

The Impact of Rising Terrorism and Military Operations on Socio Economic Culture of Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan

Muhammad Waqas Chughtai *

Abstract

Pakistan is playing a prominent role in handling insurgency and fighting against terrorism in its Federally Administrative Tribal Area (FATA) because of the heightened conflicts since the 9/11 episode. Pakistan Army, along with the help of the provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) province, and the local community of FATA, is trying to bring changes in the orientation, judgment and strategies for FATA to change unrest into progression. The intensifying activities of militants and military operations have had long term effects on the socio-economic condition of FATA. This paper aims at finding the impacts of terrorism on the social, economic, and political structure of the residents of FATA by describing the wide range of causes and effects of both militancy and military operations, and providing policy implications for development to bring peace and stability in the region. .

The research comprises of data gathered through the structured questionnaire for a sample of two hundred individuals. The findings emphasize on massive destruction of the region, thus the high cost of terrorism paid by the residents. Local Government's inability to provide relief assistance adds fuel to the fire. Therefore, political scarcity and lack of participation in decision making for regional development have widened the gap between the people and the government. On the other hand, Pakistan Army has been highly successful in clearing the territory

* *Muhammad Waqas Chughtai is a Research Fellow and associated with Elixir Online Journal as a member of Editorial Board.*

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*from militants and contributing impressively for the socio
economic development of the affected region.*

Introduction

After independence, Pakistan has faced many serious economic and security problems which not only destructed the economy of Pakistan but also disturbed the internal peace of the country. Now these problems have converted into internal threats like religious extremism, militancy, political instability, terrorism and inflation. Terrorism is a serious threat to both internal and external security which ultimately affects the socio political structure. (Daraz, 2008)

Presently in Pakistan, these crucial and serious issues are growing military extremism and rapidly damaging the social structure in all over the country (Khan, 2007). This rising militancy has not only increased internal security concern but also created a bad image globally. The militant elements have spread their activities all over Pakistan and no place is safe for citizens.

Since 9/11 Pakistan's decision to play a front role in the War on Terror has turned the country into critical and central state. Ultimately, Pakistan has to change its policies from supporting Jihadist organizations to the fight against such organizations and their activities by absolving the rising threats from United States (Amir, 2009). These militant organizations were supported in Afghan War by both General Zia's government and the United States (Khan, 2007).

In relation to the Afghan War, all militant groups established their base in tribal areas of Pakistan with the mutual consent of residents of this region. When the Government of Pakistan announced military operation against terrorism, the first target areas for operation were selected from FATA and other adjoining areas. The objective of these military operations was to remove insurgency, destroy power and militancy infrastructure to avoid

future attacks, and restore and maintain the writ of the government (Shareen, 2004).

FATA is a semi autonomous region in the north- west of Pakistan with a distinctive social and political setup. It consists of seven tribal agencies namely: Bajaur, Khyber, Mohmand, Orakzai, Kurram, South Waziristan and North Waziristan. This region became noticeable after 9/11 when the US launched the global War on Terror.

Initially, the militant groups started their activities slowly, enhancing militancy in the boarding areas of FATA. As the militant activities rose, they opened an opportunity for other extremist groups. These groups have destroyed the socio-economic culture of FATA. The Pakistan Army started operations against these terrorists and their activities through many successful operations like Operation Enduring Freedom (2001-2002), Operation Al Maizan (2002-2006), Operation Zalzala (2008), Operation Sher Dil, Rah-e-Haq and Rah-e-Rast (2007-2009) and Operation Rah Nijat (2009-2010). These terrorist activities and military operations have forced residents to take refuge in other parts of Pakistan. These refugees are called Internally Displayed Persons (IDPs).

In 2009, Pakistan's economy faced the burden of nearly three million IDPs from FATA, Swat and other surrounding areas. They left their homes due to rising drone attacks, terrorism and increasing number of military operations (Hussain, 2007).

The terrorism and military operations both have disturbed the lives of the residents of FATA and destroyed the internal peace of the country. This paper is an attempt to study the overall impacts of rising terrorism and military operations on the lives of the local residents of FATA.

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Objectives of the study

- To understand the impacts of rising terrorism and military operation on the socio-economic culture of FATA.
- To create an effective understanding of extremism that will motivate the policy makers for an effective national policy to eliminate terrorism and reduce military operations.
- To design possible solutions for various sectors of society to handle the hazards of terrorism and effects of military operations.

Literature Review

Jan et al (2011) posit that the people of FATA have accepted the disturbance and financial losses caused by the militants and other extremist groups. They also conclude that the military operation against insurgency and the extremist groups is a dire need to maintain the peace but the refugees need maximum government support for their economic losses.

Greogory (2007) concludes that Pakistan army found many of Al Qaeda members in the tribal areas of Pakistan who have crippled the social, economical and political structure of such areas. These extremist elements have violated the human rights to keep and maintain their hold in tribal areas where the activities of general public has been obstructed.

Adora (2010) analyzes that the rising militancy affects the economic activity which in turn brings down the quality of life. . In this insurgency, the economic resources are mainly targeted by the militants to fail the socio-economic setup of the region.

Hudson (2002) describes that in any region, a violent behavior of the society leads to terrorism. It reflects on the mobility of people, economies, and the political behavior of a society which can be controlled through counter terrorism.

Ferdous (2009) concludes that the terrorists' activities have spread to the entire world and the major causes of rising terrorism are poor economic structure, violent political system, and disbursed social setup. The nations are fighting in the name of counter terrorism but the root causes are defective socio-economical factors.

Azam (2009) states that the Al Qaida has adversely affected human life including social, economic and political violence and destroying the infrastructural beauty of like Pakistan and Afghanistan. He also states that the main reasons behind this insurgency are political unrest, poverty, unemployment, and personal interests.

Hypothesis of the Study

- H₁: Terrorism and Military operations have an effect on the social structure of the FATA residents.
- H₂: Terrorism and Military operations have an effect on the economic structure of the FATA residents.
- H₃: Terrorism and Military operations have an effect on the political structure of the FATA residents.

Research Methodology

The impact of terrorism and military operations on the lives of the residents of FATA has been assessed through the analysis of social, economic, and political aspects and how they get affected. This study uses different quantitative and qualitative research tools and multiple methodologies are adopted for data collection. A descriptive statistical technique is used to analyze the data. This research is conducted in Peshawar, Mardan, Buner, Sawabi and Dir where the IDPs of different agencies of FATA are living in camps.

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Sample Size

A sample of 200 people was selected through convenient sampling techniques by grouping 40 people from each of the selected IDPs areas. There were 20 men and 20 women interviewed from different conflicted areas to collect the relevant information.

Research tool

A structured questionnaire was designed for the selected respondents and it represented the real objectives of the research, therefore, face to face interview technique was selected and each affected person was interviewed separately.

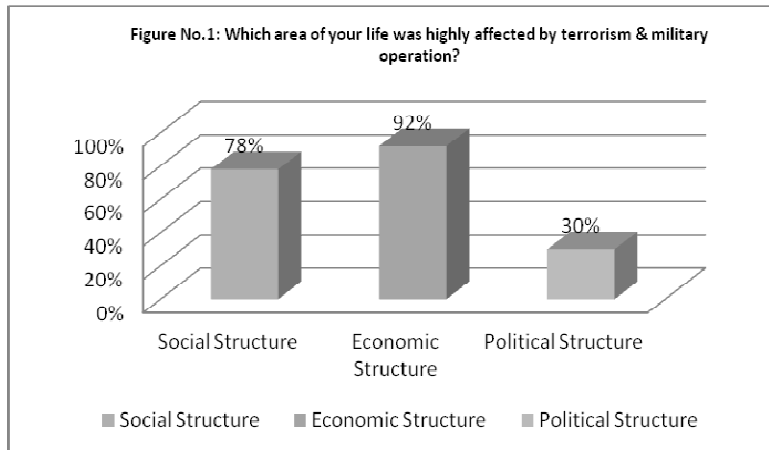
Model

A simple descriptive statistical technique was used to present the data through appropriate figures.

Results and Discussion

A total of 200 sample respondents highlighted their preference regarding the highly affected areas. According to their response, 92 percent checked the economic impact i.e. the economic structure of the FATA is high affected by rising terrorism and the military operations. Similarly, 78 percent selected the social structure while only 30 percent picked political structure of FATA.

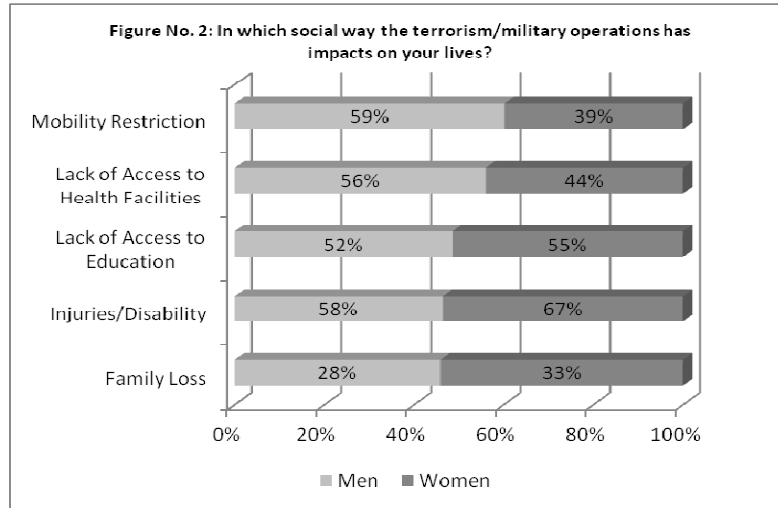
In order to assess the effects of terrorism on the lives of the FATA residents, an open ended question was asked of the selected respondents which read as: “Which area of your life is highly affected by terrorism”. Different answers were given by both male and female respondents.



Social Impact

Terrorism has extremely distressed the people's lives in different manners. The social scenario in FATA has relatively changed due to rising terrorism and military operations. A new concept of Islam was given by religious groups through misogynist and in opposition to the basic rights of the people. The social life in militant controlled areas was completely disturbed. While the extremist groups imposed the radicalization all over the country, women especially suffered in a distinctive manner due to radical religious ideology of terrorist groups.

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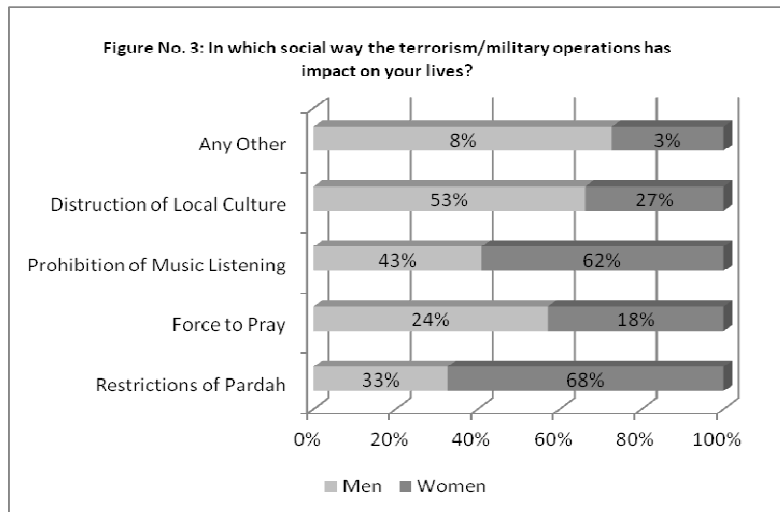


54 percent male and 44 percent female respondents stated that their access to basic health facilities was missing and their physical health condition had seriously been affected. They also pointed toward shortage of medical staff, medical equipments, medicines,, and strict restrictions imposed by religious groups to seek medical treatment from male doctors.

The Pakistan Army has established medical camps for providing better health facilities but if the women seek medical help from male doctors the former can even get killed. Therefore, women have to suffer due to non availability of gender balanced medical services. The social services cannot be delivered due to dispute between local terrorist, religious, and extremist groups and the local government.

The second most important impact highlighted by the respondents is lack of access to education. The number of educational institutes is very low for males while many women’s schools have been destroyed by terrorists in FATA. These terrorist believe that the current knowledge is a severe threat for both women’s lives and the religious ideology of Islam.

The terrorist groups and other extremist organizations have imposed strict restrictions on the mobility of women in the conflicted areas. The women are not allowed to communicate socially and to approach public places such as shopping malls and restaurants. They cannot work for government or private institutions either. Also, most areas are out of bounds for public due to military operations. With all these limitations, the residents of FATA have been restrained to the door step and they feel under house arrest.



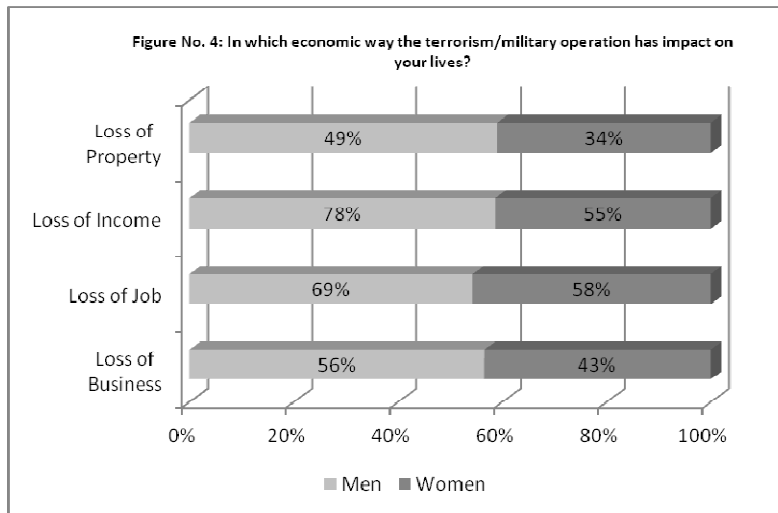
The terrorist activities and the military operations have destroyed the local culture of FATA. The sample respondents replied that music is prohibited by the militants and extremist groups and people are forced to offer prayers while women are forced to observe *pardah*. This scenario has destroyed the social fabric of FATA.

The respondents stated that are physically abused by the terrorist groups who have imposed a new distorted concept of Islam. Even men were punished for shaving or wearing any western style dresses. Ultimately, the terrorism and military

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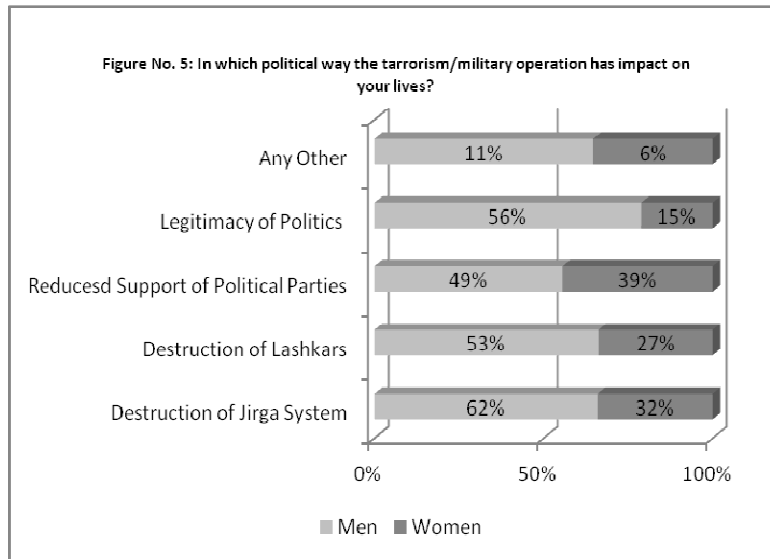
operations forced a number of residents of FATA to flee from conflicted areas to take refuge in peaceful areas of the country.

Economic Impact



The terrorist and military operations not only affected the local infrastructure and the social setup but also the local economy. Both male and female respondents replied that they had suffered losses of their houses, jobs, income, livestock, agriculture and business during this situation. A family's economic burden is shifted completely toward men. Moreover, 49 percent of male and 34 percent of female respondents said that they also suffered devaluation of their property after the military operations. 56 percent male and 43% female respondents highlighted that they experienced a loss of their various businesses by military operations and terrorists.

Political Impact



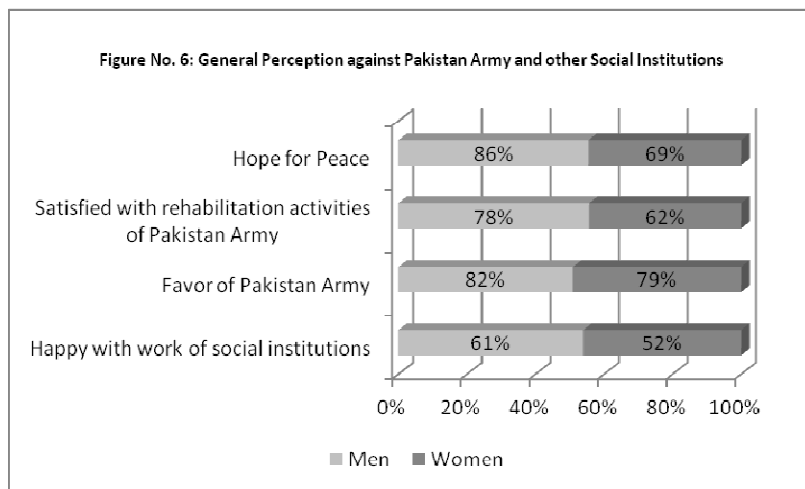
Terrorism not only destroyed the social and economic structure of FATA but also greatly affected the political structure. The tribal areas of Pakistan are governed by Frontier Crime Regulation (FCR). Therefore, the local disputes are resolved through the *Jirga* system which is associated with the political agents appointed by the Federal Government. 62 percent male and 32 percent female respondents said that the Jirga System has also faced destruction because militants have killed number of local leaders. It has affected and changed the political scenario of FATA, and now the presence of military troops in FATA has undermined the powers of Political Agents.

It is also highlighted by the respondents that earlier these militant groups had facilitated speedy justice for the poor community of FATA. Therefore, the people preferred to present their issues to these militant groups for resolution. However, very soon these militant groups misused their outreach and power and ultimately, the local community had no option but to support these militant extremists. The other political groups failed to attain the

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support of local people due to military pressure and other issues. The women were completely excluded from political decision making in the conflicted areas.

General Perception against Pakistan Army and Other Social Institutions



General perceptions with regard to the social services by the Pakistan Army and other social institutions were also shared by the respondent. 86 percent males and 69 percent females were hopeful for peace because they were satisfied with performance of Pakistan Army's rehabilitation services. They appreciated that the soldiers are fighting to protect their lives and assets from unfriendly elements of the country and are sacrificing their lives in name of Shahadat, keeping the country safe from insurgency and terrorism. 61 percent males and 52 percent females replied that they are satisfied by the services of NGOs and other institutions providing social. All sample respondents expressed their gratitude for donors and volunteers for providing them services and trying to overcome the challenge.

Women's Perceived Lifestyle

The women of FATA are the central figure in the current aftermath of military operations and conflicts. However, they strongly favor efforts for establishment of peace, economic fervor, and progress through cultural restoration in the region.

The need of time is the constitutional change and policy intervention for governance in FATA Education system requires major financial resources. They also feel that some vocational training should be provided to the women with meager educational backgrounds. These women are willing to participate in all economic activities but due to poor financial circumstance, they are unable to accomplish. They can be supported through easy loans and trainings for an economic initiative.

Suggestions

- The government of Pakistan should review its policy for supporting the local socio-economic setup of FATA.
- The government of Pakistan and Pakistan Armed Forces should take strict action against insurgency and the militant groups.
- The external involvement of other countries should confine to their own homeland and should not be permitted to interfere in internal affairs of our country.
- The governments, local NGOs and other international donor agencies should provide financial support to the locally settled welfare organizations to develop educational facilities for both males and females.
- The government should promote social services for the local community of FATA by establishing education institutions, hospitals and opportunities with the mutual collaboration of local residents and the cooperation of both national and international donors.

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Conclusion

Terrorism provides a severe blow to the provision of fundamental human rights to the citizens of Pakistan and the people of Federally Administered Tribal Areas are bearing the maximum brunt. The rising militancy of conservative religious entities changed the social, economic and political scenario of FATA. This study also shows that all residents- men, women and children- are afflicted by the impact of terrorism on their local culture. Terrorism and military operation have destroyed the local infrastructure also. The IDPs cannot foresee effective policy intervention by the government in the near future. They still are in the trauma of painful memories of local and personal losses. The terrorist activities and military operation have attained their own objectives but the affected people still are waiting for help from the federal government, developed countries and the international institutions who have always vowed to make world a peaceful place.

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