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MOTIVES AND METHODS: A CRIMINOLOGICAL EXAMINATION OF DRUG TRAFFICKING ACROSS PAKISTAN

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Abstract

The following criminological study examines drug trafficking in Pakistan, concentrating on the motivations for engaging in this illegal trade and the methods employed by traffickers. The study collects data from a variety of secondary sources based on a secondary data collection methodology. The primary objectives of the study are to determine the motivations behind drug trafficking and to examine the transportation routes and clandestine methods employed by drug traffickers. Due to the increase in opium cultivation in neighboring Afghanistan, the study reveals that drug trafficking in Pakistan has increased. Increased profits are the result of traffickers using strategic ways to exploit authorities and influence drug prices. The transit route through Pakistan has become the most popular corridor for smuggling cannabis and heroin from Afghanistan. Furthermore, methamphetamine trafficking has increased, showing that synthetic narcotics are becoming more prevalent in our country. Traffickers use several modes of transportation, including land, sea, and air. This study identifies three main motives for Pakistani drug traffickers that are financial gain, taking advantage of vulnerable populations, and terrorism funding.

To prevent the problem of drug trafficking, the current research suggests strengthening border security, encouraging regional collaboration, battling corruption within law enforcement agencies, and focusing on economic growth and job creation. Such techniques attempt to disrupt drug trafficking networks, improve law enforcement efforts, and offer alternate paths for persons who are vulnerable to drug usage and trafficking. The findings of this study add to a deeper understanding of the complicated issue of drug trafficking in Pakistan, as well as practical consequences for policymakers, and law enforcement agencies. By implementing effective

counter-measures and techniques, Pakistan may reduce the harmful consequences of drug trafficking and create a more secure, drug-free community.

Keywords: *Crystalline Methamphetamine, Criminological Study, Illicit Drugs, Narcotics Smuggling, Opium Cultivation, Transport International Router.*

INTRODUCTION

There are multiple definitions of drug trafficking under different laws. However, most definitions have comparable meanings. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) defines drug trafficking as "a global illicit trade involving the cultivation, manufacture, distribution, and sale of substances subject to drug prohibition laws." "The Drug Trafficking Act,1994" in the United Kingdom defines "drug trafficking" as the following: producing or supplying a controlled drug, transporting or storing a controlled drug, importing or exporting a controlled drug, whether in England and Wales or elsewhere under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 or a comparable law (Rahaman, 2014). "The Intoxicant Control Act of 1990" explicitly prohibits the cultivation, production, refining, transport, import, export, supply, purchase, sale, possession, preservation, storage, and use of any intoxicant other than alcohol. The trafficking of illicit psychoactive drugs is currently regarded as one of the most significant and archetypical acts of organized crime. Despite the large margins of uncertainty in the estimates, drug markets fueled by drug trafficking are most likely the "largest" illicit market in terms of revenue. Transnational drug trafficking entails the cross-border movement of illicit products. In most instances, willing sellers and buyers work together to attain their objective (Agboli, 2023).

Drug trafficking is linked to a variety of other forms of trafficking, including diverse forms of agricultural labor trafficking, begging, and various forms of harsh physical labor. Individuals who are smuggled frequently pay for their transportation to their destination by ingesting or transporting illicit substances. To recruit new victims, maintain them in a state of exploitation, and maximize their exploitation, drugs are utilized (Nieto, 2021). Various drugs, including those derived from plants, such as those derived from the opium poppy, and synthetic drugs, are used to accomplish these various outcomes. Drugs such as heroin or synthetics are frequently used to coerce individuals into sex exploitation and keep them in debt to their traffickers. Moreover, stimulants are used to induce euphoria, allowing individuals to work extended hours or more intensively. Thus, we can define drug trafficking as the trafficking of illegally produced, exported, and imported drugs, as well as legal drugs, for illicit use in the domestic or international arena (Shukla, 2014).

Despite the presence of numerous research studies exploring drug trafficking in Pakistan, there remains a significant gap in the criminological perspective applied to this subject. Existing literature primarily focuses on socio-economic, political, and security aspects, often overlooking the intricate details and complexities of the phenomenon. Thus, there is a pressing need for a comprehensive criminological examination that delves deeper into the motivations driving drug

trafficking and the specific methods employed by traffickers in Pakistan. While previous studies have touched upon certain aspects of drug trafficking for instance study conducted by Usman, (2013) focused on drug trafficking from Afghanistan to Pakistan and its implications, while another research by Maqbool, (2015) focused on non-traditional security threat to national security of Pakistan, and Asad, (2019) research was focused on politics and economics of drug production on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, however no such study have provided an in-depth analysis from a criminological standpoint. Such researches may have examined the larger context of the illicit drug trade, including its effects on society as a whole the economy, and national security. However, they have neglected to investigate the specific motivations that drive individuals to engage in drug trafficking, as well as the underlying criminogenic elements that lead to their involvement. Existing research on drug trafficking may have depended significantly on non-criminological approaches, such as sociological or economic frameworks. While these viewpoints provide useful insights, they frequently fail to reflect the nuances and complexities of criminal conduct and the criminological processes connected with drug trafficking.

To overcome these research gaps, this study conducted a thorough criminological assessment of drug trafficking in Pakistan. To shed light on the underlying criminological elements contributing to drug trafficking, extensive secondary research is employed, including interviews, surveys, case studies, and data from various published papers and reports, as well as magazines. The study is organized around two primary objectives, those are: **01)** To identify the primary motives driving individuals to engage in drug trafficking in Pakistan, **02)** To analyze the methods employed by drug traffickers in Pakistan, transportation routes, and smuggling techniques. Each of which is designed to investigate particular aspects of the research topic in depth and breadth. By examining these aspects, this research aims to develop a more nuanced understanding of the strategies and tactics employed by drug traffickers, thereby informing effective countermeasures and law enforcement strategies. The insights garnered from this research will not only provide a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics associated with drug trafficking but also offer practical implications for policymakers, law enforcement agencies, and other stakeholders involved in combating this illicit trade.

LITERATURE REVIEW

➤ GLANCE AT PAKISTAN'S DRUG PROBLEM

Pakistan has always maintained a policy of zero tolerance for all varieties and forms of drugs. This strategy has considerably contributed to a discernible decline in the country's drug production over the past several years. Primarily, the cultivation of poppies in the formerly Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) has been eradicated. The majority of Pakistan's narcotic production consisted of [opium] poppy cultivation and its transformation into hashish, or charas. Pakistan has never been a significant producer of opium. According to one source, opium cultivation decreased from 32,000 hectares in 1978 to 5,215 hectares in 1995. In succeeding years, according to a UNODC report, "Pakistan's opium poppy cultivation declined substantially to near zero levels in 1999 and 2000". The report noted that although poppy

cultivation in Pakistan fell to 213 hectares in 2001, it has since increased, "probably as a result of high opium prices following the Taliban's prohibition of poppy cultivation in Afghanistan". As a result, poppy cultivation reached 6,703 hectares in 2003, but had decreased to 2,306 hectares by around the middle of 2007 (Peter, 2010).

The remote areas of the former FATA, such as Tirah in Khyber, which were also perceived as a region with lax administration, were well-known for their opium cultivation. The poppy cultivation issue has been largely resolved due to Pakistan's anti-militant operations and narcotic eradication efforts. Recent constitutional consolidation of the former FATA into the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province has further diminished the likelihood of opium cultivation in the former FATA agencies, which are now districts of KP. While the problems of poppy cultivation and drug production have been largely resolved, at least for the time being, Pakistan still faces two types of drug problems: first, Pakistan is used as a transit route by international drug traffickers and second, domestic drug abuse is increasing. Nowadays, alcohol, ice, cocaine, and heroin are the most commonly utilized substances among Pakistan's young generation (Ahmed, T. et al., 2022; Memon, H. et al., 2022). Moreover, the collaboration and correlation of other forms of organized crime remain robust, aggravating Pakistan's drug trafficking problem. Drug smugglers, human traffickers, and traditional smugglers frequently share intelligence and collaborate. Sharing a lengthy western frontier with Afghanistan and Iran, as mentioned previously, also exacerbates Pakistan's drug-related issues (Shanty, F. 2011). Afghanistan, according to a 2018 UNODC report, "continued to be the world's largest cultivator of opium poppy and the world's largest producer of opium." The total opium poppy cultivation area in Afghanistan increased by 63 percent to 328,000 hectares in 2017, according to a report, compared to the previous year; likewise, opium production increased by 87 percent, from 4,800 tons in 2016 to 9,000 tons in 2017. In subsequent years, these tendencies have not significantly reversed, and they have increased Pakistan's susceptibility to drug trafficking as well as the danger of increased domestic drug use.

According to Hirani (2018); promotion and drug abuse activities represent a significant national concern, as security and police authorities are exhausted in their efforts to track down drug gangs and reduce drug abuse, particularly among youth. It requires coordinated efforts on the part of government authorities, as well as the protection of society and the individual. Without a doubt, this will have a negative impact on the capacity building that will contribute to the growth of the economy. Despite the fact that Pakistan has signed numerous multilateral treaties on technical options committees, including those pertaining to drug trafficking and corruption, efforts to enhance the effective implementation of these treaties on limiting the promotion and use of drugs, in particular the smuggling of funds, are hampered by multilateral obstacles (Qureshi, 2018).

➤ **THE PRESENT SITUATION OF DRUG TRAFFICKING IN PAKISTAN**

In 2018, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) published a report indicating that opium cultivation in Afghanistan increased by 63%, reaching a total of 328,000 hectares. In

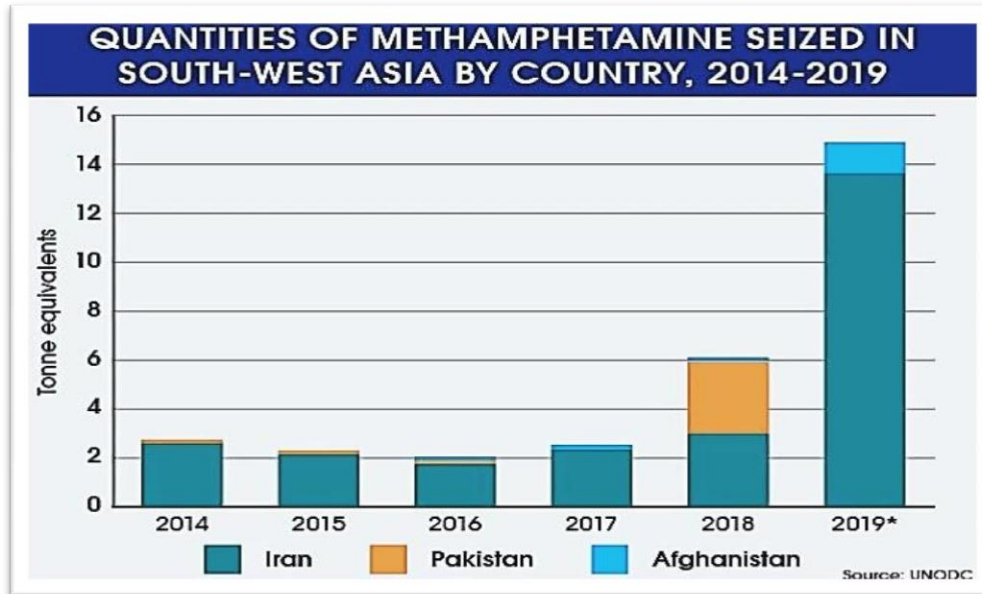
Pakistan, this alarming increase has led to an increase in narcotic smuggling cases. Despite efforts such as border fencing and increased patrols along the 2,400 km shared border between Pakistan and Afghanistan, illicit activities, specifically drug trafficking, persist. Contrary to prevalent belief, drug traffickers employ strategic methods that allow them to exploit authorities and profit from the illegal drug trade. By manipulating the market, these drug traffickers increase drug prices, allowing certain law enforcement officials to profit from subsequent street sales (Paradigm Shift, 2022).

In addition, the UNODC report designates the transit route through Pakistan as Afghanistan's busiest corridor for hashish and heroin smuggling. According to the 2018 Afghanistan survey conducted by UNODC, there was a notable 26% reduction in opium cultivation in the country. However, despite this decrease, Afghanistan still maintains its position as the second-largest producer of illicit drugs worldwide (Fazli, S. 2022). One contributing factor to the persistence of drug trafficking, especially opium smuggling, is the trade routes that have been established between Pakistan, China, and Afghanistan since 2004. These routes have inadvertently exacerbated the problem by providing avenues for drug traffickers to transport their illicit goods more easily. Pakistan is a major hub for drug trafficking operations due to its advantageous geographic location as a transit nation between China and Afghanistan. Opium and other illicit substances are moved through the routes that cross through Pakistan.

In addition, the 'Global Synthetic Drugs Assessment 2020' reports that Pakistan had a sharp increase in methamphetamine seizures between 2016 and 2018. The data shows a huge increase of more than 21 times in the amount of methamphetamine gathered over this time period. According to Atif et al. (2020), the quantity seized increased from roughly 133 kg in 2016 to 2.9 tons in 2018. Meth is a synthetic substance that stimulates the central nervous system and is highly addictive. It is sometimes referred to as methamphetamine (Zeng et al., 2023). The sharp rise in seizures is indicative of the drug's increasing availability and use in Pakistan. These results underline the necessity of a thorough and focused response to lessen the negative effects of synthetic drug use and trafficking in the nation.

Furthermore another research conducted by the researcher Malik et al. (2011) claims, the UNODC research draws attention to the concerning growth in opium cultivation in Afghanistan, which has led to a spike in drug smuggling into Pakistan. Despite measures taken to stop these illicit activities, traffickers employ strategies to affect drug prices and gain the favor of particular law enforcement officers. Furthermore, the study emphasizes that the main route used to smuggle drugs and hashish out of Afghanistan is the Pakistan transit route. The numbers highlight the seriousness of the problem by demonstrating a sharp increase in poppy output and cultivation over time.

Figure 01: Quantities of Drugs Seized in 2014-2019



Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1593910>

In the year 2018 the country such as Iran's stated that a large amount of the methamphetamine seizures that it had acquired originated in Afghanistan and were purportedly trafficked from there or via Pakistan to other international markets. Preliminary reports for 2019 indicate a considerable increase in Afghanistan's methamphetamine seizures, from roughly 9 kg in 2014 to over 1.3 tons (Dawn, 2020).

Tablets and crystals of methamphetamine have been seized in Afghanistan. Tablets of methamphetamine typically contain a variety of other substances, including heroin and MDMA, whereas crystalline methamphetamine is said to be of high purity. Multiple amphetamine seizures made at international terminals in Pakistan between 2018 and 2019 were destined for Middle Eastern nations including Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. In terms of weight, however, seizures destined for the Middle East constituted a negligible portion of the total amount of amphetamine seized by Pakistan (Haken, J. 2011).

➤ **METHOD & ROUTES UTILIZED BY DRUG TRAFFICKERS**

In order to smuggle narcotics, drug traffickers are notorious for employing a variety of ingenious methods. Using containers conveyed by land or sea is a common method, as they provide ample space for concealing illegal substances. Vehicles, including trucks and automobiles, are frequently used for narcotic trafficking. Traffickers frequently exploit various compartments of these vehicles, including the engine compartment, the cockpit, and the trunk. In South Asia, the gas canister has also been used to conceal illegal substances. In order to evade detection, drug traffickers have been observed concealing drug shipments within apparently harmless objects. Containers made of tin, fruits, and coconuts have all been used to conceal narcotics. These

objects serve as camouflage, making it more difficult for law enforcement to detect illegal substances during inspections (Namli, U. 2021). Southwest Asian narcotics smugglers exploit every opportunity and are limited only by their ingenuity and creativity. Drug traffickers take advantage of the region's fluctuating political climate, the inability of regional governments to exercise effective control within and along their countries' borders, and the potential for corruption (Ram, H. 2020).

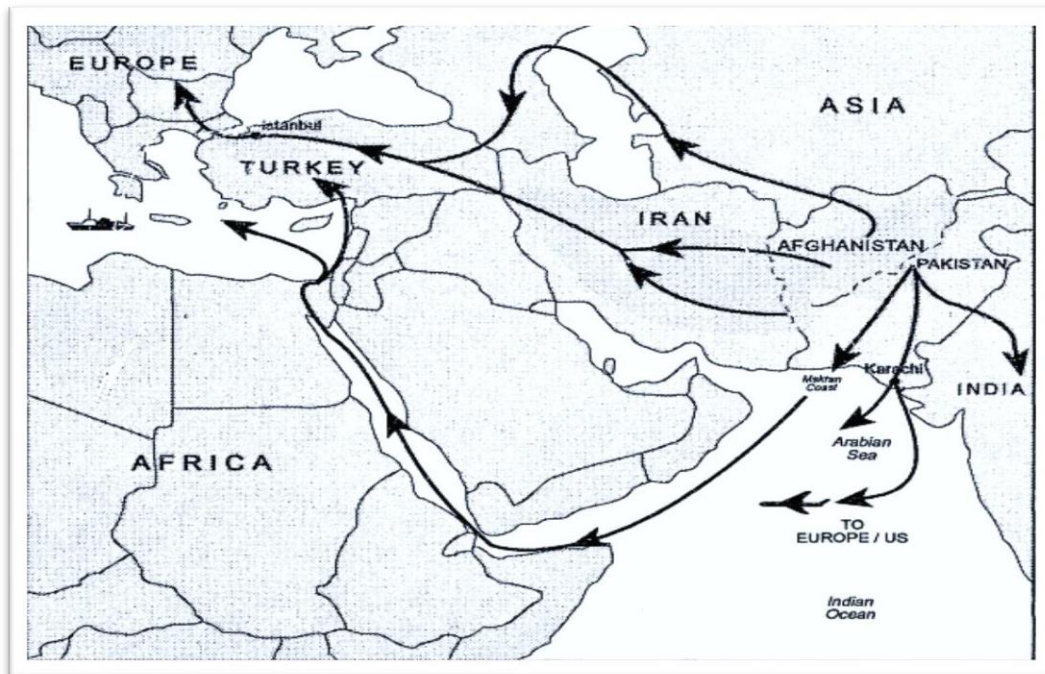
- **Through land:**

Drug smuggling in Pakistan primarily involves the transportation of Afghan opiates to conversion laboratories within the country. Farmers have two options when it comes to their opium harvest: they can either pre-sell it to traffickers or store it, anticipating higher market prices. If stored, the opium gum is typically wrapped in opium poppy leaves or placed in plastic bags to retain its moisture. Plastic packaging is preferred as it extends the gum's moisture content. Even if the gum dries, the quality of the substance remains unaffected. Farmers often believe that the value of their opium increases based on its weight (Windle, J. 2012). In the case of pre-selling, the opium is transported to central markets such as Landi Kotal, located near the Northwest Frontier Province, or directly to conversion laboratories. Various methods are employed for transportation, including couriers, donkeys, mules, and vehicles. Often, these shipments travel along major roads from Kabul through the Khyber Pass, reaching destinations like Landi Kotal and Peshawar in Pakistan (UNODC, 2015). In an attempt to bypass checkpoints along these routes, some smugglers resort to rugged mountain paths along the Pakistan border. Opium originating from cultivation areas in Afghanistan is smuggled to conversion sites along the border in Pakistan (Allan, 2004). The smuggling routes for heroin, heroin base, and morphine base are as follows:

- i. ***Baluchistan Route:*** Drugs is transported by road through Baluchistan in Pakistan, crossing the border into Iran. From there, it is taken to heroin conversion laboratories in Turkey and subsequently transshipped to Europe and the United States.
- ii. ***Pakistani Tribal Areas Route:*** Smuggling occurs via road from the tribal areas in Pakistan, passing through Afghanistan, and directly into Iran. This route serves both for local consumption and transshipment purposes.
- iii. ***Karachi Route:*** Drugs often opium is transported by road and rail to Karachi, a major city in Pakistan. From there, it is routed by sea or air to Europe and the United States, often through transit points like Bombay in India or African countries.
- iv. ***Islamabad and Lahore Route:*** Smuggling involves road and rail transport to Islamabad and Lahore, where the drugs are transshipped through Europe to reach North America.
- v. ***Makran Coast Route:*** Smuggling takes place by road and overland to staging areas along Pakistan's Makran Coast. From there, the drugs are smuggled aboard ships anchored off the coast, destined for Western Europe, Turkey, and the United States.

Drug traffickers take advantage of the regular flow of vehicular traffic on main transportation routes to conceal their smuggling operations. One commonly exploited method is through the use of the Transport International Router (TIR) system. Under this international customs agreement, subscriber nations allow bonded cargo to cross their borders with minimal bureaucratic procedures. The cargo is sealed at the point of embarkation, and physical inspections are not conducted at intermediate border crossings (Coban, A. 2014). Moreover, buses are also commonly used for drug smuggling due to their regular routes and high passenger volume, including both commuting passengers and tourists. Similar to trucks, buses present inspection challenges due to their numbers on the road. Past seizures indicate that bus owners, drivers, and passengers have all been involved in exploiting this mode of transportation. Private automobiles are also utilized for transporting illicit drugs, with the methods of concealment limited only by the resources and creativity of the smugglers (Usman, 2013). Drugs have been discovered hidden inside spare tires, specially designed reservoirs within vehicle fuel tanks, as well as in seats and interior moldings.

Figure 02 Drug Trafficking Routes within the Region



Source: Office of Justice Programs <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/Digitization/151459NCJRS.pdf>

- **Through Sea:**

Sea transport is a preferred technique for drug smugglers to transfer huge amounts of raw materials used in the manufacture of illicit substances. Pakistan and Turkey both have long coasts that provide multiple entry and exit options for nautical operations. Until recently,

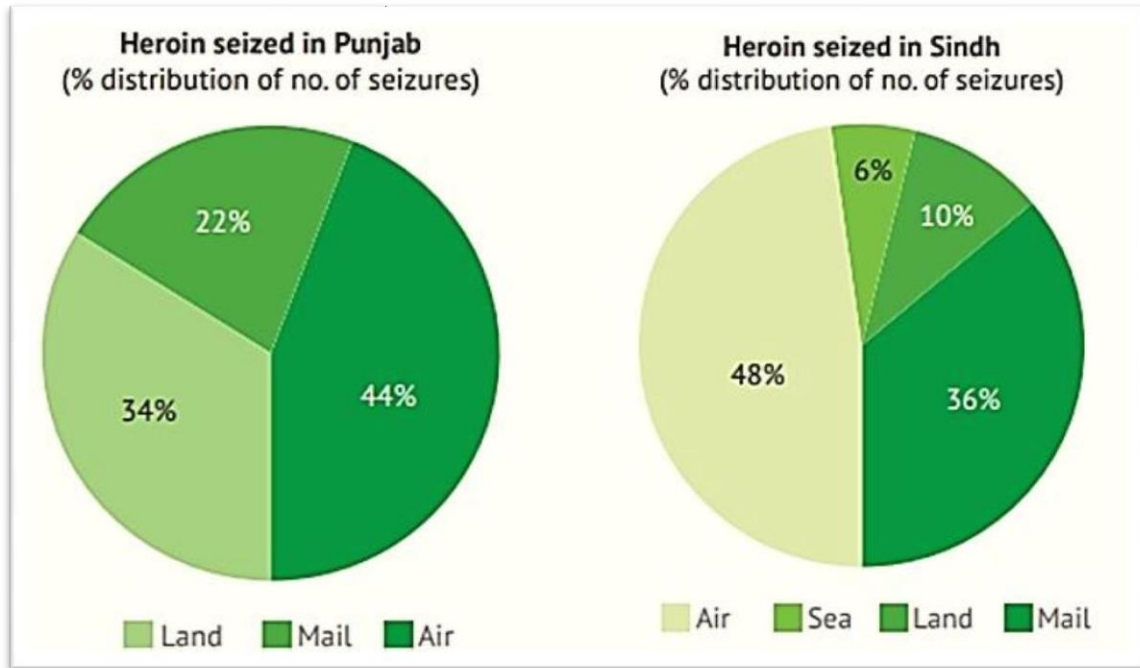
insufficient maritime interdiction troops permitted traffickers to use this mode of shipping with relatively modest risks and losses. Drug smugglers can transport large quantities of raw materials via sea routes at a lower cost than other modes of transportation (Krasa, J. 2011). They use the vastness of the oceans to conceal their illicit goods among legitimate shipments, making detection and interception more difficult. Because of the availability of maritime routes, they can develop complicated smuggling networks that cover multiple locations. Sea shipping of raw materials for drug production not only saves time and money, but it also allows for the avoidance of land-based checkpoints and border inspections. Smugglers seek distant or less-patrolled coastal locations for their operations, lowering the chance of interception even further. In terms of seizures at seaports or in the surrounding area, 15 seizures accounted for 2419 kg of heroin. Maritime trafficking out of Pakistan allows traffickers to quickly transport large amounts of heroin or opium to third-world countries. Opiates smuggled out of Pakistan via sea must leave from the Baluchistan and Sindh provinces (Sardar, S. 2016).

- **Through Air:**

In contrast to sea transport, drug traffickers also exploit air routes for their smuggling operations, particularly when they aim to reduce risks by concealing drug couriers or parcels among passengers and cargo on commercial flights. They capitalize on busier air routes, focusing on departures from major cities in Pakistan, including Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, and Peshawar. These cities have multiple connections to the Middle East, with Lahore and Karachi offering additional routes to South and Southeast Asia, as well as Europe. Air trafficking heavily relies on numerous small shipments to mitigate the risk of detection. By splitting the illicit cargo into smaller parcels, traffickers attempt to evade scrutiny and increase the chances of successful delivery (Tanner, 2011). This method allows them to blend in with legitimate passengers and cargo, making it more challenging for authorities to identify and intercept illegal substances.

Examining seizure data related to drug trafficking from Pakistan presents challenges in determining the most popular export routes. On numerous occasions, seizure reports fail to furnish precise particulars regarding the intended departure locations within Pakistan (Aziana et al., 2017). For example, in the province of Punjab, the act of seizing a vehicle from an open area is customarily classified as land trafficking. Nevertheless, the precise mode of departure from Pakistan, whether it is via the Lahore airport, the Karachi seaport, the Iranian border, or even by mail, is uncertain. Air traffickers can take advantage of the extensive network of commercial flights and connections that are accessible from key cities in Pakistan due to the characteristics of air trafficking (Hussain et al., 2014). The routes facilitate the transportation of drugs to numerous global locations, with the potential for additional distribution via pre-existing criminal networks. Fighting air trafficking presents law enforcement agencies with enormous challenges due to the volume of air travel, the vast quantity of passengers and cargo, and the challenge of conducting in-depth inspections without interfering with regular operations (Usman, 2013). However, authorities continue to enhance security measures, intelligence sharing, and cooperation with international partners to detect and intercept drug smuggling via air routes, ensuring the safety and well-being of communities affected by illicit narcotics.

Figure 03 Modes of Trafficking Across Punjab and Sindh



Source: UNODC Drug Monitoring Platform (DMP) and Individual Drug Seizures (IDS)

In conclusion, drug traffickers utilize various methods and routes for smuggling narcotics within and from Pakistan. These methods include land, sea, and air transportation. By land, traffickers take advantage of major transportation arteries, using vehicles with hidden compartments or exploiting the Transport International Routier (TIR) system. They transport drugs through various routes, including the Baluchistan route, Pakistani tribal areas route, Karachi route, Islamabad and Lahore route, and the Makran Coast route. Sea transport provides an opportunity for traffickers to smuggle bulk quantities of raw materials for drug production. The long coastlines of Pakistan and Turkey allow for easy access to maritime routes, with drug shipments often concealed among legitimate cargo (Keefe, P. R, 2013). Smugglers exploit the vastness of the oceans to minimize the risk of interception. While air trafficking is not as commonly reported as other methods, it presents unique challenges for law enforcement. Traffickers seek to hide drug couriers or parcels among passengers and cargo on commercial flights. Major cities like Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, and Peshawar offer numerous connections to the Middle East, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Europe. Small shipments are often utilized to reduce detection risks (UNODC, 2015). Law enforcement agencies face difficulties in combating drug trafficking, given the vast and complex nature of these smuggling operations. However, they continue to enhance security measures, intelligence sharing, and cooperation with international partners to disrupt drug trafficking networks and intercept illegal substances. It is crucial for authorities to remain vigilant and adopt proactive measures to detect and deter drug

smuggling. By targeting these smuggling methods and routes, law enforcement can mitigate the impact of narcotics on society and work towards a safer and drug-free future.

➤ **CRIMINAL MOTIVES OF DRUG TRAFFICKERS IN PAKISTAN**

Drug manufacturing and trafficking in Pakistan are now closely associated with the dynamics of domestic armed conflicts. Many people's involvement in the nation's drug manufacturing and trafficking is a complex phenomenon that is influenced by a range of elements, including conflicting interests, power relationships, and historical occurrences. One important player involved in the production and distribution of drugs is the Taliban and other militant organizations active in the area (Shahab, 2022). The neighboring country of Afghanistan is a major global producer of heroin and opium, and these armed organizations have benefited financially from the lucrative drug trade. The Taliban has been connected to drug smuggling into Pakistan as well as the cultivation and management of poppies in Afghanistan. Tribes and villages in the area make drugs as well. In many Pakistani localities, particularly border towns, drug production and trafficking have become deeply ingrained in the socioeconomic fabric (Javaid, 2023). For some vulnerable people, the illicit drug trade offers a means of economic survival and, occasionally, empowerment. These organizations are involved in the production and trafficking of drugs due to historical factors like a lack of official oversight and restricted access to legitimate economic opportunities. This illicit trade of drug in Pakistan and also in other countries has benefited organized crime groups and criminal networks that are wide-spread throughout the world. These firms, frequently conduct business internationally, are involved in every phase of the drug trafficking process, from distribution and transportation to cultivation and processing. The enormous potential profits from the illegal drug trade are what drive their engagement. The possibility of these criminal networks' connections to global drug cartels greatly complicates the situation surrounding drug production and trafficking in Pakistan (Shah et al., 2023). It is important to recognize that the existence of armed conflicts, insurgencies, and inadequate governance in specific regions of Pakistan has raised an environment favorable to the manufacturing and trafficking of various drugs. Individuals find it simpler to participate in illicit activities, including drug trafficking, due to the weak state of the security situation and the lack of official authority in some places. However; in Pakistan, these trafficking of drug is primarily motivated by a variety of illegal reasons, including:

1. ***Profit and Financial Gain***: Drug trafficking is a serious menace to society in Pakistan, but it also brings in a sizable profit for those who engage in the illegal trade. The nation is a major transit route for drug smuggling due to its geographic location sharing borders with Afghanistan, a major producer of heroin and opium. Due to their close proximity, traffickers can benefit handsomely from the delivery of drugs to both internal and foreign markets by passing through Pakistan. The strong demand for drugs in Pakistan and its surrounding areas fuels the country's illicit drug market. The enormous sums of money made from drug trafficking support the continued existence of this illegal industry (Iqbal et al., 2022). Traffickers gain a lot of money, which allows them to grow their businesses, avoid detection by the authorities, and take advantage of dishonest organizations.

Fighting drug trafficking is made more difficult by the fact that organized crime groups and individuals are drawn to the drug trade due to its profitability. In Pakistan, the profits made from drug trafficking have far-reaching effects.

First off, the money made by the drug trade fuels the ongoing criminality and violence in the area. In order to safeguard their operations, traffickers use harsh methods, which make the impacted populations fearful and unstable. The safety and welfare of people is negatively impacted by this kind of violence (Jain, 2018). Second, the money made from drug trafficking may be used to support terrorism and other illegal actions. Pakistan has encountered difficulties with the link between drug trafficking and terrorism. There are serious security concerns for Pakistan and the wider international community because of the possibility that the large money made from the drug trade may be used to support extremist groups (Myers, 2013). The financial networks and economic incentives that support drug trafficking in Pakistan must be disrupted in order to address the profit-driven character of the industry. This entails focusing on the resources and money obtained from drug trafficking, putting money laundering controls in place, and fortifying financial regulations to identify and stop illegal activity.

- 2. *Exploitation of Vulnerable Populations:*** Many of the drug traffickers commonly take advantage of marginalized groups in Pakistani culture by exploiting certain traits that increase a victim's susceptibility to drug trafficking. Among them are those that are addicts on drugs, those looking for work, and underprivileged areas are some of these common susceptible groups (Khan, 2006). One of the main causes behind the exploitation of weaker groups in Pakistan is the high rate of substance misuse. This kind of substance misuse affects a sizable section of the population, which presents serious problems for the nation. They take advantage of addicts' weakness and desperation since they usually need a constant flow of drugs to maintain their addiction. In order to coerce addicts into engaging in drug trafficking, traffickers may present them with cash incentives or actual narcotics. Some of these addicts may feel forced to work as couriers or low-level operatives in the illegal drug trade due to their addiction and because of the need for financial support. Meanwhile, the exploitation of vulnerable populations by drug traffickers is often facilitated by poverty and a lack of economic prospects (Kura et al., 2014).

Pakistan has a large population that is impoverished, which presents serious socioeconomic difficulties. Drug traffickers use several techniques to lure these poor people such as cash incentives or the making false promises of employment prospects to attract these impoverished individuals. The promise of quick money or better livelihoods may lead people to participate in drug trafficking activities no matter how much the risks are involved.

Furthermore, the limited access to education in many areas of Pakistan makes the local populace more vulnerable to drug trafficking. People with low levels of education may find it difficult to get work and to grow economically, leaving them with very few limited options. That's how these drug traffickers take advantage of this situation by presenting a visually appealing and attractive alternative and enticing people with the prospect of financial gain and a way out of poverty. Without knowledge of the dangers associated with drug trafficking, people may participate in the illicit business knowingly or unintentionally. Many of these traffickers have an easy time preying on people in miserable situations because of the social and economic vulnerability of some groups in Pakistan (Azam, 2011). These traffickers contribute to the nation's overall drug trafficking issues by feeding the cycle of drug usage by preying on the desperation of drug addicts, underprivileged populations, and chances seekers.

- 3. *Financing Terrorism:*** Regarding the link between drug trafficking and terrorism, Pakistan has faced significant challenges. Extremist organizations have benefited greatly from the illegal drug trade, which has given them a steady source of funding for their operations and the escalation of unrest both domestically and internationally. There are serious security concerns for Pakistan and the world community because of the link between drug trafficking and terrorism.

Radical groups, including the Taliban and other violent factions, have a history of utilizing drug trafficking as a means of generating income (Chandra, 2020). By taxing or controlling drug production, trafficking routes, and processing labs, these groups make money from the drug trade. They fund their operations, which include hiring, training, and purchasing weapons and supplies, using the money they get from trafficking in drugs. These extremist groups benefit greatly from the enormous sums of money made from the drug trade, which allows them to spread influence, grow their networks, and continue using violence. Many security problems arise from the link between drug trafficking and terrorism in Pakistan.

It first jeopardizes the stability and governance of the country. Extremist groups are able to operate in regions where there is little official authority, create safe havens, and influence local populations because to the money made from drug trafficking. This weakens state authority and jeopardizes counterterrorism initiatives (Shaikh, 2021). Second, money made from drug trafficking can be utilized to support terrorist activities both inside and outside of Pakistan. The money made from the drug trade enables extremist groups to plan and execute assaults that cause casualties and further destabilize the area. Drug trafficking and terrorism combine to produce a violent cycle that impedes social and economic advancement and prolongs insecurity.

A thorough approach is needed to address the link between drug trafficking and terrorism. To disrupt drug trafficking networks and demolish their financial infrastructure, law enforcement must step up its efforts. Hence to stop drug shipments and stop the flow of illegal money it is necessary that we must strengthen the border security and international collaboration.

➤ STRATEGIES TO PREVENT DRUG TRAFFICKING IN PAKISTAN

To successfully combat the rising issue of drugs in Pakistan; our current government may make great strides toward curtailing drug trafficking, preventing drug misuse, and safeguarding the country's economy and public health by putting these policy ideas into practice. However, it's critical to understand that in order to have long-lasting effects; a multifaceted and all-encompassing strategy involving numerous stakeholders is required. It is possible to put the following policy suggestions into practice:

- The government must work with different media channels to increase public knowledge of the negative impacts that drugs have on people, society, and the state and the severity of drug usage should be thoroughly discussed in educational curriculum, emphasizing the negative effects on one's physical and mental health as well as the economy and security.
- In light of Pakistan's close proximity to Afghanistan, a significant heroin producer, border security measures must be given top priority. The government need to spend more money bolstering border security measures, including as stepping up surveillance, exchanging info, and working with surrounding nations. Enhancing airport security and controlling land and seaports will help law enforcement better thwart drug trafficking schemes.
- Pakistan must need to keep up its vigorous involvement in global institutions like the United Nations Drug and Crime Organization it can strengthen its efforts to combat money laundering, organized crime, and drug trafficking by working with these organizations and partner nations. Enhancing drug control programs with intelligence, resources, and best practices from other countries can make them far more successful.
- The creation of treatment facilities around the nation must be given top priority by the government. Sufficient financial resources must to be assigned to furnish essential medical services, including as therapy, withdrawal, and recovery initiatives.
- Strict anti-corruption laws should be passed and implemented by the government to guarantee accountability and openness in governmental agencies. Here the government should fight against bribery and addressing court case delays pertaining to drug trafficking and money laundering should receive particular focus.

- In order to deter drug trafficking and lower drug abuse, the government should give priority to economic development programs that provide employment, especially for young people.
- Moreover, Pakistan must approach foreign allies, such as financial institutions and donor nations, for assistance and cooperation. Through forming alliances and obtaining foreign assistance, the government can obtain funds to fortify its drug control policies and carry out successful preventative initiatives.

CONCLUSION

According to the study, there has been a noteworthy increase in drug trafficking in Pakistan, which is associated with the rise of opium cultivation in Afghanistan's neighbor. Pakistan has traditionally maintained a rigorous zero-tolerance policy regarding drug manufacturing. Pakistan's primary supply of drugs was opium poppy, which was farmed and processed into hashish or charas. Opium was grown in distant locations like Tirah, Khyber, which was known to have poor government. The primary route for smuggling cannabis and heroin from Afghanistan is now via Pakistan, and methamphetamine trafficking has surged, implying that synthetic narcotics are becoming more prevalent in the country. Traffickers have gained more as a result of their strategic use of power and control over medicine prices. As a result, the study focused primarily on drug trafficking in Pakistan, attempting to determine why people engage in this illegal business and the techniques used by traffickers.

The study also outlined a variety of steps to combat drug trafficking, including increased border security, regional coordination, combating law enforcement corruption, and prioritizing job opportunities and economic development. These steps are intended to degrade drug trafficking organizations, support law enforcement efforts, and provide alternative avenues for persons who are vulnerable to drug use and trafficking.

Finally, the findings of this criminological study have practical implications for law enforcement agencies, politicians, and other stakeholders involved in the battle against drug trafficking in Pakistan. The research also provides valuable information on the complex dynamics of this criminal activity. Pakistan can effectively combat the negative effects of drug trafficking and promote a drug-free, safer society by putting in place strong countermeasures and law enforcement programs.

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