

Adverse Impact of Militancy on the Development of Children in FATA

Nadia Asghar *

Abstract

The recent rise of militancy along with suicide bombings has diverted the government of Pakistan's attention towards FATA. This latest trend has shattered the economic growth by intensifying insecurity, discouraging steps for education improvement, and increasing its long term detestable impact on people of FATA. Furthermore, the psychological and mental growth of children in FATA has been affected critically. This paper aims at finding the adverse impact of rising militancy on the development of the children in FATA, as the War on Terror has not only affected the education, health, and employment rates, but also the personality growth of youth. The study comprises of scientific methodology; a questionnaire was designed on the basis of Child Development Indicators developed by United States Department of Health and Human Services. Policy implications for prosperity of FATA through the focus on personality development of children have also been suggested.

Introduction

The Federally Administrated Tribal Areas (FATA) are situated in northwest of Pakistan. The region's border is linked to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan to the east and south respectively, and to Afghanistan from its west and north. FATA is directly governed by the federal government and it includes seven agencies namely Khyber, Kurram, North Waziristan, South Waziristan, Mohmand, Bajur and Orakzai. Agencies are further divided in sub agencies. People of the FATA are Pashtuns and Muslims by faith.

* *Nadia Asghar is Research Scholar at National Defence University Islamabad-Pakistan.*

Under the Article 1 of the Constitution, the territory of FATA is included in Pakistan and is directly governed by the President of Pakistan. The laws passed by the National assembly cannot be executed in FATA until the President orders. All administrative decisions about crimes and other issues are taken by *Jirga* under the Frontier Cries Regulation (FCR) 1901.

In 2001, the Pakistan Army entered FATA to fight against militancy. To date, twelve years have passed but the war between military and militants still continues. The war aims to create peace in FATA but due to brutal attacks by militants, peace is still a day dream. War has cast adverse impact on education, health, employment, living standards, and especially on the development of children and youth. The objective of this study is to find out the impact of militancy in the region on the development of children. For this purpose, indicators developed by United States Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS) have been applied.

Objectives

- To find out the impact of militancy on the development of children in FATA.
- To find out the social condition of women in FATA.
- To give some policy implications for the development of women and children in FATA.

Literature Review

Khan (2009) posits that Pakistan military operation in FATA does not only have the explicit cost but some implicit one as well, in terms of public-state relationship. He says that operations have negative impact on the mentality of people and children. Tribal leaders think that military operations are destroying their authority and tribal values. Therefore there is a need to develop strategies and capacity building programs for the tribal.

Adverse Impact of Militancy on the Development of Children in FATA

Javaid (2012) concludes that FATA is already an underdeveloped area and the War on Terror has made it more marginalized and deprived. The socioeconomic status of the people has declined drastically due to militants' attacks. There is a strong need to develop consensus to curb extremism from FATA. Otherwise the population living in those areas will suffer more in future with regard to education and economic circumstances.

Shiekh (2013) states that 831 schools were destroyed by militants between 2009-2012 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA. This shows the miserable status of education in FATA. The situation has detrimental psychological impact on children. Poor security has created a fear in their minds and they are distancing themselves from education.

Ahsan (2013) states that education is everyone's fundamental right and children of FATA are being deprived of this right. Children have limited mental growth and are in state of depression. He emphasizes that if serious steps are not taken then the future of these children will be dreadful.

The review of literature on the issue reveals that it is divided in two parts; first is about women and second revolves around children. The strong bond between children and their mothers is foundation of this virtual cycle as mothers act as their nurturer and mentor. Therefore, first part of this study is about the socio economic conditions of women in FATA.

Women in FATA

The worst condition of tribeswomen in FATA is attributed to the region's political, economic, educational and social structures. These women traditionally have had no role in politics throughout history until 1996, when the President of Pakistan introduced electoral reforms in FATA and women in the tribal areas got the right to vote.

Tigah

The female literacy rate is 3% (approximately) in FATA, perhaps the lowest in the world. On the other hand the dropout rate among girl students in FATA is 70.6 %. Such low rates speak volumes of the social indifference and hindrance to the women education at the community level in the area. There are very few schools and the targeted schools by the militants were mostly for girls.

The economic status of women of FATA is no better than their social, political and educational status. They work in fields and look after the livestock, which is the main source of livelihood of residents of FATA, but are not allowed to directly participate in any business. An important determinant of one's economic status is share in inheritance and women in FATA are deprived of this share.

If the majority of the population of a society is underprivileged and depressed on all the grounds, higher levels of development and modernization cannot be expected. Moreover, progress is impossible if women have absolutely no role in the area - FATA is a community having such social evils. The great and important roles which women can play and have historically been playing in the development of communities are missing in FATA. This is one of the key factors responsible for extreme underdevelopment of the area.

It is true that discrimination against women is widespread and mostly overlooked all over the country, but it is important to note that a woman in FATA is worse than the average Pakistani woman because the former is a victim of double discrimination: even her most basic constitutional rights are denied.

The community of FATA follows a *Jirga* system which needs to be replaced by a judicial court system, already being practiced in the rest of the country. The Code of Criminal Procedure also needs to be applied for the betterment of the people. Eventually, the implementation of these measures will help women to seek justice.

Adverse Impact of Militancy on the Development of Children in FATA

Vulnerable condition of the female population in FATA is the major hindrance for development. Females are illiterate and do not participate in decision making or any income generating activity. Women are responsible for the training of the children but cannot render it as they themselves are depressed. There is a dire need of political will, strength and leadership to overcome these challenges in FATA.

Children in FATA

The issues on children have not found sound footings in the existing literature on FATA. The preceding facts on marginalization of women in FATA show that unless a mother is given her right, the child can never be motivated. A mother's lap is said to be child's first learning place but depressed and socially backward, she cannot serve this duty with full spirit. The rise of militancy has also created a sense of fear and insecurity in women. Despite an impressive contribution of Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) for FATA's social uplift, the issue of physical and psychological growth of children remains unaddressed.

Hypothesis

H₀: Militancy has no impact on the development of the children in FATA.

H₁: Militancy has negative impact on the development of the children in FATA.

Research Methodology

The research method comprised of primary resources i.e. a survey as well as structured interviews. Questions were designed according to the indicators. As the respondents were children, easy language was used. Questions were translated in regional language during interviews to ensure correct understanding and response.

Sample

The target population comprised of children with versatile family backgrounds between the ages of 12 to 18 years- the sample being of eighty children. The parents' consent and convenience for the interview was also sought.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics was used for data interpretation. The development of children was gauged against the indicators developed by the United States Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS), which are as follows:

Indicators of Children Development (Developed by USDHHS)

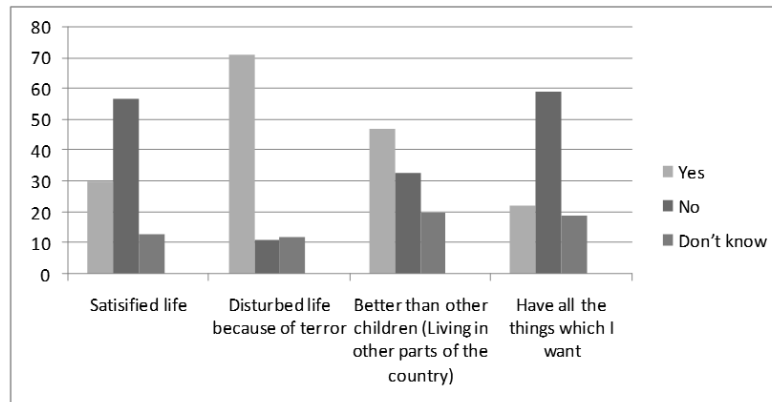
Following are the indicators which are developed by the USDHHS.

- Life satisfaction
- Hope
- Gratitude
- Money management/frugality
- Generosity
- Spirituality and purpose
- Parent-youth relationships
- Peer relationships

Results and Discussion

1. Life Satisfaction (Scale developed by Scale Huebner, E.S., Suldo, S.M., & Valois, R.F. University of South Carolina)

Figure No.1



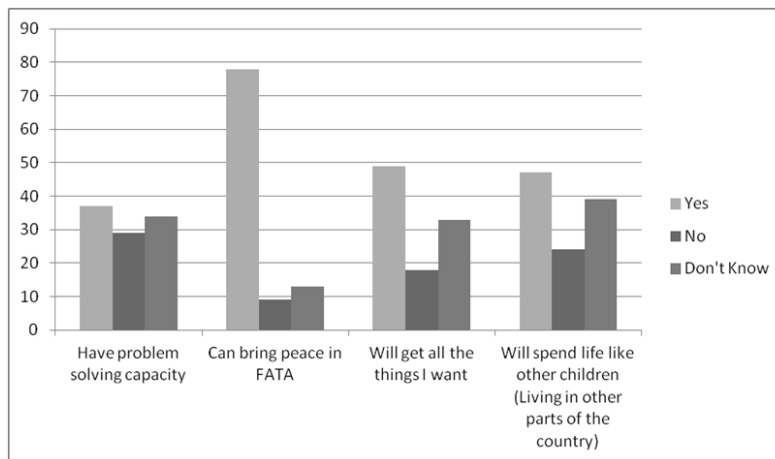
Source: (Researcher's own calculations by using field data)

Note: (Results are shown in percentage)

The above results show that children are less satisfied and terror has disturbed their lives. They are deprived of basic necessities and want to share same status with the children living in privileged areas of the country.

2. Hope (Scale developed by Snyder, C.R. University of Kansas)

Figure No.2



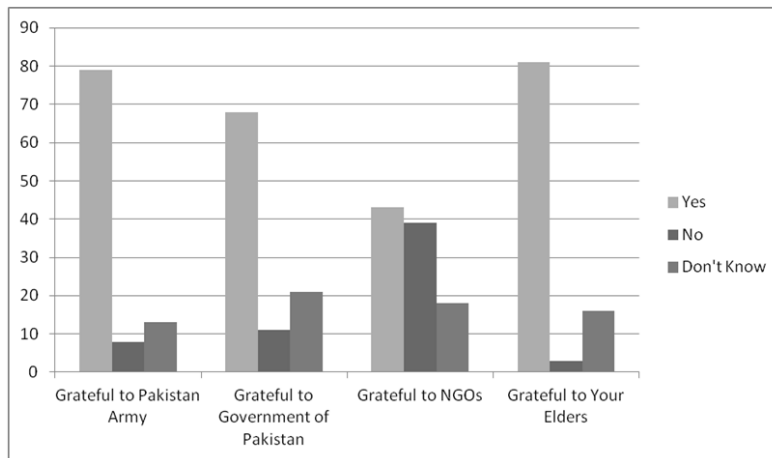
Source: (Researcher's own calculations by using field data)

Note: (Results are shown in percentage)

The above analysis on presence of hope reveals mix evidence. However, the children are determined to bring peace in their region and optimistically hope for a better life.

3. Gratitude (Scale developed by McCullough, M.E., Emmons, R.A., Tsang, J)

Figure No.3



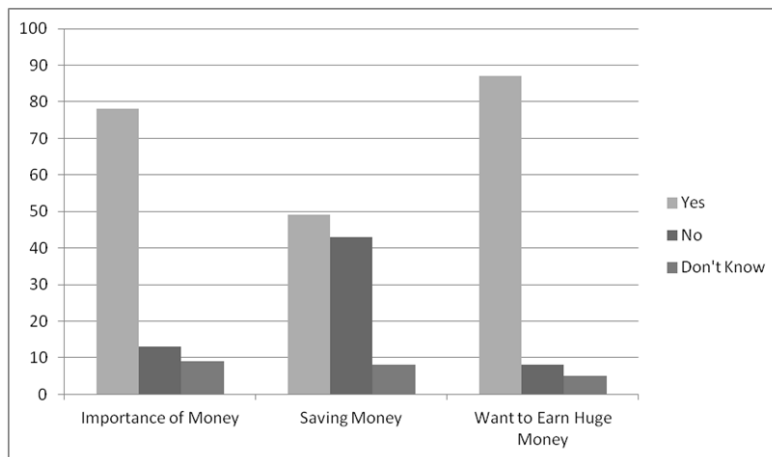
Source: (Researcher's own calculations by using field data)

Note: (Results are shown in percentage)

The results show that the children have great sense of gratitude for the Government of Pakistan and the Army, but there are mixed results about the NGOs. The reason is that most of the NGOs are working for peace and social development and a negligible number is working for the development of children.

4. Money Management/Frugality (Scale developed by Kasser, T. Knox College)

Figure No.4



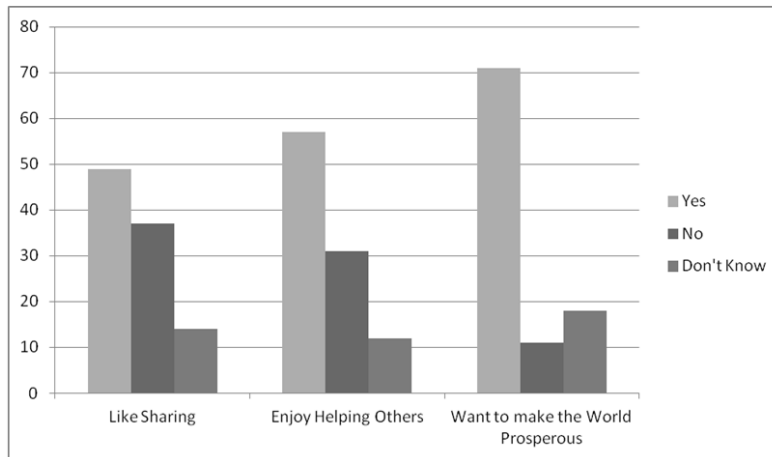
Source: (Researcher's own calculations by using field data)

Note: (Results are shown in percentage)

The above figure shows that children know the importance of money and want to have a strong earning hand. However, mixed results on saving indicate their fear of losing their property to militants, which bars them from saving.

5. Generosity (Scale developed by Kasser, T. Knox College)

Figure No.5



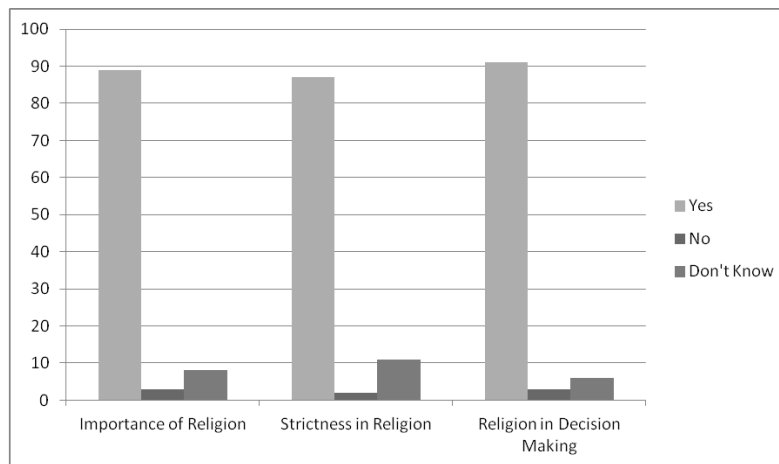
Source: *(Researcher's own calculations by using field data)*

Note: *(Results are shown in percentage)*

The results of generosity scale show that children are traditionally generous like their forefathers and they have a passion to make the world more prosperous.

6. Spirituality and Purpose (Scale developed by National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR))

Figure No.6



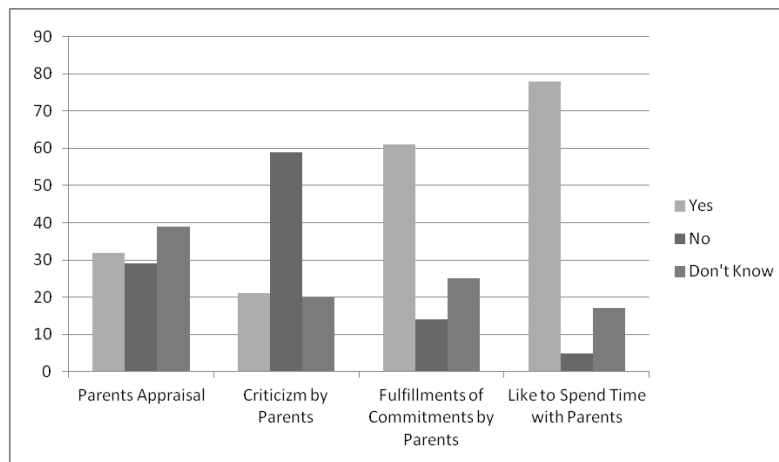
Source: (Researcher's own calculations by using field data)

Note: (Results are shown in percentage)

The results of spirituality scale show that children have great affection for religion and they are strongly affiliated to their norms and values. Religion matters a lot for them and they seek its guidance for making decisions.

7. Parent -Youth Relationships (Scale developed by Moore, K., Gunnoe, M.)

Figure No.7



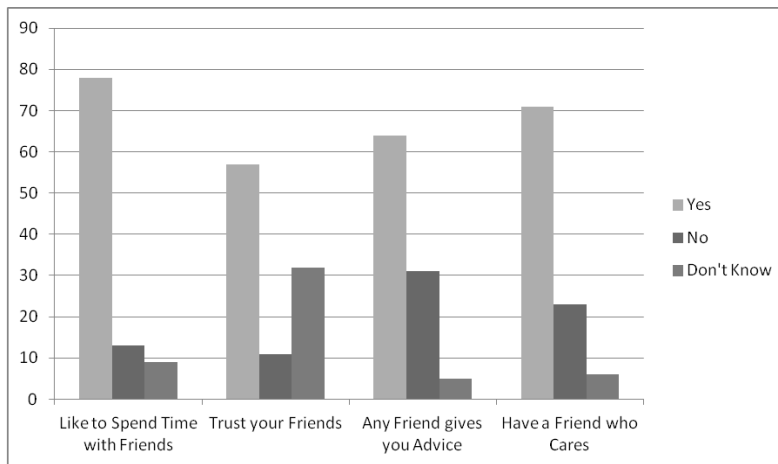
Source: (Researcher's own calculations by using field data)

Note: (Results are shown in percentage)

The results show mixed evidence. The reason is that parents are illiterate and they might not know the importance of emotional factors. They love their children but might be unaware of the fact that their appraisal is necessary for the development of children. They do not know the psychological importance of appraisal and encouragement. However, the children gladly endorsed that their parents always kept their words and fulfilled commitments.

8. Peer Relationship (Scale developed by Moore, K., Gunnoe, M.)

Figure No.8



Source: (Researcher's own calculations by using field data)

Note: (Results are shown in percentage)

The results show that children love to spend time with their friends, thus follow their traditional values of hospitality and sincerity.

Conclusion

The objective of this research is to indicate the impact of militancy on the psychological growth of the children. The results illustrate that children are discontented and disturbed. They have a sense of fear because of terror. At the end of the survey every child was asked to make a wish; most of them preferred to wish for peace and security than education. Besides harboring fear of militants, they were optimistic about efforts for bringing peace to the region and the world. The negative effect of militancy on FATA mirrored through their fearful, gloomy eyes, weak and pale

physique and depressed demeanor. Their daily diet pattern-as revealed through the interview with parents- lacks basic nutrition. Parents' ignorance on this issue also contributes to depravity. In this respect, it will be appropriate to comment that the fundamental right of each child to enjoy health and education must be catered by the government and this alarming situation in FATA calls for a quick and upfront solution. All stakeholders in the development activities in FATA – NGOs, parents and government- need to focus on the physical and psychological health and education of children for a promising and secure future of the country. Also, all proposed programs must address religious and traditional values, as they are firm roots of people of FATA and knit them closely with each other.

Suggestions

- Government must focus on providing better health and education facilities in the area.
- Women must be encouraged for education and motivated toward self actualization.
- Awareness about the training and development of the children may also be raised through community awareness programs.
- Government may start some rehabilitation programs in the area for healthy mental growth of children.
- NGOs must also contribute for the training of the children.
- Government and NGOs may look after providence of basic nutrition to the children.
- Parents especially mothers must be trained to deal with psychological requirements of children in precarious circumstances such as war and terror.
- Sports opportunities and healthy activities will help these children grow up normally and shed the sense of deprivation and dissatisfaction

Notes & References

1. Asia Report N°242 (2013) “Pakistan: Countering Militancy in PATA” 15 January 2013
2. Book: *What Do Children Need to Flourish?* Available at www.springeronline.com
3. Huebner, E.S., Suldo, S.M., & Valois, R.F. University of South Carolina
4. Israr Alam Mohmand “Students Left Behind In Pakistan’s Tribal Regions”, Radio Free Europe, September 17, 2012 <http://www.rferl.org/content/pakistan-students-left-behind-in-fata/24710912.html>
5. Javaid, Umbreen (2012) “Religious Militant Extremism: Repercussions for Pakistan” *Journal of Political Studies*.
6. Kasser, T. Knox College Frugality Scale (modified)
7. Kasser, T. Knox College Generosity Scale
8. Khan, Naila, Aman,. (2012) “Socio-Economic and Political Status of Women in FATA -The Process of Development and Phenomenon of Militancy” *TIGATIGAH, A JOURNAL OF PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT* Volume: II, December 2012, FATA Research Centre, Islamabad.
9. Khan, Zahid, Ali,. (2009) “Military operations in FATA and PATA: implications for Pakistan” *Journal of Strategic Studies*
10. Laura Lippman, Kristin A. Moore, Lina Guzman, Gregory Matthews, Jenny Hamilton “What Do Children Need to Flourish?”
11. McCullough, M.E., Emmons, R.A., Tsang, J. (2002). The grateful disposition: A conceptual and empirical topography. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (82)1, 112-127.
12. Moore, K., Gunnoe, M. (1997) Parent-Adolescent Relationship Scale used in the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth.
13. Sajid, Islamuddin,. (2012) “Over 3,000 schools destroyed in militancy, disasters: official”, *Daily Express Tribune*, June 15, 2012, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/393911/over-3000-schools-destroyed-in-militancy-disasters-official/>

Adverse Impact of Militancy on the Development of Children in FATA

14. Shaukat, Aroosa,.(2012) “Despite having second worst record for children out of school, UNESCO optimistic”, Express Tribune, October 24, 2012 <http://tribune.com.pk/story/456334/despite-having-second-worst-record-for-children-out-of-school-unesco-optimistic/>
15. Snyder, C.R. University of Kansas “ The Children’s Hope Scale”
16. Spirituality and Purpose National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR).
17. www.childtrends.org/positiveindicatos
18. www.childtrendsatabank.org