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Education Under Border Shelling: Evidence from Schools Near Line of Control in Azad Jammu and Kashmir

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Abstract: *This study was undertaken in schools which are situated near the Line of Control (LOC) in AJ&K. Objectives of the study were to find the effect of border shelling on educational setup in these schools. The population of the study was elementary and secondary school teachers who were teaching in schools near LOC in Tehsil Abbaspor District Poonch AJ&K. Universal sampling technique was used for sample selection. Five null hypotheses were formulated relating to the objectives of the research study. It was found that border shelling has a significant effect on education setup. It was also found that border shelling had a significant effect on the infrastructure of schools, teacher and student mental stress and student enrolment. Five null hypotheses were formulated which were rejected. It is recommended that government may take special security measures, allocate a special budget, and arrange training and counselling program. Future researchers can investigate border shelling effect on social problems.*

Key Words: Border Shelling, Education, Infrastructure. Student Enrollment, Teacher and Student Stress

Introduction

Azad Jammu and Kashmir nowadays face different problems like poverty, low literacy rate, trained teachers, and lack of infrastructure. These problems are more crucial in schools which are situated near the Line of Control (LOC). LOC is a military control line between India and Pakistan, before 1972 it was the borderline or cease-fire line but its latest name is the line of control. Its abbreviation is Line of Control. Its name changed after the

Shimla agreement in 1972. It is also called the princely state of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Its length is 740km. Through this division, India is controlling Ladakh and Jammu Kashmir while Pakistan is controlling Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Kashmir. Through it, the two states India and Azad Jammu Kashmir are divided. They have their own areas. One is not allowed to enter in opposite areas or crossed the LOC (Zia, 2019).

In Azad Jammu and Kashmir, basic problems of education are discussed. Mostly the people of AJK are confused due to the

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shelling and firing. They are very disturbed due to the battle between Pakistan and India. According to the ASER report of 2014 (data) that 43% of children are out of school in AJK. According to this the literacy rate of AJK is still suffering. At the primary level, the ratio of dropout students is 35%. The children are very angry to study in the schools because of the disturbance of shelling and firing. It is a dire need to provide a peaceful environment for students to get an education without any threat. According to this report, the conditions of schools are very bad and found that many schools were without proper infrastructure and were without basic needs like electricity, drinking water and boundary walls. In this, the ratio is very poor with wide regional disparities (Ali, [2018](#)).

Unrest in LOC and continuous shelling have significantly affected the social life of the citizens. It has disturbed the teaching and learning process also. (Saleh, 2018). The impacts of shelling and firing on education near LOC. There are 23 schools which are near the border. There are almost 100 schools located rounding areas of LOC badly affected due to blind shelling and firing. When the conflicts start then the whole country was hanged. Their social activities stopped due to the firing and shelling. They are badly disturbed and discouraged. They are attacked by artillery guns and bombs by both sides' armies. The very reason is that since 1947 these areas are on risk like their personal lives, children, infrastructure and properties etc. There are innumerable examples that show the disturbance of such areas like their schools' lockdown, offices and markets etc. (Finkelstein, [2021](#)). Though the colleges and schools opened survival is very difficult. In this way, the people are disturbed and they are not survived. They are also victimized due to the shelling and firing. In this way, the lives of people near LOC are very struggling and badly disturbed. In short, the public and the institutions are upset due to blind firing and shelling. They cannot work continuously and smoothly because of shelling and firing on LOC (Love, [2019](#)).

Statement of the Problem

A major population of AJ&K lies near the Line of Control. Natives of the AJ&K along the Line of Control are suffering shelling time and again. The schools lying near the border line suffer a lot. The whole system of education is closed when shelling starts. Students, teachers and the public are also disturbed. They feel like prisoners. During such circumstances, educational activities cannot run properly. Therefore, it is a dire need to conduct research on the effects of shelling on education at the primary level in the Azad Kashmir district, Poonch Tehsil Abbaspor. The primary level schools have been taken because the Middle and High schools are very rare on zero line.

Objectives of the Study

1. To find the effect of border shelling on education in schools near LoC
2. To determine the effect of border shelling on the infrastructure of schools
3. To find the effect of border shelling on student enrollment
4. To determine the effect of border shelling on student and teacher Mental stress
5. To find the effect of border shelling on student and teacher attendance

Literature Review

The basic reason is the schools which are near the border. These students are facing real problems. They are the actual targeted people of border shelling. The people living along the LOC are extremely vulnerable to militarization and volatility of the LOC which adversely affect their physical security, livelihood, socio-cultural life, educational development, psychological health and wellbeing. LOC, the abbreviation Line of Control, is a military control line between India and Pakistan, before 1972. It was borderline or cease-fire line but its latest name is the line of control. Its name changed after the Shimla agreement in 1971. It is also called the princely state of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Its length is 740km. Through this division, India is controlling Ladakh and Jammu Kashmir while Pakistan is controlling

Gilgit, Baltistan and Azad Kashmir. Through it, the two states India and Azad Jammu Kashmir are divided. They have their own areas. One is not allowed to enter in opposite areas or crossed the loc (Bannian & Rahman. [2021](#)).

The shelling and firing mean the natives near the border are facing a lot of challenges. Their quality of life was affected adversely due to the continued increasing tension. In this way, their living standard is going down day by day. They are living in the villages like a slave. Thousands of people who are near the borders are just like passengers. So near the borders; it is not an easy job to survive. It is really happening unexpectedly. Whenever firing starts the whole public becomes the victim of brutality. The life of those people comes to close down. Their whole domestic activities remained unattended, lives are stunned, and crops were left without care. In this way, they are locked inside the room. When the shelling and firing remain continued for many days, it hit the interior of the houses many days (Jacob. [2014](#)).

This type of impact means the people and students are targeted mentally. They are disturbed by the heavy weapons and artillery. They are always living in danger. Their lifestyle is emotionless. They feel like slaves. They could not bear the torture more, the psyche problem is a big problem for those who are in the habit of peaceful co-existence. The majority of the people are arguing that they experienced the kidnapping of their dear ones. They have experienced the migration of near and dear ones (Robert et al. [2016](#)).

The fear of shelling always disturbs them. They have been separated from their families and no chance to meet them for a long time. There are 90 per cent of people who are claiming the same problems. The people of districts Poonch and Kotli are living on zero points due to massive attacks of militarization that impact psychological problems. There was a common logic of anxiety and improbability, a continuously apparent risk to life, and terror of dislocation and of trailing family members. According to one survey, there are 41 to 43 per cent of people replied that shelling and firing

badly affected them psychologically and sensitively, in the meanwhile there are 47 per cent of people argue that this impact is quite real (Zakaria. [2018](#)).

The scratch of schools near the line of control between Pakistan and India is becoming the main disturbance to the peaceful education of both countries. In the history of Pakistan at the time of 2013 and 2014 shelling and firing on the Sialkot side sector almost 119 schools were hit upon by the Indian army. They remained closed for many days. It became highly frightening and distressing for the public. It is reported that in 2015-16, these conditions led to almost 300 schools closure in Indian villages of Jammu in some districts near the Line of Control (Hussain, [2020](#)).

There are some 13 or 14 civilians who died due to these shelling results. On the 12th of November 2016, there are hundreds of schools and houses hit up by the Indian army in the district Poonch side sector with mortar fire from AJ&K. It leads to the direct closing of 25 girls' and 34 boys' schools in the Poonch sector. On December 16th 2016, a school van was smacked by shelling, carnage the driver and acerbic eight children. There are innumerable school children who are staying near an International border and the zero line living in fear of uncertain conditions. Their educational activities are remaining stopped for many days due to the continuous for many days. They are living in such conditions for many days which affected their normal school activities and made the students psychologically patient. According to these conditions, the teachers are unable to keep the students in a peace zone. There are more reasons which lead to unemployment of the people manifold in near border areas. Due to these paramilitary forces, there are many children who do not able to get jobs. Even our children do not get a chance to take matriculation exams (Jaffrelot. 2018)).

In the same way, the overall conditions of schools which are along the borderline worsen. They lack the basic necessities of the building. According to one of the surveys,

there are 7 to 8 per cent of schools which have no boundary wall. Due to very poor conditions, those areas are struggling with their basic education. From 2013 to 2014 the schools have no toilets and their conditions are more worsen than elementary schools. So the students of the schools per classroom decreased and increased in those areas that are located far off the borderline, which are less targeted than those schools (Kousar & Bhadra. [2022](#)).

In a 2016 survey, the schools of occupied Jammu Kashmir are open only for 4 months and then the quality of education must be compromised. So those students study the syllabus only 50% of the curriculum of the year. According to these conditions, the Indian government decided to cover the loss and conducted the exam two times from class 1st to 8th. Which is very damageable for the students in the near future? This loss is never improved in their future. This damage is lead to a whole generation in the future. There are many schools which provide the students with the basic equipment and help them. But the students are injured and due to future shelling threats they are denied to go to schools that are near borders (Mahapata. 2011).

There is competition between two countries India and Pakistan. These two nations are always fighting. They always keep a tit for that response. The Pakistani army responded strongly and silenced the Indian guns. It is reported by the (ISPR) that two girls and two women were injured badly by the blind enemy shelling on a civilian home the Khoi Ratta near the zero line in AJ&K. These injured civilians are rescued by the army and they take them near the hospital. Although these two countries signed the 2003 cease-fire decision which is along the working boundary. It is said that the Pakistani army was injured when the Indian army started firing (Pandey, [2017](#)).

The Indian terrorist blindly attacks our civil people and the areas that are on the zero line. So according to these conditions, it is very difficult to survive and continue the activities of

routine life. In such circumstances, it is not easy to get an education and save the life of the students. Peace and comfort are also challenge for people who are struggling in their lives and passing their life very hard. As far as the neighbouring countries of Pakistan and AJ&K are concerned like Afghanistan and Bengali are also facing shelling and firing challenges. But AJ&K is the only bone of contention between the two countries which is never solved last 60 years. It is important to note that this zone personally needed peace. According to these conditions, it is very difficult to survive the problems of shelling and firing on zero line. So most civil people are becoming the patient of different diseases (Wirsing. [2019](#))

In AJ&K the environment remains dangerous all the time due to shelling. The exchange of heavy artillery guns has disturbed the whole social life. The public face lot of problems due to shelling, they cannot move freely and not can continue education in such a situation. According to these situations, it is very risky to save the life of children and teachers. The building of schools damaged is another point. (Bannian, & Rahman. [2021](#)). The teachers, students and the building were also damaged and demolished. It is said that this time not for the fight and for the disturbance of the lives. According to these situations, this area has become a danger zone for the last 75 years. It is the real bone of contention between these two countries. Nobody can cash the protest because the Indian army is very near this area. A lot of reports inform that gunfire attacks civilians and innumerable civilians died. The villages which are on the zero point disturb the whole community (Zia. [2019](#)).

It also hit the people who are on the borderline. In this way a lot of issues create like; education issues, markets, civilians and the teachers of the society. Nobody is ready to protest because of the military pressure. The army kidnapped the people who are in protest. Those raise their voice against the army. This is a really very sensitive issue. This is happening last 31 years on the border. The public is struggling continuously. The civilians are

facing a lot of casualties. They are on the line of control; it is not their mistake. So cross border shelling should be stopped. (Hellberg & Knutsson, 2018).

Null Hypotheses

On the bases of research objectives and literature review, the following null hypotheses were formulated.

- 1: There is no effect of border shelling on education in schools near LoC
- 2: There is no effect of border shelling on the infrastructure of schools
- 3: There is no effect of border shelling on student enrollment
- 4: There is no effect of border shelling on student and teacher mental stress
- 5: There is no effect of border shelling on student and teacher attendance

Methodology

The study was descriptive and quantitative in nature and a survey method was applied to collect data. Two variables were used in this research. Educational setup was the dependent variable and border shelling was the independent variable in this research

Population and Sample of the Study

All the elementary and secondary school male teachers in Tehsil Abbaspur were the population for this study. There was a total of

108 male teachers including elementary school teachers and secondary school teachers. A universal sampling technique was used to collect data from the respondents. A total of 98 questionnaires were received back from the respondents. Thus, the response rate of the respondents was 90%.

Instrument of the Study

A survey questionnaire was used to collect data from respondents. The questionnaire was designed to measure the effect of border shelling on education. The questionnaire contained two parts, the first part was about the demographic information of the respondents and the second part consisted of statements related to border shelling and its effect on education, infrastructure, student and teacher mental stress and student enrollment. Five Point Likert-type scale was used to measure the responses of the respondents, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The reliability of the questionnaire was 0.82.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is an important factor in research studies. For this current research study, data was collected through a questionnaire. When data was collected, it was analyzed through SPSS version 23.0. Regression analysis was used to analyze data.

Findings

Table 1a

Effect of Border Shelling on Education (Model Summary)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.812	.659	.658	.621

a: Predictors: (constant), border shelling

Coefficient Model

Table 1b

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient	Standardize d coefficient	T	F	Sig
	B	Std. error	Beta		
1					

Constant	5.703	.105		54.11	624.28	0.000
Border shelling	-.954	.038	-.812	-24.98		0.000

a. *Dependent Variable: Education*

Table 1 shows the result of the effect of border shelling on education. The model summary of the table indicates that the independent variable (border shelling) explains a 65.9% variance in the dependent variable (education) as the R^2 value is .659. In the table, the F value is 624.28. P value is 0.000 and both these values suggest that the model is a good fit. As shown in the table, the t value is greater than the recommended threshold of ± 2 . It is also clear from the table that the p-value is less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$). It is concluded that border shelling has a significant effect on educational

setup in schools, situated near the Line of control. In the table, β value -.812. This β value explains that a 1 unit change in the independent variable (border shelling) will bring -.812 change in the dependent variable (educational setup). As the p-value is less than 0.05, hence null hypothesis H_0 which states that there is no effect of border shelling on educational setup is rejected. It is clear that border shelling has a significant effect on educational setup in schools which are situated near the Line of Control.

Table 2a

Effect of Border Shelling on Infrastructure of Schools (Model Summary)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.834	.696	.695	0.554

a. *Predictors: (constant), border shelling*

Coefficient Model

Table 2b

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized coefficient	T	F	Sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1						
Constant	.38	.093		4.07	744.76	0.000
border shelling	.918	.034	.834	27.29		0.000

a. *Dependent Variable: Infrastructure*

This table indicates the result of the effect of border shelling on the infrastructure of schools as a result of border shelling. The model summary of the table indicates that border shelling (independent variable) explains a 69.6% variance in the infrastructure of the school (dependent variable) as the R^2 value is .696. In the table, the F value is 744.76 and the P value is 0.000 and both these values suggest that the model is a good fit. As shown in the table, the t value is greater than the critical value. It is also clear from the table that the p-value is less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$). It is

concluded that border shelling has a significant effect on the infrastructure of schools, situated near the Line of control. In the table, β value .834. This β value explains that a 1 unit change in the independent variable (border shelling) will bring a .834 change in the dependent variable (infrastructure). As the p-value is less than 0.05, hence null hypothesis H_0 which states that there is no effect of border shelling on infrastructure is rejected. It means that border shelling has a significant effect on infrastructure of schools which are situated near the Line of Control.

Table 3a

Effect of Border Shelling on Student and Teacher Attendance (Model Summary)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.915	.837	.837	.836

a. Predictors: (constant), border shelling

Coefficient Model

Table 3b

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized coefficient	T	F	Sig
1	B	Std. Error	Beta			
Constant	.126	.065		1.96	670.79	.03
Border shelling	.959	.923	.915	40.87		.000

a. Dependent Variable: Student and Teacher Attendance

Table 3 explains the result of the effect of border shelling on student and teacher attendance. It was aimed to find whether border shelling has a significant effect on students' and teachers' attendance in school. The model summary of the table indicates that the independent variable (border shelling) explains 83.7% variance in the dependent variable (student and teacher attendance) as the R² value is .837. The f-value is 670.79 and the p-value is 0.000. Both these values show that model is a good fit. It is also clear from the table that the p-value is less than 0.05 (p < 0.05). It is concluded that border shelling has a

significant effect on student and teacher attendance in schools, situated near the Line of control. In the table, the β value is .915 This β value explains that a 1 unit change in the independent variable (border shelling) will bring a .915 change in the dependent variable (student and teacher attendance). As the p-value is less than 0.05, hence null hypothesis H03 which states that there is no effect of border shelling on student and teacher attendance is rejected. It is clear that border shelling has a significant effect on student and teacher attendance in schools which are situated near the Line of Control.

Table 4a

Effect of Border Shelling on student enrollment (Model Summary)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.893	.798	.797	.496

a. Predictors: (constant), border shelling

Coefficient Model

Table 4b

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized coefficient	T	F	Sig
1	B	Std. Error	Beta			
Constant	-.446	.084		-5.33	785.89	.00
border shelling	.222	.170	.893	35.85		.00

a. Dependent Variable: Student Enrolment

This table indicates the result of the effect of border shelling on students enrollment in schools. The model summary of the table indicates that the R^2 value is .798. This value indicates that border shelling explains a 79.8% variance in student enrollment in school. In the table, the F value is 785.89. P value is 0.000 and both these values suggest that the model is a good fit. As shown in the table, the t value is greater than the recommended threshold of ± 2 . It is also clear from the table that the p-value is less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$). It is concluded that border shelling has a significant effect on

students enrollment in schools, situated near the Line of control. In the table, β vale .893. This β value explains that a 1 unit change in the independent variable (border shelling) will bring a .893 change in the dependent variable (student enrollment). As the p-value is less than 0.05, hence null hypothesis H_{04} which states that there is no effect of border shelling on student enrollment is rejected. It is clear that border shelling has a significant effect on students enrollment in schools which are situated near the Line of Control.

Table 5a

Effect of Border Shelling on Student and Teacher Mental Stress (Model Summary)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.763	.582	.580	.765

a. Predictors: (constant), border shelling

Coefficient Model

Table 5b

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized coefficient	T	F	Sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
Constant	5.87	.129		45.58	453.03	.00
border shelling	-.989	.046	-.763	-21.28		.00

a. Dependent Variable: mental stress

This table indicates the result of the effect of border shelling on students' and teachers' mental stress Model summary of the table indicates that border shelling (independent variable) explains 58.2% variance in students' and teachers' mental stress (dependent variable) as R^2 value is .582. In the table, the F value is 453.03 and the p-value is 0.000 and both these values suggest that the model is a good fit. As shown in the table, the t value is greater than the critical value. It is also clear from the table that the p-value is less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$). It is concluded that border shelling has a significant effect on students and teachers mental stress. In the table, β vale -.763. This β value explains that a 1 unit change in the independent variable (border shelling) will bring a -.763 change in the dependent variable

(infrastructure). As the p-value is less than 0.05, hence null hypothesis H_{05} which states that there is no effect of border shelling on students and teachers mental health is rejected. It means that border shelling has a significant effect on students and teachers mental health.

Conclusion

This study was conducted in schools which are situated near the Line of Control (LOC) in AJ&K. Aim of this study was to check the effect of border shelling on education set up in these schools. As shelling in these areas is a routine process, it can also disturb the smooth teaching-learning process. It was concluded that education set-up is significantly affected by border shelling. Students and teachers are in continuous danger as a result of shelling on

LOC. In such a situation, educational goals are not possible to be achieved.

It was found that border shelling has significantly affected the infrastructure of the schools. Most of the schools received severe damage as a result of shelling. Most of the school boundary walls were damaged. Water supply and electricity supply are also disturbed as a result of shelling. Students and teachers face great problems in managing smooth teaching and learning process in such situations. It was also determined that enrollment of students received set back as a result of shelling. Students' enrollment is decreased because students feel uncomfortable in such a situation. They cannot concentrate on learning and prefer to get admission in some other schools which are situated far from LOC. Teachers also feel insecure and they try to transfer themselves to some other schools.

It was also concluded from the result of this study that both teachers and students are in stress. They are in a tense situation. As a result of border shelling, students are facing mental health problems. Students of elementary schools are more in stress as

compared to secondary school students. Elementary school students are quite young and they cannot face such stressful situations. Teachers were also in stress as a result of the shelling.

It is recommended that a permanent solution must be sought out for this problem as it has affected the social life of the people. Smooth teaching and learning process is only possible when there is no threat of shelling. Students and teachers are under continuous stress as a result of border shelling. Special counselling programs may be arranged for teachers and students on how to cope with such stressful situations. An extra financial budget may provide to rebuild the infrastructure of the schools. Basic facilities may be provided. Special training programs may be arranged for teachers to how to cope with such situations.

This study was undertaken to check the border shelling effect on educational set-up. Future research studies may be undertaken to check the border shelling effect on the social problems of the inhabitants near LOC. Future research studies can also investigate how to find a feasible solution to this problem.

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