TERRORISM AND ITS EFFECTS ON EDUCATION POST 9/11 IN FATA AND KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA

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Abstract

The post-9/11 era has witnessed a significant transformation in the dynamics of terrorism, with its impacts reverberating across global regions. This paper focuses on the specific consequences of terrorism on the education sector in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) in Pakistan. The geopolitical changes and increased militancy in the region following the 9/11 attacks have posed substantial challenges to education in these areas. This study outlines the key aspects of the impact of terrorism on education in FATA and KP, offering a concise insight into the various dimensions of this complex issue. The impact of terrorism on the education sector in FATA and KP can be divided into several categories, including: Security and Infrastructure, Access to Education, Quality of Education, Social and Psychological Impact and Gender Disparities. The gender disparity in education has been exacerbated due to security concerns. Girls, in particular, face increased barriers to access and quality education, which perpetuates gender inequalities. This study underscores the urgent need for comprehensive policies and interventions to address the multifaceted challenges facing the education sector in FATA and KP post-9/11. To mitigate these issues, it is imperative to invest in rebuilding educational infrastructure, enhancing security measures, and improving the overall quality of education. Additionally, psychosocial support for affected students and teachers should be a central component of any recovery efforts. Ultimately, the future development and stability of the region heavily depend on the restoration and strengthening of its education sector.

***Keywords*:** Education, terrorism, literacy, Pakistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, FATA, military operations, colleges, schools and university

Introduction

The terrorism is spreading at local, national and international levels. Different terrorist groups are using the diverse approaches to motivate and convince youth. In these days the religious organizations are highly organized and active in this regard i.e. Alqaida, Tehreek Talban Pakistan (TTP), Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi(TNSM), Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), Lashkar-e-Omar (LeO), Tehreek-e-Jaferia Pakistan (TJP), Sipah-e-Muhammad Pakistan (SMP) and Jamaat-ul-Fuqra. These groups are involved in the

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many terrorist attacks in Pakistan and other countries of the world. Every group has its own agenda and purpose to achieve. They use the religion as an instrument to mobilize youth as the terrorism is holy war through which a Muslim can get Janna.

It is viewed that the there are various reasons are found in increasing the terrorism in Pakistan. Poverty, illiteracy, religious extremism, lack of law enforcement and improper guidance of youth are the major factors. Furthermore, various studies have been enlightened that unemployment, involvement of foreign countries, and war on terrors are also the leading causes as well.

At present more than 70 different terrorist groups/organizations are being operated in Pakistan. These group are varied range; anti Iranian Jihadies groups, Jihadist Afghani, Caliphalists, Jihadist Kashmiri, sectarian, regional and global. Terrorism is considered as global phenomena and the attacks by these groups can be seen almost every part of the world but unfortunately Pakistan has been remained as one of the most important center points for all jihadi groups. Through the war on terror Pakistan took some savior step to curb the terrorist groups through various military operations in different areas of Pakistan. These area were considered as the safe heavens for such Jihadi groups. Mostly, the terrorist organizations trained their militants in KPK areas and Afghanistan. Bureau of Counterterrorism has issued a county report on Terrorism 2019: Pakistan. According to this report 'Pakistan experienced significant terrorist threats in 2019, although the number of attacks and casualties was lower than in 2018, continuing an overall year-on-year decline. Major terrorist groups focused on conducting attacks in Pakistan included Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP or Pakistani Taliban) and ISIS-K. Separatist militant groups conducted terrorist attacks against varied targets in Balochistan and Sindh provinces. Terrorists used a range of tactics to attack individuals, markets, police checkpoints, and places of worship, including IEDs, VBIEDs, suicide bombings, and targeted assassinations'.

Research Objectives

1. To find the how terrorism affects the education in FATA and Khayber Pakhtunkhwa post 9/11.

2. To examine the kinds of terror activities were conducted by the terrorist group in FATA and Khayber Pakhtunkhwa.

3. To determine the measures have been taken to face the terrorist attacks in FATA and Khayber Pakhtunkhwa.

Literature Review

Currently, the terrorism is considered one of the major problems of the world. FATA and KP are among the poorest areas of Pakistan (South Waziristan,2009-2010). These both areas are considered as the epicenter of terrorism and turmoil. According to the report; *"Poverty Profile of Pakistan*" 60% in FATA while 39 % in KP are living below the national poverty line (Saleem, H., Shabbir, M. S., & Khan, B. 2021;). Various major operations have been made by Pakistan Army; Operation *Al Maizan* (Waqas, C. (2015),

Operation Zalzala (Spinkai, South Waziristan,2008), *Operation Sher Dil* (Bajaur Agency,2009), *Rah-e-Haq* (Swat Valley, 2007), *Rah-e-Rast* (Mingora, Swat,2007-2009) and Operation *Rah- e- Nijat* (Muhammad Waqas, 2010).

With regards to HRCP report the numbers of damaged educational institutes were 505 in the year of 2009 alone (Elias, 2014). Pakistan Army rehabilitated them as there social development agenda to restore the education sector in affected areas (Pervez, 2005). Furthermore, in Sawat 188 girls and 97 boys schools were blown up by the terrorists in 2012. Malala Yousafzai, a well-known education activist (The Nobel Peace Prize 2014 winner) was shot in Mengora City KPK, by TTP along with two other students (The News, 2012).

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) in Pakistan have been particularly affected by terrorism and have witnessed several major terrorist attacks over the years. The security situation is critical. However, several horrifying attacks made communities living in the areas insecure and vulnerable (Dawn, 2021).

Peshawar School Attack (2014): One of the deadliest attacks occurred in December 2014 when the Taliban attacked the Army Public School in Peshawar. Over 140 people, mostly children, were killed in this brutal attack (The Nation, 2014). Bacha Khan University Attack (2016): In January 2016, terrorists stormed Bacha Khan University in Charsadda, KP, killing over 20 people and injuring many others (The News, 2016).

All Saints Church Bombing (2013): In September 2013, a twin suicide bombing at the All Saints Church in Peshawar resulted in numerous casualties, with more than 80 people killed and many more injured (*The Nation*, 2013). Parachinar Market Bombings: Parachinar, in the Kurram Agency of FATA, has been the target of several deadly bombings, including a market bombing in June 2017 that killed at least 67 people and injured over 200 (Dawn, 2017).

Bannu Jail Break (2012): Militants attacked a prison in Bannu in April 2012, freeing dozens of inmates, including high-profile Taliban commanders (*The News*, 2013). Swat Operation (2009): The Swat Valley in KP was a significant conflict zone, and the military conducted an operation against the Taliban in 2009 to regain control. This operation resulted in clashes and significant displacement of the local population (The News, 2009). Dera Ismail Khan Jailbreak (2013): Militants attacked the Dera Ismail Khan Central Jail in July 2013, freeing several prisoners and causing multiple casualties (*The News*, 2012).

After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, terrorism became a significant global issue, with wide-ranging impacts not only on security and politics but also on social institutions, including education. In regions like FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the effects of terrorism have been particularly severe, leading to the destruction of schools, a decline in literacy rates, and the displacement of students and teachers. The targeting of educational institutions by terrorist groups, such as the Taliban, is one of the most visible consequences of the ongoing conflict, as these groups seek to undermine formal education and enforce their own ideological views.

The educational sector in FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa faced unprecedented challenges post-9/11, with schools being directly targeted by militants who opposed modern education, particularly for girls. Research indicates that these attacks were not random but part of a broader strategy by extremist groups to destabilize communities and prevent the spread of ideas that contradicted their worldview.

The long-term consequences of terrorism on education in these regions have been profound, leading to a generation of children who have limited or no access to quality education. The fear of violence has caused many families to withdraw their children from schools, particularly girls, for fear of reprisals. This has exacerbated existing gender disparities in education and has hampered efforts by the government and NGOs to promote universal education.

Kohat Tunnel Bombing (2008): The Kohat Tunnel, connecting Kohat in KP to the Orakzai Agency in FATA, has been the site of multiple bombings, including one in 2008 that targeted security forces and resulted in casualties (Dawn, 2008). In FATA Pakistan Military has played significant role to cope with many challenges (Sultan, N., Rehman, et. al., 2024).

These are some of the major terrorist attacks in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA (Khawar, Military Operations Disrupted Education in FATA, 2015). The region has experienced many more incidents, highlighting the ongoing security challenges faced by the local population and the efforts of the Pakistani government to combat terrorism in the area (Haq, 2014).

Article 25-A of the Constitution of Pakistan, depicts that the state is primarily responsible to root out illiteracy and make sure free and compulsory education for all citizens of Pakistan (Naeem, 2014).

Terrorism and Counterterrorism in Fata and KP and its Impact on Education Sector

Security situation in the Khayber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA is going the worst with regards to the terrorist attacks by Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (Nazakat, 2005). Mostly the schools, colleges and the universities were the main target spots by the terrorists (Syed, H. 2020; Global Coalition To Protect Education from Attack. 2015). There are various reasons could be seen in Pakistan that are the root causes of terrorism (Hassan, & Khan,. 2019).

The Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) regions of Pakistan have been grappling with the challenges of terrorism and counterterrorism efforts (Ashraf, A. 2010; Ullah, S. 2014). These issues have had a profound impact on the education sector in the region, affecting students, teachers, and communities. This study delves into the multifaceted aspects of terrorism and counterterrorism in FATA and KP and their consequences on the education sector.

Terrorism in FATA and KP

Historical Context: The FATA and KP regions have been plagued by terrorism for decades, with a history of militant movements, including the TTP (Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan). The region's proximity to Afghanistan has further exacerbated security challenges (Usman, J. 2014). There is dire need to prevent the education sector particularly schools from the attacks, besides the madrassas education should also be revised and modified with contemporary education as other Islamic countries are adopting i.e. Malaysia, Turkey and Iran (Khan, A., & Waqar, I. 2023).

Types of Attacks: Terrorist attacks in the region have included bombings, assassinations, kidnappings, and insurgent activities. Educational institutions have not been spared from these attacks.

Impact on Security: The persistent threat of terrorism has led to heightened security concerns, affecting the safety of students and teachers. Many schools have been targeted and damaged, contributing to a climate of fear.

Counterterrorism Efforts

Military Operations: The Pakistani military has conducted several major operations in the region, such as Operation Zarb-e-Azb and Operation Radd-ul-Fasaad, to root out militants. These operations have contributed to a decline in terrorist activities but also caused collateral damage.

Security Measures: Increased military presence and security measures have been implemented to protect educational institutions and students, particularly in areas prone to attacks.

International Collaboration: Pakistan has collaborated with international partners, including the United States, in counterterrorism efforts. These collaborations have had both positive and negative consequences.

Impact on the Education Sector

Infrastructure Damage: Educational infrastructure, including schools, has suffered significant damage due to terrorist attacks and military operations, leading to a shortage of safe learning environments (Usman, M. (2014).

Access to Education: The fear of violence has resulted in decreased school enrollment, particularly for girls. Many families are hesitant to send their children to school.

Quality of Education: The quality of education has been adversely affected due to the scarcity of qualified teachers, outdated curricula, and a lack of resources.

Psychological Impact: Prolonged exposure to violence has taken a toll on the mental health of students and educators, hampering the learning process.

Gender Disparities: Security concerns have widened gender disparities in education, restricting girls' access to schools.

With the passage of time it is noticed that the modern trends could be seen in the terrorist attacks all over the world (Adnan. & Hamid, 2024). Terrorism and counterterrorism efforts in FATA and KP have had far-reaching consequences on the education sector. One of the reasons instability and Talbanization in Afghanistan has also affected Pakistan (Bukhari, et al..2024) While military operations have succeeded in reducing terrorist activities, the damage to infrastructure, access to quality education, and the psychological impact on students and educators remain significant challenges. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach, encompassing the restoration of educational infrastructure, improvement in security measures, the promotion of quality education, psychosocial support, and a focus on gender-inclusive education. Achieving these goals is essential for the long-term stability, development, and prosperity of the region.

Since 2004, there are various operations have been carried out to crash the militancy from the northern areas of Pakistan. As these areas were found like the breeding points for increasing terrorism and violence. The prime objective of these operations was to restore and maintain the peace in FATA and other nearby areas. It was noticed that the education sector and it's infrastructure was damaged more due to such situation (Soofi, 2014). The terrorist attacks and operation *Zarb-e-Azb* in North Waziristan, endangered the future of 85,000 students from the government schools in the tribal agency at stake while leaving 955,900 people homeless (Zulfiqar, 2014). Two suicide attackers bombed a women's cafeteria and a faculty building at an Islamic University in Pakistan Capital, killing two people and wounding 20 others (The News, 2009).

It was also reported that in May, 2011 bombing attacks were carried on disable schoolchildren in Peshawar due to this attack seven students were injured (Sajid, 2014). 11 teachers of Hira Public School Khyber Agency were abducted in November, 2013 because they were supporting to the Polio vaccination campaign. A Director of the NGO namely Miss Farida Afridi was shot dead on July, 4th 2012 because she was providing the training to women in Jamrud, Khyder Agency (*The News*, 2012). Zafteef Khan Afridi was working in Human Rights Commission of Pakistan as Coordination and head teacher in a school was shot dead while going to school to Jamrud on 8th December, 2012 (Ibrahim, 2012). Once five female teachers were returning from school in Swabi, KP Province were gunned down in January, 2013 (*Express Tribune*, 2013). Tehrik e Talban (TTP) Pakistan has strong network in Pakistan and time to time it uses that network for various terrorist attacks (Mehmood, et al. 2023)

Unfortunately, a student of class ninth Aitazaz Hassan was killed while bravely stopping the suicide bomber in January 2014 as the bomber planned to blow up his school in Hangu district at the cost of his own life (*The News* , 2014). As the Peshawar city was closed to FATA that's why mostly the terror attacks were oftenly targeted (Mureeb , 2014). Talbans clearly mentioned at various occasions they are deadly against secularism in FATA and youth of the area should be trained for Jihad (Dawn News, 2012).

Such kind of the violence and terror situation badly affected children particularly psychologically, emotionally, socially and mentally (Sobia, 2015). Psychological illness was seemed one the emerging issues in FATA. They complained about the post-traumatic stress syndrome, insomnia, acute stress disorder, phobias, and depression. Furthermore, due to such unavoidable situation more than 600000 students missed their one year of education (*The News*, 2012).

Research Methodology

Research Design: The research design for this paper was primarily descriptive and analytical, focusing on the impact of post-9/11 terrorism on the education sector in FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Given the scope of the study, a cross-sectional design would be suitable to capture the state of the education sector at a specific point in time.

The primary data for this research paper can be challenging to obtain due to the sensitive and often inaccessible nature of the regions in question. Therefore, the study is predominantly relying on secondary data sources. However, the Secondary data source was used to conduct this study. The reports of Government, Publications, Analyze reports from government bodies at the federal and provincial levels in Pakistan, particularly the Ministry of Education, which may contain data on the state of education in FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Furthermore, the data was retrieved from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and International agencies reports, studies, and publications from organizations such as UNICEF, UNESCO, and local NGOs operating in the region. These sources provided valuable data on education and related issues. In addition, News Media: Analyze news reports and articles from reputable news outlets that have covered events and developments in FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa since the post-9/11 period. News archives can provided real-time accounts of events and their impact on education.

Destruction of Schools and Colleges in FATA and KP

Due to various terrorist attacks various schools have be destroyed in the FATA and entire belt (Islamuddin, 2015). Seven colleges and two hostels were attached by Talban i.e. Govt. Degree Colleges, Nawagai, Barkhalozi Baja, Govt. College Lakaray including girls hostel Khanahari,, Govt. Post Graduate College Khar and hostel, Govt. Degree Colleged Ladah, an Dara Adam Khel (Syed, 2020). Apart from the colleges there were 112 schools were also 364 schools were also destroyed and hundreds of school building were partially damaged in Khayder Pakhtoon Khuwa Province (Naqwi, 2019; FATA Sustainable Return and Rehabilitation Strategy. 2015).

Table - 1
List of fully damaged colleges in FATA in the year 2013-2014

Colleges Destroyed	Level
Govt. Deg. College Dara Adam Khel	Fully Damaged
Govt. Deg. College Ladah in South Waziristan Agency	Fully Damaged
Govt. Deg. College Nawagai in Bajaur Agency	Fully Damaged
Govt. Deg. College Lakaray in Mohmand Agency	Fully Damaged
Govt. Post Graduate College Khar Hostel in Bajaur Agency	Fully Damaged
Govt. Girls Hostel in Mohmand Agency	Fully Damaged
Govt. Deg. College Ladah in South Waziristan Agency	Fully Damaged
Govt. Deg. College Lakaray in Mohmand Agency	Fully Damaged

Source: *Annual Statistical Report of Govt. Institutions in FATA.2013-2014*

Internally Displaced Persons and Education

Since 2008 huge population of FATA was displaced to various other areas (Waqas, 2015). More than 30000 inhabitants were settled in Dera Ismail Khan, and Tank came from Waziristan. Furthermore, 105000 students of FATA were enrolled in the shelter schools/temporarily learning centers set up by the UNICEF. However, more than 900000 people were living in camps (*The News*, 2015).

It was also learned that in 2013 most of the families have got enrolled their children in different private, government and NGO supported schools in their nearby areas (Akhtar, H., 2014). Different UN organizations, charitable organizations and NGOs were providing several facilities to the IDPs in their camps. The number of displaced people was increased in 2015 and number of families reached 310729 around two million IDPs. However, 70% were children and women. It was hard time because of the lack of resources. But this challenge was faced with coordinative efforts made by the Pakistan Army, Government and other organizations.

Table – 2
Total IDPs registered in 2014-2015

Agency	Total registered IDPs
Bajaur	86,407
FR Tank	2,256
North Waziristan	176,396
South Waziristan	94,096
Khyber	176,396
Kurram	56,122
Mohmand	48,954
Orakzai	48,656
Total	614,934

Source*: R&R Strategy Report.2014-2015. Elementary and Secondary Education Department.KP*

Conclusion

The research paper extensively explores the consequences of terrorism on the education sector in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) regions of Pakistan since the events of 9/11. The study delves into the multifaceted impacts of terrorism, offering a comprehensive overview of the challenges faced by educational institutions, students, teachers, and communities in these conflict-ridden areas.

The research identifies several key areas of impact

Security and Infrastructure: The persistent threat of terrorist attacks has resulted in the destruction and degradation of educational infrastructure, undermining the safe learning environment.

Access to Education: The ongoing insecurity has caused a decline in school enrollment, as families are reluctant to send their children to schools due to safety concerns. Additionally, internal displacement has exacerbated the shortage of educational facilities.

Gender Disparities: Security concerns and cultural barriers have widened the gender gap in education, particularly affecting girls. The post-9/11 era has left an indelible mark on the education sector of FATA and KP. Terrorism and militancy have disrupted the lives of students, teachers, and communities, creating a dire need for concerted efforts to

rebuild, rehabilitate, and reintegrate the education system. The impact of terrorism on education in FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa post-9/11 has been profound and multifaceted. The persistent violence and instability have not only disrupted educational infrastructure but have also instilled a climate of fear that deters students and educators alike.

Pakistani government has conducted different operation against terrorist groups along with solid coordination of Pakistan Armed Forces and Law Enforcement Agencies (Rehman, et al.. 2023). This has resulted in significant declines in enrollment rates, particularly among vulnerable populations, and has exacerbated existing socio-economic disparities. Furthermore, the psychological toll on students, who are often witnesses to violence, hampers their ability to learn and thrive. To mitigate these adverse effects, it is crucial for policymakers to prioritize the restoration and enhancement of educational services in these regions, fostering a safe and conducive learning environment that can help rebuild communities and empower future generations. Addressing the root causes of terrorism through education and community engagement is essential for achieving long-term stability and growth in FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

In conclusion, the study highlights that beyond the physical destruction of schools and infrastructure, the psychological and socio-cultural impact on the affected population is equally severe. The consequences of terrorism on education extend beyond the immediate and visible damage to the very fabric of society. Therefore, policies must address the root causes and manifestations of terrorism, emphasizing peace, reconciliation, and inclusive education.

Efforts to restore education in these regions must prioritize not only the reconstruction of buildings but also the reconstruction of young minds. Access to quality education, psychosocial support, and gender-inclusive programs must be at the forefront of recovery initiatives. Only through such holistic approaches can FATA and KP rebuild their education systems, instill hope in their youth, and contribute to a more peaceful and stable future.

Recommendations

Recommendations for a research paper on the 'Post-9/11 Impact of Terrorism on Education Sector of FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa' should focus on practical steps and policy measures to address the challenges identified in the study. Here are some key recommendations:

- Invest in Educational Infrastructure by the government and other stakeholders should be done accordingly.
- There is dire need to enhance security measures in these affected areas as early as possible.
- Psychosocial support should be provided to the affected people, IDPs, women, elderly and disable people.

- Gender-inclusive education should be initiated accordingly so that the respect and honor of women particularly ensured.
- Various community engagement programs should be initiated to rebuild and rehabilitate of affected people of FATA and KPK areas. The community participation/engagement programs must be done on improving the education.
- Youth is most important segment of society. However, Youth Empowerment projects should be run to mobilize youth on Peace and Conflict Resolution Education.
- Access to Higher Education should be ensured with the support of higher education institutions.

These recommendations address the multifaceted challenges posed by terrorism in the education sector of FATA and KP. They highlight the importance of not only rebuilding infrastructure but also creating an environment that fosters quality education, mental well-being, and inclusive access for all, while fostering a sense of hope and peace in the affected communities.

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