



ISLAMABAD POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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Media Coverage

ROUNDTABLE

Psycho-Social Toxicity in Pakistan: A Fallout of Terrorism

15 January 2020

1. **NHT**
NATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE

16 January 2020

PSYCHO-SOCIAL TOXICITY IN PAKISTAN; A FALLOUT OF TERRORISM
'Neurosciences should be Integrated in the National Security Policy of Pakistan'



The menace of terrorism, which is often politically motivated, has bedeviled Pakistan for decades, despite successful kinetic operations against militant outfits. The aftermath of years of war on terror, man-made and natural disasters, ethnic and sectarian conflicts, poverty, inequality and injustice have etched the psycho-social fabric of the country adversely. The virtually undressed psychological damage has instilled a sense of perpetual fear leading to insecurity, panics, and intolerance into the minds of the citizens. Despite being a resilient nation, Pakistanis live through un-eradicating emotional and social traumas on a daily basis. Unregulated, irresponsible and insensitive media reporting is an impact multiplier of terrorism in Pakistan. Given ground-breaking new frontiers in neuroscience on the various ways brain stimulation can enhance thoughts and behaviours, a much needed review of its applications not only in the security services and military but also on ordinary citizens is the need of the hour. This was discussed at the Roundtable on Psycho-Social Toxicity in Pakistan: A Fallout of Terrorism organised by IPRI here in the capital on Wednesday. The roundtable moderated by Dr Muhammad Tahir Khalil, Vice

President (Academics), Department of Psychology, International Islamic University included Dr Shaukat Jehangir Malik, Professor of Psychiatry, University of Sussex, UK as the Keynote Speaker. The roundtable attended by eminent psychiatrists, ex-military servicemen, law enforcement representatives and media, including Dr Umar Masroor from Air University; Lt. Gen. (R) Shahid Iqbal; Dr Zafar Soharwaray Talpur; Brig. Babur (R) Barlas; M. Ali Babwedi, Director NACTA; Dr Selma Siddiqui from NUST; Dr Adeela Rehman from Fatima Jinnah Women University; and Air Cdr. (IJ) Taseer N Siddiqui. - PR

Pakistan

2. OBSERVER

Psycho-social toxicity in Pakistan: A fallout of terrorism

Staff Reporter

January 16, 2020



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<https://pakobserver.net/psycho-social-toxicity-in-pakistan-a-fallout-of-terrorism/>

3.

Psycho-Social Toxicity in Pakistan: A Fallout of Terrorism

DNA News | January 15, 2020



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It was shared that under the guise of fifth generation warfare, states are investing in technologies and research on how a country can be devastated through low intensity warfare using terrorism. While the experience of violence does not necessarily lead to psychiatric morbidity, an overload of information, unchecked globalization, weakening of the family system, human values and societal inequality can test the limits of human endurance. Speakers pointed out that insecurity breeds xenophobia which then leads to stereotyping as well as ostracizing of vulnerable and marginalised groups. Unfortunately, the state's role in curtailing such societal schisms has been very weak, especially in terms of mental healthcare facilities. Speakers warned that lack of state empathy and responsiveness towards one's citizenry can trigger antipathy, anger and frustration even amongst the most educated and culturally varying groups within society. Such discontent, demoralization and dehumanisation shatters peoples' sense of belonging and identity, forcing them to drift away from the societal sphere, they stressed.

Speakers lamented that intolerance is now pervasively found amongst every rung of Pakistani society manifested through behaviour of readily resorting to violence to settle minor disputes such as recently seen in Lahore. They stressed that the psycho-social impact of terrorism is not only multipronged but also intertwined. PTSD, depression, and use of drugs has become endemic amongst Pakistanis who are exposed to gruesome media content on a regular basis.

It was recommended that robust and inclusive mental health services should be provided; and a multidisciplinary approach espoused at the policy level to better understand trauma generated by terrorism with emotional coaching and healthy mentoring, especially of children. The need to

revitalize intergenerational communication and responsible use of communication technologies was also emphasized rather than depending on the ocean of information on the Internet which can lead young people astray. It was also stressed that social capital needs to be improved through capacity development and developing gender-specific, holistic public health strategies since women and men are impacted differently by trauma. There was also a consensus that a complete paradigm shift is required on the policy level wherein legislation should be carried out with input from all relevant stakeholders. The role of the media was extensively discussed vis-a-vis coverage of violent incidents and insensitive reporting of traumatic events which has a multiplier impact contributing to psycho-social disequilibrium. It was urged that the media should be trained to follow an ethical code of conduct in their reporting and content.

<http://www.dnanews.com.pk/psycho-social-toxicity-pakistan-fallout-terrorism/>



4.

Despite being a resilient nation, Pakistanis live through un-remitting emotional & social trauma on a daily basis: Experts

Posted on January 15, 2020 by Mirza Rizwa Baig in National



ISLAMABAD, Jan 15 (SABAH): The menace of terrorism, which is often politically motivated, has bedeviled Pakistan for decades, despite successful kinetic operations against militant outfits. The aftermath of years of war on terror, man-made and natural disasters, ethnic and sectarian conflicts, poverty, inequality and injustice have etched the psycho-social fabric of the country adversely. The virtually unaddressed psychological damage has instilled a sense of perpetual fear leading to insecurity, paranoia, and intolerance into the minds of the citizens. Despite being a resilient nation, Pakistanis live through un-remitting emotional and social trauma on a daily basis.

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stimulation can enhance thoughts and behaviours, a much needed review of its applications not only in the security services and military but also on ordinary citizens is the need of the hour.

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The roundtable attended by eminent psychiatrists, ex-military servicemen, law enforcement representatives and media, including Dr. Uzma Masroor from Air University, Lt. Gen. (Retd) Shahid Iqbal, Dr. Zarqa Suharwardy Taimur, Brig. Babur (Retd) Barlas, M. Ali Babakhel, Director NACTA, Dr. Salma Siddiqui from NUST, Dr. Adeela Rehman from Fatima Jinnah Women University, and Air Commodore (retd) Tanweer N Siddiqui. It was shared that under the guise of fifth generation warfare, states are investing in technologies and research on how a country can be devastated through low intensity warfare using terrorism. While the experience of violence does not necessarily lead to psychiatric morbidity, an overload of information, unchecked globalization, weakening of the family system, human values and societal inequality can test the limits of human endurance.

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It was recommended that robust and inclusive mental health services should be provided; and a multidisciplinary approach espoused at the policy level to better understand trauma generated by terrorism with emotional coaching and healthy mentoring, especially of children. The need to revitalize intergenerational communication and responsible use of communication technologies was also emphasized rather than depending on the ocean of information on the Internet which can lead young people astray.

It was also stressed that social capital needs to be improved through capacity development and developing gender-specific, holistic public health strategies since women and men are impacted differently by trauma. There was also a consensus that a complete paradigm shift is required on the policy level wherein legislation should be carried out with input from all relevant stakeholders. The role of the media was extensively discussed vis-a-vis coverage of violent incidents and insensitive reporting of traumatic events which has a multiplier impact contributing to psycho-social disequilibrium. It was urged that the media should be trained to follow an ethical code of conduct in their reporting and content.

<http://www.sabahnews.net/english/archives/22938>

Darby 5. Islamabad POST

Psycho-Social Toxicity in Pakistan: A Fallout of Terrorism

January 15, 2020



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<https://islamabadpost.com.pk/>

6.

INSIGHTPAKISTAN

Terrorism Fallout: Rise in Psycho-Social Toxicity in Pakistan

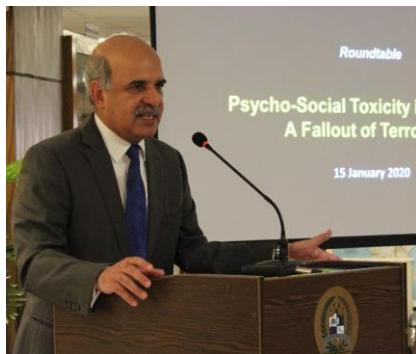
January 16, 2020

Terrorism and over sensationalized media coverage by private TV channels behind the rise in psycho-social toxicity in Pakistan

DESPARDES Report: How and to what extent the fallout of terrorism affect the Pakistani society?

Quite a bit, says a roundtable talk recently held in Islamabad.

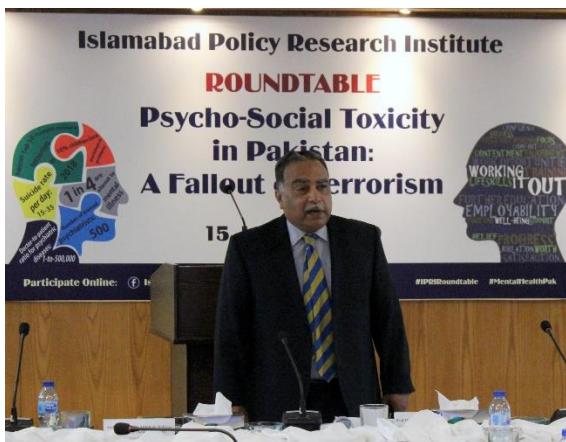
The general consensus was Pakistan as a nation went through more than two decades of roller coaster and shock & awe due to terrorism — Afghan War in late 70s through post-9/11.



The dialogue organized by Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) think tank on Wednesday highlighted the rise in psycho-social toxicity in the country — specially post 9/11 due to terrorism and over sensationalized media coverage by private TV channels. The twin effect has been devastating among Pakistanis in general — resulting in stress and other disorders. Psycho-social toxicity remains unmeasured though, for lack of empirical studies. Still, closest in terms of measure was the subject of discussion. In economic terms, the country suffered a humongous loss: the figure is north of US\$120 billion in media reports, but experts say its more.

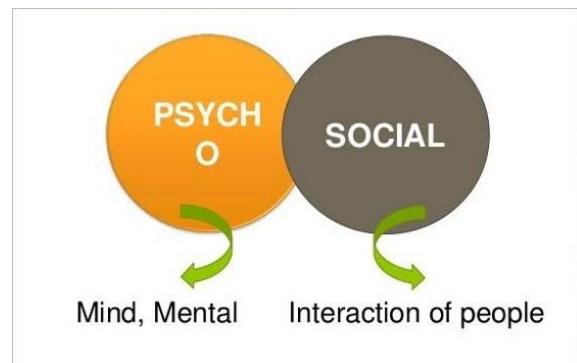
However, the collateral damage of psycho-social toxicity— unmeasured — is the effect on the emotional muscle and its growth among individuals as they interact in the community, experts say.

According to them, “Psycho relates to an individual’s feelings, thoughts, emotions and personality, and Social relates to how one lives with others within his or her environment. Culture, values, ethics and norms play a pivotal role in an individual’s social life.”



Typically, Psycho Social support institutions support the psychological and emotional well-being of the community by providing counseling, consultation and crisis intervention. Example: The Veterans Hospital and Support Centers in the US provided Psycho-social support also to the vets—post Vietnam War, and continuing to do so for those who fought Global War on Terror (GWOT) and needed help.

The consensus was: Psycho-social toxicity permeates the society including the media, and that there is need for holistic approach to handle the malaise. Psycho Social support is offered to people living in vulnerable circumstances to enable them to feel cared for, accepted and a sense of belonging to a social group. “It is an ongoing process of meeting the emotional, social, mental and spiritual needs, all of which are considered essential elements of a meaningful and positive human development” — “push for economic growth (for Human Development Index (HDI)) is not enough under the circumstances,” says an expert.



<http://despardes.com/terrorism-fallout-rise-in-psycho-social-toxicity-in-pakistan/>