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Environment of Crimes at Community Level: A Facilitator to Juvenile Militancy in District Swat

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ABSTRACT

This research paper focuses on investigating the relationship between the overall crime environment and juvenile engagement in militant activities. The study involved interviews with all 83 juveniles who had been released from the Mishal Institute for the Rehabilitation of Juvenile Militants, employing a three-level Likert scale for data collection. Statistical analysis was conducted using the Chi-square test to assess the correlation between various factors under consideration. The findings revealed a significant association between juvenile militancy and several key variables, including residing in rural areas, local community members' involvement in criminal activities, family members' participation in criminal acts, challenges in adapting to the community environment, recurrent government force raids, detentions of community members by security forces, encouragement of criminal behavior by locals, severe penalties imposed on community members, training of children to break the law, and the influence of friends involved in criminal activities. Based on these insights, the study recommends several strategies to address and mitigate violent crimes among juveniles. These strategies encompass raising awareness in communities, revitalizing the family institution to ensure proper child upbringing, resolving disputes effectively, and implementing socio-economic interventions to address economic disparities. These measures collectively contribute to the prevention and control of juvenile engagement in militant activities, fostering a safer and more harmonious society.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In post 9/11 scenario, Pakistan emerged as a front line ally state of USA in war on terrorism. This war had multiple and complex socio-economic and political implication on the state and the nation. The major negative effect of this war was emergence of militant groups in various parts of the

country like Swat, Malakand, Buner, Shangla, Lower Dir, Bajaur Agency, Khyber Agency, North and South Waziristan agencies and Orakzai Agency. These areas and its surroundings remained under partial or full control of militant groups that used sheer force and violence to control the people living in these areas. In Swat, the wave of militancy started from June 1989, when a movement, led by one, "Sufi Muhammad" demanded for implementation of Sharia law (Islamic Law) instead of existing customary tribal law. The movement was named as Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Muhammadi (TNSM) i.e. movement for enactment of Islamic Sharia Law (Abbas, 2010). Effective use of slogan of enactment of Sharia law helped attracting Muslims from surrounding areas to join the movement. During 1990, TNSM emerged as a strong counter government force and in 1994, TNSM members wearing black turban "Tor Patki" took control of the region in their hand with the demand from the government to declare/announce Sharia law (Islamic rule of

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law). The purpose of this movement was to declare Sharia (Islamic rule of law) in the region of Malakand Division. The demands of TNSM were eventually accepted by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provincial Government and as a result Nizam-e-Shariat Regulation was enforced on December 1, 1994.

After American invasion on Afghanistan, in 2001, TNSM leadership along with most of its followers migrated to Afghanistan to fight American forces, where most of TNSM followers were killed during fight. Pakistani Security forces, on their return to country, arrested and jailed TNSM leadership (Sultan-i-Rome, 2009). On January 12, 2002, TNSM organization was banned by Government of Pakistan due to its militant activities (Ali et al., 2013). One of the central leaders namely Fazalullah (now head of Tehrik Taliban Afghanistan) stated broadcasting his militant views on an illegal FM radio channel. The FM radio channel, as a medium, was used so effectively that by the year 2015 Fazalullah was a well-known name throughout the region (Khan, 2009).

Fazlullah established an active militia force called "Shaheen Force" by inducting criminal gangs from Swat and surrounding areas that were experienced in handling fire weapons (Hussain, 2011). The militia was involved in attacks on security forces, suicide attacks, Target killing of local influential, attacks on state installations and destruction of girls' schools. In July 2007, the provincial government ordered the Frontier Constabulary (FC) and police to launch a crackdown against Fazlullah's militia, which failed. The militia occupied and gained control over Swat (Rana, 2011). After the incident of Lal Masjid in early July 2007, the militia of Fazlullah merge into the Tahreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), established parallel government in Swat and declared holy war against the Pakistan army (Ali et al., 2013 and Zafar, 2011). After failure of bilateral political dialogue between provincial government and TNSM leadership, two successive military operations namely Rah-e-Haq (Operation Righteous Path launched on October 25, 2007) and Rah-e-Rast (Operation the Straight Path April 28, 2009), were launched against the militants against the militants in Swat to establish writ of state in the area (Ahmad, 2010). During these military operations some 0.15 million families were internally displaced from the Swat District that took refuge in government control districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province.

Waseem (2004) has acknowledged the Islamic militants as the first-generation; whom are generally supra-sectarian, wants to challenge the rule of law and struggling to come into power through elections, and operating through literature. While the second-generation (militants) tries to change the rule of the law through violence and force rather than peaceful means (i.e. elections). The members of Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Muhammadi (TNSM) and the Pakistani Taliban are recognized as the second generation militants or neo-fundamentalists (Rana, 2010). Act of violence in children has its deep roots in their socialization or their reaction to abusing happenings. These harmful events bring dramatic change in social outlook of children and are pronouncedly associated with child victimization of sexual abuse, social structure and position in social hierarchy, economic strains, economic deprivation, poverty, unemployment and poor living condition, violence at family and community level and criminal involvements by the children. A combination of such factors set the trap for children to become criminal or join the violent groups like militants (Zain and Sheema, 2002). In addition, the

performance of mass media in promotion of violence and criminal behavior is active and in most cases emerged as fundamental ingredient of crime and violence (Usmani, 1978).

William (1964) reported that offences did not confine to a person only but somehow affect people in surrounding. Some people are challenging a particular environment in particular way and believed to contribute to children behavioural disorder. Children who are victim of such crimes or living in a criminal surrounding area are more prone to adoption of crimes. Violent crimes, for instance, are growing in tendency in developing countries. Violent crimes are effectively executed in gangs where age of member is not always a criterion for membership. Children are recruited as gang members by offering them compensation, satisfying their sense of revenge, financial rewards and some commodities, which include food. Some well-off members join criminal gangs for the sake of fun only.

Berko et. al., (2004) emphasis that one of the major disparity of suicide bomber in eastern countries and target killer in united America is that these all are encouraged and motivated by communities through appropriate way. Violation from state law and adoption of militant behaviour required encouragement from local bodies to justify such attacks were for their survival. In many countries of Asia, Africa and Middle East, the militants assumed that attacks on state and explosion in public places are positive step to obtain their right. These views are spread by the terrorist and anti-state groups. These groups are spreading the ideology of militancy and encouraging the people to join such parties.

The involvement of youth in conflict in Pakistan can be described as exercise in militancy, as they see themselves as involved in aggressive activism against state in the existing social system. Child militants in Pakistan are mostly concerned with suicide bombing or armed attacks on armed forces of the state. Poverty, lack of maturity, emotional blackmailing and improper socialization render these children easy victims to militant groups. After recruitment, children were psychologically motivated and physically trained to help militants in mission of attacking forces or infrastructure of strategic significance. Several of child militants arrested by Pakistani forces, due to their young age are sent to rehabilitation centers for their socio-psychological rehabilitation and positive education to become a workable productive member of the society (CNN, 2009).

Theoretical Framework

The following theoretical framework is applied to delve deeper into the multifaceted nature of militancy, particularly concerning child militants in Pakistan. It provides a structured approach to understanding the root causes, recruitment processes, and potential interventions related to this complex phenomenon.

Social Learning Theory

Key Concepts: Social Learning Theory, as developed by Albert Bandura, posits that individuals acquire behaviour patterns, including violent tendencies, by observing and imitating others within their social environment. In the context of child militancy in Pakistan, this theory can explain how young individuals may be influenced by the

actions and behaviours of adult militants, family members involved in militancy, or the broader community's acceptance of militant ideologies.

Conflict Theory

Key Concepts: Conflict Theory emphasizes power dynamics, social inequality, and the role of conflict in shaping societies. It examines how conflicts can lead to social change and the emergence of extremist ideologies.

Application: In the case of Pakistan, Conflict Theory can help analyze how socio-economic disparities, political unrest, and ethnic or regional tensions contribute to the rise of militant groups and the recruitment of vulnerable youth as child militants.

Research Questions

Based on above review and analysis of research gaps, this research study is designed to find answers to the following research questions;

- How do the experiences of regular raids by government forces impact the decision of juveniles to join militant groups?
- What role do family members play in influencing and facilitating the participation of juveniles in criminal acts and militant activities?
- To what extent does the encouragement of criminal behaviour by local community members affect the likelihood of juveniles becoming involved in militant groups?
- What strategies can be implemented to effectively raise awareness in communities and deter juveniles from engaging in militant activities?

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Present study was a cross sectional study based on time horizon carried out in district Swat. The data was collected from those children that were captured by government forces and rehabilitated for normal life in a centre naming Mishal institute Swat, where 83 children were rehabilitated. All the available children that were under probation after getting rehabilitation treatment were interviewed (full enumeration) (Sekaran, 2003). The conceptual framework for this study comprised of an independent variable (Environment of crime at community level) and a dependent variable (Juvenile Militancy). Data was collected on a well thought out interview schedule translated into local vernacular and pretested for its validity. A three level likert scale was used for construction of interview schedule. For this purpose a set of attitudinal statements regarding variables under study were pooled from existing literature, opinion of experts in the field and knowledge of researcher. From set of these statements, the most appropriate statements were selected for measurement of attitudinal tendency and personal experience of respondents regarding variable under measurement. The scale so prepared was presented to a departmental Board of Studies and vetted for its appropriateness.

Measurement of Juvenile Militancy

Measurement of juvenile militancy in respondents was based on eight attributes namely training in use of arms,

arms used against enemies, considering militancy as crime, believing militancy will bring social order in the society, families are proud of you as militant, you want to continue as militant, militancy is the only solution to problems and a child chooses militancy to solve his problems. The responses were obtained on a three level scale (Yes, No and Uncertain). The above attributes were indexed for squeezing the data and getting a summary result. A child was considered to have militant tendency if he had a positive response for four (4) or more attributes on the above scale.

Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's Alpha reliability test was used to determine reliability of the scale used for the measurement of Juvenile Militancy. The Cronbach's Alpha value for the scale was 0.967 which show that is highly reliable (Cronbach's Alpha value is higher than 0.7) (Nachmias, 1992). Uni-variate analysis of data included frequency distribution and percentage. Whereas, Chi-square test was used to test the association of variables at Bi-variate level by adopting the following procedure as outlined by Tai (1978).

$$\chi^2 = \sum_{i=1}^r \sum_{j=1}^c \frac{(O_{ij} - E_{ij})^2}{E_{ij}}$$

Where

(χ^2)=Chi-square for two categorical variables

O_{ij} =the observed frequencies in the cross-classified category at ith row and jth column

e_{ij} =the expected frequency for the same category assuming no association

The formula simply directs one to take squared summation of the frequencies for each cell, divided by the expected frequency. The resulting frequency is distributed as chi-square with relevant degree of freedom. The degree of freedom is calculated as follows;

Where

$Df=(r-1)(c-1)$

Df =Degree of freedom

r =the number of rows

c =the number of columns

Wherever the assumption of chi-square test was violated in the data, Fisher's exact test was used instead of simple chi-square. The relationship developed by the Fisher is given in the equation below (Baily, 1982);

$$\text{fisherexacttest} = \frac{(a+b)!(c+d)!(a+c)!(b+d)!}{N! a! b! c! d!}$$

where a, b, c and d were the observed numbers in four cells of contingency table and 'n' the total number of observations.

3. RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

Environment of Crime at Community Level

Table 1 show that 72.3% respondents were living in rural areas and 20% were from urban areas, furthermore, 18.1% respondents stated that members of their communities were involved in criminal activities, 59% refused this statement

and 22.9% were uncertain. In addition, family members of 48.2% respondents were involved in crimes, 36.1% negated it and 15.7% were uncertain about it. It is obvious from above results that both family environment and surrounding community environments of the children is conducive for promotion of crimes, as it is inhabited by criminals. Such criminal environment infuses desire for crimes in youngsters. The results is supported by the finding of (Zain and Sheema,2002) who stated that the involvement of children in criminal activities due to violence at family and community level and the combination of such factors set the trap for children to become criminal or join militant groups.

Furthermore, a big chunk of 54.2% respondents felt themselves maladjustment in community, 33.7% were happy in their communities and 12% were uncertain about it. Community provides a cushion and psychological relief for adjustment of its members through social relation. Failure of community in performing such vital function might initiate the state of violence or isolation. The results are supported by the findings of (Berko et al, 2004) who explained that in some communities, especially areas of Palestine and Afghanistan, in a situation of maladjustment of children, they prepared their self to militant groups as suicide bombers for destruction purposes. The results further show that 39.8% respondents were unaware of raids made by law enforcing agencies in their areas, 34.9% refused occurrence of such raids and 25.3% accepted regular raids from law enforcing agencies. Moreover, 47% admitted that enforcing agencies picked up their community members, 37.3% negated it and 15.7% were uncertain. The result points to a state of harassment from state agencies in form of conducting regular raids in picking of the resident. The study area has remained under the influence of militant, which probably is the cause of such regular raids. However, the fear of such actions Shatter the nerves of people especially children. Uribe (1992) stated that due to

fear from authorities the Colombian colonial started conflict for their own safety.

In line to above results 42.9% respondents reported that resident of their area encouraged crimes and 28.9% each negated or were uncertain about this view. Moreover, 62.7% respondents accepted that enforcing agencies rigorously punished resident of their area, 14.5% were against it and 22.9% were not obviously sure. Crimes and punishment are associated with each other. In environment of crimes at community level, it becomes a social norm, where people encouraged in train their youngster in crimes. Existence and activities of enforcing agencies in such areas is logical and necessary for curbing crimes. However, uncontrolled use of power by such agencies may further aggravate the situation by instigating hatred among masses against forces. The results are supported by the findings of (Tessler and Robbins, 2007) that individuals who feel powerless or unsatisfied by the performance of formal political institutions are more likely to turn to anti state organizations or be manipulated by groups who exploit individual political and economic frustrations. Majority of 51.8% respondents negated that peoples of their areas trained their children to violate law, 13.3% admitted this statement and 34.9% were not sure. However, 55.4% respondents admitted that most of their friends were criminals, 27.7% negated it and 16.9% were uncertain. Poor check from parents and activities of children, rather encouraging them on deviance with the supplement gathering of criminal friends provoke crimes and violence as existed in these militant children. Ansari (2004) stated deviant behaviors are actually learned from the environment and due to peer group association, majority of the friends are compelled to adopt deviant behaviors.

Table 1
Frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents according to environment of crime at community level

Statements According to environment of crime at community level	Yes	No.	Uncertain
You lived in rural area.	60 -72.30%	20 -24.10%	3 -3.60%
People of your area were mostly involved in crimes.	15 -18.10%	49 -59.00%	19 -22.90%
Members of your family were involved in crimes.	40 -48.20%	30 -36.10%	13 -15.70%
You felt uneasy due to your maladjustment in your community environment.	45 -54.20%	28 -33.70%	10 -12.00%
Law enforcing agencies regularly raided your area.	21 -25.30%	29 -34.90%	33 -39.80%
Members of your community were picked up by enforcing agencies.	39 -47.00%	31 -37.30%	13 -15.70%
Residents of your area encouraged crimes.	35 -42.90%	24 -28.90%	24 -28.90%
The enforcing agencies rigorously punished people of your area.	52 -62.70%	12 -14.50%	19 -22.90%
People in your area train their children to violate law.	11 -13.30%	43 -51.80%	29 -34.90%
Most of your friends remained involved in crimes.	46 -55.40%	23 -27.70%	14 -16.90%

Association between Juvenile Militancy and Environment of Crime at Community Level

A person living in an area is highly influence by society surrounding him. Environment of crime is affecting behavior of individuals by development of deviance in them. A state of poor state control or over use of power by state agencies further aggravates the situation of crimes and militancy. To have an objective understanding of the association of crimes and community level and juvenile militancy, the concept of militancy was limited to few statements as given in Table 2. The bi-variate analysis between juvenile militancy (Dependent variable) and environment of crimes at community level (independent Variables) showed that a highly significant association (P=0.000) was present between juvenile militancy and living in rural areas. The possible reason of the association is poor writ of state and high militant control in these areas. Moreover, feuds in these areas also promote militancy. Similarly, association of involvement of local residents in crimes and juvenile militancy had highly significant association (p=0.000). In addition, juvenile militancy had a highly significant association with involvement of family members in crimes. It is evident that a general environment of crimes at family and community level with no restriction measures from family and society support are pushing for militant behavior as made obvious by above results. Environment of crimes at community level increases the likelihood of social isolation and exclusion of children (A. Ullah and Mussawar, 2014). According to William (1964) to control militancy, one has to deal with all particular environmental conditions that are believed to contribute children behavioral disorder and those children who show signs of potential criminal behavior or who are clearly surrounded by environmental and social factors that invite them to adopt militancy. Likewise, juvenile militancy had highly significant association with maladjustment in community environment (p=0.000), regular raids from law enforcing agencies (p=0.000) and

picking up of community members by law enforcing agencies (p=0.000).Childhood demands for special physical and socio psychological adjustment from the members of the society. An environment of crimes and harassment in form of violent raids from forces and kidnapping shatter the personality of children and may inculcate a sense of revenge in them in form of militancy. The findings is supported by Bloom (2001) stated that if the children come from such environment who have been neglected and exploited, they learn to be violent, learn that violence is a viable and effective means of revenge and solving problems.

Furthermore, juvenile militancy had a highly significant association with local encouragement to crimes (p=0.000), rigorous punishment to local people (p=0.000), training children to violate law (p=0.000) and involvement of most of friends in crimes (p=0.000). The result highlight two dimensions that motivate to crimes and militancy, one is a general encouragement from society and association of criminal friends and secondly mishandle from enforcing agencies that instigate a sense of revenge and commencement of violence in form of militancy among children. Non-conformity to social norms among children is strong associate of general environment of crimes in society. Deviance in form of crimes, violence and militant behaviour becomes obvious in children exposed to environment of crimes at their communities (A. Ullah et al., 2014). Bloom, (2001) stated that Children showed desire for justice, and this desire for revenge may also serve as a defense against the law for progress and improvement in life adjustment. The above results helps to conclude that a general environment of crimes and violence in society expose children to deviance. Criminal support from families, general masses and friends in form of support to crimes further aggravate the situation. Moreover, if the situation is mishandled by enforcing agencies by aggression against innocent the juvenile militancy is expected to become high and more revengeful.

Table 2
Association between juvenile militancy and environment of crime

Statements	Attitude	Juvenile Militancy				P value
		Yes	No.	Uncertain	Total	
You lived in rural area.	Yes	19 (22.9%)	32(38.6%)	9(10.8%)	60(72.3%)	0
	No	0.0(0.0%)	0.0(0.0%)	20(24.1%)	20(24.1%)	
	Uncertain	0.0(0.0%)	0.0(0.0%)	3(3.6%)	3(3.6%)	
People of your area were mostly involved in crimes.	Yes	15(18.1%)	0.0(0.0%)	0.0(0.0%)	15(18.1%)	X2=96.384
	No	4(4.8%)	32(38.6%)	13(15.7%)	49(59.0%)	
	Uncertain	0.0(0.0%)	0.0(0.0%)	19(22.9%)	19(22.9%)	
Members of your family were involved in crimes.	Yes	19(22.9%)	21(25.3%)	0.0(0.0%)	40(48.2%)	0
	No	0.0(0.0%)	11(13.3%)	19(22.3%)	30(36.3%)	
	Uncertain	0.0(0.0%)	0.0(0.0%)	13(15.7%)	13(15.7%)	
You felt uneasy due to your maladjustment in your community environment.	Yes	19(22.9%)	26(31.3%)	0.0(0.0%)	45(54.2%)	0
	No	0.0(0.0%)	6(7.2%)	22(26.5%)	28(33.7%)	
	Uncertain	0.0(0.0%)	0.0(0.0%)	10(12.0%)	10(12.0%)	
Law enforcing agencies regularly raided your area.	Yes	19(12.9%)	2(12.4%)	0.0(0.0%)	21(25.3%)	0
	No	0.0(0.0%)	29(34.9%)	0.0(0.0%)	29(34.9%)	
	Uncertain	0.0(0.0%)	1(1.2%)	32(38.6%)	33(39.8%)	
Members of your community were picked up by enforcing agencies.	Yes	19(22.9%)	20(24.1%)	0.0(0.0%)	39(47.0%)	0
	No	0.0(0.0%)	12(14.5%)	19(22.9%)	31(37.3%)	
	Uncertain	0.0(0.0%)	0.0(0.0%)	13(15.7%)	13(15.7%)	
Residents of your area encouraged crimes.	Yes	19(22.9%)	16(19.3%)	0.0(0.0%)	35(42.2%)	0

	No	0.0(0.0%)	16(19.3%)	8(9.6%)	24(28.9%)	X2=77.862
	Uncertain	0.0(0.0%)	0.0(0.0%)	24(28.9%)	24(28.9%)	
The enforcing agencies rigorously punished people of your area.	Yes	19(22.9%)	32(38.6%)	1(1.2%)	52(62.6%)	0
	No	0.0(0.0%)	0.0(0.0%)	12(14.5%)	12(14.5%)	X2=78.860
	Uncertain	0.0(0.0%)	0.0(0.0%)	19(22.9%)	19(22.9%)	
People in your area train their children to violate law.	Yes	11(13.35%)	0.0(0.0%)	0.0(0.0%)	11(13.3%)	0
	No	8(9.6%)	32(38.6%)	3(3.6%)	43(51.8%)	X2=109.084
	Uncertain	0(0.0%)	0.0(0.0%)	29(34.9%)	29(34.9%)	
Most of your friends remained involved in crimes.	Yes	19(22.9%)	27(32.5%)	0.0(0.0%)	46(55.4%)	0
	No	0.0(0.0%)	5(6.0%)	18(21.7%)	23(27.7%)	X2=68.058
	Uncertain	0.0(0.0%)	0.0(0.0%)	14(16.9%)	14(16.9%)	

4. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The above results helps to conclude that a general environment of crimes and violence in society expose children to deviance. Criminal support from families, general masses and friends in form of support to crimes further aggravate the situation. Moreover, if the situation is mishandled by enforcing agencies by aggression against innocent the juvenile militancy is expected to become high and more revengeful.

Controlling violent crimes through awareness raising, positive use of mass media, and revitalization of family institution for proper brought up of children, legal and traditional dispute resolution institutions for controlling crimes and dispute resolution and overcoming economic disparities through socio-economic interventions were the major policy recommendations in light of the study.

Competing Interests

The authors did not declare any competing interest.

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