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## Internal Displacement and Migration issues in FATA (2007-2016)

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#### Headings

- Introduction
- Searching Cause(s) of displacement
- Migration from FATA
- Living Conditions of Pakistani
- Displacement of Minorities
- Government Response towards IDPs
- Efforts for Return and Rehabilitation
- Support to the IDPs
- Suggestions
- Conclusion
- References

With the start of the War on Terror in October Abstract 2001, the tribal belt of Pakistan, known as Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), witnessed a rise in militancy. Numerous military actions have been carried out in different agencies of former FATA to eliminate militants. Millions of people have been displaced from all seven agencies and six Frontier Regions. Many people have been displaced more than once, while others have returned to their homes only to face the mammoth challenge of restoring everyday life in their villages. Additionally, significant Bajaur, South Waziristan, and North Waziristan Agencies have also migrated to Afghanistan to avoid being targeted in the conflict between the militants and the military. This paper analyzes displacement from FATA and acrossthe-border migration into Afghanistan and its impact on the lives of the uprooted tribal people from the area. An attempt has also been made to gauge the government's response towards the dislocated people from the tribal areas.

Key Words: IDPs, T.D.P.s, FATA, Displacement, Migration, Afghanistan

#### Introduction

The phenomenon of peace and conflict is as old as human history itself. However, with the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the international political stage was ripe for one of the most significant wars the world was about to see, i.e., World War One (WWI). The previous century also witnessed another Great War known as World War Two (WWII). During the Cold War, the two superpowers, i.e., United States (U.S.) and Soviet Union (U.S.S.R.), waged proxy wars against each other on different continents. These wars displaced millions of people.

Nevertheless, people displaced from one bloc would be supported by the Super Power backing the opposite bloc to gain support and afflict maximum damage on its opponent. However, with the end of the Cold War, the support needed to states hosting refugees was diminished, but conflict in third-world countries still prevailed. Thus, people displaced by such disputes were not welcomed by neighboring countries for refuge because of the lack of international support; therefore, though replaced, they remained within the borders of their home countries \_(G.Weiss and A.Koren 2006, II-I2). Consequently, the phenomenon of internal displacement glaringly emerged in various continents of the globe.

Pakistan was a U.S. ally since the 1950s; it also allowed its territory to be used against the U.S.S.R. in the showdown of the Cold War, i.e., Afghan War 1979-1988. The Tribal areas of Pakistan were utilized for training and recruiting Mujahidin against the Soviet troops in Afghanistan \_(Goodson 2001, 146-148).

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The collapse of the U.S.S.R. was followed by lawlessness in Afghanistan. The rise of the Taliban followed the anarchy: Al-Qaeda made roots entrenched in Afghanistan during the Taliban Regime\_(Clinton 2015, 121). The 9/11 attacks were planned in Afghanistan during the Taliban era\_(Johnson 2008, 1). The swift response of the U.S. and international Community-War on Terror- for the 9/11 attacks in Afghanistan triggered a chain of reaction by Al-Qaeda and Taliban in Afghanistan and the tribal belt of Pakistan.

Former Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) comprised seven agencies, i.e., Khyber, Mohmand, Bajaur, South Waziristan, North Waziristan, Kurram, and Orakzai. FATA has six F.R. regions as well, which are known as F.R. Bannu, FR Lakki Marwat, FR Dera Ismail Khan, FR Peshawar, F.R. Kohat, and F.R. Tank. It is an area that is being administered through special laws devised in 1901- Frontier Crimes Regulation (F.C.R.). During the Afghan Jihad from 1979 to 1988, Pakistan, with the support of the United States of America and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (K.S.A.), used FATA as a training area and launching pad for anti-Soviet Afghan Mujahedeen to avert the threat of Soviet Expansion towards the warm waters, i.e., the Indian Ocean. Fighters joined from all over the world and fought against the Red Army in Afghanistan (Liberty 2012, 10-14). However, after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, the Mujahedeen started fighting with each other as there was a quest for power among different Mujahedeen factions in the wartorn country. Some of the militants who had joined Afghan Mujahedeen from all across the world also stayed in FATA- as it was the launching pad for the anti-Soviet drive - along with the Pakistanis who opted to be part of the Afghan Jihad while others stayed in Afghanistan (Aspinall, Jeffrey and J. Regan 2013, 207).

After the terror attack in September 2001, Pakistan was forced by international circumstances to take an about-turn on its Afghan policy. This opened a Pandora box for the country. The foreign militants and some of the Taliban factions who had strong connections with people in FATA and were residing there could not digest the fact that in the post 9/11 world, Pakistan had to look into its interest by distancing itself from the Taliban and ex-Mujahedeen. Therefore, they started targeting the Law Enforcement Agencies (L.E.A.s) and security forces as Pakistan tried to curb the militant and Jihadi outfits operating from FATA. From August 14, 2016, around 21289 civilians, 6527 armed forces personnel, and 33110 terrorists or militants have been killed (S.A.T.P., 2016). Resultantly, military operations began to be carried out in FATA soon after 2001, told Rehmanullah Yousafzia. (Rehmanullah Yousafzai, personal communication, March 3, 2016).

The impact of militancy and counter-militancy military operations was that many local people were displaced from the whole of FATA and parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. While on the one hand, most of these people took shelter in the adjacent/ nearby settled districts such as Peshawar, Pabbi, Nowshera, D.I. Khan and Bannu etc. among the displaced people more were shifted to Bannu and took shelter in different camps like Baka Khel camp, Tarkhuba camp, a spontaneous camp of Khan Colony, etc. Baka Khel camp is situated on 12 acres of land and has four impromptu camps. Baka Khel camp was established by Pakistan Army and FATA Disaster Management Authority (FDMA). It has two hospitals; Pakistan Army establishes one while another provides services with the collaboration of Pakistan Red Cresent (P.R.C.). According to U.N.O.C.H.A. January 2016 report, 10,525 individuals reside in Baka Khel camp, while the total number of families living in the Baka Khel camp is 1400. Since the Pakistani Army established the camp, it has taken care of the displaced persons in a suitable manner. However, the displaced are still facing many problems over there. The shelters provided to them are heat resistant. Moreover, Water and Sanitation (WASH) facilities are almost non-existent in the camp.

The Jalozia IDP camps, established in 2008, houses thousands of displaced families. Jalozai camp is situated in district Nowshehra, and it houses 750 families. Jalozai camp has one hospital established by the E.H.S.A.R. foundation. Due to high numbers of families, the hospital cannot provide adequate health facilities to the IDPs. The cases of diarrhoea and malaria are frequently registered over there. Besides, there are no proper education facilities. WASH facilities are almost non-existent; females have no separated lavatories, which causes protection Issues. The displaced at Jalozia need health and hygienic kits to cater to

the demands of WASH and health facilities. In addition, the IDPs need proper education for their children. Segregated schools for boys and girls are required to avoid protection issues. The displaced persons are also facing security issues at camp. On the other hand, many uprooted populations- estimated around 75000 to 100,000 individuals- from FATA also migrated to Afghanistan to take shelter. For instance, in June 2014, when military operation Zarb-e-Azab started, around 7000 individuals from Ahmadzai Wazir and various other tribes migrated to the bordering Khost Province of Afghanistan (Adil and Khan 2014, 5).

The government seems to be more interested in changing the terminology for the displaced persons rather than focusing its attention on finding the solution for the displaced persons' issues. For instance, previously, the displaced people were called internally displaced persons who stand for IDPs; however, in September 2014, the Foreign Office issued a notification and circulated it among all relevant agencies working for the displaced persons to call them temporarily dislocated persons (T.D.P.s) (Ali 2014, 6). The motive of the circular is not clear; however, it seems that since IDP is an established term all across the globe, therefore, many instruments have been developed in international law to deal with their rights. United Nations has also developed guidelines to cope with the issues of displacement around the world. While technically, no such instrument can be applied to the T.D.P.s (Rehmanullah Yousafzai, personal communication, March 3, 2016). However, as IDPs are the universally accepted term for displaced persons, IDPs rather than T.D.P.s are used throughout this text. An exploratory method of qualitative research has been used in the write-up. Both primary and secondary sources of data have been accessed. IDP camps were visited to observe the on-ground situation. Five Key Informants (KIs) have been interviewed through interview protocol. The K.I.s are comprised of Displaced Students from FATA, one journalist, and one development practitioner-also a displaced person from Bajaur Agency. Hence, the primary data sources used in this chapter are interviews of K.I.s and observation visits of IDP camps. Books, Journals, Internal Displacement websites, N.G.O.s and Human Rights Reports, newspapers reports, and articles have been used as secondary data sources in the compilation of the chapter under study.

# Searching Cause(s) of displacement

The opinion of analysts and academia is still divided over the causes of displacement in the country. One major opinion is that the rise of militancy in FATA has caused a flight of masses from the area because it compelled the security forces in the country to carry out military operations which displaced people from FATA. Fazal Saeed considers the rise of militancy as a primary cause for the displacement in the country. However, he thinks that militants are spread in the length and breadth of the country, but there are no full-fledged military operations in other parts of the country, i.e., Karachi, etc. He said that full-fledged military operations displaced masses in abundance; therefore, the government should have opted for surgical strikes against the miscreants in FATA rather than full-scale military operations (Fazal Saeed, personal communication, March 3, 2016). The announcement of the government of Pakistan to carry out targeted military operations in different cities of the Punjab province (Abbasi 2016, 1) in the wake of the Lahore Gulshan-e-lqbal park attack, which so far considered the most significant terror attack in the city in recent years (DAWN 2016, 1) is also an example can be cited in support of the above argument.

On the other hand, Rehmanullah, while admitting that the approach of the Pakistani military establishment in the Soviet-Afghan war was wrong, still considered post 9/1 I shift of Pakistan policy towards the Taliban as a primary cause of militancy which led to counter military militancy operations and ultimately the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people. Because he tells that the fighters or Mujahedeen prepared by I.S.I. and C.I.A. had some hardliners as well, the hardliners he said were against the Soviet Union because it had attacked Afghanistan. Therefore, on the same principle, the hardliners are again against the U.S. after 9/1 I because it has attacked Afghanistan. Moreover, the hardliners are against the U.S., but they are against Pakistan as well, as the country has changed its policy in favor of the U.S. Likewise, Attaurehman believes that displacement from FATA mainly occurred because militants and extremists

Vol. III, No. I (Spring 2018)

already present in FATA had started challenging the writ of the state. Al-Qaeda and other Taliban sympathizers translated their grievances against the "U" turn in the Afghan policy of Pakistan. Therefore, the government decided to cleanse the tribal areas from extremists through military operations, which displaced thousands of people (Attaurehman, personal communication, February 29, 2016). Similarly, Taj Muhammad believes that extremism, lawlessness, and violence in FATA were there from the days of the Soviet-Afghan war. Still, the government, he says, did not take action against them unless that extremism reached the settled areas and started affecting the peace of mainstream cities and districts of the country. He is also of the opinion that Indian consulates on the Pakistan Afghan border also compelled Pakistan to mobilize its troops towards the Western Border against anti-state elements in FATA. Therefore, he opined that the government took action against miscreants in FATA, which displaced millions of people (Taj Muhammad, personal communication, February 25, 2016).

## Migration from FATA into Afghanistan and Settled Areas of Pakistan

As briefly discussed above, when different areas of FATA faced counter militancy military operations, local people tried to leave the conflict zone and fled towards safer places. The majority of the people moved into safer areas within Pakistan. However, around 7000 families also opted to go to Afghanistan. The reasons for migration into Afghanistan would be manifold. However, Taj Muhammad explains that most people tried to come to the settled areas of Pakistan as they are more developed than areas in Afghanistan. Muhammad pointed out that only those people who migrated to Afghanistan had some relatives or/and properties in Afghanistan (Taj Muhammad, personal communication, February 25, 2016).

Similarly, Fazal Saeed and Rehmanullah shed some more light on the issue and told in a Focal Group Discussion (F.G.D.) that the foremost reason was the amorphous clan system in the tribal areas where many tribes have nationalities of both Pakistan and Afghanistan. He said that many tribal families had houses on the Eastern side of Durand Line, i.e., FATA, Pakistan; while their agricultural lands were on the Western side of Durand Line, i.e., Afghanistan; therefore, they said that that was convenient for them to migrate to Afghanistan for safety (Fazal Saeed, personal communication, March 3, 2016). There are around 23 villages in FATA, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, situated on both sides of the Durand Line. Six out of these 23 villages are located in FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Therefore, it has never been kept as a closed border as it kept the Pakistani border with India; instead, the Pakistan Afghan border is managed\_(C. E. Khan 2014). Therefore, those people crossed into Afghanistan who had relatives or property on the other side of the border.

Moreover, Rehmanullah added that some families live on both sides of the Durand Line, e.g., one brother would be living on the Pakistani side of the line while the other would be living just across the Durand Line in Afghanistan. Hence, Yousafzai said that some individuals and families opted to go to Afghanistan when the area was evacuated (Rehmanullah Yousafzai, personal communication, March 3, 2016). In addition, Saeed added that those living closer to Afghanistan than the settled district of Pakistan also preferred to go there. He said that the IDPs in Pakistan are supposed to go through a rigorous registration process which usually takes days due to the influx of displaced people and stringent security checks. The unguarded border between Pakistan and Afghanistan allows the displaced to avoid such ordeal and get to safety on the other side of the border. As a result, people living closer to Afghanistan's border compared to the settled areas of Pakistan preferred to cross into the country (Fazal Saeed, personal communication, March 3, 2016).

On the other hand, the reasons for migration into IDP camps and host communities in Pakistan are pretty simple as the IDPs preferred to stay in their own country, and the government of Pakistan had made excellent arrangements for their shelter, food, and other necessities. When asked about the sufficiency and efficacy of the government support, both Taj Muhammad and Saeed were found of the same opinion. They said that the adequacy and effectiveness of the government's services and efforts are not visible in many sectors, even for the ordinary non-displaced citizens; Still; they agreed that the government was doing its

best within the limited resources at its disposal (Taj Muhammad, personal communication, February 25, 2016) & (Fazal Saeed, personal communication, March 3, 2016).

#### Living Conditions of Pakistani Displaced in Afghanistan

The living condition of those displaced who have properties in Afghanistan is much better than those who do not have properties over there-Afghanistan. For instance, many displaced persons from Waziristan are found begging for alms and charities on the streets of Kabul (Rehmanullah Yousafzai, personal communication, March 3, 2016). At the same time, it is to be noted that the educated people in FATA feel more integrated into Pakistani society than in Afghanistan because they have been educated in the country's educational institutions. Consequently, they do not prefer to go to Afghanistan, which is a war-torn country. While on the other hand, the settled areas of Pakistan are still much better than Afghanistan. It is mainly the illiterate population who, despite having no property in Afghanistan, still opted to migrate to the country for diverse reasons; therefore, their condition is not satisfactory, and they face many challenges in Afghanistan.

In addition, there seems to be a dearth of an initiative by the Pakistan government to take measures to protect Pakistani displaced people in Afghanistan. One reason for this approach by the government of Pakistan is that it does not approve of migration from Pakistan to Afghanistan. Facilities to provide shelter and protection for the displaced from FATA have been set mainly in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. However, the responsibility of protecting the Pakistani displaced in Afghanistan has been taken up by U.N.H.C.R. (Fazal Saeed, personal communication, March 3, 2016).

#### Displacement of Minorities from FATA and Related Issues

In general, the condition of minorities in Pakistan is an issue of concern for academia and human rights activists. At present, about 50,000 minority communities members are living in FATA belonging to Sikhism, Christianity, and Hinduism (Shinwari 2014, 9). One of the prominent minority communities residing in FATA is the Sikh community. They are mainly business-oriented peaceful people. Both Sikhs and Muslims of FATA have mastered the art of co-existence. However, as the rest of the people from the affected areas of FATA were displaced, therefore, the Sikh community too could not remain safe in FATA, and they too migrated to the settled districts. Ironically, being a minority community, the Sikhs living in the settled districts in the length and breadth of the country have generously provided support to their displaced brethren. Gurdwaras- specific places for worship for the Sikh community- were extending support to the followers of the Sikh faith. One such Gurdwara in district Hasanabdal in the Punjab province of the country even approached the World Food Program (W.F.P.) distribution point in nearby district Haripur of K.P. province and informed them about the displaced Sikh community (Fazal Saeed, personal communication, March 3, 2016). Members of the Sikh Community also took shelter in district Peshawar in Mohallah Jogan Shah, which also houses their Gurdwara. However, the community had apprehensions regarding their safety and thought that they were vulnerable to kidnapping for ransom crimes and that the government could not provide them with adequate protection. (H.R.C.P., 2013, p. 111)

However, it is worth mentioning here that only those people of FATA get support from the government who are domiciled residents of the area and belong to the existing tribes over there. The Sikh community is "absorbed tribes in FATA" and faces no such registration problems as displaced persons. However, Christians living in FATA were not given domicile rights there. Initially, it was challenging for them to be registered as a displaced person and get support as they were not from any registered tribes (Z. A. Khan 2014). In April 2015, this issue was addressed by the federal government, and a law was passed which made minority communities, particularly the Christian community already living in the tribal areas-official non-tribe residents of FATA (Akbar 2015, 10). Shehryar Masih became the first Christian in Khyber Agency FATA who got his domicile in over a hundred years since his ancestors' settlement in FATA. This right can facilitate the non-Muslims living in the FATA to buy the property and be selected for civil services and other government jobs on seats against specific quotas for FATA (Rani 2016, 1).

Vol. III, No. I (Spring 2018)

Additionally, the Sikh community living in Khyber Agency had left the area when in 2007, the militant extremist group Lashkar-i-Islam imposed Jizya, a religious tax on them against providing security to them. In Orakzai Agency, the Taliban occupied houses and shops Sikh community in 2010, which resulted in their migration from the area. Moreover, in Tirah valley of Khyber Agency, two members of the Sikh Community were executed by the Taliban for spying allegations against them. The Sikh Community members from the area are mainly of the opinion that they have not faced any challenges such as forced conversion at the hand of the Taliban (Shinwari 2014, 9).

However, rehabilitation of the displaced persons from the Khyber Agency is in progress, and many Sikh community members have moved back to their houses over there. The main markets in Bara *Tehsil* of Khyber Agency have been reopened after completing the military operation against the militants over there. Sikhs have also restarted their businesses in *Tehsil* Bara of Khyber Agency (Fazal Saeed, personal communication, March 3, 2016). Additionally, the Christian community from N.W.A. is still living as displaced people in IDP camps like the displaced Muslims from the region and longs for return (Akbar 2015, 10).

## Government Response towards IDPs from FATA and the Guiding Principles

The response of the government of Pakistan towards displaced from FATA is not satisfactory than the government's response towards the IDPs of Malakand Division. IDPs were provided prompt support by the government. The findings of my Ph.D. dissertation reveals that not only immediate support was provided, arrangements for their makeshift shelter were also much better than the IDPs of FATA, and even then, gaps were found in the government response towards IDPs of Swat when it was studied against the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement U.N.G.P.I.D.

There can be many reasons for this; for instance, Malakand Division comes under the provincial administration of K.P. The area inhabitants are more connected with the settled areas than the inhabitants of FATA; therefore, they got a comparatively better response. Secondly, the phenomenon of IDPs was relatively new in Pakistan in 2009 therefore; the government machinery was dealing with it with zeal. On the other hand, the phenomenon of IDPs from FATA- though temporary- is kind of a permanent one due to perpetual displacement situations from the area since 2007, starting with the displacement from Bajaur Agency.

Previously Taliban in S.W.A. asked people not to return to the area. However, the military assured them that they had secured the area asked people to return to the area. The compensation of PKR 400,000 for a wholly damaged house while PKR 160,000 for a partially damaged home was also given to the IDPs from FATA, but that was insufficient to meet their requirements. (Rehmanullah Yousafzai, personal communication, March 3, 2016). The governments are expected to compensate the affected population and the displaced community for damage to their life and property; and it is in no way expected to ask the displaced people to provide compensation to the government for damages to the government installation etc. (Kälin, C. Willaims, et al. 2010, 107)

Moreover, health facilities for the IDPs are scarce in the hosting areas and IDP camps. The hospitals in the hosting regions are mostly found ill-prepared to handle the influx of IDPs. In camp, health facilities are customarily set and functions promptly only in the beginning in the displacement situations to showcase government concern for the health of the IDPs. However, as the situation gets protracted and the media attention is diverted, the quality of in-camp health facilities deteriorates (Marwat 2014, 98-102). Moreover, the educational needs of the IDPs are almost forgotten by the government. School buildings in the hosting areas are used for providing shelter to the IDPs, which affect the education of children in host areas (F.R.C., 2014, pp. 14-15).

Nevertheless, with displacement, even that symbolic educational structure is no more functional over there. Tens of thousands of children from FATA are out of school during their displacement. Principle 23 of the U.N. Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement emphasizes the need for education for every I

#### **Suggestions**

- I. Many experts believe that full-scale military operations are not needed in FATA- keeping in view its humanitarian cost- the government should go for surgical strikes against the unwanted elements in the tribal areas to avoid flight of masses.
- 2. The government of Pakistan should develop an effective intelligence network in FATA to know about the movement and placement of local and foreign militants in the area. It will help them identify the actual and potential threat to the region's security and law and order situation. Since the Pakistani military has acquired drone technology with China's help, that technology should also be used to eliminate terrorists and militants. So those mass exoduses are avoided in the future.
- 3. Militancy in FATA was primarily fuelled by unemployment and illiteracy in the area. The lack of economic opportunities and educational facilities for locals left them with very little chance. Therefore, a war economy started nurturing over there. The government should immediately take measures to set up industries, schools, colleges, and universities all over the area to prevent FATA's -after rehabilitation of displaced people- re-descent into chaos. It is not a difficult task as the government of Afghanistan has established many universities in the areas adjacent to FATA inside Afghanistan where the same tribal system prevails. Therefore, the government of Pakistan should also copy that model for the establishment of educational institutions in FATA.
- 4. The government should adopt FATA Reforms. There is an old tribal and political system in place in the region. The area should be either merged with the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa or made a separate province because militancy has been nurtured by the loopholes in that redundant political system that denies many fundamental human rights to the people of FATA. The suggested political mainstreaming of the area may plug those gaps causing it immensely tiresome for militancy and extremism to return to FATA.

#### **Conclusion**

The overall situation of FATA displaced people is not satisfactory. Those who have been provided shelter temporarily in the IDP camps or host communities in Pakistan have manifold education, health, and hygiene issues. The administrative efforts to cope with these problems do not meet the demands adequately. The displaced who have migrated to Afghanistan for shelter purposes are also quite vulnerable because Afghanistan is a poor, war-torn country and cannot provide for those displaced. However, some IDPs have properties and relatives across the border in Afghanistan; therefore, they find it convenient to go there while the rest of the displaced in Afghanistan have been provided shelter and other necessities by the U.N.H.C.R. in Afghanistan.

The non-Muslim minorities, i.e., Sikhs, Hindus, and Christians, are at large facing no threat of being targeted either by the militants or State Agencies. Those affected by the conflict are being provided equal support by the government and relief agencies. The domicile of Christians and Hindus was a more significant hindrance in their mainstreaming in FATA, despite their decades' long stay over there, has been resolved by lawmaking by the federal government. Those members of the Sikh community whose businesses were threatened by militant groups in *Tehsil* Bara of Khyber Agency have been rehabilitated, restarted their businesses.

Displacement from FATA on such a colossal scale is/was the result of deteriorating security and law and order situation. That deteriorating situation is the product of almost seven decades of ignorance of the area by the civil and military leadership of the country. It is the prime responsibility of the government to not only protect the people of FATA from militants, displacement, and exploitation, but the authorities in power should also protect the people of FATA from becoming militants by providing them equal educational, economic, and health facilities in their area. The area should be politically mainstreamed, and F.C.R. should be abolished. FATA reforms should be devised and implemented in consultation with the people of FATA.

Vol. III, No. I (Spring 2018) Page | 153

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Vol. III, No. I (Spring 2018) Page | 155