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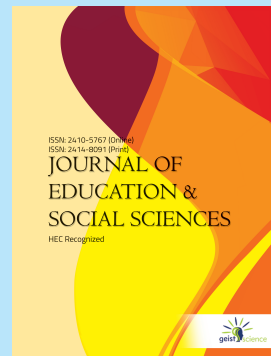
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Extremism and Intolerance: Psycho-Social Analysis and Wayforward

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Abstract: Pakistan has been under security threats since her inception, however, the challenges it is facing today is unique in nature. Intolerance in society has given birth to social conflict, uprising of extremism, militancy and terrorism. The causes of psychological and emotional imbalance may be social injustice or psychological warfare. Institutions fighting to counter the threat are prime victims facing heavy casualty both in terms of men and material. At the initial level of this qualitative research, etiology of increasing intolerance, conflict and violence are examined with evidence from behavior of the inhabitants whereas in later part, the corollary is discussed with suggested way forward. Data is collected through interviewing target folks, literature review and evidence from society. An endeavor is made to discuss the facts which generally the citizens of Pakistan overlook or avoid. The research is primarily addressed to the students of Social Sciences and Administrative sciences, who could play a vital role to reduce conflict and intolerance in the society. It will also be a social service to the nation, while working as a reference for future study on the subject as an effort is made to identify the weak links of the society.

Keywords: Conflict, intolerance, extremism, militancy, psychological warfare.

Preamble

Nations see changes in their social, economic and political setups, which also affect the social behavior of the inhabitants. Sometimes the change in behavior give positive result in the society, however, at times the changes generate conflicts; but the primary constituent of an evolving social norms has been its ability to absorb the changes. The last 6 decades cycle has witnessed an unprecedented transition; nation states, having emerged due to decolonization, found their relevance eroded. Crystallizing the future is always a risky proposition, more so in the evolving environment, where new politico-economic paradigms are redefining the social framework of the world at large. Positive jealousies, generated by diversities and harnessed through education and tolerance are fundamental to productivity and development, but it leaves awry nourish centrifugal forces and sub-nationalism (Maqsood, 2015). Unfortunately, in Pakistan's history, except for a brief period, the nation saw different groups and each group drifts its own way, the burgeoning gap between the rich and the poor, and the religious and ethnic divide, have continued to widen an already existing division in society. This complexity of national integration is further compounded by low productivity and economic vulnerabilities. A strong and viable democratic, political and economic system is essential for sustained development.

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Since its inception, Pakistan's security has been under threat; India invaded Kashmir in 1948 soon after independence which led to war of 1965. 1971 war divided Pakistan into East and West. Apart from these major wars, the Line of Control (LOC) between Pakistan and India remains under fire. Moreover, the Global War On Terror (GWOT), the unconventional war, which affected Pakistan the most and the world in general. As a result of constant threat to the civil society; the inequitable social order and a multi-tracked society emerged in Pakistan where frustration, disillusionment and discontent present everywhere having a vulnerable front offering easily exploitable to the hostile external and internal forces. The events following the bloody war in Waziristan, Bajour agency, Swat and unrest in Balochistan Province of Pakistan with day-to-day bomb blast, suicidal attacks and targeted killing all over the country at the cost of precious lives, indicate that something is seriously wrong not only in the policymaking but also in handling the issue at various tiers with requisite seriousness and deliberations. External player's involvement such as EU, India, Afghanistan and especially US's deep incursions inside Pakistan's territory has further aggravated the existing precarious internal security problems (Akhter, 2016b).

Endeavor is made through this qualitative research to highlight the causes of increasing conflicts and intolerance in the society. Moreover, it also attempts to find how intolerance can further aggravate extremism and militancy. The social vulnerabilities of Pakistani society are discussed and the threats to these vulnerabilities are also highlighted with an aim to find out some measures to fight against the menace of militancy and terrorism. Data is collected through interviewing target folks, literature review and evidence from the society. The research is primarily significant to the students of Social Sciences and Administrative sciences by being as a reference for future study. It can also be useful for those researchers who try to reduce conflict and intolerance in the society. Though, it will also be a social service for the nation to identify the terrorists and their sympathizers, moderators and facilitators either in the garb of religious or political leaderships and workers or of a common citizen.

Literature Review

Syed Jawad Shah and Waseem Ishaque in their research; "Challenges of national integration in Pakistan and strategic response" (Shah & Ishaque, 2017), conclude that national integration unifies every segment of society for harmony within the state with an aim of serving and development of the population, it also has relevance with national security and administration. Sidra and Qurat-ul-Ain in their research; "Transition from unipolar to a multipolar world: implications for Pakistan's foreign policy" (Khan & Qurat-ul-Ain, 2016), defines powerful state as the one which exceeds potential of population's masses economy. They also predict that in the future multipolar world global system will be replaced with numerous states having varying capabilities. A.Z. Hilali (2004) advocates Pakistan's case where there is an absence of good governance and unmonitored institutions. He/she further states that some ill-trained media personnel discuss sensitive national issues with the layman who give their 'expert' opinion without realizing that they

are damaging the national image and are becoming a major source of creating confusion. Faheem Akhter in his research "Education, Dialogue and Deterrence: Tools to Counter Terrorism" (Akhter, 2016b) concludes that increasing physical harm and casualties both civil population vis-à-vis armed forces personnel operating in tribal areas of Pakistan is a point of concern. Psychiatric injuries and nerves shock have led to post-traumatic stress disorder in an uncountable number of innocent citizens of Pakistan even though they have no share in Global War On Terrorism. Dr. Kessler and his team carried out a survey and published their work for post-traumatic stress disorder in the National Comorbidity Survey and concluded that post-traumatic stress disorder has worst negative impact on men, women, girls, boys, young, old in fact everyone in the areas where militancy is going on (Kessler, Sonnega, Bromet, Hughes, & Nelson, 1995). Akhter (2016b) in his research; "Pakistan's Emerging Challenges: Increasing Militancy, Decreasing Governance" highlights the causes of militancy in Pakistan and the problems faced by the state to control the menace of terrorism and militancy. Richard Nixon (former US President) in his book 'Seize the Moment' states "a civilization begins to die whenever its people lose their faith in the belief that give meaning to their world and their lives. The faith the force that generates its creature's energy" (Nixon, 2000). Pakistan is the most affected country by the extremists. Thus, there is a need to redesign entire governance system to curb the menace of terrorism. Faheem in his study; "Extremism in Pakistan: Need to refreshing the garden through reformation" (Akhter, 2016b). The strategy of dialogue, deterrence and development by Pakistan Army to contain the militancy in FATA through a whole of the nation; approach is showing significant results. He further analyses and recommends measures for improvement of the education system in FATA being an inevitable requirement for a prosperous future of the tribal youth and for an enduring stability in Pakistan (Maqsood, 2015).

Methodology

To carry out the study, qualitative method was selected focusing on grounded theory. Semi structured interviews of Pakistan armed forces officers and men were recorded those who were participants of military operations against terrorists and militant groups. Views of Ten officers including one lieutenant general, two major generals, two brigadiers, two lieutenant colonels, two majors, one captain and twenty-five soldiers were recorded (for security reasons their names will not be mentioned in the research paper). Each interviewee had handful knowledge of the operation against terrorists. Three faculty each from psychology department of the universities like, University of Karachi, University of Sindh and Peshawar University were also interviewed. Prior to their interview, their consent was taken ensuring them complete confidentiality of the obtained data and its usage for research purposes only.

Data Collection and Discussion

A part from interview of selected and targeted people mentioned above, data was also collected using all available print and electronic authenticated sources, published official reports (available on official websites), available literature on the subject, news items published on daily local, national and international newspapers. Nvivo 12 was used for content analysis. A deep study and analysis of content reveal that one of the causes of ongoing wave of extremism, militancy and terrorism in Pakistan is intolerance. The depressed and deprived population often opt for violence that also leads to extremism and militancy. The main etiology of intolerance extremism and the psychosomatic corollary were studied with a view to suggest some way forward.

Etiology

Numerous research studies have been carried out, hundreds of scholars have been giving their expert opinion, heavy slogans and hue and cry is a day-to-day matter to highlight the causes of unrest, extremism, conflict and intolerance in the society. The commonality is that, this is an irreparable damage to the culture, morale, values, ideology, property and lives.

Islam - Terrorism Relation

Though Pakistan has been the frontline state in the war on terrorism yet the west and rest of the world blame Pakistan for harboring the terrorists and militant groups. Post 9/11 all over the world, series of terrorists actions' were debited into Pakistan's account ([Khan & Qurat-ul-Ain, 2016](#)). Concept of Jihad has been portrayed as philosophy of terrorism in Islam and Muslims were tagged as extremists and terrorists, in general and viewed with suspicion. In the global canvas, terrorism is displayed as a genetic ingredient of Muslims and not a social, psychological, economic or political resistance. While "fundamental Islamist" are taken as a threat to the rest of the world, west think tanks now openly target "Islam" as a terrorist religion. The fact is that Islam gives a complete code of life; From dusk to dawn and from birth to death solution to every problem can be found in Islam ([A.Z. Hilali, 2004](#)). Any such system is believed to be based upon the literal and conservative reading of the Quran and Hadith, offering an alternative to the present socio-political framework. Another fraction is made by dividing the Muslims into peaceful and violent; the former is assumed to be moderate while the latter are perceived to be extremist ([Shah & Ishaque, 2017](#)).

Domestic Milieu Aggravates Conflict?

Human beings are unique species which can't live in isolation, but when they live in group forming society and states, they indulge in variance and conflict. Environmental factors most affect the habit and pinch the soul to think about changes. He asks for the

social rights, tries to subordinate others or dominate in the milieu. In either form, the igniter the conflict which may turn into intolerance, and finally it gives birth to extremism or terrorism. There is no denying the fact that Pakistan has been a home to many ethnic communities since its inception, but they did exist peacefully (Khan & Qurat-ul-Ain, 2016). The ethnic conflicts that have lost momentum in the past but are still capable of reviving. Hidden and exposed facets do exist in the society with their devil intent to misuse the ethnic sections of the society to destabilize the country.

Division in society on the basis of religion, political affiliation, wealth and other factors have made the Pakistani society a complexed one. People, in order to get the justice look for any strong affiliation might be political or religious, else they bribe to get the justice. Therefore, in Pakistan poor who don't have political affiliation can't get justice or live a respectable life in the society. Social unjust aggravates the frustration in the poor and middle class people who have no strong affiliation, which result in their intolerance level, which goes high and therefore, they opt for violence. Unfortunately, democratic institutions of Pakistan have not gained sufficient strength to counter the internal security threats due to political instability. The exploitative and coercive social-economic system is taking a heavy toll across the cross-section of the society forcing a common man to seek solutions from ethnic and religious alignments. Ultimately, some of them become toys in the hands of terrorist and extremist groups. Where issues like lack of uninterrupted electricity supply rather long power failure and load shedding, poor and hopeless civic amenities, congestion on the roads, mass urbanization of population, lack of job opportunities and long pending cases at the courts of justice do result into major breakdown of administration and governance.

Global and Regional Constant Interference Mobilize the Conflict?

Sovereign states do not tolerate interference in their sovereignty and so as the Pakistan. Due to the geographic, strategic, and central location; cultural heritage, dynamic human resource and so many other factors; Pakistan's importance for any global massive event can't be ruled out. Without Pakistan's consent and involvement, no such adventure can be a success (Martin, 2003). This important global fact has attracted the global and regional powers to have a foothold in this soil. While on the other hand, the pompous natives of Pakistan always repulse such attempt. Fighting War on terrorism without Pakistan can be a dream; it should be loud and clear to the entire world. World must understand that this is not a political jingle but the truth of the century. Geologically, Pakistan is beautifully located, that reaching to Central Asian Republics (CARs), Russian States or China is a daydream without stepping Pakistan's soil. US with preponderant economic strength, overwhelming military capabilities and vast political clout continue to play the leading role. Its global policies are mainly driven by the quest for maintaining global supremacy which continues to show strong resolve to take unilateral action against hostile states and groups with a view to protecting its national interests. Russia is likely to play a limited role in present global issues and relatively assertive role in regional issues, mostly taking china on board. It is effectively using regional platform to protect its interests in CARs against growing US inroads (Akhter, 2016a). China is likely to adopt non-confrontational

approach vis-à-vis the USA; largely focusing on economic growth, its Pakistan friendly stance on issues concerning Indo-Pak relations will remain relevant as long as these do not impinge upon its national interests under evolving strategic dispensation. India is becoming increasingly relevant to the global and regional powers and its strategic partnership with the US. Moreover, nuclear deal between the two has tilted the regional strategic balance (Malik, 2012). Afghanistan is now a highly fragmented polity and a hotbed of external influences and intrigues. This is not auguring well for the internal security and stability of Pakistan. Extremists have established their hideouts in these regions and are creating trouble for the government by targeting foreigners and conducting other anti-state activities like suicidal attacks on both sides of the border which is seriously tarnishing Pakistan's image and causing irreparable losses to its security and stability in its fight against terrorism.

Psychosomatic Corollary

The great Prussian philosopher and student of war 'Karl von Clausewitz'; once observed that: "Every age has its own kind of war, its own limiting conditions and its own peculiar preconceptions". Some might argue that this Clausewitzian observation doesn't apply to the war on terrorism, after all terrorism is not a new phenomenon. For the last couple of decades terrorists are using explosives, bombs, grenades and many more improvised unconventional weapons causing deaths of hundreds of innocent citizens and the same goes with the drone attacks too. The catastrophic event does not only give the physical harm but leaves behind a large number of innocent people suffering from psychiatric injuries and nervous shock. Peaceful inhabitants of the tribal areas; Waziristan, Swat, Bajaur agency and some other places never dreamt of facing such unexpected, immoral and covert operation coming from ground as well as air which has destroyed their houses, fields, shops, schools, rather everything which they had. Injuries which they receive daily are being treated in the clinics and hospitals; houses and businesses are rebuilt with a peanut compensation by government but what for those psychiatric injuries and nervous shocks, which has changed altogether their way of life, relations, independence, hospitality, poetry and even dreams.

The Prey Local Populous

Tribal areas of Pakistan share western border with Afghanistan, so as their culture and traditions as well. Taliban and other terrorists have been infiltrating from western porous border in the garb of or with the help of tribals living either side of the border. At times, these locations were bombed almost daily leaving many innocent local inhabitants killed and injured and their properties damaged. Those who survive, their fear and anxiety remain; these are the injuries which are invisible to the naked eyes. They have suffered from severe depression and anxiety ever since and are dependent on antidepressants, where psychiatrists estimate millions are suffering post-traumatic stress disorder and other psychological illnesses.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Tribal areas of Pakistan form a communal society, where families of 60 to 70 people live in the same compound. The women cook together; the families eat and sleep together. Weddings and funerals are huge gatherings of friends and family or at least they used to be. Now, "in the era of Talibanization" and "After Drones" everything has changed. Children aged upto 5 to 10 no longer go to school. Men are afraid to gather in groups. Weddings, which used to be joyous affairs with music, dancing, and drumming, are now subdued events with only close family members present. Sadly, since funerals have also been the target of drone attacks, they have become small gatherings as now. This is not the end, Post-traumatic Stress Disorder has worst negative impact on man, women, girls, boys, young, old rather no one is left victim to this ill and distress ([Kessler et al., 1995](#)).

Pervasive Sense of Fear

The terrorist attack, bomb blast, explosions, heavy weapon firing terrorize inhabitants in North-West Pakistan. A local taxi driver described how "whether we are driving a car, or we are working on a farm, or we are sitting at home chatting with family members, no matter what we are doing we are always thinking that the terrorists will strike us. So we are scared to do anything, no matter what." He further added, "People are afraid about what might happen next...This is what it is like. It is a continuous tension." The interviews carried out for this research reflect common symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, emotional breakdowns, fainting, nightmares in the people living in such areas. "After a series of Talibans' attack, people can't go and talk with or sit with anybody at any time. They face great difficulty carrying on their business and their families," says a local interviewee.

Impervious Crumple

Eight killed and several injured in Drone Attack....". "Ten killed and at least forty injured in a blast in local market during rush hours....". "At least Thirty students along with five leady teachers sustained severe injuries while a girls school has been targeted by terrorist....". "Malala Yousuf Zai along with two other girls were targeted in a school van leaving all of them critical injuries....". At times such news were used to be the headlines but has lost its significance as it echoed almost daily. Such acts may have lost charm and attraction in news or for the viewers but what about those undergoing such dilemma. A large figure of local population is suffering from Impervious Crumple, their immune system is badly affected seeing their loved ones crying and dying ([Jessica, 2010](#)). It may happen to me soon is in their sub-conscience.

Conclusion

World in general and Pakistan in particular, in the expanded security milieu are faced with complex security scenario unprecedented in its history. An effort has been made to

identify the multidimensional security threats emanating from various centers of power in the changed global and regional environment, their interplay with the domestic sensitivities. Those who have lost their loved ones, property, belongings, are left with no option other than to fall into the hands of terrorist and militants. They are deprived, depressed and deviated, their level of tolerance has reached to optimal and they are an easy target for the anti-state elements. There is a long list of young men and women who became suicidal bombers, terrorists, anti-state elements just because they lost everything. Their belongings, relatives were attacked and destroyed. They were taken into hostage by the anti-state militant groups and they were brainwashed. Hence, they were ready to participate in anti-state act. They started killing their own natives, countrymen and even the law enforcing agencies and personnels.

Pakistan has great potentials to address its vulnerabilities, however, there is a need to remain forewarned, in line with the famous dictum 'Forewarned is being Forearmed', and evolve well considered, pragmatic, consonant with the emerging realities and challenges. Pakistan has far too much at stake in these evolving conflict environment which demands better understanding of challenges and own compulsions (Akhter, 2016b). Pakistan, to-day, is passing through its most tumultuous times, Richard Nixon (former US President) in his book 'In the Arena' states "a civilization begins to die whenever its people lose faith in the belief that give meaning to their world and their lives. The faith the force that generates its creature's energy" (Nixon, 2000).

Way Forward

No national or international interest is more compelling than the security of the country. Pakistan has to face this challenge through broader understanding, co-operation and close interaction with regional and global influencing states. The militants use violence to erode the resistance of the public and leaders alike to further their political demands. But the resistance of a society to terrorist blackmail may likewise be strengthened by counter terrorist education, which clearly puts forward, what terrorists are trying to achieve. There is a need for creation of a stable domestic environment through good governance and economic development in countering this menace regardless of so called political fallout government has an obligation to show firmness resolve and take decisive action against known enemy by administering deterrent punishment (A.Z. Hilali, 2004).

Figure out one odd incident is not enough to convey the message to the rest of word that society is under threat; sufferers of nervous shocks and psychiatric injuries need confidence building measures to overcome inner fear and Pervasive sense of fear (Akhter, 2016b). There are a number of examples where people after victimization have joined or started facilitating the anti-state elements. Rehabilitation process for those victim of terrorists' attacks need speedy implementation. Those who fall pray in the hands of terrorists just because the state is not taking care of them are the potential terrorist. Swift and speedy rehabilitation process by settling down their houses, properties, lives and loved ones and providing them basic needs of the life like health-care, education and security will bring them back to the main streams.

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