

## **The Impact of Militancy on Education in FATA**

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### **Abstract**

*Pakistan's role in War on Terror in Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) has witnessed a stiff resistance by the militants who keep their own socio-political agenda in the region on their priority list. Education is one of the main targets on their plan. Militants' intentions have been clearly expressed by destruction of hundreds of schools in the tribal belt, most of the rest being either closed or non-functional owing to a frail security situation in the region. This situation creates complications for the Government of Pakistan's efforts to bring stability and peace in the region, a milestone which again is unachievable without provision of adequate education to the children and young generation. Militancy has deprived thousands of children of their constitutional and basic human right to education.*

### **Background**

The U.S. initiated Global War on Terrorism as a consequence of Al Qaeda's September 11, 2001 attacks on American mainland. While announcing this war, US President of the time, George W. Bush declared:

*"Our war on terror begins with al Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped, and defeated."<sup>1</sup>*

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Taliban are Al Qaeda's main affiliates and defeating the organisation both in Afghanistan and Pakistan remains central for the success of the War. Pakistan like most of the other states announced full cooperation with US led war on Terrorism that originated from Afghanistan.

Within a span of a few months, the US could manage successes against Taliban and therefore toppled their government. Pakistan provided the critical logistic support to US during the early phase of the war. However, it was a hot debate in America and the West that Taliban and Al-Qaeda leadership was fleeing into the Tribal region of Pakistan to get refuge with those tribal people, who once were their allies in fight against the Northern Alliance in civil war torn Afghanistan after the Soviet occupation had ended. Gradually, pressure was built on Pakistan to act against the Afghan Taliban who had fled to FATA, a community of their local sympathizers. South Waziristan was particularly considered the safest haven for Afghani Taliban. This context led to Pakistan's military campaign in its tribal areas in 2004. Thus first military operation was launched in South Waziristan. Afterwards, a number of operations with different timelines were undertaken by Pakistan military against the militants in almost all the seven tribal agencies.

FATA is located in an area which is a political hotbed for violence, extending from Southwest region to Balochistan. Balochistan is a restive province plagued with the separatist insurgency, being tackled by Pakistan Army, which results in frequent clashes between Pakistan Army and Baloch rebels<sup>2</sup>. Their insurgencies over time continue to jiggle and threaten the political stability in Pakistan. The Pashtun area of Balochistan is home to some Afghan Taliban who took refuge among fellow tribes-men inside Pakistan.<sup>3</sup> This area and FATA are considered a base for attacks against foreign forces in Southwestern Afghanistan.

The region is controlled by the Federal Government of Pakistan and on behalf of the President, the Governor of Khyber-

Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) exercises the federal authority in FATA. The Constitution of Pakistan applies same rules for governing FATA as those which were framed by the British in 1901 as Frontier Crimes Regulations (FCR).<sup>4</sup>

**Status of Education in FATA before Militancy:**

FATA had always been on low priority agenda of each government in Pakistan before the September 11 terrorist attack on the US. The people of this semi-autonomous region faced enormous difficulties in their daily lives as there were negligible fund allocations for the socio-economic uplift of the region. This was particularly true about the plans and policies with regard to the education sector. According to the figures available, the annual expenditure on education in FATA had been Rs1.5 billion until 2001. During 2004 and 2005, the education budget was nearly doubled, to Rs2.7 billion. However, this increase was practically meaningless: it is estimated that for the provision of universal primary education alone - which is an important aspect of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)-another Rs1.08billion are required. This is a grim situation, particularly for the low-income groups and the marginalized communities, and especially once the region's literacy rate is 17.42 per cent as compared to the 59.6 per cent at federal and provincial levels altogether.<sup>5</sup>

**Institutions 2004-2005:**

According to the official figures of Ministry of Education report on 'Status of Education in Pakistan 2004-2005', there were total of 674, 567 educational institutions in FATA. They included primary schools, middle and high schools, higher secondary schools, colleges and seminaries, community schools etc.

Following table illustrates the total number of educational institutions in FATA in the wake of beginning of military operations:

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<b>Institutions</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Private</b>	90,397	5,839	96,237
<b>Public</b>	399,044	179,286	578,330
<b>Total</b>	<b>489,441</b>	<b>185,125</b>	<b>674,567</b>

The enrollment in all the above institutions stood at 613,364 (including the public and private institutions). The details are shown in the table below:

**Enrollment 2004-05:**

	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Private</b>	90,397	5,839	96,236
<b>Public</b>	366,410	150,717	517,127
<b>Total</b>	<b>456,807</b>	<b>156,556</b>	<b>613,364</b>

**Teachers 2004-05:**

	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Private</b>	3,084	283	<b>3,367</b>
<b>Public</b>	13,743	5,294	<b>19037</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,827</b>	<b>5,577</b>	<b>22,404</b>

The total number of teachers in the educational institutions was 22,404, with a gender disparity-the ratio of female teachers to their male colleagues being considerably low.

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Pakistan deployed its troops in the tribal belt after the US invasion of Afghanistan so that Taliban could not make sanctuaries in that area. Wana was the first place where the military operation was launched by the Pakistan Army against militants, and the strategy was followed in South Waziristan

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Agency in 2004. Afterwards, a series of different operations were carried out against militants in all the seven agencies of FATA, which spread from Bajaur in North to South Waziristan Agency (SWA) in the south. The conflict gained momentum in 2008 when militants spread their activities based in North Waziristan to other agencies of the FATA. However, the people of FATA are the ones who bear the brunt of the conflict in the region. These people are in the direct firing range of ruthless and cold blooded extremists and militants. The militants have brutally slaughtered hundreds of people besides killing thousands of them. Even women and children are not spared. Schools are blown up and tribal elders are indiscriminately targeted. Also, militants have forced people to leave their homes.

Pakistan's efforts to stabilize the situation cannot be undermined. The State initially tried to limit the activities of the militants, through a process of talks and negotiations.

This however could not succeed and therefore prompted the government to use force. The Government of Pakistan initially attempted to contain the militants through dialogue and negotiations. After these attempts failed, a military operation was launched in early 2009 with the consensus of the political, administrative and military leadership. This operation caused an internal migration in colossal proportions from the embattled areas; an estimated two million people became internally displaced as a result of crisis. While the operation is seen as well-intentioned, it has imposed an immense cost on the local economy. Large number of people have been forced to leave their homes and livelihoods and considerable damage has been caused to physical and social infrastructure, particularly educational institutions.<sup>6</sup>

The armed forces and police are valiantly tackling the menace and sacrificing their lives but the most crucial aspect of the overall struggle against the militancy is the destruction of education system in FATA. The Taliban in the region were vocal critics of the educational institutions, particularly against women education

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on so called religious pretexts. However, another reason for their policy of destroying educational institutions stems from the fact that in many areas, these institutions are being used by security forces as their camps, thus making them prime target of the militants. Educational institutions and the people directly or indirectly associated with them were the most to suffer.

Nonetheless, there are striking facts and figures available on the number of destroyed educational institutions for boys and girls (primary schools, middle schools, high schools and colleges).

The following data shows that out of 458 destroyed educational institutions (primary, middle, high and higher secondary schools and colleges) 317 were for boys and 141 were for girls.

**Total Schools destroyed:**

<b>Agency/Region</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Bajaur</b>	68	27	95
<b>Mohmand</b>	66	22	88
<b>Khyber</b>	31	27	58
<b>Kurram</b>	45	16	61
<b>Orakzai</b>	23	11	34
<b>North Waziristan</b>	23	9	32
<b>South Waziristan</b>	29	6	35
<b>FR Peshawar</b>	11	4	15
<b>FR Kohat</b>	17	15	32
<b>FR Tank</b>	2	2	4
<b>FR Lakki</b>	2	2	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>458</b>

**Source:** FATA Research Centre

**Note:** The schools destroyed include primary, middle, high and secondary schools and a college.

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As the table shows, a total of 458 educational institutions were destroyed by the militants in the tribal region including the Frontier Regions (FR).

**Bajaur Agency**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Middle</b>	<b>Primary</b>
<b>Boys</b>	12	8	45
<b>Girls</b>	3	3	21

**Source:** FATA Research Centre

Bajaur agency was the chief target of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) militants being led by Moulana Faqeer Muhammad who tried to target schools, both male and female, as a part of their strategy to inflict damage to the government infrastructure for the attainment of political objectives. Besides, they acted this way on the pretext that these schools taught secular education and thus could not be tolerated in an Islamic society. Another reason which was used to justify their act was that most of these schools were used by the security forces as their station camps.

For the rest of agencies, the data is provided in the following tables:

**Schools Destroyed Mohmand Agency**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Middle</b>	<b>Primary</b>
<b>Boys</b>	7	12	46
<b>Girls</b>	1	3	17

**Source:** FATA Research Centre

**Schools Destroyed Khyber Agency**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Middle</b>	<b>Primary</b>
<b>Boys</b>	5	4	22
<b>Girls</b>	2	4	20

Source: FATA Research Centre

**Schools Destroyed FR Peshawar**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Middle</b>	<b>Primary</b>
<b>Boys</b>	7	0	4
<b>Girls</b>	0	1	2

Source: FATA Research Centre

**Schools Destroyed FR Kohat**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Middle</b>	<b>Primary</b>
<b>Boys</b>	8	3	5
<b>Girls</b>	1	9	5

Source: FATA Research Centre

**Schools Destroyed Kurram Agency**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Middle</b>	<b>Primary</b>
<b>Boys</b>	4	5	36
<b>Girls</b>	0	0	16

Source: FATA Research Centre.

**Schools Destroyed Orakzai Agency**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Middle</b>	<b>Primary</b>
<b>Boys</b>	5	4	14
<b>Girls</b>	1	4	0

Source: FATA Research Centre.

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**Schools Destroyed North Waziristan Agency**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Middle</b>	<b>Primary</b>
<b>Boys</b>	2	6	15
<b>Girls</b>	0	0	9

Source: FATA Research Centre

**Schools Destroyed South Waziristan Agency**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Middle</b>	<b>Primary</b>
<b>Boys</b>	16	5	7
<b>Girls</b>	0	3	3

Source: FATA Research Centre

**Schools Destroyed FR Tank**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Middle</b>	<b>Primary</b>
<b>Boys</b>	0	0	2
<b>Girls</b>	0	0	2

Source: FATA Research Centre.

**Schools Destroyed FR Lakki**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Middle</b>	<b>Primary</b>
<b>Boys</b>	0	1	1
<b>Girls</b>	0	1	1

Source: FATA Research Centre.

The data collected by FATA Research Centre shows that 343 educational institutions were completely destroyed, 79 were partially damaged due to blasts, while 36 educational institutions (32 in North Waziristan and 4 in FR Lakki) were shown just as damaged schools in the data.

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In Bajaur Agency, 57 fully damaged institutions include 35 primary boys' schools, 6 high schools for boys, 3 middle schools for boys, 10 primary schools for girls, 1 high schools for girls, 2 middle schools for girls, and 1 higher secondary school for girls. 38 partially damaged institutions include 2 colleges for boys, 1 boys' hostel, 10 primary schools for boys, 6 high schools for boys, 5 middle schools for boys, 11 primary schools for girls, 2 high schools for girls, and 1 middle school for girls.

In FR Peshawar, 10 fully damaged places include 3 primary schools for boys, 4 high schools for boys, 1 primary school for girls, 1 middle school for girls, and 1 higher secondary school for girls. The 5 partially damaged institutions include 1 primary school for boys, 3 high schools for boys, and 1 primary school for girls.

In FR Kohat, 31 fully damaged include 1 college for boys, 8 high schools for boys, 3 middle schools for boys, 5 primary schools for boys, 1 high school for girls, 9 middle schools for girls, 4 primary schools for girls, while one primary school for girls was partially damaged due to a blast.

In FR Tank, two primary schools for boys and two primary schools for girls were partially destroyed in explosions.

In Kurram Agency, 51 completely damaged schools were 32 primary schools for boys, 4 high schools for boys, 4 middle schools for boys, and 11 primary schools for girls. 10 partially damaged were 4 primary schools for boys, 1 middle school for boys, and 5 primary girls schools.

In Khyber Agency, 55 completely damaged institutions include 22 primary schools for boys, 4 high schools for boys, 4 middle schools for boys, 1 high school for girls, 20 primary schools for girls, 1 higher secondary school for girls and 3 partially damaged are 1 high school for boys, 1 middle school for boys, and 1 high school for girls.

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In Orakzai Agency, 24 fully damaged institutions include 5 high schools for boys, 3 middle schools for boys, 8 primary schools for boys, 1 high school for girls, 2 middle schools for girls, and 5 primary schools for girls. 10 partially damaged include 1 middle school for boys, 6 primary schools for boys, 2 middle schools for girls, and 1 primary school for girls.

In South Waziristan, 27 fully damaged schools and colleges include 1 boys' college, 14 high schools for boys, 3 primary schools for boys, 4 middle schools for boys, 2 middle schools for girls, and 3 primary schools for girls. 8 partially blasted institutions include 2 high schools for boys, 1 middle school for boys, 4 primary schools for boys, and 1 middle school for girl.

In Mohmand Agency, the educational institutions affected by blasts include 7 high schools for boys, 12 middle schools for boys, 46 primary schools for boys, 1 college for boys, 1 high school for girls, 3 middle schools for girls, 17 primary schools for girls, and 1 girls' hostel.

In Mohmand Agency, 88 educational institutions were completely destroyed which is the highest figure in the list of fully damaged institutions in the region. Mohmand is the agency where 46 primary schools for boys were damaged. 15 middle schools were damaged out of which 12 were schools for boys. Mohmand is also on top of the completely damaged primary schools' list, where 63 were completely destroyed.

Bajaur Agency is one of the most affected tribal agencies where the number of institutions destructed by blasts is maximum; 95 educational institutions were smashed up by militants. The buildings of the educational institutions were either fully or partially damaged. Bajaur has the highest number of blast losses; 66 primary schools collectively out of which 21 girls primary schools were destroyed. Moreover, 38 educational institutions were partially damaged which is the highest figure throughout the tribal belt.

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In FR Kohat, highest numbers of 9 girls' middle schools were completely damaged by blasts. However, only one Primary School for girls was partially damaged.

In South Waziristan, high numbers of 16 high schools for boys were destroyed by heavy explosions by militants. 14 high schools for boys were completely destroyed, which is the highest level in the region. Seven colleges and two hostels (Government Degree College Barkhalozi Baja, Government Degree College Nawagai and Government Post Graduate College Khar Hostel in Bajaur Agency, Government Degree College Lakaray and a Girls Hostel Kandahari in Mohmand Agency, Government Degree College Dara Adam Khel and Government Degree College Ladah in South Waziristan Agency) were also affected by blasts. Two Higher Secondary Schools (Government Girls Higher Secondary School Kalanga Bara in Khyber Agency and Government Girls Higher Secondary School Samand Khan Kili in FR Peshawar) were also included in the targeted schools.

It was revealed that FR Bannu and FR Dera Ismail Khan are the only areas, adjacent to North and South Waziristan agencies where educational institutions remained secure from the terrorists.

The figures show that “the dropout rate in public sector primary schools stands at 69 per cent, which by all means is a lot. Overall, the literacy rate in FATA is about 17 percent while among the women population only 3 percent are literate. On the other hand, in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, militants have blown up around 282 schools, which have affected 13,000 female and 18,000 male students. The attacks against schools are continuing with impunity”.<sup>7</sup>

**Comparative statistics:**

The following tables reflect the comparative statistics of education in FATA highlighting the nearly stagnant growth in this

sector before and during militancy, thus depicting the impacts of militant activity on education.

**Institutions (Private Sector):  
2004-2008**

<i>Year</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>			
	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Mixed</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>2004-05</b>	173	3	246	422
<b>2007-08</b>	198	43	189	430

**Source:** Pakistan Educational Statistics, Ministry of Education<sup>8</sup>

During 2004 and 2005, there were 422 private institutions in FATA in which 173 institutions were for boys, 3 for girls and 246 were co-education system. The data collected during 2007-2008 however, depicts a significant advancement in the situation. In the said duration, out of 430 institutions, 198 were for boys, 43 were for girls and 189 had a co-education system.

**Institutions (Public Sector):  
2004-2008**

<b>Year</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>			
	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Mixed</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>2004-05</b>	3,088	1,882	-	4,970
<b>2007-08</b>	3,227	2,241	-	5,468

**Source:** Pakistan Educational Statistics, Ministry of Education<sup>9</sup>

During 2004-2005, total public institutions in FATA were 4,970 in which 3,088 were for boys and 1,882 for girls while in 2007-08 the figures increased and the total number of public institutions rose to 5,468. The ratio of boys institutions have been increased up to 3,227 and girls' institutions has reached up to 2,241.

**Enrolment (Private Sector):  
2004-2008**

Year	TOTAL		
	Boys	Girls	Total
2004-05	90,397	5,839	96,237
2007-08	79,588	11,631	91,219

**Source:** Pakistan Educational Statistics, Ministry of Education<sup>10</sup>

During 2004-2005, the total enrolments of private sector were 96,237 in which 90,397 were boys' enrolment and 5,839 were girls' enrolment, but in 2007-08 this level of enrolment decreased from 96,237 to 91,219. Boys' enrolments decreased from 90,397 to 78,588. Enrolments of girls increased from 5,839 to 11,631 in 2007-08.

**Enrolment (Public Sector):  
(2004-2008)**

Year	TOTAL		
	Boys	Girls	Total
2004-05	366,410	150,717	517,127
2007-08	399,044	179,286	578,330

**Source:** Pakistan Educational Statistics, Ministry of Education<sup>11</sup>

The total enrolment of public sector was 517,127 in 2004-05 in which boys' enrolments were 366,410 and girls' were 150,717 and these enrolments increased in 2007-08. In 2007-08 the total enrolment in public sector was 578,330 in which boys' enrolment increased from 366,410 to 399,044 and girls' enrolment augmented from 150,717 to 179,286.

**Teachers (Private Sector):  
2004-2008**

Year	TOTAL		
	Male	Female	Total
2004-05	3,084	283	3,367
2007-08	2,884	422	3,288

**Source:** Pakistan Educational Statistics, Ministry of Education <sup>12</sup>

During 2004-2005, the total number of teachers in private sector was 3,367 in which male teachers were 3,084 and female teachers were 283 while in 2007-08 the total number of teachers decreased from 3,367 to 3,286. The ratio of male teachers also decreased from 3,084 to 2,884 while the ratio of female teachers enlarged from 283 to 422 in 2007-08.

**Teachers: 2004-2008**

Year	TOTAL		
	Male	Female	Total
2004-05	13,743	5,294	19037
2007-08	14,189	6,300	20,489

**Source:** Pakistan Educational Statistics, Ministry of Education <sup>13</sup>

In 2004-05 the total number of teachers in public sector was 19037; male teachers were 13,743 and female teachers were 5,294. In 2007-08, these figures have increased. The total number of teachers increased from 19037 to 20489 in which the ratio of male teachers increased from 13,743 to 14,189 and female teacher from 5,294 to 6,300.

Militants in the tribal areas continue to target the educational institutions in almost all the agencies in FATA. According to the data gathered by different sources, following is the situation with

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respect to (i) the number of schools destroyed, (ii) non-functional schools due to various reasons including security concerns, (i) the closed schools mainly due to uncertain security situation:

<b>Name of Agency</b>	<b>School Destroyed</b>	<b>Non Functional School</b>	<b>Closed School</b>
<b>South Waziristan</b>		447	
<b>Khyber</b>	61	282	3
<b>Mohmand</b>	38	29	94
<b>Bajaur</b>	78		46
<b>FR Kohat</b>		69	
<b>Total</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>827</b>	<b>143</b>

**Source:** Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child<sup>14</sup>

Constant targeting and the threat of targeting the educational institutions is major factor behind increase in dropout rate in FATA educational institutions.

**Dropout rate in FATA: (2009-2010)**

Boys	63%
Girls	77%

Ironically, 64% children quit school before reaching grade 10. Different studies found different reasons behind this high dropout rate. Some of them include the issues of security, non-availability of school (either non-existent or destroyed), financial constraints of the families and many other reasons. In case of female dropout, which is much higher than the boys' dropout rate as shown in the above figure, the reason is social constraints particularly from religious clergy and also the fear of Taliban backlash.

**Recommendations:**

In light of the details given above, following recommendations could be envisaged with regards the improvement of educational set up in FATA:

- The law and order situation in the region calls for strong political reforms and their well-timed implementation. For all development activities, safety and security of all stakeholders could be a guiding principle, as it will ensure their optimum participation in the educational process and thus in improvement of the social structure. The government must bring education in FATA on its priority agenda. Only an educated tribal society can guarantee stability and prosperity in the region. This is the basic route, though long term, to eradicate the menace of extremism and terrorism in the society. For this purpose, allocation of more budgets for the education in FATA could be the right strategy.
- It should be the priority of the government to rebuild the destroyed schools in different agencies and make sure that they are not destroyed again by the miscreants in the future. Besides, new schools should be established in the far flung and remote areas of FATA to increase the literacy rate among the tribesmen.
- The government should supervise teachers' postings in schools, as in most of the schools, student to teacher ratio is not sufficient enough to keep the work going. For this purpose teachers should be encouraged to join the schools they are posted to. Schools should also hire new teachers for thousand of vacant posts.
- Special attention is required for female education since girls' schools are prime targets of militants in present times. Female education was already suffering due to conservative tribal cultures and norms but efforts can be made to change the thinking. People can be convinced to educate their daughters and sisters by ensuring that within the educational institutions, local norms and cultures will be observed.

- Civil society should also come forward and contribute to help the local administration and people in their efforts to promote education in tribal areas. The role of local NGOs and tribal Maliks is of great importance in this regard. They can help the government in awareness programmes, establish schools of their own or counter the negative propaganda against education; particularly against the female education by extremist and conservative elements of the tribal society.

### **Conclusion**

Education is an issue that concerns every human and is imperative for all people irrespective of their identity. The very purpose of education is to provide common people a chance to improve their lives and to come out of abject poverty and violence. It is in fact the only way to move ahead and bring progress and sustainable development. This is, however, very unfortunate that despite the above stated argument, education sector is being targeted by militants in FATA; though this is one of the most deprived and underdeveloped areas of Pakistan. There are multiple reasons for targeting educational institutions in the tribal areas by the militants, but there is no doubt that the people of FATA suffer more than any other stakeholder. The situation does not add to the worries of the warring parties and they are least bothered about the burning issue.

The role of the Government of Pakistan becomes the focal point in this respect, primarily in protecting the educational institutions. Moreover, if they are destroyed by the militants, the government has to ensure that these schools are rebuilt and the process of education continues without any disruption. The role of common people in this respect is also crucial and much needed. The initiatives by the civil society, for awareness among people for the importance of education and campaigns to raise funds for the reconstruction of the destroyed schools could be a positive contribution. The armed forces and police also need full support as they are selflessly engaging militants. The concerned parties and

stakeholders must also be convinced to take immediate and effective measures for providing alternate solutions to the problems emerging out of negative impacts of militancy on the education sector in FATA.

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