

Militancy Conflicts and Displacement in Swat Valley of Pakistan: Analysis of Transformation of Social and Cultural Network

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Abstract

The paper examines the impacts of militancy conflict and internal displacement (2008-2009) on social and cultural system of the people of Swat valley, Pakistan. The research analyze that how militancy conflict and displacement radically changed the functioning of socio-cultural system of pukhtoonwali (a code of ethics), such as Jirga (Council of elders), hospitality and Hujra (place of guest) which in past maintained peace and harmony in society through their social networks. The conflict and internal displacement affected the social fabric in terms of social relations, cooperation, trust and interactions between various ethnic and social groups. However, consequences of conflict and internal displacement encouraged men and women of different social classes to stand up for their rights and develop new social networks. Nevertheless, the paper argues that the social and cultural system be reconsidered in terms of its possible contribution to peace and development in conflict affected societies.

Keywords: Militancy conflict, internal displacement, Pukhtoonwali, social network, transformation, social relations

1. Introduction

Arising out of the fight to free Afghanistan from the Soviet Union in the 1980s, the Islamic movements in the form of Afghan Mujahedeen (Fighters) and then the Taliban (Madrassa students; a movement for imposition of Islamic system), spread across the boarders of Pakistan and Afghanistan. The Taliban movement which surfaced in 1994 and controlled almost 95% of the Afghanistan by end of 2000, (Afsar, Samples and Wood, 2008; Fleischner, 2011; Orakzai, 2011). Following the 9/11 incident, the US-led forces attacked Afghanistan and demolished the Taliban government in 2001. The leaderships of Taliban and Al-Qaeda dispersed and majority of them hidin the mountain areas across the boarder of Pakistan and Afghanistan (Taj, 2011). Thereafter, the Taliban movement was particularly prevalent in the *Pukhtoon*¹ belt of northwestern Pakistan including Malakand division, composed of Swat, Buner, Shangla, Lower Dir and Upper Dir districts (Rome, 2010). During 2007-2009, militancy conflict in Swat valley was at a peak, wherein the militants attacked and killed the security personal, civil society members, the local leaders, the elected representatives of district government but also destroyed government buildings particularly schools and hospitals. Nonetheless, the militant also targeted the informal institutions like *Hujra*'s (Guesthouses), *Jirga* (council of elders), and even Mosques, which are symbols of unity in Pukhtoon society (See also Rome, 2010; Ali, 2012). Further, they established their markaz (center) as parallel courts against the government judicial system for deciding all kind of civil and criminal cases, and also challenged the local Jirga system (Orakzai, 2011), which in past played an important role in resolution of conflict and maintaining peace in society. The militants occupied more than half of the Swat valley during 2007-2009, and delinked functioning of both government machinery and structure of the local cultural system (Rahi, 2011).

¹Pukhtoon also spelled Pashtun, Pakhtun and known as Pathan; the Pashto language speaking people residing in primarily in the regions that lies between the Hindu-Kush in northeastern Afghanistan and northern stretch of the Indus river in Pakistan (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2014). For simplicity, I used the term Pukhtoon in this paper.

After several attempts to resolve the conflict through negotiations but remained unsuccessful, the government of Pakistan launched a military operation named Operation Rah-e- Rast (The straight path) in May 2009 against the militants that caused internal displacement of more than 2,3 million people from Malakand Division including Swat (World Bank and Asian Development Bank (WB and ADB, 2009). The internally displaced persons (IDPs) of Swat lived in camps; established by government of Pakistan and Non-governmental organization (NGOs), and in rented houses or with relatives in the districts of Mardan, Swabi, Charsada, Nowshera, and Peshawar, Islamabad and other part of country for a period of about six months (May to December 2009). The IDPs suffered a numbers of cultural, economic, health, social protection and psychological complications during displacement period (WB and ADB, 2009; Bari, 2012). All of these events- the radicalization of society in the name of religion and Jihad, the military operation, and the internal displacement-, not only affected the law and order, and security, 'rather it has deep imprints on the very physical, social, cultural and economic fabric of the region' (Salman, 2012:77). Hussain (2013) claims that the Taliban movement and their militant network attempted to delink the Pukhtoon from their history and indigenous narrative, and tried to isolate them from the rest of the world. However, the literature on Pukhtoon society explains that the social network under the customary laws of *Pukhtoonwali* (a code of ethics) was very strong in history and maintained peace and security in the society through its social and political networks, despite of major differentiation in class relations. Nevertheless, the factors like political structural reforms, economic development, migration, education and communication, and development interventions initiated by government of Pakistan and NGOs cannot be ignored in terms of impacts on social and cultural system of the people before the conflict.

This paper first describes the historical perspective of Swat valley that how social and cultural system under the influence of pukhtoonwali maintained homogeneity and peace in the society. The paper then examine, the impacts of militancy conflict and internal displacement on social and cultural networks of the people and analyzes how the social network system and social relations changed in Swat valley of Pakistan. The paper will give insights into how the local cultural system might be revisited particularly in the context of peace and development in conflict-affected societies.

1.1. Research Methods

This study has been conducted in Swat district of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, Pakistan. The total area of the district is 5337 sq. km and boarder the districts Buner and Malakand in the south, the Lower and Upper Dir districts to the west, and Chitral and Gilgit to the north. Mingora is the main city of the district situated at a distance of about 160 km from Peshawar the provincial capital and almost 150 km from Islamabad, however, Saidu Sharif is the head quarter of government administrative departments. The approximate population of the district according to Government of Pakistan statistics (2012) is 1.80 million. A number of ethnic groups reside in Swat including Pukhtoon (mainly of the Yousafzai tribe), Mian/Syed (Holy descent), Kohistanis, and Gujjars, Hindu and Sikh minorities (Fleishner 2011, Salman, 2012). Pushto or pukhto is the predominant language of almost 93% of the population and almost 99% of the populations are Muslim.

The study is based on primary and secondary data collected from September to December 2012 and again in October to December 2013 in Swat valley. A semi-structured question guide was used for data collection from respondents in two selected villages, Paklea from upper and Qambar from lower Swat, to explore the diversity in the changing perspectives of social networking and effect of militancy conflict. There was 100% displacement in village Qambar and directly affected by conflict while in village Paklea there was approximate 30% displacement, and was not directly affected in terms of bombing and shelling by Taliban or Pakistan army. The village Qambar is dominated by Yousafzai (mainly Pukhtoon) followed by Mian/Syed, and other occupational groups; blacksmith, barber and carpenter, while Mian/Syed is the major groups in village Paklea, followed by Yousafzai, Kohistanis and Gujjars. Semi-structured interviews of 64 persons including 18 women were conducted. Out of 64 respondents, 45 interviews were conducted in two villages; Paklea (15 male and 5 female) and Qambar (18 male and 7 female), while 19 key respondents (13 male and 6 female) interviews were conducted at Mingora city and the surrounding towns such as Saidu Sharif, Odigram, Charbagh, Fatehpur and Madyan to substantiate and triangulate the data. The key informants include elite persons of the areas, local researchers, activists and government and NGOs officials.

Moreover, four focus group discussions composed of 4-6 members, one each with men and women in both selected villages were held during the fieldwork. In addition, applying participant observation methods, informal discussions with men and women of different social and ethnic groups were carried out to validate the qualitative data.

2. *The Context of Social Networks, Militancy Conflict and Internal Displacement*

Swat valley, a Pukhtoon ethnic and Islamic religious based society, where the Pukhtoonwali *as* code of conduct and the Islamic sharia laws as religion have been used in parallel to maintain the social structure and homogeneity among various social and ethnic groups (Barth, 1981; Rome, 2008). Pukhtoonwali can be described as a way of life characterized by the principles of *Malmastia* (hospitality), *Jirga*, *Hujra*, *Badal* (revenge), *Nanawatee* (refuge, asylum), *Ghairat* (honour, chivalry), *Tor* (shame), *Tarboorwali* (agnatic rivalry), *purdha and Namooos* (gender boundaries)². Orakzai (2011) states that pukhtoonwali is the structure and process that underpin social, political and economic life of Pukhtoon, and provide an alternative form of social organization. This form of social organization can be termed as social networks, which consists of persons or groups linked by different kinds of social, political and economic relationships (Wood, 2008). For example, patron client relationships between landlord and tenants in Swat represent a kind of social network in the form of political and economic dependency (Barth, 1981).

Pukhtoonwali is the core of Pukhtoon social behaviors (Ahmed, 1980) and ‘the set of informal common laws and tribal codes that are strictly followed by Pukhtoon’ (Haring, 2010:2). It is an unwritten constitution and has been communicated in the form of proverbs, themes, songs and anecdotes (Ahmad, 1980; Khan, 2014), although in recent years, anthropologists, historians, poets and local researchers have documented it. Among the Pukhtoon, ‘doing pukhto (Pashto)’ defines the behavior patterns of the Pukhtoon, which are essential to their identity and there is no distinction between practicing Pukhtoonwali and being Pukhtoon (Kakar, 2007).

Throughout history, writers have depicted Pukhtoonwali in very different ways. For example Olaf Caroe (1958) and Spain (1962, 1972) portrayed their construction on Pukhtoon as noble savage, ungovernable and militant race. However, later researchers³ presented Pukhtoon and Pukhtoonwali as ethnic and cultural entity. Khan Abdul Ghafar Khan, known as ‘Bacha Khan’, (1890-1988) started *KhudaiKhidmatgarTehreek* (Servant of God Movement) in 1928, based on philosophy of non-violence, linked Pukhtoonwali as discourse of human dignity, pluralist democracy, and indigenous wisdom and cultural identity as a foundation for its cause of socio-political, socio-cultural, and socio-economic transformation (Banerjee, 2000; Hussain, 2013). Nonetheless, Pukhtoonwla in the context of militancy in Pakistan constitutes the extremist discourse of ethnic, religious, sectarian and nationalist sentiments, which Hussain (2013) claims, totally against the philosophy of *Khudai Khidmatgar Tehreek* and completely disjointed in the fabric of Pukhtoonwali.

Hussain (2013) writes that majority of the people in Swat adhere to the discourse of Pukhtoonwali closer to the *Khudai Khidmatgar Movement* as a modern and dynamic code which encompass all essential elements of civilization. The non-Pukhtoon ethnic groups in Swat like Gujjars and Kohistani also follow the same socio-cultural system as these people have been lived for decades under the same code of life and pukhto operates in their social and cultural life (Ahmad, 1980). In considering Pukhtoonwali in this research, I draw on the discourse of *Khudai Khidmatgar Movement* which best resembles the context of democracy and equality, and is flexible to transformation. It is this understanding of Pukhtoonwali that the militants challenged and attacked the culture of Pukhtoon, and killed and threatened the Pukhtoon poets, artists and singers as well as forcibly terminated the indigenous life style, and particularly targeted those who affiliated with *KhudaiKhidmatgarTehreek* (Hussain, 2013).

2.1. *Militancy Conflict and Internal Displacement*

Conflict, according to Oxford dictionary (2014), is a serious incompatibility between two or more opinions, principles or interest of individual, groups or state; and suggests deeper contextual meaning to the acts of violence. Conflict may be violent or non-violent, and essentially all societies contain some form of conflict (Beswick and Jackson, 2011). Militancy is thus having a combative character in the service of cause, and a person

²See for detail: Ahmad (1976, 1980); Ameen (2006); Barth (1981, 1985); Banerjee (2000); ; Kakar (2007); Lindholm (1982); and Spain (1972)

³Ahmad (1980), Bar Field (2010), Barth (1981, 1985), and Lindholm (1982)

or group struggling to achieve his cause or interests either political or religious through violent methods can be defined as militant (Shah, 2014).

The term militancy conflict used in this paper denotes the violent acts adopted by a militant group (locally known as Taliban) for the cause of enforcement of Islamic law (at least what they claim publically but other hidden interest could not be ignored) and forsaking the old social structure in Swat valley.

The definition of internal displacement has been taken from the guiding principles of the United Nation Office of the Coordination on Human Affairs (UN OCHA, 2001:1), which states that 'internal displaced persons (IDPs) is a person or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or place of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effect of armed conflict situation of generalized violence, violation of human rights or natural or human made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border'.

The OCHA principles further explain that the state is responsible for the protection and human rights violations and IDPs shall enjoy the same rights, full equality and freedom under international and domestic laws as do other persons in their country, and should not be discriminated on the basis of internal displacement. This research attempts to address questions such as how the internal displacement have affected the social relations within the villages and between household. How the gender relations change after return? How IDPs particularly women adjusted themselves during displacement and after return in the new social network?

3. Historical Perspective of Swat Valley

The princely state era from 1917 until 1969 is known as the most progressive period in the history of Swat and brought a number of social and structural changes in the Swat society. Maingul Abdul Wadood, the first king (Bacha or Badshah) of Swat introduced the society to modern development patterns first by establishing authority of state to bring peace and order in the Pukhtoon tribal society applying a mixture of customary and Islamic laws and a modern political system (Rome, 2008). Second, he developed a system of roads, communication, established education and health institutions for boys and girls, and a local judicial system based on customary codes of conduct known as 'Rawaj Nama' (Fleishner, 2011). The judicial system was not Islamic but a mix of Islamic and cultural practices where cases were often decided quickly and at very low cost. However, decisions were heavily influenced by local political leaders (ministers) who has been given the judicial authority to collect fines and taxes (Aziz, 2010).

During partition of the subcontinent in 1947, the Swat ruler signed the accession with Pakistan but maintained their internal autonomy. In 1949, Mian Abdul Wadood handed over the state rule to his son Mian Jehanzeb well known by the name 'Wali sahib' and the status of state continued till 1969. He continued the development achieved by his father, and priority was given to communication, higher education, health and justice sectors along the lines of westernize way (Fleishner, 2011; Rome, 2010). During his period the old land distribution system of Wesh; where every 10 years land was redistributed among the most powerful men (Khans⁴ of Youshafzai tribe), was abolished and permanent land was allotted to these Khans. Some of the lands were allotted to schools, hospitals, mosques and other administrative units. The Khans become more powerful in gaining control over the land while the other classes particularly tenants, craftsmen and traders became less privileged and politically dependent on the Khans (Barth, 1981). However, Wali sahib maintained his authority and being a benevolent leader dealt skillfully with Khans and Mullahs (Fleishner, 2011). According to one of the employees of the state period interviewed: 'The Wali ruled through ministers, advisors, local administrator as Tehsildar and there was about a 10,000 person's army to control any external attack particularly from Nawab of Dir. Overall, the people still remember the old period with nostalgia that despite many difficulties, there was a steadfast and low cost justice system, clear authority, peace and security, development in health and education services, and people were more prosperous in the form of socio-economic conditions'.

The Swat state was merged with Pakistan in 1969 as a settled district specified in article 246 of the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan as part of the Provincial Administrative Tribal Area. The merger of Swat state brought a new bureaucratic structure like Deputy Commissioner, Assistant commissioner, superintendent of police and judges of courts. It also brought many political, administrative and social changes in the structure of the society.

⁴Khan (s) in Swat refers to landlord and sometime to traditional political leaders as an honour and respect in Pukhtoonwali, I used both terms Khan and landlords referring the same concept.

Since the merger, development works continued and the number of schools, colleges, hospitals increased, communication improved, but the quality of works and maintenance remained poor (Rome, 2010).

However, on the other hand, according to Fleishner (2011), the absence of democratic representation at local level exacerbated class differentiation and left the poor powerless against the political elite in terms of access to justice and economic inequalities. Over to these, the decades long social, economic and political inequalities, Khanism (Landlordism), ethnic or religious fractionalization and weak government judicial system locally known as western judicial system increased the grievances of the people particularly marginalized classes instead of giving them relief (Rome, 2010). These factors have led to the fragmentation of the social system, and inflicted local people to support and join the new networks of Taliban with hope, greed and grievances (Aziz, 2010; Hussain, 2013).

During the intrusion period of militants in Swat, 'Fazlullah' - the militant leader in Swat and now the chief of the Pakistan Tehrik Taliban (TTP), motivated local people of Swat through his famous FM Radio speeches. He to some extent according to Aziz (2010) succeeded in winning the hearts of a large number of people including women who donated their jewelry and money to Fazlullah in the name of imposing Islamic system. However, majority of the population also opposed Taliban for their harsh punishment and violating the social and cultural norms of society. These motivations and opposition have varieties of impacts on the social system of the people. The below section examines the transformation in social and cultural network system and how militancy conflict and internal displacement affected the social and cultural norms of the few of the principles of the Pukhtoonwali and in long run the process of peace and development in the Swat valley.

4. Transformation in Social and Cultural System

Hospitality, Jirga, Hujra and honour are some of the prominent principles of the Pukhtoonwali and surround both social and political features of Pukhtoon society. We found that hospitality (Malmastia); generally defined as the process where a guest and stranger either local or external is served with food, gifts and protection in the form of asylum (nanawati) with proper etiquette as required for the host, still exist in almost all groups of people and individually every person practices it at their best. However, in both villages the concept of hospitality in common Hujra given by Barth and Kakar has been found almost nil. Kakar (2007) for example linked Malmastia with honour of the Pukhtoon and put that it increases the number of social networks particularly of the landlord. Barth (1965) sees malmastia as a way of validating a leader's political position. While Lindholm (1982) described malmastia as a sort of ritual of friendship, and the warmth and generosity of the host particularly to foreign and stranger guest. The respondents above the age 60 years interviewed told, 'In past there were one or two Hujra of Khan in every village where guest, local or foreigner are housed and fed as they stayed there. The landlord in village was responsible for all kinds of hospitality to guest or stranger and to the person who request for asylum. However, due to economic development every house has now constructed their own Hujra known as baitak (Drawing room; composed of one room with or without open yard), which has dropped behind the role of common Hujra and nanawati. During group discussion, the respondents in both villages told that this structure of individual baitak has weakened the social networks in terms of controlling the law and order as well as collective decision process about the village protection and development. This study found that in early 2005, the militants were treated as guest and stranger but due to weak social networks and cohesion in and between villages, the Taliban easily accommodated themselves in different parts either by force or through consent of some households.

Historically the Khans, who hold the most land in Swat, were socially and politically powerful, and the other groups such as small landowners and landless were politically dependent and remained as client of landlords. This formed a kind of political network between Khans and others, and persisted for centuries in Swat valley. The Taliban targeted the landlords and their Hujra at the very beginning to reduce their power but it was matter of honour for the Khans to protect their land and property, and they resisted against the militant. According to Barth (1981), the protection of land, women and the subordinate is the responsibility of Pukhtoon man, and if he fails to maintain, then this would mean he has lost honour (*Ghayrat*) in society, which reduces his political network and authority. The landlords interviewed told that Taliban succeeded to some extent to break this political networks between Khan and tenants and other dependent groups by motivating them through slogans of equal distribution of land and other incentives such as payment of PKR 10,000 – 15,000 (100 to 150\$) per month to a young man who join the militant group. Over to these, many of the Khans left the area due to low government control and personal securities, which further weakened their political and social networks in their respective localities. The

militants established their own centers controlling the decisions process about the villages' social and political matters including development interventions.

4.1 Effects on Jirga System

Jirga, one of the key tenets of Pukhtoonwali across Pakistan and Afghanistan, has been used as tool in Pukhtoon society to maintain law and order in society, and according to Ahmad (1980) crucial to regulate life and resolve conflict through decisions ranging from local clan level to regional and from minor to larger issues between tribes. Since 2005, the Taliban motivations through FM radio for imposing of Islamic sharia, establishment of parallel courts and attacking the Hujra, Jirga as well as government institutions has highly fragmented the functioning of collective decisions and counselling in Swat. Although, in Swat, the Jirga worked as an informal institution which not only undertakes conflict and dispute resolutions but selected the king (Wali) of Swat as ruler in 1917, and structured a strong social network through forming Lashkars (group of local people as combatant) to protect Swat and combat militant, external raiders or robbers. The Jirga played the role as judicial institution, for example the document of customary law (Riwaj Nama), developed during the Wali period is consisted of some of the decisions made by Jirga members throughout Swat. The decisions taken in Jirga were mainly based on customary laws and Islamic law, and the Jargeez (those who conducting Jirga) have been given the legislative authority in Pukhtoonwali (Ahmad, 1980; Yousafzai and Gohar 2005). However, later on, the Wali of Swat decreased the role of the Jirga through the establishment of formal institutions. According to key informants, the role of Jirga pertaining to law and order in society was almost transformed and practiced at village level only for resolution of minor family disputes.

Second factor, which hindered the holding of a grand Jirga against the militancy, was threats and killing of local leaders by militants. The Khans who tried to control Taliban through national (qoomi) Jirga and form lashkar were threatened and killed – only a few of them but none of the other members dared to protest openly against the Taliban- even the government police department was helpless (HRCF, 2010). A Jirga member told that 'efforts were made to establish a qoomi level Jirga in 2007, to hold a meeting with provincial Chief Minister, Governor and also the President of Pakistan to resolve the conflict peacefully and to form lashkar to control the Taliban but remained unsuccessful because of the lack of trust and weak social network among different clans'. Moreover, the government law enforcing agencies including army resisted against the holding of qoomi Jirga and Lashkar due to security reasons as well as to avoid human losses.

However, during our fieldwork, we found the functioning of Jirga in slightly different perspective. I will quote example of two prominent Jirga established during and after the conflict crisis. The 'Swat Qoomi Jirga', informally headed by Zahid Khan as there is no formal appointed or selected head and the second is 'Qoomi Aman Jirga' (national council for peace) headed by Inam-ur Rehman. The former is broader and represent the whole Swat while the latter is limited to the town of Kanju and surrounding areas. The purpose of Swat Qoomi Jirga as told by Zahid Khan during interview was to bring peace to the Swat valley and maintain peace talk between Taliban and provincial government of KPK as well as army officials. However, after crisis, he told that 'we held a Jirga in 2010, in which more than 200 individuals from various part of Swat participated. Nevertheless, due to resistance from government security forces and fear from Taliban, the Jirga did not discuss the conflict issues, while it focused on issues of development and proper utilization of humanitarian aid/funds given by a numbers of foreign countries and donors to the affected Swati people. However, in past the Jirga had the power to implement any kind of decision because of strong social relations and trust among different clans, which are highly lacking at present.

The Swat Peace Jirga, according to Inam-ur-Rehman, was formed to resolve minor disputes in the town and helped the police and courts in reconciliation between opposite groups. But later the jurisdiction of the Jirga was extended to other parts of the Swat. However, what we found through different sources that the security forces supported this Jirga and used as partners for maintaining peace in the area. This Jirga also face the same problem of decision-making power, however, the head of Jirga told that they have extended their links in other villages for utilization of development funds. A teacher in Qambar village told that these Jirga rarely held in a Hujra, instead arranged in hotel or schools. The Hujra of Khans is now used for political activities instead of its role of socialization or for gathering of the villagers for peace and dispute resolution.

The novel aspect of these Jirga is women's representation. Historically no such evidences of women participation in Jirga and even they could not present their cases directly to Jirga's men. The member of the Swat Aman Jirga told that women has been given representation keeping in view the gender boundaries and to facilitate the women to easily access and present their cases to woman members. Similarly, the first women's Jirga has been established in Swat, which is supported by a number of NGOs and government for the right of women and their first meeting was held in Mingora in July 2013 (Jang, 2013). This can be termed as women social network, which aims to raise voices for women rights and issues in swat valley. This above example reveals that the role of Jirga system along with maintaining the law and order in society can be used in rehabilitation and reconstruction development interventions as a tool of participatory method.

Another impact of the conflict on the informal setup was the establishment of Village Defense Committees (VDCs) by government security forces and village development committees or organizations by NGOs for implementation of development projects interventions. Security forces select the members of defense committees and their main task is to share information with law enforcement agencies regarding militant and to help the army in cordoning off some areas in time of needs (HRCF, 2010). While the development committee has to deal with decisions on projects interventions through collaboration of NGOs. These affected the role of informal village committees such as mosque, forest/agricultural land resources, funeral activities and other communal issues in terms of social relations and cooperation. The members of defense committee interviewed in several villages, complained that the security forces in Swat did not support them in time of need, and therefore, since 2009 more than 30 defense committees members have been attacked and killed by Taliban (Rehman, 2014).

However, we observed in both villages that the representation in these committees was different than that in past, for example, in past the informal committees were run by landlord or Syed family members but the new committees are rarely headed by landlord and there is representation from middle class. These committees have contributed in developing new social networks and motivated men and women to participate in development interventions and decisions making at village level, although their dependency for decision making on formal institutions increased. For example, the defense committees are totally depend on army and police for security issues, while for development activities, the development committees are dependent on NGOs and sometime relevant government departments. However, due to fragmentation among various social and ethnic groups, each group is trying to establish their own committee in order to receive humanitarian aid from Government and NGOs, and no such collective actions are taken for the benefits of the whole village.

4.2. Fragmentation in Social Relations

As stated earlier that before the conflict, interaction between neighbors' households and between men and women was frequent as women freely move to other neighbours or relatives houses during leisure time. Similarly, men were regularly setting in common Hujra of village and this was a source of socialization where they share their common issues to resolve and to help each other at the time of need. This phenomenon of conflict and displacement has highly affected such social relations and according to respondents in village Qambar, the social relations and cooperation between the households of Khans, tenants and other external residents (non-Swati) has been fragmented while participation in the marriages and funeral ceremonies remained ritual and the social sympathies for each other under Puktoonwali has gone out. According to Ex-Nazim (Mayor) 'the conflict created distrust among villagers because of hidden affiliation of people with either group; Taliban or Pakistan security forces including army, and this has fragmented the social relations even between the brothers and close relatives'. However, in village Paklea, the effect on social relations and cooperation was found a little different, and this may be due to low displacement or non-direct interventions by Taliban. There was support to Taliban among different groups, but a professor in college said that this does not mean that the whole family may be segregated from the social set up or may be expelled from village. In both villages, it was revealed through group discussions that tenant households who supported Taliban during conflict did not return after displacement due to fear that the local people may not cooperate with them or may expelled them again.

Another reason of fragmentation in social relation as told by poor class respondents; the noncooperation and non-provision of financial or social support by Khans during displacement and after return. They complained against Khans that they easily shifted to other cities of the country while left the poor families at the mercy of the militants, therefore, unintentionally they supported the militant network, which has affected the social and political affiliations between Khans and other ethnic groups. Similarly, availing of new work opportunities by

male members of tenants and other lower groups during displacement and after return also affected the households' relations as their dependency on Khans reduced. This lack of cooperation and affiliation has reduced the political control of the Khan and Syed families and new political groups emerged particularly among the young generation confronting the traditional hierarchies in the Swat valley.

One example of the fragmentation of political affiliation can be found from the 2013 parliamentary election of Pakistan, where a new political party –Pakistan Tehrik Insaff (PTI) - won all the three national assembly seats and five out of six provincial assembly seats and the old rival, Awami National Party, won only one seat from upper Swat. This may be because of the candidate close personal affiliation with his constituency since 1990s and may be that this constituency was not highly affected by conflict and there was only up to 30 percent displacement. There might be many other factors but what we observed that the previous parliamentary members did not support their constituencies and they were left in chaos during conflicts.

4.3. Effects on Gender Relations

Anthropologists like Barth, Ahmed and Dupree often link the purdah and namoos (gender boundaries) with defense of women honour and as tools used by men to control women social and their sexual behaviors, however, men are also bounded by the same norms of namoos and restricted to step in the spaces reserved for women. Women seclusion and segregation come under the code of purdah (veil) specifying the boundaries between men and women physical space and purdha is considered as the sign of dignity for men and women in Pukhtoon culture (Orakzai, 2007). In Swat, the norms of namoos and purdha are strictly followed, but with varying practices among the Khans/Syed families and other groups in Swat particularly relating to women mobility.

Before Taliban entrance, women and girls in Swat were encouraged to go to schools and do jobs particularly in professions like teaching in educational institutions and as health workers. Few of the households found that their women were working in other government department like administration, banks and NGOs as well as private industries. However, we observed that the patriarchal structure of the Pukhtoonwali oppose women involvement in private sector and NGOs, not only in Swat but in the whole rural areas of KPK and FATA, and termed this as 'inappropriate for Muslim and Pukhtoon women to obtain modern education as they could become westernized' (Orakzai, 2011:12). Such type of mindset is still there and Taliban used this patriarchal interpretation of religion and culture frameworks to justify the confinement of women within the four walls of home and to their traditional roles in the reproductive sphere. The government and NGOs official told that majority of the men did not resist against the Taliban banning of women and girls from education, jobs and mobility because of the patriarchal structure of society. However, beating of women publically and killing of innocent men and women was the matter of honour for Pukhtoon. Therefore, Swati people supported the army operation against the Taliban.

In the beginning, when the militants spreading their strength in Swat, cleverly motivated women through FM radio messages and encouraged them to make direct calls to Taliban leaders about women issues, and this provided an opportunity to women to discuss their matters with leaders, a government official told. We found that some of the women matters relating to property rights and other families issues were quickly resolved to get support of the women. But when the Taliban become powerful and occupied major parts in Swat, they started to confine women to their houses and forbidden to go out without agnatic relatives and veil for shopping in market or even medical treatment (HRCP, 2010). Women access to education was restricted by blasting and burning of almost 70% girls' schools, and this has highly affected the growth rate of the girls' education in Swat. Although, Swat was amongst the leading districts of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in terms of boys' and girls' primary enrolment ratio 92% and 75% (EDSR, 2008). Similarly more than 8000 women teachers and hundreds of lady health workers were left without jobs, which deteriorated the economic condition of the number of household particularly of women headed households. Organizations like Aurat Foundation, Khindo Kor and other local NGOs opposed the militants' slogans of banning women from jobs and education, however, Taliban were strong enough to enforce their decisions. Similarly, the government of Pakistan and national and international media publicized women issues like bombing of girls schools, restricting mobility, imposing purdha and lastly the flogging of young girl⁵ in Swat that was one of the most turning points to carry out army operation against the militants and to get support of the international communities.

⁵Flogging of girl by Taliban in Swat can be found on

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/news/2009/05/090527_obj_pakistan_nh_sl.shtml accessed date June 19, 2014

The internal displacement also affected the social cultural values of purdah and social relations among women. The respondent who displaced during conflict told that environment in the form of weather as well as cultural was very difficult for women and children to adjust as the situation in camps was not gendered and women specific needs were neglected. Women respondents told that they were restricted in camps and there was lack of purdha, privacy arrangement and social protection as well as food problems as men and women were very dependent on government food providing system. A female NGO official said, 'The women living in camps and schools faced isolation as women perform a number of domestic works at home and interact with relatives and neighbours but these activities were totally disturbed'. According to an elite person, 'Taliban and then government of Pakistan army operation has buried the values of namoos and purdah, and our women have been exposed to general public which has deep psychological imprints on women's mind'.

Nevertheless, the militancy conflict and displacement have some positive impacts on people of Swat. The respondents in both villages told that the direct interaction of the NGOs and government officials during displacement and after return motivated men and women and now they are taking part in NGOs activities particularly of skills and vocational trainings. Secondly women have also been motivated for self-help particularly women headed households who suffered more during crisis from economic hardship, as Bari (2010) state that due to the loss of family income, the burden on poor people with little or no cash income increased, particularly for mothers who were restricted to their traditional roles. One of the Lady Health Worker/Visitor (LHW/V) in Madyan stated 'In 2008-09, because of ban from Taliban, many of our LHW/Vs restricted their visits to other villages, which significantly reduced the monthly income of their households as well as their social interactions. Currently there are no such restrictions and the network of our services spread; those LHWs who left their jobs due to threats from the Taliban, have now rejoined but perform hesitantly'.

The rehabilitation and reconstruction interventions of government of Pakistan and NGOs, which focused on gender empowerment of marginalized people, have given an opportunity to both men and women to access the resources. For example in the beginning women could not come to the queues for collecting food in camps but later they stood in queues for collection of food items and other goods distributed by NGOs in spite of cultural restriction on women mobility. A Khan in Odigram, during informal discussion told that, 'the radio speeches of Fazlullah about women rights in Islam raised awareness among women and they took their cases to Taliban courts about their rights in property, where the cases were fairly decided in favor of women'. Further, establishment of free desk in courts to facilitate women and to increase their access to judicial courts through NGOs advocacy programs for women's rights, have affected the social fabric and women have begun to claim their rights in land and other properties. However, in past, women in Swat rarely own land and there were very few cases of property claim by women in courts. We observed that among NGOs and government officials this transformation; that after the conflict women feel the sharing of economic burden and participate in livelihood activities along with men, considered as positive change. We also witnessed that women are coming out of houses for receiving the food items and other incentives like monthly cash cards, and participating in the NGOs and government development projects.

Nevertheless, differentiation remains in social relations and class hierarchy between the Khans/Syed groups and other occupational groups. The militancy conflict affected such hierarchies by targeting the Khans to slacken their control over the local people and resources. Some of the tenants and other poor households supported Taliban in the hope that after control on Swat, they might get some ownership of land and land based resources. Nonetheless, Taliban could not succeed in their dreams; however, the greed aroused among poor households against Khans not only affected the homogeneity and cooperation but also affected the social system of Pukhtoonwali that have been followed since centuries.

Conclusion

The Swat valley, a Pukhtoon ethnic society was converted into a hub of militancy conflict during 2007-2009 followed by military operations, which caused internal displacement of over a million people. This research investigates that how militancy conflict and displacement affected the social and cultural system of pukhtoonwali, which the local people claimed that in past the practices of Pukhtoonwali played effective role in maintaining peace, homogeneity and unity in society through their social networks. However, the historical, social and political consequences like amalgamation of Swat state with government of Pakistan bureaucratic system and

further institutional reforms and economic development have changed the customary laws, and put the role of Hujra, Jirga, malamstia, in transition.

During intrusion of Taliban in Swat, the social network system under Pukhtoonwali was already very weak and there was lack of trust among different ethnic and social groups in terms of cooperation, support and collective confronting. The non-conducting of a Qoomi Jirga to defy the valley against the militant and non-unity under one leadership are the examples of weak social network. Orally all Pukhtoon believe in these tenets of Pukhtoonwali but actually they are rarely practiced.

The continued political and economic dominancy of the landlords and inequalities in terms of resources distribution and access among different groups widened the gaps of social and political cooperation among different groups. The motivations towards Islamic system, equal distribution of resources and establishment of parallel centers (courts) by Taliban for decisions making on all types of civil and criminal cases, have provided opportunity to marginalized classes to support the militants' network in anticipation to get their rights. Moreover, the militants challenged the government writ and informal institutions through kidnapping, torturing and brutal killing of innocent people particularly the security personal and local leaders. The banning of women from education and jobs reversed the progress made towards women equality and empowerment within pukhtoonwali. All these consequences have left stern impacts on social, cultural and economic structure of society.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to say that the militancy conflict has delinked the social and cultural system of the Pukhtoonwali from its basic functioning. However, it can be argued that if the militancy conflict and displacement on one side disturbed the socio-cultural network of men and women, then on the other hand it has also developed new networks and raised awareness by provision of opportunities for revisiting the cultural system in a democratic and modern way. The establishment of Qoomi Jirgas and women Jirga after the conflict are the examples of such efforts, which encouraged both men and women to reorganize and strengthen their network not only to bring peace in society but also take initiative for the development of Swat valley. The government securities agencies and NGOs have directly approached and supported these Jirga committees for the purpose of peace and implementation of development interventions. Further, it can be inferred that Pukhtoonwali is not as rigid as communicated in literature and media but rather the dynamic aspects as presented in Khudai Khidmatgar Tehreek have always been ignored. There is flexibility in cultural values for women's mobility and their access to education, health services, jobs and property rights. Keeping in view the broader goals of development theory, the researcher suggests that the social and cultural network system like Jirga can be revisited as a source for peace, reconciliation and development in conflicted affected developing societies.

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