

# Drug Infiltration for Terror Financing in Kashmir

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**Context** - With arms and terror infiltration becoming difficult, Pakistan has now resorted to peddling drugs to degenerate the youth of Jammu and Kashmir. Narcotics, Pakistan's new weapon to finance terrorism within the Valley, has been dubbed the biggest challenge confronting Jammu and Kashmir.

## **Pakistan-Sponsored Terrorism and its Impact**

- The culture of violence implemented through constant financial and strategic support to the insurgency in the Kashmir Valley by Pakistan by training and infiltrating weapons and militants impacted society in many ways.
- Pakistan-backed terrorism destroyed the centuries-old socio-economic and socio-cultural fabric of society.
- The deaths, mass exodus of Pandits, and increased unemployment eroded the composite way of life and increased boredom, depression, and anxiety among the masses.
- Pakistan-sponsored terrorism is at an all-time low in Jammu and Kashmir, three years after the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A.
- The number of active militants has fallen from 250 by the end of 2019 to just over 100 by January 2023.
- Security agencies have tried hard to achieve zero terror activities within the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir and busted 146 terror modules created by Pakistan in 2022.
- As a result, Pakistan's design to create a culture of violence in the Valley endorsed by self-

serving and incestuous political elite under the guise of autonomy for the last 30 years is failing.

### Pakistan's Drug Strategy in Kashmir

- **Dual Purpose for Pakistan** - Now, with the people of Kashmir increasingly relinquishing terrorism and a culture of violence, the drug strategy serves dual purposes for Islamabad. One, to attack the core of social well-being, and two, to finance terrorism within the Valley.
- **Constant infiltration of drugs in the Valley** - There is a constant infiltration of drugs by Pakistan via the Valley's Kupwara and Baramulla districts, less-used other drugs such as brown sugar, cocaine, and marijuana are also readily available within the Valley and even in parts of Jammu.

### Issues of Drug Addiction in Kashmir

- **Valley is slowly becoming a drug hub** - The Kashmir Valley is slowly becoming a drug hub in Northern India, having more than 67,000 drug abusers, of which 90 percent are heroin addicts, using more than 33,000 syringes daily.
- **Emerged as country's top drug affected region** - With 2.5 percent of the population using drugs, Kashmir has emerged as the country's top-drug-affected region, ahead of Punjab, where 1.2 percent of the population is reportedly addicted to drug abuse.
- **Residents affected** - In November 2022, the state-level narcotic coordination committee meeting chaired by the Chief Secretary revealed that at least six lakh residents were affected by drug-related issues in Jammu and Kashmir.
- **Increasing crime rate** - Increasing on average, INR 88,000 are spent by a drug abuser in the Valley yearly, increasing Kashmir's crime rate.
- The following reasons can be attributed to such a situation in Kashmir -
  1. **Collapse of age-old social discipline** - A significant reason for such an alarming situation is the near-total collapse of the Valley's age-old informal social discipline and control mechanisms enforced by village elders.
  2. **Attack on cultural core** - Pakistan's nefarious attack on the Valley's cultural core has rendered this traditional mechanism of social control ineffective.
  3. **Few contribute to social degradation** - The village elders have also often worked hand-in-glove with Pakistan's evil designs by remaining silent and endorsing the societal degradation.

### J&K Police and the War against Drugs

- **Security agencies have trained their focus on drug peddlers** - Security agencies in Jammu and Kashmir are known for anti-terror operations. They have successfully created a synergy with the local administration to sabotage Pakistan's activities and allied forces within the Valley. With Pakistan-sponsored insurgency receding, the security agencies have trained their focus on drug peddlers.
- **Security agencies in action** - In 2022, under Narcotic Drugs Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, the police registered 1,021 cases and arrested 1700 drug peddlers, including 138

notorious peddlers. During the same time, the security agencies seized enormous quantities of contraband, including 212 kilograms of charas, 56 kilograms of heroin, 13 kilograms of brown sugar, 4.355 tonnes of poppy straw and 1.567 tonnes of fukki.

- **Busted narco terror modules** - The security agencies also busted many narco-terror modules and arrested 36 persons with huge catches of drugs, arms, ammunition, and money.
- **Investigation revealed drugs smuggled from Pakistan** - In December 2022, police busted a Pakistan-based narcotics module and arrested 17 persons, including five police officials and some political activists. Investigations revealed that over five kilograms of narcotics valued at INR 5 crore were smuggled from Pakistan in three months.
- **Launched Nasha-Mukt Bharat Abhiyan** - The local administration has also launched the Nasha-Mukt Bharat Abhiyan an initiative started by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment on 15 August 2020 to eradicate the menace of drug addiction in 272 districts across India. This programme has conducted large-scale awareness programmes in colleges, universities, and within communities.

## Way Forward

- The Kashmiri society needs to have an internal interlocution and take a serious look at Pakistan's policies to foment trouble, especially through narco-terrorism.
- Kashmir's elders and religious leaders through mosques need to get involved in the war against drugs and guide the youth to engage meaningfully with the spate of developmental activities undertaken by the national and Union territory government following the abrogation of Article 370.

The government should also initiate and enable public-private partnerships, where local police, military, paramilitary, and citizen bodies act in harmony to make Kashmir free of narco-terror and Pakistan-implemented culture of violence.