

HISTORY OF OPIUM CULTIVATION IN PAKISTAN: SOCIO-ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE AND POLITICS OF OPIUM ERADICATION

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ABSTRACT: *Opium poppy is contemplating a cash crop across the globe, which is cultivated in almost every region of the world and also in many areas of Pakistan, especially in Baluchistan, Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA) and Khyber Pukhtunkhwa (KP). In the heydays of Soviet-Afghan war the cultivation of opium as a cash crop was initiated in Pakistani areas adjacent to that of Afghanistan. In the 1980s the opium poppy was grown in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Federally administered tribal areas (FATA), Kohistan, and Kala Dhaka and even in Punjab and in Baluchistan. The covert operation in Afghanistan against Soviet led by the CIA has converted the Borderland of Pakistan and Afghanistan into the world top illicit drug producer. The region supplied 60 percent of United States heroin demand. A shadow economy of opium was developed in the country and Pakistan became a major opium producer. The U.S drug enforcement agency (DEA) identified 40 major illicit drug dealer syndicates. The capabilities of the local population are deprived by the opium ban in opium growing areas of Pakistan to meet their traditional socioeconomic needs.*

Keywords: opium, opium eradication, alternative development, narcotics, opium reduction

Opium poppy is contemplating a cash crop across the globe, which is cultivated in almost every region of the world and also in many areas of Pakistan, especially in Baluchistan, Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA) and Khyber Pukhtunkhwa (KP). As far as KP is concerned, poppy crop was cultivated mostly in Malakand division and some part of Mardan, Swabi and Hazara division. Since, the opium poppy cultivation has become the major livelihood of the people of the Gadoon-Amazai mountainous region. The region is harsh, isolated with a meager soil hence it is ideal for opium poppy cultivation. Due to these factors and a very few other economic activity the Gadoon-Amazai become a major producer of opium and led Pakistan to become a major supplier of illicit drugs to the world narcotic trade.

Due to international and internal pressure, Pakistan is grappling to solve the opium production problem with different strategies, but actually it is the opium farmers only whose livelihood at stake and their socio-economic needs are not fully considering in finding solutions. Therefore, the objective of this research is to study the socioeconomic and political impacts of opium eradication and alternative development in Pakistan through an analysis of the link between opium production and local economy.

Pakistan has been trying to solve the opium production problem with different methods and policies. However, it is the opium farmers who have to lacerate their livelihood in the end, as their social and economic needs are not fully taken into consideration in finding solutions. Therefore, this research aims to study the socioeconomic and political impacts of opium reduction and alternative development in Pakistan through a study of the relationship between opium Production and the local economy.

The research examined the impacts of international Development assistance. What are the impacts of development project activities on the livelihood of former opium farmers? How much income they generated from alternative livelihood activities? It is over an investigation of these questions that this research will draw some conclusions and make policy recommendations for Pakistan to combat opium production.

HISTORY OF OPIUM IN INDO-PAK SUB-CONTINENT

The use of Opium in India is referred in the ancient Vedas, but according to some scholars opium was introduced to India in the ninth century by Arab traders [1]. The opium was used as a relaxing agent, tonic, and joyful in India before any other major society. It was used not only as a household medicine, but also for military purpose to impart courage of the soldiers, and as an indulgence of kings [2]. In 1563, Garcia d'Orta, a doctor who traveled to India in 1554, wrote that "Although in India the people take it in small quantity; it is a sell in great demand everywhere" [3]. In some regions of India, especially in Rajputana, the visitors were customarily greeted as to "Take your opiate." The opium was also shared to make a contract binding and the legal documents and contracts were stamped with the inscription "Take a draught of opium" [4]. However, the small doses of opium resulted in chronic intake.

The opium was used in social and religious customs of some castes in India. For instance, on the occasions of marriage or death the opium was an indulgence and also sealing an agreement. Also, some religious sects for freeing their mind from worldly attractions used various drugs and opiates [5]. For the same very purpose the opium was widely cultivated in India for at least one thousand years and opium use was usually not considered as a substantial social problem even during British era.

From about the thirteenth century the opium use began during the Muslims rule in northern India. And the opium was used as traditional medicine and aurevedic in local celebrations and ceremonies. Legal supply was limited to formulae suitable for eating relatively than smoking [6]. There were irregular bans, however, Allauddin Khilji imposed a complete ban on the city of Delhi in 1310 [7].

In 1526, when the Moghul rule began in India the opium was sold to China and other countries of East Asia hence the opium became an important commodity of trade. The sale of opium and poppy cultivation became state monopolies in the Moghul Empire [8]. Poppy cultivation and opium production became a regular source of income for the state during the

reign of the Moghul emperor Jalal Uddin Akbar (1556-1605), [9].

After the death of Moghul emperor Aurangzeb (1658-1707) the empire in India became crippled, and the hegemony of Moghul empire was challenged by Aurangzeb's own heirs, Marathas, French and British imperialists. The merchants in Patna took control of the opium trade [10]. In 1557, the British established their rule in India and the opium monopolistic trade was passed into the hands of the British East India Company, by the verdict of General Warren Hastings the first British Governor General of India. And the British companies became the major traders of opium for foreign trade. The British tried to popularize the use of opium to increase revenue and established controls over poppy cultivation and production all over India.

The sovereignty of the East India Company was directly transferred to the British Crown in 1858 by the "Act for the Better Government of India". The opium system was the largest source of income for the Indian treasury after land and salt [11]. The government was always aimed to regulate provisions to expand the poppy cultivation to gain the largest net income from the opium.

The British Crown chartered with merchant companies in order to trade opium. The opium grown in India was shipped to china by these companies, where it was exchanged for silk and silver. Opium was exported to the United States of America (USA) where it was used in medicine. Until the twentieth century the policies about opium in India were regulated by Britain's overall trade and to safeguard their imperial interests. After 1900, in the British and later independent Indian sub-continent, the opium policy was affected due to reduce in international trade of opium from the several countries. For example, when in 1937, the Indian National Congress Party came to power in some provinces; the party took anti-opium actions by prohibiting opium use locally. After the World War II, due to international pressure, the British Government in Indo-Pak Sub-continent banned the smoking of opium in 1946.

HISTORY OF OPIUM CULTIVATION IN PAKISTAN

Opium was used by members of all levels of British society from royal family to the urban poor for its medicinal use, as for treating diarrhea and was also a cough suppressant from the 9th century A.D., however the British attitude changed towards drugs and especially opium and there emerged a difference between legitimate medical use and illegitimate nonmedical use of many drugs, as mentioned by the Michel Foucault as "medicalization of the society" [12].

The history of Pakistan before the partition is mainly that of India. Opium became a key source of the colonial power in India in the middle of the 19th century and most of the opium sold in Indo-China was shipped from India and Burma [13]. Statistics for opium cultivation and production in Pakistan are enormously tenuous because of the lack of information on illegal production. In 1971, Pakistan licit production was reported at 12 tons per year and in 1989 the production was increased to 800 metric tons. In this era the United States Drug Enforcement Administration identified forty drug syndicates operated in Pakistan. Most of the poppy cultivation occurs in the remote mountainous tribal areas which are not accessed by law enforcement [14].

In the heydays of Soviet-Afghan war the cultivation of opium as a cash crop was initiated in Pakistani areas adjacent to that of Afghanistan. In the 1980s the opium poppy was grown in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, federally administrated tribal areas (FATA), Kohistan, and Kala Dhaka and even in Punjab and in Baluchistan [15].

THE ECONOMY OF OPIUM IN PAKISTAN AND OPIUM TRADE

The southwest Asia opium trade has a long history and according to White house, the southwestern Asia generated an estimated of 60 percent of the world heroin and opium derivatives [16]. Since 1970s onwards it is the fact that, approximately a million addicts in Iran provided a local market for opium and its products; well organized crime syndicate provided organizational expertise to move opium from the fields to the markets. The countries of Southwest Asia formed a market system and most of the opium and its derivatives produced in the border region of Pakistan and Afghanistan was smuggled to Iran [17].

After the fall of Shah Government 1979 the new theocratic government introduced a strict anti-opium policy not only on the consumers but also targeted the opium farmers. The sudden decline in production in Iran is one of the reasons for the increase in opium cultivation in Afghanistan and Pakistan during the Afghan- Soviet war [18]. The increase in opium production in Southwest Asia was also connected to the emergence of the new European and American markets after the Iranian ban on opium. The region was then named the "Golden Crescent" [19].

The political chaos in the country in 1979 and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan has damaged most forms of agriculture in Afghanistan, which has prompted a steady increase of opium production in the countries. Before the Afghan-Soviet war, opium production in Pakistan and Afghanistan was limited to smaller local and regional markets. The covert operation in Afghanistan against Soviet led by the CIA has converted the Borderland of Pakistan and Afghanistan into the world top illicit drug producer. The region supplied 60 percent of United States heroin demand [20].

The opium trade contributed to growing economic instability and generated money for almost everyone in the area, although in much unequal amount which has crippled the already fragile economy of the country. The poppies grew by the farmers earn a minimum amount of money after months of work in the fields. But the traders who bought opium from the farmers earned enough money. Money from the illicit drug trade has encouraged corruption in the government sectors. In 2004 a report published by Transparency International (TI) mentioned that, law enforcement personnel and members of judiciary established working partnership with illicit drug dealers as well as other criminal organizations. These effects of the illicit drug trade have an adverse impact on the overall domestic viability of the country and undermining both legitimate trade enterprise and state development [21].

OPIUM AND THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Since 1625 A.D. opium has ruled the region now called Pakistan and Afghanistan. The opium criminal trade began with the arrival of the British in India (later Pakistan) in 1868

A.D and which is continued to this day. This opium trade support multi-billion dollar trade in terms of goods which are smuggled from other countries to Pakistan. This criminalized economy weakened state and legal economy of the country [22].

In 1979, the processing industry was developed in Pakistan, which process raw opium into heroin [23]. During the 1980s the heroin production was about 800 metric tons per year and Pakistan was supplying 70 percent of the world's heroin and this contributes \$8 billion annually to the national economy [24].

A shadow economy of opium was developed in the country and Pakistan became a major opium producer. The U.S drug enforcement agency (DEA) identified 40 major illicit drug dealer syndicates [25].

THE POLITICS OF OPIUM REDUCTION IN PAKISTAN

Probably, as long as seventeenth century the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb (ruled 1658-1707) despised and banned the opium from court [26]. When the British conquered the rest of India in 1857 and in 1858 the "Act for the Better Government of India" transferred authority from the East India Company directly to the Crown, they replaced the royal prohibition of opium with the British Indian Opium Act of 1878. Then, the opium was legally produced and traded all over in the Indian Subcontinent.

THE BRITISH COLONIAL PERIOD

Although opium use was allowed in the British Indian Subcontinent, after 1900, a worldwide movement was evolving that opposed the use of opium. Several nations sought to reduce the opium trade and this led to the Shanghai International Opium Conference in 1909, and called for the suppression of nonmedical uses of opium, but the British opposes the plan fearing the loss of its valuable opium trade [27]. The signatories of the Shanghai International Opium Conference were not satisfied, because this agreement did not induce amenability by the participants, the anti-opium movement continued until a truce was reached to hold the Hague Opium Convention of 1912. Here, the signatories, such as Great Britain (including British India), agreed to approve the Shanghai resolutions and to control the production and distribution of raw opium by national legislation, and suppress international narcotics trade [28].

The Indian National Congress Party has taken anti-opium actions which came to power in some provinces in 1937. The Congress Party instigated ban on opium use locally, and plans were prepared to lead total ban gradually throughout all of India. In 1938, Congress came to power in Assam and put the recommendations of the Assam Provincial Committee to the State government by which the sale and consumption of opium were stopped in the three districts of the state. After World War II, due to international pressure the British Government of India in 1946 prohibited the smoking of opium [29].

POST PARTITION

Pakistan from the beginning was head on to tackle the opium problem. In 1957 Pakistan passed "The opium (West Pakistan Amendment) Act, which prohibit the smoking of opium and certain penalties, was also introduced for the possession of illicit drugs. The 1957 Act was only for the whole of the

province of West Pakistan and not extended to the Tribal areas [30]. Thus, opium was produced and poppies were cultivated in the Tribal areas. Pakistan Narcotics Board (PNB) established in 1957. PNB was responsible for fulfilling Pakistan's duties under the International Opium Convention of 1925, held in Geneva, which prohibited the sale, trading and production of the illicit drugs [31].

According to Single convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961, the primary objective of the Convention were to limit the production, trade (import and export), distribution, use and possession of drugs completely for scientific and medical purposes and to discourage drug trafficking through international cooperation [32]. Pakistan ratified the UN Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs 1961, in 1965 [33]. Pakistan has specific reservations on the production of marijuana and permitted its non-medical use [34].

Despite the reservations with the United Nations, Pakistan has taken some anti-narcotics actions in the 1960's and introduces the laws of prohibition. Pakistan passed "The West Pakistan Prohibition of Opium Smoking Ordinance in 1960 which was extended to the whole of the country and under the ordinance government pursues the following activities:

1. Prohibition of opium smoking.
2. Offenses and punishment for opium's smokers.
3. The penalty for using a place for opium smoking.
4. Destruction of opium and things seizes by the

order of the magistrate [35].

In accordance with the article 17 of the Single Convention, The government of Pakistan (GOP) passed the resolution on 8th march, 1973 and renamed PNB as the Pakistan Narcotics Control Board (PNCB); and the responsibilities and function of the agency were increased. The operations of PNCB were organized immediately and ensured representation from Health division, Finance division, the States, the frontier region, Planning division and members from each of the four provinces. The PNCB is responsible for control of drug abuse and to prevent the non-medical use of drugs in the country. The PNCB has also started development in the area where opium poppies were grown with the aim of income substitution for freeing people from dependence on opium [36].

In April 1989, Narcotics Control Division (NCD) was set up and the Anti-Narcotics Task Force and PNCB are the law enforcement agencies of the NCD [37]. ANTF and PNCB were merged together to establish Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) and was affirmed as an attached department of Narcotics Control division in 1995 [38]. ANF played a major role in controlling the supply and production of drugs, eradication of poppy crop and to ensure that no heroin laboratory becomes functional in the country. In 2013 the NCD became the division of the Ministry of Interior and Narcotics Control.

The major factor which pressed the Pakistani government to take actions against opium production in 1979 was the dramatically increased in the illicit opium production of Southwest Asia which reached a total of 1600 metric tons. In 1979, Pakistan produced 800 metric tons of illicit opium, making it world largest opium producer. Another factor influencing government to fight opium production was the

spreading of heroin. Due to these factors Pakistan introduced the Prohibition (Enforcement of Hadd) ordinance¹ in 1979, prohibiting all exports, imports, processing and possession of opium [39].

Heroin, the more refined and much more lucrative and addictive than opium, had become popular in the country. The heroin flooded in the society and according to the Pakistan Narcotics Control Board (PNCB) there were 1.2 million addicts in 1989 [40]. In 1980 the local farmers and tribesman of Pakistan began to grow large quantities of opium poppies which were then turned into heroin. Until 1988 Pakistan had become the world's largest heroin producer and the country opium crop was approximately 200 metric tons [41].

The flow of heroin transformed Pakistan into a Narco-state. The drug money was dominating the politics of the country. In 1989, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto lost power in a no-confidence moment and she charged that drug dealers had spent rupees 194 million to buy the vote of the members of the parliament [42]. By the mid-1980s, the export of heroin reached to \$8 billion and created a black market in the Pakistan. The number of heroin addicts in the country had risen from 1.2 to 1.7 million. The European market was dominated by the Pakistan-Afghan opium and supplied 60 percent of America illicit drug demand as well [43].

From 1979 to 1993 heroin from Pakistan dominated the US market, the public became alarmed and the US authorities started taking action against the drug problem. The US started war against illicit drug under President Nixon policy of "total war" on drugs in and the heroin was the prime target. The US Drug law Enforcement Agency (DEA) magnificently destroyed much of the smuggling and trafficking operations of Pakistan heroin syndicates in the USA [44].

To reduce the flow of drugs to the United States, The US Department of State provided anti-narcotics assistance to Pakistan, under the foreign Assistance Act of 1961. The office of the US drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) was set up in Islamabad, to supports development of Pakistani law enforcement agencies and work with them to destroy the drug trafficking syndicates. From 1990 to 1996 the US has provided \$24.35 million to Pakistan for the development of law enforcement institutions, eradication of opium crops and reduction of Pakistani demand. In fiscal year of 1997 the State Department provided \$2.5 million for administrative support and control illicit crop. The US supported Pakistani efforts by providing road construction, Vehicles, communication gear and crop substitution. The demand reduction project initiated by Pakistan that has a goal of reducing the country's population of 1.5 million heroin addicts was also supported by the US, and started projects with the ANF to increase public awareness about the danger of abusing heroin. These efforts decreased the Pakistani opium production to 140 metric ton level according to the DEA in 1996 [45].

¹Promulgation of the Prohibition Enforcement of Hadd Order is law relating to prohibition of intoxicants so as to bring it in conformity with the Injunctions of Islam as set out in The Holy Quran and Sunnah.

The measure taken by the government of Pakistan to eradicate the illicit crop and provide alternative livelihoods with the cooperation of the international community; The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) declared Pakistan a poppy free country in 2012 [46].

SOCIOECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE OF OPIUM

Opium plays a multi-functional role in rural livelihood, providing credit, access to land and an important source of income to households to satisfy their basic needs with insufficient land. Although the crop needs more care and weeding than any other, once the sap has been collected it preserves for a long time, is easy to stock and makes a good price on a guaranteed market. The opium has a higher price per weight than anything else cultivated on earth, even as it is noted that the byproducts of opium poppy have a high use-value. As opium farmers generally claim, "opium doesn't go looking for money, money comes looking for opium" [47]. Opium and illicit drugs are used as cash in boarder areas of Pakistan. Traders, farmers and ordinary people keep opium and illicit drugs in their homes rather than money in the bank. They go to the market and sell their assets and buy basic needs of daily life to realize cash, just as people in the West sell shares. The socioeconomic aspects of opium cannot be ignored [48].

The villagers in the remote highland areas relied on opium to cure most of their sicknesses. Because the opium has a medicinal value such as analgesic, cough suppressant, and for treating diarrhea, opium had been the main traditional medicine of the people of the region. In Swabi region, opium farmers got income from opium to buy the access to the modern health care service; they also send their children to schools. The capabilities of the local population are deprived by the opium ban in opium growing areas of Pakistan to meet their traditional socioeconomic needs.

An assessment of the Gadoon-Amazai region after the opium ban found that 40 percent of adult people out of the original population had left the area for seeking jobs in the other cities of the country [49].

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The cultivation of opium is a global problem which is obviously beyond the ability and capability of the GOP or the local KP government to resolve. It is not the kind of problem that a single nation will face on their, its collective problem. It is a worldwide phenomenon which may solely be combated by international efforts.

It is difficult and impractical for the Pakistani government or the local KP authority to deal with the opium problem alone from its own limited resources in the interest of the global community. In the international perspective in that the opium problem should be viewed Pakistan as a victim rather than a cause. Therefore, international technical and financial assistance is essential to the efforts to search out a sustainable solution to the problem of opium production in the Pakistan.

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