

## EDUCATION IN FATA

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### Abstract

*FATA is federally administered areas of Pakistan consisting of seven tribal agencies and six frontier regions. It is geographically, linguistically and culturally linked on one side with Afghanistan and on other with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. FATA has many problems but educational conditions and impediments are its greatest nightmares. Educational poverty supersedes all poverties here. There are number of ghost schools, lack of modern and even traditional teaching facilities, absence of a single university, medical, engineering or tangible vocational institutes which take back FATA to dark ages and this is resulting in taking back Pakistan to medieval times. Present study will work on the hypothesis that modern education is the remedy of all the malaises of FATA. If FATA excels in modern education it will eliminate extremism, militancy, poverty, conflicts and such eroding issues. Qualitative approach will be adopted to seek the answers of raised research questions. A comparative analysis will be made with demographically, topographically similar areas in the world and role of modern educational intervention in the development and vice versa. Thus this study will make a comprehensive survey of current situation of modern and religious education in FATA, its impacts and futuristic analysis.*

### Keywords

FATA, Education, Literacy rate, Militancy, FRs, Madrassa.

### FATA: An Introduction

The tribal agencies and frontier regions that constitute the region of Pakistan are known as Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). These include Bajaur, Mohmand, Khyber ,Orakzai, Kurram, North Waziristan, and South Waziristan agencies and six smaller zones, called 'Frontier Regions' (FRs) in the districts of Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan, Kohat, Lakki Marwat, Peshawar and Tank. To the north and east, the tribal areas are bounded by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, while on the south lies the province of Balochistan. In the south-east, FATA joins the Punjab province. The Durand Line, which separates Pakistan from Afghanistan, forms the western border of FATA.<sup>1</sup> The area

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between British India frontier and Afghanistan inhabited by Pushtun tribes enjoyed epi-central position for Great Game between Russia and Great Britain in late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. British launched two wars in 1839-42 and 1878-79 respectively with Afghanistan where FATA unfortunately remained centre of confrontation. In earlier war British were defeated but in later war most of Pushtun tribes came under the control of British troops.<sup>2</sup> Although British had got military success but constant attacks from tribal belts, proved costly to London. The foreign policy of Afghanistan was under the control of British and in 1893 they compelled King Abdur Rahman of Afghanistan to accept Durand Line Agreement. This agreement drew artificial boundary of 1610 miles between Pushtun tribes from Wakhan in the North to the Iranian border with some adjustment of the territories. The Pushtun tribes who always resisted outer control were granted autonomy in internal affairs and controlled through Frontier Crime Regulation established by British through appointed political agents and Maliks.<sup>3</sup>

### **FATA Under Pakistan**

In 1947 when British India was divided into India and Pakistan, the Indian Independence Act of 1947 annulled the agreements between tribal people and British Raj and new created state of Pakistan had to negotiate new agreements with tribal Pushtuns. The Islamabad government conceded the autonomy to the region and extended the rights and privileges to the Maliks who in return pledged loyalty to Pakistan. The Governor General of Pakistan of that time issued orders and notifications regarding agreement between FATA and federal government. These notifications were reviewed and modified after 1947 and finally made part of 1973 constitution of Pakistan. The Soviet intervention of Afghanistan in 1979 which lasted till 1989 left negative impacts on social, cultural and educational fabric of FATA. Millions of refugees from Afghanistan settled in most undeveloped part of the region. It served as hub for Mujahideens. Money, fighters and Jihad ideology spread in the area. The social fabric of FATA transformed in religious fundamentalism as Maliks and local clergy lost authority at the hands of Mujahideens. *Deobandi* and *Salafi* teachings were easily accepted by disfranchised youth who were fed up of Soviet war and subsequent anarchy in Afghanistan. *Madrassas* along with religious teachings spread *Jihadi* teachings where even basic secular education was not less than a dream.<sup>4</sup>

### **Education in FATA**

According to Article 37 of Constitution of 1973 it is the responsibility of state to remove illiteracy and provide compulsory and free education to all citizens of Pakistan. UNESCO recommends at least 4 percent of GDP to education but Pakistan was spending till recent past below 7 percent for education.<sup>5</sup> Allocation of education budget for FATA has been consistently low for FATA as below as 1.5 billion rupees till 2001 which was raised to 2.7 billion for 2004-05.<sup>6</sup> Additional 1.08 billion rupees were needed in 2005 to meet universal education program in FATA alone.<sup>7</sup> Level of difference in fund

allocation for education as compared to 2005 NWFP is manifested in table below:

<b>Educational Indicators for Pakistan: NWFP &amp; FATA ( 1998-2003-2004)</b>			
<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Pakistan</b>	<b>NWFP</b>	<b>FATA</b>
Literacy Rate (Both male and female %)	4392	35.41	17.42
Literacy Rate male	5481	51.39	29.51
Literacy rate female	3202	18.82	3.00
Government primary schools total number	155000	18924	4189
Government primary school for boys	111100	11633	2524
Governmental primary school for girls	43900	7291	1665
Total enrolment in primary school	19781100	2041693	339793
Government middle schools total number	28700	2053	404
Government middle school for boys	22700	1319	284
Government middle school for girls	6600	734	120
Government higher schools total numbers	16100	1534	240
Government higher schools for boys	13100	1059	206
Government higher schools for girls	3000	273	27
Literacy rate 1998. All other figures 2003-04			

Source Govt: of NWFP 2005b Govt: of Pakistan 1998<sup>8</sup>

Literacy rate of FATA is far below when compared with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and rest of Pakistan. One more irritating matter is far below literacy rate of females. 17.42 is total literacy rate and in proportion of male and female it is 30 and 3 respectively according to 2005 record of KPK government. This shows pathetic and alarming situation of overall literacy conditions and most importantly female education. As far as number of primary schools is concerned again the situation is very grave. Pakistan has above 0.1 million schools and KPK has about 20 thousand schools but FATA has only 2425 schools. Again if we make a ratio of male and female number of schools it is 1:2. Girls have about 1600 schools and it can be imagined keeping in mind anti women education mindset of tribal area how many of them will be functional fully or partially. Total enrollment in primary schools is only 0.3 million against 2 million in KPK and 20 million in all Pakistan. From this data huge difference in the quantity and quality of educational factors can be imagined.

Same is situation of middle schools. In whole Pakistan there are 28 thousand middle schools. In KPK there are above two thousand middle schools but in FATA there are only four hundred middle schools. For boys there are 284

and for girls there are 120 schools. As far as high and higher schools are concerned in Pakistan there are 16 thousand schools and in KPK above than two thousand but in FATA this number lingers around two hundred only. out of these two hundred there are only 27 schools for girls. Keeping in mind far flung and unattractive zones and suffering from lack of transport facilities and hyper conservative environment how many of these girls' high schools would be performing in real sense.

The data provided by government often does not reflect truly the ground realities. It is common practice that in settled areas of other provinces and even in capital territory the buildings of schools and government institutions are used for other businesses then how this be not practiced in the areas where already there is least interest for education.

In FATA there are community schools, *Madrasahs* (religious seminaries) and private schools. The syllabus is prepared by federal government after input from the provinces. Recently Directorate of FATA has launched a website [www.fata.edu.pk](http://www.fata.edu.pk) for information sake. Private schools are overtaking government schools due to affordability to low income families even in rural areas.<sup>9</sup>

#### Government Schools and enrollment FATA 2004-05

Level	Number of schools			Enrollment	Student per Institution	Teaching Staff	Teacher per Institution
	Female	Male	Total	Total	Average	Total	Average
Primary	1282	2015	3297	275485	83.56	9081	2.75
Mosque	00	212	212	13815	65.165	235	1.11
Community	448	361	809	54236	67.040	1608	1.9
Middle	122	282	404	68090	168.54	3950	9.78
High	26	205	231	91104	349.39	4287	18.56
Higher Secondary	02	08	10	6201	620.10	306	30.60
College	11	21	32	8196	256.13	592	18.50

Source: Govt: of NWFP 2005

Number of enrollment in Primary schools is more than two lakh students. In mosque schools it is about 15 thousand students. Community school intake is about 55 thousand students. Although in primary it is above 2 lakh but in middle it dwindles down to 70 thousand students which shows alarming drop out ratio. In high it is 91 thousand but in higher secondary it remains only 6 thousands. In college it remains about 9 thousands. The fluctuating and low ratio of enrollment along with many other factors may be due to number of institutions. Data shows

that number of teachers per institution is higher in secondary level schools but minimum in mosque and in primary schools. Enrollment of girls' students is not encouraging. Drop out rates in girls are 70 percent against 43 percent of boys. Drop out rate varies in agencies and FRs even. In North Waziristan it is 87 percent but in Bannu FR among boys dropout rate is 0.08 percent.<sup>10</sup> Enrollment rate is low but drop out is faster. Half of the students drop out who are enrolled in *katchi* before reaching class V.

Most cited causes for rapid drop out are poor teaching, teachers' absence, corporal punishment and inconvenient location of schools. Lack of accommodation facilities, unavailability of drinking water, transportation problems contribute to low enrollment. There is great disparity in number of schools for boys and girls and segregation of girls and boys institutions plays havoc in causing low enrolment of girls who comprise half of the total population. There is no university in FATA and seats in universities are reserved for FATA students but even these are snatched by those who study in settled areas but have domicile of FATA. From primary to secondary schools there are 20,000 teaching staff and women make only 29% of it in documents but hardly make 10 % at higher secondary school level.<sup>11</sup> Between 1995 and 2005 number of primary teachers has risen to 40 percent with 69 percent of women. At higher secondary level there is 49 % increase with 42 males and 7% females only.

There are three Bachelor of Education (BEd) colleges in FATA only one of which is for women.<sup>12</sup>

### **Main Issues**

Heavy dropout rate at primary level deters entry into higher education. This is mainly because of poverty, perceived low economic income of education, improperly cited schools, lack of parental involvement, teacher absenteeism and lack of schools and staff where it is most needed. Among girls this is caused by shortage of girls' schools and female teachers, and social factors like early marriage, cultural taboos and tribal hostilities that make travelling hazardous. Overall literacy rate is low but it is of grave concern among girls and it further deteriorates situation at secondary level. Systematic data base approach is sacrificed over political influences for the establishment of schools and colleges. The insular nature of tribal society and tribal values hinder parents to understand the importance of education. Lack of female teachers is because the female literacy rate is too low to meet from local areas and it becomes difficult for teachers from settled areas to serve there. Instructional methods are traditional and rote memorization is the scheme of time. No concept of modern pedagogy is prevalent there. The education secretariat is understaffed to meet the requirements of the FATA education. There is lack of transparency and accountability and political interference and tribal values system undermines merit system in induction of teachers and evaluation of students. The capacity of all actors in education is underdeveloped.

### Impact of Militancy on Education in FATA

According to Naqvi<sup>13</sup> militants in tribal areas want to maintain their own social and religious agenda and to sabotage education is their main target.

Numbers of schools are blown up and destroyed; many are closed due to frail security. Militancy has deprived millions of students of their basic human right of education:

Total Schools Destroyed			
Agency/Region	Boys	Girls	Total
Bajaur	68	27	95
Mohmand	66	22	88
Khyber	31	27	58
Kurram	45	16	61
Orakzai	23	11	34
North Waziristan	23	09	32
South Waziristan	29	06	35
FR Peshawar	11	04	15
FR Kohat	17	15	32
FR Tank	02	02	04
FR Lakki	02	02	04
Total	317	141	458

Naqvi; FATA Research Centre<sup>14</sup>

Militancy is a great bulwark in the way of education. Already due to typical demography and topography of FATA there is poor literacy rate and terrorist activities of militants are further aggravating the situation. This leads to worst conditions in FATA. The government of Pakistan should take following measures to harness the situation.

### Recommendations

- The government should eliminate political and anti merit interference in the establishment of institutions and induction of teaching faculty. For this purpose greater part of GDP to be spent on education.
- The government should encourage private sector education under strict government vigilance. Directorate of FATA education is made more efficient and dynamic. Number of schools and especially for females is enhanced and scholarships and encouraging activities be initiated. Security situation is one of the greatest impediments and before long this headache be removed.

- Proper training and coaching for FATA teachers must be started at vast and qualitative level.
- University for FATA is its legitimate right. As after civil war of America people from North started carpet beggar movement in the similar fashion people from rest of Pakistan raise some movement to ensure quality education in FATA.
- Studies conducted elsewhere in Pakistan can provide guidelines for improvement in education system of FATA.<sup>15</sup>
- Basic amenities be provided in schools and infrastructure be made expansive and qualitative. Special incentives like tax exemptions be provided to private sector. Education for special children be made focus.
- The government should make education economically beneficial and construct industrial and vocational zones in FATA.
- Proper system of teacher evaluation and check on quality teaching be ensured.
- FATA Directorate of education must be made more efficient and for its capacity development help be sought from all possible sources.
- Integrate formal primary curriculum with *Madrassa* and collaboration be ensured to maximize performance.
- Proper transportation be provided to female students and hostels be made for married female teachers.
- Set up modern training facilities with the help of private public partnership.

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