
TECHNOLOGIES IN DRUG TRAFFICKING TACKLED BY LEGAL ENFORCEMENTS

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ABSTRACT:

Drug Trafficking is a global Illicit Trade involving the cultivate, manufacture, distribution and sale of substances which are subject to drug prohibition laws. Drug Traffickers mishandling the present technological world to their marketing strategies. The societal ideologies shift the illegitimate drug trafficking as the freedom of societal enhancement to consume it. This societal change is well-versed with the updated technologies to enhance it but it faced the dynamic challenges upthrust against eradication. Technologies include Electronic Gadgets, GPS Technology, Narco Submarines, Virtual Market, Body Packing, social media, Drones and Robots. Similarly, Law Enforcement Agencies in India with their Policies and Strategies strive hard to combat drug trafficking in spite of certain shortcomings. They have also contributed to a significant level in weeding out the illegal drug trafficking trade. In this article, the researcher attempts to analyze the technologies used by Drug Traffickers and role of Enforcement Agencies in combatting Drug Traffickers and the challenges faced by them.

Keywords: Drug Trafficking, Traffickers, Technologies, Law Enforcement Agencies, Dark Net

INTRODUCTION

India has a long and interesting history when it comes to drugs. From Vedic times, Cannabis, popularly known as Marijuana has been used for various medical purposes and religious ceremonies and festivals. In fact, it is one of the five sacred plants mentioned in the Vedas and was known as 'Vijaya'. Interestingly, Lord Shiva was also known as Lord of Vijaya and his followers to this day, smoke Ganja or have Charas to reach a trance-like meditative state. In 330 BC Alexander the Great introduced opium to the people of India and once again it was widely used for its medicinal properties. The British East India Company assumed total control of opium cultivation and began trading it where it was legal and smuggling it where it was illegal. The use of Technology in drug Trafficking has become increasingly sophisticated in recent years. Drug traffickers employ a wide range of Technological tools and methods to facilitate their illegal activities. This includes the dark web, encrypted communication apps, cryptocurrency transactions, and advanced smuggling techniques. In India, the government has implemented various laws and regulations to combat drug trafficking, such as the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985. These laws are aimed at controlling the production, distribution, and possession of narcotics and psychotropic substances and are crucial in the fight against drug-related crimes.

DRUG TRAFFICKING AND WORLD DRUG REPORT 2021:

Drug trafficking is a global illicit trade involving the cultivation, manufacture, distribution and sale of substances which are subject to drug prohibition laws. The World Drug Report 2021¹ is aimed not only at fostering greater international cooperation to counter the impact of the world drug problem on health, governance and security, but also, with its special focus on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, at assisting Member States in anticipating and addressing challenges that may arise in the near future. Drug use killed almost half a million people in 2019, while drug use disorders resulted in 18 million years of healthy life lost, mostly due to opioids.² Serious and

¹ UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME, <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/drug-trafficking/> (last visited Dec 12, 2021)

² United Nation Publication, World Drug Report 2021, Booklet 1, 3(2021) https://www.unodc.org/res/wdr2021/field/WDR21_Booklet_1.pdf

often lethal illnesses are more common among drug users, particularly those who inject drugs, many of whom are living with HIV and Hepatitis C.

The Findings of World Drug Report 2021 by United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes are as follows:³

- 1) Cannabis is more potent but fewer young people see it as harmful
- 2) Increase in Drug Sales over the Dark Web has raised by four times ie during 2011 to Mid 2017 it was 80 million dollars whereas in Mid 2017 to 2020 it has increased to 315 million dollars.
- 3) Drug markets quickly recovered after the onset of the pandemic, but some trafficking dynamics such as Larger shipment size, Increased use of private aircraft, Increased use of waterway routes, Contactless methods to deliver drug to end consumers have been accelerated during Covid-19.

DRUG TRAFFICKERS:

A Drug Trafficker is termed as an unlicensed dealer in illegal drugs or a dealer of illicit trafficking of drugs. The other names include Drug dealer and Drug peddler.

Section 2 (viii) (iii)⁴ defines Illicit Traffic, in relation to Narcotic drugs and Psychotropic Substances means engaging in production, manufacture, possession, sale, purchase, transportation, warehousing, concealment, use or consumption, import inter-State, export inter-State, import into India, export from India or transshipment, of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances.

TRADITIONAL TECHNIQUES USED BY DRUG TRAFFICKERS:⁵

³ United Nation Publication, World Drug Report 2021, Booklet 1, 10 – 12 (2021)
https://www.unodc.org/res/wdr2021/field/WDR21_Booklet_1.pdf

⁴ THE NARCOTIC DRUGS AND PSYCHOTROPIC SUBSTANCES ACT, 1985, ACT NO. 61 OF 1985 (India)

⁵ Felipe Puerta, Drug Traffickers Evade Authorities, InSight Crime, Sep 18, 2018,
<https://insightcrime.org/news/analysis/5-creative-ways-drug-traffickers-evade-authorities/>

Narco-Ambulances:

Criminal groups in several countries have used ambulances to transport Cocaine and Marijuana to escape from the authorities as the probability of the detection rate is comparatively low as compared with other vehicles.

The Ant Plan In Buses:

It is referred to smuggling methods involving breaking shipments up into very small batches when the so called “Ant Plan” is used to transport drugs. It traditionally depends on drug “mules” travelled by air. For eg: In the year 2018, a joint effort by Colombian, Peruvian and Chilean Security Forces dismantled a group known as “Beetles” that allegedly recruited cyclists to transport Marijuana out of Columbia.

Camouflaging In Legal Shipments:

The drug traffickers hide their products inside items set to be exported in shipping containers. Corruption and lack of control in many of the ports whether it is by air, sea or land are attracting drug trafficking groups to use them as platforms for selling their product in lucrative international markets.

Chemical Masking:

Using chemical processes to change the appearance of cocaine has been one of the cartels’ most commonly used techniques for trafficking the drug since the days of Pablo Escobar. And it remains both a go-to strategy for criminal organizations and a headache for authorities. Now, criminal groups are using professional chemists to teach them new ways to temporarily mix cocaine and other drugs with oils, plastics, metals and more recently pet food, in order to transport them undetected.

TECHNOLOGIES USED BY DRUG TRAFFICKERS:

The report submitted by Parliament on 12th December 2021 stated that “Technology is being

leveraged by drug traffickers to maintain anonymity, making it track the movement of drugs”⁶.

Drug trafficking groups utilize new technologies in two distinct ways: to improve the efficiency of product delivery and distribution through the medium of secure, instant communications; and to protect themselves and their illicit operations from investigation by drug law enforcement agencies, sometimes using techniques of counter-attack. New technologies enable drug trafficking groups to commit traditional crimes with new methods—for example, to conceal information about the shipment of illicit drug consignments by means of encrypted messages or to launder drug-related funds by electronic transfer—and to commit new offences with new means, for example, by using information warfare or digital attack against intelligence activities of drug law enforcement agencies.

Electronic Gadgets:

Drug traffickers use computers and electronic pocket organizers for storing information (such as bank account numbers, contact details of associates, databases of assets and financial activity, sales and other business records, grid coordinates of clandestine landing strips and recipes for synthetic drug manufacture) and for electronic mail (e-mail) and other correspondence. Surrogates receive instructions by telephone, fax, pager or computer on where to deliver warehouse loads, whom to contact for transportation services and where to send the profits. Greater protection derives from the use of prepaid telephone cards, broadband radio frequencies, restricted-access Internet chat rooms, encryption, satellite telephony and “cloned” cellular telephones (so called when the identity codes assigned to legitimate customers are intercepted and programmed into cellular telephones used by criminals.⁷

GPS Technology:

The GPS has increasingly become a drug dealer’s new partner in crime. The evolution of maritime

⁶ The New Indian Express, (Dec 12, 2021, 09.22 AM), <https://www.newindianexpress.com/theSundayStandard/2021/dec/12/use-of-cryptocurrency-for-drug-trafficking-worries-parliamentcommittee-2394553.html>

⁷ International Narcotics Control board, Chapter 1, 2, (2013) https://www.incb.org/documents/Publications/AnnualReports/Thematic_chapters/English/AR_2001_E_Chapter_I.pdf

trafficking expertise proves drug traffickers have both motive and means to develop new strategies that ensure delivery of their illicit cargo. Twenty years ago traffickers used beepers and telephone booths to communicate. Today they take advantage of anonymity provided by prepaid burner mobile phones and public Wi-Fi internet connectivity. Techno savvy traffickers install electronic trackers and remotely follow their cocaine around the world. One preferred device is a battery operated GPS tracker capable of real time data transmission received on mobile phones, tablets, laptops and PCs. Such equipment allows communications tower triangulation that indicates approximate location. The Tuesday April 11th 2017 arrest of Ecuadorian kingpin nicknamed “Gerard”⁸ featured GPS locators and waterproofed cocaine packets, as part of his trafficking scheme. Some consignments are air dropped at geographic coordinates on the Pacific Ocean. GPS tracking device identifies exactly where the shipment is and its speed of movement. The special technology also sends a text message, when there is deviation from programmed coordinates.

Narco-Submarine:

Drug Cartels are developing new advanced smuggling submarines that can carry 86 million Pound worth of cocaine undetected beneath the waves.⁹ They are handcrafted structures painted in ocean colours so that they are difficult to detect. They are hermetically sealed, contain diesel or electric engines and carry people who help ensure that the drugs get to their destination. For years they have been used by cartels to smuggle cocaine and other drugs mainly from Colombia and Ecuador to Central America, Mexico and the United States. They allow Colombian gangs in association with Mexican drug cartels to move drugs fast and boost profits. These submarines production has tremendously increased by criminal organisations for two reasons. One is large volume of drugs can be loaded and transported quickly and secondly they are less detectable due to their appearance.

⁸ Ricardo Swire, Drug Traffickers and GPS Technology, Linked in, May 15, 2017 <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/drug-traffickers-gps-technology-ricardo-swire>

⁹ Tariq Tahir, Highs and Lows, The U.S Sun, (Feb 26, 2021, 09:59 AM) <https://www.the-sun.com/news/2412076/drug-cartels-new-advanced-narco-subs/>

A Narco Submarine are the secretive craft specially built by criminals to smuggle drug overseas. These are thought to have been in use since the 1990's and were the stuff of legend until they began to be intercepted in the mid-2000. They were known as 'Bigfoot' by the disbelieving US Navy and Coast Guard commanders until one was finally caught 100 miles off the coast of Costa Rica in 2006. They soon acquired the name narco subs - but in reality they were low profile or semi-submersible vessels designed to avoid detection.

There are four main types of Narco Submarines¹⁰. They are

Low Profile Vessel with inboard Motor. (LPV-IM)

This is the oldest form of vessel and appeared in 2005. It is still relevant today but has been less common. They have inbuilt motor termed as Inboard Motor.

Low Profile + Very Slender Vessel (LPV-OM-VSV)

Since 2017 they have become increasingly popular with drug trafficking Organizations. They are typically 55 feet long and it has Outboard Motors.

Hybrid go –fast:

This model has been very popular since 2016. It appears like a power boat loaded with extra fuel and narcotics. It goes very faster than any other vessel.

The Rarest Beast: Very Slender Vessel with Inboard Motor:

So far only one of this category, have been interdicted at sea. It was dragged from the water by the Colombian Navy in January 2019. This appears to be the stealthier configuration of all and its very hard to detect.

¹⁰ H I Sutton, The 4 types of Narco submarines the Military Faces, Forbes, (Apr 12, 2020, 07.50 AM) <https://www.forbes.com/sites/hisutton/2020/04/12/the-4-types-of-narco-submarine-trying-to-escape- detection/?sh=3d83f39770c1>

The next generation of vessels uses electric motors to make them extremely quiet and much harder for law enforcement to detect, with a payload four times that of previous narco subs. Underwater, the new sub uses two electric motors powered by ten tons of batteries. Master boat builders construct the massive craft in secret hideouts with drug cartels putting aside their differences to invest new technology and ship cocaine together on the subs. Colombia's navy recently raided an artisan boatyard on the Cucurupí River, in the north of the country, and arrested 11 members of a boat-building organisation. There they came across narco subs under construction for drug cartels across South America - who are increasingly using for advanced technology to beat the cops. Drug Traffickers hire engineers to build them and they give special training on construction and ship design.¹¹ The safety aspects are prioritized for the drugs and the lives of the people who go inside it does not matter. If a submarine sinks or fails, it will be a millionaire loss for eg., may be around 100 or 200 million dollars.

Virtual Market:

Drug Traffickers had adapted themselves quickly in this pandemic. Increased digital interconnectivity has brought about innovations in how global drug supply chains operate. In particular, evolutions in digital communications platforms have added a new dimension to drug distribution. Purchasing drugs online brings a number of advantages to traffickers as compared with sales made in person, on the street. The Tor Network is the largest darknet and contains most sites. Customers intending to buy drugs over the dark web typically access the darknets through software such as the onion router (Tor) in order to ensure that their identities remain concealed. Specialized “darknet explorers” enable customers to access their desired market platform, where goods are then typically paid for in cryptocurrencies, in particular bitcoins. The delivery of drugs purchased on the darknets is generally carried out by public and private postal services without their knowledge, with parcels often being sent to anonymous post office boxes, including automated booths, or “pack stations”, for self-service collection. The main advantage of the dark web (darknets) for both suppliers and customers is the anonymity of the transaction: no physical contact is required and the reticence of some customers to interact with drug dealers is therefore reduced. The need for the customer to go to dangerous places to buy drugs is also removed.

¹¹ Karol Suarez, Narco Submarines, Yahoo News, (Oct 28, 2021, 08.30 AM)
<https://news.yahoo.com/narco-submarines-play-growing-role-140847380.html>

Customers also benefit from other customers' feedback about the quality of the drugs sold, which helps them evaluate the reliability of the supplier.

Drug Transactions in The Dark Web:

Cannabis accounts for the largest share of drug transactions made on the 19 major darknet markets analysed over the period 2011–2020 and its share has been increasing. After cannabis, the substances accounting for the largest shares are synthetic stimulants (mostly amphetamine, dexamphetamine, Ritalin (methylphenidate), Adderall (i.e., tablets containing amphetamine), Modafinil (a substitute for amphetamine), methamphetamine and various cathinones, such as mephedrone, MDPV, methylone or α -PVP), "ecstasy" and cocaine. Opioids sold on the dark web include oxycodone, hydromorphone, hydrocodone, codeine, buprenorphine, methadone, tramadol, tapentadol, fentanyl and heroin. The country from which the drugs offered for sale are shipped are United States (29% of all drug transactions), followed by United Kingdom (21%), Germany (13%), Netherlands (9%), Australia (7%) and Canada (5%).¹² In Asia, the territories of shipment of drugs sold on the 19 major darknet markets analysed were China and India, followed by Hong Kong, China, Singapore, Afghanistan and Thailand.

Major Darknet Markets In 2021:

Hydra Market was the largest darknet Market. The drugs most likely trafficked were Stimulants such as Amphetamine, Mephedrone, Cathinones, Cannabis, Cocaines, Opioids and Hallucinogens. The second largest darknet Market was Cannazon, a market mainly specializes in the sale of Cannabis. Next is the Empire and its best selling drugs were Cannabis, Synthetic Stimulants mostly Amphetamines and Cocaine. Another Darknet Market is the Whitehouse. It was established around February 2019 and it accepts the virtual currency monero, rather than bitcoin, as its only form of payment. The above are some of the Major Darknet Markets in 2021.

Social Media Platforms:

Social-media platforms are being used to recruit new sellers. Research in the UK found that social

¹² UNODC Research, World Drug Report 2021, Booklet 2, 79 – 80 (2021)
https://www.unodc.org/res/wdr2021/field/WDR21_Booklet_2.pdf

media has reportedly been used to advertise the luxurious lifestyles of drug dealers and to groom child dealers as a way of cutting out the middleman, thereby penetrating local markets directly. Social-media platforms are being used to recruit new sellers. Research in the UK found that social media has reportedly been used to advertise the luxurious lifestyles of drug dealers and to groom child dealers as a way of cutting out the middleman, thereby penetrating local markets directly¹³. Social media is thus able to create new opportunities for transactional relationships between criminal groups and new ad-hoc employees.

Body Packing:

Body packing is one of the common ways to traffic illicit drugs. Drug mules usually swallow or insert drugs within the gastrointestinal tract. Detection of such drug packets has become difficult because of the constantly improving packaging techniques and the sophistication used by traffickers. The material of the drug packets is mostly made with latex.¹⁴ Predominantly, latex material includes the usage of latex gloves fingers, balloons, or multilayered condoms. The packets are not always radiodense, therefore they can be difficult to detect on conventional abdominal radiographs.

Air Transport Alternatives: - Drones

Drug Traffickers have sought alternatives to typical planes, helicopters and light aircraft because they have become more easily detectable for authorities and less profitable. The increased use of drones combined with lagging legislation to regulate them in the region has been a boon to organized crime groups that traffic cocaine internationally. criminal groups had gone so far as to commission custom-made drones designed to carry more drugs. On 10th September 2021, The Border Security Force (BSF) has recovered 6 kg of Heroin that was smuggled to India from Pakistan with the help of a drone in Punjab's Amritsar. Also the Punjab smugglers buy drones

¹³ Lucia bird & Thi Hong, Transformative Technologies, Global Initiative Against Transnational Organised Crime, 7, (2020) <https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Transformative-Technologies-WEB.pdf>

¹⁴ Ayoub Ahmad Abedzadeh, New Packaging Methods of body packers, 14, 627 – 633, (2019) <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1930043319300536>

from websites such as OLX for drug trafficking from Pakistan.¹⁵

Robots:

Televend is an automated digital retail system used to sell illegal drugs on the encrypted messaging app Telegram. On a traditional Darknet Markets, vendors need to have human workers logged in online for as much of the day as possible, to accept and process orders. Their tasks include decrypting customers' shipping addresses, preparing labels and packing drugs for postal delivery, marking packs' shipment status and monitoring and updating stock levels to prevent purchases of sold-out product lines. Televend bots do all of this automatically. Once Telegram users have added Televend as a contact and navigated their way through a couple of stages, they find a list of vendors selling every drug imaginable. After tapping on a vendor they trust or recognise, they reach the vendor's storefront, which is staffed 24/7 by robots.

The above are all the technologies used by Drug Traffickers for trafficking drugs.

INDIAN LEGISLATIONS THAT COUNTER DRUG TRAFFICKING:

The Legislations which counters drug trafficking in India are as follows:

- The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985
- The Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1988
- The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Regulation of Controlled Substances) Order, 2013 and Amendment Order, 2018

LAW ENFORCING AGENCIES – NDPS ACT:

The Law Enforcing Agencies empowered under NDPS Act are NCB(Narcotics Control Bureau

¹⁵ Manjeet Sehgal, Punjab smugglers buying drones from OLX to fetch drugs, arms consignments from Pakistan, India Today, (Jan 12, 2020, 09.51 PM) <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/punjab-smugglers-buying-drones-from-olx-to-fetch-drugs-arms-consignments-from-pakistan-1636261-2020-01-12>

in terms of Section 4(3) of NDPS Act). It is the central authority for exercising powers and functions and a nodal agency for matters pertaining to drug law enforcement in India and coordinates actions taken by various agencies of central and state government. It includes any Officer (being an officer superior in rank to peon, sepoy or constable) of the departments of Central Excise, Narcotics, Customs, Revenue Intelligence, Sashatra Seema Bal or other department of Central government including

Para-Military forces or armed forces as is empowered in this behalf by general or special order by the Central Government or any officer (being an officer superior in rank to a peon, sepoy or constable) of the revenue, drugs control, excise, police or any other department of a State Government as is empowered in this behalf by general or special order of the State Government. They have the power of entry, search, seizure and arrest without warrant. NCB is signatory to all UN Drug Conventions and SAARC Conventions.¹⁶

ROLE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES:

The role of Law Enforcement Agencies in order to counter Narcotics are as follows:

- i. Surveillance and enforcement at import points and land borders.
- ii. Preventive and interdiction efforts along the known drug routes.
- iii. Control measures at export points, such as air-passenger terminals, cargo terminals and foreign post offices.
- iv. Improved co-ordination between the various drug law enforcement agencies.
- v. Identification and eradication of illicit cultivation and the wild growth of cannabis and the opium poppy.
- vi. Strengthening of the intelligence apparatus to improve the collection, collation, analysis and dissemination of operational intelligence

¹⁶ Narcotics Control Bureau, <https://narcoticsindia.nic.in/#>, (last visited Dec 14, 2021)

- vii. Increased international co-operation, both in operational and long term intelligence as well as in investigations and mutual legal assistance.
- viii. Assisting States in enhancing their drug law enforcement effort;
- ix. Collection and dissemination of intelligence;
- x. Analysis of seizure data, study of trends and modus operandi;
- xi. Preparation of National Drug Enforcement Statistics;
- xii. Liaison with International agencies such as UNDCP, INCB, INTERPOL, Customs Cooperation Council, RILO etc;
- xiii. National contact point for intelligence and investigations

CONTRIBUTIONS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES:

a) OPERATION TRANCE:

The NCB was part of a global 'Operation Trance', launched in December 2019. The International Narcotics Control Board's (INCB) 'Operation Trance', together with the authorities of India, announced the dismantling of a criminal network trafficking psychoactive substances via the darknet in the year 2020¹⁷. Using information from 'Operation Trance', 135 kg of psychoactive substances and hundreds of thousands of tramadol and other psychoactive tablets were seized, four suspects were arrested, and, for the first time, a darknet vendor operating in India was dismantled. The INCB operation, which concluded in January, involved 74 governments as well as Interpol, the Oceania Customs Organization (OCO), the Universal Postal Union (UPU) and the World Customs Organization (WCO).

b) OPERATION LION FISH

¹⁷ International Narcotics Control board, <https://www.incb.org/incb/en/news/press-releases/2020/major-tramadol-trafficking-network-dismantled-under-incbs-operation-trance.html> (last visited Dec 14, 2021)

The operation "revealed a network of West African and Asian organised crime groups behind trafficking in methamphetamine¹⁹¹⁸ -one of the most smuggled drugs in the region. Traffickers are increasingly swallowing condoms filled with liquid cocaine to cheat traditional detection methods. The campaign, called Operation Lionfish - ASEAN, involved more than 2,000 police and customs officials in 14 countries. It focused on drug trafficking through airports while a second phase will target land and sea borders. They identified cocaine trafficking route via Ethiopia to destinations in the Middle East, Asia and Pacific". It resulted in seizure of 1,000 bricks of Cocaine in South Africa. Police and Customs officials spread over 41 countries, arrested 287 individuals in this operation.

CHALLENGES FACED BY LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES:

The Challenges faced by Law Enforcement Agencies are enlisted below.

New Technologies:

The rapid development of new technologies also threatens the efficacy of law enforcement efforts. The global reach of the internet as a platform both for communication and coordination between traffickers is impacting upon the movement of illicit consignments and the modus operandi employed by trafficking groups. Law enforcement effectiveness is challenged if agencies do not adapt to the growing role played by cyber technologies in drug trafficking and related money-laundering activities.

Proximity to Golden Triangle and Golden Crescent:

The Golden Triangle represents the region coinciding with the rural mountains of Myanmar, Laos and Thailand. It is Southeast Asia's main opium-producing region and one of the oldest narcotics supply routes to Europe and North America. States of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, and Nagaland share their border with Myanmar. Drugs including opium, heroin, methamphetamine and many more are smuggled from Myanmar into the northeast. Also, drugs

¹⁸ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime,
<https://www.unodc.org/southasia/frontpage/2012/october/drug-mules-swallowed-by-the-illicit-drug-trade.html> (last visited Dec 14, 2021)

illicitly cultivated in India travel through the same route for trade. Drugs produced in the 'Golden Triangle' enter India through Mizoram, Manipur, and Nagaland from Bhamo, Lashio, and Mandalay in Myanmar. Indo-Myanmar border is guarded by the Assam Rifles (AR), a paramilitary force, under the operational control of Indian Army's Eastern Command. India-Myanmar share friendly relations and are not involved in any border dispute. Therefore, there is no strict fencing of this stretch. Moreover, as part of an understanding between the Indian and Burmese government, there exists a Free Movement Regime (FMR) between India and Myanmar, allowing free movement of Indians and Burmese within 16 km of the border without visa restrictions. Poor state of education, unemployment, poverty, Corruptions by police officials make the people vulnerable and the traffickers use this vulnerability and manipulate their minds into joining criminal rackets.

The Golden Crescent overlaps three countries namely Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. Heroin and Hashish are produced in Golden Crescent region and are trafficked into India through the border states of Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir.

New Psychoactive Substances:

New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) present a new global phenomenon in the drug market. It poses significant risk to public health and a challenge to drug policy¹⁹. This phenomenon is characterized by the emergence of a significant number of new substances every year that are not controlled under international drug control conventions, which means that their trafficking is legal. These substances mimic traditional illicit drugs and may cause severe adverse health effects. Law enforcement and healthcare professionals are becoming more and more concerned as they struggle with how to react to these new risks. Furthermore, legislation is proving inadequate to monitor and control the situation, allowing NPS proliferation to outpace healthcare and justice systems worldwide and also these are not controlled under International Drug Control Conventions.

¹⁹ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, <https://www.unodc.org/LSS/Page/NPS> (last visited Dec 14, 2021)

Unearthing Entire Supply chain:

Police Agencies should focus more on busting the entire supply chain to stop the actual supply of flow of drugs in the city. But the city's police often don't prefer going after the suppliers as they work in a set format and are bound with too many restrictions – one of the biggest ones being the problem of jurisdiction. To bust a supply chain, the law enforcers keep on looking for the intelligence thread linked to the entire chain at any level, from consumers to the manufacturers or cartel runners. The majority of cartels, especially the domestic ones, keep on changing their methods, locations and members to stay off the radar of the NCB or other law enforcement agencies. The groups would set up some makeshift facilities in the interiors of the country, produce drugs and then dismantle everything.

Lack of Training and Infrastructure:

Cryptocurrencies have emerged as the most advanced methods of terror financing and when it is being transacted on the dark net-like TOR, Freenet, Zeronet and Perfectdark, it becomes untraceable for the security agencies²⁰. Money launderers, cybercriminals and terrorists find cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin, Monero, Ripples and Zcash highly convenient because they offer anonymity and non-traceability. The security agencies need to be trained to penetrate these online systems to trace the sources of funding and purpose so that the preventive steps can be taken. The darknet also provides self-destructive mailboxes and proxy servers where people can use fake IDs. It definitely makes it difficult to prove a particular charge and there is a requirement for an amendment to the Information Technology Act and Evidence Act. We need to increase our infrastructures like high configuration servers and better coordination in sharing information with foreign law enforcing agencies.

These are the challenges faced by the Law Enforcing Agencies in combatting Drug Trafficking. These needs to be overcome by appropriate policies and strategies, Intelligence, Enforcement

²⁰ Sentinel Digital Desk, Experts: India needs to check the use of cryptocurrency for terror funding, (Nov 16, 2021, 07.33 AM) <https://www.sentinelassam.com/topheadlines/experts-india-needs-to-check-the-use-of-cryptocurrency-for-terror-funding-563323>

and Coordination in order to endeavor a drug free society which is also the vision of Narcotics Control Bureau.

CONCLUSION:

This article clearly states about the latest technologies used by the drug traffickers and the role played and challenges faced by Law Enforcement Agencies in combatting drug menace and trafficking. Drug Trafficking is an Organized Crime and its associated dangers are Murder, Rape, Human Trafficking, Money laundering, Terrorism etc. So in order to stop the sale and consumption of illegal drugs, Law Enforcement Agencies must focus on the source of supply. Exposing a drug traffic network requires years of planning, intelligence collection and sustained efforts to bust the network. Enforcement Agencies should focus mainly on tracking the network deeply and prosecuting the producers and suppliers. The law dealing with drugs and narcotic substances must distinguish between suppliers of drugs and street peddlers (small time sellers). Smugglers and suppliers and members of this organized crime should be awarded large number of fines and punishments.

I consider the primary raw material in drug trafficking is the Capital. The illegal drug market is profitable because of its illegality. It is reasonable cheap to grow and produce illicit drugs, the price dramatically increases when a drug is trafficked out of the country because of the risks involved. Hardly 1% of revenue generated by cocaine and heroin trades goes to farmers who produce the crops. Lavish amounts are spent in changing the distribution and marketing strategies and in providing training to the people who indulge in this illegal trade. It is evident that drug traffickers invest a hefty sum of money to smuggle drugs. One such example is the building of Narco Submarines. So focus must be made in arresting the drug pins but in reality the drug pins lead a lavish life style by escaping from the law enforcement agencies. The supply networks have to be eradicated worldwide through the coordinated efforts and exchange of intelligence between countries. As far as demand is considered, it may vanish if supply chain is interrupted. Finally Sustainable development goals Target 16.4 states that by 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime. This has to be publicized, and Government efforts needs to be coordinated by each citizen and they must strive to achieve this target by not taking the drugs.

Drug Free India is not only a dream but with a Nation's commitment it can be a reality too in mere future.

SUGGESTIONS:

The following are few suggestions to witness a drug free India.

- a. Public must be made aware regarding the consumption of drugs and its harmful impact on health.
- b. Ministry of Home Affairs, in its fight against drug abuse, has posted a pledge in its website, stating "Say Yes to Life and No to Drugs"²¹. It must be taken seriously and honestly by youths and by all the professionals and general public.
- c. Delay in Trial for those arrested on drug charges. They spend years in jail before their cases finally come up for hearing. In "The Hindu" dated 17.02.2021, The court directed the Narcotics Control Bureau to pay a sum of Rs.100000/- as compensation to accused for delay in trial as he was remanded in Judicial custody in 2018 and the trial was yet to commence. These delays indirectly helps the chain of drug traffickers to evade from Law Enforcing Agencies. So Speedy Trial is a must.
- d. Training, Infrastructure facilities must be given to Law Enforcement Agencies.
- e. They must also be equipped with advanced and specialized cyber courses to deal with darknet issues.

²¹ Narcotics Control Bureau, <https://pledge.mygov.in/fightagainstdrugabuse/> (last visited on Dec 13, 2021)