

Military Operation in Malakand Division Pakistan: Causes and Implications

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ABSTRACT

Terrorism and military operation have a strong effect on the behavior of people and play destructive role in the disturbance of people's lives and government activities in the region. In Malakand division where the literacy is low, people have strong belief on religion, having strict cultural norms; therefore it was easy for insurgent groups to misguide the innocent people with misinterpretation of religion. The paper discusses and analyzes various factors and consequences of military operation in Malakand division. The current research is significant to know the pro and cons of military operations as Pakistan is facing the menace of terrorism. According to survey the main elements of terrorism and military operation have been investigated and discussed. First bad administration and lack of good governance weakens local loyalty for the government. Second was negligence of government policies towards such rural areas. Third was, economic dislocation, fourth illiteracy, strict cultural norms and illegal use of FM broadcasting by militants. The FM broadcasting used to change the mind and attitude of people towards social instability and extremism. These all elements opened room for insurgent groups to have footing. Through survey also the implications of military operation have been investigated and discussed.

Keywords: Extremism, economic dislocation, military operation, strict cultural norms, terrorism, Insurgent groups

INTRODUCTION

Military operation is a planned and controlled movement or operation by the armed forces for training purposes and in war.

Military operation is the military actions of a state in response to a developing situation. These actions are designed as a [military plan](#) to resolve any issue and control the situation in the state's interests. Operations may be of [combat](#) or [non-combat](#) types (Glantz, 1991). The military operations have code names for security and also a general name for common usage i.e. Pakistan military operation Rah-e-Rast or Rah-e-Nijat.

Parallel to and reflecting this framework for operations are organized elements within the armed forces which prepare for and conduct operations at various levels of war. While there is a general correlation between the size of units, the area within which they operate, and the scope of mission they perform, the correlation is not absolute. In fact, it is ultimately the mission that a unit performs that determines the level of war within which it operates (Glantz, 1991).

Terrorism in Malakand Division

Military Operation was launched against religious extremists in parts of Malakand Division which included Swat, Buner and Dir Lower. Though the operation was started in order to establish writ of the government and provide safe, harmonious and democratic life to people

of the area but at the same time it caused plenty of troubles such as the shattered economy, increased unemployment, poor health and education, and of course the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and their relevant troubles.

Pakistan's military launched a massive offensive against Taliban groups in Malakand region of KPK in the last week of April 2009. The operation was chosen as a last resort after the failure of two agreements of the provincial government, first with the local Taliban group, led by Mullah Fazlullah, and second with defunct TNSM headed by Sufi Muhammad. Taliban had refused, in violation of the agreement, to lay down their weapons even after the promulgation of the Nizam-e-Adl Regulation in the restive region. Taliban attacks on security forces including Pakistan Army, Frontier Corps (FC) and police did not stop either. Before the launch of the security operation and while the peace agreement was still intact, militants carried out 18 terrorist attacks in Swat, Dir and Buner districts of Malakand region in the month of April alone. Eight of these attacks targeted security forces, including the army and police. That was a clear indication that the militants had no respect for the peace agreement and wanted to pursue their own agenda. Indeed it was Taliban's advance into adjacent areas of Swat, mainly Buner and Shangla, which forced the government to launch an operation.

The operation in Malakand is the 15th major military operation against Taliban in KPK and FATA of Pakistan. Almost all previous operations had eventually ended with the government reaching a peace agreement or truce with Taliban. After every agreement, the government declared its victory. Taliban, nonetheless, used these agreements strategically to their advantage. These deals had not only consolidated their control in certain areas but also helped them make new recruitments, vital for making further advances (Rana, 2009).

LITERATURE REVIEW

After 9/11 there are more challenges for Muslim dominated countries like Iraq and Afghanistan which resulted in direct war in both these countries. In both wars much people lost their lives and also too much people have been paralyzed due to various attacks of Allied forces. Similarly, Pakistan is also facing much more difficulties, deaths and destruction because of the frontline ally status (Rehman, 2011).

The Malakand is Provincially Administrated Tribal Area (PATA). In 1994, the Supreme Court of Pakistan gave the decision that Malakand division to be governed under normal Pakistani law and no special provisions for that region. But the decision was not very effective, because the head of TNSM Sufi Muhammad called for exclusive Shariah jurisdiction. While in 2002 President Musharraf was trying to establish the local governance which has to work for security aspects in the PATA districts (Aziz et al, 2010).

Operation Rah-e-Haq, began on October 25, 2007 in Swat and involved the Pakistan Army and [Taliban](#)-led forces in a fight for control of the [Swat](#) district of Pakistan. Between October 25 and November 7, 2007 the militants quickly held control of the region. Taliban started their anti-state activities like ban on female education, judiciary system, closed barber shops, controlled local radio stations and started their own made rules regulation for the region in other words it could be said that Taliban run state in the state (BBC, 2013).

Pakistan military launched the operation Rah-e-Rast against non-state actor or Taliban groups in Malakand region of KPK in the last week of April 2009. The operation was done after the failure of two agreements of the provincial government, first with the Mullah Fazlullah who led the local Taliban group, and second with Sufi Muhammad head of TNSM. Taliban had refused, in violation of the agreement, to lay down their weapons even after the promulgation of the Nizam-e-Adl Regulation in the restive region. Taliban challenged the writ of government attacks on security forces including Pakistan Army, FC and police. Before the

launch of the security operation and while the peace agreement was still intact, militants carried out 18 terrorist attacks in Swat, Dir and Buner districts of Malakand region in the month of April alone (Rana, 2009).

According to the result of the RIPORE survey, 63% of the households agreed with the view that people joined the militants to improve their livelihoods. 85% held the view that there was a link between poor socio-economic status and militancy. Entering the Taliban leadership hierarchy enabled individuals to share in the spoils. Some key informants disclosed that besides enriching themselves by looting rich households, money was made by selling the rubble of schools and hospitals destroyed by militant activity. 75% thought that unemployment induced youth to join the militants (Aziz, 2010).

In the last week of May, four hundred armed Taliban attacked on Shaltalo check post in Dir located a few kilometers away from Afghanistan, in these days violation of sovereignty was most debated political issue in Pakistan. Spokesman of Afghan Taliban Zabiullah Mujahid denied that no single Afghan Talib involved in such attack. But it seems that this attack was from TNSM who were said to be back in the region. Therefore Pakistan military launched military operation in April 2009 against non-state actors i.e Sufi Muhammad and his son-in-law Molvi Fazalullah (Mayo, 2011).

These extremist groups are most of them under the umbrella of TTP. In Malakand division the most active non-state actor network was Fazlullah's network in the Swat valley, upper and Lower Dir, Buner and Shangla; by linking the Bajaur, Khyber, and Mohmand tribal regions with the Malakand division (Kakar, 2009).

In 2008 the leader of TNSM Moulana Fazlullah, nicknamed "Mullah Radio" had strong link with TTP which have strong links with jihadi group of Asmatullah Shaheen Bhattani. In February 2009, Baithullah Mehsood joined the Afghan Taliban, mainly Maulvi Nazir, to form Shura Ittihad ul Mujahideen (SIM) and Mullah Omer as their Amir-ul-Mumineen. On February 14, 2009 the KPK government agreed to a peace agreement with TNSM. For temporary agreement the Taliban were agreed and the government allowed the implementation of Shariah in the region therefore violence was stopped (Butt et al, 2011).

The softness of commissioner of Malakand Division Syed Muhammad Javed provided possible support to TNSM. The military had also expressed his close links with non-state actor like Commander of Banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan Moulvi Faqir and some more. Therefore he has been transferred while Fazal Karim Khattak has been appointed as new Commissioner (Khan, 2010).

President Asif Ali Zardari stated that non-state actors and militants had been created intentionally and his growth under such policy had to achieve some short-term tactical objectives. He also said that emergence of these non-state actors were because of the weakness of civil bureaucracy.[†]

Defense Minister Ahmed Mukhtar in an interview with a private TV channel said that, the major operation in Malakand division has been completed and militants were losing strength. He said the military operation would be conducted in any part of the country where we needed to eliminate any non-state actor, militancy or terrorism (Daily Times, 2009).

[†] <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/pakistan/5779916/Pakistani-president-Asif-Zardari-admits-creating-terrorist-groups.html>

Media plays an important role to change the behavior of people. McCombs and Shaw assumed that “the mass media sets the agenda for political campaigns, influencing public attitudes toward desired issues” (Razzaq, 2013).

As compared to other areas of country PATA especially Malakand Division of KPK has more FM radio stations, because of the different rules of Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) for PATA. FATA and PATA of the KPK and Baluchistan have a special status in the Constitution of the Pakistan (Alam, 2013).

Two international financial institutions the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank were involved in the validation and verification process of damages and needs assessment in Swat and other Malakand districts where the army has been battling the Taliban, said an official on Tuesday, and estimated that the reconstruction process would be completed in three years (Haq et al, 2009).

The new social order introduced by Taliban in the name of Islam was thoroughly misogynist and against the fundamental rights of people. It's indicate the narrow mind of non-state actors or Taliban who's tried to miss guide the innocent people of the area through the wrong explanation of religion (Bari, 2010).

According to UNICEF survey thousands of children displaced due to military operation and they faced further risks in different sectors like health, education, physiological, nutritional support, clean water, sanitation, protection and other violation (UNICEF, 2009).

According to Najam U Din it is well established that displaced women may face specific risks and involuntary. “Displacement can expose women and girls to a range of factors which may put them at risk of further violations of their rights” (Din, 2010).

Following research questions have been formulated for the study:

1. Does government negligence contribute to militant tendency in the region?
2. Is military operation the only way to resolve the issue of terrorism and extremism?
3. What will be the relationship between economic dislocation and militancy?
4. Does the influence of community play an important role in solution of such?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research design is qualitative as well as quantitative, but focus here is more on quantitative methodology. In quantitative method field work has been done to collect data through questionnaires and took the opinion of the public of Malakand division.

The research also used qualitative method, which includes documents and research work conducted on this topic. This contains books, research articles, journals, news articles and reports. By the help of this material the research has analyzed causes and implication of military operation in Malakand division.

Sampling

During survey only the people of Malakand were sampled who were students, businessmen, politicians, professionals, and house wives.

Tools and Instruments

A survey conducted from the public of Malakand division through questionnaire to find out their perceptions and argument. The questioner proved useful in comparative approach

towards causes and implications of military operation in Malakand division. The survey helped us in better understanding about the causes of militancy in the region and implications of military operation for the public of Malakand division.

Data Collection

As mentioned above that the research design is quantitative as well as qualitative, therefore for qualitative method the research collected the relevant data from institutes, libraries, and from internet websites.

In quantitative method for data collection, questionnaire has been used for the public of Malakand region. Questionnaire was filled from three hundred respondents (focus group) in both genders male and female, in three main districts of Malakand division; Swat (Mingoara), Bunir and Dir (Timergara) which are were more affected areas.

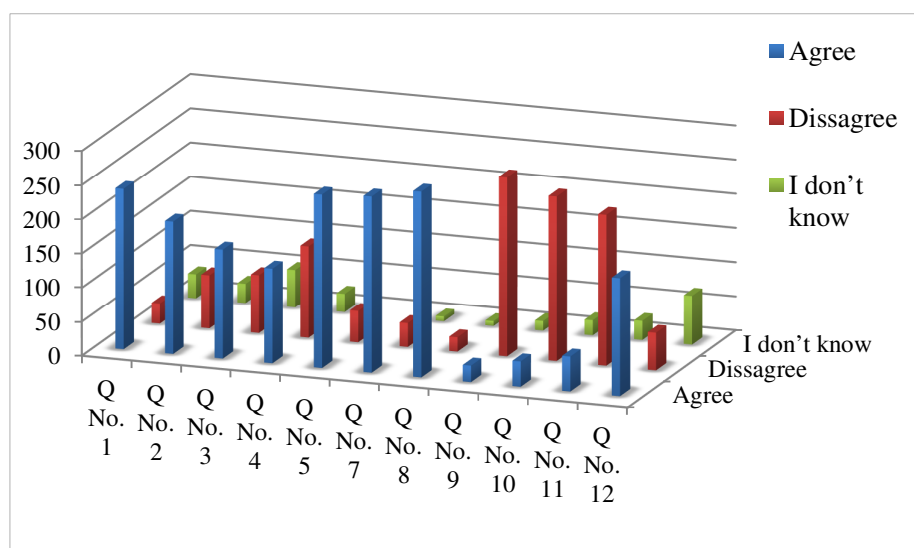
Data Processing and Analysis

Graphs have been used here as instrument for data analysis. SPSS also used in processing the data, which became helpful for knowing the causes and implications of military operation in Malaknd division.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

In order to achieve the objective of the research, statistical analysis was carried out using *SPSS (software Statistical Package for Social Science)*. The outcomes of the study are presented in graph charts. The main focus was the people of Malakand division during survey.

To get the desired result researcher got the information through questionnaire from three hundred people of the total population of Malakand division which is 5.52 million. The distributed questionnaire was three hundred and thirty and recovery of questionnaire was three hundred. In which it was tried to make sure the equal opportunity to both male and female of every age, occupation, and education level. But because of the tradition and strict cultural norms of the area it was impossible to reach in equal figure to both gender, so male respondents were 290 while female were 10 in the total figure of 300. During survey only the people of Malakand division has been targeted who were students, businessman, professionals and house wives.



Result Question No 1

Do you share the view that government negligence was responsible for military operation?

The above graph shows that 78.33% (235) respondents agree that the government negligence was responsible for military operation. While 10% (30) respondents are disagree with question and 11.67% (35) respondents do not know.

Result Question No 2

Do you agree to view that poverty and extreme illiteracy facilitate militancy in the region?

The graph shows that 64% (194) respondents were agree while 26% (78) respondents were disagree and 9.3% (28) say they don't know.

Result Question No 3

Do you see any relationship between economic marginalization and militancy?

The graph shows that 53% (160) respondents say there was relationship between economic marginalization and militancy. But 28% (85) respondents disagree and 18.33% (55) do not know. We can say that result can justify the research question.

Result Question No 4

Should religious leaders in the region be blame for misinterpreting religious beliefs leading to extremism?

The graph shows that 46.33% (139) respondents say the religious leaders in the region should be blamed for misinterpreting religious beliefs leading to extremism while not equal but very close figure 44.67% (134) respondents disagree with question and 9% (27) respondent do not know about it.

Result Question No 5

Do you or your family member face any physical damages during military operation?

The graph shows that 84.67% (254) respondents faced damages during military operation which means a lot of people have got damages while less people as mentioned that 15.33% (46) respondent have got no damages during military operation.

Result Question No 7

Do you think the military operation affected the life of innocent people?

The graph shows that 86% (258) respondents agree, 11.67% (35) respondents disagree and 2.33% (7) people say they do not know. We can say that the result justifies the question.

Result Question No 8

During military operation innocent people suffered more than terrorists?

The result shows that innocent people were more suffered than terrorists because 90.67% (272) respondents agree while only 7% (21) people disagree and 2.33% (7) respondents do not know. We can say that the result justifies the question.

Result Question No 9

Could military operation be the only solution in resolving the crisis?

The graph shows that 87.33% (262) respondents were disagree with question, that military operation was not the only way to resolve crisis. While 8% (24) respondents were agree and 4.67% (14) respondents do not know. We can say that the result justifies the question.

Research Question No 10

Q10. Do you think government exhausted all other measures particularly diplomatic means, before resorting to operation?

The graph indicates that 80.33% (241) respondents disagree with question; means that government had not used other measures for solving the problem before military operation. While 12.33% (37) respondents agree and 7.33% (22) respondents do not know. We can say that the result justifies the question.

Result Question No 11

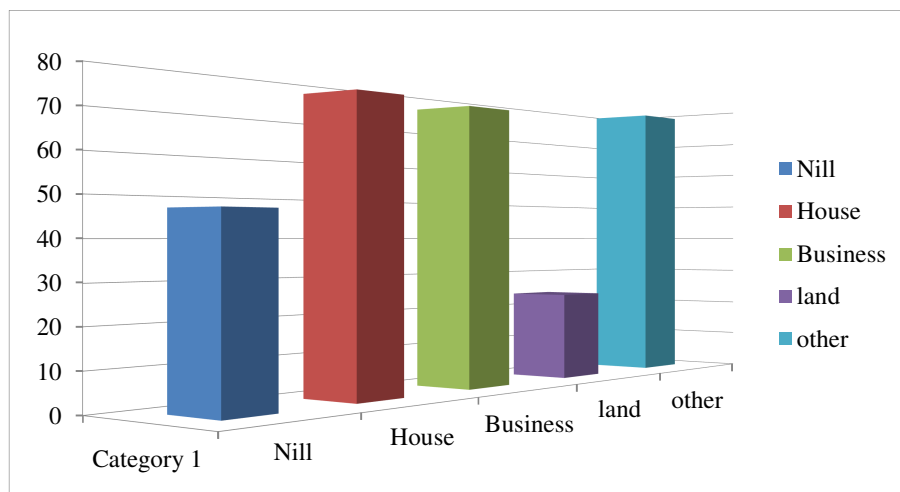
Do you think the media played a neutral role before, during and after the operation?

If we observe the graph, maximum respondents 73.67% (221) say that the media had not played neutral role before, during and after military operation and the media facilitated government, not public of the region. While 17% (51) respondents agree and 9.33% (28) respondents do not know.

Result Question No 12

The creation of FM radio station was instrumental in creating more problems in the region?

According to the given graph, illegal FM radio station in the region in which many illegal stations created by terrorists and they interpreted Islam in a wrong way. If we observe graph 57.67% (173) respondents agree with question that creation of FM station created more problems in the region. While 18.33% (55) respondents disagree with question and 24% (72) respondents do not know. We can say that the result justifies the question.

Result Question No 6

Q6. If yes, what kind of property was damaged by the military operation?

The above graph shows first result which is indicated by “Nil” those 15.67% (47) respondents did not face damages during military operation. While 84.33% respondents faced damages in which house damages are 25.33% (76), business damages are 25% (75) and land damages are 8% (24). In the given graph “Other” represent following damages.

Death casualties, injuries, disabilities, livestock, agriculture or all kinds of damages like house, land, business etc. Those damages were 26% (78) therefore all kinds of damages were 84.33% damages which also means that a lot of people suffered during military operation.

CONCLUSION

Military operation has positive and negative impacts on the people but mostly it has negative impact on society. While terrorism destroyed, good social values of the society. Because of not proper check of government rules and regulation in Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (PATA), the illegal activities changed the behavior of the public of Malakand Division toward extremism. While the proper check of government brings awareness regarding positive activities, education, peace and social development in the society. But without a proper check of government towards illegal activities like extremism bring negative change in the behavior of people.

During research it is examined that the peoples of different areas have different perceptions about military operation and extremism in the region. According to survey the main elements of terrorism and military operation have been investigated and discussed. There were some main elements that promoted terrorism in the region. Bad administration and lack of good governance weakens local loyalty for the government like emergence of Tehrik-e-Nifaz Shariat Muhammadi (TNSM) in Malakand division and illegal activities of (TNSM) became causes of militancy in the region, like negligence of government policies towards such rural areas and illegal use of FM broadcasting by militants. The FM broadcasting used to change the mind and attitude of people towards social instability and extremism. Economic dislocation, illiteracy, and strict cultural norms also promoted militancy in the Malakand division. These all elements opened room for extremism and terrorism in the region.

During militancy the people of Malakand division denied very fundamental right to life, education, movement, and freedom of expression. Women's access to education had suffered great in Taliban controlled-areas, as most of the schools bombed by the militants.

Through survey also the implications of military operation have been investigated and discussed. The military operation affected millions of innocent people and got physical, economical, psychological and educational disabilities. According to survey a lot of people faced damages in the form of health, death casualties, injuries, disabilities, livestock, agriculture or all kind of damages like house, land, business etc. Because of operation common people more suffered than militants. During military operation infrastructure in the targeted area damaged due to terrorism and military operation. In Malakand division a large number of property and construction were also affected due to militancy and military operation. Besides, the trouble makers have caused huge damages to public property and a large number of schools, bridges and hospitals which have deprived innocent children from education and people from health and communication facilities.

During militancy, military operation left physiological impact on the people of the area, due to which many people hesitated to answer the questions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Proper care and negligence of government is a basic thing which may develop or destruct the society. Keeping in view all the results that proper check of government to such rural areas and positive policies like education, jobs, economic stability help to run the state in good manners. Positive use of religious thought helps better understanding towards Islam, and also discouraging the negative image and self-interpretation of Islam which the extremists used for their own objectives. The illegal use of FM radio also plays very important role to disturb the situation therefore media needs a proper check and balance from concerned authority. PEMRA must play its role in the registration and issuing of license for FM stations and also keep check on content of these stations.

Government should give more focus on the situations of rural areas. By establishing proper education system, and strengthening economy, to create jobs and proper check and balance on local and governmental policies, this kind of unpleasant situation will not occur again.

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