

FATA
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EXTREMISM & RADICALIZATION IN FATA: IMPACTS ON CULTURE



| FRC Seminar Report

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Acknowledgment

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We would like to thank the honorable guest speakers. People from media, academia, military, civil society and students are highly appreciated for their presence and participation in the event.

FRC owes to thank the field researchers and the FRC team for contributing in holding the Seminar and showing concerns to the cause.

This report is based on the content of speeches and addresses by the speakers and participants at the seminar.

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Extremism and Radicalization in FATA: Impacts on Culture

Introduction

The ongoing violent conflict in Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan has changed the overall picture of the region in a decade of war. The war brought both **structural** (*institutional including social institutions, economic and political institutions*) and **thematic** (*values and codes including Pashtunwali, religious values and others*) implications for the region. The seminar organized by FATA Research Centre in Islamabad on the topic “**Extremism and Radicalization in FATA: Impacts on Culture**” focuses more on the later one i.e. thematic changes in the culture of Pashtun society in FATA.

It has been understood, to the most extent, that why and how this war came into FATA. But now it required discussing the implications of this war so that one may find a safe way to avoid further damages in this respect.

Literature and performing art are the widows to a culture and reflection of life. Culture is presented and preserved through literature and art. Values, codes, social trends and traditions are truly represented by art and literature. So, in this connection, impact on culture is parallel to the impact on literature, poetry, performing art and vice-versa.

The changing trends have been reflected in Pashto poetry and other literature in the conflict laden area of FATA. The majority of the literary figures, specifically poets, addressed the prevailing situations in the region. Their writings are dominant by themes of violence and terror.

By dividing literary people we get two broad categories; in the time of transitions of any sort in a society some of the literary figures welcome new trends while the others denounce. The prevailing conflict in FATA has divided the writers in two parts where some of the writers, mostly new writers, often praised the actors of the conflict while most of them condemn both the violence and the actors involved in it. Thus the conflict engendered new themes and genres in art and literature produced in tribal regions of Pakistan especially in FATA.

Impact on Poetry

The violence in Afghanistan and the Pashtun-inhabited parts of Pakistan is making itself felt on the cultural and social life of the Pashtuns. New themes and terms, such as suicide attack, missile and helicopter have entered into Pashto literature, especially poetry (ghazal, nazm and Tappa etc), reflecting the destructive nature of the insurgency and counter-insurgency operations.

Culture and traditions are preserved through poetry because it is the most attractive form of writing which invites the reader and listener irrespective of his/her societal, political and economic identity. Pashto poetry was based on the advocacy of social values such as **cooperation, tolerance and forgiveness** etc.

"Poets are inspired by what is happening in the world. Their imagination absorbs it, says veteran Pashto poet in Peshawar, *Rahmat Shah Sael*. "That is why Pashto poets are writing about violence in one way or another". Poetry has always been a powerful vehicle for expressing and preserving the national identity and cultural value of Pashtuns.

"It is not the poets' choice to write about war and violence. They are compelled to do so - to express their reaction to hatred and bloodshed", says Darwesh Durrani, a popular Pashto poet and professor of literature in Quetta.

Impact on Values and Traditions

The values and traditions of Pashtuns have been praised by all those who have been exposed to Pashtun nation. These values include *Mrasta* (cooperation), *Rashiya Wayel* (truth), *Badal Akhista* (revenge)¹, *Melmastiya* (hospitality), *Nanawaty* (appeal for forgiveness) when these codes come together formed *Nang* (honor) which is also called *Pashtunwali*². The institutions³ and authorities⁴ in Pashtun society were well defined and recognized under the principles of *Nang* or *Pashtunwali*. The Pashtun traditional authorities have been serving the cause of humanity through traditional institutions under the codes of *Pashtunwali* over the years. But the prevailing circumstances have changed the fundamental purpose of these codes, institutions and authorities in Pashtun society.

The traditional institutions have been hijacked by the newly emerged influential groups and individuals in the Pashtun land. Previously, these institutions had been headed by the identified and publically accepted tribal authority in shape of 'tribal elders' but now the militants have become the prevalent figures in these institutions. Many a times *Jarga* has to punish only those which are unlike by militants. *Hujra* is no more the institution of the people because it is no more a platform for expressing people's views and it is no more education institution which would have been educating people in past. Common people fear of being beheaded by militants ruined the original sense of these institutions. For now, the usage of mosques in tribal society is to campaign for the cause of militants but previously it has been used to highlight social evils and create harmony in the society.

The purpose of the codes of *Pashtunwali* has also been changed after the advent of militancy in the region. 'Cooperation' now stands for the current prevailing setup, funding⁵ for the cause of militants. Before the advent of militancy in the region, the 'cooperation' was the most important code of Pashtun society which kept the society integrated. Due to *Mrasta* problem of one was considered the problem all in the Pashtun society.

¹ **Revenge** and **hospitality** are the most misunderstood codes of *Pashtunwali*. Here revenge has two aspects; one is negative and while the other is positive. The former one (negative aspect) is very rare because active role of other codes of *Pashtunwali* such as **Nanawaty** (appeal for forgiveness) and **Mrasta** (cooperation). While in the case of the later one i.e. positive aspect of Revenge, Pashtuns are famous for giving the reward back to the one who helped him in past.

² **Pashtunwali** consists of five major codes including **Mrasta** (cooperation), **Rashiya Wayel** (Truth), **Badal Akhista** (Revenge), **Melmastiya** (Hospitality), **Nanawaty** (Appeal for forgiveness).

³ The traditional institutions include *Jarga*, *Hujra*, Mosque, Godhar, etc. which serve the people in many ways where some of the institutions provide justice while some provide platforms for getting moral education and some provide platforms to the people for expressing their views and thoughts.

⁴ Traditional and religious leaders those who are considered as honored and uncontroversial among Pashtuns used to served the nation under their defined role by *Pashtunwali*

⁵ This fund for the cause of militancy is called **Chanda** that is compulsory to be paid in most the parts of FATA. In case for non-payment the person faces worst consequences.

Impact on Performing Arts

The current Pashto art industries are presenting violence^{6,7} in their products although against the choice of the producers. Due to the existence of violence in the region its reflection became inevitable in poetry. According to Musafar Khan who runs a production house in Peshawar, he is producing and releasing CDs mostly contain themes of violence, only due to their popularity among people. He also claims that his production house releases at least four such CDs of Pashto film songs every month. The producers are just presenting the prevailing violent picture of the Pashtun society which is, of course, accelerating intolerance and extremism in the society.

The seminar on the aforementioned topic has been organized with the intentions to find a way to preserve or even save Pashtun culture through discussion and debate among the learned, scholars, artists and other stakeholders. The speakers at the seminar brought their own exposure, experiences and observation to bring into light this culturally and literary changing situation in FATA.

⁶ *Khudkasha Damaka yama pashto song 2011, movie, Sabar mi Tamam sho.* <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hheWCn0wNlQ>

⁷ *Shaba Tabahi Oka, movie, Ghaddar,* <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=usyhQy4qwf0>

Profile of Guest Speakers

Professor Dr. Hanif Khalil

Dr. Hanif Khalil is an expert for M.Phil/Ph.D on the Board of Studies of the Department of Urdu and Pakistani Languages, Al-Khair University, AJK. He with his profound academic background in Urdu literature works as an Assistant Professor at National Institute of Pakistan studies, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad. Dr. Hanif had served as a lecturer/visiting faculty member, Taxila Institute of Asian Civilization, QAU, Islamabad and Govt. College No. 1 D.I.Khan, N.W.F.P. He had been the visiting faculty member at NOVA CSS Academy in Islamabad. Dr. Hanif Khalil owns a great deal of publications on culture and Pushtu language; he had been the author of at least 15 HEC recognized journals articles. He also presented 13 papers at International conferences such as International conference on Pakhtun Culture (Pashtu World Conference) held at Kabul, Afghanistan organized by Afghan Cultural Association's Grand (Jirga). Dr. Hanif khalil wrote 30 books out which five were published from HEC recognized publishing authorities including Pashtoon Qabeelay Aor Un Kay Lehjay, Peshawar, Cultural Impact of Pashtu on Pakistani Languages (English) and Mukhtasar Tareekh Zuban-o-Adab – Pashtu.

Arshad Hussain

Arshad Hussain is a renowned T. V artist, singer and a cultural activist. He has been working in Pashtu film and TV for over more than 2 decades. Arshad Hussain started up his career in his childhood and is a great advocate of arts and liberalism that he appreciates the transfer of artistic mores into the next generations. Arshad Hussain believes that he was a born actor would like to die as an actor. For his sheer commitment and perseverance to the arts and television he was kidnapped from his hometown in Mardan and that turned into an art activist. He also encourages and trains the young artists to make them an integral part of cultural restoration society.

Akbar Sial

Akbar Sial is a well known poet of pushtu and has great services for Peace, Pushtu language, literature and cultural promotion. Being a responsive poet, he is the harbingers of peace, humanism and harmony. Ali Akbar Sial, an Islamabad-based senior Pashtu poet and author of several books belongs to Malakand. He is the mastermind of the Pakhtun Cultural Association (PCA) Islamabad, a literary-cum-cultural organization. In 1995, his Pushtu poetry collection came out titled “Rangoonah” and in 2000 he wrote “Pa Jung De or Olagee” (To hell with war). But when enough bloodshed stained the land of Pakhtuns, Sial dared to pen down “Da Parharoonah Bah Gandal Ghawarree (These wounds need to heal) that hit the stalls in 2005. “Ukhkay Ukhkay Muskaytub” (The tearful smile) in 2008 and “Zamung Pa Kalee Ke Shar Ma Jurrawai” (Don’t create disturbance in our village) published in 2009. He has excelled in versifying the adverse effects of war in a fitting manner.

Key Notes taken from Guest Speakers' opinion

Professor Hanif Khalil:

Impact on Culture, especially on Pashto Ghazal

- The event of 9/11 changed the whole world, especially the South Asia. This event brought change in almost all fields of life here in subcontinent. It has changed its culture and traditions.
- The region we are living in is very much important in every aspect including geography, culture, literature and social values etc. Allama Iqbal also indicated its importance for the nation and region in his poetry⁸ that trouble in Afghan nation⁹ will extend to the whole continent. His vision reflected in his poetry when he explains the geographical location of this region so precisely that it seems true even today.
- Due to so much importance Pashtun nation got affected very much after the event of 9/11. One can observe the changing trends in Pashto literature and poetry after the event.
- Before the event of 9/11 in Pashto poetry the dominant tendency was of depicting love and cooperation among people. Very few of the poets were refereeing the ancestors of Pashtun who have fought war and battle¹⁰.
- But we Pashtun as a nation criticize the trends of violence in poetry. Pashtun want to change the perception of being martial and warrior. The poets must give the message of peace and love not of war and battles in their poetry. They should not portray the war loving Pashtun leaders in their poetry¹¹. War and battle was the workable option in the era in which these Pashtun warriors had lived but now trends have changed and war is considered not a good option.
- Our poets should highlight the issue of present days and present their solution through soft ways.
- They should advocate the importance of education, peaceful co-existence and brotherhood. Besides, they should discuss the losses of the nation in this war against terror along with future agenda for the nation.
- The non-violence struggle launched by *Khan Abdul Ghafar Khan* against the British rule in India is a great example of dealing with an issue with non-violent way. This struggle has been compiled in a poetic verse of *Khyber Afridi* in which he says that non-violence is more powerful than violence¹². Therefore we should respond to the ongoing war by increasing education and other soft capabilities.

آسیا یک پیکر آب و گل است ملت افغان در آن پیکر دل است
از فساد او فساد آسیا در کشاد او کشاد آسیا⁸

Theme of the verses: Afghanistan is the heart of Asia and trouble in this land will likely to extend to the whole continent.

⁹ Pashtun as a nation also known as *Afghan*

¹⁰ The speaker referred to the poetic verses of *Ghani Khan* in which he says that the valleys of Pashtun were full of battles

ای زما وطنه د لعلونو خزانې زما ستا هره دره کې دې د تورونې زما

¹¹ Referred to *Murad Shinwari's* verses in which he portrayed *Ahmad Shah Abdali* who was a great warrior.

¹² *Zor de pa narne ked a sakhti na ziat..... Lar pa ghra ke obasi paste oba* (Khyber Afridi)

- After the event of 9/11 two forces have emerged in the region; one is the NATO while the other one is *Al-Qaeda* and other militants. The clash between the two caused the death of several people (Pashtun). In such a critical situation poets should advocate peace.
- It is a common phenomenon that the hero of one nation is the villain of the other nation but poets like *Rahman Baba* are hero among every nation. The non controversial status of *Rahman Baba* is due to his message of love and peace in his poetry.
- *Rahman Baba* was a great advocate of humanity and human rights. So the poets in the current era should follow the great poets of humanity such as *Rahman Baba*¹³.
- Our priority should not be revolving around 'victory' and 'defeat' rather we should focus on peace in the region. If victory became our first priority we would not be able to save mankind. No matter who wins and losses but the ultimate suffering will be faced by the people.
- Our poets should condemn attack on both sides whether it is from NATO side or from Taliban. They should tell the nation to be aware of the exploitation in the name of religion.
- The post 9/11 poets influenced by the war and conflict in the Pashtun land where majority of the poetry is the reflection of this whole conflict. The recent poets indicated that we should understand our position in this conflict in Pashtun land. They told the people that Pashtun are playing in the hands of others and this exploitation gave them bad name (defame)¹⁴.
- **Akbar Syal's** poetry is also revolving around the same theme that how peace could be achieved. He says while addressing NATO State that they fight on our land instead of their own¹⁵. On the other hand he also criticizes the means adopted by Taliban to implement/preach Islam i.e. aggressive and violent¹⁶.
- **Shabab Ranhezai** is famous poet from Swat and his poetry addressed the whole situation of Swat conflict in a very compact piece of poetry. He says that conflict create a sort of situations in which Pashtun kill other Pashtun. According to the poet no one know who make the people fight and for what cause¹⁷.
- Another Pashtun poet belonging to Bannu district says that it is not yet confirmed that who is behind these killing of Pashtun and who is negotiating on the behalf of the slain nation. Such sort of literature indicates the confusion among the people living in the conflicting zone.
- Even in this tense and tough security situation Pashtun poets advocate peace on this land. They preach to mankind that they should make their land as peaceful as heaven.
- **Pir Muhammad Karwan** an Afghan poet also talks of peace even after the destruction of his house and village. He indicates two things in his poetry; the destruction of land and property of the people, and the willingness of the people for achieving peace and accommodating others in this crisis. He says that people offered their palms for the birds to make their nests on, because they have lost trees in the war and conflict where the birds could make nests.

¹³ د خلیل تر کعبې دا کعبه ده لوبه که اباد کا خوګ ويران حرم د زړه Deewan-e-Rahman Baba, page 55,
<http://www.rahmanbabadiwan.com/book/index.htm>

¹⁴ Dase kali ke me khalqo bood-o-bash de,, che tareekh ye khon alood ao dil kharash de.....har badshah zma da mulk badshah da taash de.
 (*Saifur Rahman Salim*)

¹⁵ Hagha pa khpal watan ke na kavi de jang wazoona,,, hagha zma kor ta rewarhe de zilat tasawor (*Akbar Syal*)

¹⁶ Cha che da Khudai sana Kawala da tasbo pa danu,, nan hagha khalq da saroonu karobar kavi (*Akbar Syal*)

¹⁷ Da da baroodo hawagane da kom lora razi.....mala mza da qatal boe zma da wrora razi (*Shabab Ranhezai*)

- The above mentioned pieces of poetry depict that poets, who represent the people's grievances, tell the world that Pashtun nation condemn the existing war on their land.
- Literature can change the course of action of a nation when it presents the non-violent heroes to the nation. Poet can play a very positive role in this respect. They can tell the people that their heroes are those who saved humanity not those who destroyed it.

Arshad Hussain:

Extremism & its Impact on Art industry, Entertainment and Pushtun Culture

- Everyone connected to the field of art and entertainment in Pashtun land got affected due to the ongoing militancy in the region. These include actors both of small and big screen, singers both male and female. Some of them have been killed while the others have been tortured and harassed mentally and physically.
- This discouragement of the artists started even before the advent of militancy in the area, when the religious parties formed government in KPK. They have been discouraged at the government level.
- Traditionally, the artists have not been praised by the Pashtun. Although they do not like artists, but they have not been tortured or miss treated. It very common notion that Pashtun love art but do not like artists.
- Culture and performing art is tool of communication which played positive role in the Pashtun region. Performing art is the one which presents the culture and traditions of a nation.
- There is a common rule everywhere that whenever the contents of the performing art are contrary to the ethics and morality of the society and against the religion, the censor board can even reject and/ or ban the contents of the product. But unfortunately the previous government in KPK discouraged the whole industry of performing art and culture, instead of censoring the controversial contents.
- All the academies and art nurseries have been closed by the government and even the artists have been expelled from their houses during the previous government in KPK. Academy and nursery is very important for the artists where they can practice and get training. Unfortunately the artists are lacking any such platform which means the emergence of new artists is rare.
- Culture is not only about acting and dancing rather these things are small components of the whole culture. But through acting and art we can best present the culture.
- The eras of Muthidda Majles-e-Aamal's and of present government are the Bleak Period for art and entertainment in which aforementioned discouraged the artists very much. In the period of religious government art remained banned because government wanted to ban it while in the present government militancy is creating hurdles for it. Anyhow the present government had opened Nishtar Hall for art related activities which brought a light ray of hope among artists.
- During the bleak era the artists could not do anything for preserving art and culture. The basic reason was that they do not know even their own rights therefore they could not fight for their rights. Besides there is not such organization which can make the artists aware of their rights and make them fight for their rights.

- The artist should be well aware that art and entertainment can more easily penetrate into the society than anything else. But unfortunately there is no such organization which can educate the artists.
- Many culture related programs have been conducted in Nishtar Hall to promote and preserve art and culture. But unfortunately those activities could not help the artists who have been abducted and those who are living in exile affected by militancy and extremism in the region.
- In fact state and civil society both are silent to help the effected artists.
- There is also no culture mapping in KPK and FATA. People are unaware of the cultural diversities within the culture. Apart from that there is not proper projection of our indigenous skills. It is because government does not have any 'culture policy' at state level.
- Now it is the time to reflect and explain to the world that Pashtun and Pashtunwali are not intolerant. If they have guns and they also have *Rabab* (musical instrument commonly played in Pashtun region). This can only be possible through flourishing art and promoting cultural activities.

Akbar Sial's Speech:

Pushtun society and externally imposed governance structures

- Pashtun society has been shattered during the ongoing violent conflict in the region. In such a shattered society norms and values cannot be maintained. Therefore first we need to revive the society as a whole and then we can talk of the norms and values.
- In this case our struggle should be for the restoration of the traditional society. Because the traditional society has very sophisticated codes of conduct.
- Pashtun society has a very rich history which is roughly calculated as five thousand years old.
- On the basis of this society Bayazid Pir Rokhan (author of *Norul Bayan*-belonged to SWA) strived to build a State comprising Pashtun population from the current Pakistan and Afghanistan which could stand in front of the **Mughal Empire**. The existence of such efforts could be noticed even at the time of Khushhal Khan Khattak. Later on in 1726 Ahmad Shah Abdali got successful in creating a Pashtun State in Afghanistan.
- When **Angrez** (commonly used for the European, particularly for British) came to this region, a series of wars and battles erupted between Pashtun and **Angrez**.
- The British found Pashtun as one of the strongest enemies in the region. Therefore British had divided Pashtun into many parts and regions. These regions and parts include Afghanistan, FATA, KPK and Balochistan. This division decreased the power and strength of Pashtun.
- FATA is an original model of Pashtun society which had survived or kept itself preserved in various times.
- FATA lies between Pakistan and Afghanistan where English, Urdu and Persian and Darri languages, respectively, had great influence.
- Afghan governance system was the combination of kingship and Mullahism while in Pakistan the combination was of Dictatorship and Mullahism.
- These systems and languages could not influence the Pashtun society living in FATA.

- If we talk about the characteristics of Pashtun society, FATA is a good example of it. Where women were free to walk everywhere to earn, to help their males. But there was no persistence of harassment or violence against women. That is the fundamental reason of low ratio of divorce in the Pashtun region. In the contrast, women in non-Pashtun societies enjoy more freedom but they have to face violence against them as well.
- Before the current conflict Pashtun society was peaceful and calm as compare to the other societies. The ratio of crimes was very low in Pashtun society.
- So the peaceful culture of Pashtun was first disturbed through imposing of Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR) 1901. Whereby, a big population has been governed by a few of bureaucrats¹⁸. The FCR is not legislated for civilized nations; rather it is an assault on Pashtun culture. It has attempted to imbalance the civilization of Pashtun society.
- “Culture¹⁹ cannot survive without civilization²⁰” Akbar Syal. The Pashtun culture in FATA was a very rich culture but the lack of infrastructure hindered in institutionalizing it. That’s why the militancy has affected the culture badly.
- The FATA has been exploited by both the governments in Pakistan and Afghanistan for their own interests in different times.
- Almost three millions Pashtun have been killed during last 32 years. This is a great loss for a nation which is sufficient for destabilizing it. Therefore, Pashtun living in FATA in particular and Pashtun nation in general lost their culture, norm and values due to conflict(5).
- These loses can be restored through formal education where male and female could go to school and this education will bring peace to the region. This cannot be possible without the support of State and other societies living in Pakistan.

¹⁸ Political Agent (PA) and Assistant Political Agent (APA)

¹⁹ **Culture** is the customs and beliefs, art, way of life, and social organization of a particular country, society or group.

<http://oaadonline.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/dictionary/culture>

²⁰ **Civilization** has been used to refer to the material and instrumental side of human cultures that are complex in terms of technology, science, and division of labor.

Way forward

If literature can accelerate the violent trends in the social and cultural values it can discourage such evils in the society. All the Pashtun literary figures should work for spreading tolerance in the society so that the people make themselves distant from extremism and radicalization. On the other hand the state of Pakistan should make proper policy to eradicate extremism from the Pashtun society which is spreading all over the country. The citizens living in other parts of the country should come forward to help Pashtun in curbing radicalization. The traditional institutions played a very positive role in educating Pashtuns throughout centuries which have been affected by the current militancy. These institutions should be restored to provide effective platforms for exposition of the tribal culture.

It is important to note that:

- Our poets should highlight the issues of present days through soft ways.
- They should advocate the importance of education, peaceful co-existence and brotherhood. Besides, they should discuss the losses of the nation in this war against terror along with future agenda for the nation.
- The non-violent movement can better counter the element of intolerance in society; such movements have held in history.
- By nature Pashtun nation is peaceful but the national, regional and international situation exposed it to the violence and extremism which means eliminating violence from the land of Pashtun can restore the peace once again.
- Strategically the region of Pashtun inhabitants is very important therefore it must be dealt with serious policies.
- If the poets really want to bring peace and tolerance in the Pashtun region of FATA they should praise only those who brought peace to the area and not to those who brought wars and conflicts.
- The government should intervene in the production of art and other sources of entertainment to set down standards for such production. Because the contents of such production are very low standard. The substandard sources of entertainment provide space for extremism and radicalization.
- Jarga, Hujra and other traditional Pashtun institutions remained effective for people's education; therefore, keeping in consideration its past role, these institutions should be restored.

Appendices

Agenda: for “Extremism and Radicalization in FATA: Impacts on Culture”

Date: December 27, 2012

Timings: 14:30 hrs to 17:30 hrs

Venue: Islamabad Hotel, Sheesh Mehal

G-6 Melody, Islamabad

Contact: 051-2112853-4, 0343-8511353

Key Speakers:

Professor Hanif Khalil (Professor, Poet and Writer)

Mr. Akbar Sial (General Secretary Pushtun Cultural Association)

Mr. Arshad Hussain (T.V Artist and Cultural Activist)

Time	Activities	Owner
14:00 - 14:30	Arrival of Guest and Registration	Ms. Zakia Rubab Mohsin
14:35 - 4:45	Welcome, Purpose and Agenda	Mr. M. Zaheer Khan
14:45 - 15:00	Introduction of FRC, Projects	Dr. Ashraf Ali
15:00 - 15:15	Impact on Culture, especially on Pashto Ghazal	Prof. Hanif Khalil
15:20 - 15:35	Pushtun Society and Externally Imposed Governance Structures	Mr. Akbar Sial
15:40 - 15:55	Extremism & its Impact on Art industry, Entertainment and Pushtun Culture	Mr. Arshad Hussain
16:00 - 16:30	Discussion, Question and Answer	Open
16:35 - 16:45	Conclusion, Thanks and Adjournment	Dr. Ashraf Ali
16:50	Hi-Tea	All participants

Media Coverage

(1). Time to change the cliché “Pashtun is a martial nation”



By: Sharafat Chaudhry

Islamabad December 27: Pashtun culture has undergone several changes manifested in folklore, art and literature since the advent of violence and fundamentalism in the region especially after Pakistan’s participation in the US lead ‘war on terror’.

These views were expressed by the speakers in a seminar *“Extremism and Radicalization in FATA: Impacts on Culture”* held by FATA Research Center here at a local hotel.

Speakers of the seminar opined that incidents of conflict and violence have affected Pashtun culture exhibited in folklore, music, literature or *Matal* (proverb). Thus focus of cultural activities has been switched from serenity to security.

Speakers noted that Pashtun culture has been confronted with the new and hard realities of terror, violence and suicide bombings. The romantic and peace inspiring diction is replaced with tragic words like suicide, blast, cries, grief etc.

Speaking on the occasion, a poet-cum-writer Professor Hanif Khalil said that besides its socio-political effects, the incident of 9/11 has also permanent effect on the literary scenario and literature of the sub continent. As the incident has direct contact with politics, literature, history and geography of Pashtun that is why the effects of this incident can be seen in all the genres of

literature created in Pashto language. Both prose and poetry has its effect but the Pashto poetry is highly affected by the rise of militancy in the region.

Mr Khalil said, “It is time to change the cliché that Pashtun is a martial nation”. He added that Pashtun poets and writers wanted to convey a message of peace to the nation through their writings. He presented couplets of various poets to supplement his arguments.

Mr Khalid advised the Pashtun, “It is the time to follow the non-violent theory of Khan Abdul Wali Khan to spread peace, love and brotherhood”.

FRC President Dr. Ashraf Ali opined on the occasion that although ongoing war on terror adversely affected the social, political, economic and cultural spheres of life yet it contributed to great extent to Pashto literature as well.

He said that violence and extremism is overcoming the non-violent culture and highlighted the need for revival of Pashtun cultural.

Dr Ali added that more than 2,000 tribal elders were killed in FATA during the last one decade. The assassinations of tribal elders affected the mechanism of Jirga and created a judicial vacuum in FATA that was filled by militants, he said.

“It is a matter of great concern that the communication gap between tribal society and the state was widening with each passing day,” Dr Ali said, adding that international conspiracies were being hatched to isolate Pakistan.

“Apart from the debate that either it is our own war or we are fighting a war of others, it is a fact that it is being fought on our soil,” he said. Dr Ali added that Pashtuns experienced the largest displacement of human history owing to the war against terrorism that influenced the Pashtun culture to a great deal.

While expressing his views on the occasion, the artist and cultural activist Arshad Hussain said that Pashto culture has badly been affected by the persisting conflict in the region. He said that during last decade Nashtar hall in Peshawar, the hub of cultural activities had been closed for many years. Many artists became the victim of art and cultural enmity. “Conflict in the region posed a great setback to our performing art, poetry and music” he added.

“It is the state’s responsibility to protect the art and the artist” Mr Hussain demanded of the government.

Mr. Akbar Sial the General Secretary Pushtun Cultural Association while talking about the changed landscapes of Pushtun culture said that as a consequence of the conflict the young Pushtun talent now avoids joining the fields of music and the film industry.

The seminar moderator Zaheer Khan said that many master literary pieces and great art had been created during chaos. Making an historical relevance he said, “The Romantic Movement in

English literature emerged only after the French Revolution, and we hope that persisting situation in FATA will engender unrivaled literary activities”.

A large numbers of literati, poets, writers, musicians, civil society activists, academicians, researchers and students participated in the seminar while debating the influence of persisting conflict in FATA on Pashtun culture.

(2). Impacts of Extremism on Pushtu poetry



By: Haroon Rashid

Please follow the link below for Urdu News story

http://www.bbc.co.uk/urdu/pakistan/2012/12/121228_pashto_culture_poetry_sz.shtml



(3). Pakhtuns advised against glorifying ‘warriors’



By Rashid Khattak 28th December, 2012

ISLAMABAD, Dec 27: Speakers at a seminar here on Thursday said that Pakhtun culture had undergone tremendous changes, manifested in folklore, art and literature, over the past one decade.

The seminar titled “Extremism and radicalisation in Fata: impacts on culture” was organised by Fata Research Centre (FRC).

Participants appreciated the role of Pakhtun poets and writers, saying that they were raising their voices against violence and supporting peace. “Our poets condemn drone attacks as well as suicide bombings because innocent people are being killed in such acts of violence,” said Prof Hanif Khalil.

For restoration of peace in the region, Prof Khalil suggested, Pakhtuns should advise their new generation to get modern education and excel in science and technology, instead of glorifying the adventures of their “warrior” forefathers. He said that their heroes might be villains, for others.

“It is time to change the cliché that Pakhtun is a martial nation,” Mr Khalil said. He added that Pakhtun poets and writers wanted to convey a message of peace to the nation through their writings. He presented couplets of various poets to supplement his arguments.

Speaking on the occasion, FRC president Dr Ashraf Ali said that the consequences of 9/11 affected the entire world but Pakhtuns were the worst hit. “This war has affected every sphere of life of Pakhtuns, including their politics, economy, culture and literature,” he said.

Ashraf Ali added that more than 2,000 tribal elders were killed in Fata during the last one decade. The assassinations of tribal elders affected the mechanism of Jirga and created a judicial vacuum in Fata that was filled by militants, he said.

“It is a matter of great concern that the communication gap between tribal society and the state was widening with each passing day,” Mr Ali said, adding that international conspiracies were being hatched to isolate Pakistan.

“Apart from the debate that either it is our own war or we are fighting a war of others, it is a fact that it is being fought on our soil,” he said. Ali added that Pakhtuns experienced the largest displacement of human history owing to the war against terrorism.

Akbar Sial, the general secretary of Pakhtun Cultural Association, said that rulers on both sides of the Durand Line had exploited the people of Fata for their interests. He said that women were allowed in Fata to go to the mountains to collect firewood and take part in agricultural activities, however, they were not allowed to attend school.

He said that in the past Fata had a model Pakhtun society that was secured from the affects of Afghanistan and Pakistan. There were arm manufacturing factories in Fata but despite that there

had been peace in the past, he added. “The problem begins when arms fall in the hands of cowards as possession of weapons turns such people into fascists,” he said.

Mr Sial said that Pakhtuns should live in peace and avoid wars. “They have fought so many wars that their war quota has been exhausted,” he said. He hoped that dialogue could bring peace to the war-torn region.

Arshad Hussain, TV artist and cultural activist, showed the plight of Pakhtun singers and performers through a detailed presentation. He said that he was kidnapped by the Taliban in 2008 and was freed after paying a hefty amount as ransom.

“They kidnapped me because they thought that my profession was un-Islamic. However, the incident turned me into a cultural activist,” he said. He added that he lost his job after the kidnapping incident as his seniors considered him a security risk for his colleagues.

Mirza Mohammad Jihadi, adviser to the president, who was scheduled to address the seminar as chief guest did not turn up owing to reasons best known to him, though the organisers were expecting him till the last minute.

(3). From serenity to security: ‘Extremism has taken its toll on the Pashtun culture’

THE EXPRESS
TRIBUNE
WITH THE *International Herald Tribune*

By [Our Correspondent](#)

Published: December 28, 2012



“Poets are not villains but the silent messengers of peace, reflecting the hidden side of the society,” says Khalil.

ISLAMABAD:

Aside from health, education, agriculture and the overall economy, the rise of violence and extremism in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Fata) after 9/11 has also taken a toll on the Pashtun culture: with its folklore, art and literature shifting focus from serenity to security.

These views were expressed by speakers at a seminar on “Extremism and Radicalisation in Fata: Impacts on Culture” held here at a local hotel.

Ashraf Ali, president of Fata Research Centre (FRC) said Fata has undergone a massive human migration since after 9/11. Over 1,000 schools have been blown up and the once-enrolled students are joining militant wings. These changes are affecting the Pashtunwali – the code of conduct of the Pashtun people that focuses on principles of honour, courage, hospitality, asylum and inheritance, he said. “New even the poetry is militarised and militants are idealised in it,” he added.

Professor Hanif Khalil shed light on the impact of terrorism on poetry, specifically gazal and tappa forms. “The misperception with the Pashtun people is that they love music but hate musicians, as said by famous Pashto poet Ghani Khan,” he said. “We own Ahmad Shah Abdali, Muhammad Bin Qasim and Mahmood Ghaznavi, but they were Arabs and Turk who had nothing directly to do with the Pushtuns,” he added.

” It is time we follow the non-violent theory of
Khan Abdul Wali Khan to spread peace,
love and brotherhood
Professor Hanif Khalil

“It is time we follow the non-violent theory of Khan Abdul Wali Khan to spread peace, love and brotherhood,” said Khalil. “Poets are not villains but the silent messengers of peace, reflecting the hidden side of the society,” he said.

The professor shared several couplets about the militants: “Those who would once run the beads of rosary are now the businessmen of skulls” and “O birds make nests in our hands; all the trees and bushes have been perished in my town due to war.”

Arshad Hussain, a TV artist and cultural activist showcased a documentary about actors and singers who have been killed or threatened by militants. “The period of previous government was the worst for art and culture in Fata and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa as every thing was banned in the name of Islam,” Hussain said. Nashtar Hall, the cultural hub of K-P in Peshawar, had also been closed for many years, he added.

Any artist should have the freedom of artistic expression, but every outlet during those governments was shunned. “Even I was abducted by the Taliban and those nine days were the worst days of my life.”

“Sadly, the incumbent government’s efforts to revive art and culture are aimless and it is up to us to remain united and stand against all odds in this critical time,” he added.

Akbar Sial, the general secretary of Pushtun Cultural Association talked about the changing landscapes of the Pashtun culture. “As a consequence of the ongoing conflict, young Pushtun talent now avoids joining the fields of music or the film industry,” he lamented.

A large numbers of literati, poets, writers, musicians, civil society activists, academicians, researchers and students participated in the seminar.

Published in The Express Tribune, December 28th, 2012

(4). Pashto Literature in times of conflict

PAKISTAN OBSERVER

By: Sana jamal

Saturday, December 29, 2012 - Islamabad —The continuing conflict and aggression, since Pakistan's alliance with US-led war on terror, has left deep impressions on Pakistani culture and literature. The impact on Pashto prose and poetry were particularly discussed by a group of literati in Islamabad who deliberated on changing trends in Pashto literature in an age of terror.

Participants at the seminar on "Extremism and Radicalization in FATA: Impacts on Culture", organized by FATA Research Center (FRC), identified twofold impact on the culture due to conflicts and rising extremism. First influence, quite visible one, is that the local artists fear cultural setback as the violence has affected Pashtun culture in all forms: folklore, music, literature. "The romanticism in the poetry has been replaced with tragic words like suicide bombing, blasts, cries, grief" remarked one participant.

While the other, rather promising view, is that the same conflict is contributing to Pashto literature. After all major literary masterworks have often been produced during hard times, mentioned Dr. Ashraf Ali, the president of FRC. Citing the example of Romantic era in English literature that began after French Revolution, he said although ongoing war has badly affected the social, political, economic and cultural spheres of life "yet it has contributed greatly to Pashto literature as well."

Dr. Ashraf's comment pointed towards a noteworthy chapter of Pakistan literature that present a local perspective and powerful insight into ongoing conflicts by putting vivid impression into words.

Discussing the key literary trends and struggles that Pakistani writers face today, a poet-cum-writer Professor Hanif Khalil said that 9/11 has had permanent effect on the literary scenario of the region besides socio-political effects. "But Pashto prose and poetry has been highly affected by the rise of militancy in the region since the conflict has intricate and direct link with Pashtun politics, literature, history and geography.

The focus of cultural activities has shifted from serenity to security in post 9/11 scenario. Arshad Hussain, artist and cultural activist, said the Nashtar hall in Peshawar, the hub of cultural activities, had been closed for many years as "the conflict in the region posed a great setback to our performing art, poetry and music" he said. Many artists became the victim of art and cultural enmity, said Hussain, demanding that "it is the state's responsibility to protect the art and the artist" Akbar Sial, the General Secretary Pushtun Cultural Association, while talking about the changed landscapes of Pushtun culture said that the worst effects has been that the deviation of young ones from literary and art fields. Underlining the need for revival of Pashtun cultural, he said that violence and extremism is overwhelming the non-violent culture.

FRC is a think-tank based in Islamabad that focuses on Federally Administrated Tribal Areas (FATA) in its entirety to bring to light its unique social values, strange customary laws, rich political history and constitutional status.

(5). Extremism and radicalization in Fata impacts on culture

The Lahore Times

By [Muhammad Daud Khan](#)

Published: December 28, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Pashtun culture has undergone several changes manifested in folklore, art and literature since the advent of violence and fundamentalism in the region, especially after Pakistan's participation in the US led 'war on terror'.

Such views were expressed by the speakers in a seminar "*Extremism and Radicalization in FATA: Impacts on Culture*" held by FATA Research Center here at a local hotel.

Speakers of the seminar opined that incidents of conflict and violence have affected Pashtun culture exhibited in folklore, music, literature or *Matal* (proverb). Thus, focus of cultural activities has been switched from serenity to security.

A large number of literati, poets, writers, musicians, civil society activists, academicians, researchers and students participated in the seminar while debating the influence of persisting conflict in FATA on Pashtun culture.

Speakers noted that Pashtun culture had been confronted with the new and hard realities of terror, violence and suicide bombings. The romantic and peace inspiring diction is replaced with tragic words like suicide, blast, cries, grief, etc.

While expressing his views on the occasion, the artist and cultural activist Arshad Hussain said that Pashto culture had badly been affected by the persisting conflict in the region.

He said that during last decade, Nashtar hall in Peshawar, the hub of cultural activities had been closed for many years. Many artists became the victim of art and cultural enmity.

"Conflict in the region posed a great setback to our performing art, poetry and music," he added.

"It is the state's responsibility to protect the art and the artist," Mr Hussain demanded of the government.

Speaking on the occasion, a poet-cum-writer Professor Hanif Khalil said that besides its socio-political effects, the incident of 9/11 has the also permanent effect on the literary scenario and literature of the sub continent. As the incident has direct contact with politics, literature, history and geography of Pashtun that is why the effects of this incident can be seen in all the genres of literature created in Pashto language. Both prose and poetry have its effect, but the Pashto poetry is highly affected by the rise of militancy in the region.

Mr. Akbar Siyal the General Secretary Pushtun Cultural Association while talking about the changed landscapes of Pushtun culture said that as a consequence of the conflict the young Pushtun talent now avoids joining the fields of music and the film industry.

Dr. Ashraf Ali, the president of FATA Research Center while giving welcome remarks said that although ongoing war on terror adversely affected the social, political, economic and cultural spheres of life yet it contributed to the great extent to Pashto literature as well.

“The history of world literature shows that the master literary pieces were created during chaos. The romantic movement in English literature emerged only after French Revolution.”

He said that violence and extremism is overcoming the non-violent culture and highlighted the need for revival of Pashtun cultural.

The session was followed by very enlightening questions and comments.

(6). Violence, conflict affects Pushtun culture



Usman Ahmed, December 28, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Pashtun culture has undergone several changes manifested in folklore, art and literature since the advent of violence and fundamentalism in the region especially after Pakistan’s participation in the US lead ‘war on terror.

These views were expressed by the speakers in a seminar “*Extremism and Radicalization in FATA: Impacts on Culture*” held by FATA Research Center here at a local hotel.

Speakers of the seminar were of the view that incidents of conflict and violence have affected Pashtun culture exhibited in folklore, music, literature or *Matal* (proverb). Thus focus of cultural activities has been switched from serenity to security.

The seminar was attended by literati, poets, writers, musicians, civil society activists, academicians, researchers and students and debated over the influence of persisting conflict in FATA on Pashtun culture.

The speakers noted that Pashtun culture has been confronted with the new and hard realities of terror, violence and suicide bombings. The romantic and peace inspiring diction is replaced with tragic words like suicide, blast, cries, grief etc.

Speaking on the occasion, Arshad Hussain a TV artist said that Pashto culture has badly been affected by the persisting conflict in the region. He said that during last decade Nashtar hall in Peshawar, the hub of cultural activities had been closed for many years, adding that many artists became the victim of art and cultural enmity.

He said that conflict in the region posed a great setback to our performing art, poetry and music. He demanded of the government to protect the art and the artist.

Professor Hanif Khalil on the occasion said that besides its socio-political effects, the incident of 9/11 has also permanent effect on the literary scenario and literature of the sub continent.

“As the incident has direct contact with politics, literature, history and geography of Pashtun that is why the effects of this incident can be seen in all the genres of literature created in Pashto language, he said

He was of the view that both prose and poetry has its effect but the Pashto poetry is highly affected by the rise of militancy in the region.

Earlier Dr. Ashraf Ali, the president of FATA Research Center while giving welcome remarks said that although ongoing war on terror adversely affected the social, political, economic and cultural spheres of life yet it contributed to great extent to Pashto literature as well.

He said that violence and extremism is overcoming the non-violent culture and highlighted the need for revival of Pashtun cultural.

The Kooza News Desk

(7).Radio Buraq

<http://frc.com.pk/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Amad-FCR-Report31-12-2012.mp3>



Event at a glance (Pictures)



Plate No. 1: The stage, showing speakers



Plate No.2: The participants