A Critique of the Assessment of Achievements and Failures of the Foreign Funded Projects in District Khyber

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Abstract

This study was conducted to assess the achievements and failures of the foreign funded projects conducted in Khyber Agency. The data was collected from the donors’ websites, office files and newspaper articles and through interviews from the beneficiaries of the project. The findings of the study show that these projects have benefited the community in a variety of ways. The people have been helped in livestock and agriculture sectors which in turn have boosted the economic activities resulting in the ultimate restitution of the livelihood of the community. The findings also show that the limited economic opportunities in the Newly Merged Districts (NMDs) have forced the local people, especially young men, to join either militant groups or indulge in illicit trades which offer good financial incentives. Thus, the creation of employment and other alternative livelihood options through the market-led agriculture and livestock are critical for the stabilization of the NMDs. The findings also reveal the fact that the precarious situation, threats from the non-state actors, and the intervention of the local landlords and some governmental departments hinder the smooth operation of these projects. In the light of the data analysis, the researcher recommends that more funds should be allocated for agriculture, rehabilitation, energy, infrastructure and health sectors. The monitoring system should be upgraded, the community should be directly involved and the participation of the governmental personnel and departments should be minimized.

Keywords: Foreign Funded, Agrarian, Locals, Humanitarian, Economy.

Introduction

After every major cataclysmic disaster both man-made and natural a plethora of organizations mushrooms out and then fizzles out in no time after its work is done. After the US started an anti-terror war in Afghanistan in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the Newly Merged Districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were among the worst affected areas of Pakistan becoming centre of focus from all over the world. With all around armed conflicts raging unremittingly, the whole area was a den of militants and the hotbed of terrorists’ violence. Due to fierce fighting between the Military and non-state actors in district Khyber and the rest of erstwhile FATA, a biggest exodus of people approximating nearly 3 million, both from the erstwhile FATA and the adjacent districts, left their native land and migrated to other parts of the country (Khan, 2012).

Besides man-made disasters, natural disasters have also wrought havoc in FATA and other parts of Pakistan. The 2005 earthquake, the devastating floods of 2010 and 2014 have converged the attention of the International Development Community. Due to the very limited role of governmental institutions in delivering services to the people of FATA, Foreign Donors and Humanitarian Organizations have come to the fore and launching projects in order to facilitate and serve the masses in a variety of ways. The aim of
this research paper is to evaluate the successful strategies and services delivered under extreme threat and in precarious situations (Mirt, 2010).

Humanitarian assistance mainly focuses on three targets of intervention which broadly follows one another, i.e. meeting the immediate needs of food, shelter, and health services (Waters et al., 2007). International donors have served at different levels regardless of their character, nature, and intentions. Their ultimate objective is to create a better and more stable community. Foreign donors have been working in liaison with the governmental departments with the objectives to serve the people of the newly merged districts and provide them humanitarian assistance and ensure socio-economic development of the area (Huma, 2012).

Khyber district, a former Agency located in the erstwhile FATA, ranging from the Tirah Valley down to Peshawar, is one of the seven Newly Merged Districts (NMDs) of KP. The economy of the Khyber district is relatively weak compared to the other districts and administrative territories of Pakistan. Local households are engaged in subsistence farming, rearing of livestock and other small-scale businesses. Khyber district, especially the upper and lower parts of Tehsil Bara, is blessed with abundant natural resources. Due to the scarcity of water, the district has little cultivable land, i.e. 24,153 hectares out of the total 257,676 hectare area. Rural Population of the Khyber district is 889,433. Besides, the agriculture and livestock sectors of the area have been gravely impacted by the chaos of militancy and military operations. Farmers were evicted of their belongings like houses, poultries, livestock, agriculture land and businesses. Upon their return to homes after years of displacement, farm-based households in the district have received support from FAO with the financial assistance of JICA, USAID and INL to rebuild their livelihood.

The limited economic opportunities in the NMDs have forced the local people, especially young, to join either militant groups or indulge in illicit trade which offers good financial incentives. Thus, the creation of employment and other alternative livelihood options through the market-led agriculture and livestock are critical for the stabilization of NMDs.

Japan International Cooperative Agency (JICA) (2011) invested in and funded these sectors in order to ensure Human Security and Human Development, to develop sound Market Economy, and to achieve a balanced regional socio-economic development.

In (2009-2013), USAID funded different projects in the then FATA in order to increase the capacity and efficiency of power and energy sectors, to foster private-sector-led economic growth, to ensure stability in the region, to increase access to quality education and Health care. All these areas were highly susceptible to extremist activities.

**Review of Literature**

Besides general perceptions of the community, lots of articles, theses and books have been written about the nature and objectives of Foreign Donor Agencies in the former FATA. Some have given unbiased and prejudiced views regarding the positive and negative perceptions of the community about the International Donor Agencies. Others have taken the Donors as an integral part of the new liberal agenda, rolling back the state and opening international borders for globalization, deregulation of labor market, thus rendering the process of hiring and firing quite easy. Others have pointed with anxiety to the extraordinary growth of social sector projects in Pakistan and particularly in the former FATA and marvel at their resources and outreach. There are persons who have been part of the Donor Agencies. They have deplored in their essays lesser tendency so far transparency and accountability are concerned. The following is a brief literature review, selected from a bewilderingly massive writings in this rapidly dynamic field.

Akbar (2010) has elaborated on the communication strategies for projects’ implementation in the area of intervention. He has pointed out the difficulties and great challenges faced by the implanters and donors.
Aslam (2008) has meticulously analyzed the terror acts in the tribal regions bringing to light the masterminds of this perennial problem and the role of the Donor Agencies in helping the people during conflict on the basis of Humanitarian principles.

Din (2010) in his article “Internal Displacement in Pakistan: Contemporary challenges” has pointed to the great exodus of IDPs of FATA and the repercussions in store for Pashtuns. His verdict and opinions are based on arguments and are presented in the light of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan.

Farooq et al. (2009) in their paper “Developing FATA, A White Paper for USAID” have elaborated on the rehabilitation projects in FATA, funded by the USAID. To what extent these commensurate with needs of the community and have pointed to the allocation of funds and interventions.

Khan et al. (2016) research thesis titled “Armed Conflict in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan and the Role of Donors in Restoring Health Services” has earned wide fame in the scholarly circles of Pakistan. They have fully explored the issues of militancy and the hurdles faced by the Donor Agencies. Moreover, the apathy of government sectors and great miseries of the people of FATA have been thoroughly explored in all its dimensions and hues.

FDS (2005), FATA Development Statistics Peshawar Pakistan, Planning and Development Bureau of Statistics, has rendered valuable job in the compilation of all the projects working in FATA. Foreign funded organizations have been elaborated at length and the areas of their intervention and sectors have been thoroughly discussed.

FATA Research Centre (2013), “A Seminar on IDPs of FATA: Issues and Challenges,” is a probing document seeking to find solution to the problems of Tribal people and have pointed to the great hardships and challenges faced by the field workers during launching of different projects.

Muriuk (2005) in his work, “Contributions of Organizations in Complex Emergencies” has pointed to the contributions of different donors in complex emergencies in FATA. He has tried to repudiate the fallacies and allegations against foreign funded projects.

JEN (2016) testifies the meritorious job rendered by JICA – the Japanese organization. Through rearing livestock, the economy of the returnees was considerably improved helping them retrieve their old standard of life very easily.

SRSP (2017) in its annual report enumerates all the projects launched and completed by Sarhad Rural Support Program throughout FATA. SRSP is unique in the sense that almost all foreign donors have funded this organization. The main arena of its activities is the livelihood and Education.

KADP (2016) report by FATA Secretariat Peshawar is an exhaustive documentation of the Khyber Area Development Project. The report has elaborated on the incessant struggle of this organization in the elimination of poppy crop - an opium producing crop - from the area through the production of alternative crops.

Objectives of the study

Following are the objectives of the study:

- To explore and evaluate the strategies adopted by USAID and JICA for the successful operation of their projects in District Khyber
- To pinpoint the perceptions of the community about these organizations in the area of military operations
To evaluate these foreign funded projects in District Khyber, and to know for certain whether the projects commensurate with the needs of the community or not.

Research Methodology

For the sake of accuracy and collection of maximum information, two-pronged mixed methodology was adopted by the researcher. Alongside the field visits and interviews, websites of the donors were meticulously searched, office files were raked out, newspaper articles were perused in spades and all other accessible desk reviews were thoroughly studied. Interviews were mostly taken from the most reliable stakeholders of the region as well as from the available personnel who had worked in the projects. Beneficiaries of all strata of society and gender were interviewed in their villages and all the necessary information was collected.

In order to be cognizant of the successes and failures of the completed projects in District Khyber, the researcher visited the concerned district personally. The areas where the projects had been launched and then phased out after completion were observed in the hope to see the signs of developmental works. The researcher noted all the negative and positive remarks, the expectations and dreams of the community people with sympathy and detachment without any bias and partiality for the donor. This study mainly focused on the completed projects of JICA and USAID.

JICA and USAID Funded Projects In Khyber Agency

Background of the JICA Project:

FAO with the financial assistance of the Government of Japan launched the Phase-I of the JICA-funded project to provide early recovery support to the returning farming families. The duration of project was three years (2016-2018).

The phase-I of the project successfully assisted approximately 77,000 households through a variegated set of interventions aimed at stabilization of the area and enhancing food security through sustainable agriculture development and resuming agriculture based livelihood. The phase-II of the project is currently being implemented.

Project I Title: Support Reactivation and Strengthening of the Economy of Returnees through Livestock Sector

Japan has been donating funds through its donor Agencies, such as Japan Emergency NGO (JEN), and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Stabilizing the people’s lives by rehabilitating their likelihoods at grass-root level has been the main goal of JEN for Pakistan. The funding source for this project was the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.

Project’s Location, Duration and Budget

This project had been launched in the Aka Khel area of Bara, Khyber Agency. It spanned three successive years (2016-2018). The budget allocated year-wise was 28 million Japanese Yen for the year 2016; 27 million Yen for the year 2017 and 28 million Yen for the year 2018. The total beneficiaries of the Aka khel area of Bara, Khyber Agency, were 750 households, almost 9000 individuals.

Major Activities and Output

1. Distribution of 135 Achai breed cows among the most deserving households.
2. Equitable distribution of livestock feed (fodder), of 3 bags, weighing approximately 37 kg, among 750 households.
3. De-worming of 4500 large and small livestock, amounting to 2100 ml.
4. Drenching Gun (54 pieces) for de-worming prepared.
5. Training of 2 months duration on Livestock Management, which also included, besides other things, basic first-aid training. Moreover, training of 2 months duration, for 4 staff members of Livestock, about Artificial Insemination.
6. Distribution of first Aid Kits and AI container to LEWs and staff of Livestock Department.
8. Refresher trainings (10), for LEWs and Department of Livestock, on Livestock Management and Artificial Insemination.
9. Training for 750 households about Live Stock Management, spanning 2 days.
10. Six trainings to 150 households about Livestock Feed and Feeding Practices, spanning 2 days each.
11. Livestock fair was arranged on the World Animal Day, i.e. 4th October, 2017, with great fanfare.
12. Twelve Entrepreneurship Trainings of Youth Group, in connection with development of linkages with markets and Milk Collection Points.
13. Exposure visits of the most industrious and hardworking farmers and some of the Livestock Department employees.
14. Trainings of Livelihood Recovery Committee (LRC) to 15 members of the community.
15. Anti-Congo spray of 75000 animals (JEN, 2018).

Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) control was also on the agenda of JEN. In 2015, Japan had funded five million dollars for the restoration of the livelihood project. The project aimed to improve surveillance of FMD outbreak and to introduce rapid response mechanism in order to reduce the losses due to this disease. Improvement of the productivity of livestock in turn contributed to food security. Besides, it improved resilience of the livelihood of livestock farmers against the threat of animal diseases.

The project aimed to reduce the poverty in the area and by promoting economic opportunities in the area. Almost 77000 households resumed agricultural production through which livelihood food security was improved. Due to focus on horticulture, livestock and fisheries nutrition diversification of agriculture was considerably improved. The subsequent boosting of the economic activities paved way for peace and security in the area. The animals’ health is very important from the point of view of this project. Once the animals’ health was made secure, then problems of food security, rural livelihoods, etc. were also solved to considerable extent (JEN, 2018).

**Community’s Feedback about JICA Project**

The community appreciates the sincere efforts of Japanese agencies by bridging the gap and bringing in financial marketing. Never before had any government thought of this and people are amazed at the miracles of these Japanese donors. While sauntering in the area of the project under discussion, I came across several persons, both male and female, who could not stem their sincere emotions of gratitude for Japanese donor Agency. But, at the same time, they were critical of the government of Pakistan that it was doing nothing for the people while foreign donors were more sincere. When queried about the benefits of the project, a farmer named Akram Afridi narrated: “before this project we had no idea how to feed our cattle. We did not properly know about the mood and habits of cattle breeding, i.e. when to feed, when to give rest and motion and what to feed. We could not discriminate about the highest milk yielding fodder and could not discriminate between the poisonous and benign plants and herbs.”

I came across an agile woman of my age named Gul Pari who had been attached to agriculture and livestock breeding. She had several milking cows and was providing milk on daily basis to several families. Her husband had died in a military operation of the government when a shell hit him in his house causing...
his body drifts to sprinkle all around. “He was a very hard working and affectionate husband and we lived a humble life for decades and decades. With the exodus of Bara, when people were leaving their homes for safety, I also abandoned my house full of goods. Accompanied by some close relatives, I was obliged to live in Jalozai camp. The life of the camp was very tedious and I was not acclimatized to this new environment of parasitic life. I had 3 daughters and 2 sons at the time. But my heart melts away and my nerves dull when I recall the sudden death of my son in the camp. Some insidious disease or malnutrition might have been the cause. After the burial of my son, I resolved to leave the camp and adopt some profession or raise some milking cows. I bent on the grave of my sweet 7 year old son and wept bitterly. People assembled and solaced me but I was senseless. My life had been snatched from me. At last, I woke from my grief trance and kissed the grave and accompanied my daughters. With a final glance at the grave of my son, I said, “My son, I am going away. May be I shall not see your grave again. Live in your grave amid the hustle bustle of IDPs but I am going away. We will meet in other World.” My daughters were also weeping and at last we headed for a village in Noshehra.”

“I used to work in the fields along my son and daughters. Life was going on and my sisters and I embroidered clothes and prepared other accessories and got sufficient money. But my ambition was milking cows and cattle and was not happy with this stagnant life. I had accumulated a few thousand rupees and took some loan from my relative and bought a cow of very good breed. I started selling milk and was passing the life in great dignity and full of work. At dusk of evening when I entered the house the cow blabbered for powder and the green fodder tantalized her bosom and devoured voraciously.”

“I returned to our village in the first wave of repatriation. Dangers and fears still loomed at large but there was no escape. Then the Japanese organization started work on the cattle and agriculture and I was greatly supported in a special way. Besides guidance and instructions, I was given sufficient fodder, medicines, spray and seeds. Above all, to the extreme of my wonder, I was given a high breed cow. I cannot forget the services and humanity of Japanese donors”.

While searching to find out the beneficiaries of that project, I came across Multan khan – an aged resident of Bara – who narrated “I am above seventy and have been working in my ancestral lands for the last 50 years. This Japini donor has changed my life. At first, I was given a very high breed cow which used to give milk in buckets. Later on, I was given training in the field of agriculture, livestock and poultry” (JEN, 2018).

Details of the USAID Project

UN-FAO also conceived a project with the assistance of USAID, focusing on Commercial Agriculture in the Ex-FATA districts. The project’s main objective was to uplift the poor farmers leading to a commercial farming as major enterprise and income generation.

Project-2 Title: “Restoring Subsistence and Commercial Agriculture in FATA”
Funded by: USAID
Duration: 2016 to March 2021

Objectives of the Project

To make a significant contribution to the stabilization of the area and to reduce poverty and economic inequalities through sustainable agriculture development in FATA were the two objectives of the project.

Outcome-1: Resumption of food production and restoration and improvement of agriculture-based livelihood in target areas, i.e. the returnee areas.

Outcome-2: Restoration/establishment of market structures and services.
Key Activities and achievements of the USAID-138 Project:

- Provision of crop input to resume crop production
- Provision of Wheat Seed and Maize Seed
- Provision of high producing multi-cut fodder seed
- Provision of Multi-cut Fodder Seed for Rabi
- Provision of Multi-cut Fodder Seed for Kharif
- Provision of poultry packages to restore poultry production
- Provision of milk collection kits for the collection and transportation of milk
- Livestock breeding improvement through artificial insemination of imported sexed semen
- Vaccination and de-worming of animals
- Land rehabilitation/development
- Repair and rehabilitation/development of irrigation related infrastructure
- Integrated Natural Recourse Management Plans Control Structures
- Restoration/establishment of market structures and services.
- Agricultural enterprises established and strengthened
- Off-season vegetable production through Tunnel Farming
- Establishment of small vegetable enterprises
- Establishment of fruit and forest plant nurseries
- Rehabilitation of damaged orchards
- Provision of pruning tools and packaging material for small fruit enterprises
- Rehabilitation of damaged small-scale broiler farms
- Establishment of milk sale points at cluster levels
- Establishment of district level milk collection and marketing units
- Establishment of model meat sale points
- Registration of farmers with Farm Services Centers
- Strengthening and establishment of livestock market
- Establishment of cluster based packing sheds/collection centers for fruits and vegetables
- Establishment of structured market for horticulture production
- Development of Value Chain Models based on already conducted studies and potential
- Linkages Development and Marketing workshops to involve and mobilize private sector and service providers
- Productive skill and capacity development initiatives for value chain stakeholders
- Dissemination of information on agricultural techniques, practices, and markets via mass media programming such as radio programs and SMSs.
- Establishment of FFS (Farmers Field Schools)/LFFS
- Establishment of WOS (Women Open Schools)

Total allocation of Budget. USD 2.5 million each for Khyber, North Waziristan, South Waziristan and Orakzai district.

Community’s Feedback about USAID Project

In order to know the perception of the community about the USAID project, the researcher interviewed and collected data from some participants and beneficiaries of the project. As a whole, the community applauded the humane services rendered by the foreign donor agencies helping them in the restitution and rejuvenation of their livelihood.

In the course of the interviews, an erudite gentleman named Darvesh Khan narrated “in the wake of 9/11 and subsequent terrorism, poverty ensued. During this economic downturn, the services of women were direly needed to help their peers. The USAID project was efficacious because it gave women a chance to
participate in economic activities of the household. Under the project, 500 women were given poultry packages and were trained in breeding poultry. The opportunity encouraged women of the community giving them a sense of independence, self-reliance and strength”.

For Muhammad Ali — a half-educated but highly active young beneficiary of the project — these foreign donors are no less than a deity. “The donors have distributed the packages systematically and transparently avoiding every bit of the influence afflicted by the local aristocrats. In the livestock sector, very encouraging and beneficial steps have been taken by these foreign donors. They have distributed livestock and food and fodder packages among the people and trained them in breeding livestock in a modern way. These steps have helped the poor segments of society by boosting up their participation in the economic activities of the area which in turn has rejuvenated their livelihood”, narrated Muhammad Ali.

“Under this project, 500 untrained and unskilled women were given different packages and trainings. These trainings were very informative and beneficial enabling women to help their male counterparts in domestic activities. Besides, fish-ponds have been constructed and developed boosting the job sector and economy of the area. Some local affluent landlords and governmental departments were trying to manipulate these projects, but the involvement of the community forestalled the manipulation”, narrated Shereen Bibi — a beneficiary of the project.

**Introduction of the New Scientific Trends in Livestock Sector through JICA & USAID-138 Project**

Although Pakistan is an agricultural country but its methods of agriculture are yet obsolete. Moreover, livestock Management, fisheries and poultry are also in its embryonic stages and have not seen the new lights of latest technologies. Japan has tried to cement together the seemingly independent branches of agriculture, i.e. poultry breeding, livestock management and development of forestry and pastures. Each one of these complements and supplements the other and all are interdependent.

**Conclusion**

The limited economic opportunities in the NMDs have forced the local people to join either militant groups or indulge in illicit trades which offer good financial incentives. Young men are particularly tempted by this situation. Thus, the creation of employment and other alternative livelihood options through the market-led agriculture and livestock are critical for the stabilization of NMDs.

The government and people of Pakistan, especially of District Khyber, cordially appreciate the landmark humanitarian services and efforts in tackling the urban problems due to hyper increase in the population of the people. JEN and JICA, the two Japanese donor agencies, have left no stone unturned to help the different segments of Pakistani community, particularly the agrarian newly merged Districts of KP in every field of life (JIC, 2014).

In view of the research undertaken, general reports, newspaper articles and donor records, it is crystal clear that donor agencies have been sincere in their efforts but the middle man, i.e. the implementing partners and relevant governmental departments, often sabotage the noble designs of the donors. Moreover, security threats and vulnerabilities due to conflicts in FATA have been affecting the outputs of the projects funded by foreign donors.

Sectarianism, feuds, intra and inter tribal wrangling and vendetta and the vested interests of drug mafia often give setbacks to the smooth running of the foreign funded projects blotting their general benefits for the community. Sudden shifts in the policies and priorities of the donors and governments greatly impair the goo effects of the donors’ precious funds. Besides, sudden climate change and frequent occurrence of natural disasters also negatively impact the outcome.
Recommendations

Reversion to instability and violence has great chances in District Khyber. So, an integrated strategy should be adopted and all the issues pertaining to peace, security, politics and economy should be tackled together in an appropriate manner. The impact of foreign funds on the development of Newly Merged Districts is visible in all sectors but the most vivid example of success is the rehabilitation. Considering the ground realities, more and more funds should be allocated for agriculture, rehabilitation, energy, infrastructure and health sectors. The monitoring system should be upgraded and the community should be directly involved and the participation of the governmental personnel and departments should be minimized.

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**Interviews**

Akram Afridi
Gul Pari
Multan Khan
Darvesh Khan
Shereen Bibi
Muhammad Ali