



KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
Only IAS Academy by Grandson of "Perunthalaivar Kamarajar"

Narco-terrorism

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Across the Valley, a silent, devastating pandemic of drug addiction is wreaking havoc in families and stretching the public health system to its limits: it's clogging hospitals and clinics, filling up detention centres with mostly young men, piling up FIRs, taking seizure levels to a new record, leaving a trail of tragedy and loss in its wake,

About the news:

The Imhans-K survey's revelations are startling: during 2022-23, substance abuse in the Valley was as high as 2.87 per cent (of the population) and that of opioid dependence 2.23 per cent (of the population).

Just four years ago, opioid prevalence in the whole of J&K (not just Kashmir) was just 1.5 per cent as per a 2019 Central government report on 'Magnitude of Substance Use in India'.

This was significantly lower than Punjab 2.8 per cent, Haryana 2.5 per cent, Delhi 2.3 per cent, and Himachal Pradesh 1.7 per cent – all states of similar size.

Experts point to a **range of factors behind this**: from lack of recreation in society to fewer jobs and financial stress; life in a conflict zone and its attendant uncertainties, boredom of lockdown during Covid-19 and, of course, the easy accessibility of heroin.

The Imhans-K survey – the first such that covered all 10 districts of Kashmir spearheaded by Rather with a team of 30 field supervisors and five project managers – showed that in all 10 districts of Kashmir put together, 67,468 individuals were seen with a "pattern of dependence on psychoactive substances" between March 2022 and March 2023.

Narco-terrorism:

Narco-terrorism refers to the attempts of narcotics traffickers to influence the policies of a government or a society through violence and intimidation, and to hinder the enforcement of anti-drug laws by the systematic threat or use of such violence.

In short, Narco terrorism implies the **nexus between drug syndicates and terrorists** that facilitate and fund terrorist activities and influence government policies.

Factors contributing to rise:

Proximity to drug-producing regions: India's proximity to the "Golden Crescent" (including parts of Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan), provides easy access to narcotics.

Cross-border connections: India shares borders with countries like Pakistan, which is known for its involvement in drug trafficking.

Financing mechanism: Socioeconomic factors such as poverty, unemployment, and lack of opportunities can contribute to the involvement of individuals in the drug trade.

Kamaraj IAS Academy

Plot A P.127, AF block, 6 th street, 11th Main Rd, Shanthi Colony, Anna Nagar, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600040

Phone: **044 4353 9988 / 98403 94477 / Whatsapp : 09710729833**

Corruption and weak law enforcement: Corruption within law enforcement agencies can facilitate the operations of drug trafficking networks ex. in Punjab.

High profits and demand: The lucrative nature of the illegal drug trade makes it an attractive source of revenue for terrorist organizations.

Transnational nature of the trade: Transnational drug syndicates collaborate with terrorist organizations, facilitating the flow of drugs and funding for terrorist activities.

Inefficient Policymaking: Terrorist and militant actions are a problem in India, which are supported by the neighboring countries. It's no surprise that few Indians see the importation of ganja, opium, hashish, and other drugs as a concern because secessionism, terrorism, and insurgency have occupied the thoughts of policymakers and the general people.

Northeast Region: Drugs, sourced from Myanmar and Bangladesh, has a direct bearing on the funding of terror and extremist activities in the northeast. A series of intermittent seizures in India of 'yaba' tablets that were meant for Bangladesh, indicates the existence of multiple exit points along the border in Tripura, Assam, and Meghalaya. The proceeds of this drug-trade find its way to insurgent-outfits.

Golden Triangle (SE Asia):

The Golden Triangle is the area where the **borders of Thailand, Laos, and Myanmar meet at the confluence of the Ruak and Mekong rivers**. The name "Golden Triangle" was coined by the CIA.

Along with Afghanistan in the Golden Crescent, it has been one of the largest opium-producing areas of the world, since the 1950s.

Most of the world's heroin came from the Golden Triangle until the early 21st century when Afghanistan became the world's largest producer.

Golden Crescent:

The Golden Crescent is the name given to **one of Asia's two principal areas of illicit opium production** (with the other being the Golden Triangle), located at the **crossroads of Central, South, and Western Asia**.

This space overlaps three nations, Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan, whose mountainous peripheries define the crescent.



Government's measures against Narcotic Trafficking:

Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substance Act 1985: Indian Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985: Provides to carry out controlled delivery mechanisms measures as it deems necessary or expenditure for the purpose of preventing and combating abuse of narcotic substances. Provides minimum punishment of 10 years.

Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB): Nodal agency for enforcement of laws concerning narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

India signed **bilateral agreements with USA, UK, Myanmar, Afghanistan, UAE, Mauritius, Zambia, and the Russia** for 'drug control'.

India is a **signatory of UN and SAARC convention on narcotic drugs and psychotropic Substances**.

The Indian Army has implemented **Operation Sadbhavana**, which includes de-addiction counseling centers and awareness camps. De-addiction counselling centers help drug-addicted youth, while awareness camps aim to educate the public about the dangers of drug abuse.

Nasha Mukht J&K Campaign: The campaign, launched by LG, aims to make Jammu and Kashmir drug-free. The **"Zero Tolerance Policy"** of the state police and anti-narcotics task force has been praised for its effectiveness. Continued vigilance by security forces and agencies is crucial to eliminate the nexus between criminals and Pakistan-sponsored terror modules.

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Way forward:

Multilateral Cooperation: Enhance international cooperation and information sharing to disrupt drug trafficking networks and dismantle the nexus between drug trade and terrorism.

Advanced Technology Integration: Invest in advanced technologies to enhance detection and interception of drug shipments, monitor financial transactions, and secure border areas.

Community Engagement and Rehabilitation: Focus on community awareness, education, and rehabilitation programs to prevent drug abuse and support individuals struggling with addiction.

Target Financing Networks: Strengthen efforts to track and disrupt the financing networks supporting narco-terrorism through collaboration with financial institutions and international organizations.

Cross-Border Intelligence Sharing: Strengthen intelligence-sharing mechanisms and conduct joint operations with countries sharing borders affected by drug trafficking.

De-radicalization: Implement sustainable economic development programs to provide viable alternatives to communities involved in the drug trade.