

STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPMENT OF FATA

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Abstract

The law and order situation of FATA, during the recent years of turmoil caused by the war on terror resembles that of late nineteenth century situation which it faced after the Third Afghan War. The socio-economic situation of FATA cannot be changed with ordinary procedures and methods. It is evident from different reports that people desire development but according to their terms. The dignity and respect for their culture are as equally important as the provision of education, health, environment, social protection, and job market. The existing development model in practice needs substantial reverse engineering and speedy work. This study presents a situational analysis and model for the development of FATA focusing on various service sectors and highlights the role of Military, Donors and NGOs in the development process. This study adopts a qualitative methodology and utilizes government reports as sources material.

Keywords: Socio-economic, Environment, Situational, Infrastructure

Introduction

During the British Rule, development activities in FATA were only security oriented and limited to the construction of border security roads, forts, piquets, road-side observation posts and check posts for the security of forts and secured movement of Frontier Corps between border area and the forts. Functional health and education facilities were only provided in the vicinity of the Agency Headquarters and Sub-Divisional Headquarters, leaving the bulk of agency population at its own. These arrangements continued till the visit of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, the then Prime Minister of Pakistan to South and North Waziristan in 1973. However, even today much of the scenario has not changed; people of FATA don't have any legislative assembly of their own, though they have representation in the Senate and National Assembly. FATA falls under the direct exclusive

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executive power of the President granted by constitution under articles 51, 59, and 247.

FATA illustrates a terrible and apathetic picture, while looking at its disadvantaged communities and the state of governance. Although, hospitality is the tradition of the area but tribal wars, extremist propensity, and tendency of excessive crimes have been very common in the area. The crime ratio has also been drastically worse during the Afghan war due to excessive arms and increasing warlords in the area adjacent to Durand Line. In this scenario, women and kids live in most vulnerable conditions, for getting resources, basic amenities, and access to information. They do not have any say and participation in the decision-making process, though their names are being used in different documents such as political representation and local councils. They have no means to access basic health and education amenities. Leaving aside the agency headquarters where basic health facilities are available, general people of the area remain deprived of this basic requirement. Poor health care in the region has resulted in large numbers of untimely and avoidable casualties. Access to health services is severely limited, with just one dispensary, basic health unit or rural health centre for every 50 square kilometers of area and these facilities mostly concentrated near the settled areas.¹

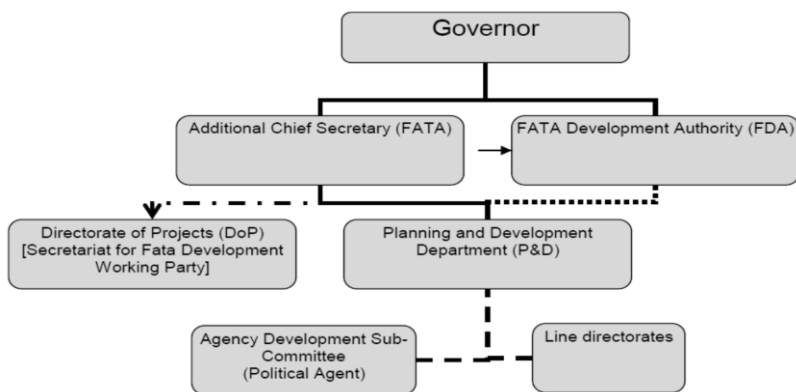
As regards education, a total of three graduate colleges exist across FATA for more than two million people and only one is for women located in the Khyber Agency. The inadequate and skeletal infrastructure is the root cause of such underdevelopment in the area. The infrastructural facilities have been decreasing instead of increasing for last several years. According to education census 2015-16, there were 5,994 schools in the FATA and as many as 1,036 schools (611 for boys and 425 for girls) were non-functional. 3,842 of the total functional schools were of primary level, and 2,219 of them catered to boys and 1,623 were girls' primary schools. 118 schools were being run in mosques, while 169 were community-run schools. The report stated that 32 of these institutions were industrial home centers, 439 were middle schools (273 for boys and 166 for girls),

296 high schools (231 for boys and 65 for girls), 15 higher secondary schools (10 for boys five for girls) and 32 were colleges (21 boys and 11 girls). The data of non-functional schools showed that of the total 1,036 non-functional institutions, 692 were primary schools (418 for boys and 274 for girls), 41 mosque schools, 137 community-run primary schools (54 for boys and 83 for girls), 111 were middle schools (68 for boys and 43 for girls), 39 high schools (27 for boys and 12 for girls) one higher secondary school for boys while three colleges (two for boys and one for girls) were also non-functional. Of the 9 closed institutions, five were primary level schools (four for boys and one for girls) while four community schools (one for boys and three for girls) are also closed.²

FATA reflects a terrible and apathetic picture while looking at its disadvantaged communities and the state of governance. Notwithstanding the cherished tribal traditions like hospitality and stronger social bonds, tribal wars, extremist propensity and tendency of excessive crimes have become the hallmark of the tribal belt today. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the subsequent wars there have had a further deteriorating impact on the increasing crime ratio due to excessive arms accessibility and growing number of warlords in the area adjacent to Durand Line. Women and children are the greatest victim of this scenario, vulnerable to the scarcity of basic resources and amenities. Basic health and education amenities are a far away dream for these neglected strata of society. A total of three graduate colleges exist across FATA for more than two million people and only one is for women located in the Khyber Agency. Lack of access to information and any opportunity to give vent to their views have practically excluded women from participation in the decision-making process, though their names are being used in different documents such as political representation and local councils. The inadequate and skeletal infrastructure is the root cause of such underdevelopment in the area. Ironically, these infrastructural facilities have been decreasing instead of increasing for the last several years.

Numerous development plans have been proposed by different public sector organizations to change this chronic situation and uplift the socioeconomic conditions of the area. The FATA Development Authority established under FATA Secretariat in the year 2006 is the central body that deals with the development activities across the administrative boundaries of FATA. The Authority was established mainly to promote socio-economic development through public-private partnership. Subsequently with the increase in foreign funding, the Directorate of the Projects (DoP) was also established in 2007 in the FATA Secretariat to coordinate these funds and donor activities. The Directorate was set up to design, plan, implement, and monitor foreign funded projects to bring sustainable social and economic development in the area. The new arrangement was aimed at achieving coordinated implementation of various development projects/plans for optimal developmental outcomes. The development framework of FATA can be summarized as given in the Figure 1 below.

Figure – 1 - FATA Development Framework



Source: Planning and Development Department, FATA Secretariat, Peshawar

Situation Analysis of FATA

In FATA, currently the development activities are carried out through three types of project designs:

- The projects in first category are implemented by the Government of Pakistan under Annual Development Plans through its own funds and according to the procedures prescribed in annual budgets and by the Federal Planning Commission. These projects are planned, executed and monitored by the executing departments according to the rules, procedures and principles laid down by the Government of Pakistan.
- The second are the rural development projects funded by multi-lateral or bi-lateral donors. These projects have their own project office/project management unit and staff. Although, these projects follow the procedures laid down by the Federal Planning Commission, but they are also bound to follow the procedures laid down by the donor agencies.
- The third types of projects working in FATA are the ones, which follow their own procedures and rules, independent of the Government of Pakistan. The FATA secretariat in this case only coordinates these projects through Directorate of Projects.

Although all the three types of project designs are following different execution mechanism, they have one thing in common. They all concentrate on activities that are overlapping rather than supplementing each other. All of their developmental efforts are focused on working in the same areas like provision of new facilities, maintenance and repair, capacity building or provision of food and non-food items to the people hit by war or natural disaster in the area.

Major Issues in FATA Development

Currently, the following issues are seriously hampering the overall development process led by international community, government and government officials and development sector organization towards bringing any change in the FATA:-

Lack of Vision

The development initiatives by the Government of Pakistan and the donors are based on old techniques and methodologies. Every year a number of schools, health institutions and other related infrastructure are

built but without any visible amelioration in the condition of common people. There is no vision or a development model devised for the peculiar situation of the area due to War on Terror. The efforts undertaken by the Government and Donors would have made a meaningful improvement with their current style only if peace had existed there. Recently FATA has been passing through a difficult time and therefore needs an extraordinary vision and a different development approach to yield fruitful results. The government must work more effectively by designing a SMART (Specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely) plan to rebuild the lives of natives.³

Resistance to NGOs and Foreign Donors

Government of Pakistan restrained foreign NGOs and their representatives' entry to FATA and allied areas due to serious concerns and security issues.⁴ The NGOs and foreign donors do not have any acceptability in the social system throughout the country. But they face sever resistance

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and conflict in FATA. The tribesmen consider NGOs as anti-religion and un-Islamic. Due to liberal environment of NGOs, their progressive and open-mindedness and mixed

cultural activities make them socially alienated in FATA and other conservative societies. People consider them foreign agents who have vested interest in conflict with their religion and homeland culture. Thus, most of NGOs and donors are considered as a source of foreign occupation.

Weak Capacity of Government Executing Agencies

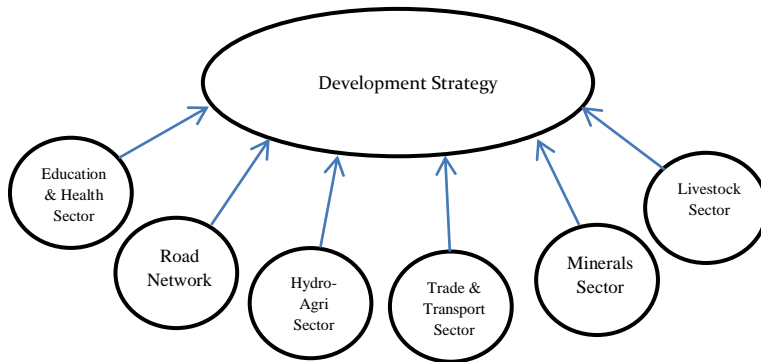
On one side, the role of NGOs is not acceptable to the people and on the other side, the government executing agencies which are acceptable to the people have little capacity to design and execute projects to bring meaningful change in the area. There is a serious need for improving the capacities of these executing agencies.⁵ The administrative reforms instituted by the successive governments, directed to bring change in the

working of the civilian administration have failed as these reforms did not take into consideration the culture, traditions, social system and economic status of the area. Although the development sector organizations have been paying millions of dollars for getting technical assistance and other non-development expenditures to their foreign consultants but, due to local administrations' poor capacity to deliver, no visible results have been achieved yet.

Proposed Development Strategy

As discussed above, today FATA needs a unique multi-pronged development model based on reverse engineering and limited to a few important sectors that can help people of FATA improve their economy, build their stakes in the national mainstream and help them improve their social status. The model should propose a comprehensive socio-economic plan developed through participatory process. The suggested development dimensions of the proposed model are given in Figure 2 below.

Figure-2 - Proposed Development Dimensions



Education and Health

In the current scenario, it is difficult to provide advance health and education at the door steps. Due to large amount of financial and logistical resources required to provide such facility at the doorstep, it is more feasible to provide quality educational and health facilities at the divisional, sub-divisional and tehsil headquarters levels. The centralized education and

health facility arrangements can bring better results instead of providing security to each school and health center in the far flung areas. There is a need to build residential schools for both males and females from sixth to twelfth grade. In these schools, there should be free education and free accommodation.

It has been a common claim of respondents that illiteracy is the major cause of extremism in FATA. The provision of free education, accommodation and food in *Madrassas* (religious seminaries) is the main charm for the poor tribesmen to send their children *Madrassas*. If the government provides such facilities in residential schools within a controlled environment, it can counter the trend of sending the young ones to *Madrassas* and, as a result, can counterbalance extremist approaches and mechanisms. This will encourage students to come to such schools. It will be easy for the administration to have a check on these schools and quality education can be given to the residents of FATA.⁶ Similarly, the teaching staff should be provided residential facilities near the school in a secure environment to ensure their attendance.

The same procedure should be adopted for health facilities. Rather than constructing health facilities across FATA, the health facilities at the Headquarters should be improved and uplifted. More than 800 health units and 30 hospitals are already working in FATA. Approximately 3000 professional and trained staff is employed by these basic health units.⁷

The international development organizations are pouring their funds for health and education facilities in the FATA but not in a systematic way.

Access to good quality of care is limited and acknowledged barriers include unequally distributed health infrastructure, staff absenteeism, lack of drugs and lack of clinical skills among the health professionals

leading to poor quality of services. The international development organizations such as World Bank, UNICEF, UNDP, JICS and USAID are pouring their funds for health and education facilities in the FATA but not in a systematic way. All these funds, combined with the efforts of the government, can easily equip existing health and education facilities at

headquarters rather than putting these resources at stake by constructing new buildings in unsecured areas.

Road Infrastructure

The infrastructure especially roads had never been so vulnerable and destroyed before the coalition forces came in Afghanistan. Now, all connecting roads in the tribal belt and border areas were damaged due to mortar shells, movement of heavy equipment and natural disasters. When the education and health institutions are centralized, good quality road structure is required throughout FATA to connect the far-flung areas with the headquarters. The main roads that connect FATA to the settled districts are required to be reconstructed and connections to local areas be provided to initiate socioeconomic development activities. Civil and military organizations including Frontier Works Organization (FWO) are already working for the construction of road infrastructure. According to FWO Project Director, a portion of 550 kilometers is being built by FWO in FATA and other projects are under construction.⁸ This infrastructural arrangement, on the one side, will help develop the trade and mineral sector of the area and, on the other side, provide quick response time to the students and tribesmen needing to reach for their needs and health services available at the headquarters.

Hydro-Agri Sector

FATA has a rugged terrain with short span of a rainfall. Mostly rainfall occurs in off-season and results in flooding that destroys land and the water goes waste. To boost agriculture sector, this water is required to be stored and the lands protected from soil erosion due to flash floods. It will be very useful to have water retaining structures all across FATA like check dams, water storage dams, reservoirs, retaining structures for land along with water distribution systems for agricultural purposes. This will help in not only boosting the agriculture sector but also saving the erosion of land.⁹ The area is blessed with unlimited quantity of natural resources. The minerals, livestock, precious flora and fauna and pure natural water are the potential economic resources that can be tamed towards development of the area.

Such resources can be very vital to eradicate poverty that makes people vulnerable and oppressed.

Trade & Transport Sector

Trade is the major source of Tribal economy. FATA has three of the four major trade routes connecting Pakistan with Afghanistan. These trade routes should be developed and facilities are required to be provided to the tribesmen that can increase the trade turnover in the area. Similarly, the second sector that needs to be organized and improved is the transportation

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sectors, a main source of employment in the tribal areas. This sector also needs to be supported. Transportation is the key to the development of any area. The access to market, health, education and other

basic municipal services can only be ensured if proper transportation system is provided and road infrastructure is developed.¹⁰ A major impediment in the development of trade sector in FATA is the nonexistence of proper banking system. With the exception of agency headquarters, a major part of FATA is still without any banking and financing facility, thus hindering business activities there. In order to boost economic activities and trade, proper and state of the art banking system with reasonable financing facilities is required in FATA.

Minerals Sector

The other important sector that needs to be invested in is the mineral sector. This will provide a good economic opportunity to the people of FATA and help them improve their economic conditions. The area has a great potential of minerals that is a billion-dollar industry these days. The mineral sector is also linked with engineering and technical education. Establishing and providing such connected facilities can bring a faster and effective change in FATA. Pakistan Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (PCSIR) can also play vital role in the development of mineral

sector in FATA.¹¹ Once the things are settled down, the international investors can be invited by using diplomatic marketing and peace diplomacy.

Livestock Sector

Livestock is a source of food, transportation and household income in FATA and is an established industry. The number of ruminants in FATA stands at 4.89 million, consisting of 1.01 million cattle, 0.12 million buffalo, 1.37 million sheep, 2.22 million goats, and 0.17 million camels, horses, asses and mules (Government of KPK, 2005). The figure is even holding in the period of war and extremism in the area that can be multiplied many a times if peace and harmony comes back. The household animals of Afghan refugees are not included in the abovementioned estimates.

Poultry is another source of earning livelihood in FATA that meets local and Afghan market demands. It is evident from the research that the 15% population has full time employment provided by the livestock industry. This industry can be furnished and regulated by introducing investment plans and inviting local and international investors. This kind of initiatives can be very helpful to normalize the peace and security situation and bring socioeconomic development that would ultimately uplift the living standards of inhabitants of FATA.

Role of Military, Donors and NGOs

The role of Military, donors and NGOs in FATA, especially in a situation where the Political Administration and the executing agencies has serious deficiencies cannot be ruled out. In the current scenario, these agencies can play a very positive role in planning, monitoring and evaluation for development of FATA. Similarly, their role in financial management, human resource improvement and capacity building of the agencies involved in the development sector of FATA will be an added advantage to the Political Administration and Government of Pakistan. According to the President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, Mr. Zahid Hussain, Pakistan

Army is playing an important role in the development of the infrastructure and people of FATA.¹²The NGOs and donors can play this role effectively, sitting in the capitals of KP and Pakistan and the army in the field. This will also reduce the security risk prevailing in FATA for these agencies besides providing a system of check and balances and monitoring and evaluation.

Conclusion

The fate of FATA had never been so-affixed with Afghan politics as it became after Russian invasion of Afghanistan. The third generation of FATA is brought up in the environment of guns and bullets. They are witness to

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the extremity of bloodshed that has never been seen by their forefathers. The dignity, self-respect, social pride, and cultural richness of the area and its inhabitants have blurred in the current circumstances. The

meanings of development have entirely changed. The onus of responsibility for their plight does not rest solely with the People of FATA, especially the young generation. The international community, especially those who have remained involved there for the last three decades, are also answerable along with the extremist elements for this gloomy period of FATA.

Today FATA is receiving huge funds mainly from international development agencies, donor organizations and from the federal government. However, available funds are not properly utilized towards the development of FATA. The situation in the area has changed a lot considering its social hierarchy, cultural traditions and living standards due to longstanding war on terror and equally increasing extremism in the area. New approach towards development and social uplift is required. In order to mainstream the area and people, somewhat reverse engineering will be required and a fresh start is needed to be taken. The resources are required to be pooled and utilized in a proper way which can change the fate of the

people by providing them a workable infrastructure, standard health facilities, education, security and basic amenities of life.

Apart from the blame game, sustainable measures of development through SMART (Specific, measureable, achievable, realistic, and timely) rule are still missing. The capacity of the local administration to deliver needs to be improved a lot, especially in terms of public consultation, community engagement and trust building. In this scenario, the required development and its discourse is not what the international standards require but it should correspond to what is needed by the local people, suiting the prevailing situation; only that can bring some positive changes in the lives of the inhabitants of FATA.

NOTES

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