

Challenges Faced by Anti-Narcotics Force in Combating Drugs Trafficking: A case study of Regional Directorate Peshawar

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Received: 24-02-2025

Revised: 14-03-2025

Accepted: 01-04-2025

Published: 04-04-2025

ABSTRACT

This comprehensive study summarizes the findings of an intensive investigation conducted to obtain a thorough understanding of the challenges that the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) encountered in its unrelenting effort to combat drug trafficking inside the complicated environment of the Regional Directorate Peshawar. These challenges encompass a broad spectrum involving hurdles including insufficient border control operations, insufficient training for employees, limited resources, language obstacles, possibly life-threatening risks, and the changing nature of drug trafficking methods. This study provides a clear picture of the complex network of challenges encountered on the front lines from the perspectives of ANF personnel with a variety of employment and experiences.

Keywords:

Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), Drug trafficking, Drug abuse prevention, Narcotics control, Counter-narcotics operations

INTRODUCTION

The term “narcotic” comes from the Greek word for “stupor” and originally referred to a variety of substances that dulled the senses and relieved pain. Illicit drug use includes the non-medical use of a variety of drugs that are prohibited by international law. These drugs include amphetamine type stimulants, cannabis, cocaine, heroin and other opioids, and MDMA (ecstasy). Negative effects include: slowed physical activity, constriction of the pupils, flushing of the face and neck, constipation, nausea, vomiting, and slowed breathing etc.

Most precisely, it is a crime to use, possess, manufacture, or distribute drugs classified as having a potential for abuse. Drug trafficking is a major source of revenue for organized crime groups. It is a known fact that the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is a gateway for drug dealers as the western border of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa relates to Afghanistan-a major drug producing country. The drugs produced in Afghanistan are smuggled through Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to the rest of Pakistan and then exported to other countries.

The trafficking of narcotics is illegal in Pakistan and the federal government is presently reported to be working closely with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to eradicate such practices. The law enforcement unit specifically tasked with this role is Pakistan's Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), which operates in cooperation with other law enforcement agencies including "Frontier Corps, Pakistan Rangers, Customs and Coast Guards" and "agencies with responsibilities for interdiction in the Federally and Provincially Administered tribal areas.

In Regional Directorate of Peshawar ANF is facing a lot of challenges in combating drug trafficking. This study will examine the challenges faced by ANF.

Drug trafficking, which comprises the production, distribution, and sale of illegal substances, is a problem for worldwide security. The main transformation and adaptation on the stability of the economy, politics, and organizational structures is brought about by the evolution of illicit drug trafficking. The distribution of the illicit drugs and consumption cause domestic as well as international war, which pose a security issue around the globe. Drug trafficking has a social, economic and political impact leading to breaking of the spine of the society (Sherman, 2010).

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. Identify and evaluate the key challenges encountered by ANF in combating drug trafficking in Regional Directorate Peshawar.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the primary operational and logistical challenges faced by ANF for combating drug trafficking in Regional Directorate Peshawar?

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The drug problem, in its various manifestations, is a serious global challenge, which affects, every region and country in varying degrees. Pakistan is no exception. Pakistan has long been exposed to the negative and wide-ranging consequences of illicit cultivation, production, manufacturing, trafficking and abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

According to the "National Anti-narcotics Policy 2019" The Constitution of Pakistan under Article 37(g) obligates the state to "prevent prostitution, gambling, and taking of injurious drugs and advertisements". Under Articles 90 and 99 of the Constitution of Pakistan, the Rules of Business, 1973 provides the mandate and responsibility to the Ministry of Narcotics Control to deal with matters related Narcotics. This includes Drug Supply Reduction, Drug Demand Reduction and International Cooperation activities including related issues of coordination and capacity building. The Control of Narcotic Substances Act (1997), hereinafter referred to as CNSA 1997, defines the punishments and imprisonment for drug use, abuse, smuggling and trafficking.

The Anti-narcotics Force (ANF) Act, 1997 supplements the CNSA 1997 by providing for the establishment of Anti-narcotics Force for undertaking and overseeing investigations of narcotics and drugs-related crimes. To prevent and counter the multi-faceted drug problem, including drugs related transnational organized crime, Pakistan seeks a comprehensive, balanced and integrated approach. National Anti-Narcotics Policy of Pakistan puts emphasis on three main priorities: namely Drug Supply Reduction (Interdiction), Drug Demand Reduction (Prevention & Treatment) and Regional and International Cooperation.

Felbab (2009) world's drug problem is primarily 3-fold: manufacture, trafficking and abuse. When all three meet to produce a fatal cocktail, like in the case of Pakistan, it gets more complex. The globe is now considered as drug trafficking most profitable enterprise, with revenues far

exceeding those of the oil and gas industries combined, and only second to the trade in guns. Historically most of the world's heroin was supplied by the golden crescent (Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iran) and the golden three-angle (Burma, Thailand, and Laos).

The UNODC estimates indicate that over 40% of illicit Afghan opiates are transited through Pakistan. As a transit state of illicit drugs originating in Afghanistan, Pakistan is seriously concerned over the deteriorating drug situation in the neighboring country and the growing local demand within Pakistan. Drug traffickers in Pakistan use western parts of the country to flourish their business.

The security threat to the state by drug trafficking comes from three interrelated sections: Drug cultivation and trafficking within the state. Drug trafficking through the state, in which the traffickers use the state as a transit route. Drug abuse within. The threats to the state from drug trafficking further depend upon the nature and scope of the drug trafficking organizations. There are three types of drug trafficking organizations. (Chandran, 1998).

Shanty (2011) explained how terrorists and drug traffickers earn cash from narcotics in Afghanistan to support their global operations in his book international terrorism and drug trafficking from Afghanistan. He gave a quick overview of the Taliban's ascent to power and their ties to Osama Bin Laden. It is revealed by the author that the Taliban offer sanctuary to drug traffickers and receive income from drug smugglers throughout the transportation of smuggled materials.

Khosa (2020) discussed the drug issue in Pakistan, law enforcement agencies involved for drug interdiction, and the problems law enforcement agencies confront in combatting narcotics trafficking in his book, Drug Trafficking in Pakistan.

Peters (2009) was a reporter who covered the security situation in Pakistan and Afghanistan. During the Musharraf era, one of her most well-known research articles discussed how Taliban utilized opioids to collect cash from opium growers by collecting ten percent of the tax, charging fees to guard opium and heroin trafficking across the borders, and operating their own clandestine laboratories on Pak-Afghan border.

Paoli (2017) examines the connection between organized crime and drug trafficking and the two aspects of organized criminality and trafficking in narcotic drugs in his article. The thesis further illustrate that how organized crime is regarded depends on the link between Organized crime and drug trafficking. Currently, illegal drug dealing is one of the most widely held serious forms of organized crime, as well as one of the world's most lucrative industries.

Maqbool (2015) in an article entitled Drug Trafficking, investigated drug trafficking, as a non-traditional threat to the security of Pakistan's national security, which constitutes an untraditional security threat. Medication dealing is a non-customary risk to security which, in blend with illegal intimidation, might be transformed into a more deadly exertion. On two levels, it represents a significant danger to the globe assaulting people, and second, by financing psychological oppressors with cash got in a roundabout way from designated states.

A study report by the Foundation for Fundamental Rights (2020) inspects the control of medications substance act system dependent on an exhaustive assessment of the legislation. Similar instances and offers suggestions for making Pakistan's drug enforcement authorities more effective, fair, and focused. It aims to learn how the law works in practice and which types of crime it has mostly addressed.

In essay titled Drug Trafficking from Afghanistan to Pakistan and Its Implications, Usman and Khan (2013) addressed the subject of trafficking. It is attempting to develop effective to the issue

to lessen the negative effects or drug trafficking on their bilateral ties. It advocates for a regional strategy that treats Pakistan and Afghanistan as a unified entity to eliminate poppy production in Afghanistan and its infiltration into Pakistan. In addition to basic international treaties, we also need to consider the presence of hundreds of regional and agreements. These agreements frequently enhance the rights and responsibilities of member governments.

Lyons and Ford (2012) Although numerous praiseworthy initiatives have been made at the national level to improve law enforcement, the fact remains that in a country with a criminal network organizer, their producers in another country, their distributors in a third and the revenue of the crimes laundered in a fourth, most major trafficking activities are internationally.

RESEARCH GAP

It is seen during writing literature review that drugs production and its trafficking remain conversation point for public and worldwide researchers notwithstanding, conversely, conversation on laws and approaches was disregarded particularly in Pakistan. Many research papers and studies have been conducted in the world. But in Pakistan there is no enough comprehensive study on the subject topic.

A study named “Role of Anti-Narcotics Force in Combating Drug Trafficking” had been carried out to explore the possible dimensions of the pervasiveness of drug trafficking. There is a gap in existing literature. This study will fill the gap, the loopholes in the existing mechanism and to highlights the efforts made by authorities especially with regards to premier drug law enforcement agency ANF to counter this curse.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This research will be qualitative in nature, based on perception. The research study will confine to the Anti-Narcotics force Regional Directorate Peshawar. There are 5 police stations in regional Directorate Peshawar. The sample size of the study will 10-15 ANF officials. Convenience sampling - a non-probability sampling technique will be used to select the sampled respondents. Interview schedule will used as a tool of data collection with open and close ended questions. The interview schedule will be prepared in English, but the interviews will be taken in the native language i.e., Urdu and Pashto. After collection of data, it will be analyzed and interpreted through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

The tool for data collection is a very important and essential step in the research. The tool for data collection will be adapted interview schedule, validity and reliability will be evaluated as prescribed procedure.

FINDINGS

The Anti Narcotics Force (ANF) plays a crucial role in combating drug trafficking, and its effectiveness varies across different regions. For a case study of the Regional Directorate in Peshawar, several challenges are commonly faced and these are critical to understanding the limitations and areas for improvement in the fight against drug trafficking. Below are key findings regarding these challenges:

1. Geo political Location and Cross-Border Trafficking

Proximity to Afghanistan:

Peshawar is located near the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, a key route for drug trafficking. Afghanistan is one of the largest producers of opium, and drugs of ten pass through the region to reach global markets. The porous border and limited control over remote areas make it easier for traffickers to move drugs into and out of the region.

Smuggling Routes:

The rugged terrain in this region makes it difficult for ANF to monitor and control all access points. Smuggling through forests, mountains and tribal areas presents logistical challenges in terms of patrolling and enforcement.

2. Limited Resources and Personnel

Understaffing:

The ANF faces a shortage of trained personnel to cover the vast territory of Peshawar and surrounding regions. This limits their ability to effectively monitor and intercept drug shipments.

Lack of Equipment:

There is also a shortage of advanced technology and surveillance equipment, such as drones, radars, and mobile tracking systems, which are vital for tracking drug movements and apprehending traffickers.

Funding Issues:

In sufficient funding for operations and equipment can hamper the effectiveness of the ANF in implementing large-scale operations and investigations.

3. Corruption and Political Influence

Corruption within Law Enforcement:

Corruption among some law enforcement officers can undermine efforts to combat drug trafficking. Bribery and collusion with traffickers are significant issues that hinder progress.

Political Interference:

Political connections between traffickers and influential individuals can lead to leniency or delays in prosecution. Political interference canals prevent the ANF from pursuing certain cases or individuals.

4. Local Resistance and Social Challenges

Cultural and Social Acceptance of Drugs:

In some communities, there is a degree of tolerance or indifference toward drug use and trafficking. This can be attributed to economic hardship, where drug trafficking becomes a source of livelihood for certain groups.

Resistance from Local Populations:

In certain tribal areas, the local population may not cooperate with the authorities due to mistrust or fear of retaliation. This lack of community support can impede the ANF's ability to gather intelligence and apprehend suspects.

5. Challenges in Investigations and Intelligence Gathering

Lack of Reliable Intelligence:

Effective counter-narcotic operations depend heavily on accurate intelligence. However, in regions like Peshawar, obtaining reliable information from informants or local sources can be difficult due to fear of retribution or mistrust of law enforcement agencies.

Complex Networks of Traffickers:

Drug trafficking operations often involve complex and well-organized networks, with traffickers using various tactics, such as false documentation, to evade detection. This makes it harder for the ANF to infiltrate these networks or trace drug movements.

6. Judicial Challenges

Slow Legal Processes:

Even when traffickers are arrested, the legal process can be slow and inefficient. Weak laws, lengthy trials and delays in evidence processing reduce the chances of conviction.

Lack of Conviction:

Often, even with strong evidence, traffickers may not be convicted due to inefficiencies in the judicial system or the influence of powerful figures who have connections with drug cartels.

7. Evolving Drug Trends

New Forms of Drugs:

The trafficking of synthetic drugs such as meth amphetamine has been increasing in the region and this requires new methods of detection and intervention. The adaptability of traffickers to changing drug trends is a major challenge for ANF forces who need to stay ahead in terms of both intelligence and tactics.

CONCLUSION

The ANF's struggle in combating drug trafficking in Peshawar is shaped by a combination of internal and external factors, including inadequate resources, corruption, complex local dynamics and a challenging geo-political situation. While there have been some successes, much more needs to be done in terms of improving interagency coordination, enhancing intelligence capabilities, addressing corruption and securing community support. A multi-faceted approach that includes stricter enforcement, public awareness and international collaboration is essential to effectively curb drug trafficking in the region.

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