

Illiteracy: A Threat to Peace in Federally Administrated Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan

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Pakistan's decision of participating in the war on terror has put the entire country especially FATA on the mercy of extremist and terrorists. The current layer of terrorism and extremism has destroyed the peaceful traditional tribal society. The present study was conducted during 2013 to probe the effect of illiteracy on peace in the war-affected zone FATA. The major findings of the study reveal that illiteracy ratio was high at FATA, making FATA safe haven for militants and it was one of the main cases of terrorism, leading to violence, making the illiterate youth and madrasa students more vulnerable to militancy. Furthermore lacks of interest in education, dysfunctional education institution, and preference to madrasa education were also the variables, which were affecting peace in FATA. The study also reveals that in the presence of illiteracy sustainable peace is not possible in FATA

Keywords. peace, threat, illiteracy, FATA,

Federally Administrated Tribal Areas (FATA) is constitutionalized territory of Pakistan. The area is composed of seven administrative units (agencies), namely Khyber, Kurram, Bajaur, Mohmand, Orakzai, North and South Waziristan and six Frontier Regions (FR Peshawar, FR Kohat, FR Tank, FR Banuu, FR Lakki and FR Dera Ismail Khan). According to the 1998 Pakistan census, FATA's

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total population is 3.3 million. The area is run under British colonial system Frontier Crime Regulations (FCR) making it isolates from the rest of the country.

FATA has remained deprived of many political and legal rights resulting loose write of state in the area. FATA is one of the most undeveloped areas where 60% population lives in poor conditions with only 17% literacy rate (Ahmar, 2008). The low condition of life and low literacy rate has made FATA ungoverned and uncontrolled region Shinwari (2008). FATA is a male dominated society with high rate of poverty, unemployment and illiteracy. The region has been neglected by successive governments; this has created numerous political, security and economic problems which has depressed the people especially young men in FATA. In the presence of such social evils many of the FATA people are turning to fundamentalist religion. Islamist extremists groups in the region are powerful and potentially dangerous, making security volatile as result many conflicts has been accord between Taliban and security forces (Camp, 2010). The main factors leading to terrorism in FATA are lack of economic opportunities, unequal access to avenues for social and economic mobilization, Corruption, defective education system, poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, easy access to firearms, bad governance, volatile geopolitical situation, marginalization of the rural areas, and non-availability of justice (Ali, 2010). The alternate education available in FATA is in form of madrassa, since the 1950s, the border areas had seen a large increase in the number of madrassas, many reportedly funded by Saudi Arabia. Many refugee children, as well as poor Pakistanis, attended these madrassas. Although all madrassas are not spreading extremism and terrorism but some madrassa have been reported recruiting students for terrorism(KEMP, 2008).

Method

The study was based on primary data; collected from the

residents of the two war's affected tribes (Ali sherZai and MasoZai) having 4495 and 3176 households respectively (1998 Census Report), 366 samples were obtained by using Sekaran table (2003).

After the collection of data, statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was used. The data was analyzed by using uni-variate and bi-variate techniques of data analysis. At uni-variate level frequencies and percentages were worked out, whereas, at bi-variate level dependent variable was indexed and cross tabbed to test the association with independent variables for further details see table 1.

Table 1

Conceptual Frame Work

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable
Illiteracy	Peace

Results

Table 2

Perceived Current Status of Peace in FATA

Statement	Agree	Disagree	Not sure
FATA is peaceful place	38(10.4 %)	315 (86.1%)	13 (3.6%)
FATA is under the shadow of war	312 (85.2%)	41 (11.2%)	13 (3.6%)
War/ Terrorism has affected the lives of people of FATA	316 (86.4%)	28 (7.7%)	22 (6.0%)
FATA is not peaceful after the arrival of militants	273 (74.6%)	67 (18.3%)	26 (7.1%)
There is violence and terror in FATA	290 (79.2%)	52 (14.2%)	24 (6.6%)
Drone attacks are common in FATA	291 (79.5%)	50 (13.7%)	25 (6.8%)

FATA is an open hide out/safe heavens of militants	146 (39.9%)	198 (54.1%)	22 (6.0%)
Militants movement can be freely observe in FATA	98 (26.8%)	261 (71.3%)	7 (1.9%)
Peace is the major demand of FATA people	326 (89.1%)	17 (4.6%)	23 (6.3%)
There should be urgent efforts for peace in FATA	341 (93.2%)	16 (4.4%)	9 (2.5%)
There are high prospects of peace in near future	43 (11.7%)	81 (22.1%)	242 (66.1%)

Table 2 major results reveals that majority of the respondents 86.1% believed that peace does not exist in FATA, 85.2% and 86.4 % of the respondents reported that FATA is under the shadow of war and war has affected the lives of FATA people respectively. Another 86.4%, 74.6%, 79.2%, 79.5%, 39.9% of the respondents also stated that militant has destroyed the peace of FATA, has brought terror, violence and drone attacks in the area respectively. Another 39.9% and 26.8% of the respondents endorsed the success of military operation against miscreants destroying safe heavens of militants and restricting their free movement at FATA respectively. A sizeable number of respondents 89.1 %, 93.2 %, 11.7% were prioritizing and demanding urgent efforts for peace in the region but unfortunately they themselves are not sure for having it in the near future respectively.

Table 3

Illiteracy as Factor affecting Peace in FATA

Statement	Agree	Disagree	Not sure
Low literacy ratio	313 (85.5%)	15 (4.1%)	38 (10.4%)
Lack of interest in education	57 (15.6%)	279 (76.2%)	30 (8.2%)
Dysfunctional education institution	244 (66.7%)	103 (28.1%)	19 (5.2%)
Illiteracy Is the main cause of terrorism	313 (85.5%)	25 (6.8%)	28 (7.7%)
Illiteracy leads to violence	216 (59%)	55 (15%)	95 (26%)
Illiterate youth are more vulnerable to militancy	271 (74.0%)	51 (13.9%)	44 (12.1%)
Tribal gives preference to madrasa education on formal education	207 (56.6%)	153 (41.8%)	6 (1.6%)
Preference to madrasa education due to religious attachments	301 (82.2%)	56 (15.3%)	9 (2.5%)
madrasa students are more vulnerable to militancy.	267 (73%)	72 (19.6%)	27 (7.4%)
Lack of education making FATA safe havens for militants	275 (75.1%)	71 (19.4%)	20 (5.5%)

Presence of low literacy ratio and sustainable peace.	270 (73.8%)	52 (14.2%)	44 (12.0%)
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The major findings of table 3 states that majority of the respondents 85.5%, 15.6% and 66.7% believed that FATA is low literacy zone due to lack of interested in education and dysfunctional education's institution respectively. The majority of the respondents 85.5%, 59% and 74.0% reported that illiteracy is one of the main causes of terrorism, leads to violence and illiterate youth are more vulnerable to militancy respectively. Furthermore 56.6%, 82.2% and 73% of the respondents reported that tribal people give preference to madrasa education, due to religious attachments and also reported that madrasa students are vulnerable to militancy respectively. A sizable number of respondents 75.1% and 73.8% reported that low literacy ratio has converted FATA into safe havens for militants and in the presence of low literacy ratio sustainable peace could not be archived respectively.

Table 5

Illiteracy as factor affecting peace in FATA

Variables	Yes	No	Don't Know	χ^2 (p)
Low literacy ratio				
Agree	247 (67.5%)	41 (11.2%)	25 (6.8%)	$\chi^2=18.96$ (.001)
Disagree	8 (2.2%)	1 (0.3%)	6 (1.6%)	
Not sure	25 (6.8%)	7 (1.9%)	6 (1.6%)	
Lack of interest in education				
Agree	49	6 (1.6%)	2 (0.5%)	$\chi^2=8.26$

	(13.4%)			(.082)
Disagree	208 (56.8.0%)	37 (10.1%)	34 (9.3%)	
Not sure	23 (6.3%)	6 (1.6%)	1 (0.3%)	
Dysfunctional education institution				
Agree	192 (52.5%)	31 (8.5%)	21 (5.7%)	$\chi^2=8.88$
Disagree	71 (19.4%)	16 (4.4%)	16 (4.4%)	(.06)
Not sure	17 (4.6%)	2 (0.5%)	0 (0.0%)	
Militant hit formal education infrastructure				
Agree	140 (38.3%)	26 (7.1%)	13 (3.6%)	$\chi^2=4.71$
Disagree	109 (29.8%)	18 (4.9%)	21 (5.7%)	(.31)
Not sure	31 (8.5%)	5 (1.6%)	3 (0.8%)	
Illiteracy the main case of terrorism				
Agree	238 (65.0%)	43 (11.7%)	32 (8.7%)	$\chi^2=11.64$
Disagree	25 (6.8%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	(.02)
Not sure	17 (4.6%)	6 (1.6%)	5 (1.4%)	
Illiterate Youth are more vulnerable to militancy				
Agree	205 (56.0%)	35 (9.6%)	31 (8.5%)	$\chi^2=8.18$
Disagree	35 (9.6%)	10 (2.7%)	6 (1.6%)	(.06)
Not sure	40 (10.9%)	4 (1.1%)	0 (0.0%)	
Illiteracy leads to violence				
Agree	159 (43.4%)	34 (9.3%)	23 (6.3%)	$\chi^2=7.96$
Disagree	40 (10.9%)	10 (2.7%)	5 (1.4%)	(.09)
Not sure	81 (21.1%)	5 (1.4%)	9 (2.5%)	
Preference to madrasa education on formal education				
Agree	150 (41.0%)	37 (10.1%)	20 (5.5%)	$\chi^2=11.8$

Disagree	127 (34.7%)	12 (3.3%)	14 (3.8%)	5 (.01)	
Not sure	3 (0.8%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (0.8%)		
madrasa education is preferred because of religious attachments					
Agree	225 (61.5%)	45 (12.3%)	31 (8.5%)		$\chi^2=5.32$
Disagree	55 (12.6%)	9 (1.1%)	8 (1.6%)	(.25)	
Not sure	9 (2.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)		
madrasa students are more vulnerable to militancy					
Agree	210 (57.4%)	31 (8.5%)	26 (7.1%)		$\chi^2=10.54$
Disagree	55 (15.0%)	9 (2.5%)	8 (2.2%)	(.03)	
Not sure	15 (4.1%)	9 (2.5%)	3 (0.8%)		
Tribal People prefer madrasa education due to low quality of formal education system					
Agree	41 (11.2%)	9 (2.5%)	5 (1.4%)		$\chi^2=3.00$
Disagree	229 (62.6%)	37 (10.1%)	32 (8.7%)	(.55)	
Not sure	10 (2.7%)	3 (.8%)	0 (0.0%)		
Due to lack of education FATA has become a safe havens for militants					
Agree	157 (42.9%)	109 (29.8%)	9 (2.5%)		$\chi^2=10.67$
Disagree	45 (12.3%)	25 (6.8%)	1 (0.3%)	(.03)	
Not sure	10 (2.7%)	7 (1.9%)	3 (0.8%)		
Presence of low literacy ratio and impossibility of sustainable peace.					

Agree	217 (59.3%)	31 (8.5%)	22 (6.0%)	$\chi^2=12.38$ (.01)
Disagree	38 (10.4%)	8 (2.2%)	6 (1.6%)	
Not sure	25 (6.8%)	10 (2.7%)	9 (2.5%)	

Table 5 shows the association of illiteracy and peace, significant association was observed between variable peace and low literacy ratio in FATA (P= .001), lack of interest in education (P= .082), dysfunctional education institution (P=.064), illiteracy as the main case of terrorism (P=.020), illiterate youth are more vulnerable to militancy (P= .066), illiteracy leads to violence (P=.093), preference to madrasa education (P=0.18), madrasa students are more vulnerable to militancy (P=.032) lack of education making FATA safe havens for militants (P=.030) and the impossibility of peace in the presence of low literacy ratio (P=.015) whereas those found insignificant include militants hitting formal education infrastructure (P=. 318), preference of madrasa education due to religious sentiments (P=.255) and preference to madrasa education due to low quality of formal education system (P=.557).

Discussion

Peace has become one of the main global challenges faced by most of the nations. After 9/11 peace has become one of the burning issues of FATA. "Literacy is a bridge from misery to hope. It is a tool for daily life in modern society. It is a bulwark against poverty and a building block of development, an essential complement to investments in roads, dams, clinics, and factories. Literacy is a platform for democratization and a vehicle for the promotion of cultural and national identity. Especially for girls and women, it is an agent of family health and nutrition. For everyone everywhere, literacy is, finally, the road to human progress and the means through which every man, woman, and child can realize his or her full potential." (Kofi Annan)

Illiteracy is one of the key factors molding the attitudes of human towards peaceful productive activities. The results as a whole

reveal that low literacy ratio, lack of interest in education, dysfunctional education institution, preference to madrasa education and lack of education making FATA safe havens for militants were affecting peace while the variable such as militants hitting formal education infrastructure, illiteracy as main cause of terrorism, illiteracy leads to violence, illiterate youth are more vulnerable to militancy, preference of madrasa education due to religious sentiments, madrasa students are more vulnerable to militancy had no significant association.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concluded significant association between dependent variable peace and sub variables of independent variable illiteracy these included low literacy ratio in FATA, Tribal's lack of interest in education, dysfunctional education institution, illiteracy as the main case of terrorism, Illiteracy leads to violence, illiterate Youth are more vulnerable to militancy, preference to madrasa education, madrasa students' more vulnerable to militancy, lack of education making FATA safe havens for militants and the impossibility of peace in the presence of low literacy ratio..

To overcome the current problems in FATA government and private sector should provide free education to the inhabitants of FATA. The quality of education should not be compromised on any level. Importance should also be given on adult education in FATA. The illiterate youth should be given technical education to integrate them in the reestablishment of FATA. FATA students (formal and madrassas) should be provided scholarships and recreational facilities. Madrasas in FATA should be registered with government and policy should be implemented to restrict anyone for misleading and wrong interpretation of Islam

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