



THE ROLE OF THE SOUTH KONAWE POLICE DRUG RESEARCH UNIT IN COMBATING NARCOTICS ABUSE (A STUDY OF THE SOUTH KONAWE POLICE DRUG RESEARCH UNIT).

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Received: 12/07/2026 | Revised: 17/07/2026 | Accepted: 07/08/2026 | Published: 18/08/2026

Abstract

Drug abuse is a legal and social problem that can have serious impacts on security, health, and public order. This condition demands an active role from law enforcement officers, particularly the Narcotics Investigation Unit, in efforts to combat drug abuse. This study aims to analyze the role of the South Konawe Police Narcotics Investigation Unit in combating drug abuse and identify obstacles faced in carrying out this task. This study uses an empirical legal research method with a qualitative descriptive approach. Data were obtained through interviews, observations, and documentation related to the implementation of the South Konawe Police Narcotics Investigation Unit's duties. The results show that the South Konawe Police Narcotics Investigation Unit plays a crucial role in combating drug abuse through preemptive, preventive, and repressive efforts. Preemptive efforts are carried out through providing education and outreach to the community regarding the dangers of narcotics, while preventive efforts are carried out through monitoring areas considered vulnerable, patrol activities, and cooperation with various parties. Meanwhile, repressive efforts are carried out through investigations, inquiries, arrests, searches, confiscation of evidence, and legal proceedings against perpetrators of narcotics crimes. In its implementation, several obstacles remain, including limited human resources, facilities and infrastructure, the vastness of the jurisdiction, and the still low awareness of some members of the public to participate in eradicating narcotics abuse. Therefore, it is necessary to increase personnel capacity, support facilities and infrastructure, and strengthen synergy between the police, local governments, related institutions, and the community so that the eradication of narcotics abuse in the jurisdiction of the South Konawe Police can be implemented more optimally.

Keywords: Narcotics Research Unit, Police, Prevention, Narcotics Abuse, South Konawe.

INTRODUCTION

Law is a set of norms that govern human behavior in social, national, and state life. The purpose of law is to create order, certainty, justice, and provide protection for every citizen. As a coercive norm, law regulates the rights and obligations of every individual to create a harmonious social life. However, in practice, legal norms are not always complied with. Many members of society still violate the law through various forms of crime, one of which is the crime of narcotics abuse and illicit trafficking. The problem of narcotics and narcotics has developed into an extraordinary crime because its impact not only threatens individual health but also disrupts social and economic stability, security, and national resilience. Narcotics crime has transnational characteristics (transnational organized crime) involving international networks with increasingly sophisticated distribution systems through sea, air, and digital technology. This condition has made Indonesia not only a transit country but also a marketing destination and even a production location for several types of synthetic narcotics.

Based on the results of the 2023 National Narcotics Agency (BNN) National Drug Abuse Prevalence Survey, the prevalence of drug abuse in Indonesia is estimated to reach around 3.3 million people, or approximately 1.73% of the population aged 15–64. The productive age group, especially those aged 15–35, is the most vulnerable to drug abuse. The most commonly abused drugs include methamphetamine, marijuana, ecstasy, synthetic tobacco, and various drugs containing narcotics without medical authorization. Law enforcement data also shows that drug crimes

remain one of the most prevalent criminal cases in Indonesia. According to the 2023 National Narcotics Agency (BNN) Annual Report, law enforcement officers successfully uncovered thousands of drug cases, with evidence including methamphetamine, marijuana, ecstasy, and various other synthetic drugs originating from national and international networks. This situation demonstrates that drug eradication efforts still face very complex challenges.

The development of narcotics case handling is also evident in data from the Indonesian National Police. Throughout 2024, the Indonesian National Police, through the Directorate of Narcotics Crimes at the Criminal Investigation Agency (Bareskrim), along with regional police (Polda), successfully uncovered tens of thousands of narcotics cases and seized large amounts of evidence, including methamphetamine, marijuana, ecstasy, cocaine, and various other hard drugs. These actions demonstrate that narcotics trafficking networks remain highly active and continue to expand across Indonesia. Entering 2025, law enforcement officers again succeeded in dismantling various international networks smuggling narcotics into Indonesia via sea routes and through illegal ports. The perpetrators' modus operandi has evolved, utilizing communication technology, electronic transactions, expedition services, and even identity disguise, requiring increasingly professional investigative and criminal investigation capabilities from law enforcement officers, particularly the Narcotics Investigation Unit. Regulations regarding narcotics still refer to Law Number 5 of 1997 concerning Narcotics, particularly for types of narcotics that have not been classified as narcotics under the provisions of existing laws and regulations. Therefore, handling of narcotics abuse continues to be carried out based on the provisions of that law, depending on the characteristics of the evidence found in each case.

The phenomenon of drug abuse also occurs in Southeast Sulawesi Province, including South Konawe Regency. This region has a strategic geographic location because it is located on inter-district and inter-island distribution routes, making it potentially exploited as a drug trafficking route. This situation causes the South Konawe Police, particularly the Narcotics Investigation Unit, to face significant challenges in carrying out their functions of preventing, investigating, prosecuting, and eradicating narcotics crimes. Several cases successfully uncovered by law enforcement officers indicate that drug circulation in Southeast Sulawesi remains quite high. In the first case, in 2023, the Narcotics Investigation Directorate of the Southeast Sulawesi Regional Police successfully uncovered a methamphetamine distribution network with evidence of more than 2 kilograms of methamphetamine, and named several suspects suspected of being part of an inter-provincial network. The case has been processed to the stage of being handed over to the prosecutor's office.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Police

The Indonesian National Police (abbreviated as Polri) is the National Law Enforcement Agency and the State Police in Indonesia which is directly responsible under the President of the Republic of Indonesia. The Polri carries out the duties of the state police throughout Indonesia, namely maintaining public security and order, enforcing the law, and providing protection and services to the community. The description of the police's duties is explained in Article 14 of the Law on the Indonesian National Police.

The Indonesian National Police also faces many increasingly complex challenges, such as combating narcotics, corruption and money laundering, terrorism, cybercrime, human trafficking, and radical and intolerant groups. These crimes are now transnational in nature and have global networks.

In the latest developments in the increasingly modern and global police force, the Indonesian National Police not only deals with domestic security and order, but is also involved in regional and international security and order issues, as pursued by UN policy.

The Indonesian police force is regulated by Law Number 2 of 2002 concerning the Indonesian National Police. As a law enforcement agency, the Indonesian National Police is primarily tasked with maintaining domestic security and, in carrying out its duties, always upholds human rights and the law.

2. General Overview of Narcotics

History of Narcotics and Its Various Types Narcotics comes from the word narke (Greek) which means "numbness", the general public knows narcotics as various types of drugs that are considered dirty, dangerous and illegal (Dally: 1995). Narcotic Dependence is a condition characterized by the urge to use narcotics continuously with increasing doses to produce the same effect and if its use is reduced and/or stopped suddenly, it causes typical physical and psychological symptoms.

Narcotics are one of the oldest drugs known to mankind. Initially, narcotics were used to induce sleep, but now they can be used as stimulants, such as amphetamines and cocaine, to keep a person awake. Today, there are

various types of narcotics, and their development is closely linked to human science and technology for processing them.

Narcotics is an abbreviation of narcotics, narcotics, and other addictive substances. Narcotics can cause addiction. (Sugono, 2008). Meanwhile, referring to the Big Indonesian Dictionary, narcotics are defined as drugs that can have a calming effect on the nerves, can relieve pain, and can induce sleep (drowsiness) or can cause stimulation.

3. Handling

Handling in a legal context refers to actions or efforts taken by authorities, such as law enforcement officers, to resolve a legal problem or case, whether in the form of dispute resolution, action against violations of the law, or preventive and repressive measures in enforcing the law.

4. Repressive

In general, repressive comes from the word "repress," which means to suppress or restrain. In the context of law and law enforcement, repressive action refers to actions taken after a violation or crime has occurred, with the aim of stopping, punishing, or suppressing the violation. This action differs from preventive action, which is taken to prevent a violation from occurring.

5. Abuse

Abuse is the act of using something (such as property, authority, or power) improperly or contrary to its intended purpose. In a legal context, abuse often refers to the use of authority, property, or resources for an unauthorized or unlawful purpose, which may cause harm to others or society in general.

Drug abuse is the act of consuming or using illegal drugs that does not comply with medical regulations or applicable laws, with the aim of seeking satisfaction or certain effects that are contrary to norms and laws.

METHOD

A. Research Type

This research uses empirical legal research. Empirical legal research examines how the law works and is applied in society through the behavior of law enforcement officers and the public as legal subjects. The focus of this research is not only on examining applicable legal provisions but also on the implementation of legal norms in law enforcement practices.

In this study, an empirical approach is used to analyze the implementation of the role of the South Konawe Police Narcotics Investigation Unit in combating drug abuse, as well as to identify various obstacles faced in carrying out its duties and authorities. Research data was obtained directly through field research by conducting interviews with parties related to the research object, supported by a library study of laws and regulations, literature, scientific journals, and other relevant documents.

B. Research Location

The research location was conducted at the Narcotics Unit of the South Konawe Police. This research approach used a qualitative and descriptive approach. The descriptive approach in qualitative research emphasizes a detailed and in-depth explanation of a phenomenon or event without any manipulation of variables. In the context of qualitative research, the descriptive approach aims to provide an accurate and contextual description of a phenomenon in order to produce a picture of the real situation based on the facts that appear as they are, in order to conclude the results of the analysis of the research problem (Nawawi, 1991).

Grounded Theory Research developed by Strauss and Corbin involves a descriptive approach, focusing on developing theories that emerge from systematically collected data (Anselm, Strauss, and Juliet Corbin, 2003:45). The descriptive approach in qualitative research emphasizes an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. This approach involves interviews, observation, data analysis, and other qualitative data collection techniques to obtain a comprehensive picture of the research subject.

C. Data Types and Sources

The data and data sources from this research are as follows:

1. Primary Data

Primary data refers to information or data collected directly from valid original sources, namely through research or direct data collection.

2. Secondary Data

As supporting data, primary data is data obtained through literature review results using literature collection techniques such as books, scientific works, articles, publications, websites, journals and other literature materials.

D. Data collection technique

As for data collection techniques, the researcher used the following techniques in this study:

1. Observation

Observations in this study were conducted through direct observation. The data had never been previously processed or interpreted and was obtained directly from observations, interviews, questionnaires, experiments, or other research methods.

2. Interview

This study employed an interview method, where the interview process utilized an interview guide derived from topic development and questioning, providing a more flexible approach. The choice of interview technique depends on the research objectives, the type of information desired, and the characteristics of the respondents, while maintaining objectivity and openness throughout the interview process.

3. Documentation

Researchers use documents in the form of writing and images, for example notes, regulations, policies and activity documentation.

E. Data analysis

Data analysis is the process of investigating, cleaning, interpreting, and presenting data to obtain useful information, draw conclusions, and support decision-making. Data analysis can be performed using various methods depending on the type of data used and the purpose of the analysis. Some general stages in data analysis are:

a. Understanding the Purpose

b. Data collection

c. Data Exploration

d. Interpretation and Conclusion

e. Validation, checking the validity of the analysis results that the method used and the interpretation taken are in accordance with the standards and objectives of the analysis.

f. Documentation, by documenting the analysis steps in detail.

F. Research Time

The research was carried out within a predetermined time through the stages of observation, data collection and completion of the thesis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. THE ROLE OF THE SOUTH KONAWE POLICE DRUG RESEARCH UNIT IN COMBATING NARCOTICS ABUSE

The implementation of drug abuse prevention is one of the implementation tasks of the Indonesian National Police (Polri) in enforcing the law, protecting the community, and maintaining public order and security. In carrying out these functions, the South Konawe Police Narcotics Investigation Unit implements various efforts that are not only focused on prosecuting perpetrators of criminal acts but also prioritize preventive measures and cooperation with various parties.¹

Efforts to combat drug abuse are essentially part of criminal policy, which aims to protect the public from the harmful effects of drug abuse. Therefore, the Narcotics Investigation Unit's duties cannot be viewed solely as investigative activities, but rather as a series of interrelated activities, ranging from prevention and enforcement to coordination with relevant agencies.²

¹Sadjijono, 2018, *Police Law in Indonesia*, LaksBang Mediatama, Yogyakarta, pp. 44–46.

²Andi Hamzah, 2019, *Indonesian Criminal Procedure Law*, Sinar Grafika, Jakarta, p. 19.

According to Barda Nawawi Arief, crime prevention policies must be implemented through an integrated approach, combining penal and *non-penal means*. This approach aims to ensure that law enforcement not only deters perpetrators but also prevents new crimes by increasing public legal awareness.³ This opinion is relevant to the implementation of the Narcotics Investigation Unit's duties, which prioritizes a balance between preventive and repressive measures.

From a criminal law perspective, drug abuse is a crime with special characteristics because it involves aspects of health, safety, and public order. The resulting impacts are felt not only by the perpetrator but also affect families, the social environment, and regional security stability. Therefore, addressing it requires a sustainable strategy implemented professionally by law enforcement officials.⁴

The Narcotics Investigation Unit's duties are inseparable from the principles of professionalism, accountability, and legal certainty. Every investigation, inquiry, arrest, search, seizure, and transfer of cases must be carried out in accordance with statutory provisions to ensure the protection of all parties' rights. This also embodies the principle of *due process of law* in the Indonesian criminal justice system.⁵

In practice, the success of combating drug abuse is measured not only by the number of cases solved, but also by the effectiveness of preventative measures that can reduce the number of abuse cases in the community. Therefore, the Narcotics Investigation Unit's approach must be comprehensive, involving local government officials, educational institutions, community leaders, religious leaders, and community participation as partners with the police.

In general, the *modus operandi* of drug abuse and trafficking continues to evolve along with technological advances and changing patterns of social interaction. Transactions are no longer always conducted face-to-face, but can utilize electronic communication media, intermediaries, or systems designed to minimize contact between sellers and buyers. Furthermore, perpetrators frequently change transaction locations, adopt different identities, and leverage their social networks to expand distribution. These conditions require investigators to conduct meticulous investigations, gather valid evidence, and develop potential networks.

In addition to these evolving *modus operandi*, another challenge facing law enforcement is the increasing ability of perpetrators to disguise their activities. The use of third-party accounts, communication through digital applications, and the breakdown of roles within distribution networks are some of the patterns commonly encountered in handling narcotics and narcotics cases. This situation requires the Narcotics Investigation Unit to increase its human resource capacity, investigative capabilities, and coordination with other agencies to support effective law enforcement.

Based on an interview with the Head of the Narcotics Unit of the Konsel Police, the description of the implementation of the Narcotics Investigation Unit's role in combating drug abuse is provided through a discussion of the implementation of police duties in general. The implementation of these duties is carried out in accordance with the authority granted by laws and regulations and Police Standard Operating Procedures, which emphasize prevention efforts, law enforcement, and coordination with various parties in order to reduce the number of drug abuse in the community.⁶

In general, the Narcotics Investigation Unit's duties begin with early detection of potential drug abuse and illicit trafficking through gathering information from the public, mapping areas deemed vulnerable, and monitoring the development of perpetrators' *modus operandi*. The information obtained is then analyzed as a basis for determining the appropriate law enforcement measures. This approach aims to ensure that all police actions are carried out accurately and in accordance with applicable laws.

1. Preventive Role

The preventive role is one of the main strategies implemented by the South Konawe Police Narcotics Investigation Unit in its efforts to combat drug abuse. Preventive efforts are carried out as a precautionary measure before a crime occurs, so that the public understands the dangers of drug abuse, the legal consequences, and the importance of protecting the environment from illicit drug trafficking. A preventive approach is an integral part of the Indonesian National Police's duties in ensuring public security and order.⁷

³Barda Nawawi Arief, 2018, *Anthology of Criminal Law Policy*, Kencana, Jakarta, p. 27.

⁴Siswanto Sunarso, 2012, *Legal Politics in the Narcotics Law*, Rineka Cipta, Jakarta, p. 61.

⁵M. Yahya Harahap, 2016, *Discussion of Problems and Application of the Criminal Procedure Code: Investigation and Prosecution*, Sinar Grafika, Jakarta, p. 34.

⁶Interview with IPTU Herman Eka Purnama, SH, MH on Monday, July 20, 2026

⁷*Ibid*, p. 48

The legal basis for the implementation of preventive efforts by the Police is contained in Article 13 of Law Number 2 of 2002 concerning the National Police of the Republic of Indonesia, which states that the main duties of the National Police of the Republic of Indonesia are: (a) maintaining public security and order; (b) enforcing the law; and (c) providing protection, guidance, and services to the community. These provisions indicate that the function of the police is not only oriented towards taking action against perpetrators of criminal acts, but also includes preventive efforts through guidance and services to the community.⁸

In addition, Article 14 paragraph (1) letter c of Law Number 2 of 2002 stipulates that the Police are tasked with fostering the community to increase community participation, public legal awareness and community compliance with laws and regulations. This provision is the legal basis for the Narcotics Research Unit in carrying out legal counseling, outreach and education to the community regarding the dangers of narcotics abuse.

In the narcotics sector, Law No. 5 of 1997 concerning Narcotics not only regulates prohibitions and criminal sanctions, but also places prevention as a key component of drug abuse prevention policies. Therefore, public education efforts are one way to implement this policy, ensuring early prevention of drug abuse through increased public knowledge and awareness.

Based on the results of the researcher's interview with the Head of the South Konawe Police Narcotics Investigation Unit, IPTU Herman, preventive efforts are implemented continuously through socialization activities and legal counseling to the community. The targets of these activities include students at the junior high and high school levels, university students, village and sub-district government officials, youth organizations, and community groups in areas deemed vulnerable to drug abuse.⁹ Furthermore, the socialization not only explains the types of narcotics and the impact of their abuse on health, but also provides an understanding of the criminal threats regulated by laws and regulations. Thus, the community is expected to understand that drug abuse is not only detrimental to oneself, but also an act that has legal consequences and must be avoided.

Socialization is also carried out in collaboration with schools, local governments, village governments, religious leaders, community leaders, and other relevant institutions. This collaboration aims to expand the reach of education so that messages about the dangers of drug abuse can be received by all levels of society. This collaborative approach is considered more effective because preventing drug abuse cannot be the sole responsibility of law enforcement but requires the active participation of all elements of society.¹⁰

In addition to direct outreach, preventive activities are also carried out through community forums, educational media distribution, and information dissemination on the characteristics of drug abuse to help the public recognize and report suspected criminal activity in their communities. These steps also strengthen the partnership between the police and the community in maintaining security and order.

According to Barda Nawawi Arief, crime prevention policies cannot simply rely on criminal law (*penal policy*). They must also be supported by approaches outside of criminal law (*non-penal policy*), such as legal education, outreach, community development, and increased legal awareness. These approaches are believed to be more effective in suppressing the factors that cause crime, including drug abuse.¹¹

2. Repressive Role

The repressive role is one of the Indonesian National Police's duties in combating narcotics crimes through law enforcement against anyone suspected of drug abuse or illicit trafficking. Unlike preventive measures, which focus more on prevention, repressive measures are implemented after a suspected crime has occurred, with the goal of identifying the perpetrator, gathering evidence, and submitting the case to the public prosecutor for processing in accordance with statutory provisions.¹²

In handling narcotics crimes, investigators' authority is also regulated by Law Number 35 of 2009 concerning Narcotics. Article 81 states that investigators from the Indonesian National Police and the National

⁸Article 13 Letters (a), (b), and (c). Law No. 2 of 2002 concerning the Police

⁹First Inspector Herman, Head of the Konawe Selatan Police Narcotics Unit on July 20, 2026. Results of the researcher's interview with the Head of the Konawe Selatan Police Narcotics Unit regarding the implementation of preventive measures, based on information obtained in field research.

¹⁰Soedjono Dirdjosoworo, 2010, *Narcotics and Adolescents*, Alumni, Bandung, p. 119.

¹¹Barda Nawawi Arief, 2018, *Anthology of Criminal Law Policy*, Kencana, Jakarta, p. 31.

¹²Sadjijono, 2018, *Police Law in Indonesia*, LaksBang Mediatama, Yogyakarta, p. 62.

Narcotics Agency (BNN) are authorized to conduct investigations into the abuse and illicit trafficking of narcotics and narcotic precursors in accordance with statutory provisions. This regulation demonstrates that the National Police have clear authority to uncover any narcotics crimes occurring within their jurisdiction.¹³

Furthermore, all repressive actions must be guided by the provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code. According to Article 1, number 2 of the Criminal Procedure Code, an investigation is a series of actions by investigators, according to the methods stipulated in the law, to seek and collect evidence that will shed light on the crime and identify the suspect. Therefore, every investigator's action must be carried out in accordance with legal procedures to ensure legal certainty and protect human rights.

According to M. Yahya Harahap, investigation is a crucial stage in the criminal justice process because its quality will influence the prosecution process through to trial. Investigations conducted professionally, objectively, and based on valid evidence will result in a law enforcement process that provides legal certainty, justice, and benefits the community.¹⁴ This opinion demonstrates that repressive measures are not only oriented towards arresting the perpetrator, but also on legally valid evidence.

In practice, repressive actions carried out by the Narcotics Crime Investigation Unit begin with investigative activities to obtain information regarding suspected drug abuse or illicit trafficking. This information can come from public reports, victim complaints, patrol results, previous case developments, or police intelligence information. Once sufficient preliminary evidence is obtained, investigators escalate the case to the investigation stage in accordance with the provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code and Law Number 35 of 2009 concerning Narcotics.

The investigation phase encompasses a series of legal actions, including summoning witnesses, questioning suspects, arresting them, conducting searches, confiscating evidence, conducting laboratory tests on narcotics evidence, naming suspects, and transferring case files to the public prosecutor. All of these actions are carried out in accordance with applicable legal procedures to ensure that the evidence obtained has the power to prove the case in court and can be legally accounted for.

3. Coordinating Role

The coordinating role is one of the Indonesian National Police's responsibilities in combating narcotics crimes, aimed at building synergy between agencies and the community. Combating narcotics crimes cannot be optimally achieved by relying solely on police investigations and inquiries, given that narcotics trafficking is a crime with a broad, organized network that often crosses borders. Therefore, coordination is a crucial tool in supporting successful law enforcement while strengthening efforts to prevent narcotics abuse in the community.¹

The legal basis for the implementation of coordination by the Police is regulated in Article 13 of Law Number 2 of 2002 concerning the National Police of the Republic of Indonesia, which states that the main duties of the Police include maintaining public security and order, enforcing the law, and providing protection, guidance, and services to the community. To carry out these duties effectively, the Police need to build cooperation with government agencies, law enforcement officers, and the community in accordance with their respective fields of duty and authority.¹⁵

Furthermore, Article 104 of Law Number 35 of 2009 concerning Narcotics emphasizes that the public has the broadest possible opportunity to participate in preventing and eradicating the abuse and illicit trafficking of narcotics and narcotic precursors. Furthermore, Article 105 stipulates that the public has rights and responsibilities in preventing and eradicating the abuse and illicit trafficking of narcotics. These provisions demonstrate that combating narcotics is a shared responsibility between law enforcement officials and the public.

In carrying out its duties, the Narcotics Investigation Unit coordinates with the National Narcotics Agency as a strategic partner in information exchange, prevention activities, the development of networks, and human resource capacity building in the field of narcotics eradication. This collaboration is crucial given that narcotics crimes are no longer committed individually but involve organized networks, necessitating integrated action.

¹³Article 81 of Law Number 35 of 2009 concerning Narcotics

¹⁴M. Yahya Harahap, 2016, *Discussion of Problems and Application of the Criminal Procedure Code: Investigation and Prosecution*, Sinar Grafika, Jakarta, pp. 109–111.

¹⁵Sadjijono, 2018, *Police Law in Indonesia*, LaksBang Mediatama, Yogyakarta, p. 73.

Coordination is also carried out with the Prosecutor's Office, acting as the public prosecutor, in the case resolution process. This working relationship aims to ensure that the investigation results meet the formal and material requirements stipulated in the Criminal Procedure Code. Through good coordination, investigators can complete the instructions provided by the public prosecutor so that case files can be promptly declared complete (P-21) and submitted for prosecution.

According to M. Yahya Harahap, the success of an investigation is determined not only by the investigator's ability to gather evidence, but also by good coordination between the investigator and the public prosecutor from the outset of the case. This coordination aims to ensure that all investigative actions comply with the provisions of criminal procedure law, thereby producing strong evidence in court. Therefore, coordination is an integral part of the criminal law enforcement process.¹⁶

B. OBSTACLES FACED BY THE SOUTH KONAWE POLICE DRUG RESEARCH UNIT IN COMBATING NARCOTICS ABUSE

The crime of drug abuse in the jurisdiction of the South Konawe Police Resort (Polres) has reached a quite alarming point and requires comprehensive and continuous handling from law enforcement officers, especially the Narcotics Investigation Unit (Satresnarkoba). As the frontline in the function of eradicating, investigating, and prosecuting narcotics crimes, the South Konawe Police Narcotics Unit is required to act quickly, responsively, and tactically in breaking the chain of illicit trafficking that is increasingly targeting various levels of society indiscriminately. However, the reality on the ground shows that efforts to free the South Konawe region from the trap of drugs is not an easy matter due to the emergence of various internal and external obstacles. Law enforcement efforts often clash with the complexity of the characteristics of the vast region and the shifting modus operandi of the perpetrators who are increasingly neat and covert.

The success of combating narcotics crime fundamentally depends not only on the sharpness of formal legal regulations, but is also greatly influenced by the synergy of structural elements within the police institution itself and the socio-cultural dynamics of the local community. In carrying out its constitutional mandate, the South Konawe Police Narcotics Unit continuously strives to optimize all available resources, both through a repressive approach to provide a deterrent effect for dealers and distributors, and a preventive approach through regular outreach. However, in implementing operational policies in the field, the police often encounter deadlocks caused by strained strategic communication ties and the psychological distance between law enforcement officers and the local communities inhabiting the jurisdiction. The ideal law enforcement pattern often experiences a reduction in function when faced with a sociology of society that tends to be closed and reluctant to get involved in legal matters.

Therefore, an in-depth theoretical and empirical analysis is needed to precisely map the dominant factors that are stumbling blocks for the police in formulating an effective strategy for combating narcotics crimes in the South Konawe jurisdiction. Based on the results of initial observations and periodic performance evaluations conducted by the authorities, these obstacles can be broadly classified into several fundamental, interrelated aspects, ranging from aspects of public participation, social unrest, to economic vulnerability that triggers high local crime rates.¹⁷ These various structural and cultural obstacles then crystallized into real challenges faced by the South Konawe Police Narcotics Unit in freeing the area from the threat of narcotics, as outlined in several crucial points below:

1. Low Public Participation in Providing Information

The success of combating narcotics abuse and illicit trafficking is highly dependent on *criminal intelligence*, the primary source of which is public information. As an organized and well-organized crime, narcotics transactions are not conducted in open spaces easily monitored by conventional Sabhara patrols, but rather in private spaces or through covert modus operandi. The South Konawe Police Narcotics Unit structurally has limited personnel to monitor every inch of its jurisdiction, which is dominated by plantations, mining areas, and remote rural areas. Therefore, the absence of reports or information from local residents will automatically break the chain of investigation, causing the police to

¹⁶M. Yahya Harahap, 2016, *Discussion of Problems and Application of the Criminal Procedure Code: Investigation and Prosecution*, Sinar Grafika, Jakarta, pp. 365–367.

¹⁷South Konawe Police Narcotics Research Unit, *Annual Evaluation Report on Combating Narcotics Crimes in the South Konawe Jurisdiction*, (Andoolo: South Konawe Police, 2025), p. 42.

lose momentum in making arrests (*hand-to-hand transactions*), and allowing illicit trafficking to continue to spread massively at the grassroots level.

"As a concrete example, the obstacles resulting from this lack of information are reflected in the handling of a case of illicit crystal methamphetamine trafficking in a village in Tinanggea District, which was handled by investigators from the South Konawe Police Narcotics Unit. Based on the dynamics of the case, the illicit drug transactions carried out by a local dealer had actually been going on for more than six months in a rented house located in a densely populated area. The presence of strangers entering and leaving the house at odd hours had proven to have aroused strong suspicion among neighbors and local village officials. Although this wave of suspicion had long overshadowed the daily lives of residents, not a single individual or RT/RW official dared to report this strong indication to the authorities or through the nearest Bhabinkamtibmas, allowing this network to flourish before finally being independently uncovered by the operational team through in-depth investigation."¹⁸

When the case was finally uncovered and field investigations were conducted, alarming sociological facts emerged regarding the underlying reasons behind the local community's silence. The main and most dominant obstacles were "psychological distance" and collective fear for their personal and family safety. Residents in the South Konawe jurisdiction tended to perceive that reporting drug dealers would place them in danger, such as the threat of revenge or physical violence from the notorious network of dealers. This fear was exacerbated by a lack of public understanding of the statutory witness protection system, leading residents to choose to play it safe by turning a blind eye rather than engage in what they considered a complex and risky legal process.

2. Influence of Social Factors

Social factors play a crucial and multidimensional role in shaping patterns of drug abuse and illicit trafficking within the jurisdiction of the South Konawe Police. As a region undergoing a cultural transition due to industrialization, local urbanization, and a shift from traditional values to modernization, the social structure of the South Konawe community is vulnerable to the establishment of deviant behavior patterns. Unfiltered social interactions, the weakening of traditional social control institutions such as customary institutions and religious leaders, and strong peer pressure *create* a permissive ecosystem for the entry of addictive substances. The South Konawe Police Narcotics Unit, in its various socio-criminal evaluations, found that most victims of drug abuse, particularly among the younger generation, initially fell into it not for purely economic or criminal motives, but rather due to a failure to adapt socially within their own environment.¹⁹

One of the most prominent social dynamics and a real obstacle in the field is the high rate of broken homes *and* weak parental monitoring. In some areas of South Konawe, busy parents working in the plantation, mining, or trade sectors often reduce the time for quality interaction with their children. The lack of attention, affection, and supervision within the household causes children to seek emotional escape outside the domestic environment in order to gain *social recognition*. When this escape space is filled with the wrong social circle, the use of narcotics such as crystal methamphetamine or other illegal drugs is often used as an initiation ritual or a symbol of group solidarity so that the child feels accepted and recognized by their peer community.

These social barriers to law enforcement and rehabilitation are exacerbated by the stigmatization and negative labeling (*labeling theory*) perpetrated by society against former drug users who have completed legal proceedings or rehabilitation. Rather than being embraced and given space for social reintegration, former addicts in rural South Konawe are often ostracized, suspected, and rejected from social circles and local employment opportunities. This social pressure of ostracization psychologically undermines their self-confidence and triggers severe depression. Due to the lack of a healthy support system *within* their communities, these former users tend to return to their former communities, which are themselves networks of drug dealers, thus triggering repeated drug recidivism.²⁰

¹⁸Interview with Head of Narcotics Unit IPTU Herman on July 20, 2026

¹⁹South Konawe Police Narcotics Research Unit, *Descriptive Analysis of the Correlation of Social Factors to the Level of Juvenile Crime*, (Andoolo: South Konawe Police Internal Data, 2025), p. 14.

²⁰Nurlela Puspa Sari, SH, *MH Legal Protection for Children Who Repeat Criminal Offenses Through a Restorative Justice Approach*, p. 89

Furthermore, shifts in local culture and lifestyle *among* youth in South Konawe, particularly those living in transit areas or around industrial and tourism areas, have accelerated drug penetration. Nightlife, traditional festivals held without strict supervision, and the trend of gathering at night in public spaces without productive activities have become fertile social incubators for the distribution of illicit substances. Customary and religious norms that once effectively served as a bulwark of societal morality have begun to experience shallow meaning and are considered outdated by the younger generation. This situation creates social anomie, a condition in which society loses its moral compass and behavioral guidelines, making the line between acceptable and unlawful actions increasingly blurred in the eyes of youth.

From the perspective of operational obstacles for the South Konawe Police Narcotics Unit, the paternalistic social structure of society, where community leaders or traditional figures hold sway over public opinion, sometimes gives rise to social intervention phenomena that hinder the objectivity of law enforcement. In some cases, when the perpetrator of drug abuse is a close relative of an influential figure or has a certain social status in the village, a covert social movement emerges to resolve the matter amicably or through customary mechanisms outside the corridor of criminal law. This erroneous traditional legal sociological approach often places investigators in a dilemma between maintaining social stability and upholding legal certainty *based* on the Narcotics Law.

3. Economic and Environmental Factors on Drug Abuse

The economic dimension and environmental conditions are two intertwined variables that have a very strong driving force in perpetuating the cycle of drug abuse and illicit trafficking in the jurisdiction of the South Konawe Police. As a developing region with an economic base based on the agricultural, plantation, mining, and fisheries sectors, South Konawe is not immune to the dynamics of economic inequality and fluctuations in community income. Financial vulnerability, high unemployment rates among those of productive age, and limited formal sector employment opportunities create a space for economic despair. On the other hand, the vast geographical environment with long coastal areas, open trans-Sulawesi routes, and the presence of heterogeneous industrial areas and mining worker housing, create an environmental ecosystem that is highly vulnerable to infiltration of drug trafficking.²¹

The main economic obstacle frequently encountered by the South Konawe Police Narcotics Unit in the field is the temptation of some residents to take shortcuts to escape poverty by becoming part of drug trafficking networks. This illicit business offers lucrative and instant financial gains, far exceeding the average income of farm laborers, palm oil plantation workers, or traditional fishermen. Many lower-level perpetrators, such as couriers or local retailers (*street-level dealers*), are initially poor or unemployed youths lacking adequate job skills. They are easily manipulated by major dealers to deliver packages of methamphetamine in exchange for lucrative wages, regardless of the serious criminal penalties that threaten their safety.

These economic factors create massive structural obstacles to law enforcement, as the large cash flow within the narcotics business creates networks of patronage and financial protection at the grassroots level. The modus operandi of drug dealers often involves providing financial assistance or under the guise of social charity to impoverished local communities surrounding their operational areas. By distributing a portion of their ill-gotten gains to help with medical expenses, renovating public facilities, or providing small business loans, these criminals successfully cultivate the loyalty of their neighbors. Consequently, when narcotics officers attempt to conduct raids or arrests, the police often encounter resistance from local residents who seek to protect the dealers, who are considered "economic heroes" in their communities.²²

²¹South Konawe Police Narcotics Research Unit, *Report on Mapping Areas Prone to Illicit Narcotics Trafficking Based on Spatial Environmental Typology*, (Andoolo: South Konawe Police Operational Data, 2025), p. 77.

²²Marlin, *Problems of Law Enforcement Against Narcotics Crimes in the Coastal Jurisdiction of Southeast Sulawesi*, (Kendari: Scientific Journal of Cassation Law, 2026), Vol. 4, No. 1, p. 15.

CONCLUSION

1. The role of the South Konawe Police Narcotics Investigation Unit has carried out its role in overcoming drug abuse through three main approaches, namely preventive, repressive, and coordinative. The preventive role is realized through legal counseling, socialization of the dangers of narcotics in schools, universities, government agencies, and the community as an effort to increase legal awareness and prevent drug abuse from an early age. The repressive role is implemented through investigations, inquiries, arrests, searches, confiscation of evidence, examination of witnesses and suspects, and the transfer of cases to the public prosecutor in accordance with the provisions of Law Number 35 of 2009 concerning Narcotics and the Criminal Procedure Code. The coordinative role is realized through cooperation with the National Narcotics Agency, the Prosecutor's Office, local governments, educational institutions, community leaders, and other community elements in supporting efforts to prevent and eradicate drug abuse. These three forms of roles have been implemented in an integrated manner to support the effectiveness of overcoming drug abuse in the jurisdiction of the South Konawe Police.
2. The implementation of drug abuse prevention efforts by the South Konawe Police Narcotics Investigation Unit still faces various obstacles, including the development of perpetrators' modus operandi, the use of communication technology in drug transactions, low public participation in providing information, and the influence of the economic and social environment on the increase in drug abuse. Nevertheless, the South Konawe Police Narcotics Investigation Unit continues to strive to overcome these obstacles by improving the professionalism of investigators, optimizing outreach activities, strengthening coordination with related agencies, and increasing partnerships with the community as part of a sustainable drug abuse prevention strategy.

SUGGESTION

1. It is hoped that the South Konawe Police Narcotics Investigation Unit will continue to improve the effectiveness of its preventive, repressive, and coordinative functions by enhancing human resource capacity, utilizing information technology in investigations and inquiries, and expanding legal outreach activities to the community, particularly in schools, universities, villages, and areas with high levels of vulnerability to drug abuse. Furthermore, increased synergy with the National Narcotics Agency, the Prosecutor's Office, local governments, and all stakeholders is needed to ensure a more integrated and sustainable approach to combating drug abuse.
2. It is hoped that local governments, educational institutions, families, religious leaders, community leaders, and all levels of society will play an active role in supporting drug abuse prevention efforts by increasing supervision, legal education, youth development, and encouraging the courage to provide information to law enforcement officials if they become aware of suspected drug abuse or illicit trafficking. Active community participation will strengthen the effectiveness of law enforcement and is a crucial factor in realizing a safe, orderly, and drug-free South Konawe Regency.

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THE ROLE OF THE SOUTH KONAWE POLICE DRUG RESEARCH UNIT IN COMBATING NARCOTICS ABUSE (A STUDY OF THE SOUTH KONAWE POLICE DRUG RESEARCH UNIT).

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