

THE STATUS OF EDUCATION GOVERNANCE IN CONFLICT AFFECTED NORTH-WESTERN PAKISTAN BORDERING AFGHANISTAN

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Abstract

The North-Western Pakistan region (Tribal Areas and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) has been caught up in militancy, conflict, terrorism, insecurity and instability for more than a decade. Militancy is a serious threat in the way of education and has affected the education governance in North-Western Pakistan. Also, the mental and psychological development of children in FATA and KP has been badly affected due to continuous attacks on educational institutions by militants. These terrorist activities and military operations have caused massive displacement of the local residents to different parts of Pakistan. Furthermore, Education has been overlooked by successive governments in FATA and many areas in KP where literacy rate is critically low. These areas already lag behind other provinces socially and economically. Poor governance, political instability and terrorism have resulted in illiteracy and deprived the students of their basic right to education. This paper underlines the status of education governance by analyzing the impact of militancy and instability on the education. Moreover, the paper is structured to show how these problems can be addressed through a more comprehensive strategy and programs of action by the government of Pakistan.

Key Words: Education Governance, Tribal Areas, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Militancy, Education institutions, Literacy Rate, Military Operations, Schools, Colleges, Psychological.

Introduction

North Western Pakistan is among the underdeveloped areas of Pakistan and is the epicenter of instability and turmoil. According to the report;

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“Poverty Profile of Pakistan” 60% in FATA while 39% in KP are living below the national poverty line.¹ Following the US invasion of Afghanistan, the government of Pakistan deployed its arms forces on its border with Afghanistan to clear the area from militants. Military operations and drone strikes to target the militants initially did not succeed but it sowed the seeds of hatred in the area towards the Pak-Army. The reactionary elements took arms against Pakistani government and formed various militant organizations under different banners e.g. *Tahrik -e-Taliban Pakistan*, *Tahrik-e-Nafaze Shariat-e-Muhammadi* etc. They joint hands and started a war against Pakistani government and targeted schools and colleges in FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The activities of the militants were initially on low scale but gathered momentum when Pakistan’s Army carried out major operations against terrorists like Operation *Al Maizan* (North Waziristan Agency, 2002-2006), *Operation Zalzala* (Spinkai, South Waziristan, 2008), *Operation Sher Dil* (Bajaur Agency, 2009), *Rah-e-Haq* (Swat Valley, 2007), *Rah-e-Rast* (Swat, 2007-2009) and Operation *Rah- e- Nijat* (South Waziristan, 2009-2010).²

According to the Report of Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, 505 schools were damaged or destroyed in 2009 alone.³ The militants in tribal areas want to maintain their own social and religious agenda. For this purpose to destroy and dismantle the education sector is their main objective.⁴ In 2012, about 97 boys’ and 188 girls’ schools have been blown up by the militants in Swat. On 9 October 2012, Malala Yousafzai, along with two other students was shot by TTP to name the few incidents.⁵

One such incident occurred on 16 December, 2014, when a group of Pakistani Taliban militants entered the auditorium and classrooms of the Army public school and fired indiscriminately that resulted in the killing of more than 140 children, in addition to burning books, class rooms and human bodies.⁶

¹ Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative. “Pakistan Country Briefing”, *Multidimensional Poverty Index Data Bank*. OPHI, University of Oxford 2017. Retrieved from: <http://ophi.org.uk/multidimensional-poverty-index/mpo-2015/mpo-country-briefings/>. Accessed on 19/5/2016.

² Waqas M., *The Impact of Rising Terrorism on Socio-Economic Culture of FATA*. FATA Research Center 2010. Retrieved from: <http://www.frc.com>. Accessed on 15/4/2016.

³ Elias, G., *The Pakistani Taliban War on Education*. 2014. Retrieved from <http://www.foreignpolicy.com>. Accessed on 7/7/2015.

⁴ Pervez, H. *Education and the State: Fifty Years of Pakistan*. Islamabad: Oxford University Press. 2005, p.32.

⁵ Bureau Report, Peshawar. “Militancy keeps 600,000 KP children out of school.” Daily Dawn, September 11, 2012, p.3.

⁶ Ismail, K. “Taliban massacre 131 school children: Principle among 141 dead in Attack on Army Public School.” Daily Dawn, June 6, 2014, retrieved from Dawn News: <http://www.Dawnnews.com>. Accessed on 4/4/2015.

This paper is structured in two sections. The first section discusses the impact of militancy and instability on the education governance. While the second section discusses strategies of the government for the reconstruction of educational institutions in FATA and KP. Moreover, it frames recommendations to policy makers to develop and stabilize the region along with sustainable peace.

Objectives of the Study

- To explore the status of education governance by analyzing the impact of militancy and instability on education in North-Western (FATA and KP) Pakistan.
- To explore the intensity of the destruction of educational institutions caused by militancy and instability.
- To find out the impact of displacement on education governance of FATA and KP.
- To assess the status of strategies and efforts of the government for the reconstruction and reforms in the education governance in North-Western Pakistan.

Education Governance in North-Western Pakistan

According to Article 25-A of the Constitution of Pakistan, the state is primarily responsible to root out illiteracy and make sure free and compulsory education for all citizens of Pakistan.⁷ KP and FATA are far below in literacy rates than the rest of Pakistan. In Punjab, literacy rate is 64% while in Sind it is 56%. In FATA the total literacy rate is 17.42 percent. Before 9/11 literacy rate in FATA was 24% according to *Annual Statistical Reports of Government Schools in FATA*.⁸ On the other hand, the overall literacy rate in KP is 50 percent. This shows the alarming situation of overall literacy conditions. Illiteracy is particularly higher among young men aged 15-30 that provides a huge resource for militant recruitment.⁹

The government has paid little attention to bring educational reforms in FATA and KP. The lack of modern schools, having no medical and engineering college or university, FATA is still in the dark ages. Many

⁷ Naeem, S. "Right to Education." Daily Tribune Express. Peshawar, June 7, 2015, retrieved from <http://www.expresstribune.com>. Accessed on 13/5/2016.

⁸ Mureeb, M. "FATA prepares to boost Literacy Rates Through Enrollment Drive." Daily Tribune Express. Peshawar, June 14, 2015, retrieved from <http://www.expresstribune.com>. Accessed on 13/5/2016.

⁹ Daily *The Nation*, Peshawar, May 9, 2013, 12.

children are unable to get access to education due to the fear of attacks on schools or the long distance to the nearest school. Many of them enrolled do not complete a full course of study; and those who do, suffer poor facilities and security threats, that negatively impact their education.

Lack of basic facilities including drinking water, fans, furniture, and maintenance work, lack of sufficient girls' schools, transportation, and lack of higher education are hurdles for educational institutions to cross. Moreover, it has also been reliably confirmed that most of the schools cannot be physically verified and that only exists on "paper".¹⁰

Such paper schools are called "Ghost Schools", and most often these schools are used by tribal *Malaks* or local influential people as their business centers or personnel guest houses. A *Malak* is the representative of his tribe in the political administration controlling each agency of FATA. These *Malaks* are the blue-eyed of the political administration and reap all benefits while hundreds of people are deprived even of their basic rights. Hence such a situation presents a grim state of affairs in FATA and KP in terms of education which is the key to development.

Instability and Education Governance in North-Western Pakistan

Security situation got worsened when the Pakistani Taliban took refuge in FATA. There has been a violent trend to blow up schools at night in KP and FATA. The perpetrators used small, improvised devices controlled with remote or timers that rarely cause human casualties. Not only the government-run schools were targeted but also many private schools were damaged. Sometimes the responsibility of the attacks was claimed by *Tehreek-e-Taliban* Pakistan.¹¹

Schools were frequently attacked as they are state-run institutions and they promote the type of education opposed by extremists and are therefore legitimate targets. This has triggered attacks on schools in FATA and KP. On the other hand, the camping of the armed forces in the schools has led to further the attacks by anti-state elements as happened in Bara Tehsil of Khyber Agency, and in North & South Waziristan. More generally, disrupting the education sector and destabilizing areas is part of a wider strategy adopted by the militants.

As mentioned earlier since 2004, Pakistan's Army carried out operations to eradicate militancy. Twelve years have passed but the military and militants are still engaged in fighting. The aim of military operations is to

¹⁰ Haq, R. "Round and Round: Higher Education in FATA still a Pipe dream." Daily Tribune Express. Peshawar, September 8, 2014. Retrieved from Express Tribune: <http://www.expresstribune.com>. Accessed on 7/6/2015.

¹¹ Nazakat, A. "The Impact of Militancy on Education in FATA." *Tigah*, Islamabad: FATA Research Centre 2005. Retrieved from: <http://frc.org.pk/tigah/>. Accessed on 28/06/2015.

restore peace in FATA but due to ongoing militancy, peace is still a distant dream. As a result of these military operations the physical infrastructure and services particularly education sector of FATA and KP have been significantly damaged.¹²

In 2014, the KP government took a decision of closing down the schools and holding back educational activities for some days due to rising insurgency across the region. The terrorist attacks and operation *Zarb-e-Azb* in North Waziristan, endangered the future of 85,000 students while leaving 955,900 people homeless in the tribal areas.¹³

The Taliban took the responsibility for attacking the International Islamic University in Islamabad on Oct 20, 2009, retaliating to Pakistani army offensive in South Waziristan. 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.¹⁴

In addition, there have been many attacks on school buses and teacher vans across FATA and KP as well. In September 2011, the militants attacked a school bus that was carrying school children home from Khyber Model School in Peshawar. When the target was missed, they opened fire with guns on the vehicle. A pupil aged 15, who was among the injured, said that, he tried to take some other students off the bus during the shooting. But they were shot at from the other side.

Moreover, Most of the attacks were carried out in the form of bombings. In an incident where a bus carrying disabled school children in Peshawar in May 2011, was bombed injuring 7 students.¹⁵ In November 2013, the militants abducted 11 school teachers from Hira Public School in the Khyber Agency because they had helped in a polio vaccination campaign meant for school children.¹⁶ From Khyber Agency also Farida Afridi, director of NGO in Jamrud area, was shot dead on 4 July 2012 as she was providing education and training for women.¹⁷

On Dec 8, 2012, Zarteef Khan Afridi, the coordinator of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan in Khyber Agency, who was working as a head teacher, was shot dead on his way to the school in Jamrud. He had

¹² Khawar, G. "Military Operations Affected Education in FATA." *Daily Dawn*. Peshawar. April 4, 2013. Retrieved from <http://www.dawnnews.com>. Accessed on 17/06/2015.

¹³ Soofi, A. *Legal Challenges to Military Operations in Pakistan: The Case of FATA*. New York: Georgetown University Press. 2014, 34.

¹⁴ *Daily Dawn*, Islamabad, March 21, 2009 8. Retrieved from <http://www.dawnnews.com>. Accessed on 22/6/2015.

¹⁵ *Global Coalition To Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA) Report*. 2015. Retrieved from: <http://www.protectingeducationfromattack.com>. Accessed 21/06/2015.

¹⁶ Akhtar, H. "Teachers Shot Dead by Militants." *Daily Express Tribune*. Peshawar. May 15, 2014. Retrieved from <http://expresstribune.com>. Accessed on 20/6/2015.

¹⁷ Bureau Report. "Women NGO Worker Shot Dead." *Daily Express Tribune*. Peshawar. June 2014. Retrieved from <http://expresstribune.com>.

received threatening letters by the Taliban for opposing them and supporting women's rights.¹⁸ In January 2013, five female teachers returning from schools near Swabi in KP province were gunned down.¹⁹ Accessibility beyond primary schools is also a serious problem because there is one middle school for every nine primary schools.

In 2010, Taliban assassinated the vice chancellor Dr. Muhammad Farooq, of a supposedly liberal University in Mardan. He was counselling at a school that was set up by Pakistan's Army with the help of international donors where 150 boys who were liberated by military forces were reading. As per reports of the New York Times, 6 university professors and intellectuals including him, were murdered within one year.²⁰ On January 2014, a ninth grader Aitzaz Hassan Bangash bravely stopped a suicide bomber from blowing up his school in Hangu district at the cost of his own life.²¹

The city of Peshawar has often been targeted by the militant outfits because it is adjacent to FATA on three sides. The attack on army public school was a soul shaking tragedy and the most violent terrorist act in the history of Pakistan. Khalifa Umer Mansoor, the commander of Taliban, released a video message directly threatening Pak Army of slaughtering more children. The school, operated by the Pakistan Army, was an intended target. Responsibility for the massacre was claimed by the TTP; they said that they acted in retaliation for the army's Zarb-e-Azb operation and the killings of Taliban at the hands of Pakistani authorities.²²

Not just the Taliban, a segment of the *Madrassah* establishment, too, opposes formal education provided by the government, looking on formal education as un-Islamic and believing that this system trains 'secular' generations-secular being thought of as a negative attribute by most Pakistani clerics and the Taliban. Taliban have claimed that they are deadly against secular and western education because Shariah law orders Muslims to be against it. All people must be trained for Jihad.²³

During the last eight years of uncertainty and violence in the area children have suffered mentally, socially, emotionally, and psychologically.

¹⁸ Ibrahim, S. "HRCP's Coordinator Shot Dead in Peshawar." *Daily India Today*. New Delhi. June 5, 2012. Retrieved from <http://www.Indiatoday.com>. Accessed on 9/6/2015.

¹⁹ Bureau Report. "Gunmen Kills Five Female Teachers." *Daily Tribune Express*. Peshawar. September 12, 2013. Retrieved from <http://www.Dailyexpress.com>. Accessed on 10/6/2015.

²⁰ *Daily The News*. Peshawar. October 3, 2010. Retrieved from <https://www.thenews.com.pk/archive/print/609018-vc-of-swat-varsity-shot-dead-in-mardan>. Accessed on 20/6/2015.

²¹ Aitzaz Hasan. "Tributes to Pakistan Teenager Killed." *BBC News*. November 3, 2014. Retrieved <http://www.bbcnews.com>. Accessed on 14/6/2015.

²² Tahir Khan. "TTP claim responsibility for Peshawar school attack". *Daily Express Tribune*. Peshawar. December 16, 2014. Retrieved from <https://tribune.com.pk/story/807574/ttp-claim-responsibility-for-peshawar-school-attack/>. Accessed on 21/6/2015.

²³ *The News*. (2012). Devastation: Bombing of Schools in KP and FATA. Retrieved June 17, 2015, from Dawn News: <http://www.dawnnews.com>

And now their academic career has been adversely affected by the displacement. In the wake of military operations in FATA, majority of the children came with the complaint of depression, phobias, acute stress disorder, insomnia and post-traumatic stress syndrome. In 2009, about 97,000 psychiatric cases were reported from the violence-hit areas of FATA. The symptoms of psychological illness have been estimated to be carried by every sixth child. In 2011, approximately 90,000 patients were examined at a local hospital in FATA where about 50,000 people had suffered due to violence caused by militancy and military operations.²⁴

KP has 2 million out of school children. Those who are already in schools are not learning to an acceptable standard. An estimated 7 million students are out of school in FATA. Due to the unavoidable circumstances created by militancy; around 600,000 students have missed one or more years of their education.²⁵ These adolescents deprived of education can be easily exploited by the militants.

Destruction of Education Institutions in North-Western Pakistan

The volatile state of affairs in FATA has affected higher education in the entire tribal belt. Almost all colleges in all parts of FATA have come under attack as the wave of militancy has swept not only Bajaur, Mohmand, Kurram, Khyber, South and North Waziristan agency but Darra Adam Khel, Bannu, Swat. The militants blew up 7 colleges and two hostels (Government Degree College Barkhalozi Baja, Government Degree College Nawagai and Government Post Graduate College, Khar Hostel in Bajaur Agency, Government Degree College Lakaray and a Girls Hostel Kandahari in Mohmand Agency, Government Degree College Dara Adam Khel and Government Degree College Ladah in South Waziristan Agency) have been raised to the ground by bomb blast (Syed, 2010). Mr. Ahmad Ali, lecturer and inhabitant of Khyber Agency claims: "The only two degree colleges in Darra Adam Khel and FR Peshawar have already been occupied by security forces and they are still in occupation of military forces."²⁶ List of fully damaged colleges is given below.

²⁴ FATA Research Center [Seminar Report]. *Social and Psychological Consequences of Violence in Fata: Issues and Challenges*. Peshawar, FATA Research Center, September 17, 2013. Retrieved from <http://frc.com.pk/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/SPCV-in-FATA.pdf>. Accessed on 10/6/2015

²⁵ *Daily Dawn*, Peshawar. May 15, 2011. Retrieved from <https://www.dawn.com/news/629053>. Accessed on 23/6/2015.

²⁶ Ahmad Ali, Shinwari, Interviewed by author, FR Peshawar, FATA, Pakistan, June 30, 2015. He is a lecturer of Political Science at Government Degree College Barra, Khyber Agency, FATA.

Table 1: Fully Damaged Colleges in FATA in the Year 2013-2014

Colleges Destroyed	Level of Damage
Government Degree College Dara Adam Khel	Fully Damaged
Government Degree College Ladah in South Waziristan Agency	Fully Damaged
Government Degree College Nawagai in Bajaur Agency	Fully Damaged
Government Degree College Lakaray in Mohmand Agency	Fully Damaged
Government Post Graduate College Khar Hostel in Bajaur Agency	Fully Damaged
Girls Hostel in Mohmand Agency	Fully Damaged
Government Degree College Ladah in South Waziristan Agency	Fully Damaged
Government Degree College Lakaray in Mohmand Agency	Fully Damaged

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

During the years of 2013-14, 731 schools succumbed to militancy in FATA and Frontier regions. Among them South Waziristan received a major blow with the destruction of 27 schools while Khyber agency suffered the destruction of 112 schools. In Khyber agency 63 schools were destroyed that consisted 35 boy's schools and 28 for girls. At least 162 schools in Orakzai agency suffered the same fate.²⁷ The number of schools turned into wreckage in Bajaur agency is 85 of which 64 were boys and 12 girl's schools. In Mohmand agency the total number of demolished schools is 109 of which 81 were boy's schools.²⁸

In addition, during the period of 2013-14, a total of 28 schools in the Frontier region of Kohat were sabotaged, where half of them were girl's schools. In FR Bannu, 5 boy's school, in FR tank 1 and in South Waziristan 9 schools received the brunt of terrorism. Out of 168, 92 schools were boys schools nearly 70 schools in Kurram agency bit the dust by militancy and flood of which 54 were boy's and 16 girl's schools.²⁹

²⁷ Naqwi, Ahmad. A. *The Impact of Militancy on Education in FATA*. FATA Research Center, Islamabad. December 1, 2014. Retrieved from <http://www.frc.com>, Accessed on 22/6/2015.

²⁸ *Daily The Nation*, Peshawar, April 3, 2013, 12.

²⁹ Asad Zia, "Education woes: 551 schools in FATA, FRs devastated by militancy, floods in 2013-14." *Daily Tribune Express*. Peshawar, November 3, 2014. Retrieved from <https://tribune.com.pk/story/785218/education-woes-551-schools-in-fata-frs-devastated-by-militancy-floods-in-2013-14/>. Accessed on 23/6/2015.

Moreover, Khyber Agency is among the areas worst hit by militancy. Hundreds of government-run primary, middle, high, higher secondary and colleges in Khyber Agency had been closed down either by the government due to conflict or due to militant attacks on schools. Miss Shazia contended that the causes of rapid dropouts are lack and inconvenient location of schools, poor teaching quality and poor parenting. Most schools are either overcrowded or still damaged.³⁰

Before army was sent to this region in 2014, many of the schools and colleges were not functional as they were under the use of militants as their hideouts and training centers. Several schools and colleges remained closed for more than a year in Bara Tehsil of Khyber Agency due to prolonged curfews. An alarming 64% of children quit school before reaching Class 10th. Due to mass displacement from Bara Tehsil of Khyber Agency, the dislocated children have been reading in tent schools now. Due to the poor financial status, youth in Bara remained illiterate which caused their joining militancy.³¹

Aftab Afridi, an inhabitant of Bara, opined that the government discriminates between schools of developed and underdeveloped localities by focusing expenditure on schools in developed areas. But at least 30 schools were opened in tents by the government to continue educational activities for children in Bara.³² This portrays a very dismal picture of education in FATA and KP. The attacks on students and school facilities have a devastating impact on both education sector and society as a whole. A resource-poor province such as KP can ill afford to repair and rebuild schools following attacks of this nature.

According to Annual School Census Report of Government Institutions in KP (2012) released by Elementary and Secondary Education Department, More than 3400 schools were vandalized in Peshawar, Noshehra, Kohat, Hangu, Bannu, Lakki Marwat and in many other areas.³³ Many teachers are understandably reluctant to work in insurgency-hit districts due to lack of state protection. The teachers are hesitant to render their services in an area where even the state can't protect them. On February 11, 2014, three primary school teachers were killed in Hangu district when

³⁰ Shazia, Interviewed by author, Landi Kotal, Khyber Agency, FATA, Pakistan, June 30, 2015. She is working at FATA Secretariat, Warsak Road Peshawar.

³¹ Ibrahim, Shinwari. "Bara in a State of Ruin." *Daily Dawn*. Peshawar, February 1, 2015. Retrieved from <https://www.dawn.com/news/1160716>. Accessed on 24/6/2015.

³² Aftab Afridi, Interviewed by author, Barra, Khyber Agency, FATA, Pakistan, June 10, 2015. He is a lecturer of History in Government Degree College Barra, Khyber Agency, FATA.

³³ Islamuddin, S. "Over 3000 Schools Destroyed in FATA." *Daily Express Tribune*. Peshawar, January 12, 2015. Retrieved from <http://www.expresstribune.com>. Accessed on 24/6/2015.

they were going home from school. After three months, two high school teachers were shot dead in the same district.³⁴

The most affected district in KP is Swat where 152 schools have been brought down. Charsadda comes after Swabi where militants destroyed 16 schools.³⁵ The militants destroyed 23 schools in Dir Lower and 22 in Dir upper districts respectively. Ten schools have been destroyed in Buner and twenty in Shangla. In July 2014, the education department claimed that 160 primary and secondary schools, including 13 in Peshawar, remained closed due to the activities of militant groups in KP.³⁶

In KP militants were in control of Swat Valley in the beginning of 2009. They were hard-liner in their interpretation of Sharia Law and were deadly against female education. They outrightly banned girls schooling in January 2009, and forcefully closed 900 schools to stop enrolment of female pupils. In Swat district some 8,000 female teachers and 120,000 girls stopped attending schools. Though later on the area was regained by Pak Army but the female teachers and schoolgirls were too frightened to go back to their schools nearly a year after the military had gained the control. In Swat alone, around 200 educational institutions have been dismantled at the end of 2011.³⁷ Mr. Safiullah maintained that the rural schools in Swat are deficient in necessary equipment and lack resources such as science laboratories, computers and the unavailability of teachers to teach science subjects.³⁸

After 9/11, many educational institutions have been occupied either by militants or security forces. This led to the deprivation of the children that lived in those areas. In 2009, most of the schools in Swat district were occupied by Pakistani military thus halted the education of around 10000 children in Swat district. Students had already suffered due to curfew and violence in FATA and after displacement, children had lost opportunities to continue education.³⁹

³⁴ Akhtar 2014

³⁵ Islamuddin, S. "Over 3400 Schools Destroyed in KP." *Daily Express Tribune*. Peshawar, June 15, 2015. Retrieved from <https://tribune.com.pk/story/393911/over-3000-schools-destroyed-in-militancy-disasters-official/>. Accessed on 24/6/2015.

³⁶ Usman, Jalal. "Educational Institutions to Remain Closed." *Daily Dawn*. Peshawar, December 17, 2014. Retrieved from <http://thepeshawar.com/news-and-events/educational-institutions-to-remain-closed/>. Accessed on 14/6/2015.

³⁷ Asad Hashid. "The fight for education in Pakistan's Swat." *Aljazeera Online*. October 15, 2012. Retrieved from <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2012/10/2012101516347715708.html>. Accessed on 23/6/2015.

³⁸ Safiullah, Interviewed by author, Mohmand Agency, May 11, 2015. He is School Teacher at Mohmand Agency, FATA.

³⁹ Asad Hashid. "The fight for education in Pakistan's Swat." *Aljazeera Online*. October 15, 2012. Retrieved from <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2012/10/2012101516347715708.html>. Accessed on 23/6/2015.

Many students in north and South Waziristan, Kurram and Bajaur agencies could not continue their education and many left it all together due to the unavoidable circumstances of security threat and unleashed insurgency in the area...These schools were used by the militants as their hideouts before the military operations. After military started operations in the area, many schools and colleges suffered as a result of it. Govt. Degree College for boys Meeran Shah is such an example of the affected educational institutions. Missiles and mortar guns were fired at these buildings and since major parts of the buildings were destroyed, they couldn't be used for educational purposes. In the same way a girls degree college where about 200 girls were enrolled was rendered unsuitable in Meeran Shah as it was under the use of frontier corps. In 2012, similar cases were reported in all the other troubled Agencies.⁴⁰

According to the Annual Statistical Report of Government Educational Institutions: 2013-2014 released by FATA Secretariat Directorate of Education, South Waziristan stands atop among the among the most suffered agencies with 427 dysfunctional educational institutions. It is followed by Khyber agency with 267, Orakzai 226, Kurram 97, Mohmand 91 and north Waziristan with 4 dysfunctional institutions. Because of militancy 9 schools were declared closed in Bajaur agency. In frontier regions Kohat greatly suffered with the closure of 16 educational institutions for both boys and girls.⁴¹

During the years of 2013-14, 731 schools succumbed to militancy in FATA and Frontier regions.⁴² Over 2499 educational institutions are completely closed due to worsening law and order situation.⁴³ Mr. Fazal Muhammad, a resident of FATA shared that the lack of middle schooling opportunities for girls has led to the discouragement of their parents to appreciate the value of primary school education. Enrollment rate is low but drop out is faster. He further added that this happens due to the perceived low economic value of education, poverty, improper school location, lack of involvement of the parents and above all the unavailability of staff and schools where they are needed the most.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ *Daily Dawn*. Peshawar, February 25, 2012, 12. Retrieved from <https://www.dawn.com/news/698333>, Accessed on 11/6/2015.

⁴¹ Khawar, G. "Military Operations Disrupted Education in FATA." *Daily Dawn*. Peshawar, December 23, 2013. Retrieved from <http://www.Dawnnews.com>. Accessed on 26/6/2015.

⁴² Islamuddin, S. "Over 3000 Schools Destroyed in Militancy." *Daily Express Tribune*. Peshawar. 23 June, 2012. Retrieved from Express Tribune: <http://www.dawnnews.com>. Accessed on 12/6/2015.

⁴³ Usman, M. (2014). Over 800 Schools destroyed in KP and FATA. Retrieved June 20, 2015, from *The News*: <http://www.thenews.com>.

⁴⁴ Fazal Muhammad, Interviewed by author, Bajaur Agency, FATA, Pakistan, June 16, 2015. He is a School Teacher at Bajaur Khar.

Displacement and Education

Since 2008, a large population of FATA has been frequently displaced to other areas which severely affected the education of the children. Pakistan's unsteady economy shouldered the burden of almost 3 million IDPs from FATA, Swat and other adjacent localities in 2008.⁴⁵ In 2009, about 3000 people fled their homes and left Waziristan to get settled in tank, DI Khan and other nearby places.⁴⁶ For about 105,000 displaced children of FATA UNICEF set up temporary learning centers and were later handed down to the government to be transformed into permanent public schools. Today in and around the city of Peshawar more than 900,000 people live in camps. Teachers, students and their families have shifted to safer places halting their studies for a long period of time. Military operations and drone strikes, which had depopulated Bajaur and parts of neighboring Mohmand Agency, with an estimated 300,000 people fleeing their homes.⁴⁷

Children of the displaced families have been enrolled in cities or IDPs camps in all public, private or NGOs run schools. Most of the displaced population has chosen to take refuge in hosting communities within the neighboring province of KP.

In 2015, the latest wave of displacement has affected up to an estimated 310,729 families—around 2 million IDPs—of which around 70% are women and children.

The continued presence of IDPs is increasing pressure on the already stretched resources (particularly water, education, and health) of the hosting districts in KP. Pak army claims that they have cleared over 80 percent of the area of militancy. Nevertheless, no plan for the return of the displaced persons and families has been declared yet.⁴⁸ Mr. Muhammad Adil Wazir, a resident of FR Bannu, opined; due to militancy and military operations the families hundreds of thousands of students have fled the area resulting in the disruptions of the education of their children.⁴⁹

A detailed breakdown of displaced families per agency/region in 2014-2015 is given in Table 2.

⁴⁵ Waqas, C. *The Impact of Rising Terrorism and Military Operations on Socio Economic Culture of FATA of Pakistan*. Islamabad, FATA Research Center. 2014. Retrieved from <http://www.frc.com>. Accessed on 27/6/2015.

⁴⁶ UNICEF. "Temporary Learning Schools for FATA Students." UNICEF, Islamabad: Pakistan 2012. (September 11, 2012). Retrieved from https://www.unicef.org/pakistan/UNICEF_-_Annual_Report_2012_-_Version_8.0.pdf. Accessed on 22/6/2015.

⁴⁷ *Daily Dawn*. Islamabad, July 08, 2014, 8. Retrieved from <https://www.dawn.com/news/1117879>. Accessed on 1/7/2015.

⁴⁸ Government of Pakistan, FATA Secretariat. "FATA Sustainable Return and Rehabilitation Strategy." March 2015. Retrieved <http://www.pk.undp.org/content/dam/pakistan/docs/CPRU/idps2014/02-R&R%20Report%20Format.pdf>. Accessed on 2/7/2015.

⁴⁹ Muhammad Adil Wazir, Interviewed by author, FR Bannu, FATA Pakistan, June 20, 2015. He is a lecturer at Miran Shah College.

Table 2: Breakdown of Displaced Families per Agency/Region 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*

Government Strategies for the Education Governance Reforms

Since inception of Pakistan, the FATA and KP has had the poor standard of basic education and recently the terrorism further deteriorated the Students' achievement level while the dropouts have gone up. Many large and small projects have been launched to overcome the hurdles and enhance quality of education. These programs include the construction of new buildings, the provision of improved textbooks and capacity building and infrastructure development components. As reported by the Economic Survey of Pakistan 2005-06, Pakistan spends 2.1 percent of GDP on education sector. Some encouraging steps have been taken like the new constitutional obligation to impart free and compulsory education to all children between the ages of five and sixteen.

Constant exposure to conflicts and disasters has further exacerbated this challenge by increasing the need for reconstruction and rehabilitation of schools. The government is taking ambitious steps to improve the service delivery. This includes reconstruction programs to increase the number of classrooms and up gradation of Middle to High Schools. The pace of progress on these reforms, however, has been a constant challenge. Out of total 29,037 government schools in the province in September 2013, 11786 were without electricity and 88, 94 were without drinking water facilities.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Government of Pakistan, FATA Secretariat. Post Crisis Needs Assessment Khyber Pakhtunkhwa & Federally Administered Tribal Areas. September 2010. Retrieved from

The government is concerned about raising the level of education in FATA that touches the lowest ebb in the whole country. The government is providing services and infrastructure to help achieve the stated goals and it has the responsibility to establish primary, secondary, higher secondary, undergraduate and postgraduate educational institutes in all tribal agencies. The government of KP has announced a new program to construct schools wherein 100 high schools will be modeled on global standards of education.⁵¹

Alternative temporary education solutions have been provided to IDPs for reactivating schooling of children in the surrounding areas, such as tents facilities. All efforts have been made to ensure that these temporary tent schools are safe from militant attacks. The government of Pakistan aims to ensure that all rehabilitated schools are made more resilient and provided boundary walls, better sanitary facilities and safe drinking water, etc. These rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts have been carried out in coordination with UNICEF, USAID and UNESCO. Basic foundations have been laid down across all Agencies and Frontier Regions of FATA to allow the IDPs of FATA to return home and have basic living conditions in their areas of origin so that the students of IDPs can continue their education.

The following table shows the ongoing educational programs of government.

Table 3: Ongoing Educational Programs of Government of Pakistan

1	Primary and Secondary Education
2	Up gradation of one High School to Higher Secondary Status in Mohmand Agency.
3	Up gradation of Two Middle Schools to High Status in Mohmand Agency
4	Up gradation of Eight Primary Schools to Middle Status in Mohmand Agency
5	Reopening of Functional Community Schools in Mohmand Agency
6	Establishment of 4 Primary Schools in Swabi.
7	Construction of buildings for 09 Community Schools in Mohmand Agency
8	Rehabilitation/Reconstruction of damaged educational institutions in Mohmand Agency
9	Up gradation of 18 existing Education Facilities in Khyber Agency. (GGPS = 7, GPS = 8,
10	Construction of Additional Class Rooms in existing Educational Institutions in Khyber Agency
11	Establishment of 10 Primary Schools (04 GPS & 06 GGPS) in Khyber Agency

<http://lgkp.gov.pk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/10.-Consolidated-report-on-the-Post-Crisis-Needs-Assessment-for-KP-and-FATA.pdf>. Accessed on 23/6/2015.

⁵¹ *Daily The News*. Peshawar, February 12, 2015. Retrieved from <http://www.thenews.com>. Accessed on 24/6/2015.

12	Rehabilitation, Improvement and Maintenance of 60 existing schools in Peshawar
13	Up gradation of GHSS Sama Badahber to Degree College in FR Peshawar.
14	Up-Gradation of 2 High Schools to Higher Secondary Status in Swat. (1 Girls and 1 Boys)
15	Construction of Additional Class Room/Labs/Admin: Block & Canteen at Parachinar Public School in Kurram Agency
16	Establishment of Islamia College University at Parachinar&Sadda Kurram Agency.
17	Regularization of 5 Community Schools in Orakzai agency
18	Re-construction Damaged Schools in Orakzai Agency.
19	Construction of 100 cadet hostel, two staff residences, enlarging/levelling of sports and assembly ground in Cadet College Razmak, NWA.
20	Construction of Hostel at Hazar Public School, Miranshah, N.W.Agency.
21	Establishment of Government Degree College (Boys) in Bannu FR

Source: *Annual Development Plan, 2013-2014. Directorate of Education, FATA Secretariat.*

The KP government has announced to build top 100 standard schools to be completed during the year of 2015 while the chain of such schools will be extended and funded to make them models of standard and quality and all the new educational institutions are built on this pattern in future. The key challenge for the education system is to bring out of school children into schools and retain them longer to learn more and better, besides provision of adequate number of classrooms and basic facilities to those already enrolled in schools.⁵² The government of KP has allocated a fund of 108 billion for primary and secondary level education sector and the Higher education budget has been increased from 13 billion to 15 billion in the budget of 2015-2016. Rs.472 billion has been provided for security of schools, colleges and universities. Construction of Government Girls Degree Colleges in Haripur and Nowshera and construction of buildings for Colleges and major repair of existing colleges is under construction.⁵³

Since November 2013, 35 Degree Colleges including 23 for boys and 12 for girls and 3 post graduate colleges have been established for youth in

⁵² Bureau Report, "Call for Rebuilding Ruin Schools in FATA." *Daily The Nation*. Peshawar, February 7, 2014. Retrieved from <http://nation.com.pk/07-Feb-2014/call-for-rebuilding-ruined-schools-in-fata>. Accessed on 25/6/2015.

⁵³ Webdesk, "KP Government Allocates High Funds to Education Sector." *Daily The News Tribe*. Peshawar, June 14, 2015. Retrieved from <https://www.thenewstribes.com/2015/06/14/kpk-govt-allocates-high-funds-to-education-sector/>. Accessed on 22/6/2015.

FATA to extend opportunity of higher education in FATA. In KP Construction work on public libraries in Kohat and Chitral had completed in June 2014 while the library in Lakki Marwat is also under construction.⁵⁴ Staff and student hostels, examination halls, additional classrooms, library blocks, boundary walls, furniture, machinery and equipment are also being provided to strengthen existing infrastructure of colleges. Moreover, financial support has been provided to ten universities along with development of their existing infrastructure. Construction work is under process on campus of Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan. Sub Campuses of Universities at Haripur, Swabi, have been upgraded to full fledged Universities for which financial support has been provided by Provincial Government. In the case of fully damaged schools, temporary learning Centers have been provided to ensure reactivation of education services in the region.⁵⁵

Conclusion

The overarching conclusion that emerges from the analysis is that attacks on education infrastructure have been a feature of armed conflict in FATA and KP. Since 9/11, the region has witnessed unprecedented instability. Today the North-Western Pakistan region is passing through the most crucial stage of its history. A long term developmental strategy needs to be planned in order to establish peace and security, ensure stability and restore hope of the people. Despite the impact of the conflict, a very small percentage of funds are allocated for education. This prevents the education sector from responding swiftly during periods of intense conflict. The threats of terrorism and militancy can be removed by providing better education to the students of this region.

Many of the schools and colleges in the conflict hit areas are still closed. To discourage education, militants have adopted the policy of both attacking the schools and targeting the teachers. The government needs to invest more in education sector and increase its funding in order to save the nation from the negative impacts of illiteracy. This deteriorating status of education has further given rise to militancy and insurgency in the region and is a potential threat to the whole nation.

The Taliban's war on education and schools has two important motives. They want a system of education based on Sharia Law and second, they allege that military forces use these schools as their operating bases. Their attacks on education institutions have disrupted children's education in KP and FATA. These attacks have psychological impacts on the students and affect their ability to learn if the school remains open. It has created an atmosphere of fear in the area that any school can be attacked.

⁵⁴ *Daily The Nation*, Peshawar, June 18, 2014.

⁵⁵ Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. "KP Higher Education Department Presents its Achievements." Retrieved from <http://hed.kp.gov.pk/>. Accessed on September 12, 2014.

A deep crisis prevails despite of minor improvements in education sector while major work is needed to improve the quality of education. The government must increase the funding available to the education sector as lack of education will have a negative impact on the nation. Lack of education has led to a rise in intolerance in society. Therefore, an effective and efficient system of checks and balances should be installed in all the educational institutions otherwise our aim to become an enlightened nation will never be realized.

Recommendations

The paper proposes recommendations for the concerned policy makers and opens new vistas for further research.

- ❖ Education in KP and FATA must stand atop on government's priority list. Stability and prosperity can be ensured only in educated society.
- ❖ Governments should rebuild the destroyed schools in the militancy hit areas and it should make sure its safety and security. To increase literacy rate, the building of new schools is inevitable.
- ❖ The Government should take immediate measures to address the issue of teachers' postings in schools and ensure the availability of teaching staff. The teachers need to be encouraged and motivated to perform their duties in their concerned area.
- ❖ There is need of makeshift arrangements for the students of militancy struck areas and they should be provided with facilities like tent and other necessary services e.g. chairs, desks and books, wherever needed.
- ❖ To continue education process and rebuild the destroyed schools the government needs to allocate specific budget for this purpose.
- ❖ The government should devise curricula that truly represents the spirit of Islam and can convince the militants that in these schools no 'anti-Islamic' education is imparted.
- ❖ Universities must be built in FATA to promote higher education. Government should provide basic facilities to schools and infrastructure should be renovated.
- ❖ In order to save the future of internally displaced students of FATA and KP, an alternative education system should be introduced on an urgent basis.

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