

## Militancy: A Myth or Reality

### An Exploratory Study of the Socio-economic and Religious Forces Behind Militancy in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

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**Abstract:** Militancy; as one of the burning social issues creates numerous personal, social and psychological problems that persevere to vacate the roots of social development, integration, stability and personality development of the subject victims. Consequently, militancy or terrorism remains a major area of concern throughout the globe. Based on the analyses of secondary information along with qualitative analyses, this study emphasizes over the forces behind militancy that are hidden in the realm of social, cultural, economic and religious spheres spreading the waves of violence generally in Pakistan and particularly in the research area.

The facts and figures derived from this study conclude that militancy is a multifaceted social menace that found its seeds in the socio-economic inequalities like the presence of social injustice, prevalence of intense poverty and religious misinterpretation among the masses. The study recommends the strength of state institutions, provision of equal and quality education, alleviation of intense poverty, provision of equal employment opportunities for the youth, arrangement of periodic and monthly seminars and workshops regarding the menace of militancy and its negative consequences, positive interpretation of religious teachings and directives etc. in order to minimize the intensity of the quagmire of militancy.

**Key words:** Militancy, violence, social injustice, deprivation, religious misinterpretation, illiteracy, poverty.

#### Background of the Study

Pakistan has been on the verge of confrontation since its very establishment and survival during the last few years has been experiencing the impacts of numerous social issues including terrorism and militancy. The roots of militancy can be traced back to many socio-political factors. Social deprivation, drug-smuggling, Afghan refugees, religious exploitation through *Madrassas* (religious seminaries) and training centers, and external factors such as the interplay of power politics at the international level, all have had their share in spreading militancy in Pakistan (Firdous, 2010). Moreover, a number of reasons, including easy access to arms and ammunition, bad governance, marginalization of the rural areas, non-availability of justice and a volatile geopolitical situation, make it vulnerable to all kinds of terrorist threats. Issues such as poverty, unemployment, and illiteracy are important contributing factors (Khan, 2009). However, research into the causes of extremism is only restricted to the roots of problems and there is little understanding of the drivers of extremism among researchers, analysts and policy makers alike.

A large number of people who join militant groups mostly belong to the lower socio-economic class in Pakistan. South Punjab and upper Sindh, which are gaining a reputation as safe havens

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for terrorist elements, are known areas of high poverty, which also rank very low in terms of education. Consequently, there is a large presence of *Madrassas* in these areas which, even if they are not necessarily producing terrorists, are definitely contributing to a mindset that encourages militancy. Members of this class have increasingly become more conservative, and even financed and supported militant outfits because of their inability to change the economic system in any other way (Saddiqa, 2011). This is not done consciously, but is driven by the realization that orthodox religious ideology provides greater sociopolitical space than the existing system. The Pakistani state has historically failed to build an alternate narrative, and the political-party system has failed to allay the concerns of ordinary people, which creates space for radicalism and militancy to grow (Saddiqa, 2011:158).

Pakistan's domestic instability is also linked to a number of different causes which are home-grown, such as social deprivation, drug-smuggling, Afghan refugees, religious exploitation through *Madrassas* and the role of religious scholars as well as psychological factors, have had their share in spreading militancy in Pakistan (Abbas, 2007:34). In addition, Pakistani people, at least some segments in the society, are often convinced by the shallow promises of implementing the Islamic system in its true sense (which they think is the ultimate source of solution of their problems) in the land by each and every political party that competes for securing political power in the country. The non-implementation of which until now cannot also be overlooked as a contributing factor to the already existing aggression in the society. Moreover, the clash between various sub-groups i.e. Sunni-Shia within the main religious domain further stir-up the existing aggression and violence. In Pakistan, the political use of Islam by the state promoted an aggressive competition for official patronage between and within the many variations of Sunni and Shia Islam, between the clerical elites of major sects and sub-sects. The focus on building an ideological state has undoubtedly affected Pakistan negatively in all areas that define a functional modern state where the Pakistan's government, its society and the military, are at ideological crossroads (Hashmi, 2009).

Rampant poverty and the egregious employment conditions of the area exacerbated the daily life of the people. Mostly through the offering of high salary from militants, the poor and unemployed people are merrily welcomed and are involved in militancy. The illiterate people were also involved without understanding the aftermaths of this menace for the future. They blindly follow the pseudo religious leaders of the region. Along with the other social issues, poverty and education are considered the main causes of the emergence of militancy in the region where the country spends only 1.5 percent of its GDP on the neglected educational sector while 22.3 per cent population lives on or below the poverty line in Pakistan (The News International, 2008).

Robert Kemp (2008) in his paper on extremism in Afghanistan and Pakistan postulate that the rise of radicalism in Afghanistan and the *Pakhtun* tribal areas of Pakistan is rooted in the disintegration of tribal (in both countries) and state (mainly in Afghanistan, but increasingly in Pakistan)

structures; and the increased influence of religiously orthodox foreign elements who assumed prominence during the long drawn out conflict in Afghanistan. The current insurgency in Afghanistan and Pakistan has complex local roots, and is fed by poverty where Shinwari (2008) claims that Federally Administer Tribal Areas (FATA)<sup>1</sup> is the most backward region in Pakistan, with 60 percent of the population living below the poverty line. The intense rise of militancy and extremism in the beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century in the country in general and in Malakand Division in Particular has been another added up toll on the country's existence and perpetuation.

In this paper, an attempt has been made to explore the possible linkage between militancy and the prevalent socio-economic, cultural and political situation in Pakistan. Besides, it examines the possible links between the incidence of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, misperception and misinterpretation of religious teachings among the people of the region, which ultimately results in the surge of militancy.

### **The Argument**

The impelling factors that compel individuals and sometimes the whole community to challenge the government's writ using the most sophisticated strategic and war technology. Mostly the factors responsible for the issues like militancy and terrorism are hidden in multifaceted realms throughout the globe, which prevent the people to think rationally about the negative and long term consequences of the issue. The same is the dilemma with the people of the target region, who without rational thinking of the issue, its long term and even immediate ill consequences, got entangled with the issue. Studying the prevalent scenario with a detailed socio-cultural and religious background of the inhabitants of the region, an attempt has been made to understand the established relationship between militancy in the area with the ingrained misperceived and misinterpreted religious ideology of the region, exploitation of its relatively emotionally dominant culture, emotionally intertwined social system, role of mass media and the possible emotional implications of the geographical location or positioning of the region (Thaugard, 2005).

Religion, in general, is emotional in nature. Most of its aspects and practices contain emotional attachments or mechanisms, which are necessarily crucial in explaining the acquisition and maintenance of religious belief and also shed light on certain prayers and rituals. Religion is largely a product of the emotional and a bit of people's rational thinking. Emotional thinking involves both individual thought processes and social processes that transmit and help to maintain religious attitudes (Thaugard, 2005). Thus religion includes beliefs and practices that people have acquired and practice in the course of life and they are also steady enough to hold on to them, irrespective of the future consequences of the related decisions being made, or actions being done.

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<sup>1</sup> Such Federally Administered Areas includes agencies adjacent to the boarder of Afghanistan in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan.

Besides, militancy since its beginning was a blend of cultural impositions and religious fundamentalism where the deep-rooted cultural restrictions upon the masses and resultantly sowing the seeds of rigid and fundamental religious ideologies further intensify the issue. Moreover, it is proclaimed that the religion of the region (Islam) includes *Jihad*, or struggle against non-Muslims. Within this perspective, along-with Afghanistan, Pakistan, in general and the region under study in particular, has experienced as well as been victimized by the issue of militancy.

One of the prominent reasons for the rapid spread of militants' (*Taliban*) ideology and gaining support was the successful conversion of the masses to implement a full-fledged *Sharia* that believe in the execution of quick justice and observance of the true Islamic principles. *Taliban* commanders were of the opinion to setup strict Islamic *Sharia* courts in *Buner* (a district in Malakand Division) as they had already done in Swat (another district in Malakand Division) (The Daily Dawn, Peshawar, Wednesday, April 12, 2009). No doubt, such fundamental laws as justice and equality were lacking in the region, and people were desirous enough to attain them by whatever means. Events of social injustice may provoke moral shocks, indignation, and anger and thus move citizens to action (The Daily Dawn, Peshawar, Wednesday, April 12, 2009).

Culture; as a way of life moulds the personalities of individuals and provides the grounds for learning from the practices they have in their surrounding, which automatically make them unique, conservative and emotionally strong which according to Margaret Mead, Gregory Bateson and Jean Briggs are culturally determined forces (Ekman, 1972). *Pakhtun's* culture, customs and traditions are characterized by the values of bravery and brotherhood that compel the masses to have sentimental attachment with those who channelize the pathways of militancy and so many other destructive and emotional activities (Yang, 2003).

#### **Objective of the Study**

- To investigate the correlation between socio-economic factors and militancy
- To find out the deeply-rooted cultural restrictions resulting in militancy in the area
- To identify the role of religious misperceived and misinterpreted notions, which spread militancy

#### **Methodology**

This research focuses on those forces, which create waves of insurgent militancy in Pakistan. The study is based on secondary information collected through library sources, internet, research papers, articles, magazines, books, reports of both governmental and non-governmental organizations etc. The collected data have been framed qualitatively (that provides a method for examining social research data without converting them to a numerical format; Babbie: 2004) with reference to various forces hidden in the realm of social, cultural, economic and religious spheres observed from secondary information through the mentioned sources. The literary approach of

the study basically focuses on a generalized contextual prevalence of militancy throughout the globe that has been further delimited to Pakistan and the specified area under study.

The current research patently show the multifaceted forces of militancy and terrorism that have been further divided into a few categories including social forces, cultural restrictions and impositions, economic deprivation and religious, when misperceived and misinterpreted, which often compel and create the currents in the minds and hearts of militants to be violent. Besides, the data sorted for the current paper is based on secondary sources and empirical findings in the form of facts and figures that have been mentioned for the purpose of clarifying the issue more authentically as well as to provide remedial measures and recommendations for policy makers and other organizations working in the field.

### **Literal Forces behind Militancy**

Militancy or terrorism that has been globally debated and researched is among the igniting matters of concern in the present scenario of modernity. The following discussion explicitly explains those forces which are regarded as responsible for the prevalence and existence of militancy in the region. Such forces have been identified through the in-depth study of relevant material in the existing literature on militancy and terrorism.

#### *Social Forces*

Social factors facilitate the spread of violent terrorist ideologies and the mechanisms by which they do so. Plenty of research exists (such as Ahmad, 2011, Daraz et al, 2012) to back up the notion that one's behavioral choices are powerfully influenced by one's social and political environment. An individual is, perhaps, more likely to become a terrorist or militant in a repressive society in which exposure to violence, poverty, and political disempowerment is a regular occurrence than in a relatively free society in which legitimate outlets for rage and frustration and prospects for a better life exist. Yet majorities of people, even in the harshest of socio-political circumstances, do not become terrorists or give moral or financial support to terrorist organizations. Moreover, the vehement militant movements have generally emerged from relatively affluent quarters. In fact, alleviating poverty generally leads to an upsurge in support for militant movements. Musharraf (the then President of Pakistan and Army Chief) likened global terrorism to a tree in which the leaves are individual terrorists, the branches are terror organizations and the roots are illiteracy, poverty and unresolved political disputes such as the Palestinian conflict. The leaves and branches will keep growing back until the root causes of terrorism are addressed, he said. "We tend to take a shortsighted perspective, dealing with leaves and branches", Musharraf said, "we must address the root causes with sincerity and a lot of vigor, which one doesn't see" (Kenrick, 2006).

There may be two hidden motives to discourage education and increase poverty in Swat and other areas of Malakand Division. Ignorance and poverty breed extremism and this is actually

happening in Swat where unemployment is also on the rise. People are drawn towards militancy because they are given a handsome remuneration for becoming a Taliban. State-of-the-art weapons, handsome salaries and the assurance of paradise in the hereafter are some of the temptations that lure the youth. These young men are the major source of strength and power for the militant leaders. Through them militants have succeeded in banishing the influential people of Swat and have compelled political leaders to kneel before them (Khan, 2008).

#### *Poverty and Militancy*

Pakistan is a developing country and is considered to be a semi-industrialized nation comprising of 170 million people, out of which more than 20 percent live below the poverty line. The Gross Domestic Product or GDP of Pakistan in 2010 stood at 167 billion dollars, constituting only 0.27 % of the world economy. Pakistan is considered to be the world's 27<sup>th</sup> largest economy, based on its purchasing power. This economy is deteriorating day by day, as core inflation has now reached 12%, according to the economic survey conducted by the government (Ahmad, 2011). Terrorism itself has cost Pakistan 6% of its GDP in 2009–2010. In such a run, the fact can't be repudiated altogether that the potential for militancy and extremism already existed in Pakistan due to its fragile social structure since independence in terms of poverty, unemployment, ignorance, economic stagnation, radical ideologies, bad governance, injustice and rigid culture.

Pakistan ranks prominently among the poorest countries of the world. The per capita income is drastically low and the state of some basic human resources is extremely disappointing. The people have been deprived of modern facilities in education, health, communication and good food. As such the people are worried because of a lack of the income source and they are unable to fulfill their needs to live a life parallel to their neighbors. In this age of competition they feel deprived of their rights and inferiority complex prevails upon them (Nasir & Hyder, 1988:474). In this regard, results derived from a survey conducted in the research region show a large number of unemployed youth indicating poor employment opportunities and is a sure sign of poverty. A few have received some form of education from either the government school system or the *Madrassas*. As they plan to get jobs and to raise families they find that their chances of employment are non-existent. These large groups of youth drift endlessly looking for an opportunity to make a living so that they can start a family. Unfortunately for them such opportunities are few, except when the militants offer them jobs.

Swat is a populous district that is religious and believes in *Jihad* based on their history. About 58% household respondents said that they supported the militants on grounds of religion. Unrest combined with poverty, unemployment and tension related to land, and exploitation of tenants and peasants by landlords in Swat formed a formidable sea of discontent. During the survey, households were asked if people joined militants for the sake of employment. A resounding 75% thought that unemployment forced the youth to join the militants. In another penetrating analysis it was found that one way in which income inequality may contribute to militancy is that the better

life options, that become available by joining the militants, allow one to become a powerful person in society. It is apparent that many people also joined the militants to improve their livelihoods by entering the terrorist leadership hierarchy that enables one to share in the spoils that the terrorists collect through criminality (Aziz, 2010).

#### *Unemployment and Militancy*

Unemployment has been plaguing the country throughout its existence and especially after the global recession the situation has further worsened. The worsening economic condition has also forced the government to slow down investments in development projects, which has resulted in unemployment. Foreign investment has been fleeing from the country, due to the existing security situation. Since the start of the war on terror in 2001, Pakistan has received billions of dollars in aid and is still unable to stabilize its economy. It is mostly due to the rising tide of militancy and volatile security situation that the entrepreneurs and businessmen have pulled out their investments. These economic conditions, along with the rising inflation and growing unemployment, have presented the radicals with a tool to exploit the public for their own agenda (Ahmad, 2011).

The rise of extremism and militancy has been directly linked to the failing economy by many observers. It is human nature that, whenever an individual or nation faces difficult times, they project the blame on others, so they can vent their grievances. Throughout history fascist and dictatorial regimes have used this ploy to unite their nation against a certain country, ethnic or religious group. The religious extremists have been using the same ploy on the ignorant Pakistani people. The lack of education and awareness among the masses has also contributed to its spread. This is a vicious circle, where the failing economy gives rise to terrorism and the increase in terrorism deteriorates the economy. The extremists target minorities, mostly belonging to different sects and religions, while blaming the west for imperialism. They convince people that all the problems they face in their lives are due to these Western countries conspiring along with their collaborators. The word "collaborators" is mostly associated by these extremists with the minorities or state officials. They have branded the whole economic system as a Zionist conspiracy and persuaded the people of it being the reason for their economic woes. A person who is financially weak also remains disturbed and these insecure minds are easy to indoctrinate with poison. These terrorists are not to be underestimated in their skills of persuasion, as they have been fully trained in the art of psychological warfare.

Besides this, these networks also lure the people with financial and monetary rewards. Due to the strong financial resources of these networks, they are able to pay these individuals even regular salaries. This was evident in Swat and can still be seen in the Taliban controlled areas. The Taliban and other extremist groups pay regular salaries to their foot soldiers and commanders and also promise to financially support the families of the militants who are killed during conflict. This promise is also made to the suicide bombers, along with the promise of heaven. It is clearly

evident that, the fanatics exploit the economic situation of these people for their personal benefits. They use the finances they gather through extortion, kidnappings, drug trade and robberies to woo these people. They in fact convince the ignorant individual to make a deal with the devil. It is also a fact that these fanatics make a great contribution, towards the worsening economic situation. The bomb blasts in business districts, the suicide targeting innocent shoppers, threats to business establishments and their constant fear tactics, have added to the unemployment and poverty.

The Taliban and their extremist allies have also created an illusion of Robin Hood (person who steals from the rich to give to the poor), in the eyes of the impoverished. They claim to take from the rich and give to the poor. They also claim to fight against the feudal and capitalist system. They lure the people by giving them the vague concept of "*Khilafat*", of which they are themselves not clear (Ahmad, 2011). Working class people in Pakistan have had different impressions of Swat created in their minds after reading newspapers and watching the electronic media in the last three to four years. Swat has become important news for all of us due to the increased militancy of the Taliban after 2007. The events in Swat are distant happenings for many Pakistanis from working class backgrounds as it was a tourist area which most people could not afford to visit.

Why did the working class youth of Swat turn towards the Taliban? On the one hand, the social gap between the working class and the Khans of the area had widened so much over the last couple of decades that people did not relate any more to the traditional *Jirga* system under the tribal rules. On the other hand very high levels of corruption among government functionaries did not allow common people to exercise and assert their economic, social and political rights. During a discussion with a group of commoners in Matta Tehsil, the second biggest Tehsil of Swat district, it was evident that they would not have taken any responsibility under the tribal system to safeguard the Khans from the wrath of the Taliban. All 44 factories have been closed rendering 40,000 workers jobless for more than two years. Over 55,000 workers employed in hotel industry are out of jobs. Lady Health Visitors have set bright example of workers' struggle. Unemployed youth of the region found it very easy to get a job from the Taliban with lot of money and authority. They used this money and authority to settle scores against the Khans and in most cases in their personal feuds as well (Mehmood, 2001).

Another survey also collected information on a militant's employment status before he left for the front, and found that 50 percent of the militants did not have jobs in the year before they left. A further 25 percent worked part time, while the remaining 25 percent worked full time. The results were adjusted for the fact that many militants were studying before recruitment and did not enter the workforce at all, but even so, about a quarter of the sample were entirely unemployed in the year before joining the jihad. Of those who had worked either part or full time, the paper reports that "several" were highly skilled, but does not provide data on the numbers (Aftab, 2008:3), and



to that there is no such survey that could provide the best information on income of the militants or their families or on assets held by the households.

### *Illiteracy and Militancy*

Increasing educational attainment is likely to reduce conflict risk, especially in countries like Pakistan that have very low levels of primary and secondary school enrollment. Education quality, relevance and content also have a role to play in mitigating violence. Education reform must, therefore, be a higher priority for all stakeholders interested in a more peaceful and stable Pakistan. Debate within the country about education reform should not be left only to education policymakers and experts, but ought to figure prominently in national dialogues about how to foster security. The price of ignoring Pakistan's education challenges is simply too great in a country where half the population is under the age of 17 (Rebecca & Graff, 2010:1).

There has been much debate concerning the roots of militancy in Pakistan, and multiple factors clearly come into play. One risk factor that has attracted much attention both inside Pakistan and abroad is the dismal state of the national education sector. Despite recent progress, current school attainment and literacy levels remain strikingly low, as does education spending. The Pakistani education sector, like much of the country's public infrastructure, has been in decline over recent decades. The question of how limited access to quality education may contribute to militancy in Pakistan is more salient now than ever, given the rising national and international security implications of continued violence (Rebecca & Graff, 2010:1). Poor school performance across Pakistan would therefore seem an obvious area of inquiry as a risk factor for conflict. Poor education is a risk factor for militant violence in Pakistan; this analysis helps to disentangle the reasons why education and militancy may be linked, either because poor education creates widespread grievances, negative worldviews and opportunities for militants to recruit or because schools fail to impart critical citizenship skills.

Analysts have largely failed to carefully examine Pakistan's education landscape, leading to mischaracterization and over-simplification of the role of educational institutions in fueling Pakistani militancy. Understanding the characteristics and weaknesses of Pakistan's education sector is a key to develop better explanations of the link between education and militancy. Currently, there are 47 million illiterate adults in Pakistan, a number that is expected to increase to nearly 50 million by 2015, making Pakistan one of the few countries in the world in which the illiterate population is growing. In contrast, India's illiterate population is expected to decrease by more than 8 million by 2015, and the illiterate populations of Iran and Bangladesh are forecast to decrease by 1.8 million and 350,000, respectively. After Nigeria and India, Pakistan has the highest number of out-of-school children, with 6.8 million kids between the ages of 5 and 9 leave the school in early period.

In 2002, under the Pervez Musharraf government, an effort was made in the wake of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks to “secularize” Pakistani schools as a way of helping to mitigate terrorist militancy (Rebecca & Graff, 2010:11). Literacy is considered as the main pillar that guarantees the development of a society. Literacy combined with skill play a vital role in the development of any segment of society. In Pakistan, there are potentially numerous connections between the education system and the mounting occurrence of militancy, and these have been largely overlooked by security experts whose main focus has been the role of *madrassas*. Though some *madrassas* clearly do have an impact on the political and security climate, their role is limited. The study of Abbas (2005) about militants also profiled the socio-economic characteristics of the household of the deceased militants, in addition to collecting a range of information on the household’s religious convictions, support for the militant’s decision to leave for jihad etc. His findings with regard to education were similar to earlier study of Fair (2011 and 2012) in that only 4 percent of the deceased militants were reported to have attended a *madrassa* full time, and levels of education attained by the group were higher than the average for Pakistan (Abbas, 2005). About 94 percent of the militants had had some form of formal education, with 40 percent having completed high school (Aftab, 2008:3).

According to the Refugee Review Tribunal Research Response, the public school system in Pakistan works on the basis of a curriculum that is highly likely to engender intolerance and promote the concept of conflict resolution through violence. Children from low income households who tend to use public services are thus exposed to a schooling that essentially does not encourage free thinking, inquisitiveness, or tolerance of any sort of difference. Combined with a lack of employment opportunities for the average graduate, this is a combustible mixture in an environment where armed conflict is presented as a religious duty. Unlike the core of the Afghan Taliban that are not *Madrassa* educated where most of them are semi-literate or illiterate. Those who have received some educational training have generally attended local schools but not *Madrassas*. Based on what little information there is about the militants, it seems that the leadership of the TIP consists in large part of men who have worked or continue to work in shops, as day laborers, as hawkers and peddlers, or in the case of the current leader, Maulana Fazlullah, as a chair-lift operator (RRT, 2009) .

Two sets of studies by scholars of Pakistan shed light on the question of how schooling fuels militancy, but there remain large gaps in this research. In line with research on the background of terrorist recruits globally, one strand looks at the profiles of Pakistani militants and seeks to determine their educational background, income and other biographical information. Fair (2011 and 2012) conducted an insightful survey of families in the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa who lost at least one child in militant violence in Afghanistan or Kashmir: A minority of militants was recruited in *Madrassas* or in public schools, while none were recruited in private schools. Fewer, than a quarter ever attended a *Madrassa*, and of those *Madrassa* alumni most also attended public school. A majority had the equivalent of a 10<sup>th</sup>-grade education; whereas the average

Pakistani child only attends school through grade 6.99. The study suggests that there is not a strong link between militancy writ large and either lack of education or *Madrassa* attendance. However, when the same study examined a smaller set of militants who were suicide bombers in both Pakistan and Afghanistan, Fair found that most did attend a *Madrassa*, primarily in North and South Waziristan tribal agencies. She reasons that given the thin levels of support for suicide bombings in both countries, militant groups have no choice but to recruit among low skilled *Madrassa* students.

Studies such as this are important given the dearth of robust information about the profile of militants in Pakistan. However, they are also prone to three main shortcomings that may skew the endings. First, blunt measures of educational attainment may overshadow the quality of schooling those former students either militants or peaceful citizens received, which may be just as important. We discuss education quality and militancy in the next section. Second, focusing on the perpetrators of successful attacks ignores the larger pool of attackers who were not successful and were likely to be less skilled and educated. Third, it takes more than a skilled recruit to sustain a successful militant movement. Militants achieve greater success in environments that are conducive to their operations, where public support is high. Looking narrowly at the background of attackers misses the larger picture of the community of support for militants.

A second line of research moves beyond individual militants to examine the communities of support that anchor militant groups in a society. Several scholars (Abbas, 2005; Ahmad, 2011; Fair, 2011 and 2012; Daraz et al, 2012) have done significant work on public attitudes toward militancy in Pakistan. Here, the evidence is equally unclear. On the one hand these studies find that higher the level of education obtained by respondents, the less likely they are to support the Taliban and Pakistani sectarian groups. However, the number of years spent in school seems to have no impact on support for Al Qaeda, with which the Pakistani public is least familiar, and on Kashmir-related militancy. One study suggests that support of Kashmir-related groups is tied to the quality of education, and particularly, the narrow anti-India worldview that is reflected in the curriculum and in textbooks, hypothesizing that the longer students are in school the more they are exposed to this perspective. Again, the evidence underscores the importance of the quality of education obtained. This is confirmed by another recent study showing that support for terrorist attacks in Pakistan is thin but tends to correlate with respondents' holding extremist views (Rebecca & Graff, 2010:27).

Four broad approaches to education and conflict which we refer to as the grievance, worldviews, skills and opportunity arguments stand out in the effort to explain why education and conflict risk are often linked. The first is that education systems can either serve to exacerbate or conversely to mitigate constituents' grievances against their government, which in turn can make citizens more or less likely to support militancy or to actually join a militant group. The second argument is

the education system's power to shape students' worldviews and thereby either instill a more militaristic or radical outlook, or help students challenge extremist beliefs and develop more constructive and tolerant alternative realities, thus reducing the likelihood that they will support or join the militants. The third argument holds that education systems can either teach peaceful "citizenship" skills, including literacy, thus equipping students with the means to seek to peacefully resolve conflicts, or schools can engage in what some specialists call "war education" by condoning violence and fostering the escalation of physical violence. And the fourth claim which is more controversial when it comes to terrorist groups but does apply in contexts of civil war is that limited access to high quality education means that students are likely to have fewer employment prospects, which can increase the opportunity for militant groups to recruit (Rebecca & Graff, 2010:30).

#### *Religion and Militancy*

Religion; a symbol of collective life, sentiment and compelling force over its followers cannot be ignored in the intensification. In this context, taking the Islamic ideology for guarantee, considered it their prime responsibility to practice the rituals of *Zakat* from their Gold and Cash amounts. Women of the area got united and become a single moral community when they started giving their jewellery to Maulana Fazallullah (was a religious leader of the area). Giving up jewellery has a lot of significance and a source of salvation in Pakhtun society (Shaheen, 2010).

Religious sentiments and religious authorities have played a key role in political and military affairs in the Pakhtun inhabited lands for hundreds of years. Especially in times of invasions and external occupation, the call for Jihad (holy war) and the role of religious leaders have been prominent. Calls for Jihad were made against Sikhs in the seventeenth century when they occupied what is now KP and later in 1847 when the British replaced the Sikhs as the paramount power. Islam has played a key role in the history of Pakistan itself. In 1949, the Pakistan Constituent Assembly passed a resolution for all laws to be in consonance with Islam. The wars of 1947, 1965 and 1971 against India were steeped in religious narrative. With the advent of Zia-ul-Haq, and later the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the western border of Pakistan became a veritable jihadist base that attracted foreign Mujahedin (Aziz, 2010). The ties between religiously inspired groups and officialdom in Pakistan continued after the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan in 1989, and the subsequent disinterest of the U.S. in Afghan affairs. Jihadist training camps were tolerated and supported on both sides of the Afghan-Pakistani border. Training camps and jihadist bases continued to exist in parts of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) after 2001. Thus, the Taliban of Swat and then in Malakand had ample historical as well as mythological resonance for their call for resistance, Jihad and religious revival. Close to 83% of respondents in survey were of the view that people of Swat were influenced by religious personalities, while 67% of respondent households agreed on the close connection between religious education and militancy. Also 67% had the opinion that calls for Jihad against the U.S. in Afghanistan had encouraged militancy in Swat. A full 78% agreed that the Pakistani government's

alliance with the U.S. in the “war on terror” had encouraged people to support militants. A 70% of the households stated that the Afghan Taliban assisted Swat militants (Aziz, 2010).

### **Conclusion**

The current study concludes that the problem of militancy lies in the realm of multifaceted and hidden forces and is accompanied by the feeling of deprivation, amongst a large majority of the people. In Pakistan, there is a strong linkage between rising religious bigotry/terrorism and poverty and role of dictatorial rule, based on well defined hierarchal pyramid. James C. Davies gives a psychological explanation of why people revolt by explaining a gap that exists between what people want and what people get. His theory explains that when frustration becomes widespread and intense, society seeks violent means and once the frustration becomes focused on the government, the violence becomes coherent and directional. Decades of military oppression, establishment’s greed, chronic illiteracy, high unemployment and callus attitude of the military/bureaucratic alliance inculcate a feeling of despair and dejection in Pakistan. Under the circumstances, the frustrated youth becomes an easy prey for the recruiters of hate and rejection, postured under the brand of religious extremists. In this regard, the biggest force behind the issue of militancy is lack of education and then of quality education for common man. Since the country has not been able to configure best education system for the nation, we have reached a stage where nobody wants to send his child to government schools and good private schools are out of reach. So a common man has been deprived of his birth-right to get an education.

Besides, the facts and figures derived from this research show that the Pakistanis are at the lowest levels in the world human development index. The country is facing the problem of extreme poverty and unemployment where 22.3 per cent population lives on or below the poverty level as well as majority of the educated youth is out of jobs, and even if some of them get jobs these jobs are not according to their level of education or skills. The people have been deprived of modern facilities in education, health, communication and good food. Such people are worried due to lack of income resources and they are unable to fulfill their needs to live a life parallel to their neighbors. In this age of competition they feel deprived of their rights and inferiority complex prevails upon them. To fulfill their daily basic needs and of their dependents, the common people have no alternative ways and means except to adopt the violent professions, to be militants and terrorists. It has also been found that deep-rooted and century old economic and income inequalities contribute to spread militancy as the better life options that become available by joining the militants and to become a powerful person in society. It is apparent that many people also joined the militants to improve their livelihoods by entering the terrorist leadership hierarchy that enables one to share in the spoils that the terrorists collect through criminality.

Besides, the current study found that militancy, since its beginning, was and is a blend of cultural impositions and religious fundamentalism where the deep-rooted cultural restrictions upon the masses and resultantly sowing the seeds of rigid and fundamental religious ideologies further

intensify the issue. Most of the people belonging to different regions of the county (having deep-rooted socio-cultural and religious background), without rationally thinking over the issue, its long term and even immediate ill consequences, adopt this profession and got the issue practically in hands. Actually they support the militants and militancy on the ground of misperceived religious ideology without knowing the real essence of religious teachings.

### **Remedial Measures/Recommendations**

A cursory look at the forces behind militancy indicates that in Pakistan in general and in the research area in particular the phenomenon has not come to fore overnight. It has taken years and decades to flourish and involves many factors. Since militancy is multifaceted, the solution has to be multi pronged. In view of the forces described, the possible remedies could include:

- Strengthening state institutions and devise systems whereby peoples' interests are safeguarded and not of elite's.
- The whole education system should be revamped with a view to have common system of education throughout the country. The standard of education imparted in Governmental schools should be improved to a level comparable with developing countries. Relevant and lucrative technical and vocational training should be provided to youth, which is compatible with requirements of today's industrial needs. This would also add value to the human capital and would provide them employment opportunities.
- Poverty is said to act like a "Magnifying Glass". It magnifies everything, poor's happiness and also sorrows. The sense of deprivation when increases manifold, it drives masses towards violent ways. It may be manifested in our changing social behaviors and extreme cases can propel people to terrorist activities to satiate the sense of deprivation. Government must make concerted efforts towards poverty alleviation. In the presence of poorly educated masses stricken by abject poverty, people with heinous desires would keep getting recruits to become militants for terrorist activities.
- Aggressive diplomatic campaign should be resorted to, to expose regional and international players that are striving to create problems for the victimized nations and are actually hampering the efforts for war against terror. Despite making most of the sacrifices and contribution to this war, the concerned are only being posed as part of problem rather than solution.
- The solution of long standing political issue involving Muslims should also be advocated like Palestine and Kashmir issues. These issues are part of motivational strategies for hiring recruits. However, if sincere efforts are not made in this regard, in all likelihood, the conflict will go on.
- All efforts must be made through different means to isolate innocent people lured by malicious elements. The use of force against such elements will then prove to be of tremendous help.
- The war against militancy and terrorism is going to be a long drawn war and not a battle. Winning the war involves wisdom to make political choices, meticulous planning and

execution, character to learn lessons, strategic retreats and even shaking hands with arch adversaries. The first aim should be the battle's agility on a ground away from the motherland that could ensure peace and security. In addition, sincere efforts to remedy the underlying forces which create conducive environment for violent attitudes to flourish. Only then the desired dream can be fulfilled through the provision of decent livelihood to the populace and at the same time, serve as a good neighbor.

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