TERRORISM, CAUSAL FACTORS AND ITS PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT IN PAKISTAN'S PERESPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

The current study explored the concept of terrorism, its causal factors and its psychological impact in Pakistan's perspective. The study is solely qualitative while conducting focus group of 7 practicing clinical psychologist working in public sector for more than 10 years of clinical experience. The themes of focus group were generated .The main themes of focus group of terrorism, it's causal factors and it's psychological impact in Pakistan's perspective were lack of political will, executive constraints, poverty, weaker professional role of media and disharmony among political groups on national issues. The psychological impacts of terrorism were insecure feelings, traumatic fear, hopelessness and helplessness. The clinical psychologists mainly recommended that government should handle terrorism with professional approach without any executive constraints and involve media in psycho educating population of Pakistan. Furthermore there must be unification of all political groups to fight against national issues to solve psycho social and socio economic problems to minimize the grievances of people which will ultimately help in community support to fight against terrorism and psychological warfare in Pakistan. The clinical psychologists further recommended that psychologists should render their services on media while inculcating hope among population and give preventive education and strategies to cure post terrorism traumatic fears .This will restrict public support to perpetrators and will give courage to the general population to cooperate with the institutions of the Government to counter terrorism and share perpetrators suspicious movements information timely with their respective area security departments.

Key words : Lack of political will, Poverty, Psycho education, Psychological warfare, Traumatic fear, Executive constraints, Perpetrators.

INTRODUCTION

The word Terrorism is derived from Latin word Terrere,which means ,to frighten .Townshed (2002)[10] describes the US and British version of terrorism in his book entitled "Terrorism a very short Introduction " as "Terrorism is the calculated use or threat of violence to inculcate fear ,intended to coerce or intimidate governments or societies".United Nation General assembly [11]narrated definition of terrorism "Criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public ,a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes are in circumstance unjustifiable whatever the considerations of a political,philosophical,ideological,racial,ethnic,religious or any other nature that may be involved to justify them.Bockstelte [3]at the George C.Marshall European center for securiry studies ,underlines the psychological and tactical aspect of terrorism.Terrorism is defined as political violence in an asymmetrical conflict that is designed to induce terror and psychic fear(sometimes indiscriminate)through the violent victimization and destruction of noncombatant targets (sometimes iconic symbols).such acts are meant to send a message from illicit clandestine organization.The purpose of terrorism is to exploit the media in order to achieve maximum attainable publicity as an amplifying force multiplier in order to influence the targeted audience to reach short-midterm political goalsor desired long –ternm end states .The objectives of terrorists are to create fear among the public,to convince citisens that their government is powerless and to get immediate publicity for their cause

Terrorism in Pakistan

According to South Asian Terrorism Portal Index terrorism in Pakistan is believed to have started in 2000 and peaked during 2009.According to report by Brown Universitys Watson institute for international and public affairs[7],23,372 pakistan civilians and 8,832 pakistan security personel killed in the war on

terrorism.According to government of Pakistan ,the direct and indirect economic costs of terrorism from 2000-2010 was of total $68 billion ,in 2018 Pakistan news[13] ,reported that the Pakistan economy suffered a total loss of$126.79 billion due to war on terror since 2001.Feyyaz(2013)[13]defined terrorism in Pakistan as violent acts by religious ,sectarian and nationalist non-state actors against un armed civilians,law enforcement agencies including security forces ,government officials ,public leaders,journalists,civil society activists ,foreigners and public infrastructure anywhere in Pakistan.

Terrorism trends in Pakistan

Feyyaz(2013)[13] discussed terrorism trends in Pakistan by discerning ,dis aggregating analytically locating empirical data relevant to each trend .He identified 8 trends of Terrorism in Pakistan namely: Human and political syndrome(Anti-state attacks),Infrastructure and criminalized warfare(swat district occupation by terrorist sabotaging education institutions, tourism and state buildings),Regime and system change(unrest the system Benazir assassination in 2007),Normative-cultural terrorism(revenge from state after killing of Baitullah Masud concept of "badal" meaning revenge),Ideoligical and realpolitik anarchism(ideological groups of terrorists like salfism group of swat,batullah masud followed deobandi group,Spatial conquests(terrorist attack on settled areas then shifting to remote areas),Non-seasonal Terrorism(more attacks in summer utilizing day lights and initial working days specially Monday for terrorist attack as first working day and rushy day),Strategic terrorism(terrorist attack to distort the image government and its institutions, attacking defence installations,offices and tarnishing national image by planning by damaging electronic systems.

Research questions

1-How the terrorism in Pakistan affects socio-economic and psycho social system of population ?

2-How can Clinical Psychologists can play role in minimizing terrorism, causal factors and its psychological impact in Pakistan?

Methodology

Research design

The research was based on qualitative research design. Focus group was conducted to explore the concept of terrorism, causal factors and its psychological impact in Pakistan's perspective.

Sample

7 Clinical psychologists were selected for the focus group from Fountain House which is psycho social rehabilitation center for the psychiatric patients in Pakistan. Fountain House is unique set up where experienced mental professionals render their services for community at large in Lahore, Pakistan.

Inclusive criteria

The clinical psychologists who have clinical experience of more than 10 years were included in focus group

Exclusive criteria

The clinical psychologists who didn't have experience of more than 10 years and were not exposed to working in public set up were excluded from the study.
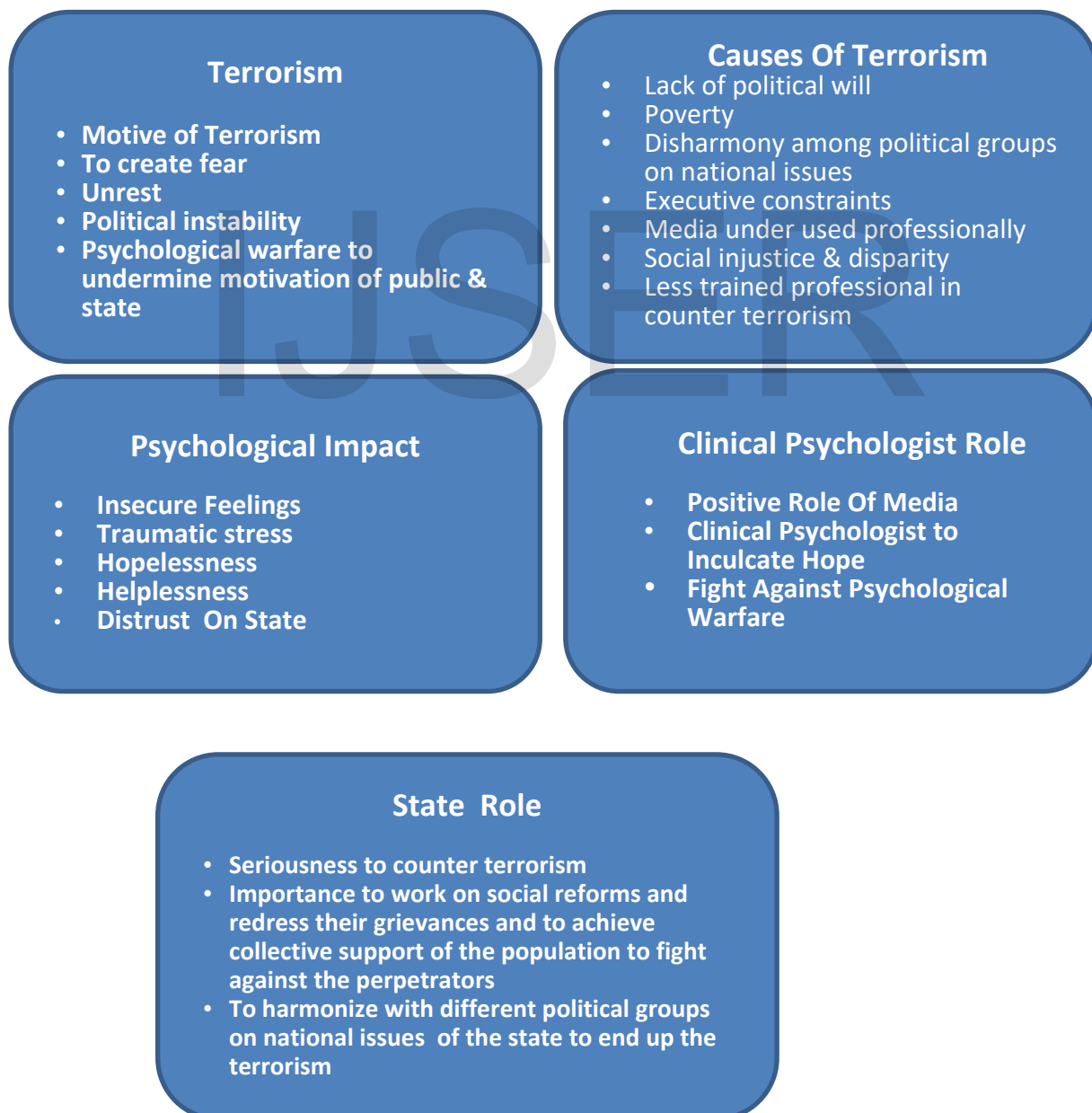
Procedure

The focus group was conducted at Fountain House comprising of 7 experienced Clinical psychologists. The participants were briefed about the topic and its importance. The participants were told openly discuss their point of view with their professional observations and its general psychological impact on the people
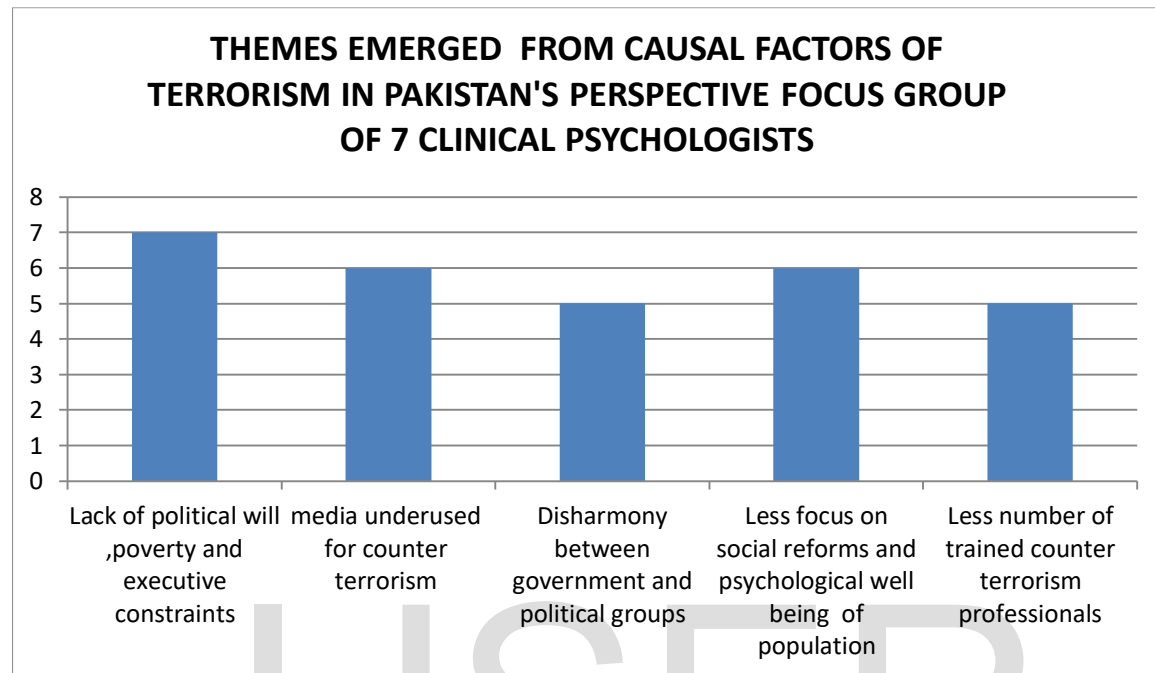
of Pakistan. They also have to give recommendations as clinical psychologist to uplift the morale of general population and governmental role in counter terrorism.

Results

OVERALL THEMES OF

TERRORISM, CAUSAL FACTORS AND ITS PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT IN PAKISTAN'S PERSPECTIVE

Terrorism

- **Motive of Terrorism**
- **To create fear**
- **Unrest**
- **Political instability**
- **Psychological warfare to undermine motivation of public & state**

Causes Of Terrorism

- Lack of political will
- Poverty
- Disharmony among political groups on national issues
- Executive constraints
- Media under used professionally
- Social injustice & disparity
- Less trained professional in counter terrorism

Psychological Impact

- **Insecure Feelings**
- **Traumatic stress**
- **Hopelessness**
- **Helplessness**
- **Distrust On State**

Clinical Psychologist Role

- **Positive Role Of Media**
- **Clinical Psychologist to Inculcate Hope**
- **Fight Against Psychological Warfare**

State Role

- **Seriousness to counter terrorism**
- **Importance to work on social reforms and redress their grievances and to achieve collective support of the population to fight against the perpetrators**
- **To harmonize with different political groups on national issues of the state to end up the terrorism**

THEMES EMERGED FROM CAUSAL FACTORS OF TERRORISM IN PAKISTAN'S PERSPECTIVE FOCUS GROUP OF 7 CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGISTS

Discussion

The study explored the concept of terrorism, causal factors and its psychological impact in Pakistan perspective. The themes emerged in the focus group clearly depicted the causes of terrorism in Pakistan and its psychological impact. The foremost cause clinical psychologists discussed was lack of political will , constraint executive governments and poverty .The next cause is under use of media role in counter terrorism.Walsh and piazza (2010)[12] in their article on why respecting physical integrity rights reduces terrorism clearly explained that stable governments who show seriousness in counterterrorism should well define their strategies in countering terrorism.The new democracies (Eyerman,1998)[4] and states with constrained executives (Li,2005)[8]are more frequently targeted by terrorists.Walsh and piazza(2010)[12] widely shared norms of appropriate government conduct .The alienation attitude of the government from the members of population could hamper the state counterterrorism strategies the internal conflict of political forces in the country damages the efficacy of government counterterrorism policy and reduces international willingness to cooperate with the government.Lack of political will and disharmony among institutions violates the physical integrity of the population.Abadie(2006)[1] and Kurrild-Kligaard,justesan,and Klemmenson(2006)[6]found a curvilinear relationship between terrorism and rights that allow individuals to participate in political process.Abrahms(2007)[2]concludes that civil liberties that permits freedom of expression,association and personal autonomy reduce terrorism.Li(2005)[8]discussed democratic governments in two basic characteristics democratic participation and constraints on the actions of executives.These characteristics influence terrorism as political groups are less likely to resort to terrorism when participation is greater because this allows them to redress their grievances through legitimate political channels. More constraints on executive branch of government increase attacks by limiting governments' ability to take aggressive action against terrorist groups. Lack of political will is

increased if elected government faces other institutional checks so inter institution Institutional harmony is very important. Government require support the population ,domestic political movements ,and from the international community to mount an effective counterterrorism policy. Terrorist groups rely on gaps in intelligence and law enforcement information and their ability to blend into local population to evade capture by state authorities. The media role is very important to high light the perpetrators and to expose them but some governments under report terrorist attacks where the government influence media(Sandler,1995)[9].All these causes hampers psychological wellbeing of population and develop distrust on government specially lower middle class becomes more prone to join anti-state activities.

Implications

1-Government should have organized counterterrorism policy. All political groups should be taken in confidence by the government so that political rivals should not support perpetrators. There is dire need of poverty alleviation program at emergency level to save fragile population who is living below poverty line to win their trust and stop them to support perpetrators for getting funds for their survival.

2-Media should be free from Government influence with certain checks and balances and should play important role in counterterrorism while organizing programs to inculcate hope, social reform strategies and governmental plans and representation of all political groups in programs. The international community should also be taken in confidence to fight against terrorism

3-Clinical Psychologist should conduct mobile psycho education camps and deliver lectures on hope, motivation, Information sharing with the state, and become ambassadors to convey grievances of general population to the Government to solve their issues.

4-National issues conferences, dialogues and strategies should be organized to carry all groups along so that perpetrators should not receive internal support and sympathy instead the population should identify the perpetrators and share in information with the concerned security institutions.

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