

# COMBATING TRANSNATIONAL DRUG TRAFFICKING: A FOCUS ON PAKISTAN'S CHALLENGES AND COUNTERMEASURES

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## ABSTRACT

For decades, scholars have grappled with precisely defining Transnational Organized Crime (TOC). Reuter and Rubinstein cautioned back in the 1970s that pinpointing TOC would inevitably be the weak point in any investigation into cross-border illicit conduct. TOC involves numerous activities from drug and human trafficking to money laundering, insider trading, and corruption and spans across different actors, including agent provocateurs, operating in multiple countries. While recent laws have been enacted to criminalize these various acts, the sheer breadth of TOC makes it an exceptionally challenging subject to address. TOC generates between \$1.6 to \$2.2 trillion per year. and thus considered as a danger to international security due to its "explosive and destabilizing repercussions" potential. TOC poses a significant threat to both direct and indirect peace, as well as cultural peace. It jeopardizes human rights, world peace, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Academics and researchers are unable to convey knowledge about TOC because it is covert and hidden, and because it is related to elites. The industry of transnational organized crime especially drug trafficking; the largest facet of TOC (occupies 30-35% of Transnational Criminal activities) is one that is always adapting to new markets and developing new types. It is an illicit enterprise that cuts across all boundaries; cultural, social, linguistic, and geographic. This corporation does not recognize any borders or standards because it operates outside of them. This article explores the multifaceted ramifications of this illicit trade on Pakistan's internal socio-economic and political fabric, and how these vulnerabilities are, in turn, reflected in and contribute to a detrimental international image. Drawing on a comprehensive review of existing literature and reports, researchers argue that drug trafficking extends far beyond a mere law enforcement issue, deeply eroding governance, fueling corruption, and exacerbating internal security threats.

**Keywords:** Transnational organized crime (TOC), Pakistan, drug trafficking

## INTRODUCTION

Transnational organized crime is a thriving part of the global economy. Transnational organized crime can be used to describe any major international crime with a financial goal that

takes place in more than one country. Transnational organized crime includes illicit activities like the trade in drugs, migrants, people, weapons, and counterfeit goods

(Natarajan, 2019). Drug Trafficking is the most profitable illegal business, bringing in an estimated \$360 billion to \$500 billion every year. Experts and agencies (like DEA, UNODC) acknowledge that most trafficking revenue data lags several years behind real time and is always an estimate. In 2009, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2009) said that the world's cocaine and opiate markets were worth \$80 billion and \$66 billion, respectively, each year. According to UN publication "Economic and Social Consequences of Drug Abuse and illicit Trafficking", major types of drugs along with respective turnover are; heroin (\$100 to \$110 billion), cocaine (\$110 to \$130 billion), cannabis (\$75 billion), synthetic drugs (\$60 billion). Given a conventional bias in some of the estimates for individual substances, total market worth of illicit businesses related to drugs is estimated around \$400 to \$500 billion per annum. The illicit businesses of drug involve cultivation, manufacturing, transportation, distribution and sales of drugs or substances which are subjected to prohibition of (drugs) law.

Eliminating restrictions on the free flow of goods and monetary resources across international borders has greatly assisted, severe and organized crimes. Because of the ongoing struggle between supply and demand on a global scale, criminal organizations have established new markets in which they can sell illegal goods and services. It is a mammoth business to deal in narcotics (especially in Europe and North America), guns (primarily in Africa and the Middle East), exotic animals (mainly in Asia), and people who can be used (particularly in Asia). These businesses come under "big business" (virtually everywhere). Criminals violating the law in more than one nation typically try. However, because it is a closely guarded commercial secret, it is difficult to predict how it may influence the economy. There are many different reasons why people get involved in international crime, but money is by far the most common one. According to estimates, the global revenue generated by transnational crimes was anywhere from \$1.6 trillion to \$2.2 trillion in 2014. In 2014, this

figure was equivalent to approximately 2.5 percent of the total GDP of the world (Statista, 2018). According to the information, Criminal activities such as the trafficking of drugs and the production of counterfeit money might raise up to around \$1.8 trillion in next few years (van Uhm, 2019). A recent estimate by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) also suggests that only drugs market value of more than \$500 billion are being transported worldwide. This number was arrived at through an internal investigation of the most recent developments in the industry. As a result of the increased availability of locations at which they may cultivate /manufacture and sell illicit drugs, organized crime syndicates are also seeing an increase in their financial profits. It decreases the company's overall manufacturing expenses while improving its earnings (Lindley, 2019).

Vast quantities of cocaine and heroin are currently being carried from Latin America (mainly Colombia, Peru, Brazil, or Venezuela) to West Africa and from Central or South Asia to East Africa. These are two ways to get to Africa via these routes (and sometimes West Africa).

Drugs from East and West Africa end up in Europe and the United States, the world's two largest drug markets. The Balkan and Northern routes are two main heroin trafficking routes connecting Afghanistan with Russian Federation and Western Europe. Balkan route crosses from Iran / Pakistan to Turkey - Greece - Bulgaria to South-East Europe to Western European market. Northern Rout runs through Tajikistan - and Kyrgyzstan to Russian Federation. The amount of cocaine confiscated in Africa more than doubled in 2016, according to the 2018 UNODC World Drug Report. North African states saw a six-fold rise and seized 69 percent of all cocaine. Some nations, such as Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, and the Canary Islands, are key transit hubs for the illegal drug trade, according to Interpol's World Atlas of Illicit Flows. According to a paper published in the Journal of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Captagon, a combination of amphetamine and theophylline that increases alertness, is rising throughout Africa (Kocsis,

2018). Both of these medications are assumed to originate mainly in India. It is why their use is increasing in countries such as Mali, Chad, and Nigeria. People believe that Niger, Benin, and Togo are three of Africa's most vital transit hubs. Since then, hundreds of methamphetamine labs have been discovered in West Africa, including one in Nigeria capable of producing the narcotic for billions of dollars.

Different way transnational crimes put individuals in peril is by exploiting vulnerable populations and communities for financial gain. Farmers who typically cultivate food crops, for instance, can decide to start stimulating illegal substances instead to increase their income.

In the past few years, it has been widely reported that organizations involved in the trafficking of drugs are also engaging in violent and criminal activities. One clear illustration of this is the alarmingly high number of killings committed in groups in Mexico. In addition, some profits from selling illegal drugs may find their way into the coffers of terrorist organizations or violent insurgent factions (Enderwick, 2019). Due to transnational crime, people are in danger of being injured or injuring others, jeopardizing their health and safety. Trafficking in drugs and people is a high-risk industry controlled by those who don't care if the people who participate in it are treated. People are willing to put their lives on the line to get what they want to engage in the dangerous game of drug trafficking. If one is detected, the costs of drug trafficking can be high, and they could face severe consequences.

## 2. Research Gap

Previous findings strongly indicate not one but two significant knowledge gaps on the authors' part. First, there hasn't been much research done on either of the variables with regards to Pakistan. Second, the majority of the researches that has been done on transnational crimes have been carried out in the developed nations. Whereas developing countries are more vulnerable to the effects of Transnational crimes since their political, bureaucratic, and legal

systems are already showing indications of strain under pressure.

Apropos in view, it is a need of the hour to look into Transnational crimes through proposed study to discuss the impacts of TOC, its causes and vulnerabilities for Pakistan with a view to suggest suitable countermeasures for facets of TOC. This research article will investigate drug trafficking (largest facet of transnational crimes) in Pakistan, its spread, causes, and vulnerabilities of Pakistan. The goal of this research is to fill in the gaps that have been detected in the existing knowledge and suggest viable countermeasures against drugs trafficking. People will also better understand why the rates of international crime in Europe and Asia are so drastically different as a direct result of this study's findings.

## 3. Research Problem

From 1980, Pakistan's transnational crime rates peaked (Dass, 2019). These crimes have potential to damage any country's economy and image, but particularly, developing countries like Pakistan is at risk. A study by Global Financial Integrity found that the amount of illegal money generated by drug trafficking is roughly 7-10 times more than reported (Integrity, 2019). These crimes and corruption make state institutions even weaker than they already are and all this will tear the social fabric, hurt the state's legitimacy, scare away legal and economic activity, put public safety at risk, and maybe even start a rebellion or cause chaos. As the rise of drug trafficking in Pakistan shows, crime takes money and resources away from more productive economic activities (Kotiswaran, 2019). It is generally agreed that transnational crime poses a risk not just to national security but also to human security. So it is the need of the hour to look into the matter through the proposed study to discuss the impact of transnational crimes, its causes and vulnerabilities for Pakistan.

## 4. Objective and Research Question of the Study

The following objective and Research Question are intended to serve the purpose of this research:

**RO1:** To analyse extents, causes and vulnerabilities of drug trafficking in Pakistan with a view to suggest viable countermeasures for the same.

**RQ1:** What are the extents, causes and vulnerabilities for drug trafficking in Pakistan with a view to suggest viable countermeasures for the same?

### 5. Significance of the Study

This research investigation's finding will have far-reaching benefits, theoretically and practically. Because there had previously been almost no such research study that focused on the influence of drug trafficking, its spread, causes and vulnerabilities in Pakistan. This research will help to understand the importance of low levels of transnational criminal activity and a positive country image, as well as how these aspects contribute to the growth of the economy. Finally, this research study will also encourage various law enforcement agencies and the country's government to take essential measures in introducing effective practices for decreasing crime rates and ensuring the implementation of criminal laws to improve the overall performance of legal activities to increase the country's total GDP.

### 6. Literature Review

The paradigm of drug trafficking, though less dramatically altered than other forms of organized crime, remains complex. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2021) defines it as the "farming, production, transportation, and sale of products that are illegal under federal law." As a quintessential transnational crime, it leaves no state unaffected, impacting countries as sources, processors, transit points, or markets. This illicit

trade destabilizes nations through violence, public health crises, and economic inefficiencies, significantly straining developing countries' resources. It remains the most lucrative criminal enterprise, generating an estimated \$500 billion in annual revenue, with cocaine and opiates alone accounting for \$85 billion and \$68 billion, respectively (Global Financial Integrity, 2017). The inherent relationship between drug manufacturing and consumption often leads to "spillage" along trafficking routes, partly due to traffickers compensating middlemen with drugs (Eck and Gersh, 2000). Consequently, many transit countries experience a rise in domestic drug usage and consumption, a phenomenon for which Pakistan is a classic example.

### 6.1 Drug Patterns

Illicit drug distribution patterns vary based on the level of activity (supplier, intermediary, reseller), the degree of institutionalization (e.g., salaried smugglers, specialized offices, strategic alliances, market share battles), and the specific drug marketed (cannabis, cocaine, heroin, or synthetics) (Curtis and Wendel, 2000). The industry, particularly for cocaine and heroin, has become more structured across manufacturing, retail, and intermediate levels, often controlled by organized gangs and cartels, sometimes unified by ethnicity (Desroches, 2007). Drug trafficking, confining the manufacturing, distribution, and sale of illegal narcotics, is a global criminal enterprise (Curtis and Wendel, 2000). Accurately estimating its worldwide market value is impossible due to its clandestine nature. Statistics are largely derived from drug seizure reports, which represent a small fraction of actual trafficking. Furthermore, inconsistent international definitions of drug trafficking hinder reliable cross-country and regional comparisons (Natarajan and Hough, 2000).

**Table 0.1: Global estimates of the use of various drugs**

	Percentage of population that has used the drug		Number of users (thousands)	
	low	high	low	high
Cannabis	2.7	4.9	128,480	232,070
Opioids	0.6	0.8	27,990	37,560
Opiates	0.3	0.4	12,920	20,460
Cocaine	0.3	0.4	13,800	20,730
Amphetamines	0.3	1.1	13,870	53,870
"Ecstasy"	0.2	0.6	9,340	28,390
All illicit drug use	3.4	7.0	162,000	329,000

## 6.2 Global Drug Production

Large-scale drug trafficking groups, such as Afghan and Mexican cartels, fit the profile of organized crime paradigms (Rodrigues et al., 2017). This category also includes terrorist, insurgent, and militia groups (e.g., FARC, Taliban, Tajik militias) that significantly fund their operations through "protection" of drug manufacturing and trafficking (Greenfield and Paoli, 2012).

While most major trafficking groups are based in producing or transit countries, some operate in consumer nations like Italy, where the Calabrian 'Ndrangheta became a key player in the European cocaine trade since the 2000s (Paoli and Reuter, 2008). Contrary to some claims (Calderoni, 2012), its influence is substantial. Similarly, large criminal organizations from producing or transit nations often establish branches in consuming countries, with representatives of Colombian and Afghan drug gangs reported in the United States and Pakistan, respectively (Morselli et al., 2017).

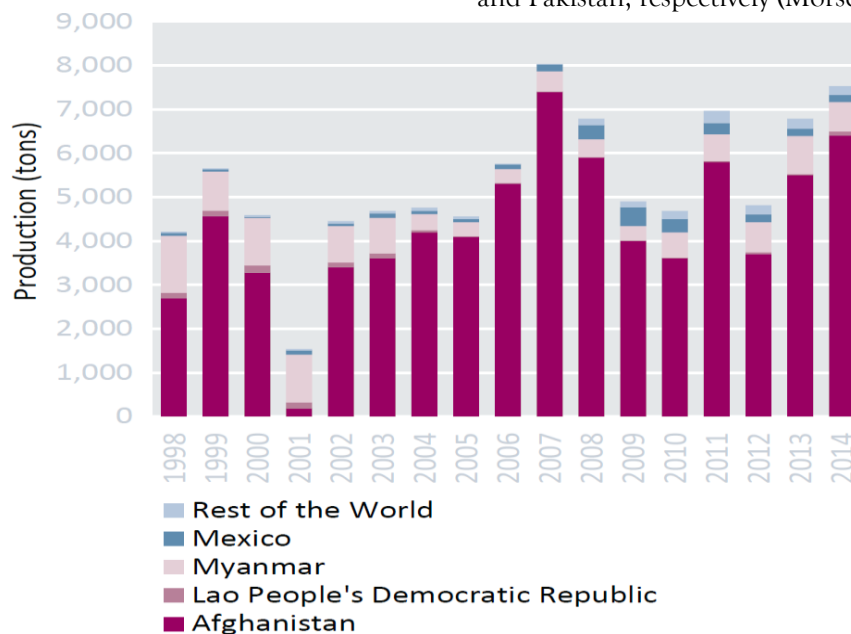


Figure.1: Global drug output index

## 6.3 Drug Users

In developing nations, illicit drug users are typically aged 14–45, with a peak in their mid-twenties, though initiation often occurs between 11 and 24 (Lloyd, 2013). The UNODC highlights that drug abuse often affects individuals during their most productive years, rendering them unproductive burdens on society. Among young

people, the deliberate inhalation of readily available and inexpensive solvents (like glue, aerosols, gasoline, or paint) is common, particularly for their potent psychoactive effects (UNODC, 2021). This practice is prevalent among street children in Latin America, Africa, and former European socialist states.



Widespread poverty, urban migration, and failing social services contribute to significant populations of homeless children in developing cities, including those in Pakistan, India, Mongolia, Bangladesh, and Brazil. For instance, over 100,000 street children are estimated in major Indian cities alone (Singer, 2008). Illicit drug sales can offer these vulnerable youths a

means of survival, peer acceptance, and an escape from harsh realities, risky lifestyles, and frequent victimization (Pivette et al., 2014). Similar patterns, with substantial populations of drug-consuming street children lacking family support, have also emerged in Southeast Asia, including Laos and Vietnam (Keefer, 2008), hindering their potential contribution to national development.

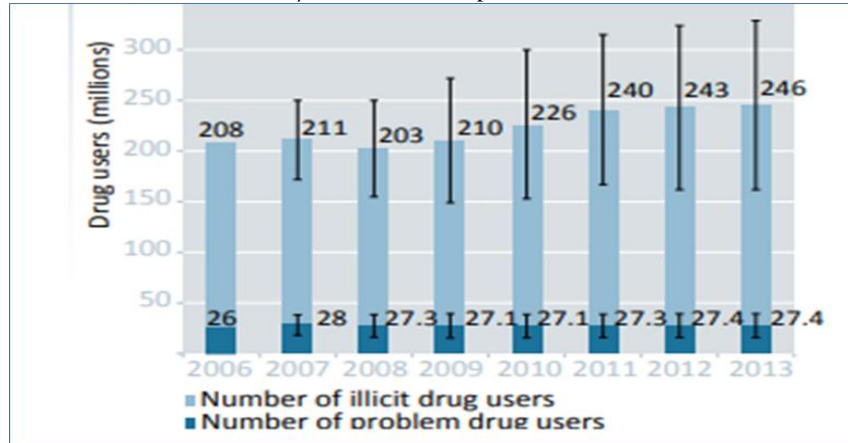


Figure 0: Global trend in the estimated number of drug users

Source: UNODC, responses to annual report questionnaire.

Note: Estimates are for adults (aged 15-64), based on past-year use.

According to UNODC reports, Pakistan's domestic drug problem has significantly worsened. The number of opioid users, for example, doubled from 2000 to 2006, reaching an estimated 0.64 million, with 0.5 million being heroin users. This surge was primarily driven by the enormous increase in opium and heroin production in neighboring Afghanistan.

A 2013 UNODC report found that roughly 6.7 million people (6% of the population) had used a controlled substance, indicating a notable boost in drug use over a seven-year period.

In recent years, the use of synthetic drugs (like buprenorphine and ecstasy) has been on the rise, particularly among youth. These drugs, trafficked from Europe, the UAE, and India, target an emerging customer base of affluent young people in urban areas and educational institutions. This new trend complicates efforts by Law Enforcement Agencies to detect and combat drug use.

## 7 Methodology

This study employs a qualitative methodology to address its research objectives. This approach was chosen to delve into the perspectives and experiences of participants, specifically to explore the causes and vulnerabilities of Pakistan concerning drug trafficking. The primary research methods for data collection are interviews and document analysis. Instead of relying on a single source, the researchers used a diverse range of data from both interviews and documents. This triangulation of data provides a more comprehensive understanding of the complex environment in which government officials face difficulties implementing effective countermeasures against Transnational Organized Crime (TOC) in Pakistan. To gather data for this study, purposive sampling will be used to select key participants who have direct experience with the issue of drug trafficking. The sample includes Government officials, Officers from various federal agencies and Businessmen from Karachi. This diverse group of participants will provide a comprehensive range of

perspectives from government, law enforcement, and the private sector. Thematic analysis will be carried out to find different factors that affect drug use and its extent in the country.

## 8 Discussion

### 8.1 Document analysis

As per the data available (till Aug 2024) of World meters and UNODC World Drug Reports of last

**Table 2: Population growth and drug use - Worldwide**

Year	Population (Million)	Drug Users (Million)	Percentage
1996	5700	180	3.15
2000	6170	185	2.99
2004	6503	201	3.09
2008	6844	203	2.96
2012	7201	246	3.41
2016	7559	275	3.63
2020	7887	284	3.60
2024 (till Aug)	8162	292	3.5

years, there was an estimation of 292 million people (of age range between 15-65 years) had used drugs globally. It is observed that with the increase in population, there is an increase in the number of people who use drugs which reflect the incapability of present measures against drug trafficking.

**Table 2: Population growth and drug use prevalence by type and Region**

Region	Drug Users (Million)						% of Population	% of Global Total
	Opioids	Cannabies	Amphetamine	Cocaine	others	Total		
Asia	25	64	21	4	19	133	4.3%	45.5%
Americas	13	38	6	14	-	71	5.6%	24.4%
Europe	8	24	5	4	3	44	5.2%	15%
Africa	6	21	2	3	6	38	3.4%	13%
Oceania	1	3	1	1	-	6	6.5%	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>292</b>	-	-

### 8.2 Financial Aspects of Drug Trafficking

The illicit drug trade offers significant financial benefits to traffickers and corrupt officials, though at a severe physical and financial cost to society. Drug traffickers capitalize on these lucrative markets, often paying off "black sheep" within law enforcement, customs, and government agencies to facilitate the sale of illegal drugs.

According to UNODC and UNDCP data, the vast majority of profits are generated during the distribution stage. Specifically, heroin traffickers acquire a staggering 90% of the total value, while farmers receive only 6%, opium traders 2%, and processors a mere 2%. This massive profit margin at the distribution level, combined with rising

drug prices, highlights the immense financial incentive driving the global drug trade.

According to the UNODC, over 40% of crimes in Pakistan are linked to drug use or abuse, leading to a rise in theft, robbery, and other offenses. A survey at District Jail Malir further highlights this connection, revealing that 92% of inmates suffer from substance abuse disorders and are incarcerated for drug-related offenses, including serious crimes like robbery, rape, and murder.

The age group between 15 and 35 is most affected, with drug use among the 15-25 age group contributing to high unemployment rates. This reflects, a country's most efficient workforce, is often deprived of better education and

productive activities, making them unable to secure good jobs. Their involvement in drugs and related crimes not only affects their personal well-

being but also proves detrimental to the nation's sustainable development.

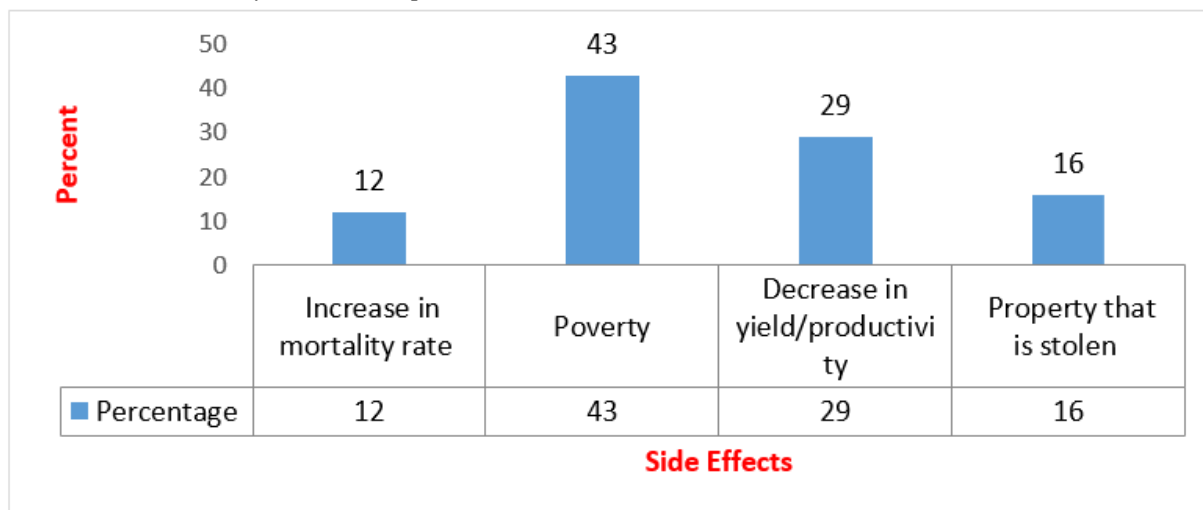


Figure 0: Side effects of drug trafficking

The past data helps in analysis how Peer pressure is a powerful risk factor for initiating drug use in Pakistan, with youths being the most vulnerable demographic due to their search for identity and need for peer acceptance. This is reflected in the finding that 48% of drug users began due to the influence of others.

Other key reasons for initiation include:

- 16% started to cope with personal difficulties.
- 14% started to deal with breakups/ marriage/ affairs
- 13% started for enjoyment or to get high.
- 4% used drugs for self-medication.
- 3% cited enhancement of sexual performance as a reason.

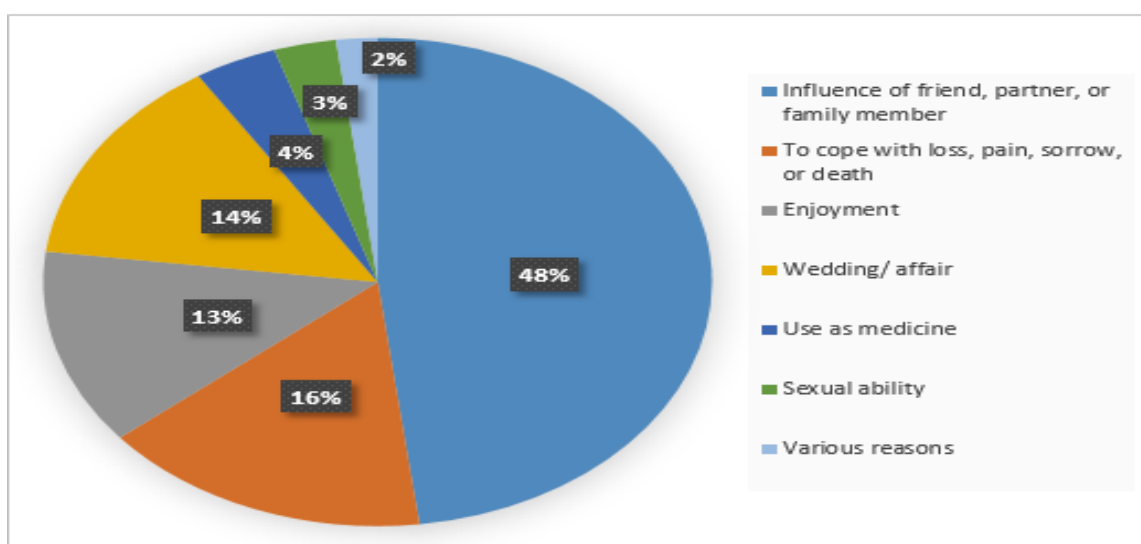


Figure 5: Percentage of reasons for drug use

This document analysis highlights that there are convincing evidences that drug use causes low

productivity. As per this study, almost 74.1 percent of men who had not used any drugs are



full time employees. On the other hand, around 40 percent of opiate users were found either unemployed, engage in casual work or remained

more absent from work (if permanently employed).

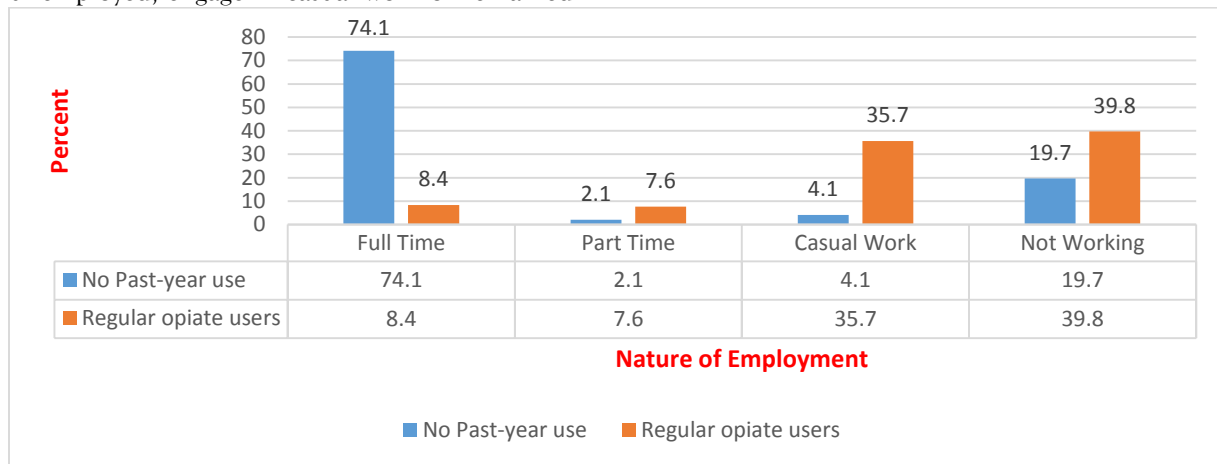


Figure 6: Employment status among drug users

### 8.3 Overview of Pakistan's Drug Problem

The analysis showed that Nine million people in Pakistan, or 3.6% of the total population, used cannabis in the past year, making it the country's most common drug. A majority of these users are employed, married men with a primary-level education or less, with the average user being 33 years old. The average age of first-time use is 21. The severity and frequency of use are high, with

roughly 25% of users admitting to daily consumption, putting them in the bracket of drug use disorder and dependence. Despite this, only 7% have ever sought treatment. Cannabis is often introduced by friends or family, particularly at social events like weddings. Charas is the most common form of cannabis for new users, with 89% of respondents saying it was their first drug.

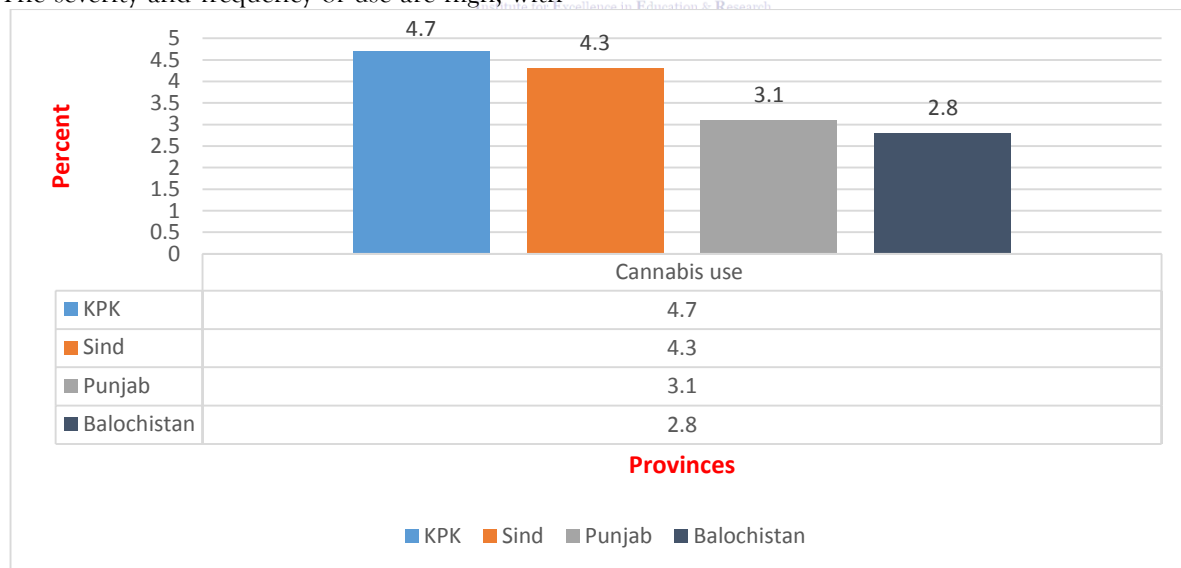


Figure 7: Annual prevalence of cannabis use in Pakistan

Two and a half million people, or 1% of the total population, used opiates in Pakistan. The majority of these users live in urban areas, with

80% using heroin and 33% using opium. The average age for opium users is 38.2 years, while heroin users average 33.8 years.

The data reveals a stark difference in living conditions between the two groups. While 60% of opium users have a home, only 40% of heroin

users do, with a majority of heroin users (60%) living in public spaces like shrines, parks, and on the streets.

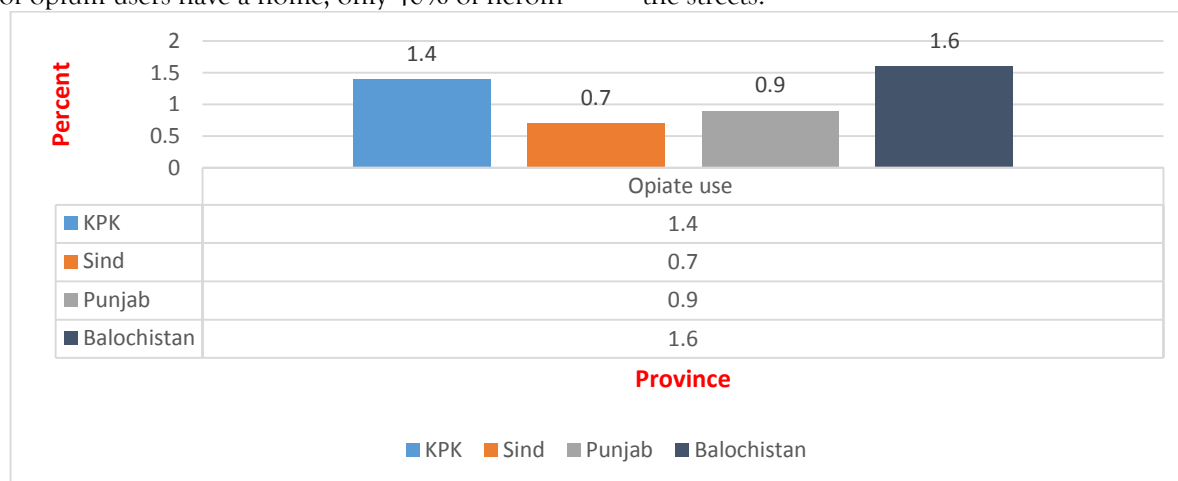


Figure 8: Annual prevalence use of opiate use in Pakistan

This study identifies an emerging pattern of stimulant use in Pakistan, with cocaine and Amphetamine-Type Stimulants (ATS) showing a rise in popularity, with usage rates of 0.01% and 0.08%, respectively. Methamphetamine, a form of ATS previously undetected, is now used by an estimated 19,000 people. While the number of stimulant users is currently low, misuse of these

drugs, including prescription amphetamines like Ritalin, can spread rapidly. This research highlights distinct user demographics: Prescription amphetamines are primarily used by moderately educated, married females up to the age of 36. Methamphetamines are mostly used by moderately educated males up to the age of 35.

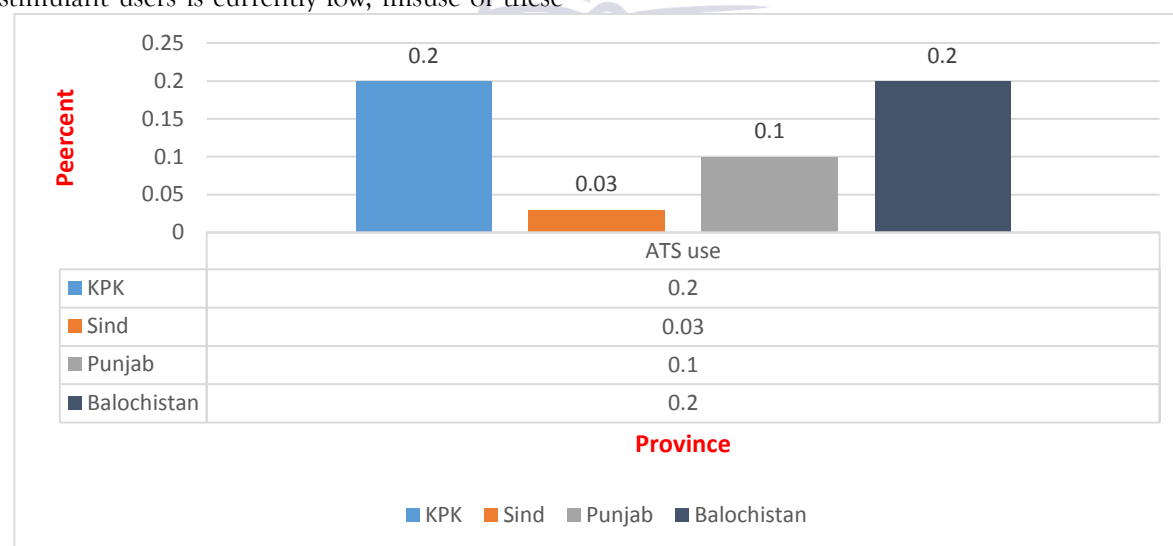


Figure 9: Annual prevalence use of ATS use in Pakistan

#### 8.4 Thematic Analysis

This section presents the thematic analysis of the qualitative data relevant to the research objective and question. The qualitative data based on interviews helped in generating codes resulted in

identification of primary themes. Employing thematic analysis, the researchers discerned two categories of challenges confronting Pakistan in its efforts to combat drug trafficking:

i. Structural Challenge.

ii. Transactional Challenges.

This section details the developed themes and sub-themes, accompanied by illustrative figure.

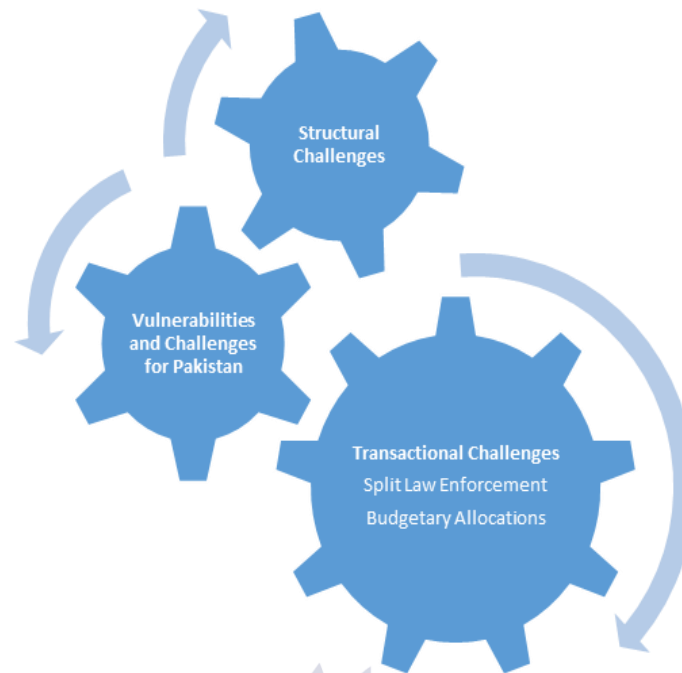


Figure 10: Thematic mapping of vulnerabilities and challenges

#### 8.4.1 Structural Challenges

In this thematic analysis the respondents put forward their views that the geographic location of Pakistan and proximity to World's largest opium producer (Afghanistan) with its ever progressing drug production constitutes structural challenge of Pakistan which cannot be addressed till establishment of peace in the region (in general) and in Afghanistan (in particular). Second important factor is Global demand of drugs. As long as there is a market for drugs, there will be cultivation, production, processing, smuggling, peddling, trafficking and consumption of drugs. Additionally, there is ironical paradox linked with drug trade; high interdiction leads to increased street value of drugs thereby adding more profits to drug traffickers. Drug traffickers uses this windfall to invest in new routes, means and ways to circumvent the law enforcement infrastructure. Structural challenges can only be overcome in long term.

#### 8.4.2 Transactional Challenges

Transactional challenges being faced by Pakistan with regards to drugs can further be divided into following subcategories: -

- i. Transit route problem.
- ii. Domestic drug use problem.

In order to prevent smuggling, paddling and trafficking of drugs, multiple Law Enforcement Agencies (LAEs) are present as part of well-established bigger infrastructure. Notwithstanding of available paraphernalia, precursor chemicals are still being spill over across the border from Pakistan and processed drugs smuggled back. Likewise, new types of drugs i.e. party drugs such as ecstasy pills are being trafficked from European and Gulf countries. These conditions represent transactional challenges and can be addressed in medium or even short term by plummeting the transit route flows along with strict scrutiny of domestic drug use problem. Transactional challenges can be further described through following factors: -

#### 8.4.2.1 Split Law Enforcement

There are eight government departments under different federal and provincial ministries responsible for drug interdiction. If reinstate and rehabilitation department also included, then number of these departments further increased. However, there is no platform or forum available for all these departments to coordinate, converse, develop, avoid duplication of effort or identified loopholes / shortcomings and develop coordinated response towards a common goal of curtailing or limiting smuggling of precursors and trafficking back of processed drugs to tackle Pakistan's drug transit problem. It is also highlighted that lower officials of police departments are found less equipped together with weak in knowledge in identifying party drugs and precursor chemical and thus represents a huge capacity gap.

#### 8.4.2.2 Budgetary Allocations

The responses highlighted that for fiscal year 2019-20, budgetary allocation of Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) for Narcotics Control Division is PKR 135.2 million. The allotted budget was also meant for five projects; three (in progress) infrastructure development projects of ANF (barracks and police stations) and two other similar projects. PKR 50 million is dedicated for establishment of one Model Addiction Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre (MATRC). It is clear that there is huge resource gap in dealing with the drug problem in Pakistan. In addition, human resource gap has not been accounted for here which is also immense as trained personnel in LEAs are very less to guard long porous borders/ and in comparison to people involved in drug peddling, trafficking and smugglers.

### 9 Conclusion and Way Forward to Deal with Pakistan's Drug Problem

Pakistan should adopt three pronged strategies in order to deal with drug problem. The three pronged strategy is appended below: -

#### 9.1 Address the Drug Transit Route Problem

Following measures may be adopted to address drug transit route problem: -

##### 9.1.1 Formation of a Regional Task Force (RTF)

In order to eradicate smuggling of precursor chemical from Pakistan to Afghanistan and trafficking of processed drugs (back) from Afghanistan to Pakistan, formulation of Regional Task Force (RTF) is suggested. The RTF may have mandate to carryout intelligence sharing, maintaining and scrutiny of data of licit precursor chemical import / production industry and keeping record of surplus chemical and other measures which deemed necessary to eliminate drug transit route problem of Pakistan. It is added that Control of Narcotics and Substances Act of Pakistan (CNSA 1997) allows Mutual Legal Assistance (MLAs) and Extradition Treaties with foreign countries. Same can be streamlined by formulating standing operation procedures for efficient working and progressive improvement.

##### 9.1.2 Utilization of International Consensus and Cooperation

Pakistan hosted a conference under the initiative of UNODC's Paris Pact in March 2005. International community unequivocally expressed support in capacity building of LEAs through assistance programs, intelligence sharing and cooperation in fighting against trafficking of acetic anhydride and processed drug across border. UNODC's Triangular Cooperation Initiative has a mandate of strengthening /enhancing border control /management between Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran. Upcoming ministerial conference is scheduled in 2025.

##### 9.1.3 Customs Cooperation

Custom cooperation is very important. There is a need to establish enhanced cooperation mechanism for better border management through cooperation of customs and other LEAs responsible of anti-smuggling.

#### **9.1.4 Work for Enhanced Coordination and Capacity Building of All LEAs**

Coordination and capacity of LEAs may be enhanced through following means: -

##### **9.1.4.1 Budget for Control of Drug Abuse**

Enhanced budgetary allocation for drug control is the need of time. A National Fund for control of drug has been established in which sale of forfeited property can be added according to Narcotics Substances Act 1997. This fund can be used to introduce “seizure reward” and “performance reward” for personnel of LEAs and establishment of more MATRCs. Presently, there are only 5 MATRCs in four provincial capitals and Sukkur.

##### **9.1.4.2 Capacity Building LEAs**

Capacity building of police department and LEAs responsible for anti-smuggling can be done through training, provision of latest detection equipment, and providing facilities for LEA's personnel employed at far flung and rugged border areas.

##### **9.1.4.3 Precursor Identification and Interdiction Courses**

A combine courses for precursor identification and interdiction may be organized for LEAs personnel by specialists of subject. Under CNS Act 1997, a police officer of the level of sub-inspector can act under the law for interdiction. The courses may be conducted for all officer of sub-inspector level.

##### **9.1.4.4 High Frequency Coordination**

Effective and frequent coordination among different departments of Inter Agency Task Force (Anti Narcotics Force (ANF), Pakistan Rangers, Pakistan Coast Guards, Customs, Frontier Corps, Police) will surely pay dividend in controlling drug trafficking. Coordination can be enhanced through regular meetings under a regulatory body consist of representatives of all LEAs / Policy Review Board (PRB) or the Narcotics Interdiction Committee (NIC) and Inter Agency Task Farce (IATF). NIC may be re-

energized with a mandate of asset freezing authority till finalization of inquiry of suspicious person and authority of asset forfeiture (after conviction). The Policy Review Board (PRB) may also take on the task to suggest measure for effective implementation of regulations related to drugs and psychotropic substances and reduction in drug demand.

##### **9.1.4.5 Raising a Dedicated Wing for Forfeiture of Assets Acquired from Drug Money**

The cumbersome and slow procedure in placed for forfeiture of assets acquired from drug money is serous shortcoming and need to be reassessed. It is suggested that a dedicated Wing be raised for forfeiture of assets acquired from drug money. Drug traffickers' data and their assets may be acquired with a view to probe the case of money laundering by same Wing instead of transferring the case to Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) or Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) or Inland Revenue (IR). Fast tracked realization of forfeited assets will generate significant deposits in the National Fund for the Control of Drug Abuse established under the Control of Narcotics Substances CNS Act 1997. Process of utilizing this fund is unwieldy and need to be revised for speedy liquidation of assets acquired illicitly from drug trafficking.

#### **9.2 Address Domestic Drug Use Problem**

Following measures may be adopted to address domestic drug use problem: -

##### **9.2.1 Awareness Programs**

Raising awareness should be a continuous exercise. Awareness seminars in educational campuses be organized and youths be encouraged to form part of drug curbing campaign instead of becoming a vulnerable sector of society or victim of drug menace. Campuses administrations be made bound to maintain regular interaction with police and other related LEAs on the issue of drug use or substance abuse in campuses.

##### **9.2.2 MATRCs**

Scope of MATRCs be expanded on two fronts. Prevention /awareness at the first stage, whereas treatment /rehabilitation on the second stage.



Targeted programs for awareness and prevention be launched on campus (school, college, universities), communities, health promotion activities, Most at Risk Adolescents (MARA) and programs for street children. Treatment and rehabilitation programs should be capable to deal with the drug dependent persons, particularly those with co-morbidities such as HIV, HCV, TB and STDs. The tasks of awareness, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation be entrusted on MATRCs and surely need capacity building.

### 9.2.3 The Public Sector Development Program

Ministry of Interior and Narcotics Control should include projects of raising awareness against drug abuse in PSDP. It is imperative to engage as many sectors of society as possible to join hands in cause of eradicating drug abuse from society. A dedicated awareness campaigns including seminars, print and media advertisements, mobile text messages along with utilization of social media for the cause on quarterly basis will pay dividends.

## 10 Summary

The movement of illegal narcotics across borders is referred to as "transnational drug trafficking". When researcher examines TOC, they are to be reminiscent of all illicit cross-border activities. It provides the opportunity of macro-level investigation of all facets of TOC and employ cross-sectional survey instead of longitudinal analysis. Similar points are made by Paoli et al. (2009) and Zaitch (2002). It also supports the notion that the majority of actors involve in illicit cross border activities does not stick to one particular product rather found involve in many illicit businesses containing transnational move of goods, drugs, currency, wildlife, people or even human organs. The knowledge of hidden routes for crossing porous Pakistan-Afghanistan and Pakistan-Iran borders and links with border management authorities are being utilized by these actors to its fullest for monetary benefits. Illegal drugs are manufactured in the same manner as of any other commodity: raw ingredients like coca, marijuana leaf, poppies, and then processing these to transform into

finished, consumable items that may be sold to consumers. There are numerous processes in this industrial chain, including planting, processing, transportation, and distribution (Finckenauer and Chin, 2006). Each of these procedures clearly adds value to the product and generates revenue for the organization. Having a monopoly on the production of raw material, processing and distribution of consumable drugs provides a country with a strategic advantage over competitors (countries). Periphery countries can also gain a lot of money from the high demand of drugs globally, as is typically the case with rare or expensive items (e.g. diamonds). Same phenomenon is exactly replicate with Afghanistan (producer) and Pakistan (periphery country) in case of drugs instead of diamond. Economic studies of the trafficking sector have revealed that the people who work in industrial chain are intrinsically unequal. Each person in the upper and medium levels of the drug trade makes a lot of money, but the majority of the accounting gains are distributed among several low-level sellers. The bulk of the money is generated by importation and resale of illicit drugs (Reuter & Greenfield, 2001). According to Peter Reuter and his colleagues, the costs of producing cocaine are actually nothing when compared to the price of cocaine in the United States (Caulkins & Reuter, 2010). These findings imply that money is being transported between countries of origin, transit and destination during transnational drug trafficking. In general, drug trafficking has both positive and negative economic consequences. The opportunity to invest, the flow of money, and the creation of jobs are just a few of the many advantages of the pharmaceutical sector. According to this study, the pharmaceutical business generates around \$3.5 billion in cash flows and investments every year and employs 499,000 people in Pakistan. Drug trafficking, on the other side, harms the economy by encouraging greater drug use, crime, and bribery in the society as experienced in border areas of Pakistan specially formerly FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas) and Panjgur/ Makran divisions of Balochistan. Drug usage is predicted to cost \$0.88 billion to Pakistan per year whereas violence is estimated to cost

\$2.07 billion, investment losses are estimated to cost \$1.9 billion, and other expenses including additional expenditure in counter smuggling measures and health care sector etc. calculated to around \$1.80 billion. When all of these expenses are considered, it is apparent that the illegal drug trade harms the economies negatively. Even while the drug trade as a whole is terrible for the economy, it is crucial to realize that the money generated by it is assisting some impoverished and undeveloped communities in climbing out of a rut. In fact, biggest social problems of any society, like illiteracy, unemployment, violence, deteriorate law and order situation, are directly linked with ratio of drug abuse in a country. The drug epidemic in Pakistan has become a major concern to human safety since the fall of the Soviet Union, due to raise in both drug trafficking and drug consumption. This risk has an impact on six of the seven most often used indicators of human safety. Pakistan's drug problem jeopardizes the country's economic, political, social, personal, health, and environmental stability. Economic growth, better community structures, and stricter enforcement of drug trafficking laws can all help to reduce the extent of the problem. If things continue as they are, the area's stability and the safety of its residents will suffer (Hignett, 2021).

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