Pakistan Languages and Humanities Review
www.plhr.org.pk

RESEARCH PAPER

Pakistan's Policy of Social Inclusion for Making a Resilient Society to Violent Extremism

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ABSTRACT

The community provides the support/links that connects the actors across the Counter Violent Extremism space. Pakistani government's CVE initiatives regarding community resilience work are not up to the mark. In the past, policy initiatives were designed with gaps to manage or to stop the evil of violent extremism at the community level. History of Pakistan shows that lack of rule of law, social injustices at community level, inappropriate role of mosques and identity crisis had promoted violent extremism within communities. The objective of this research is to promote social inclusion by enhancing resilience capabilities within Pakistani society and to analyze the national and local policies and evaluate the programmes/practices to enhance community resilience to violent extremism. This research is qualitative in methodology and data has been collected from secondary sources. Finally, paper concludes that non- governmental organizations can play their role. Only need is the cooperation among state and nongovernmental organizations because use of the hard power through the military is not a viable solution. For durable peace and prosperity, the linkages between state policies with local level initiatives would be started in the form of bonding, bridging and linking connections across society.

Introduction

Violent extremism is a global security threat and it also hit Pakistan badly. Violent extremism is a global concern and challenge. In United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights (UNHCR) Report 2016, violent extremism is defined as, "it is the beliefs and actions of people who support or use violence to achieve ideological, religious or political goals. This includes terrorism and other forms of politically motivated and communal violence" (ohchr, 2016). This definition is given by Australia. Another definition given by USA is "encouraging condoning, justifying or supporting the commission of violence to achieve political, ideological, religious, social or economic goals (ohchr, 2016). In recent history, communities suffered the most from violent extremism and Pakistanis are among those who have badly suffered from it. Since Pakistan's independence in 1947 from British rule, it has been divided along ethnic, religious and sectarian lines and due to many factors extremism and terrorism foster here. It is necessary to evolve countering strategies to stop violent extremism and to develop resilience is one of the strategies to counter extremism.

Due to changing nature of conflicts, countering violent extremism has become an important task especially for the security as well as for the economy and social development of Pakistan. Pakistan since its independence, experiencing ethnic, sectarian and religious violent conflicts. Social fabric of Pakistani society has been tearing off. Despite heavy losses, Pakistan is determined to eliminate terrorism and succeeded in many ways. The idea of counter violence extremism focuses on countering the pull of terrorists' recruitment and influence by building resilience among effected populations. Counter violence extremism through social inclusion is a soft approach to counter extremism and to win the hearts and minds of people. To counter violent extremism word widely, it is important to flourish resilience within different communities.

This research has explained the role of National Internal Security Policy, National Action Plan and Pigaam e- Pakistan have played for social cohesion in the making of a resilient society to violent extremism. It is a collective responsibility of government, relevant stakeholders and people of Pakistan. In various parts of Pakistan, people had experienced violent extremism and it would be a test case for the promotion of social inclusion policies implementation by government of Pakistan.

Literature Review

An article on "building community resilience to violent extremism" by Stevan Weine explained some principles for building resilience like to establish resilience building approaches, to analyze risk factors and protective resources in communities under threat to emphasize on collaborative working of government, community and families. This is a proper way to conduct research in communities which are under threat. This research has examined which acts of building community resilience works with whom under what circumstances and why. (Weine, 2013). A study by Sheelagh Stewart evaluates that all stakeholders including individuals, civil society, communities, and government institutions can play a vital role to manage violent conflict. And also develop liaison with the government to improve the skills for managing conflict along with challenges that come from conflict and cause of conflict (Stewart, 2018). Ellis and Abdi explained that for a resilient community strong bondings are required within ethnic and religious subgroups. Governing institutions and communities should have collaborations because this type of coordination between individuals and institutions builds a resilient community that can respond to disaster in a better way. The threat of violent Islamic ideology is exaggerated due to disproportionate media coverage. This study is important as it has discussed wrong projection of the connection between violent extremism and Islamic ideology (B. Heidi Ellis, 2017). According to a report, strategies should be made both by local groups and international experts. In Pakistan, different individuals have different motivations to join violent extremist groups. Along with the individual's motivations, there are also many structural factors in Pakistan due to which violent extremist groups have space. So a wide range of perspectives must be taken into consideration while formulating policies. In this report, different reforms recommended including educational, national narratives and structural reforms. Coordination between researchers and practitioners is required for sustainable achievements (Peace Direct, 2017). Existing literature is highlighting the necessity of coordination between different participants of society to build a resilient community. Diverse reasons for roots of violent extremist groups in Pakistan have been mentioned. This study has examined that how policies are operational in Pakistan to form a resilient community. What gaps are there in policy formulation and implementation which should be addressed through social inclusion for making a resilient society?

It is necessary to tackle the policies for countering violent extremism from a social inclusion angle and to analyze what role of policy initiatives can play in the process and secondly to enhance state policies at national and local level joining hands with nongovernmental and civil society organizations for playing their role for creating resilience to violent extremism. Following research questions has been addressed in this article,

Community Resilience and Social Inclusion/ Cohesion

Community resilience is the capacity of communities in term of developing social capital and cohesion to resist or absorb multiple shocks caused by violent extremism, conflicts, disasters, climate hazards and socio-economic hardships through social cohesion. According to National Institute of Standards and Technology(NIST)USA, "Community resilience is the ability to prepare for anticipated hazards, adapt to changing conditions, and withstand and recover rapidly from disruptions. Activities, such as disaster preparedness—which includes prevention, protection, mitigation, response and recovery—are key steps to resilience". (https://www.nist.gov/community-resilience)

For durable resilience within a society what is required, most importantly among other things, basic social human needs such as existence needs, wellbeing needs, which covers health, happiness and prosperity needs, identity needs, who they are and power to act, speak and thinking needs in an inclusive way where people feel they have enough to live a prosperous life. Social inclusion is a process to facilitate people or to uplift people through availability of all basic needs which a human being deserves and providing those opportunities which are necessary for the growth and development of people. It produces bonding and linkages among societies.

Community resilience is an importance area as a management strategy against violent extremism. For many scholars and practitioners, the main impetus for resilience building derives from the community-led and community centric approach (Ellis & Abdi, 2017). (Karamat, Muzaffar & Shah, 2019) It is important for community and policymakers towards making a thorough and strategic approach for utilizing the local actors to establish community resilience against violent extremism (Ostevik, 2020). The community provides the support/links that joins the actors across the counter violence extremism junction. Non- governmental organizations can play their role in functionalizing community resilience. In vulnerable and post conflict societies they strengthen the idea of collectivity and sense of community. At local level a network of nongovernmental organizations must be established for proper functioning of community resilience. Use of military is not the solution of the problem.

Violent extremism deteriorated social bonding/cohesion between communities of Pakistan that are already divided by ethnic lines. It's the role of policy makers to promote bonding, bridging and linking connections across society. Hard security approach with a soft security approach is required for dealing with violent extremism. For the promotion of resilience, there is a need of safe space for dialogue among communities, with public institutions, local government officials, and politicians for addressing grievances and to launch socio-economic up-lifting programmes for the affected communities is required. Pakistani community is divided into us and them and it provokes conflict instead of cohesion. There is a dire need to promote social inclusion by enhancing resilience capabilities within Pakistani society. For that matter state policies connections with communities must be strengthened in the form of bonding,

bridging and linking connections across society. The National Internal Security Policy, National Action Plan and Pigaam e- Pakistan have suggested the support for community actions and identified the role of mosques and madrassas for better religious education, the rule of law and accountability must be implemented throughout the Pakistan.

By under taking the above points, this research aims to explain the missing points by analyzing the different policy initiatives in Pakistan, which were applied on the community to counter and prevent the violent extremism through social inclusion The paper tackles the policies of Pakistan for countering violent extremism from a community resilience/social inclusion angle and to analyze what role of policy initiatives had been taken by NACTA through NISP 2018 and National Counter Extremism Policy Guidelines NCEPG, 2018 , Pegham e Pakistan 2018 and NSP 2022 to yield necessary arguments.

Policy Approaches: Community Resilience and Social Inclusion in Pakistan

Pakistan has lacked in comprehensive approach and policy guidelines to counter the problem of violent extremism. As a result only hard power through military is used to crush the menace of violent extremism. It took several years to develop a policy for counter violent extremism. (Heydemann,2014; Makki & Yamin, 2021; Yaseen, Muzaffar, 2018))

Unveiling the Pakistan's National Internal Security Policy and National Action Plan in 2014 emphasized for making necessary security policy for curbing terrorism while addressing in a systematic way for the removal of the hidden causes of violent extremism.

A clear message against terrorists was given by Pegaam-e-Pakistan Conference in 2018. Pegaam-e-Pakistan, was a conference conducted by International Islamic Institute at Islamabad. In this regard in January 2018, Paigham-e-Pakistan of 1800 ullema issued a national fatwa based on the tenets of Islam, denounces all types of extremist ideologies and suggests the government to deal with extremism. In which religious scholars from all schools of thought have issued a unanimous "Fatwa" on the issues arising from extremism. This Fatwa got importance to curb extremism in keeping with the golden principles of Islam. Religious scholars from all schools of thought issued a Fatwa to curb terrorism and suicide attacks in order to save the society. Pegaam-e-Pakistan advocates that state should maintain social harmony and justice diversity. Ullema must play their role and discouraged sectarianism and grouping in mosques and madaris. Suicide attacks through terrorism were declared un-Islamic. Pegaam-e-Pakistan was an appropriate step to reconstruct Pakistani society to enjoy tolerance, brother hood, mutual respect and justice on all grounds rather than to promote hatred, intolerance and killing. (gcwus.edu.pk/wp-content/uploads/paigham-e-Pakistan.pdf, 10-01-2018) A revised version of NISP-II was given. Again it was endorsed the use of the military power against terrorism and violent extremism as well as the use of soft power for addressing the socio-economic, political, regional and identity issues. The role of mosques, madrassas, social injustice, no rule of law and identity crises were explained as major causes of violent extremism.

Under NACTA, in January 2018, National counter extremism policy guidelines were introduced. In NCEPG, 2018, for a peaceful, harmonious and inter connected and inclusive society some guide lines were given and some factors were also identified for

the promotion of conducive environment of extremism (NCEPG, 2018, pp 3-5) In it, a strategy CONNECT was announced in which the aim was to re start the lost people to people contact and people to state contacts. This CONNECT strategy had three main pillars of the local area committee. First was localized mapping of issues and solutions, two was citizen engagement projects and third was dispute resolution. In this CONNECT policy, by highlighting citizen engagement; government of Pakistan had added the community aspect in its policy directions. It emphasized the provision of necessary support to the local authorities for the development of different programmes by showing social inclusion within communities. At the level of union-council or district level, different committees for peace and welfare were announced. Unfortunately, Pakistan had no policy implementation throughout the country to promote community resilience through social inclusion. It is a collective responsibility of government, relevant stakeholders and people of Pakistan. For durable peace and prosperity, the lack of linkages between state policies with local level initiatives would be addressed in those communities who have suffered a lot in violent extremism.

National Security Policy (NSP) 2022-2026 version claims it as a citizen centric security policy for Pakistan. In the section VI for the internal security challenges such as terrorism, extremism and sectarianism, the policy objectives include writ of the state all across, prioritizing of fighting challenges, ensuring rule of law and providing equal opportunities to the citizenry, through an independent fool proof and citizen focused justice system should prevail here in Pakistan. This time it's again a challenging order with no details.

Violent extremism deteriorated social bonding/inclusion among Pakistani communities on the basis of ethnicity. It's the role of policy makers to promote bonding, bridging and linking connections across society. Use of dialogue/discussion approach with communities is understandable in dealing with violent extremism because the only use of military power against them have/had severe repercussions. For the promotion of resilience, there is a need of dialogue among different communities, with provincial authorities, local government officials, and political leaders for addressing grievances and to launch socio-economic up-lifting programmes for the affected communities is required. Pakistani community is divided into us and them and it provokes conflict instead of cohesion.

Conclusion

The research shows that the evolution of Pakistan's counter violent extremism policies discusses the various aspects of countering violent extremism and terrorism. Community led and citizen centric approaches were introduced in 2018 and 2022 in the national internal security policies. NACTA role for implementation of the above said policies is not commendable. The lack of coordination between civil and military institutions has widened the gap for successful community centric approaches for counter violent extremism and social cohesion. They did not form a cordial relationship with local authorities as well as with communities. There is no clear cut structure and implementation strategy seen in Pakistan's National Security policies. Deficiencies must be addressed at implementation level.

An approach to invest in communities and non-governmental organizations will lead towards the prevention of violent extremism is required. The government of Pakistan must be there for communities that their voice must be heard and problems of socio-economic matters must be resolved. The construct of social cohesion through

community development would be a proper tool against violent extremism.The current state policies are not functioning properly to curb the menace of violent extremism in Pakistan. There should be a combination of governmental and non- governmental actors, in which NACTA can play its role as a facilitator for specific activities to the local communities of the different areas of Pakistan. National integration programmes for community resilience should extend to affected areas. It is a dire need to empower local NGOs for the promotion of social cohesion which will ultimately lead towards national integration.

Recommendations

An integrated approach for the promotion of inclusiveness is necessary among government and non government organizations, young masses, women and civil society. There is a lack of connections between state policies with local authorities for controlling injustices, inequalities and poverty removal from society. There is a gap between micro and macro processes, which this research has addressed. It is necessary for integration and cooperation of politicians, bureaucrats and military as institutions for promotion of social inclusion within Pakistan for making a resilient society to violent extremism. The national policies suggested the immediate applicability of rule of law for reducing social injustices at community level, role of mosques for curbing the menace of violent extremism and solution of the identity crisis.

The lack of coordination between NACTA and military led towards the failure of adopting soft and community-centric approaches. Now in the National Security Policy 2022 version, there is no proper strategy for cohesion within communities is seen. In policy guidelines it's written that "securing Pakistan internally, achieve a secure Pakistan by protecting citizens against terrorism, violent sub-nationalisms, extremism, sectarianism and organized crime".(NSP, 2022-2026, section VI). What efforts for community resilience would be done is again missing in the National Security Policy of 2022.

State policy must address the youth, minorities and ethnic identities and provide confidence to them and engage them for community development programmes. There is also much confusion among state departments responsible for delivering on the ground. Pakistani government's CVE initiatives which led towards community resilience/development are less in numbers. In the past, policy initiatives were designed with gaps having no major effects to counter and prevent the danger of violent extremism at the society level.

Pakistan's geo-strategic location and security concerns compelled it to build hard power tools and paid little attention to develop effective tools of soft power for the long term benefits of the society for developing resilience to violent extremism. Pakistani nation is that courageous nation who fought against terrorism and yet has resilience to fight against any threat or danger. The need is to boost resilience capacity in the society. Pakistan needs to develop itself through social inclusion/cohesion.

It is necessary for integration and cooperation of politicians, bureaucrats and military as institutions for promotion of social inclusion within Pakistan for making a resilient society to violent extremism. The nongovernmental organizations can be used effectively for the implementation of national policies at grass root level for countering violent extremism.

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