

Human Security and Extremism in Pakistan: Synergy and Conflict

Dr Shaheen Akhtar

**Research Fellow, Institute of Regional
Studies, Islamabad**

Questions & Main Argument

- What is the relationship b/w HS & extremism?
- What are Human Security conditions of Pakistan”
- How do they contribute to rising extremism in in Pak, especially in FATA, Swat; South Punjab & Balochistan?
- How HS approach can help Pak in countering growing extremism in different parts of the country?
- ***Main argument:* lack of HS is playing key role in providing space to growth of religious extremism & ethno-nationalist militancy in Pak. Ignorance, deprivation is making Pakistani youth vulnerable to militancy & extremism.**

The Debate : Exploring nexus b/w Human Security & Extremism

- **Traditional security is state centric**, emphasis on territorial/ physical protection of the state & preferred approach is mil security. while **human security is about security of the people not just territory** through development and not through arms.
- The **HS approach** is not aimed to replace the security of the state but to **broaden the area of concern to improve the security of the state & the people.**
- **UNDP 1994 Report** identifies **7 dimensions** of HS: Eco sec; food sec; health sec; environmental sec; personal sec; community sec; & pol sec.
- **The debate on relationship b/w HS & extremism** is going on. The **issue at heart is whether HS is a contributory factor or a primary factor** in the growth of extremism.

Pakistan's Context of HS & Extremism

- There are many **explanations to growth of extremism** in Pak. i.e. **geo-pol, sociological and ideological**. Soviet invasion of Afg & mobilization of Mujahideen; islamisation of Pakistani society under Zia; reaction to US war in Afg; Pak becoming key US ally and Taliban's striving to impose their brand of Islam.
- **None of these give imp to socio-eco factors-** poverty, unemployment, that provide enabling env for radicalization of Pakistani society esp youth.
- **Pak rising extremism in Pakistani state**, esp. in the economically & socially depressed regions has brought the state of HS in Pak in sharp focus.
- **The most alarming is educational crisis followed by energy crisis & food insecurity, poverty & unemployment and the fast growing pop esp the youth bulge.**

Pak: Human Security Scenario

- **Educational crisis:** nearly half of pop illiterate, 3.7 mn of children out of school; huge gender disparity with 28 percentage point.
- **Public schooling not keeping pace with growing pop.** Low level of exp- 2.6 % of GDP in 2005-06, coming down to 2.1% this year.
- **Energy crisis: 3000 to 4000 shortfall** hitting economy & public life
- **Food insecurity:** with shortages & food prices sky rocketing, 2008 World food report said- 77 mn Pakistanis were food insecure. Malnutrition going up.
- **Poverty/unemployment:** 32% below national poverty line. Rural poverty much higher. Poverty of opportunity index (POPI) exceeds income poverty by 8.5%. Income inequalities increasing.
- **Youth Bulge: half of pop under 20 & 66% under 30.** vulnerable to joblessness, lack of edu & eco opportunity. Creating vulnerability of youth joining militancy.

Growth of Religious Extremism & Nationalist Violence in Pak

- **FATA/Malkand region:** perhaps the most backward region in Pak with **60 % of its pop. living below the poverty line.**
- **Region lacks basic infrastructure-** roads, hospitals, electricity, irrigation, schools.
- **GOP invests \$11 per capita on dev efforts in FATA compared to \$25 per capita** in the rest of the country.
- **Female literacy 3%-** national average of 32%. **Male literacy 29 % -** national average of 55%.
- **Healthcare facilities weak-** MMR twice as national; pop per doctor 7,670 against 1,226 at national level.
- **Employment opportunities limited-** agriculture, transport, arms manufacturing & trade, drug trafficking, cross-border smuggling.

Contd...

- **Lack of eco opportunities in FATA have allowed youth to be exploited by Taliban.**
- Some reports say, Taliban rank & file receive monthly salary of Rs 15,000 against Tribal levies earning Rs. 3,500 only.
- **CAMP & PAIMAN field analysis reports** conclude that poverty & lack of opportunity as a contributing factor towards growing militancy in FATA.
- **HS situation worsened after the eruption of the conflict in FATA. Cost of conflict estimated at \$2 bn, more than one mn displaced, edu. disrupted.**
- **Swat/ Malakand: class dimension of the conflict.**
- **Militant violence & subsequent mil op displaced 2.8 mn people. Schools targeted by militants – approximately 280 schools -70% destroyed in Swat, 1.2 mn children deprived of edu services.**
- **Economy of Swat severely hit, crops damaged, businesses shut down, infrastructure destroyed.**

South Punjab: a fertile ground for extremism

- **Interior Min Rehman Malik has equated South Punjab with Swat-** not in terms of violence but due to presence of elements that want to take the society to another direction.
- **Mushrooming of Madrasas in SP in 1980s onward.** Bahawalpur div alone tops with 1,383 Madrasas with 84,000 student. Punjab have **11,332**.
- **HS indicators of South Punjab very low compared to national level.** Region is mired in poverty and underdevelopment. Poverty rampant & illiteracy high. There are few job prospects for the youth.
- **Region is home of big landowners** who also happen to be politicians and belong to powerful pir families. But they have done little for the development of their area.
- **Region left out in the industrialization process, agriculture faltering.**
- **Marked differences b/w northern & southern districts of Punjab in incidence of poverty.**

Incidence of Poverty in Punjab, by districts (2004-2005): % of pop below poverty line

Southern districts

- Rahimyar Khan 45.87
- Bahawalpur 36.46
- Rajanpur 54.16
- D.G. Khan 51.01
- Muzaffargarh 56.29
- Multan 38.40
- Lodhran 48.37
- Bahawalnagar 32.45
- Vihari 30.03
- Khanewal 38.84
- Layyah 40.86

Northern districts

- Rawalpindi 11.32
- Attock 14.11
- Chakwal 18.09
- Sialkot 13.96
- Jehlum 12.32
- Gujarat 12.72
- Sargodha 25.66
- Narowal 19.30
- Gujranwala 19.04
- Lahore 11.60
- Sheikhpura 26.20

Contd...

- **There is correlation of poverty & militancy in SP.** Unemployed & frustrated youth providing support to militant activities.
- **Debate going on whether SP has reached a stage** where extremists can turn violent or is it still at a stage where the process to a violent conflict can be reversed.
- **Senior police officers, ind. analysts & militants in custody suggest that southern Punjab could be Pak's next battle ground.** Internal police docs also indicate that the province is at risk.
- **Those who play down the fear of Talibalisation of SP** feel that an overemphasis would draw excessive US attention to SP; that Punjab-based militants are "home grown" & not connected with war in Afg; they will not spin out of control & the dominance of Sufi version of Islam will not allow a Swat or FATA like Talibalisation in SP.

Balochistan

- Balochistan is embroiled in low grade nationalist insurgency since 2002. Killing of Nawab Bugti in 2006 added fuel to the fire. BLA & BRA leading the militancy.
- Issues at heart are control over Balochistan natural resources & pol & eco autonomy.
- **Alienation of Balochistan is rooted in socio-eco underdevelopment.** 'Balochistan Eco Report 2009 of WB says, province economy is lagging behind other provinces. From 1972 to 2006 it expanded by 2.7 times compared to 3.6 times in NWFP & Sindh and 4 times in Punjab.
- **Balochistan social indicators are at worst in edu, health, water & sanitation.** Illiteracy is about 60%. Primary school enrolment ratio 32 % compared to 66 % nationally. GPI (gender Parity Index) at 0.34 is alarmingly low.
- water single most imp constraint to developing rural Balochistan.

Balochistan package- 'Aghaz-e-Haqooqe Balochistan'

- **Balochistan Package** prepared by PC covers three areas – constitutional, administrative and eco presented in the Parliament:
- **probes into pol murders** inc that of Akbar Bugti & others
- **army pullout from a key area, halt to new cantonments**
- **Release of detained pol workers, return of dissidents** living in exile,
- **A commission to be constituted in respect of missing persons**
- **Dialogue with all major stakeholders** in the pol spectrum.
- **Cons. amendments about provincial autonomy** considered by the PC be addressed immediately.
- **More local control on resources: rationalisation of the royalty formula & gas dev surcharge.**
- **public-private ownership** to be followed in areas of a district granted for exploration.

Contd...

- **All new mega projects to be initiated with the consent/approval of the provincial govt**
- **Special economic package for Sui and armed forces to be systematically withdrawn from there.**
- **federal government to immediately give 20 % from its 30 % shares in Saindak project.**
- **federal govt to pay arrears of gas dev surcharge (GDS) from 1954 to 1991, amounting to Rs 120 billion, in 12 years.**
- **Rs1 bn for the rehabilitation of IDPs of Dera Bugti. 5000 jobs for the province.**
- **With change in the NFC award formula based on pop, inverse pop ratio, backwardness, poverty & resource generation be taken into consideration.**

Extremism & synergy

- **Pakistan require a strategic shift from state centric approach to people centric approach** with greater emphasis on human security in all its seven dimensions cited above.
- **HS conditions in its all seven dimensions need to be addressed in conflict prone areas** of FATA, South Punjab and Balochistan on priority basis.
- **Pakistan need to adopt long term sustainable growth strategies.** Poverty reduction prospects are critically contingent on investment in human development.
- **The process of de-radicalization by way of addressing the underlying socio-eco conditions that foster radicalization.**
- **Exclusive reliance on mil action may not be productive in the long run and must be accompanied by social development, equitable economic development and good governance.**