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## The performance of the prevention and suppression of narcotics by Border Patrol Police: A case study of Border Patrol Police Company 327, Chiang Rai Province

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#### Abstract

This research has two objectives: the first objective is a needs analysis of the prevention and suppression of Border Patrol Police against narcotics. The second objective is recommending solutions for increasing the efficiency of the prevention and suppression of the drug trafficking network by Border Patrol Police Company 327 in Chiang Rai Province. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to gather information. Approximately five participants were purposively selected and interviewed, and 169 volunteer samples were surveyed. This research found that the most significant problems and obstacles to implementing prevention and suppression by Border Patrol Police against narcotics are as follows: suppressing and arresting the perpetrators; investigating the case and prosecuting; searching for news and intelligence; managing and administrating investigations; coordination with other organizations and agencies; control and surveillance; and public relations.

In addition, guidelines and recommendations to increase efficiency of strategies for the suppression and prevention of drug trafficking networks are to increase the efficiency concerning news and intelligence operations, such as asking for cooperation from interviewees while providing them with protection and risk prevention as well as giving rewards to those interviewees with experience. These practices must include the following: arresting the perpetrators, developing new techniques and forms to arrest the perpetrators, coordinating with any involved agencies in order to build good relations, and embrace both government and private sectors in addition to those individuals who are responsible for exchanging information in order to efficiently prevent and suppress drug trafficking networks.

**Keywirds:** prevention and suppression of narcotics, drug addiction, Border Patrol Police, drug networks, narcotics trafficking

### 1. Background and Significance of Problems

All social sectors in Thailand widely accept drug problems as a critical problem at the national level. It has also become an influential agenda of the nation, which urgently needs to be addressed and analyzed from causes to the consequences because every social sector is being adversely affected by the growing spread of narcotics. Even though there have been strict measures of suppression and prevention against drug traffickers and drug addicts, the number of drug dealers, drug addicts, and cases of drug trafficking increase every year (Paterapulvadon, et al. 2017). In 2017, it was expected that these numbers would increase and affect 271 million or 5.5% of the total world population, aged between 15 and 64 years old, which is similar to the numbers from the previous year, 2016. In addition, it is anticipated that the number of drug dealers will increase by 30% from the year 2009, while several world populations will increase by around 10%. Additionally, it was reported that the uses of drugs extracted from opium are prevalent in the regions of North America, Africa, Asia, and Europe when compared to the year 2009. Meanwhile, the uses of marijuana are increasingly spreading in North America, South America, and Asia as well (*BBC News*, 2019). These reports clearly indicate the critical problem of drug trafficking and use increasing and spreading throughout the world. According to these unfortunate statistics, it is anticipated that these will pose problems for the implementation of suppression against narcotics unless it is more thoroughly studied (Kampunthong, 2019).

The Drug Safety Pracharath Ruamjai Plan 2018 is composed of 4 plans: drug suppression plan, drug treatment plan, drug protection plan, and completes the administrative plan. These plans aim to reduce drug problems in three parts--upstream, midstream, and downstream--by concluding the overall results in 2018 as follows:

- 1. Internationally aggressive operation plan: the overall results of the Mekong River safety zone covering six countries (total period three years) showed 1,836 of arrest cases with 3,376 suspects possessing evidence such as amphetamine, marijuana, ice, heroin, opium, ecstasy, chemicals, and substrate. Accordingly, the performance of the cooperative framework in controlling narcotic spread at global and regional levels in Asia resulted in good cooperation between associated countries, which are bilaterally: Thai and Laos, Thai and Singapore, Thai and Myanmar, Thai and Malaysia, Thai and China, and Thai and Cambodia (*Chiangmai News*, 2018).
- 2. Suppression plans against drug trafficking networks: suppression and law enforcement lead to 298,975 arrest cases with 322,294 suspects covering 75,862 cases with five substantial charges against 89,928 suspects possessing narcotic evidence such as amphetamine, marijuana, and ice under the allegation of conspiracy, support, and assistance (*Chiangmai News*, 2018).
- 3. Prevention and drug treatment plans in the village and community regarding drug protection for children and minors in academic institutions and a group of primary children must emphasize the building of immunity and the development of cognitive skills by the conveyance of Brain Executive Functions (BEF). In addition, those plans should be targeted at workforces in the business sector as well as ordinary people in the villages/communities as security communities with drug safety suppression in accordance with Drug Safety Pracharath Ruamjai Plan 2018. This plan also includes drug treatment and rehabilitation, with 184,907 drug addicts who receive treatment covering three systems. The government operation to suppress and solve drug problems from 2015 to 2018 resulted in consistently alleviating the drug problems in Thailand (*Chiang Mai News*, 2018). However, the problems of the implementation of prevention and suppression against drug trafficking networks are periodically manifested.

However, a police study of drug suppression found that there are many problems with this implementation. For instance, a case study by Paterapulvadon, et al. (2017) studying the problem of implementation of prevention and suppression against drugs by police officers working in police stations, Petchabun Province, found that the overall problem of implementation of prevention and suppression against drugs by police officers was at a high level. The problem of suppression and arrest showed the maximum level, followed by public relations, investigating the cases, and finding the intelligence and information. The overall problem of administration of prevention and suppression against drugs was at a high level. The aspect of administration appeared at the maximum level, followed by materials and tools of the workforce and expenditures. Administrative resource factors were workforce, expenditures, materials, tools, and administration leading to the implementation of prevention and suppression against drugs at a significant level. In addition, a study conducted by Chamaiporn Thanormsreedech Chai (2016) regarding the administration of the prevention of drugs by city municipalities according to the concept of sustainable administration revealed that the problems of administration were the city municipal operating in drug prevention without using extensive networks.

Border Patrol Police is another essential agency responsible for prevention and suppression against drugs, in cooperation with other agencies, under the Royal Thai Police Headquarters. This agency acts as a police operation, as reinforcement replacing military force maintaining peace along the border areas in accord with the Geneva Treaty between Thailand and France. It determines military force within the radius of 25 kilometers from border areas. The aim of establishing Border Patrol Police at the initial phase is to protect Communists from invading the country. However, at present, the Border Patrol Police are responsible for suppressing drugs, especially amphetamine, entering into Thailand, especially the Border Patrol Police Company 327, Chiang Rai Province, who are accountable for providing support in blocking drug trafficking with consistency because of the heavy inundation of narcotics from neighboring countries. It can be noticed by the confiscation of evidence by police, such as amphetamine in the central area before transporting to the southern region (Public Relations Office 3, Chiang Mai, 2019). Consequently, these lead to searching and investigating the problem and obstacles to the implementation of prevention and suppression against drug networks to find the guidelines in enhancing work efficiency in the future.

### 2. Research Objectives

- 1. To study the problems and obstacles to the implementation of prevention and suppression against drug networks by the Border Patrol Police Company 327, Chiang Rai Province
- 2. To propose guidelines and recommendations for the efficient implementation of strategies for the prevention and suppression of narcotics trafficking

### 3. Research Methodology

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to gather data. For the qualitative method, approximately five purposively selected participants were interviewed. These five participants are Border Patrol Police from the Border Patrol Police Company 327, Chiang Rai Province. Table 1 provides a list of five participants who were interviewed. The selected participants must have at least three years of work experience. The participants provided detailed information to help answer the research questions.

Table 1: The interviewees to in-depth interviews

Border Patrol Police Officers	Number (individual)		
Inspector of Border Patrol Police Company 327	1		
Sub – Inspector 3271	1		
Sub – Inspector 3272	1		
Sub – Inspector 3273	1		
Sub – Inspector 3274	1		
Total	5		

For the quantitative method, a voluntary sampling was used, and approximately 169 police officers in the Border Patrol Police Company 327 were surveyed. These 169 police officers were the total number of Border Patrol Police Company 327 as of October 2019.

### 4. Research Results

# 4.1 Problems and obstacles to implementing prevention and suppression against drug trafficking networks by the Border Patrol Police from the Border Patrol Police Company 327, Chiang Rai Province

For the in-depth interview, 5 participants were interviewed to gather more detailed and specific information. The following are the responses of the participants:

- 1. The first, third, and fourth interviewees are experienced officers aged between 34 and 53 years old with positions ranging from Police Surgent Major to Police Sub-Lieutenant and have education levels from below bachelor's degree and single, ascending to the doctorate level, married and having a monthly salary of 23,000 to 35,000 baht; they also have 9 to 30 years of work experience. Although these police officers have extensive work experience, they find few chances for promotions to become Deputy Commissioner General, which requires a high level of decision-making capacity to be in the command line of the police department.
- 2. The second and fifth interviewees are a police officers who have less work experience when compared to the other participants, 3 to 5 years, graduated from the Royal Police Cadet Academy, are aged between 24 and 27 years old, have positions from Police Lieutenant to Police Captain with a single status, and salaries between 20,000 and 25,000 baht. Although they have less work experience, they an excellent chance to be promoted to Commissioner-General as they graduated from the Royal Police Cadet Academy. This group of participants tends to use theoretical knowledge rather than work experience when compared to the first group. Therefore, to achieve the best efficiency for drug prevention and suppression, these two groups of participants must work together and help each other.

From in-depth interviews, there are 12 problems and obstacles to implement drug prevention and suppression which are (1) the problem of suppression and arresting (capturing drug perpetrators); (2) the

problem of finding the intelligence and investigating the cases; (3) the problem of administration; (4) the problem of equipment; (5) the problem of personnel; (6) the problem of expenditures; (7) danger for their life; (8) the problem of coordination between agencies; (9) the problem of surveillance; (10) the problem of drug treatment; (11) the problem of poor and uninvolved, or disengaged communities; and (12) the problem of public relations. However, the top three significant problems and obstacles to implementing drug prevention and suppression by Border Patrol Police are as follows: gathering intelligence related to drugs, suppression and arresting (drug perpetrators), and cooperation with other agencies.

The first problem is gathering information related to drug trafficking. Regarding the work of investigating the case and finding the intelligence (informant operation), most informants were reluctant to cooperate with the officer because they fear retaliation from the drug dealers and require excessively expensive rewards, together with the lack of enough funding for investigating and finding the intelligence, such as the cost of petrol, food, and accommodation. Too frequently, the police officer had to use personal funds to support their working operation, which is consistent with the first interviewee, who stated:

Major problems and obstacles to the implementation of drug prevention and suppression are about investigating the cases and finding the news because most news lines were reluctant to giving cooperation with the officer because they fear the dangers and require too expensive rewards.

As the second interviewee similarly stated:

The main problem and obstacle to the implement drug prevention and suppression is about investigation cases and finding the news, together with the lack of enough budgets to access more information, such as the cost of petrol, food, and accommodation. More often, the police officer had to spend personal funds to support their working operation.

Suppressing and arresting the drug perpetrators is the second problem. It is difficult to find evidence to charge the primary suspects in specific areas because most big drug dealers do not live in Thailand. Therefore, most of the arrested drug perpetrators are a small group, and mostly involved in drug delivery. Therefore, the police find it very difficult to get access to primary drug operators. In addition, currently, the number of drug traffickers importing into Thailand are increasing. Thailand is becoming the place for drug storage with numerous conveyor paths. Moreover, modern communication methods in Thailand have become so congested that it is difficult for police checkpoints to stop and arrest drug traffickers who use sophisticated methods such as: using new technology for money transfer instead of cash, and, with the easy transfer methods and new modifications of drug payments, such as using bitcoin for payment as well as money laundering of drug money.

Additionally, in the present, most drug traffickers living in the southern region prefer to use nature trails for delivering narcotics with increasing rates aside from utilizing an assortment of drug-delivery forms, making it impossible for a police officer to arrest the drug perpetrators which makes it challenging to eradicate drug trafficking in Thailand. As the first interviewee explained:

The problem and obstacle to the implementation of drug prevention and suppression is the difficulty in arresting the influential persons in many areas as well as to find strong evidence because most of them are not living in Thailand; however, the police instead are always capturing minor drug traffickers.

As the third interviewee similarly stated:

The problem and obstacle to the implement drug prevention and suppression is that the number of drug dealers is being multiplied, leading the narcotics flowing into the country as the place for drug storage with many delivery paths, while communication in Thailand is so heavily congested that it is difficult for the police to set up the checkpoint to capture those drug perpetrators. Moreover, most of them use modern methods for drug trades, such as using bitcoin instead of cash in the past.

Similarly, the fourth interviewee stated:

I think the main problem and obstacle to implementing drug prevention and suppression is arresting the drug traffickers because, nowadays, most drug dealers live in the border areas, which allows them easier access through natural paths for delivering drugs as well as access to more advanced conveyance methods, thus, making it impossible for police officers to arrest them; these are the most serious problems as seen today.

The third problem is cooperation with other agencies. It is quite difficult to establish relations with other organizations because the officers need to use news and information supported by the news lines. However, they often share insufficient information; so, while working, they cannot share the same information equally. This makes operations inconsistent. This finding is similar with the first interviewee, who stated:

The problem and obstacle to the implement drug prevention and suppression is the lack of complete cooperation; especially when the officers are working with other agencies, this causes some problem because of being unable to share information 100%, thus leading to unequal and dissimilar information followed by a discontinuity of operation.

# 4.2 Guidelines and recommendations to enhance the efficiency of the implementation of drug prevention and suppression of the Border Patrol Police can be concluded as follows:

The five interviewed participants suggest the following recommendations:

1. It is essential to eliminate the source of narcotics together with strictly controlling and aggressively penalizing both drug traffickers and drug addicts, which is in accord with the first interviewee, who stated:

I agree that they should eradicate the narcotic sources besides imposing aggressive penalties on those drug dealers and drug addicts to make them afraid of legal punishment.

2. There must be the integration of policy working jointly with the neighboring countries to prevent and reduce the amount of narcotics flowing into Thailand, which is in line with the first interviewee, who stated:

Integration policy should be launched by jointly working with those neighboring countries; this can help reduce the influx of drugs into Thailand.

3. It is necessary to provide education about narcotics to the minority populations as well as the majority of each community so that they have the knowledge they need to help them choose to avoid drugs. As the second interviewee stated:

The minority should be provided enough knowledge equal to people in the larger communities; this can lead to more lawful behavior, law abiding citizens and greater respect for the law.

4. It is also vital to add and provide more equipment for the investigations, such as drones, bugs, GPS, guns, armed forces, and more funding to be consistent with the increasing workload. As the third interviewee explained:

They should increase the funding and equipment for investigation tools, such as drones, bugs, GPS, firearms, armed force, and budgets to accommodate increasing work of the police.

5. It is crucial to launch a policy for supporting dealers by making the trade of drugs legal and by taxing the sale of drugs by the government, which is consistent with the fourth interviewee who explained:

There should be a policy allowing a legal drug trade, but with limitations to the quantity of narcotics traded. They also should pay taxes to the government in order to provide better control and supervision of lawful narcotics trading.

6. It is imperative to add financial support to the budgets of the Border Police so that they can implement drug suppression strategies effectively and consistent with their duties and responsibilities. As the fifth interviewee noted:

The Border police should receive more financial support to help their implementation of drug suppression consistent with their duties.

# 4.3 Recommendations to implement the prevention and suppression of drug trafficking networks by the Border Patrol Police from the Border Patrol Police Company 327, Chiang Rai Province (Quantitative Research)

Table 2: The guidelines and recommendations to implement prevention and suppression against drug trafficking networks with more efficiency

Order	The guideline and recommendation to implementation of prevention and suppression against drug trafficking networks with more efficiency	$\overline{X}$	S.D.	Translation
1.	It is necessary to increase the efficiency of "the campaign for drug prevention"	3.10	1.190	average
2.	It is essential to increase the efficiency of "news operation"	3.59	1.031	high
3.	It is vital to increase the efficiency of "arresting drug perpetrators"	3.52	1.023	average
4.	It is crucial to boost the efficiency of "training armed forces and strategies"	3.34	1.220	average
5.	It is paramount to boost the efficiency of cooperation with all involved agencies"	3.44	1.106	average
	Totaling	3.39	0.0496	average

Table 2 shows guidelines and recommendations to implement prevention and suppression against drug trafficking networks with more efficiency. It was found that the overview score is at a moderate level ( $\overline{X}$  =3.39, S.D.= 0.0496). The efficiency of intelligence operation should be improved at a high level ( $\overline{X}$  =3.59, S.D.=1.031), followed by the efficiency of arresting the perpetrators should be enhanced at an average level ( $\overline{X}$  =3.52, S.D.=1.023). The efficiency of "cooperation with any related agencies" should be bettered at an average level ( $\overline{X}$  =3.44, S.D.=1.106).

The guidelines and recommendations to implement strategies of prevention and suppression against drug trafficking networks with more efficiency indicate that the overall score is at an average level. Table 2 also reveals that the efficiency of news operations is the highest priority to be improved, followed by the efficiency of arresting the perpetrators and the efficiency of "cooperation with any related agencies".

### 5. Discussion

## 5.1 The problem and obstacle to the implementation of drug prevention and suppression by Border Patrol Police from Border Patrol Police Company 327, Chiang Rai Province

The problems and obstacles to the implementation of drug prevention and suppression by Border Patrol Police is the lack of more involvement with case investigation, the search for intelligence, administrative management, materials and tools, armed forces, expenditures, risks, cooperation, control and surveillance, treatment of drug addicts, reinforcement in the community, and public relations. This finding is in line with research by Kunyapatt, et al. (2017), who found that the problem and obstacle to the implementation of drug prevention and suppression by police officers from Petchabun Police Station, Petchabun Province appeared to be the overall image was at the high level. When considering each aspect with descending orders, it was turned out that the aspect of arrest and suppression was at the highest level, followed by public relations, cased investigation before ending with the search of news. This research was also agreeable with the study by Chamaiporn Thanormsri Dech Chai (2016) reporting that the significant problem concerning administrative management was the implementation of drug prevention without using extensive operating networks. This study is consistent with research by Aek Patthara Lao Mee Pon (2015), indicating that the number of officers responsible for drug suppression was insufficient and meager because of high risks and the lack of operators and tools contributing to drug suppression in this responsibility. Furthermore, there were obstructions to the operation due to the delay of taking effect of the policy on drug suppression in hierarchal orders; moreover, each department has its commanding line, thus leading to disunity in the solutions to drug problems. There were also the problems of cooperation with other departments depending on unofficial collaboration, together with budget allocation to support drug suppression dispersed throughout many agencies. Additional problems also include budget scramble, the incompletion of work operation, and limitation and delay in allocating budgets. Meanwhile, the obstacles to the implementation of police officers include weak enforcement of law and feeble punishment on those repetitive drug perpetrators making the police officer unable to use full force in searching for narcotics, insufficient work performance, inadequate tools and equipment, incomplete physical condition of the officers, and lack of officer training. This finding is in accordance with the research by Pada Sree Touyeun (2015) finding that the problem of cooperation and solution to drug problem by the community leader in Uttaradit Province has four aspects, which are the problem of planning, the problem of control and surveillance, the problem of drug treatment on the addicts, and the most severe problem of community reinforcement; the overall image is at average level. The above findings agree with a study by Aummarit Suwanit (2015) who found that the problems in operation of the Drug Prevention and Suppression Center in Pho Thong District, Ang Thong Province, can be categorized into four different aspects, each with diverse problems: the structure and roles of the operators, cooperation system, mobilization of Drug Prevention and Suppression Center, and the resources used for administering personnel. This finding is agreeable with the study by one interviewee saying:

The problem and obstacle to the implementation of drug prevention and suppression against drug trafficking networks involve with the difficulty in arresting and suppression, case investigation, accessing for more information, armed forces, limited budgets, high risks, incomplete cooperation, control and surveillance, treatment on drug addicts, and community reinforcement.

These findings are also consistent with one interviewee who described the problems and obstacles to the implementation of drug prevention and suppression against drug trafficking networks by Border Patrol Police in the following:

Most problems and obstacle to the implementation of drug prevention and suppression against drug trafficking networks are the problems of suppressing the increasing number of drug dealers together with rising inundation of narcotics into Thailand as the place for drug storage with many delivery paths as well as heavily congested communication, making it difficult to set up police checkpoints for arresting those drug traffickers who use much more complex methods than in the past, such as using bitcoin for trading drugs instead of cash as well as utilizing easier money transfer methods for drug trades.

## 5.2 The guidelines and recommendations for the police to implement drug prevention and suppression strategies and policies more efficiently:

The guideline and recommendations for drug prevention and suppression to perform their work more efficiently are overall at the average level. Therefore, it is necessary to increase the efficiency level of "News Operation," the efficiency of "arresting drug perpetrators," and the efficiency of "cooperation with any involved agencies." Aside from these, there must be an increasing struggle to eliminate the sources of narcotics, together with using policy with completion working joining with neighboring countries more seriously as well as facilitating convenient communication and providing more education to the minority group, allocating more investigation tools and equipment, and spending more budgets contributing to drug suppression. According to Phraparn Takkatok, et al. (2017), the commanders play a crucial role in building morale and motivation to police officers who operate in drug suppression, together with increasing the support in materials and equipment for operation, providing more training for police officers so that they can be active to the updated situation. Furthermore, the place is another crucial factor contributing to the implementation of drug suppression with consistency by police officers because some areas are closed and have complicated routes, making it hard for the police officer to access the investigation. In contrast, many areas have open spaces making it easy for those drug traffickers to see the movement of police officers in the far distance and make an easy escape before being arrested by the police.

At present, the forms of drug trades are drastically changing, making it difficult for the police to arrest drug perpetrators and collect relevant evidence for making a successful case against them. According to Chamaiporn Thanoemsreedech (2016), an important guideline for developing administrative management is to keep the operation in drug prevention updated by using modernized networks, such as internet, social media, and LINE application; at the same time, the municipal city should increase public relation and convince private sectors to participate in this mission. Pada Sree Touyeun (2015) found that the guideline to support cooperation in prevention and solution to the drug problem is to have government agencies hold meetings to identify operational plans joined by community leaders and people so that they can reach mutual understanding. Moreover, the community leader should be responsible for control and surveillance on drug addicts and perpetrators more consistently and thoughtfully. In the meantime, government agencies should support and encourage community leaders to receive frequent training and seminar as to giving sensible advice to those drug addicts and their families aside from giving supports to people and arousing them to partake in drug prevention and solution within their community in earnest. Furthermore, another interviewee explained his opinion about the guideline and suggestion to drug prevention and suppression by the Border Patrol Police in order to have work operation more efficiency by saying:

They should add and develop investigation tools and equipment, such as drone, bugs, GPS, firearms, armed force, and more expenditure to accommodate increasing workloads.

These comments are in agreement with another interviewee, who provides a guideline and suggestion to drug prevention and suppression for the Border Patrol Police, that it is essential to have their work performance be more efficient:

The guideline and suggestion for drug prevention and suppression by the Border Patrol Police should focus on increasing extra budgets to support frontier polices when they are working for drug suppression.

### 6. Recommendations

### **6.1 General recommendations**

- 1. It is indispensable to provide more knowledge and understanding to children and minors covering plain and highland areas so that they can better understand the problem of narcotics.
- 2. It is advised to set activities and projects within the community so that the children in the community can spend their leisure doing beneficial activities as well as to provide them with knowledge about drug problems within their community.

### **6.2 Practical Recommendations**

- 1. Both Royal Thai Police headquarters and Border Patrol Police Office should promote a campaign against drug problems. They should not only report news about arresting drug perpetrators, but they should also provide training in the armed forces and emergency practices in cooperation with any involved agencies to make their work operation related to drug problems more efficient.
- 2. The Royal Thai Police headquarters and the Border Patrol Police Office should provide financial support such as extra budgets to the frontier police in order to implement drug prevention and suppression.
- 3. The Royal Thai Police should work together with private organizations for drug prevention and suppression, such as building and promoting mutual understanding (MOU), including cooperation with other agencies throughout the region and globally.

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