

**AN ANALYSIS OF SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACTS OF ORGANIZED CRIMES IN
DISTRICT SWAT**

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ABSTRACT

This study is an attempt to understand organized crimes in district Swat. This study focused on understanding organized crimes and its impact on the socio-economic fabric of swat, particularly on teducation, health, small businesses, tourism, and agriculture. Qualitative method was utilized for conducting the study. Primary data was collected from a sample of 30 respondents representing the sector of teducation, health, small businesses, tourism, and agriculture. Data was collected through in-depth interview using interview guide. This research considers organized crimes in the form of militancy has damaged the socioeconomic fabric of the society. The study finds that the sectors of education, health, small business, tourism and agriculture was badly impacte during the conflict. Besides, the social networks were shattered as majority of the people from the conflict area were forced to migrate in order to avoid violence and brutal killing from the militants. The study recommends acceleration of the rehabilitation and reconciliation process, coordination of the different organization working for reconstruction, allocation of appropriate funds for youth development and awareness, and promoting the true image of islam in order to avoid such conflicts in future.

Keywords: Organized Crime, Tourism, Swat, Socioeconomic, Damage, Social networks

INTRODUCTION

Organized crimes have been a reality of modern day societies, and are practiced globally in various forms. Historically, in primitive societies crime was a working concept in form of violence, but with the passage of time, with the emergence of pastoral and nomadic era, violence became intense due to the possession of scared resources among different groups there crimes took birth, but was not that much organized (Rana, 2003). At the inception of tribal society much of the social efforts for life survival and security became organized. In this sense the use of violence took charge there in an organized way to prevent the privilege of their tribe against other foreign invaders, while the use of violence was considered as a mean of social security (Chitkara, 2003). With the passage of time, and with the advancement of state societies in 16th century, a totally new concept emerged which infact was an extension of tribal violence. The concept of state military came to the world for the purpose to ensure the legislative social security for the public of the state, but gradually, as the state societies became advanced, this military was legislatively used against each other's in order to promote the desires and interests of few peoples, usually caled the "elite class" while some people call them the bankers (Paul & Brahma, 1988).

Historically, world war 1st and 2nd is the proof of organized as well as legislative efforts to ensure one world government, and soon after after world war 2nd this government appeared in the form of United Nations (UN) which is directly for the purpose to strengthen the global and promote the interests of the world, however; indirectly the establishment of the UN was for promoting universalism of one global agenda (Weinberg, 1994). But soon, after the establishment of UN, the military tactics were also revised due to the formalities of formal worlds. As a result of this formal tension, the nations around the world worked on non-formal intelligence agencies, fueled the cold war which ultimately resulted in the breakdown of Russia (Abbas, 2004). During cold war the traditional and tribal system of violent activities became advance again with a new spirit--fuelled by intelligence agencies for the purpose to weaken the countries which is a main part of one world agenda or universalism. But with the passage of time, and for the utilization of intelligence agencies and the articulated militant groups, dramatized new concepts emerge in form of organized

criminal networks, which were later on called as terrorist organizations Chafe & Chafe, 2003).

The terrorists networks were designed for the purpose to ensure the implementation of this so called one world agenda through both; formal and informal military as well as militancy tactics. This was done through the help of media magic and fictionalization of criminal groups, globally. But as a matter of fact, in today well informed global system, these all inhuman desire and tactics are in progress in different forms and shapes. The modern technological advancement has made it possible for the people around the world to easily understand the global environment and the role of inhuman criminal groups and terror networks behind all covert tactics, internationally (Abbas, 2007; Daraz, 2008). Currently, at international level, the players of global power system produce, mobilize, channelized and they utilize various criminal groups all over the world for the purpose to give elevation to their status quo-power for which they had formalized a great inhuman network of criminals by the name of terrorism (Paul & Brahma, 1988).

Swat, being a district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and a part of Pakistan, was on the way towards socioeconomic development due to vast tourism opportunities, its agricultural potentials and business market. After 2001, the world became a place of terror, in which Pakistan and Afghanistan were the main sufferers, and became the key target because of their geopolitical, economical, and strategic position (Hudson, 2002). The region of Swat became sensitive because of its close linkage with Afghanistan, and also because of the non-presence of Pak army at the adjustment borders. The actual distortion of social structure in Swat is started in Gat-Peuchar, the nearest region to Afghan border, where the terrorist trained militant, and thus a wave of terrorism started since 2002-2003, however; the condition became intense in 2005. They also launched their terror operation through Radio channel in properly organized manner, along with the practical slogan of Sharia and Islam, under the leadership of Fazlullah (Bhutto, 2008), and started challenging state jurisdiction. In order to bring them into the constitutional fold of the state, and to tackle the issue, the Pak army launched several operations. This not only resulted in a long lasting military operation but also created enormous socioeconomic problems for the locals. In this way, nearly 5-5 lacks locals were compelled to leave their place and shifted to other areas of the province. This

movement and the debilitating security situation paralyzed the whole socioeconomic structure, and majority of the people were deprived of the basic needs of life (Ahmed, 2009).

The socio-economic resettlement and up gradation of the district remained the serious and much complicated process for the state, because it requires multi-dimensional approach of state as well as local powers to bring the life into a normal state as it was before the military operation. The current research was conducted in district Swat, in order to find out the impact of organized crimes in the form of terrorism on the social and economic fabric of Swat. The study was designed to investigate the broader socio-cultural, political, religious and economic factors that contributed to organized crimes and its broader impacts, however; the study was focused on the following specific objectives.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To know about the nature of organized crimes in Swat
- To find out the social impacts of organized crimes in Swat
- To investigate economic impacts of organized crimes in Swat

METHODOLOGY

The current study was conducted in District Swat. The study was conducted under qualitative approach. Primary data was collected from a sample of 30 respondents comprising of five categories including Agriculture Department, Tourism Department, Hoteling, Education Department and Local business community. Further, convenient sampling technique was used for sample selection. This method was used because respondents were easily available for the study, and the researcher faced no problem in accessing them (Hancock,1998). Besides, primary data was collected through in-depth interviews using interview guide. The interviews were carried out in a face to face interaction with the respondents. The data was passed through different stages and was analyzed under different themes in order to clarify the issue under study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACTS OF ORGANIZED CRIME ON SWAT

Social structure has been considered as a key in the development and uprising of any region and society. It is social structure which provides the machinery for enabling the members of that society to perform their part for the sustenance of society. It binds people close together like a single unit, and any disturbance in one part leads to disturbance in the rest of the organ (society). The present study was about the socioeconomic impacts of organized crimes in Swat, and during interviews, respondents were asked about the social and economic impacts of organized crimes. The following themes are derived from the information in order to dig the issue deeper and to highlight its various aspects.

During the talibanization time in Swat various educational institutions were destroyed. The destruction was so worse that it impacted the educational process at large and some students also left their education incomplete. An extract from interview:

“Militants targeted the educational institutions and bombed them. After the conflict the education was completely destroyed. The damage was so huge that the district has not yet recovered from its impacts”

The current condition of the damaged education institutions is still bad, but it is quite better than the period of talibanization. In this regard the Pakistan army worked well for the rehabilitation of educational services. The basic reason behind the outburst aggression of taliban towards education system and infrastructure, was the negative approach and attitude of taliban against the education. According to them the prevailing education system, particularly female education promote obscenity and it is against the true image of Islam. Similar ideas were shared by another respondent.

“Female education was considered against islam, and militants bombed their schools and threatened those who sent their daughters to school. Those families were targeted who were not

willing to follow them. They were killed and hanged in the streets”

Besides, it was difficult for families to send their children to school and protect them from attacks of the militants. Education was banned for females in the area. Women faced psychological traumas because of the fear of losing their husband or other house members while they went out for day to day activities. When children witnessed the killings and atrocities they were left in the state of fear and trauma. Thus, parents preferred not sending their children to schools and were confined to homes. Some school going young boys were engaged by the militants as paid killers, robbers, preachers etc. They were paid, trained and given ammunition to exercise power freely and openly. The youth who was employed by the militants were either arrested or killed by the army.

Besides education the health sector was the second target of the militant attacks. They targeted health services for not treating their injured members. Further, they violently occupied and blasted several health facilities across the district. Along, health related infrastructure, doctors were also targeted for providing treatment to the security forces and not treating them. In this regard a respondent was of the view that:

“Due to the fear of militant attacks the doctors did not come to the hospitals. There are incidences that several women died on their way to hospitals, and non-availability of medical treatment”

The women from distant areas died on their way to the hospital. Although, army doctors, private clinics and NGOs played a major role in treatment of patients, however; in absence of proper infrastructure and security threats they were unable to cater the needs of large population. After, the military operation, NGOs and government worked towards rebuilding of infrastructure and in some public hospitals, machineries were installed but the damage was so huge that it would take many years to recover properly. Similar opinions were shared by respondents and a respondent uttered that:

“The militant attacks destroyed major health related infrastructure. They not only blasted the hospital but also threatened the medical practitioners. There was chaos and fear all around and mostly the public suffered from the actions”

The conflict disturbed all aspects of their living including health facilities. The already fragile health system was further destroyed and the medical facilities were stressed for the coming years. It was reported that the conflict negatively impacted the health of women and new born in particular, as they require extensive treatment, and mostly maternal and newborn related health services were damaged or closed around the district.

Similarly, militancy in Swat destroyed tourism sector and deprived the owners from precious earning from this sector. Tourism have a great economic importance in Swat, and tourist from many parts of the world visit here due to its natural beauty and fertile land. The months from June to August are tourists season in Swat, and people visit the famous tourist spots including Malam-Jabba, Fiza Gat, Madyan, Bahrain, Kalam, Matta and a lot of other beautiful spots had always been remained the choice of tourists. These tourists spent a lot of money in the local market which contribute to the growth of Swat economy. An extract from interview:

“Tourism is our main source of earning. In the month of June to August, we earn a lot of money. Tourist from all around the country as well as other parts of the world visit here and we sell many local made things in this time.

The different kinds of local handicrafts are focus of interest for the tourists, especially for foreigners, and buy these on quite well prices. The militant attacks converted the peaceful paradise on earth (Swat), into a boiling pot of tension and fear. As a result the tourists also moved to other parts and this sector was badly impacted. Field information also show similar findings and a majority of respondent were of the opinion that the tourism sector has been badly impacted due to militancy. An extract from field interview:

“The paradise on earth was converted into a hell. Before the conflict people flocked towards the district, which was a source of huge income for the locals. Constant militancy has destroyed this sector of abundance income. The tourist were not coming here due to security reasons”

Swat, a peaceful place for tourists and a paradise on earth was negatively impacted the socioeconomic fabric of Swat. Militancy and counter-militancy affected the valley in every sphere of life but perhaps the worst damage done, among many, was to its tourism.

In addition, the militancy resulted in huge economic loss in other sectors including small scale business, agriculture, fruit farms. In many localities of Swat people were engaged in small business, stone work, olive and fruit farms. These were main economic resources of the area and many products in these sectors were famous in global market as well. In this context a respondent shared that:

“Majority of population in the district is associated small business and agriculture. The constant militancy impacted the agriculture productivity and economy of the local. Also, they found it hard during militancy to transport their production to markets due to security reasons and blocked routes. The people of Swat faced huge economic loss due to conflict”

Besides other sectors, majority of the population is associated to agriculture and small business in Swat. These sectors remained the major source of their income for years. During the militancy, significant damage was done to the agriculture and small business due to the hurdles in transportation such as broken road and bridges. The most affected were the poor class since they had very few means of earning, which were also hindered by the prevailing conflict in the area. Transport was halted, roads were damaged and business was shut due to security issues such as continuous shelling and bombing, looting, killing, kidnapping and robbery. A respondent stated that:

“The people related to agriculture and small business were worsely impacted. The constant blockage of roads, continuous shelling, and demolishing of bridges made it difficult to do the work. Also markets were

closed and agriculture productivity decreased many fold due to lack of attention. The consequences were felt in post conflict time as it was difficult to overcome on the losses”

The constant waves of militancy resulted in huge economic loss to the people. In militant stricken areas majority of people lost their business while agriculture productivity decreased. The labor associated to these sectors was negatively impacts and they were left with no means of earning and income.

Similarly, the conflict resulted in huge migration of the people around the district. People were forced to migrate due to the circumstance that prevailed in the region such as kidnapping, lack of income source, threat to life, lack of basic necessities etc. Mostly, the influential and rich people were targeted by the militants in order to get hold of their money and property. The families of the wealthy people faced kidnapping of children and their loved ones. They were forced to pay heavy amounts in the form of ransom hence to prevent further damages most of the business class migrated to Peshawar and other parts of the country. Reflecting upon this a respondent told that:

“The conflicting situation forced us to migrate and leave our homes at God’s mercy. We witnessed the killing and assassination of many people. There was kidnapping and fear prevail all around. We were left with no other options, and migration costs us a lot of money and resources”

Due to its costs it was difficult for the poor people to migrate. They were double victims of the conflicts as many of many were exposed to conflict as were as poverty. They were unable to provide education to their children in other areas. Further, due to migration the social networks were shattered and families become disorganized. In this way militancy exerted severe socioeconomic on the life of Swat people. They lost their lives, economy, infrastructure, relationships and education. They were exposed to exploitation in the internally displaced persons (IDPs) camps. A respondent stated that:

“The conflict ruined us and our economy. We migrated to other parts of the province where we were exposed to derogatory situation. There

was absence of basic facilities in these camps. The schooling of our children was also badly impacted and they lost their precious time”

Thus, the wave of militancy in Swat resulted in enormous consequences for the people of Swat. They faced several challenges and they suffered socially and economically. The tourism sector was completely collapsed and majority of the people were forced to migrate, leaving their homes and property.

CONCLUSION

After 9/11 Pakistan faced various challenges in which economic and combating organized crimes in the form of militancy. In this context, the Pakistan security forces launched various operations against the militants. The Swat operation was one of them that was popularly known by operation Rah-e-Nijat. The study concludes that Swat has a great economic importance in Pakistan because of huge tourism potential and its vast agriculture productivity. After, militancy, Swat experienced various socioeconomic challenges. The major sources of income were either damaged or closed, and the social fabric was shattered. The study further concluded that violence destroyed the infrastructure of education, health, agriculture, and communication. People lost their small business and they were forced to migrated due to the debilitating security situation. The people lost their fruit farms and livestock, while families shattered and networks destroyed. The impact of militancy on the education sector was colossal because they were against the modern education, particularly female education. The socioeconomic damaged/impact knocked at the door of almost every resident of Swat, and it will take many years to recover from this irreparable shock

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of study findings it is suggested that the law enforcement agencies need to be more proactive in facilitating justice to the masses. A counter terrorism shall be formed and extended to the whole district in order to combat organized crimes. The situation requires a comprehensive national youth policy that gives particular attention to youth employment and development in the national development agenda, as well as improving and expanding service delivery through increased allocation of development funds to militancy affected

districts. Donors could assist youth development by increasing investments in microfinance and venture capital schemes that provide financial, logistical, and technical assistance to youth-led ventures. Further, the religious leaders shall promote the true image of Islam, and play their positive role in tackling the issue. The civil society shall increase their efforts to build resilience against organized crime. Public awareness shall be created against organized crimes and its implications on the socioeconomic fabric.

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