

PUBLIC AGENDA AND MEDIA AGENDA REGARDING MILITANCY IN FATA, PAKISTAN: A QUANTITATIVE APPROACH

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ABSTRACT : *This study aims to examine the media agenda and public agenda on the issue of militancy in Federally Administrated Tribal's Areas (FATA), Pakistan, as well as the differences between public agenda and agenda of The Daily News regarding militancy in FATA. The study also investigated the causes, effects and elimination of militancy in FATA. To achieve the objectives of this study, the researcher collected data from daily The News International of three years (2011-13) through coding sheet related to militancy in FATA. The researchers used purposive sample technique for data collection of the editorials in English newspaper daily The News, while the researchers have used Survey method for data collection of the respondents. A simple random sample was applied in determine the sample of respondents for this research study. A questionnaire was distributed among 500 respondents in three Tehsils (sub- divisions) of Khyber agency to find out results. The response rate was recorded 91%. The collected data was analyzed by SPSS Software. The findings of the study show that there were similarities in the media and public agenda regarding militancy in FATA. It also clarified that The News has a same agenda as public perception in the area.*

Key words: Public Agenda, Media agenda, Militancy, FATA, Pakistan

INTRODUCTION

This study has been designed to examine in comparison the media agenda and public agenda on the issue of militancy in FATA. It also highlights the differences between public agenda and agenda of in print media, regarding militancy in FATA. The researchers were also discussed the causes and effects of militancy in FATA. It analyzes the difference between public perception and agenda of English newspapers regarding the elimination of militancy in FATA.

Due to the mass media, this is the era of information explosion, now the whole world has shrunk into a global village. The mass media is building the mode of a society. They represent the public viewpoint on public issues. Media has highlighted the voice of public. Mass media is more influential than the social environment, but they are still significant, especially in affirming perceptions, attitudes and opinions that are already established. The mass media focus attention of the people on certain issues and problems, leading many people to form public perceptions, attitudes and opinions about them. [1]

In the reaction of the 9/11 tragedy, the US and NATO forces attacked Taliban and Al-Qaeda with a name of 'Operation Enduring Freedom' in 2001. As a result, the Taliban government was dislodged in Afghanistan. Thousands of Taliban and Al Qaeda members were killed and thousands of Taliban and Al Qaeda operatives fled to FATA where they took shelter in these areas. With the arrival of Taliban, the smoke of the war on terror also entered into FATA and thus the Tribal Areas changed into new battlegrounds. This region emerged as primer hunting ground not only for Al-Qaeda leadership, but it also for new groups and organizations in FATA and the adjacent areas of Khyber Pukhtoonkhwa (KPK) came under the militant threats and activities of Al-Qaeda. General Musharraf launched military operations in these areas against these organizations. Due to these military operations, there emerged a new local Taliban group (Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan). Thus the emergence of the Pakistani and external militant outfits brought the violence back into tribal

areas and various parts of Pakistan. During their stay in the tribal belt of Pakistan, they gained an opportunity to re-organize themselves and support of the tribal people. They exploited the local social values, customs, traditions, norms, culture, language and religion. Militancy has brought a violent revolution in the tribal areas and affected the daily lives of the people. [2]

Review of Literature

An American organization named New America Foundation and Terror Free Tomorrow (NAFTFT) conducted public opinion survey in the Tribal Areas of Pakistan in 2010 [3]. The survey consisted face-to-face interviews of 1,000 residents of FATA older than age 17 years from 120 villages. The study disclosed that 90% people of FATA opposed the U.S. military pursuing Al-Qaeda and Taliban in the tribal regions. The study also explored that out of ten, seven people in FATA wanted only the Pakistani paramilitary forces to fight against Al-Qaeda and Taliban in the FATA regions. Only 10% tribal residents are of the view that the suicide attacks are often / sometimes meant to target Pakistani security forces and police. While 60% respondents believed that these attacks were only against the U.S. and NATO forces. The result showed that more than 75% people opposed American drone strikes and only 16% residents believed that these attacks accurately kill militants, whereas, 48% point out that these Drone attacks largely killed innocent people. 33% people considered that they targeted both militants and civilians. More than 75% of the residents of FATA opposed the presence of Al-Qaeda in the area and 66% opposed the Pakistani and Afghan Taliban.

Media is a source of information for a society regarding any issue, be it local, regional or global; people rely and even trust on what is presented to them by media [4]. It shapes the perception of the public and leaders. On the basis of this perception the political actors formulate the policies, especially during the situation of militancy and terrorism.

He argued that the media presents both sides of the issues and problems. It also performs the responsibility to inform the

reader about certain issues and problems. Media has an important role in making and building public perception, creating heroes, villains, devils, monsters, friends and enemies. He stated that during the war the role of media is not only to present the developing events in a particular area but to offer a comprehensive picture of the policies of the country.

He further stated that the mass media pay attention to some issues and neglect others to affect public opinion and damage national interests. Agenda setting is an idea that the news media shape up to determine the issues the public perceives and talks about.

The media were persuasive in focusing public attention on specific issues, events and persons and in determine the importance people attach to public matters [5]. He further said that agenda setting of newspapers, television and other news media, public were aware or not aware, pay attention or neglected, play up and downgrade specific features of the public events. People tended to include or exclude from their understanding what the media include or exclude from their content. People also tended to set an importance to what they include that closely resemble the emphasis give to issues, events and persons by the media.

The people of the Pakistan do not support militancy in the country [6]. The data showed that there is no clear relation between religiosity and Sharia law, legal Islamist Political Parties and poverty support for Islamist Militancy Organizations. They further said that those people who believed in international and Pakistan’s democratic process don’t supportive for militancy. They suggested that economic and democratic development can play a key role in the solution of militancy.

The historical events of the recent and distant past became to raise extremism in FATA [7]. due to the local and foreign Taliban, Al-Qaeda, TTP etc. He said that the Pakistani law enforcement agencies have not been succeeded in fighting against militants. The Talban recruits new generation and give them a place in their hideouts in FATA.

Objectives:

- To analysis the portrayal of militancy in FATA through media.
- To know the public perception of Khyber Agency towards militancy in FATA.
- To find out the differences between media agenda and public perception.

Research question of the study:

- What is the agenda of daily The News on militancy in FATA?
- What is the public perception on the issue of militancy in FATA?
- What is a difference between public perception and agenda of daily The News regarding militancy in FATA.

Research Design

The universe of study was the people of three Tehsils, the Khyber Agency, namely Barra, Jamrud and Landikotal, includes males and females and the researcher were received 457 questionnaires from the 500 respondents through random sampling and for the contents analysis the whole editorial of the Daily The News of three years from 1stJanuary, 2011 to 31th December, 2013 were analyzed through purposive sampling technique.

RESULTS

The findings of the study are based on descriptive statistics to know the difference between public perception and media agenda regarding militancy in FATA.

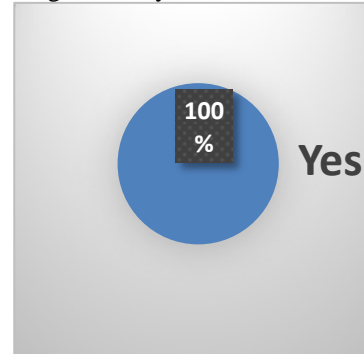


Fig. 1. Views of the respondents about militancy in FATA (n=457)

The Fig 1.shows the response of the residents of the Khyber agency about the militancy in the area. 100% of the respondents said that militancy is a big threat and problem for the residents of the Khyber agency in FATA.

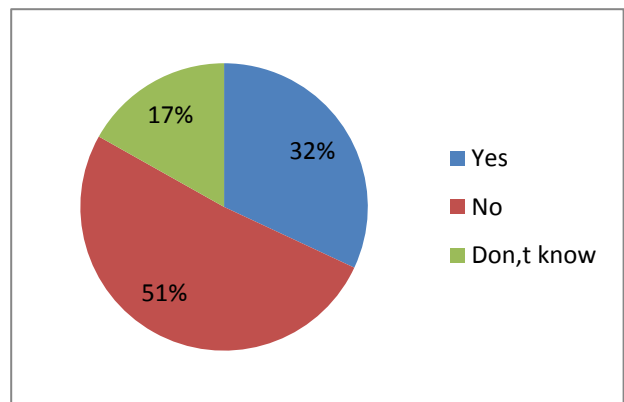


Fig. 2. Withdrawal of American from Afghanistan (n=457)

The Fig. also demonstrates that 51% of the respondents thought that the power of the militant will be same after the withdrawal of the Americans forces from Afghanistan as now in the area, whereas, 32% of them believed that militancy will be controlled in FATA after the withdrawal of Americans military forces from Afghanistan.

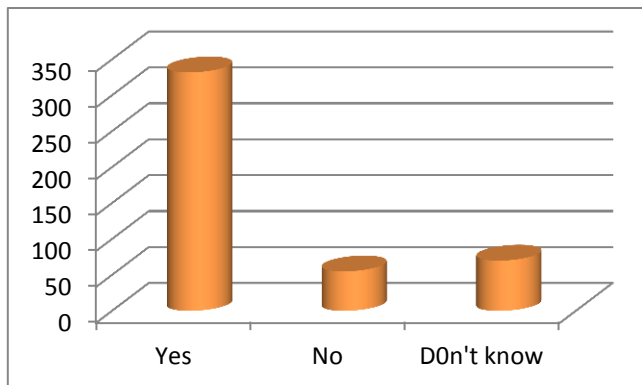


Fig. 3 Views of the respondents about the war of America(n=457)

The Fig.3 illustrates the views of the respondents regarding American involvement in militancy in the tribal areas. 73% of the respondents expressed that America is involved in various parts of FATA in the spreading militancy, while, 12% didn't agree with the notion.

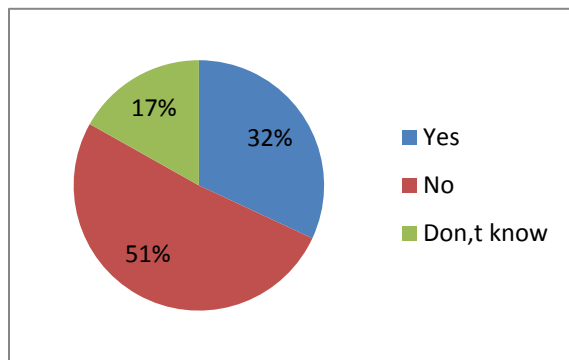


Fig. 4 Withdrawal of American from Afghanistan (n=457)

The Fig. 4 also demonstrates that 51% of the respondents thought that the power of the militant will be same after the withdrawal of the Americans forces from Afghanistan as now in the area, whereas, 32% of them believed that militancy will be controlled in FATA after the withdrawal of Americans military forces from Afghanistan.

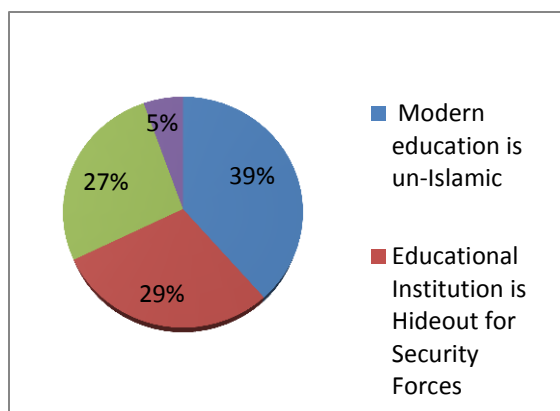


Fig. 5 Reasons of destruction of educational institutions(n=457)

The Fig. 5 illustrates the respondent views about the reasons of destruction of the educational institutions. 39% among them have the viewed that militants consider the modern education as un-Islamic, 29% believed that militants are destroying educational institutions because military forces use there against militants as hideout, 27% thought that militants don't want the people of the area to be educated and 5% view any other reason for destruction of educational institutions in FATA.

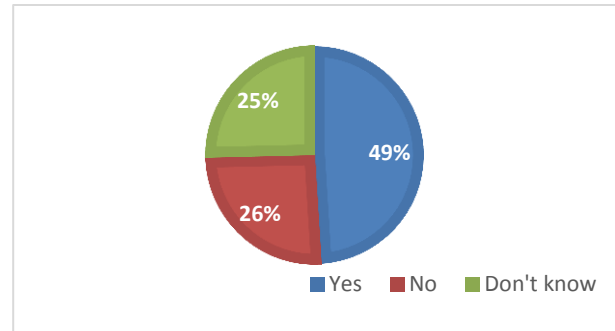


Fig. 6 Militant ideology about democracy and Islam(n=457)

The Fig. 6 illustrates the ideology of the militants regarding democracy in the country. 49% of the respondents viewed that militants consider democracy against Islam, 26% didn't agree with the notion that militants dislike democracy.

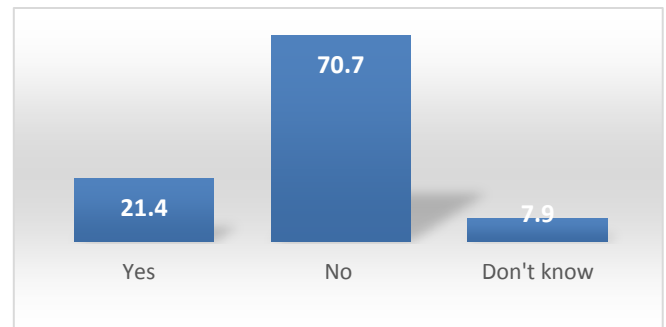


Fig. 7 Government security responsibilities(n=457)

The Fig.7 shows the opinion of the residents of the Khyber Agency that the government doesn't provide security to the people of the tribal areas. 71% of the respondents believed that the government has failed in the protection of the common people of FATA while 21% of the respondents thought that the government is providing security to the residents of the FATA.

Table 1. views about Drone attacks(n=457)

S.No	Variable/Statement	Yes	No	Don't know
1	Drone attacks are against sovereignty of Pakistan	394(86.3%)	38(8.3%)	25(5.5%)
2	Drone hit civilians	395(86.4%)	38(8.3%)	24 (5.3%)
3	Drone promoting militancy	262(57.3%)	113(24.7%)	82(17.9%)

The Table 1 illustrates that 86% of the respondents believed that the drone attacks on Pakistan is against the sovereignty of the country and against the international law, while, 50% of the respondents expressed that the Pakistani government is responsible for the drone strikes in various parts of the country. It also demonstrates that the drone attacks frequently hit civilians in FATA. 86% of the respondents answered that the drone attacks often hit civilians in the tribal areas. The drone strikes are promoting of militancy in Pakistan and particularly in the FATA. 57% of the respondents viewed that the drone attacks on different areas of the country is the main reason of the militancy in the country.

The table 2 shows the opinion of the residents of Khyber Agency that the drone attacks radicalize the local people and foster sentiment against the US and Pakistani government. 50% of the respondents consider that the drone attacks are

responsible Pakistan. 44% consider that America is responsible for drone strikes on te tribal areas of Pakistan.

Table 2 The Drone war responsibility and creating hatred (n=457)

S . N o	Variable/State ment	Pakistan	Ameri ca	Al-Qaeda	Talib an
1	Who is responsible for Drone attacks	229(50.1 %)	202(4 4.3%)	16(3.5%)	10(2. 2%)
2	Drone creating hatred	178(38.9 .4%)	251(5 4.9%)	4 (0.9%)	24(5. 3%)

39% of the respondents said that the drone attacks creating anti-Americanism feelings in the whole country, while 39% of the respondents believed that the drone strikes are creating hatred for the Pakistani government.

Table 3 Comparison of Public perception and daily The News on the bases of perception regarding militancy in FATA

Public Perception			Agenda of daily The News		
Characteristics	Variable s	%	Date	Editorial title	Description
Biggest threat to country	Yes	100	February 13, 2013	Talks of talk	Taliban is the biggest threat to the country
American withdrawal effects	No	52	January 6, 2012	Death and diplomacy	The withdrawal of American and other forces from Afghanistan is not going to alter that objective, and this is a fight that will continue.
Destruction educational institutions	Yes	86	January 11, 2012	Bombers return	The number of schools for both boys and girls that have been destroyed would certainly indicate that the terrorists see no value or future in educating the younger generation
Against female education	Yes	79	February 16, 2013	Talking space	TTP has been violently opposed to female education.
Democracy against Islam	Yes	49	May 22, 2013	Talk and fight	The Taliban have repeatedly expressed their opposition to democracy, deeming it un-Islamic
Government public protection	No	71	September 3, 2011	Violence on Eid	This latest round of violence serves only to illustrate the extent of the state's failure to perform its most basic duty – that of protecting the lives of citizens.
Drone effects	Yes	86	November 01, 2013	Dark skies	Drone attacks as a violation of its sovereignty
			April 15, 2011	No respite	The deaths of six more people in South Waziristan, killed by a drone on Wednesday, is the clearest message yet that we are not masters in our own house
Drone war responsibility	Pakistan	44	March 19, 2011	The gift of deaths	the drone attacks have the tacit support of the government
Drone hits civilians	Yes	86	April 12, 2011	Drones die out	A vast majority was civilian with many women and children among drones killed.

The table 3 demonstrates the comparison of the public agenda and media agenda on the bases of perception regarding militancy in FATA. The table shows that there are similarities in the media and public agenda regarding militancy in FATA. It also clarified that The News has a same policy as public in the area.

DISCUSSION

Research Questions No 1: what is the agenda of daily The News on militancy in FATA?

The results of the study explored that the print media has been involved in a positive agenda towards militancy in FATA, the newspaper published 10 out of 39 editorials in 3 years about perceptions of the militancy to highlight the issue, while 9 editorials about the causes of militancy in the area, 10 editorials regarding effects and 10 editorials on the elimination of the militancy from the FATA.

Research Questions No 2: what is the Public agenda on the issue of militancy in FATA?

The findings of the research disclosed that residents of the Khyber Agency thought that America is behind the scene supporting in the ongoing militancy in FATA. 73% of the respondents replied that America is engaged in the militancy while 51% didn't agree with the notion that militancy will be controlled after the withdrawal of America from Afghanistan. The results also explored that Pakistan indirectly and America is directly responsible for Drone attacks in FATA. 50% of the respondents considered Pakistan, while, 44% of the respondents America responsible for drone strikes in Pakistan. Among them, 86% said that drone attacks hit civilians instead of militants in the area.

Research Questions No 3: what is the difference between public and daily The News agenda regarding militancy in FATA?

The results of the study disclosed that there is no difference between public perception and agenda of selected newspaper because both highlighted the perception, causes, effects and recommendations for elimination of militancy in FATA.

CONCLUSION

Media is playing a vital role in building and promoting the public agenda. It means that media is highlighting the issues and problems that the common people are facing in society.

The study revealed that the media is promoting those issues and problems which the people of the area considers important.

The data of the editorial analysis of the News and Public survey of the residents of the Khyber Agency have the same stance about the perception, causes, effects and suggestions for elimination of militancy in FATA.

It concludes that the Policy of print media is same as the Public of the Khyber Agency towards militancy in the FATA.

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