger becomes a part of their character. The violent nature inclines them towards hazardous injury and leads them towards death (MedlinePlus, n.d.).

The curse of drugs is a serious issue among students. For meeting the demands of higher education, for obtaining required grades to get admissions in certain colleges or universities, and for fulfilling the desires of their families, students are under stress and thus suffer from many psychological problems. In this connection, to

exert extra effort, they have to take less sleep, and to get rid of sleep, they make use of a drug. Thus, they become addicted for the rest of their lives. It is a fact that the era of university era is regarded as a golden period of the students' lives. In this emotional period matter of curiosity is found in students. Students just check the test and consequences of the use they use drugs, and gradually this drug captures their mental capacity, and the grave becomes their last destination.

Government and private rehabilitation centers are established for ceasing the curse of drugs, but unfortunately, no beneficial results have been derived. As they live in a rehabilitation center, they avoid using drugs, but after leaving the place, they again start to use drugs. It can be said that no perpetual solution has been sought out to do away with the curse of drugs. Apart from this, the fee of the rehabilitation center is so high that the poor who are prey of this abominable are unable to afford it. Their self-made effort causes harmful impacts on their lives.

Recommendations

The research study offers many solutions for eliminating the curse of drugs from society.

Youth is an important segment of any nation. It is necessary to take immediate efforts to save them from the curse of drugs.

- The high officials of police should keep a check on different police stations lest they should be involved in the business of drugs. These high officials should strictly direct their lower staff not to be involved in heinous crimes and bring the criminals of the drug mafia to court.
- The government should establish free rehabilitation centers at the large number. So patients of drugs could get easy medical aid.
- Pakistan should keep a ban on the production of drug crops and bring the producers before the court.

Conclusion

In this perspective, the result can be derived that drug trafficking from Afghanistan to Pakistan is ruining the future of Baluchistan. The government of Pakistan must take a keen interest in avoiding danger to the lives of the youth of Pakistan. This curse has created frustration and fear in the families. The law enforcement agencies also need to be active to arrest drug dealers who are being cause of the ruin of the future of the young generation. Only the eagle eye of the government can save the future of the young generation.

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