

# **The Opium Wars in the Longue Durée: Production, Profit, and Policy**

Presentation for “Poppies, Power and Profit: the Opium Wars and their Global Legacies. A mini course for K-12 Educators”

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# Brief Background --- China as the Main Market for British Opium

- The Opium Wars (to 1860)
- Immediate (first-order) consequences
  - Balancing the British trade deficit with China
    - Halt or reverse the “drain” of silver
  - Opening of the large Chinese market for opium
- Second-order consequences (post-1860)
  - Opium imports into and consumption in China skyrocket
    - An early “opioid crisis”
  - Opium becomes one of the most important sources of revenue in colonial Asia
  - Opium production in India becomes highly organized

# Opium Production and Sale in British India

- British India is the major source of opium
  - Late 19<sup>th</sup> century to much of Asia (provision opium)
  - Becomes a major consumer as well (excise opium)
- Clash between church and state
- Profit (state) vs. “principle” (church)
- Royal Commission on Opium (1893-1895)
- Recommendation:
  - Continued legal regime for opium in India
- Follows the Indian Hemp Drugs Commission
  - “Trial balloon”
  - Another legacy of the Opium Wars

# Back to China

- Early 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Clash between profit and public good
  - Revenue vs. social and health consequences
- By 1910 the British are ready to scale back opium exports
- Back and forth until 1949 within China
- Post 1949 prohibition and suppression

# Legacies of the Opium Wars

The background of the slide features a soft-focus image of several white poppy seed pods. The pods are round and have a delicate, fringed top. They are arranged in a way that creates a sense of depth, with some in the foreground and others receding into the background. The overall tone is light and somewhat somber, reflecting the historical subject matter.

- Focus on the present
- Opium production
- Drug policy
- Research on opioids



The background of the slide features a close-up, soft-focus photograph of several white poppy seed pods. The pods are spherical and have a delicate, fluted rim at the top where the petals were. They are attached to thin, green stems. The lighting is bright and even, creating a clean, minimalist aesthetic.

# Legacy I: Opium Production

# Background: Uses of Opium in India Today

- Medicinal
  - Legal for Ayurvedic (traditional) doctors
  - Legal for the pharmaceutical industry in India
  - Legal for export (for medicinal use)
  - Only country in the world that can legally export raw opium
  - Others export opium husk
    - Biggest competitors: Turkey and Australia
- Recreational
  - Illegal
  - Problem

# Opium Production

- Almost identical to the system used to supply China
  - Highly organized
- Cultivation
- Harvest
- Delivery
- Processing
- Export/domestic sale





# Oversight of Legal Production and Sale/Export of Opium

- Central Bureau of Narcotics (CBN)
- Indian Revenue Service
- Headquarters in Gwalior
- Three field locations
  - Kota (Rajasthan)
  - Neemuch (Madhya Pradesh)
  - Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh)

# Cultivation I

- Finalization of General Conditions for Grant of License for Cultivation of Opium Poppy
  - September-October
- Licensing of farmers and settlement of previous seasons accounts
  - October
- Measurement and test measurement of licensed fields
  - 3rd Week of December to the end of January

ऐसे कुपक जिन्होंने फसल वर्ष 2004-05 में अपनी सम्पूर्ण फसल विभागीय निगरानी में उतारवा दी है। यदि वे कुपक इसी प्रकार फसल वर्ष 2005-06 में भी अपनी सम्पूर्ण फसल उतारवा देंगे तो वे अगले फसल वर्ष 2006-07 में सम्पूर्ण फसल उतारवा दे सकेंगे।

कोटिकासूत्रों में पाए जाते हैं।

2005-06 फसल वर्ष

अफीम या अफीम पोस्ततृण उत्पादन के लिए अफीम पोस्त उपजाने की अनुज्ञप्ति

अनुज्ञास्थिधारी का नाम और उसके माता पिता का नाम	ग्राम	परगना जिला/ तहसील	अनुज्ञाति संख्या	अनुज्ञाति क्षेत्र	राजस्व अभिलेख के अनुसार प्लॉट नं.
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एस. एल. शर्मा  
जिला अफिम अधिकारी  
कनकपुरी के हस्ताक्षर और मुद्रा  
बोमबे प्रथम खण्ड

जिला अफीम अधिकारी  
जिला अफीम अधिकारी के हस्ताक्षर और मुद्रा

मापा गया क्षेत्र 10.0	जांच मापित क्षेत्र	फसल कटाई क्षेत्र
क्षेत्रफल (आरी में)		
हस्ताक्षर		
(उप निरीक्षक)	(निरीक्षक/जि.अ.अ.)	(उप निरीक्षक)

तोल के समय की जाने वाली प्रविष्टियां

ब्लैट सं.	डॉ.ओ.ओ. द्वारा समुनुदेशित अकीम का वर्ग	अकीम का भार (कि.ग्रा.)	70° सें. पर कल्पित भार (कि.ग्रा.)	70° सें. पर कल्पित भार के आधार पर संदेय कीमत	कारखाने में अकीम की अन्तिम परीक्षा तक रोकी गयी राशि	तैल के समय सदत राशि
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7) लगातार

जिला अफीम अधिकारी के हस्ताक्षर और मुद्रा

अन्तिम संदाय के समय की जाने वाली प्रविष्टियां

कारखाने की रिपोर्ट के आधार पर 70 <sup>०</sup> में, पर अंकीय का कुल भार	खतिहर को औसत उपज राशि	कारखाने की रिपोर्ट के आधार परदेय कुल राशि	तोल के समय पहलू की संतत पूर्व जलसंयोजक	अंतिम संदाय के समय संदत/वसुली गई राशि
(8)	(9)	(10)	एक हजार जिनकी अंकीय कुल वर्ष 2005-06	

फसल वर्ष 2006-07 में लायसेंस पाने की  
न्यूनतम मात्रता औसत 56 कि. घा. प्रति  
हेक्टर (70 डिग्री गाढ़ता पर होगी)।

आवश्यक सूचना

यदि गाँव की अमीम फसल में अधिक दवाई, अनाज, सूखान या अन्य किसी प्राकृतिक प्रकोप से क्षति होती है तो गाँव के लम्बरदार एक सप्ताह के अंदर जिला अमीम अधिकारी को अपनी रिपोर्ट देगा।

पूर्व चेतावनी

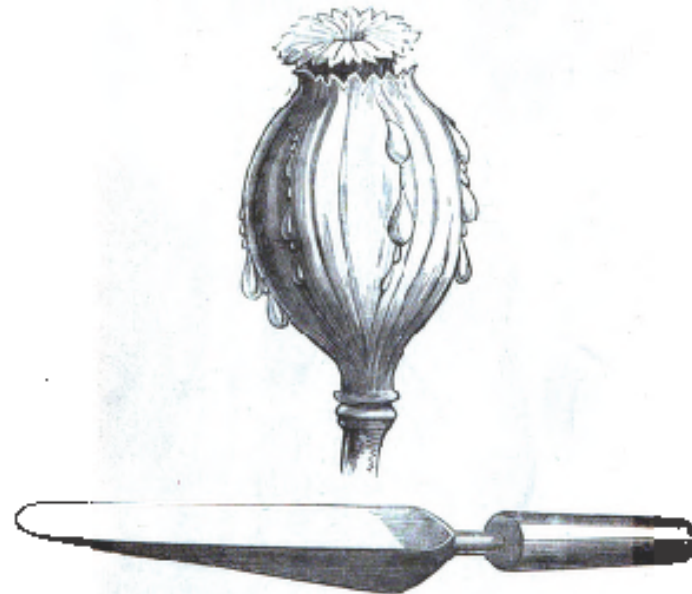
पूर्व चेतावनी  
ये कृषक सिन को भीमेश्वर सिन के हस्ताक्षर और मुद्रा  
05 में "पानी मिथिन" पाई जाती है और 2005  
जब असीम को गाड़ता 55 दिनों से कम है और  
तो वे आगे कपल वर्ष 2006-07 में बावर्ष  
पानी के पात्र नहीं होने।

# Cultivation II

- Lancing of opium poppy bulbs
  - February
- Checks regarding the opium produce
  - February/ March
- Field analysis, weighment, and procurement
  - Late March/ April
- Delivery of opium to two opium factories
  - Ghazipur and Neemuch
  - Final analysis, drying and processing
  - Late March/ April

13.2.16  
Dr. Bennett F. Davenport,  
751 TREMONT ST.  
BOSTON, - - MASS.

THE  
TRUTH  
ABOUT  
OPIUM SMOKING



Twelve Illustrations.

SECOND EDITION.—SIXTH THOUSAND.

LONDON:  
HODDER & STOUGHTON, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1882.

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लीमच-1  
1850













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भारत सरकार  
वित्त मंत्रालय, राजस्व विभाग  
**केन्द्रीय नारकोटिक्स ब्यूरो**  
**अफीम किसान कार्ड**




किसान क्रमांक  
नाम

पिता / पति  
का नाम  
उम्र (वर्ष)  
पता

अफीम डिविजन  
जारी करने का वर्ष



  
जिला अफीम अधिकारी  
एन. एस. धुव

अफीम प्रशिक्षण







# विभिन्न श्रेणियों की अफीम थैलो की पहचान

## टेस्ट की स्केल

X	I	II	III	IV	V	WM.	सस्येकटेड	आसानीवार	धोई	सुरचन



















# GOVT. OPIUM & ALKALOID WORKS



भारत सरकार  
वित्त मंत्रालय  
नीमच







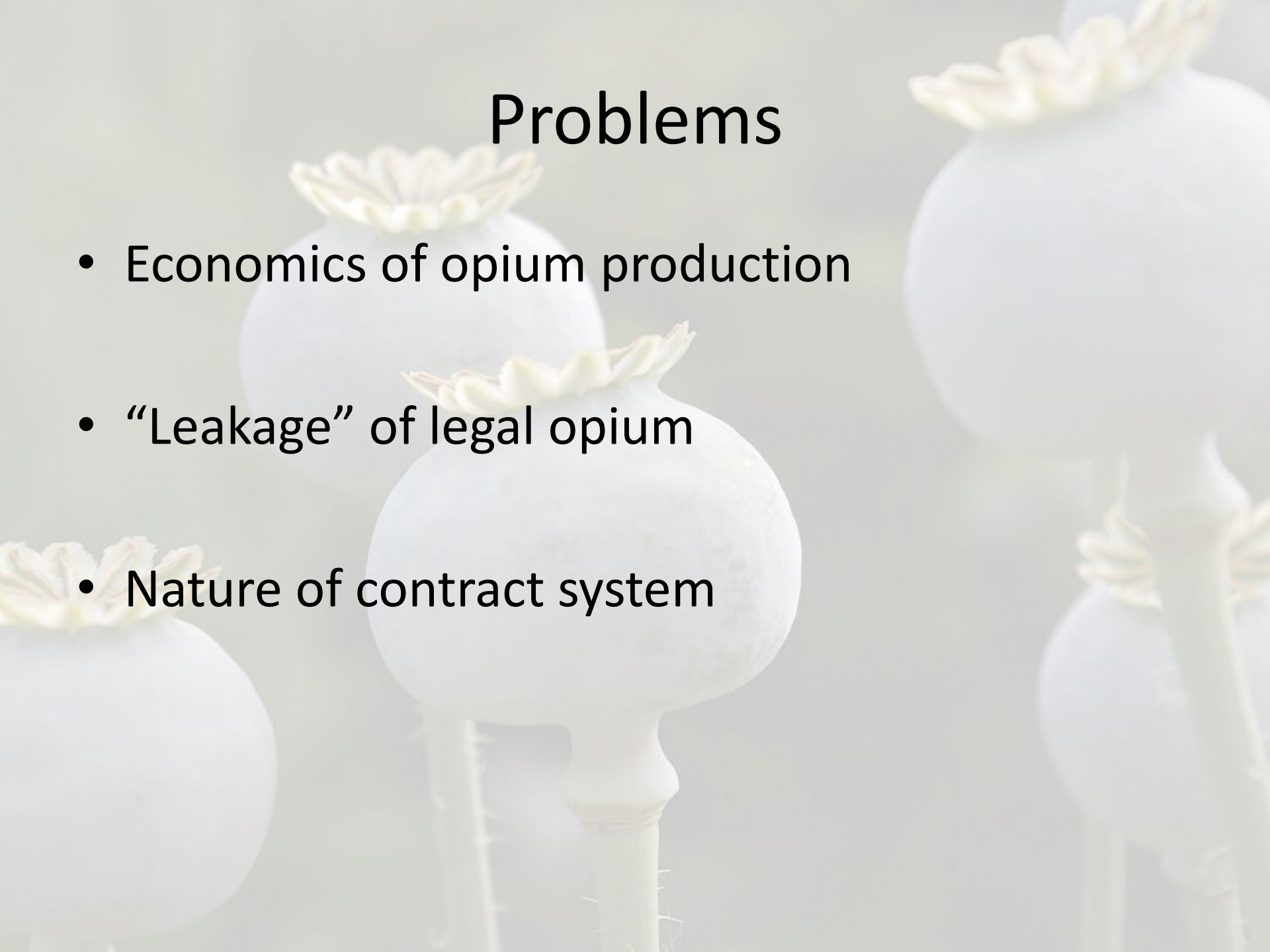
**ALKALOID PLANT**

**अल्कालायड कारखाना**



# Problems

- Economics of opium production
- “Leakage” of legal opium
- Nature of contract system





भ्रष्टाचार राष्ट्र विरोधी, गरीब-  
- विरोधी व आर्थिक विकास विरोधी हैं!



The background of the slide features several white poppy seed pods (papaver capsules) on thin green stems. The pods are round and have a small, fringed, yellowish-brown crown at the top. They are arranged in a way that some are in sharp focus while others are blurred in the foreground and background, creating a sense of depth. The overall lighting is soft and even.

# Legacy II: Drug Policy



# The Importance of Opium for Cannabis Policy

- Recall
  - (i) The Royal Commission on Opium  
(1893-1895)  
and
  - (ii) The Indian Hemp Drugs Commission  
(1893-1894)  
(a 'trial balloon')

# Cannabis in British India

- Three types of cannabis products sold for excise revenue
- *Bhang*
  - Leaf
  - Weak
- *Ganja*
  - Resinous buds, plant tops
  - Moderate strength
- *Charas* (hashish)
  - Primarily resin
  - Strong
- Same psychoactive ingredient
  - Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)



# Historical/Cultural Context

- Hindu mythology
- Shiva
  - Churning of the oceans, poison
  - “Bhole Nath” (simple deity)
- Various festivals
  - Shivratri
  - Holi
- Usually consumed as *bhang* (not *ganja* or *charas*)







# Historical/Cultural Context I

- Recipes: medical
  - *Charaka Samhita*, , *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridayam*, *Bhavaprakash* (Sanskrit)
  - Fever, digestive disorders, pain, sexual dysfunction
- Recipes: culinary
  - Drinks
  - Sweets
  - Curries











# The Indian Hemp Drugs Commission I

- The Indian Hemp Drugs Commission
- Charge: should marijuana in all its forms remain legal?
- The Report of the Indian Hemp Drugs Commission (IHDCR)
- A key component: witness testimonies
  - 1,193 key informants
  - 70-question survey
  - 1,938 pages of testimony
- Extraordinary detail

# What does cannabis do to cats?

"1-15 P.M., expression altered, the eye being glassy and the look fixed in one direction; rocking movements."

"While apparently asleep with its eyes closed occasionally emitted a peculiar and unpleasant cry"

"Sleepy, "cat's appearance wild and suspicious""

"It is difficult to describe the vocal sounds that may be emitted by a distressed cat, but one cry was occasionally heard from animals in this condition, which deserves a passing notice. It may be described as a high-pitched, prolonged wailing cry, and was particularly objected to by the laboratory staff, who informed me that the cry was unusual --- and considered a sign of ill-luck in Bengali households."

3-30 P.M., the cat, on being disturbed and made to walk, takes a few steps and then passes into a sort of cataleptic condition, maintaining the posture in which it may have happened to be when it stopped moving. The position is not one in which its limbs are all at rest, and is sometimes slightly grotesque.



# The Indian Hemp Drugs Commission II

- Composition of the IHDC
  - Four of the seven members are British
  - Three of seven members are Indian
- Five members of the IHDC advocate continued legal regime for bhang, ganja, and charas
- Two Indians write notes of dissent
  - Both oppose the “categorical” policy approach
  - Advocate prohibition of *ganja* and *charas* but legal *bhanga*

# The Royal Commission on Opium

The background of the slide features a soft-focus image of several white poppy flowers. The flowers have delicate, pale yellow centers and are set against a light, hazy background, creating a serene and somewhat somber atmosphere.

- The Royal Commission on Opium
- Charge: should opium remain legal?
- The Report of the Royal Commission on Opium
  - A key component: witness testimonies
  - Conclusion: Keep opium legal



# Drug Policy in India Today

- Echoes of the Indian Hemp Drugs Commission and the Royal Commission on Opium
- Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act
- Example: policy vis-à-vis marijuana

The background of the slide features several white poppy seed pods (capsules) on thin green stems. The pods are round and have a small, fringed, yellowish-brown crown at the top. They are arranged in a way that some are in sharp focus while others are blurred in the background, creating a sense of depth. The overall color palette is soft and muted, with the white of the pods contrasting gently against the light green stems and the pale, out-of-focus background.

# Legacy III: Research on Drugs



# Unique Data from British Reports

- A 'unicorn' dataset
- Collection of detailed data on
  - consumption
  - prices
  - opium, cannabis, and alcohol
- In markets with legal regimes
  - where all three substances are being simultaneously consumed
- [Cross-price elasticities](#)
- Policy implications

# Conclusion

- The Opium Wars shaped the history of one of the most important commodities in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Asia
- Legacies of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century boom in opium production and consumption are visible far from the epicenter of consumption
- Impacts include modern day production of, policy regarding, and research into the nature of opium and other psychoactive substances





Thank you