

Use of Narcotics in Pakistan: Situation Analysis and Way Forward

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The use of narcotics in Pakistan is mainly looked at as if it is something isolated from the political games that are played at regional and global levels. This research is partially an attempt to explain why this could not be the case. It looks at the connections between regional and global divisions of power relationships to set stage for understanding the flaws in our conception of the menace of drugs and their proliferation in our society at certain moments in our history. The role of shadow economy in this context has also remained under researched. This paper attempted to address these gaps in knowledge that mislead, misdirect our understanding and conception of drugs and their use, as well as affecting our effectively reacting to these social problematics. The conclusions drawn are the way forward for our policy making apparatuses. Pakistan is signatory to a number of bilateral and multilateral pacts and treaties on narcotics control. It also has vibrant national anti-narcotics and illicit drugs prevention policies and various task forces to deal with the menace of use and abuse of banned substances like National Anti-Narcotics Council (NANC), Ministry of Narcotics Control, Inter-Agency Task Force, Anti-Narcotics Force, National Anti-Narcotics Policy. Despite all these efforts, use and abuse of drugs is on the rise. In the present international scenario, especially the FATF related policies, international pressure and procedures, use of narcotics is no longer an isolated incident but rather part of a very huge ensemble of problems for Pakistan to deal with. Legally, there are no barriers to going after the complete eradication of the narcotics in Pakistan. In other words, the problem is not having the required legal and administrative cover to prevent the use, sale, and import of narcotics in Pakistan. There is plenty of cover available to drug enforcement agencies but still the menace of drug control is on the rise. This gives rise to many problematics. Why is it the case that with so much international cooperation the menace of illicit drugs is on the rise? Could this be the result of what international relations theorists refer to as “the shadow economy” which fuels this massive inflow of drugs, appropriately labelled as “Afghan opiates,” in Pakistan? What are the bottlenecks that prevent implementation of narcotics control policies? Are there other factors that hamper effective implementation of avowed national commitment against the use and abuse of narcotics in Pakistan? Is shadow economy, that the world has failed to harness, something that Pakistan can tackle with its limited resources? Or are there any capacity issues and double-dealings that leave the strongly worded national commitment against banned substances in the lurch? Answers to these pressing questions have been sought in this paper .

Keywords: illicit Drugs, Narcotics Control, Shadow Economy, WOT

Use of narcotics in Pakistan is not an isolated issue. It is the symptom of a deep laying malaise that is at the very core of the way the world has been made to operate. It is also known as the shadow economy, an acronym for how the third world has remained an uninsured corner of the insured world (Duffield, 2007). It would be naive to think that the use of narcotics could be overcome without taking the happenings at the regional and global level into proper account. This paper has, therefore, adopted an interdisciplinary

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perspective to be able to create a realistic, the term is loaded, understanding of the situation and to move forward with the newfound understanding.

Pakistan has a truckload of agencies that are supposed to implement national and international, bilateral and multilateral agreements on the use of narcotics and other class-A drugs. There is a full-fledged national policy titled The National Anti-Narcotics Policy 2019 in place that testifies to the State's commitment to tackle this menace. But argued in this paper is that this understanding of the menace is not indigenous but imported lock, stock, and barrel from the west. That is where the gap in our understanding lies. It is to this gap that this paper attends. Narcotics, therefore suffer from many definitions and depends where you stand on the human divide to decide on the matter. This paper analyses the current situation as it exists at many levels and looks at the road ahead.

The paper has been divided into three sections. Section 1 details the gaps and contradictions that intersperse existing literature on the menace of drug use in Pakistan. Section 2 takes stock of the present policies of the government and all other concerned agencies in perspective of their efforts to curb the flow of drugs through our youth and society. Section 3 reflects on what can be salvaged from deconstruction of the existing mindset on drugs, their use and abuse, for a better - more cautious way forward.

Literature Review

If the argument in contemporary philosophy is anything to go by, which holds that everything is text i.e. constructed from a specific perspective (Hendricks 2016), then the best foray in our review of the literature on drugs are a few Hollywood movies *Jack Reacher* (2009) and *American Made* (2017) by their mainstream actors who implicate the American deep state to be involved in what came to be famously called the Iran-Contra scandal the world over. This thread of the argument leads us to a position where we cannot only make our analysis of the current situation of drugs in Pakistan but can also refine our understanding of the future course of action.

Significance and Scope of the Study

Pakistan has lost one of its most brilliant first generation to the menace of drugs abuse. Pakistan was quite young when it entered the Cold War from its Western dimension. The significance of the study derives from its ability to use interdisciplinary approach to highlight the hindrances in Pakistan's way that are far graver than the limitations of its human and financial resources. It is this dimension of proliferation of drugs which is not highlighted in its proper ideological setting. This is the significance of this study as well as its scope because it addresses a very neglected aspect of the work and literature on the use of narcotics in Pakistan that eventually lead to flawed inferences among our policy makers.

Statement of Problem

Pakistan is signatory to a number of bilateral and multilateral pacts and treaties on narcotics control. It also has vibrant national anti-narcotics and illicit drugs prevention policies and various task forces to deal with the menace of use and abuse of banned substances like National Anti-Narcotics Council (NANC), Ministry of Narcotics Control, Inter-Agency Task Force, Anti-Narcotics Force, National Anti-Narcotics Policy. Despite

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all these efforts, use and abuse of drugs is on the rise. In the present international scenario, especially the FATF related policies, international pressure and procedures, use of narcotics is no longer an isolated incident but rather part of a very huge ensemble of problems for Pakistan to deal with. Legally, there are no barriers to going after the complete eradication of the narcotics in Pakistan. In other words, the problem is not having the required legal and administrative cover to prevent the use, sale, and import of narcotics in Pakistan. There is plenty of cover available to drug enforcement agencies but still the menace of drug control is on the rise. This gives rise to many problematics. Why is it the case that with so much international cooperation, the menace of illicit drugs is on the rise? Could this be the result of what international relations theorists refer to as “the shadow economy” which fuels this massive inflow of drugs, appropriately labelled as “Afghan opiates,” in Pakistan? What are the bottlenecks that prevent implementation of narcotics control policies? Are there other factors that hamper effective implementation of avowed national commitment against the use and abuse of narcotics in Pakistan? Is shadow economy, that the world has failed to harness, something that Pakistan can tackle with its limited resources? Or are there any capacity issues and double-dealings that leave the strongly worded national commitment against banned substances in the lurch?

Method

Qualitative, interpretive, deconstructive and interdisciplinary approach has been adopted to bring out the nuances of the topic at hand. It is mainly based on primary sources that are collected from the concerned ministries and other government agencies like the ANF. For adding global and regional dimensions to the study, an eclectic use of social, cultural, and critical theorists has been sought because the topic at hand demands an engagement from a theoretical perspective that Pakistan does not have. Therefore, international relation theorists come together with philosophers in the social sciences to help us make sense of the prevalent conditions and policies geared towards countering the spread of narcotics in Pakistan.

Deconstruction remains the main methodological tool that assists the theoretical framework i.e., social, cultural, and critical theories. This research method complements that main thrust of line of argument pursued in this paper. Both are extremely sensitive to the loss in translation of many aspects of the research and debate on the use of drugs in Pakistan.

Illicit Drugs: Their Classification

Pakistan is a signatory to three international conventions on drugs control like “the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 as amended by the 1972 Protocol, the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971, and the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988” (National Anti-Narcotics Policy, 2019). Anti-Narcotics Force or ANF is responsible for spearheading this fight against the use, sale, and cultivation of narcotics in Pakistan in partnership with provincial anti-narcotics forces. Narcotics or illicit drugs refer to a phenomenon that includes too many things all at the same time. In order to understand different classification of Class A and B drugs, Figure 1 details different classification of these controlled drugs:

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A Class Drugs/Narcotics	B Class Drugs/Narcotics
Heroin	Alcohol
LSD Tablets	Opium
Cocaine/Crack	Cannabis
Cristal Ice	Paan
Hashes	Bangh
Ecstasy Tablets	Cigarette – E Cigarette
Injections	Naswar
	Sedative Tablets/Syrups
	Painkillers
	Solvents
	Different Chemical Types
	Gutka

Courtesy: Changing Trend - Use of Narcotics in City of Lahore, Drug Advisory Training Hub (DATH) & Youth Council for Anti-Narcotics (YOCFAN) 2018)

Establishing the Phenomenon

According to ANF, the factors responsible for the increase in abuse of drugs are “Increased availability of drugs at low prices”; “rapidly changing social norms;” scarcity of financial security, joblessness, awareness about drugs and the consequences of their abuse, and lack of political will to deal with the problem. These are some of the main factors that ANF has identified to be responsible for the large-scale drug abuse situation in Pakistan. What this lack evidences, is a total want of an holistic perspective that takes into account the greater international political and economic “ventures” (rhymes with adventure), that are unfolding by the minute (National Anti-Narcotics Policy, 2019). As Mir, the great Urdu poet, has put it succinctly, that *Mir is such a fool that he is asking for medicine from the same doctor’s son who got him ill in the first place.*

What is immediately obvious is absence of any references to regional situation as a possible factor in the increase of drugs in our society. This omission is not unintentional. It is premised upon a certain understanding of the role of playing second fiddle to an international effort, mainly American, as well as on the Houdini act which makes all references, all allusions to factors that are far more sinister than meets the eye in our reports and policies on narcotics control, disappear in thin air. The nexus between corruption, shadow economy and narcotics is undeniable. It is this nexus which Pakistani scholars have read from an America perspective lacking a clear view of dynamics of realpolitiking in the region, especially in the Af-Pak region. For instance, in their article, *International Security Assistance Force Drawdown from Afghanistan: Challenges and Opportunities* (2015), Shah and Ayaz continue to look upon the presence of American and NATO forces in Afghanistan from a position that makes them the ‘good guys’ whose presence ensures a drug free Pakistan which is under threat once Taliban sweep into power:

While sympathizers of jihadi cause can find happiness in this eventuality [i.e., the withdrawal of US and NATO from Afghanistan] it should not be forgotten that state failure in Afghanistan would result in weak governance and lawlessness. This in turn would lead to ineffective counter insurgency and organized crime/drug trafficking which would spill over into Pakistan and hence this scenario would pose a clear and imminent danger to Pakistan’s security and stability as well. The domino effect will be stronger in Khyber

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Pakhtunkhwa, Baluchistan and FATA which are already beset with serious security challenges like insurgency, drug proliferation, and religiously inspired militant extremism (p.4).

It has already been assumed that the problem would start after their departure and that it would be the result of vacuum created by the withdrawal of ISAF. A similar position can be observed in many other scholars like Gul (2015), Sultan, Khurram, and Hussain (2018), and Bashir and Aman (2021) who do not look at US Imperial Army as the main perpetrators of terrorism and promoters of drugs in the world but, in a classic case of what Antonio Gramsci calls “consensual hegemony,” these indigenous scholars look up to America as if it is going to bring freedom and democracy to the wretched of the earth.

This literature review begins by trying to “establish the phenomenon” (Merton 1987) of the use, spread, and proliferation of narcotics in Pakistan. There would surely be many differences in how the phenomenon is perceived by different researchers from different perspectives, as elaborated upon by Reed (2011) in his book *Interpretation and Social Knowledge: On the Use of Theory in Human Sciences*, especially when he writes that

...debates about method often carry implicit disagreements about the nature and purpose of inquiry, the structure of social life itself, and the role of the critical intellectual or social researcher in comprehending it. If we render these disagreements explicit, we find that they are not only about method, strictly understood, but also about how knowledge claims are built out of conceptual innovation, justified in publication, and criticized as inaccurate and untrue (or, to use that infuriatingly ambiguous word, “problematic”) (Reed, 2011, p.3).

With this caveat in mind, the present Section concerns with bringing the available scholarly literature on the topic of the use of drugs in Pakistan for a more accurate rendition of the problem of the use of drugs and its multifarious connotations.

Writing at the beginning of the twenty first century, Sherman et al., (2005) conclude in their study of the use of drugs among street children in Lahore, Pakistan that drug use is a coping mechanism for these street children and that “[targeted] programs are needed to meet their special needs” (Sherman et al., 2005).

The study was a joint venture of Johns Hopkins University, USA and specialists from “Nai Zindagi”, Pakistan. Their study is meticulous in their collection and interpretation of the quantitative data. They have rightly pointed out the flaws in Pakistan’s approach to the menace of drug use and show through elaborate figures and interviews, or through firsthand accounts of the street children in Lahore, how Pakistan is not making any headway and state the obvious that a lot needs to be done to tackle the problem. They rightly point out that “throughout the world, the underlying cause of a country’s street children epidemic is that of poverty” (p. iv114) but do not pursue it further. The point that there could be specific policies that create grounds for destitution, deprivation, and poverty is not taken up as a concern in their reflections on many facets

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of the problematic of drug use and abuse in Pakistan. Jafari et al., (2015) are perfect example of missing elephant in the room when they write that “Pakistan has been a producer of opium both for export and domestic consumption for centuries” (p 295) and right on the money when they write that “In 1979, the Government of Pakistan responded to the problem of increased illicit opium trade by enforcement of anti-drug policies, which prohibits trafficking, financing or possession of more than 10gm of heroin or 1kg of opium” (p 295). Despite a reflection of a sheer ignorance of historical inaccuracy, it is also one of phenomenal historical accuracy (Jafari et al., 2000). 1979 is extremely important because it marks the beginning of a long covert war, led by CIA every step of the way in our region, that Pakistan was inadvertently forced into as a result of its proximity with Afghanistan. This is precisely the time when poppy is transformed from an historical medicinal herb/drug into heroine: “The opium poppy is an ancient medicinal plant, included among 700 remedies in the Ebers Papyrus of about 1550 BC Egypt” (Cookson, Katona, & Taylor 2002).

Shadow Economy

Since Daniel Defoe and his 1726 The Political History of the Devil, we were made to believe that there are two things in our world that we may easily deem certain: death and taxes. Nevertheless, humanity always has its way of adjusting the status quo to its own will and thus, although the existence of taxes seems indispensable to the functioning of modern states, resourceful individuals get by correcting the great tax expectations themselves. And so they move into the shadows (Labendowicz 2015,).

Shadow economy, which this paper identifies as one of the root causes of the rise in use of drugs in Pakistan, is not an isolated issue. It has deep global roots and thrives on all kinds of shady deals that would otherwise fall under the purview of State machinery. There is no proper definition of the term, but it can be best described as any “gray economy/ informal economy/illicit economy” that is “both hard to define and to measure” (p 6). It contains all those sectors that do not come under the umbrella of a nationally organised economy that is taxed/milked called contribution to GDP. It is a parallel structure that attempts to keep clear of government regulations and works on its own locally valid business ethics. It is, in this sense, “[existing] alongside a country’s official economy and remains unseen/unreported to the regulator” (Labendowicz, 2015).

In other words, it works in the shadows like a petty thief. Labendowicz quips that the principle to save as many taxes as possible is perhaps the very legacy of the US President, Donald Trump, who had presented businessmen and entrepreneurs with his “infamous golden rule” to pay “as little taxes as possible.” But shadow economy is much more than about paying little taxes. It generates its billions in an altogether different kind of business ethos, the darkest of the dark in the shadow: by strangling a large chunk of humanity to keep its billions rolling. In other words, it works on entirely new terrain of exploitation that is not restricted by any moral codes. The proverbial gloves are off in this bare-knuckle grounding of the uninsured lives. This grounding is not restricted by region but universal.

It is here that we need the help of international relations theorists, particularly Mearsheimer and Duffield (2007, 2018) to make sense of what has come to pass in the

world, in general, and Pakistan, in particular. They will help us make sense of the situation that is otherwise missed by our scholars focused on eliminating, like Don Quixote, the menace of drug use from our society side by side to their peers in drug enforcement agencies. It would be extremely interesting to notice how the very policies that are imported from the west, to look at the problem of drug use in Pakistan, are originating from and deeply imbricated in the very act of importation. This is, otherwise, also a tale of our ideological indoctrination as well.

In his book, *The Great Delusion: Liberal Dreams and International Realities* (2018), John Mearsheimer implicates a certain kind of thought process that has left a trail of terror in its wake across the globe. He calls it liberal hegemony (Mearsheimer 2018). The term liberal is not used in the context of oppression, exploitation, and capitalism at its brutal by him alone. It is, rather the legacy of the great French theorist, Michel Foucault, who laid to rest the very philosophical foundations of western liberalism by exposing its deep underbelly. He left it with no plausible deniability and thus the charges, once objectively verified, got stuck. This led to a massive inflow of scholarly work from many mainstream theorists across disciplines like David Harvey and Mark Duffield among many others. What they intended to expose was the kind of nexus that is best summed up by Waltraud Queiser Morales, the “dissident” Mexican writer, in “a provocative 1989 article entitled ‘The War on Drugs: A New U.S. National Security Doctrine?’, writes that “during the Gorbachev era in the Soviet Union the Cold War had rapidly lost its ‘fear potential’. For U.S. policy makers the ideology of anti-Communism was becoming increasingly inadequate as the ‘automatic legitimating doctrine of the U.S. national security state” (p 3). As part of their legitimising doctrine, Fraser argue, Morales thought the US invented many other justificatory narratives to keep its nose in the affairs of Latin America. Drugs was one obvious excuse to keep their presence in an otherwise ideologically laid out strategic game plan in Latin America where it was fighting Russian Communists. “War on Drugs”, which carries all the nuances of the erstwhile War on Terror, both Morales and Fraser agree, was one such justificatory narrative to cloak their political and economic intervention. “For example,” Fraser continues, “the Reagan administration had used the new U.S. crusade against the cocaine cartels to justify the presence of U.S. Special Operations Forces and counternarcotics agents in the Andes and Colombia, who in addition to fighting drugs had also clearly been engaged in counter-insurgency operations” (p.3). The Regan Administration sponsored a coup against its former ally, Panama’s corrupt dictator, writes Fraser, which illustrates the point further for us that “the United States would eventually use the War on Drugs as a rationale for a ‘bald-faced’ invasion of Panama” (Fraser 2003).

What is of particular importance for us here is replication of the same strategy of appearance and reality in Afghanistan during its fight with the USSR. Pakistani policy makers too got sucked into the liberal dream. That bandwagon has continued to exist and is now replicated in our policies on drug control when ‘Afghan opiates’ continue to fuel the presence of American troops in Afghanistan. Watching Tom Cruise’s *Jack Reacher* (2012) and *American Made* (2017), both mainstream Hollywood movies by its brand name, as if a scholarly book by Rutledge or University of Chicago Press, would illustrate the point pursued here further.

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Shadow economy, particularly when it comes to drugs and arms, acts in shadow of the US Army, the exact same place from where our briefings, policies, and training material on combatting drug cartels come from. This obvious fact is mostly lost on those policy makers who cannot stitch the entire picture due to specific capacity issues, which, when analyzed further, are the result of another form of liberal hegemony. Pakistan is, therefore, between the devil and the deep blue sea when it comes to making sense of the problem of increasing demand of illicit, Class A drugs in Pakistan. A simple question would have revealed the reality behind the hype against the uses and abuses of drugs in Pakistan: why would a nation with such an atrocious record of lying to the international community and human suffering would be interested in eliminating narcotics as a cause of human suffering?

Results

Taking Stock

One thing that immediately jumps out from literature review is differences in approaches within Pakistan and the very best of critical/ social theorists is their understanding of the specter of liberalism that haunts us. Something which stands totally deconstructed philosophically is presented to our nation as the panacea of all our ills. The national commitment against the use, sale, and cultivation of the banned substances like poppy is one such example to illustrate the moot point here. What is described by Pakistan's premier anti-narcotics agency as its aim is not indigenous but would change with the patterns of change in the master narrative.

There are enough agencies and sub agencies, national and international, bilateral and multilateral agreements to fill a room but what has been witnessed continuously is the need to develop an indigenous understanding of how drugs related crimes, its trafficking, counter measures are perceived by Ministry of Narcotics Control, GoP, ANF and their entire fleet of subordinate branches. The point is that there is more at stake in how the use of drugs are commonly looked at from an angle and perspective that is fed to our policy makers on a platter from those who set the rules of the game. Once we understand that those who set these rules for us to follow as a national duty are the very same policy makers who are also making policies that impact the region and the globe in ways that perpetuate rather than curb the flow of drugs through the world. The money is then used to keep the world, and especially our region, restive and on permanent tenterhooks.

The way ahead is therefore marred by crucial and critical decisions. They could potentially determine the culprit that could yield us a win against proliferation of drugs through our society. As has been manifested by all kinds of data already, the use and abuse of drugs is on the rise rather than on the wane as it should have been, had our policies been realistic. The road ahead is the proverbial road by Robert Frost: *it is the road less travelled by that will make all the difference*. The other one has already been trodden by.

Facts and Figures

In their article titled *Effect of law enforcement on drug abuse: a comparison of substance use in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey* (2015), Jafri et al argue that

“situation of opium cultivation and production over the last decade in Afghanistan, leaves no doubt that law enforcement has not worked”, because it is the only source of family income for many Afghan families. Drug economy clearly provides many livelihoods and incomes for Afghan families. The article surprisingly lacks reference to the ravages of the war imposed on Afghanistan that created grounds for evaporation of all other sources of income in Afghan society. They focus on the data by recording that “the number of families involved in opium poppy cultivation was estimated at 309000 families in 2005 that represented about 2 million persons or 8.7% of the total population in Afghanistan” (Jafari et al 2015) but do not elaborate the situation it is happening in. This is plainly an historical oversight that distorts reality.

“Law enforcement has not worked”? The means of livelihood for millions of Afghans notwithstanding, it is best to highlight the current position of Pakistan’s anti-narcotics muscle. The following data is garnered from primary sources like the main stakeholders in anti-narcotics efforts in Pakistan. The data is instructive as well as bewildering when compared in the light of what Jafri et al had been saying (p.298).

Fact Check

Government Agencies and Ministries

There are a number of dedicated governmental agencies and ministries that are working on controlling and finally eradicating drugs from Pakistani society. They include Ministry of Narcotics Control, Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), National Anti-Narcotics Council (NANC), Parliamentary Committees on Narcotics Control, National Narcotics Control Committee (NNCC), Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF), Provincial Narcotics Control Committees (PNCC), and District Narcotic Control Cells (DNCC) (The National Anti-Narcotics Policy, 2019).

In other words, there is no dearth of governmental agencies, ministries, divisions, and think tanks to top it all off, that are supposedly fighting the menace of drugs proliferation in Pakistani society, yet the point remains elusive: why cannot the perpetrators be named?

National and International Agreements

Pakistan has entered into many agreements with international bodies who work on this global problem. According to the National Drug Policy document, Pakistan is signatory to many international Conventions and Declarations on Drugs Control like Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961 (As amended by the 1972 Protocol amending the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961); Convention on Psychotropic Substances, 1971; Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1988; Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balance Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem – 2009; SAARC Convention on Narcotic Drugs & Psychotropic Substances – 1990; The Protocol on drug matters with Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) countries (National Anti-Narcotics Policy, 2019).

The Road Ahead

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Continuing from the previous discussion on the philosophy behind how drugs are perceived by dedicated agencies, one can argue that the case for not trusting Empire, heatedly argued between and among scholars is not only valid but the only possible alternative. The shift in gears, called *Kumk* in colloquial Pashto, is required for many reasons all of which have something to do with our progress towards nation building. It cannot be done in a situation where policy makers are beholden to the tune of the Pied Piper. The road ahead is therefore not known and certainly not strewn with roses. The best contemporary practice is to keep *locally* manufactured GPS or a compass to navigate the unknown terrain. That compass is mandatory because it not only keep us on a trajectory that brings us back to ourselves but gives us many lessons in nation building which is something we surely lack. Why else would John Mearsheimer, Mark Duffield, Michel Foucault, Noam Chomsky (all of them are credible and leading global intellectuals), hold that there is something sinister that lurked behind the facade of liberalism and new liberalism if it were the panacea for all the ills of humanity? Why would they hold it to account if it is what is taught to us? They keep us busy elsewhere as they decamp with booty. The most glorious example, one which also serves as an analogy for understanding the thrust of the main argument of this paper on the use of narcotics in Pakistan, is how Pakistani society has been engaged in playing the NGO/ INGO game under the umbrella of community development and community resilience in war torn societies like ours. Pakistan's premier think tanks like PSPDI, Islamabad and other such bodies are a case in point. This is how they advertise themselves to Pakistani people: "SDPI defines sustainable development as the enhancement of peace, social justice and well-being within and across generations. SDPI produces knowledge that can enhance the capacity of government to make informed policy decisions and to engage civil society on "issues of public interest" (sdpi.org, 2020). That they generate "original research on sustainable development issues" and collects data for researchers and research institutes. They also announce themselves as research "advisory" by training and facilitating individual researchers by providing training. These goals seem very good and amiable but look what happens to them when we bring insights from Mark Duffield. "For some years," writes Mark Duffield, "I have been aware that development and security inter-connect. It is only now, however, after completing this book, that I fully realize how enduring and essential this relationship is" (Duffield 2007). He writes that the concept of development appears very "benign and practical act of helping others" but in reality, it is just another form of control that are utilised by "liberal forms of power and government" that Pakistan is very painfully aware of. Development, he writes, is method of cheating the less advanced societies (Duffield 2007).

The irony of the two situations must not be lost on any keen reader: what is hailed by PSDI as the greatest Cavour to Pakistan is, in fact, nothing more than a liberal technology of cover mentality and power. What we call 'development' is mere liberal management of the outcome, outflow, and blowback from relentless campaigns for what John Mearsheimer rightly calls 'liberal hegemony' (Mearsheimer 2018).

The point remains that Pakistan's whole conception of narcotics, its control, and countermeasures are imported lock, stock, and barrel from the mother narrative of Pakistan. This mother narrative is also mother to liberalism in many an interesting way that keeps us from finding the very crux of Pakistan. ANF's goals for its SPEAR strategy

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would further elaborate the point under discussion here, especially when it announces its priorities and goals.

Some of the major tasks that Anti-Narcotics Force has prioritised under its Spear Strategy, write the authors of our National Anti-Narcotics Policy, are to have closer interaction “with other Ministries/ Departments as per National Anti-Narcotics Policy 2010”; establish close liaison between “Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) under Inter Agency Task Force (IATF) Forum”; engage in close “cooperation with international narcotics control authorities, organization, bodies, associations and societies” along with pledges to make Pakistan an effective front against drugs and its illicit trade in Pakistan and internationally with financial support from donors (National Anti-Narcotics Policy, 2019).

“Financial assistance from donors” is the axis around which ANF’s policy guidelines and objectives are based. It brings back Mark Duffield’s insight back into our focus that many things have become a shadow under the name of ‘development’, human or otherwise. This gives us an inkling of what lies ahead with the kind of blind faith that policy makers have been prone to adopt when it comes to finding their own way forward.

The way forward, our policy makers are unable to understand, is not in following the policies and objectives given to us by “donors” but understanding the regional and global situation that provides the context to drugs and its proliferation in our society. It is a multibillion-dollar shadow economy. What we need to understand as we move forward through this bog is realise the fact that a multibillion-dollar shadow economy has its international enablers who are hiding in plain sight. On the road ahead, it must be at the back of our mind that the donors are not angels but hard-core neo-liberals who are wedded to money. They would never want the fountainhead of their unlimited source of money be curtailed, jeopardised, and ultimately eliminated.

On the road ahead, one must also keep in mind the fact that our society has not been producing enough of those who could put country before self-interest. Shadow economy, that is deeply interlinked with drug cartels, does not survive on its own. Our reputation and position on the world’s most corrupt country list is not a myth that is based on legends. Our society values money and tolerates corruption because it is a means to something that is held in high esteem. Given this fact, shadow economy would thrive as we are to chase mirages and illusions. This could prove handy as we head into the unknown.

Conclusion

Pakistan’s anti-narcotics paradigm suffers from an acute sense of purpose and has been made to chase the red light which is perpetually in motion. It not only lacks human and financial resources to combat the use of drugs in Pakistan but also lacks the intellectual resources to make sense of the whole gambit. It is not helped by the shadow economy either that thrives side by side, what is commonly perceived as its antithesis, the legitimate one. The legitimacy of the legitimate economy is under erasure in the debates among critical, social, and cultural theorists. Pakistan does not have the capacity nor the resources to rid itself of this far graver problematic than drugs. A much larger population has been reduced through, what Mark Duffield and Michel Foucault, call “bio-politics”

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i.e., the subjugation of man to a certain narrative, discourse, or hegemonic interpretation of the realities of our world. In other words, our lens is not indigenous but foreign. The war on drugs cannot be won when the interpretation comes from the same sources that create the trouble in the first place. It would be exactly like replicating that famous Urdu couplet penned by the inimitable Mir Dard: (Mir is so naïve that he seeks medicine from the son of the same doctor who had given him his illness in the first place. *Mir bhi kya saada hain, Huway bemar jis kay sabab.... Ussee Ataar (doctor/quack) kay londay say dawa letein hain.*)

There is no disputing the fact that the threat that the use and abuse of drugs pose to the future of Pakistan's mainly young generation, but what remains to be realized is to get rid of the false beliefs that the West/ USA, an Imperial hegemonic power, could have been our savior. It is just business for them. Pakistan is poised to be on a completely different trajectory.

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