

Peshawar School Massacre, Pakistan: A Qualitative Account of Citizens' Perceptions

Fatima Asim and Muhammad Bilal*

Abstract

On 16th December 2014, Army Public School and College (APSAC), Warsak road, Peshawar, located in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province of Pakistan, was attacked by more than six militants dressed as Pakistan Army Soldiers which resulted in killing of 149 people, mostly innocent children. After this attack, Government with the collaboration of Military took immediate steps for the eradication of terrorists from Pakistan and announced National Action Plan (NAP). Based on Master's Fieldwork in Rawalpindi city, this study explores peoples' reasoning to why such an attack took place? The paper further investigates whether the citizens of Rawalpindi are satisfied with the counter-terrorism steps taken immediately after the Peshawar incident. The locale of the study was Rawalpindi's Union Council number 30. This qualitative study used purposive sampling techniques to draw a heterogeneous sample of 31 participants in order to conduct In-depth interviews.

Key words: Peshawar school attack, counter-terrorism, Islam, Taliban, Pakistan

Introduction

The brutal militant attack of 16th December 2014 on a school in Peshawar had shaken the Pakistani society to the core. The unprecedented killing of innocent students caused colossal fear in the country already weary of unending terrorist attacks. On that day, six or more militants dressed as Pakistan Army soldiers, entered the Army Public School and College (APSAC) in Warsak road, Peshawar, around 10:30am, through the graveyard on the backside of school, heartlessly massacring 149 innocent lives including 133 children. Militancy, which started in 1970s, has become a major security challenge to Pakistan. Hitherto, the country has witnessed five peaks of terrorist activities – both the sectarian based as well as the militants attacking the sovereignty of the State (Hussain, 2010).

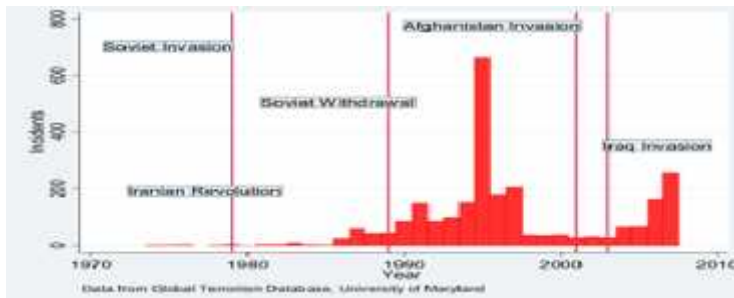


Figure 1. Five Waves of Terrorist Activities in Pakistan

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The decade of 1970s proved to be lethal when the Afghans were directed to Pakistan, with the help of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the head of Pakistan People Party, (PPP) and ISI Brigadier General Babar, so that the Afghan Militants could be trained against the Soviet Union and King Daoud of Afghanistan. Later, during the 1980s General Zia-ul-Haq gave hype to the Religion. He initiated the religious campaign in order to gain legitimacy for his dictatorial regime (Talbot, 1999; Coll, 2004; Lieven, 2011; Rahman, 2012; Fair, 2014) which transformed the overall national psychological make-up of the Pakistani society. General Zia-ul-Haq allowed the mushrooming of Madrassas in order to recruit the manpower to fight against the Soviet Union. This was the time of Cold War and Pakistan as an American Proxy vehemently used Islam and Madrassas in order to create and disseminate the Jihad culture across the country with the help of many other countries including Saudi Arabia, Iran, China and Egypt (Institute for the Study of War, n.d.). This also brought about the menaces of drug and Kalashnikov culture in the country. These events eventually paved the way for the emergence of Talibanization movement in Pakistan (Zahid, 2011). PPP also played its part in flourishing militancy and after Z.A. Bhutto was hanged in 1979; his daughter Benazir Bhutto - second chairperson of PPP - continued supporting the mujahedeen (Coll, 2004). Ejaz Hussain (2010) narrates that right after Bhutto's execution a group emerged named, Al-Zulfikar, who started committing acts of terrorism including hijacking. This made Zia fearsome of PPP's workers, as they were the strong party in Sindh, due to which he formed the Muhajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) to break Bhutto's influence in Sindh laying the foundations of political terrorism and insurgency in the province. During the 1990s, both Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif toed the army policy of extending support and recognition to Taliban. The backing given to the Taliban's from the Pakistan has indeed turned the tables for the country itself.

The Taliban's model for the ideal Islamic revolution has put an immense effect, in the territory of Pakistan and to a greater degree on the Central Asian Republics as well. Pakistan, a fragile state invaded by identity pressure, facing economic calamity, ethnic and sectarian divisions, a ferocious ruling class of high elites, and unable to provide the satisfactory needs of the citizen with their government, has been shadowed with the waves of militant Islam creating intolerance towards other forms and practices of Islam.

In post 9/11 scenario, incident that took many innocent lives, the global image of Pakistan was wrecked and its fortune changed. The presence of Al-Qaeda and Osama Bin Laden in neighboring Afghanistan, who are believed to have been responsible for the attack, and the geo-strategic position and historical connections of Pakistan with the Afghan militant groups had made it an arduous situation for the country. Since then Pakistan has appeared as a conflicting partner in countering-terrorism. Pakistan was blamed around the globe for having trained the Taliban on its grounds and was asked offensively to side either way. US President George W. Bush announced that

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there is no room for neutrality and asked Pakistan to decide either she is with American or Taliban (CNN, 2001). This was the time when General Musharraf, after toppling the elected government of Nawaz Sharif on 12 October 1999, was searching for the legitimacy for his unconstitutional regime. Seeing this a golden opportunity to gain acceptability in the international arena, he took a U-turn on Afghan policy and allowed Americans to use its air space and ultimately launched numerous operations in tribal areas against Taliban and Al- Qaeda in order to dismantle the militant infrastructure (Bilal, 2014). Afterwards several operations were conducted by Pakistan Army, such as; 1st and 2nd phase of operation Rah-e-Haq on November 2007 and July 2008 respectively, Sirat-e-Mustaqeem June 2008, operation Sherdil August 2008, Darghalam December 2008, Buner operation April 2009, 3rd phase of operation Rah-e-Haq on January 2009 and Operation Rah-e-Rast on May 2009, operation Bia Darghalam on September 2009, Rah-e-Nijat on October 2009, Kwakhbadeshm on November 2009 in South Waziristan (Rana, 2010) Zarb-e-Azb and Khyber-1 started in 2014, and Khyber-2 in 2015, and the list goes on. Internal security of Pakistan has been targeted on daily basis to destabilize the political and economic conditions of Pakistan. According to South Asia Terrorism Portal (2015), the annual fatality rates from terrorist attacks has risen from 189 in 2003 to 3,448 till November 22nd, 2015 with a total of 59,460 Pakistanis killed including 20,803 civilians, 6,356 security forces personnel and 32,301 insurgents. Pakistan's collaboration with the U.S. for eradication of terrorism has benefited them with billions in aid (Fair et al., 2010) whereas Pakistan has repeatedly stressed that American aid is incomparable to the economic and human loss incurred on Pakistan.

During the regime of General Pervez Musharraf (1999-2008), one of the incidences that fueled insurgency in Pakistan was the army's siege of the Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) in Islamabad, headed by Maulana Abdul Aziz, and his younger brother Maulana Abdul Rashid Ghazi. This Deobandi Mosque had two madrassas; one for boys (Jamia Farida) under the supervision of Moulana Abdul Aziz, and the other (Jamia Hafsa) for girls was led by his wife, Umme Hassaan. Around 1980s, Lal Masjid served as a major passage for providing fighters to Afghanistan, when war against Soviet was going on. In 2007, an operation took place in Lal masjid due to their alleged involvement in different attacks within Pakistan and the vandalism by students of Jamia Farida and Hafsa, as well as, forceful implementation of Sharia Law and establishing Sharia Courts by the Heads of the Masjid. This Lal Masjid siege resulted in the death of over 103 people including 92 civilians and 11 army personnel. After Pakistan Army operation of Lal Masjid, Taliban activities became emergent and the military operations in the Swat region and South Waziristan of Pakistan were launched to eradicate the terrorism (Siddique, 2008). However, Pakistan also faced many consequences. One major outburst was the insurgency in Pakistan when Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) came into being in December 2007. Baitullah Mehsud of South Waziristan led this Pakistani Taliban group (South Asia Terrorism Portal, n.d). The hideouts of TTP were in the tribal areas of Pakistan. TTP started doing numerous

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terrorist attacks in Pakistan and Taliban rule over Swat valley was a prime example of their increasing influence. All the seven agencies of Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) were under their influence as they belonged to different tribes of South Waziristan (Nawaz, 2009). The head of TTP, Baitullah Mehsud was killed in a US Drone attack in South Waziristan (The Bureau of Investigation Journalism, 2013), and Haikimullah Mehsud took over who was also killed in a similar fashion on November 2013 (Sherazi, 2013). The next Chief, namely, Mullah Fazullah took over in 2013, who is alleged mastermind of the Peshawar school attack (Abdillah, 2014).

Peshawar School Attack is first of its kind in Pakistan; nevertheless, there are instances of such brutality in other parts of the world. In Russia, on September 1st, 2004, 32 gunmen seized a middle school in Beslan, on the first day of the new term. The terrorists managed to hold many students, teachers, parents, and staff hostage for 3 days. Due to lack of leadership among the representatives of the government and inability to establish proper communication with the terrorists as well as the rescue teams, 335 people were reportedly assassinated and more than 700 were injured during the crisis (The Guardian News, 2004). TTP claimed the responsibility for the Peshawar School attack as the vengeance for a major military attack in the region and the militants were ordered to shoot older students (The News, 2014). Subsequently, Pakistan Army officials were in pressure to kill Fazlullah within 24 hours. Leading News channels telecasted reports of Fazlullah's death in an airstrike in Afghanistan on Saturday, March 21st 2015, whereas, TTP denied the death of their leader (The Express Tribune, 2015).

After the APSAC attack, few immediate steps taken within hours when the Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Shareif arranged a meeting with the Afghanistan Government and the American military command for mutual understanding on the eradication of TTP. The next step was initiated by the Government, after the atrocious event occurred in Peshawar, when the Prime Minister of Pakistan; Mian Muhammad Nawaz Shareef, conducted All Party Conference (APC) on 24th December 2014, attended by the heads of political parties and senior military officials. In the meeting, the strategies and the policies to counter-terrorism were proposed as the National Action Plan (NAP; Haider, 2015).

The Prime Minister himself disclosed the NAP containing 20 main points to public on television. These points were the enforcement of sentence to death for terrorism. Special military courts were established to ensure the speedy trial of the terrorists. The Anti-terrorism organization known as National Counter-Terrorism Authority (NCTA) will be strengthening to keep a close eye on the activities of the terrorist organizations. The electronic and social media will be put on hold for publicizing the terrorists' messages. The funding networks of terrorist organizations will be severed. The banned organizations will not be allowed to re-establish legally under different names and all Madrasahs will be registered. A special anti-terrorism force of 10,000 soldiers

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will be created and the minorities will be protected. A major point included the elimination of terrorism from all parts of the country including Punjab and the government of Balochistan will be empowered, while the operations in Karachi are to be kept active. The FATA will be given importance and decisive actions will be taken at the regional level (Gishkori, 2015).

The NAP sent a global message that there is no room for ignorance and the safe home for Talibans either 'good or bad' (Malik, 2015). According to the Anti-Terrorism (Second Amendment) Act 2014, Pakistan's newly adopted stratagem is based on 3-D approach, which means Deterrence, Development, and Dialogue. These policies were since enforced expansively across the country by holding the Military Court trials and lifting the ban from death penalty. This gave a sound and a salient message to all the terrorist organizations that now this fight of cowardice is to be held between the strongest and the weakest as attacking the innocent, unarmed children was an act of spinelessness (Khan, 2015). As soon as the moratorium was lifted, the Military Court in four different jails of Faisalabad, Rawalpindi, Sukkur and Karachi hanged seven prisoners. These seven were convicted and found guilty under the anti-terrorism courts but were never given death penalty (INP, 2015). Later seven other terrorists were presented in Military Courts, established under Pakistan Army (Amendment) Act, 2015, and after 3-5 trials, they admitted their involvement in Peshawar School attack before the Magistrate and the trial court. On August 13th, 2015, Chief of Army Staff, Gen. Raheel Sharif, confirmed the capital punishment for 6 terrorists and one was sentenced for life imprisonment. All seven of them belonged from Toheedwal Jihad Group (TWJ; ISPR, 2015). It is mentionable that political parties reluctantly extended support to the proposal of Military courts and legal fraternity voiced opposition to the establishment of such courts declaring them unconstitutional.

This study mainly focuses on the counter-terrorism strategies adopted by the Government of Pakistan after Peshawar school attack. This study will help in understanding the perception of public whether they are satisfied with the steps taken after the Peshawar Attack in order to provide a safe environment to the citizens of Pakistan? Also, Peshawar School incident is a recent one, very little research has been done in this regard, and it is expected that current research will provide a space to further discuss the issues of counter-terrorism policy in Pakistan.

Methods

The current research is based on three months of Master's fieldwork conducted between March and Jun 2015. The research strategy chosen for this study was Qualitative in a bid to to know in-depth perceptions about Peshawar School massacre and Pakistan counter-terrorism polices in post-Peshawar school attack. This study employed comprehensive; unstructured gauge for evaluation of diverse set of minds and perceptions.

The locale of the study chosen was Union Council 30; Mitterpura and Amarpura, areas situated near Murree road Rawalpindi, which includes both the residential as well as commercial area. Rawalpindi lies on the Potohar Plateau in the north of the province of Punjab, and is (in itself) the fourth largest city in Pakistan, after Karachi, Lahore and Faisalabad. Since 2001, terrorists have targeted various areas of Rawalpindi; first terrorist attack was witnessed near Jhanda Chichi, Rawalpindi, which was an unsuccessful attempt on a convoy of former President General Pervez Musharraf, while crossing a bridge nearby. Since then, over eighteen (18) such attacks have been observed which includes, various attempt at GHQ and Army officials, Parade Lane Mosque, and Pirwadai Bus station.

The sample of the study includes the citizens of Rawalpindi belonging to different socio-economic groups, and diverse educational and professional backgrounds. The sample included 18 males and 13 females from young, middle and old age group. The research applied various purposive sampling techniques - stratified purposive, snowball and convenience sampling techniques - to select the sample from heterogeneous population in order to record the diversity of opinions. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method also stated as selective or subjective sampling-that is characterized by intentionally including representative groups or typical areas in a sample (Palys, 2008).

Over 31 in-depth interviews were conducted and recorded after acquiring the verbal consent of the respondents. The main target of these interviews was to intensely explore the viewpoints, and perceptions of the respondents. The data collection and field minuting all balanced under the systematic and intrigued procedural commitment. Thematic analysis took place once the recordings were transcribed and pragmatic information was effectively utilized. Thematic analysis is basically classifying, analyzing and recording themes-patterns- within the data and it further helps in interpreting several aspects of the research topic (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Last but not least, pseudonyms were used to ensure the confidentiality of the respondents.

Results and Discussion

The result section has two main parts - the first discusses the peoples' perceptions about the event of Peshawar school attack, whereas, the second part comprises of perceptions regarding the National Action Plan (NAP) made after the Peshawar school attack and how people see the effectiveness of such plan.

Peshawar School Attack: Native Narratives from Rawalpindi

During the fieldwork people asserted that Peshawar school attack was a brutal act carried out by Taliban, mainly to take revenge from the army because of the military operations in Tribal Areas. On the other hand, many respondents believed that

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attackers were non-Muslims who camouflaged themselves as Taliban, as one participant named Maria of 46 years of age said:

ایک بہت وحشیانہ عمل تھا، میں ان کو انسان ہی نہیں سمجھتی۔ معصوم بچوں کا قتل کرنا جنکو ان کی ماؤں نے صبح علم حاصل کرنے کے لیے تیار کیا، ان کی کیا غلطی تھی؟ ان کو قتل کرنے کا کیا مقصد تھا؟ بڑے آپ کو پریشان کر رہے تھے، ان سے بات کرو! اتنی بے دردی سے شہید کیا ہے، جتنی مذمت کریں وہ کم ہے۔

It was a very barbaric act; I do not even consider them as human. Killing innocent children who were sent to school in the morning by their mothers to acquire knowledge. what was their fault? What was the purpose of killing them? They had issues with elders, then why killing children with such brutality, I cannot condemn enough.

According to another participant named Jahanzeb, who is doing M.Phil in International Relations (IR), many other factors create terrorism in Pakistan. For him, it is the conspiracy of the foreign agencies such as; Raw, CIA, MI6, and Mossad, who cannot see the prosperity and progress of Pakistan. In addition, CPEC (China Pakistan Economic Corridor) which could play a pivotal role in boosting Pakistan's economy not being digested by any of the major leading countries, such as India, America and Israel. For this reason, India has sent the military-trained personnel to Pakistan, to destabilize the country. We found a certain level of denial among respondents in accepting that attackers were Pakistanis and Muslims, they prefer to blame other countries for such an act bailing out their own fellow citizens. Pakistanis are prone to conspiracy theories and this tendency is also present in this case, however, they cannot be wholly blamed for such an attitude, as information gap and mistrust towards the government are important factors of this skeptic culture. Also, many such theories proved to be true such as presence of Black Water (U.S. private military and Security Company later renamed as Academi in 2011) and CIA in Pakistan and Indian's hand in separatist insurgency in Baluchistan (Bilal, 2014).

The other possible reason stated by the participants on the occurrence of Peshawar School attack is that the foreign freedom fighters who were given the safe place in Pakistan to unsettle the Russians. However, after the defeat of Russian forces in Afghanistan, these fighters have settled in the Tribal Areas and now fighting against Pakistan in the name of Jihad. The Post 1979 Soviet Invasion gave the mujahedeen an ample space to cast their ideology in Afghanistan and Pakistan. After the 9/11 incident, Pakistan took U- turn in her policy towards Taliban which eventually turned the mujahedeen against the Pakistani State bidding a goodbye to decades of intimate association. The incident of Lal Masjid, Attacks on religious places, sectarian clashes and this recent havoc of Peshawar deteriorated the overall security landscape of the country.

People of Rawalpindi labeled poverty as another important variable contributing towards passive political participation, extremist mindset and terrorism. They further explained that those who are less educated, remain less aware of the tactics used by these militants and are easily manipulated. As said by Mehmood, age 52years:

غربت بہت بڑی وجہ ہے ہماری قوم کے لیے۔ اس کی وجہ سے گورننس کی کمی ہے، لوگوں کو بنیادی سہولیات نہیں مل رہیں۔ بے ری بھی ایک اہم وجہ ہے غربت کی، تو جو غریب لوگ ہیں وہ ان لوگوں کے ہاتھ لگ جاتے ہیں۔

Poverty is a very huge factor of our nation. Lack of governance and basic facilities, and joblessness are the main reasons behind poverty. Therefore, the poor gets into the clutches of these people (terrorist organizations) and thus become terrorists.

According to a survey by the National Accounts Committee, 45.7% of the population in Pakistan is living under the poverty line (Rana, 2012). The poverty in Pakistan has increased over the years as the Economic Survey for 2013-14 reveals that 60.9% of our population is below the poverty line and is unfortunately more likely to increase in future (Kakakhel, 2014).

Participants are also of the view that terrorists kidnap children for suicide attacks and those innocent souls are drugged and are taught wrong about Islam. As Babar, age 42 said:

یہ مذہب کا غلط استعمال کرتے ہیں۔ یہ جھوٹ بتاتے ہیں کہ آپ انکے خواب میں آئے تھے بچوں کو چنا ہے اس کام کے لیے۔ اور یہ کہ آپ کہہ رہے ہیں کہ میں اس بچے کا جنت میں انتظار کر رہا ہوں۔

They are misusing the religion, and tell lies that, Prophet (PBUH) came in their dream and He (PBUH) has selected you for suicide attack and is waiting for you in the heaven.

These people justify the terrorist activities in the name of religion. Islam, like any other religion, is a subjective experience of an individual or a group and this subjectivity has been used in this particular context where Quran, Hadith and the stories of Prophet's (PBUH) life are used to indoctrinate extremist ideologies.

Talal Asad (2007) while debating the psychology of suicide bombing asserts that the central question is not the willingness of suicide bomber to die or to kill, rather, it is more imperative to understand that "what one makes of death – one's own and that of others". In particular case of Pakistan, after every suicide attack, both the military and government quarters give a typical reaction that few terrorists are left who will be weed out soon. However, Pakistan has made no serious efforts to understand the

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motivational and ideological factors behind such attacks resulting in its failure in developing a counter-narrative against terrorism.

Lastly the element of revenge comes. At times, when innocent people are killed in operations, they are traumatized due to the loss and want to take revenge for their loss. A naive mind can capture any unethical or illegal gain with ease and zero resistance. This makes them vulnerable and militants use them in the name of Islam to kill the innocent people.

According to the participants, Peshawar attack was also a revenge scenario where the Taliban took vengeance from the army because their families were killed during the operations in Tribal Areas. As Amina, a housewife stated:

طالبان کا کہنا ہے کہ ان کے بچے مارے گئے تھے وزیرستان آپریشن میں اور ان میں سے ایک دہشت گرد نے یہ کہا کہ، آپ نے ہمارے بچوں کو مارا تو اب ہم آپ کے بچے ماریں گے۔

According to Taliban's perspective, their children were killed in Waziristan operations, as one of the terrorists said that, you killed our children, so we will kill yours.

In addition, the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, (TTP) justified the attack on Peshawar school saying that they want the Pakistan Army to taste the flavor of deaths of their kids as they have been mourning over the deaths of their children being killed during the operations (The Nation, 2014).

People also propose another explanation that India was behind this attack; the Indian Intelligence agency Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) had trained the Pakistani people who did such a heinous crime killing the innocent souls. While appraising the government's reaction to the Peshawar attack, many respondents mentioned that the protests held by the Pakistan Tehrik Insaaf leader, Imran Khan was on their peak in Islamabad and in a situation of political instability and bedlam, the government could respond appropriately.

The respondents while commenting on the historical perspectives of Peshawar school attack said that numerous terrorist incidents have occurred in Pakistan. However, they maintained, that government and the army have only taken concrete steps towards this event because it was a military school, and the Taliban have touched their hearts. These comments and many of this sort reaffirms the historical gap exist between the civilian and army in Pakistan highlighting such perception that army and their families are living privileged lives on the cost of civilian rights and the tax which civilians pay. This divide is also indicated in a popular phrase 'bloody civilians' used by the army personnel in Pakistan to indicate the incompetence of civilians. Nevertheless, many civilians believe that army personnel regard themselves as the superior beings whereas

in actual they are responsible for the current crises prevailed across the country. Those respondents who declared them accountable argued that Pakistan has remained under the army rule for almost a half of the period of her life and it was military regimes that hindered the institutional development in Pakistan.

National Action Plan: Perceptions of Success and Failures

People knew very little about the policies that were presented after the Peshawar school attack. However, they were well aware regarding certain steps the Government has taken to counter the terrorism such as lifting the moratorium and the Operation Zarb-e-Azab. The participants believed that the public support is pivotal for government and the government should keep a check on all the systems that are related to security. The participants were very happy to see that someone stood up and started doing something for the motherland. As quoted by a housewife Sehnaz, age 50:

کوئی تو ایسا شخص آیا جو نٹر ہو کر اس کام کے لیے کھڑا ہوا۔ چاہئے وہاں پر نواز شریف بھی تھے مگر اس میں زیادہ جو باتھ ہے وہ راحیل شریف کا تھا۔

I mean there was someone who stood there without any fear. Although, Nawaz Shareef was in-charge but it was Raheel Shareef on his back.

Those who were aware of the counter-terrorism policies supported the National Action Plan (NAP) and promulgation of anti-Terrorism Act 2014. However people were concerned regarding the implementation of these policies as they believed that immediately after the Peshawar School attack, government seemed vigilant and security was tight. However, with the passage of time, same old situation started to prevail.

When asked about the effectiveness of the policies, different viewpoints were recorded. Some thought that the policies presented were effective enough to tackle the terrorism, and other thought that they needed to be improvised. One remark was by Mehmood, age 52:

اللہ کا بہت احسان ہے کہ کافی حد تک قابو پا لیا گیا ہے اس سب پر۔ کافی کمی آئی ہے اس سب میں۔

It is blessings of Allah that whatever had happened, has decreased immensely and in control now.

Participants were apprehensive regarding the implementation of the NAP. As one of the participants complained that there is no affectivity seen. He further explained that

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the affectivity observed in the beginning was not maintained. Another participant criticized:

قانون کا اُس وقت تک کوئی فائدہ نہیں جب تک اُس پر عمل درآمد نہ ہو، اِس سے بہتر ہے کہ کوئی قانون نہ ہو۔ لوگ پالیسیوں سے مطمئن اُس وقت ہوتے ہیں جب ان کو لاگو کیا جاتا ہے۔

There is no use of making laws, when they are not implemented. People are satisfied with the policies only when they are implemented.

Implementation of law is more important and necessary than its legislation. Although, the participants were very happy to hear the hanging penalty for the terrorist as they say it is the best possible punishment that could be given, the implementation of law in Pakistan has remained a major issue. This is a common saying in Pakistan that law is a toy in the hands of powerful and only become active when the target is weak, politically as well as economically. This historical context is the main reason of the participants' skepticism that whether the said policies would be implemented or it is mere an emotional reaction to the Peshawar School attack. Majority of the participants, as mentioned above, did not know about the whole NAP, just the major elements were known to them. Participants were of the view that the security institutions should perform effectively so we could avoid incidents such as the horrific episode of Peshawar school attack. Furthermore, many appreciated the reaction Pakistan Military showed after the Peshawar case.

The respondents were asked about the role of government and public in the implementation of the policies, there were mix responses. For the government part, some were happy with the government, and some thought it is mere an eyewash. As said by Ismail, age 63:

حکومت کیا کر رہی ہے؟ مزے کر رہی ہے۔ وہ اپوزیشن کو گھسیٹ رہے ہیں اور اپوزیشن ان کو گھسیٹ رہی ہے، یہ ایک کبھی نہ ختم ہونے والا کبڈی میچ ہے جو ایک مدت اور آگے بھی امید ہے یہی چلتا رہے گا۔

What is government doing? (Said in a sarcastic tone) She is only enjoying. The government and the opposition are dragging each other, it is like a Kabaddi match, which goes on and never ends.

There is no check and balance on the proper implementation of the policy. The government security institutes are still showing careless attitude. As for the public, the participant thought the public should stand up with the government, in order to get rid of the terrorism. We as Pakistani citizens, according to participants, need to cooperate with the security measures that are being taken like; stopping at the check posts and getting your accessories checked. We need to keep our ear and eyes open, and should report for anything unusual. The day we all start working together, the internal

security will automatically get better. The Participants were asked about the effectiveness of the security, one of them said:

میرے خیال ہے کہ نگرانی اور زیادہ بڑھا دی گئی، اور حکومت زیادہ بہتر طریقے بہتر طریقہ سے کام کر رہی ہے، اور جیسے جیسے یہ لوگ قدم اٹھا رہے ہیں اور بہتری کی طرف بڑھ رہے ہیں۔

The vigilance has increased-and the government is working more effectively and as they are taking initiatives, they are getting better.

Conclusion

Public trust is pivotal for the success of counter-terrorism policy, however the current research revealed that there is a certain level of skepticism exists among public particularly regarding the implementation of NAP. Also the lack of public involvement in formulation of such policies suggests a vibrant gap between public and government which needs to be bridged to win the war against terrorism in Pakistan. There is another important policy dimension, which requires immediate attention that the role of police force as the face of state 's authority, in counter-terrorism has been largely ignored. The sole engagement of military on the cost of ignoring community policing further enhancing the insecurity among common people.

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