

**The Post Conflict Reconstruction: Exploring the Economic  
Potentials in the Case of Kurram Tribal District**



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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
MS Peace and Conflict Studies

Supervisor

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE MOST BENEFICENT THE  
MOST MERCIFUL.

*Read! And thy Lord is Most Honorable and Most benevolent, Who  
Taught (to write) by pen, He Taught man that which he knew not*

(Surah Al-Alaq 30:3-5)  
Al Quran

## THESIS ACCPETANCE CERTIFICATE

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## **MS THESIS WORK**

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## **Declaration**

I, Mahhah Qayyum hereby declare that this research work titled “The Post Conflict Reconstruction: Exploring the Economic Potentials in the Case of Kurram Tribal District” is my original work. This work has not been presented elsewhere for assessment. The material used from other sources has been properly acknowledged/ referenced.

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## **Abstract**

District Kurram is among the seven merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and has been in the post-conflict phase since 2017. In the meantime, an immense amount of development potential has been discovered by the security forces and administrative authorities in the Kurram Valley. These potentials can be explored for economic purposes for the region as well as for the country. This is exploratory research, carried out in the context of post-conflict economic development. The study has explored different sectors from which the development potential can be extracted and a sustainable peaceful environment could be created in the Kurram valley, leaving minimum space for conflict recurrence. Interestingly, lacking academic literature came out to be an alarming take out of this research. However, for the case of district Kurram, the development projects have picked up the pace, but still lack financing by the central and provincial administration. This study has successfully explored the economic potentials that are present and have the capacity of being further explored in the Kurram tribal district.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

The tribal areas of Pakistan, after Afghanistan, were the worst hit in the aftermath of first the Afghan War and later in the US-led War on Terror (Abbas, 2010). The massive refugee influx altered the complete social structure of Pakistan's tribal areas (Rieck, 2015). In addition to this, as a result of the Pakistan army's full-blown operations in these areas, the complete infrastructure of these areas was destroyed, people were displaced to safer places having their homes, lands, and businesses destroyed (Sayeed and Shah, 2017). Among tribal districts, Kurram Valley was one of the big hits (BBC, 2010). This is because Kurram has the largest Shia population among other tribals districts, and the extremist Sunni fractions (Al-Qaeda and Tehreek e Taliban Pakistan) consider them to be *kafir* (Zubair, 2019; Rieck, 2015). Kurram valley faced a decade (2007-2017) of deadly violence resulting in human fatalities and thousands of people displaced (Ali, 2017). However, the valley still lacks basic developmental structure as well as scholastic study in the context of Post Conflict Developments (Planning & Development Department, 2019).

Reconstruction, as a term, has different connotations for different societies (Eastmond, 2010). Reconstruction was referred to as rebuilding the social and physical infrastructure after the two world wars ended (Kumar, 1997). This notion has also been used for the reintegration of political structure and reinforcement of law, giving negligible attention to the economic aspects (del Castillo, 2008). It is not restricted to the rehabilitation and reconstruction of public facilities and physical and human resources, rather it includes the balance and structural reform policies and the microeconomic foundations necessary to build an appealing market economy and trigger investment and macroeconomic growth positively (Hackett, 2010; Montalvo & Reynal-Querol,

2005). This includes a favorable business environment for investment opportunities, an appropriate financial system, and private financing (Stewart and Ohiorhenuan, 2008). These pillars include the right business environment for investment, appropriate private sector funding, and infrastructure, an active and efficient bureaucracy with a suitable legal, regulatory, and institutional system (Muhtar et al, 2014). However, an economic policy amid the post-conflict reconstruction is difficult to be formulated if there is an unfavorable environment in the country, especially the collapsing legal and political system, lack of employment opportunities, and unavailability of skilled labor (United Nations, 2009). Even though the circumstances may vary from case to case, however, the basic precursors for successful and sustainable reconstruction policies followed by their implementation are the restoration of stability, the rule of law, and recognition by the majority of the population of the newly established government and the legislative bodies entrusted with the task of economic management (del Castillo, 2008). Economic reconstruction, therefore, takes place in the sense of a multi-pronged path to peace, although, political conditions are often far from ideal and reconstruction often takes place in sections only in some areas, whereas other parts of the world may still be in dispute and lack the security structure required for economic reconstruction (Langer and Brown, 2016; Coyne and Pellillo, 2011).

## **1.2 The Case of Kurram Tribal District**

The name Kurram comes from the Kurram River. The scenic beauty of Kurram valley adds to the beauty of the famous Koh e Sufaid along the Duran Line. Kurram borders Afghanistan in the north and west, Kohat in the southeast, North Waziristan in the south, and Khyber and Orakzai merged districts in the east. The total area of the district is 3,380 square kilometers (Planning & Development Department, 2019).

It is one of the seven former semi-autonomous agencies of erstwhile Federally Administered Tribal Areas, until the FATA merger in 2008, Kurram was given the status of a district (Naseer, 2020). Administratively, Kurram falls under the Kohat Division of KP province. The district is subdivided into 3 Tehsils namely: Central Kurram, Lower Kurram, and Upper Kurram. The district has its headquarters at Parachinar. Deputy Commissioner is the administrative head of the District who is supported by Assistant Commissioners at the Tehsil level (Planning & Development Department, 2019).

District Kurram also has a significant population of Shia Muslims (44%) among all the other tribal districts of erstwhile FATA (Chandran, 2017). The Shia population is mainly settled in the upper Kurram and the rest are Sunni, settled in the lower and central Kurram. After the emergence of Talibanization in 2007, Kurram was declared a conflict zone by the government of Pakistan (Global Protection Cluster, 2015). This was a repercussion of the War on Terror and the operations of the Pakistan Army in other tribal areas and therefore Pakistan army also launched an offensive operation, operation Koh e Sufaid, in Parachinar city of Kurram region, with the key objective of safeguarding and reopening the Thall-Parachinar road (Tribune, 2011). Previously, Kurram had been a victim of sectarian violence as well, which had been going on since the declaration of Kurram as an agency, in 1892 (Rieck, 2015).

Non-serious political administration, among other reasons, is the basic cause of this militancy, in the case of district Kurram. Mostly, effective preemptive policies by political administration can hinder these incidents, even in the case of Kurram, these unfortunate events have terrorized the locals (Zaheer and Ali, 2012). Poverty, illiteracy, and unemployment played a key role in pushing the youth of Kurram to get involved in militant activities, mainly making a way for easy money. However, it was not only the youth but the other marginalized factions of the

community also preferred to join militant groups to gain legitimacy and save their identities. The youth of Kurram opted for these groups to fulfill their financial status and lack of education (Zaheer and Ali, 2012).

Up until 2017, the region entered the post-conflict development phase. The claims for Kurram to enter the post-conflict phase are based on some of the indicators for the end to the conflict as according to Tzifakis. These indicators are the establishment of law enforcement, repatriation of internally displaced people, and the communal reconciliation (Tzifakis, 2013). Currently, district Kurram is under the post-conflict development phase, however, this research revolves around exploring the economic potentials for a sustainable Kurram district.

### **1.3 Research Objectives and Questions**

The objectives of my study are as follows:

1. To explore the need for economic policies concerning the post-conflict reconstruction of Kurram tribal district.
2. To explore the potentials for leveraging the existing resources of district Kurram.

In doing so, the research aims to answer the below-mentioned questions in the post-conflict economic reconstruction discourse:

1. How does the post-conflict development contribute to a sustainable peace environment for Kurram tribal district?
2. How can the potential development opportunities present in district Kurram be further leveraged to enhance the post-conflict reconstruction process?



## **1.4 Research Method**

This research aims to establish a well-furbished interpretation and key essentials of post-conflict economic reconstruction and development. These key essentials as identified by the World Bank in 1998 are the rebuilding of the socio-economic framework of society and the reconstruction of enabling conditions for a functioning peacetime society, explicitly including governance and rule of law. Considering these key components for post-conflict economic development and reconstruction, this research found the case for Kurram tribal district fulfilling these components while transitioning from conflict to the post-conflict phase. Considering the impact of militancy in the tribal areas of Pakistan, it is necessary to have an academic discourse studying the reconstruction and development process in the context of Pakistan, mainly the conflict-stricken areas of the country, which in this case are the tribal districts of Pakistan. To explore the case of Kurram tribal district under the conceptual and theoretical framework of Post-conflict economic reconstruction, this study employs qualitative methods with an inductive approach to explore the various notions associated with post-conflict economic reconstruction and development in the context of the tribal district of Kurram. To fill the literature gap, with regards to district Kurram in the context of post-conflict development, it is necessary to compile all the data that has been taken from surveys and reports from different governmental and non-governmental institutions and to establish a clear link with the available data to the essentials of post-conflict reconstruction and development, as this is one of the objectives of this study. This study is primarily based on secondary data which includes the reports published by different governmental and non-governmental departments and organizations, in addition to the news reports. For primary data collection, in-depth interviews were conducted following a semi-structured questionnaire. However, the anonymity of the interviewees has been respected in this thesis as per their request.

## **1.5 Significance of Research**

For the case of district Kurram, there is a lack of scholastic or academic research material available, which focuses on the post-conflict dynamics, challenges, and potentials with regards to policymaking. Previously, Durani (2002), Ali (2018), Shah (2012), Malik (2013), Ullah (2015) have worked on the political dynamics of the tribal districts in the light of the post-Afghan war, the tribal culture, the impacts of US-led War on Terror. Scholars such as Ishaque (2016), Hameed (2012), Anwar (2016), Mehmood and Jafar (2019) have explored the post-conflict reconstruction on the tribal districts as a whole while focusing on how the external actors have instilled the violence in the region and how the cultural and traditional dynamics of the tribal districts adopted this course of violence in their mainstream. These scholars have also studied the impacts of the merger of the Federally Administered Areas of Pakistan to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. However, there has been seen an absence of published literature with regards to district Kurram, which has also been noted during several personal conversations about this thesis. In addition to this, Kurram is one of the most successful cases when it comes to transitioning from conflict to the post-conflict phase as there has been a significant decrease in the number of violent attacks in comparison to other tribal districts. Furthermore, the decade long militancy in district Kurram also needs to be studied further, as in this specific case of Kurram, among the other tribal districts, the presence of a multi-sectarian population had been a contributing factor to violent extremism.

## **1.6 Research Outline**

Chapter 1 introduces the topic, with a brief definition of what constitutes a conflict and the types of conflict that generally exist. This is followed by a brief look into the relationship between conflict and the economy. The relationship between both is to understand the main purpose of the study. In doing so, chapter 1 further discusses briefly, the concept of post-conflict reconstruction

and how economic reconstruction is essential with regards to development. Adding to this, chapter 1 also introduces the case in the study which is the case of district Kurram, its current status, the cause of conflict, and the indicators of conflict moving into the post-conflict phase. Chapter 1 also constitutes the significance and objectives of the research along with the research method.

Chapter 2 discusses the existing academic discourse on the topic and will explain the notions of Post Conflict Economic Development in detail. This chapter takes the historical perspective of post-conflict reconstruction and discusses the implications that led to the need for focusing on the economic effects of the conflict and the need for economic recovery in the post-conflict scenario. Chapter 2 also discusses the challenges that entail the successful recovery of the economy in the aftermath of a conflict, and further looks into the challenges that come in the way for sustainable economic recovery. Furthermore, the dynamics of post-conflict economies as well as the nurturing indigenous drivers have also been discussed in chapter 2. The importance of post-conflict economic development and the need for a contextual approach is also briefly discussed in chapter 2.

In the third chapter, the case of district Kurram is briefly introduced. It discusses the demographics of the Kurram valley and along with its history of the valley. The key factor which differentiates Kurram with other tribal districts is its Shia inhabitants, due to which Kurram has gone through sectarian violence throughout its history. Chapter 3, discusses the sectarianism over the years focusing on the timeline between 1979 and 1989. This was the period of the Afghan war that followed a massive influx of Afghan refugees into Pakistan's tribal districts. During this period, the sectarian conflicts were at its peak until 1996, when a peace agreement was finally signed by the two parties. This was continued by the wave of violence, in the face of militancy from 2007 till 2017. This wave of violence was a repercussion to the War on Terror which was

initiated by the United States of America. In this research, 2007 and 2017 are considered to be the years of conflict and in the mid of 2017, the region had entered the post-conflict phase.

Chapter 4 presents the collected data, for the understanding of economic potential which entails post-conflict economic recovery. This chapter is divided into two parts, the existing/available potential, and the generated potential in the Kurram Valley. The data is based on annual reports and surveys as well as confidential documents of various governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Chapter 5 is the discussion and conclusion chapter. A brief understanding of the economic potential available from chapter 4, keeping in view the literature in chapter 2. This chapter explores the post-conflict development efforts that are undergoing in the Kurram valley in the light of post-conflict economic development as detailed in chapter 2. It further discusses the need to explore the further potential in the valley. This chapter also answers the research questions in chapter 1 and discusses whether the study has met the research objectives as stated in chapter 1. It further continues to conclude the research with suggestions and recommendations to follow.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Defining Post-Conflict Economic Reconstruction – Implications, Challenges, and Importance**

Post Conflict reconstruction is aimed at consolidating peace and security to achieve a sustainable socio-economic environment in a conflict-stricken society (Panic, 2005). It is to be kept in mind that post-conflict, as a term, does not always entail to the elimination of the conflict triggers from the root level. Neither does it promise a complete end to hostilities, as they often re-occur even after peace agreements have been signed (Fischer 2004). Mostly, it signifies just a reduction in skirmishes, or may also create a window for an opportunity of peace which may increase again in case of mismanagement (Hamre and Sullivan, 2002).

Generally, post-conflict reconstruction is considered to be a systemic and a multidimensional mechanism involving efforts to strengthen the law enforcement, economic reintegration, economic development, and communal (justice and reconciliation) conditions, all together (African Union, 2006). The economic aspects of the post-conflict economic reconstruction typically include the provision of aid, the refurbishment of infrastructure, community restoration, the establishing appropriate environment for the development of the private sector and also implementing important organizational developments sustainability and stability of macro-economic growth. (Tzifakis, 2013).

#### **2.1 Post Conflict Economic Reconstruction**

How does the aftermath of war contribute to economic recovery? Looking at it from a purely economic perspective, the contribution of economic recovery in a post-conflict setup means the recurrence of opportunities for employment as were before the conflict. Also, another school

of thought views this reconstruction as a comeback to higher levels of per capita GDP achieved in five years before the outbreak (Flores and Nooruddin, 2007). It is likely, however, that development levels could have been very small, or even negative, in the time before the outbreak of conflict. In such situations, the return to GDP trajectory in terms of growth as were before the conflict is not desirable for the conflict-stricken area (Svensson, 1998).

The economic recovery is seen, from a wider point of view, as ensuring socio-economic well-being, for instance, “food security, public health, shelter, educational systems, and a social safety net for all citizens... an economic strategy for assistance designed to ensure the reconstruction of physical infrastructure, generating employment opportunity, opening markets, creating legal and regulatory reforms, laying down foundations for international trade and investments, and establishing transparent banking and financial institutions” (Forman,2002). A realist interpretation of this sort increases the likelihood of broadly overlapping reconstruction from conflict with getting over lack of development (Steinberg, 2019). On the other hand, having a narrowing view on development, alone, may underplay the mere cost of setting up the economic repercussions of the conflicts as discussed above (Mueller and Tobias, 2016). As argued by Addison, for example, the developments favoring only a small elite threat reinforcing or even worsening tensions and thereby increasing opportunities for violence among those who remain marginalized. Rather pertinently, it does not give any consolation to the vulnerable, who mostly feel the consequences of conflict. (Addison, 2003)

Several recovery techniques have been worked on in the international community, for example, the idea of post-conflict reconstruction and development has been advanced by the World Bank. It defines post-conflict economic reconstruction as “the rebuilding of the socio-economic framework of society” and “the reconstruction of the enabling conditions for a functioning

peacetime society, explicitly including governance and rule of law as essential components” (World Bank, 1998). Focusing on resource development, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) views development as a means of regaining the 'natural' course of development from conflict, in which a community can acquire the capacity to create and enforce economic policy, largely, as a result of self-sustaining economic governance process (Ohiorhenuan, 2008). Economic reconstruction, initially, requires establishing basic security, as a bare minimum, and also a reiteration of rule of law, a cohesive macro-economic structure, and an efficient system that ensures accountability and transparency. It could also be taken as a path for a sustainable economic recovery, as the process of post-conflict economic recovery has also been able to restore the fundamentals for mobilization of domestic revenue and repair the damaged human and social capital structure (Office for ECOSOC, 2008).

Consequently, sustainable economic recovery cannot be solely a return to the pre-conflict levels of income and rate of growth. But, somewhat it includes the rate of growth that allows for a statistical significance from the past. Meaning, that the development has to be higher, significantly, as compared to historical levels and followed by meaningful creation of job opportunities and actions that minimize, already existing, extreme horizontal inequalities (Stewart, 2005). Recovery, reconstruction, and rebuilding are the terms that may imply a return to the status quo before the conflict. Furthermore, severe inequality, poverty, corruption, exclusion, institutional collapse, bad policy design, and economic mismanagement, are the terms which will, in the first place, lead to violent conflict, and then deteriorate further throughout the conflict. (Ohiorhenuan, 2008). Subsequently, post-conflict reconstruction is not always is not all about the restoration of economic or institutional mechanisms for the conflict struck societies, but, it is also about establishing new dispensation for the political economy (Paris and Sisk, 2009). It does not only imply the

reconstruction but also the reconstruction in a better, different, and a more sustainable manner (Torjesen, 2013).

Now a question arises here, for when this process for post-conflict economic recovery does start. In simpler words, it starts when the conflict has ended up or a ceasefire agreement has reached, or one of the parties in conflict wins. But, such incidents do not always indicate a successful end to aggression, as several conflicting factions persist, most of the time. One indicator may be the reduction in casualties below a certain limit, but these quantitative benchmarks do not always indicate the start of a permanent return to stability (Mandel, 2006). African Development Bank has another approach towards post-conflict development and this approach is in specific transformative and provisional contexts. It says, "Post-conflict reconstruction is a situation in which a conflict... has subsidized to a degree where foreign aid would be both necessary and sustainable"(African Development Bank, 2004). Nevertheless, this perspective is hardly somewhat politically oriented, although in some cases during the conflict, aid has been upheld.

Since the 19th century, the concept of restoration is being studied. Although colonialists identified reconstruction through community participation from urban setups of their colonies, liberals recognized this effect on exchange in enhancing countries and individuals among themselves (Williams, 2005). The topic of post-conflict economic reconstruction was also discussed by David Ricardo in 1815, and he raised concerns including the readjustment of economic activity to conflict resolution activities (Coulomb, 2004). In 1848 John Stuart Mill also explained the prospects for the rehabilitation of people in the face of natural calamities nonetheless (Coyne, 2005).

Theoretical and functional roots of the contemporary concept of reconstruction can also be found throughout the process of reconstruction of the South after the downfall of the Confederacy



in 1863 as well as in the debates about the contentious role of businessmen in the North (Williams, 2005). After World War I ended, Austria launched the very first international post-conflict economic reconstruction effort. League of Nations took the initiative and focused on fact-finding economic commission's effort and propositions. Austrian reconstruction included the cessation of payments for reparations, the implementation of structural reforms for the economy of the region. Similar but far less complex work was later conducted out in Hungary, while the third interwar international reconstruction plan centered on the repatriation of ethnic Greeks expelled from Turkey after the 1922 war (Williams, 2005).

Following the end of the Second World War, the most successful post-conflict economic reconstruction initiative was taken. This concerns the work of the Relief and Rehabilitation Administration of the United Nations against Europe and China (1943-1946), loans from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development to Germany, the Marshall Plan for Western Europe (1948-1951), and international aid to Japan (de Long and Eichengreen, 1993). The Marshall Plan stands out as the most effective plan of all these initiatives. This suggested a shift of \$13.3 billion in funding from the United States to Western Europe to meet the goals for increased production, extended international trade, enhanced internal financial stability, and to promote economic cooperation of Europe (de Long and Eichengreen, 1993). It consisted primarily of subsidies for goods and services plus technical assistance, its performance was mainly due to the use of the indexation instrument for introducing structural changes. The strategy accomplished all its goals, despite inflation, unemployment, and budget deficits being substantially reduced, recipient countries' GDP rose by 35% while intra-European trade received an 80% increase. (Lewarne and Snelbecker, 2004).

So far, the scholars have focused primarily on security and political aspects for establishing peace, when studying on post-conflict reconstruction. Mostly, the focus of their study has been restricted to historical, public policy, and political disciplines (Coyne, 2007). In Castillo's words, most of the studies that deal with reconstruction discuss economic problems 'only tangentially, or as an afterthought, often with no policy rigor, precision, or comprehensiveness' (del Castillo, 2008). However, the importance of external support and financing for the conflict-stricken societies cannot be denied, whatsoever. Where conflicts may vary in length and severity, the effect on human, social, and physical resources in most cases, is devastating (World Bank, 1999).

The post-conflict discourse on economic recovery reflects a concept that every other reconstruction initiative has a unique common ground (Jabareen, 2013). Each post-conflict scenario varies in terms of factors including the origin from where the conflict started as well as how was it addressed, the whole process of the completion (if completed) of the peace agreements in the concerned state's territory, the economic conditions as well as the development level as before the conflict occurrence, the degree of external political involvement and support for the resolution, and also the investor's interest in the state affairs (del Castillo, 2008). Therefore, the process of reconstruction will be different for each case.

Another recurring major finding of this study is recognizing and addressing certain key activities frequently used in donor work (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2006). An attempt to help study the reconstruction processes that are aimed at restoring the basic approach to satisfy the challenging demands of its most disadvantaged sectors of society are given utmost priority. This involves improvements in the physical infrastructure – including healthcare facilities, educational infrastructure, proper sanitation systems, residential infrastructure – it also includes preparation for an urgent humanitarian and developmental aid,

which includes food, health care, and temporary shelter (World Bank, 1999). It is also about increasing the human resources of the receiving nation with restored health care and education sector and improved job opportunities of the people through development programs (del Castillo 2008). Special attention should be paid to the socioeconomic rehabilitation of some groups of individuals into society, including internally displaced persons, demobilized former combatants, and female heads of households (Kreimer, 1998).

One crucial aspect of post-conflict economic reconstruction is raising potential risks that allegedly triggered the conflict at first. Numerous scholars suggest the importance of 'horizontal inequalities' (which are the existing differences among groups identified through region/ethnicity/class/religion) using specific programs designed to stimulate wide development (Addison 2001, and Humphreys 2003). It is also recommended that raising reliance on natural resources in situations where armed conflicts require exploitation (Bigombe and Collier, 2000). It is also claimed that the reconstruction process should not be about rebuilding peace as it were before, as if it had been good enough then there had been no chances of the conflict to even rise at first (Luckham, 2004). Rather, it is about undermining the war-economy structures that sustain interest in conflict protraction.

Several other scholars, such as Humphreys and Fearon (2009), Duffield (2002), and Suhrke (2007), are researching the effect of development aid on the reconstruction post-conflict. It has also been argued, that aid would stimulate development in the post-conflict situation quite successfully (Collier and Hoeffler, 2002). However, donors typically are not that successful in handling aid. That is due to an increase in aid transfers at the onset of peace when conflict struck countries have little potential for integration, and typically decline within three years, when the receiving countries have stronger institutional structure (Foster and Keith, 2003). Consequently,

aid contributions must be distributed over periods and slowly increase between the fourth and seventh years of prosperity and returning to usual levels after yet another decade (Elbadawi, Kaltani, and Schmidt, 2008).

While donors also engaged in various post-conflict reconstruction projects in recent history, the rehabilitation of Western Europe after the Second World War ended, has been regarded as the most productive tale. It is because of the amount of capital made available to countries in Western Europe (Panic, 2005). Although Germany received about \$200 per capita (in constant 2001 \$US) during the first two years of the post-war period, Bosnia and Herzegovina received over \$1,400 per capita after the Dayton Agreement was signed (Lewarne and Snelbecker, 2004). Nevertheless, the provision of such extensive aid throughout the case of Bosnia had the negative effects of the assistance reliance on the local economy (Tzifakis and Tsardanidis, 2006). Nevertheless, the aftermath of World War II was widely accepted as the United States launched the Marshall Plan. Modern reconstruction research, on the other hand, is mostly undertaken under extremely uncertain post-conflict circumstances, under which cessation of hostilities seems to be very likely (Chesterman, 2004).

A great number of people have been killed and terrorized, in the face of armed conflicts. For instance, in the case of the Democratic Republic of Congo alone, around 5 million people, or even more than that, lost their lives during the conflict that lasted for almost a decade in the 1990s, and even several diseases were exacerbated in the face of this conflict (International Rescue Committee, 2008). Also, in the case of Côte d'Ivoire, around 750,000 people were internally displaced and hence resulted in a half-million of refugee outflow (United National High Commissioner for Refugee (UNHCR), 2007). In addition to these, Bosnia and Rwanda faced the

worst ever slaughter in the face of genocide and are quoted as the most disastrous examples for the fatalities to violent conflicts (Mackintosh, 1996).

The social and economic effects of violent conflicts are also significant. Huge losses of livelihood, breakdown of public institutions, and rule of law, persistent instability, employment opportunities, damaged infrastructure, and fragmented social networks are the legacies of violent conflict (Justino, 2011). Afghanistan, even after a couple of decades of the protracted conflict, remains to be the world's poorest, the most vulnerable nations as well as ranked at almost the bottom of all the human development indices (Kruck and Freedman, 2010). Afghanistan is ranked on number seven, among the world's weakest states, under the Failed State Index of Fund for Peace (Fund for Peace, 2008).

Nevertheless, recent studies indicate a decrease in the number of armed conflicts, at global levels, mainly the ones that started in the 1990s, immediately after the Cold War ended (Human Security Center, 2008). Therefore, to reverse and transform the hostile conditions, and to have a reduced risk for conflict recurrence, economic recovery is a necessity.

Instances, where countries have emerged from violent conflicts, have been seen experiencing major challenges in trying to rally the desperately needed financial and human resources, first as humanitarian aid, and then later to recover their economies (Collier, 2009). Most of the time, the newly appointed official (mostly temporary), face numerous challenges at the same time, due to critically lacking expertise. These (temporary) officials have to work on the preservation of peace, security, reintegration of the ex-combatants, resettlement of the internally displaced persons (IDPs), repatriation of refugees, rehabilitation of the damaged infrastructure and public institutions, and also the restoration of trust amongst private investors. They also have to restore the regulation of government finances and reestablish control over important national

resources. Lastly, these (temporary) officials are also expected to help to promote the circumstances for the conflict to persist in the concerned society and must work on creating more job opportunities to tackle the vertical and horizontal inequalities (Stewart, 2002). The ramifications of these exceptional limitations are still to be properly addressed by the global community and expressed throughout the creation of post-conflict support policies and programs (United Nation Security Council, 2008).

To begin with, the fact that a post-conflict economy is not just some usual or normal economy that appears to be in tremendous suffering. Particularly, major destruction of infrastructure, disturbance in community infrastructure, disruption in signaling, or incentives which usually characterize the history of armed conflict imply a prolonged period to 'normalcy' (People, 2015). As we can comprehend, that process of reconstruction in a post-conflict dynamic and bringing it back to normal is an overlapping process and has no straight outline to be followed, therefore, we can now identify the need for special creative thinking to design, sequence, and implement public policy (United Nations Development Programme, 2005).

Assets are diverted from development to destruction during conflicts. Therefore, hyperinflation, asset destruction, and a subsequent decline in economic output, also are the economic legacies of violent conflicts (Stewart and Ohiorhenuan, 2008). The warped method of acquisition of assets and utilization of resources in situations of conflict tends to leave behind a skewed economic framework as well as an extremely crippling atmosphere for reasonable private-sector development (Department for International Development, 2008). Economic growth and confidence between investors could become impossible to stop once the conflict is over. Economies at all scales from rural to national and financial exchanges could seriously disrupt (UN Economic and Social Council, 2008). Simultaneously, frequently illegal, economies emerge with

the destruction of legitimate economic activity, which empowers tribal leaders to gain support in their constituencies. Despite the challenges of restoring legitimate markets during a conflict, such alternative economies are an ongoing attraction (Rondinelli, 2007).

At times, conflicts reverberate again after a brief time of peace. There are cases, where the conflict persists even though the conflict has ended, so there is no defined before or after any conflict (Szayna, *et al*, 2017). Loss of lives, without any doubt, is the most tragic outcome of any conflict. Adding to this, massive damage and obliteration of human capital and infrastructure, decreasing rates of human resources which are a result of death, disease, and displacement, collapsing economic growth, decreasing opportunities for employment and livelihood, weakening of institutions, as well as declining social capital, specifically the style for 'bridging' systems that spread through cultural and social divisions (Silva, 2006). Public capacity is progressively reduced resulting throughout the public being unable to fund public services or infrastructure any more (Moser and Ichida, 2001).

Provision of opportunities that nurture a self-sufficient economic and social development, whilst, mitigating possible risk factors for the recurrence of conflict, is the ultimate goal of post-conflict economic reconstruction (Stewart and Ohiorhenuan, 2008). Another important concern is the recognition of gender disparity for the employment sector. It is to be kept in mind that the social structure should stand based on gender equity, and the contribution of both, men and women, in ensuring a sustainable economic and social community (UN Women, 2014).

Policies for post-conflict reconstruction are supposed to be based on a thorough understanding of the regional forces of reconstruction. Individuals of the post-conflict societies, usually do not rely on external players to run their activities, financially (Dod and Smith, 2009). But instead, they firmly take over their responsibilities in the process of reconstruction and

recovery. The key factor to ensure a stronger and lasting reconstruction is possible if the driving fractions have an in-depth knowledge of the social dynamics of the affected community, and that their planning resonates with the traditions of locals (Beddington and McLean, 2012).

Conflicts, mainly the violent conflicts, leave behind a damaged economy and a destructed social structure. Keeping this in mind, the economic prospects of post-conflict reconstruction hold great importance, to revert the destruction of social and human capital, and to end the suffering of people by creating employment opportunities (Stewart and Ohiorhenuan, 2008). Even though external assistance and aid may be able to play its part, but eventually it is the people who have to stand up for themselves and take over, to strengthen the local economy, making a sustainable economic environment. This is why economic recovery holds greater importance (UN Economic and Social Council, 2008)

Another reason behind the importance of economic reconstruction in the post-conflict scenarios is the fact that the chances for conflict to recur are much reduced (Brown et al, 2011). In such cases, however, the economic recovery may reverse leading to a threat to conflict recurrence (Flores and Nooruddin, 2007). Poor economic growth, lacking employment opportunities (for male adults), existing horizontal inequalities, and an abundance of natural resources are major risk factors for conflict to recur (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004).

An effective economic reconstruction strategy will immediately lead to the reversal of the lower per capita income into higher per capita and will as well strengthen the development prospects (Anderson, 1999). Nonetheless, economic recovery cannot lead straight to other factors, on itself, and conflict-sensitive strategies have to be adopted for the risk factors to be dealt with (Gaigals and Leonhard, 2001). Another method involves the reconstruction strategies adopted must avoid infuriating the conflict, deliberately, by predicting the effects for disparities or



inequalities in the community (International Alert, 2006). As per this approach, the reconstruction strategy needs to widen the employment opportunities as it would help in lessening the horizontal inequalities in the areas where they are at par. Strategies of this sort, if adopted, would result in building up a sustainable economic structure and may also result in a reduction in the rental prospects in the cases of natural resources. Speaking in broad terms, an inclusive economic reconstruction strategy is a necessity and will automatically eliminate the risks for the conflict to recur with improved livelihoods (del Castillo, 2008).

Recognizing the significance of post-conflict economic recovery has birthed new, more broad, approaches towards reconstruction integrating economic recovery, in the post-conflict peacebuilding scenarios (del Castillo, 2008). In post-conflict environments, the primary emphasis of internal and external actors is now oriented towards a variety of socio-economic tasks beyond the traditional role of economic stability that favors in consolidations of peace. Multilateral and bilateral policymakers together formed specialized units to work on post-conflict reconstruction, recovery, and development issues (Maier, 2010). These specialized units include the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery under United Nations Development Programme and the Low-Income Countries under Stress also known as the Fragile and Conflict-Affected Countries Program initiative under the World Bank (Patrick and Brown, 2007). These units work on supporting the post-conflict communities with the reconstructed infrastructure, promoted economic potentials, ensuring the inclusion of marginalized segments into social, economic, and political sectors, as well as a reformed regulatory framework for investments and trade (Barnett, 2007). Parallel to this, the focus of post-conflict reconstruction has shifted on the restoration and reformation of the economic stakeholders who are the anchors of prospering economies (Tschirgi, 2004). It has resulted in increased post-conflict initiatives that promote an instant fix for the recovery of social

and human capital, as well as the development of policies which are aimed at enhancing governance and skilled economic policies, along with radical reform in government services and regulatory authorities (Lewarne and Snelbecker, 2004).

While post-conflict communities are similar, mostly, but they do vary in several respects. Therefore, the policies and strategies for reconstruction and recovery are different in all cases (Panic, 2005). The cases, however, may vary, but certain key factors are essential to be followed in the formulation of policies. These key factors are as follows:

The first key factor that differentiates each case is the per capita income level. In most case of post-conflict communities, are characterized to be on the middle or lower level of income per capita (del Castillo, 2008). The cases, with lower per capita face problems due to a lacking human capital and infrastructure, and significant dependence of foreign aid. In these cases, the attraction for foreign investments (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2006). Secondly, the conflicting communities are differentiated based on existing horizontal inequalities. These inequalities pose difficulties for the policymakers, as now they have to work on introducing policies that favor all and have the potential of reducing the social disparities (Stewart, 2005).

Another differentiation could be made considering the presence and absence of natural resources (Stewart, 2012). This is mainly because in case of availability of natural resources the chances for quick and sustainable economic recovery are more as compared to the communities who lack these resources (Auty, 2001). Also, it is important to note that the communities with higher availability of natural resources automatically become an attraction for foreign investments, but mostly these foreign attractions are focused on the exploitation of these resources rather than benefitting them for the local community. This may as well be a hazard for the community to fall

prey to corruption and illegal trades which may feud conflict to re-occur (Mabey and McNally, 1999).

Lastly, the most important factor for characterizing different cases for post-conflict reconstruction is based on the grounds of the level of destruction and disarray the community has faced due to the conflict (Panic, 2005). The economic destruction as well as the destruction of human and social capital leading to weakening the social contract. In such cases, it is important to notice the interests of domestic as well as international stakeholders in the reconstruction of the post-conflict community into a sustainable and secure part of society, keeping in mind their international engagements (Humphreys and Richards, 2005).

## **2.2 Sustainable Peace and the Role of Social Capital**

The international peace initiatives have stressed on peacebuilding and reconciliation, but in post-conflict contexts, ethnic divisions do not seem to have decreased (Lerche, 2000). Since the 2001 invasion, Afghanistan has become increasingly ethnicized (Aitken, 2007). British, United States and Iraqi officials acknowledge Iraq's descent into a largely ethnically defined civil war (Haddad, 2013). Ethnic tension has continued or exacerbated, regardless of the interference of external actors and the post-conflict peace-building projects (Newman, 2011).

It may be argued that the ultimate result of ethnic violence is those outcomes. Some political analysts and scholars have since the beginning called for the division of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Iraq along ethnic/sectarian lines as the only effective solution to the conflict (Mearshiemer & Pape, 1993). In this perspective, ethnic conflicts would be unavoidable and the resolution would be much easier through the development of new ethnic states by segregating the parties involved, from this perspective (Easterly, 1999). Efforts to preserve the territorial integrity

of those states and achieve peace, are misguided and doomed to failure for these partition advocates (Kaufmann, 1998).

Some diplomats and commentators had also understood Afghanistan as an ethnically divided country. At the time of the 2001 invasion, western diplomats such as German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer proposed a federal solution for Afghanistan (Aitken, 2007). For Afghanistan, ethnic federalism (both territorial and non-territorial) has been promoted further as 'a constitutional solution for reconciling diverse cultural, national, and other interests with those of a single, larger political group' (Tremay, 2005). That approach is reasonable considering Afghanistan's instability at the time, with most of the state being poorly controlled by several warlords. But it depends on a perception of Afghanistan as an ethnically divided nation, and warlords as ethnic leaders, as the West views it.

Conflicts will not only evolve the relevance and purpose of existing categories but can also enable new ethnic identities to rise (Varshney, 2003). Ethno-linguistic categories arose in Afghanistan during and after the Anti-Soviet war as socially and politically important identities (Sharma, 2016). Networks focused on relationships of kinship and not of a territorial unit or ethnic group is the foundation of identities in Afghanistan (Collins, 2003). This fundamental unit of identity, the qawm, is identified as 'any segment of society bound by solidarity...' and may be based on extended family, community, occupational group, village, etc. (Bhatia, 2008).

The ethno-nationalist discourses suggest that ethnic identities are not set identities. Ethnic distinctiveness can increase, particularly in conflicts (Simonsen, 2005). According to Esteban and Ray, ethnicity is not always a political identity (Esteban and Ray, 2008), rather, multiple identities can be politicized in various contexts and the definitions to these politicized identities may vary according to the conflicts, displacements, and migrations (Aitken, 2007). At least in principle, it

opens up the possibility of sacrificing the value of ethnicity after a conflict. This complex approach to ethnicity has consequences for foreign involvement and peace-making strategies and reflects a relatively defined political identity as opposed to traditional approaches in ethnic interventions and peace processes (Aitken, 2007).

International actors usually follow at least two significant goals to achieve a lasting peace. Firstly, sustainable peace requires an end to conflicts, or at least a significant reduction in violence (Gates et al, 2007). A resolution can be achieved through a negotiated peace agreement or in some cases the international interventions attempted to resolve conflicts through military action (Walter, 2002). Secondly, peace-building is a diplomatic process involving efforts to create stable democratic institutions (Abubakar, 2019). The common assumption is that stable political structures would allow managing conflicts, preventing conflict recurrence, and providing the conditions for a peaceful resolution (Paris, 2004). The integrity of democratic institutions depends on people's recognition of the system's legitimacy (Aitken, 2007).

When conflicts are often seen as ethnic conflicts, peace efforts may improve the ethnic interpretation of the issue and legitimize ethno-nationalists as ethnic representatives (Baumann, 1999). Cessation of war is the main aim of the peace processes. Peace mechanisms include the main parties, who are more or less able to participate in discussions on the critical issues in dispute (Darby & Mac Ginty, 2000). To achieve the aim of ending the conflict, the main characters almost always involve both government and paramilitaries (Aitken, 2007). Armed actors' privileges can exclude other social actors from the negotiations (Hofmann and Schneckener, 2011). If the conflict is framed as an ethnic conflict the armed parties will be legitimized as representatives of their ethnic group in the process (Aitken, 2007). Also, these parties' demands for security and a share

of power are likely to be ethnically phrased as demand for ethnic power-sharing (Downes, 2004; Aitken, 2007).

Nearly all forms of traditional cultural-social societies are founded on common norms, such as tribes, clans, village associations, religious sects, etc., and use these norms to achieve cooperative ends (Collins, 2006). As a general rule, this type of social capital has not been seen as an advantage in the literature on development; it is seen much more broadly as a liability (Fukuyama, 2002). Economic modernization was regarded as antithetical to the existing culture and social structures, which would either wash away or be thwarted by the forces of traditionalism (Herzfeld, 2005).

Although there is a variety of definitions been given to social capital, in this paper, I will be considering the definition used by Francis Fukuyama in “*Social capital, civil society, and development*”, which is as follows: social capital is an instantiated, informal norm that promotes cooperation between two or more parties. The norms which constitute social capital are elaborately articulated doctrines such as tribes and religions (sects) (Fukuyama, 2010). Collective action by a group of individuals having no social capital can, of course, be achieved, but that would possibly entail the expense of monitoring, negotiating, litigating, and executing formal agreements (Woolcock, 1998). No contract can describe some uncertainty between the participants; much of this relies on the assumption that a certain amount of interest which prevents the parties from exploiting unexpected weaknesses (Beckert, 1996).

In this thesis, social capital is seen as a complex framework of societal institutions and practices that make up a society and that organize and establish limits on people's behavior, informally, which in Kendall's words also refers to social structures (Kendall, 2012). Contrary to this, Brown has defined social structure as, “the set of actually existing relations, at a given

moment, which link together certain human beings” (Radcliffe-Brown, 1940). Theorists have stressed that social structure in society produces predictability and order and is thus an integral part of it (Parsons, 1951). Often a war can distort the established foundations of a social system, for example in the cases of North Waziristan in particular and FATA in general, Shakirullah in 2020, observed multiple traditional informal structures degraded by the violent conflict.

Throughout FATA, the local communities were targeted by militants with a strategy to weaken people and their social institutions by creating such an environment that is more appropriate to promote their ideology (Nawaz and Borchgrave, 2009). The literature demonstrates that different conflict resolution mechanisms are profoundly correlated with a particular society's dominant culture, and conflict resolution mechanisms are essential to the preservation of social order in society (Nawab and Elahi, 2019). In this case, for example, traditional jirga systems were disputed and the conflict resolution mechanism weakened the social status of tribal elders and maliks (tribal chiefs) and the authority was moved from malik to mullah (Dawar, 2019).

Jirga used to be entirely functional in the pre-conflict scenario for restoring peace by resolving inter-tribe and intra-tribe conflicts and disputes, because jirga is the fundamental social institution of the Pashtun social system (Wardak, 2003). Jirga is a centuries-old civil body that is being assembled to address local problems in times of strife, conflicts, and strife. Jirga is not only functional in Pashtun dominated areas but has been practiced with various names and nomenclatures in Punjab, Baluchistan, Sindh, and other ethnic groups throughout Pakistan (Nawab and Elahi, 2019). The Pashtun jirga is very common and carries great significance across Pashtun-dominated areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan (Ahmed and Yousaf, 2018).

Before the outbreak of militancy throughout FATA, the informal institutions (jirga and hujra) played a crucial role in promoting stability, unity, and integration in the absence of the

formal and ineffective laws of government (Nawab and Elahi, 2019). These institutions have been deeply rooted in the tribal society, and well organized (Gluckman, 2017). Such informal institutions underwent a series of such processes that contributed to its regional modification and alteration (Nawab and Elahi, 2019). Local perceptions of distortion and re-emergence processes are of great importance when searching for novel explanations about these informal institutions (Brinkerhoff, 2007).

### **2.3 Discourse on Tribal Areas of Pakistan**

Pakistan's tribal areas (previously known as FATA) lie in the east of the Durand Border, consisting of seven agencies and six frontier regions. (Lambah, 2012). The Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan was a British Indian legacy (Yousaf, 2019). Pakistan agreed to establish an adult franchise for the 1997 elections in the former FATA (Wazir and Khan, 2013). According to the 1997 electoral rolls, there were 1.6 million ex-FATA voters including 0.4 million female votes (Anwar, 2016). Historically, the elections of 1997 were held based on the universal adult franchise, for the first time in FATA (Ahmad and Mohyuddin, 2013). The post-9/11 global and national atmosphere significantly influenced Pakistan's north-western region, and especially the tribal areas (Rubin and Rashid, 2008). It offered an opportunity to implement reforms and bring tribal people in settled districts to a distance on one hand (Ullah, 2015), and on the other side. Regardless of the foreign development funding, poverty alleviation, the building of democratic institutions and the militancy has held the regions retrograde (Anwar, 2011).

The 9/11 attacks altered the dynamics in the South and Central Asian region, specifically. (Cooley, 2012). So much so, that Pakistan had become a frontline state in the war against global terrorism (US-backed), and fully supported the efforts of the International Community to restore and rehabilitate Afghanistan (Javaid, 2016). Pakistan's army shifted to tribal areas after the entry



of NATO forces in Afghanistan (Shah, 2012). The insurgents turned against the state, and then the suicide attacks started, targeting communications and women education (Anwar, 2016). Lack of government's seriousness on this issue exacerbated these activities of insurgents, and soon the scenario transformed from being just a law and order concern to an outright insurgency (Ullah, 2015), resulting in the deaths of more than 600 *maliks* (Malik, 2013). The return of peace and the establishment of democracy in the tribal areas demanded long-term sustainable socio-economic development involving both the tribal leaders and official machinery because sustainable peace cannot be achieved by military means only (Anwar, 2016). For the establishment of a peaceful and democratic setup in the tribal areas of Pakistan, the policymakers must meet the contextual dynamics of the traditional tribal customs while implementing modern-day ideas and strategies (Fukuyama, 2014). Concrete socio-economic and political changes to bring tribal areas into the mainstream should be implemented (Shah, 2012). It is time for sound decisions to be made with agreement on the future political and administrative character of the districts now merged (Anwar, 2016). Repeated violation of constitutional rule; dissolution of state institutions, the disconnection between state goals and citizens' interests undermined their citizens' protection (Patrick, 2011).

The tribal areas have their conventional system in which tribes played a traditional role particularly its elites called Maliks or Masharan (elders) (Ali, 2018). Production and trade of drugs is another important aspect, in regards to the tribal areas. Afghanistan is said to have 93% of the total world's production of opium, 14.3% of Afghanistan population is engaged in this opium production, agriculture accounts for 53% of Afghanistan's economy, narcotic trade needs instability and unstable Afghanistan is a wonderful opportunity (Jones 2009). These statistics and societal dynamics have influenced the tribal areas of Pakistan at large (Durani and Khan, 2002). The law and order situation of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province also deteriorated due to this. To

counter the situation an elite police force was established in the province besides the emphasis on policing by the community and nonpolitical committees formation for resolution of the conflict (Anwar, 2016).

The tribal areas faced extreme administrative instability and the rebels, terrorists, and anti-state forces that armed the proper functioning of the government posed many challenges (Peters and Rassler, 2010). The tribal areas have certainly not been provided due attention in the past, but many development projects have now been initiated to provide people with a better living climate.

The Tribal areas of Pakistan have faced more than a decade of violence, recently in the face of militancy. However, the transition phase of post-conflict reconstruction has not been explored in its true discourse. Ishaque (2016) has explored the post-conflict stability operations in erstwhile FATA while investigating the need for integration of FATA into the mainstream and also the options that are available for the economic development and social uplifting of the tribal areas (as a whole) of Pakistan. Mehmood and Jafar (2019) have worked on exploring the effect of the merger of the FATA with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and analyzed the cultural amalgamation concerning the judicial system in comparison to the *jirga* culture, the educational shift from madrassa to modern-day education, up-gradation of health facilities, the economic effects of the merger from the free market to regular market and the overall security impact including the internal and external security. Anwar (2016) has also worked on the post-conflict reconstruction in FATA, Pakistan, while exploring the developments in the aftermath of 9/11 and also analyzed the factors which resulted in the tribal areas of Pakistan being among the most violent areas in the world, since 2001. Hameed (2012) identified, mapped, and analyzed the fundamental causes of the multifaceted violent conflicts along with the tribal areas of Pakistan and how has the old age administrative structures contributed to the continuation of the violent activities. However,

there has been little to no discourse on the post-conflict reconstruction in the case of Kurram tribal district, knowing that the violence in Kurram Valley was in one way or the other linked with the multi-sectarian dynamics.

## Chapter 3

### Case of District Kurram: History, Sectarianism and the Emergence of Militancy

#### 3.1 Introduction

Kurram is among the seven merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It was termed as an agency under erstwhile FATA until May 2018 (International Crisis Group (ICG), 2019). Its capital, Parachinar can easily be located on the world map as it lies close to the point where the 34<sup>th</sup> parallel intersects the 70<sup>th</sup> parallel (Stewart 1982). Kurram lies on a vast area of land lying along Pakistan's sensitive 160-kilometer border with Afghanistan, covering 3,380 square kilometers or 0.0038 percent of Pakistan's land area (Community Motivation and Development Organization). As per the latest census report, the population of district Kurram is estimated to be 0.618 million (male 0.308 million, female 0.310 million) (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2017).



Retrieved from: <https://cmdo.org.pk/kurram-agency/>

Kurram's history goes back to centuries. It was considered to be the preferred gateway for Kabul and Gardez from India through the Peiwar Kotal Pass, in ancient times. The Kurram Agency was inhabited by the Hindu Aryans in 1600 B.C. and the early 19th century was part of the Kingdom of Afghanistan until it was put under British rule in 1848 (Planning & Development Department, 2019). It is named after the river Kurram which passes through it and is now given the status of the district after the amalgamation of FATA into the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Kurram is bordered by Afghanistan in the north and the west (Nangarhar and Paktia province respectively) and in the east by Orakzai and Khyber tribal districts, in the southeast by district Hangu and in the south by North Waziristan. The Kurram valley is 115 kilometers long as has an area of about 1,278 square miles (Community Motivation and Development Organization).

The population of the valley consists of numerous tribes namely Turi, Bangash, Parachamkani, Masozai, Alisherazi, Maqbals, Jajis, Zaimusht, Mangal, Kharotai, Ghalgai, and Hazara. This altered population structure of the valley has led to sectarian tensions between Shias and Sunnis (Global Protection Cluster, 2015). It is among poor regions of the country and lags behind the rest of the world in almost every socioeconomic comparison. The majority of people are extremely poor. As per the economic survey 2018, the poverty level here is 44% as compared to 32% in the rest of the country (Economic Survey, 2018-19). The quality and construction of the houses have improved with the prosperity brought in the people working mostly in the Middle East countries. Generally, people are not literate and earn living by farming as tenants on land owned by others (Planning & Development Department, 2019).

The economy is predominantly agrarian, but the marginal landholdings allow only subsistence agriculture. Since this area has remained closed until now, therefore, elements of social forestry and extensive exploration/extraction of mineral resources have not taken place (Economic

Survey, 2018-19). Universal economic principles of supply/demand give/take and input/output have been rendered ineffective in the existing tribal structure (Economic Survey, 2018-19). Although this region gets lofty shares in the form of development funds, allowances, compensations, and subsidies etcetera, however, the worst part is that most of it go down the drain due to inadequacies of infrastructure and inherent system (Dawn, 2018).

The capital, Parachinar is also the largest city of Pakistan's former Federal Administered Areas (FATA). The magnificent Parachinar Valley, where heaven's vault envelops the lovely tropical scenery and snow-capped peaks are towering in the background, is now on its journey towards revival from a lasting period of militancy and sectarian conflict (Nation, 2017). Sectarian violence was not a new phenomenon for Kurram Agency where well over 4000 people have been killed in clashes between the Sunni and Shia tribes since 1980 (Global Protection Cluster, 2015). Parachinar is located in a far-flung corner of western Pakistan, is also known as the "Little Iran" by some Iranian Shiites (Vatanka, 2012). Mostly the locals of Kurram belong to the Shia sect and became a striking example of Shia suffering in the face of sectarianism and sectarian violence. As district Kurram is surrounded by Afghan territory from three sides, hence has elements that connect the sanctuaries of Pakistani Taliban and the so-called Islamic State group. Such elements conform to a staunch anti-Shia version of the Sunni Muslims. (Ali, 2017) The horrific situation at Parachinar could be seen as a result of the growing sectarian violence that has plagued the Pakistani nation in recent years (Rieck, 2015).

Around 44% of the district's population belongs to the Shia sect (Planning & Development Department, 2019). Since 2007, the capital Parachinar has been the victim of many terrorist attacks that resulted in more than 500 deaths, making it the second most attacked city after Peshawar by militants (BBC, 2018). Nearly 60 percent of the locals in Parachinar had suffered from post-

traumatic stress disorder as a result of the immense terrorist attacks from 2007 to 2017, and nearly 40 percent of the population suffered from depression. The lack of mental health facilities in Kurram prevented many people from receiving treatment within their region (Dawn, 2017). As per certain researches, Parachinar had the highest suicide rate among young adults and almost 100 individuals committed suicide each year since 2017 (Dawn, 2017). The Almighty has bestowed the Parachinar region with an immense amount of species in plants. So much so, the locals of this region have survived highly on the dependence of these plants for fulfilling their nutritional and medical needs (Khan, 2013).

### **3.2 Kurram in History**

For district Kurram, sectarian violence was never a new concept, as having the only tribal district with such vast populations of Shias. In a total population of approximately five hundred thousand people, Shias constitute a strong 44 percent (Chandran, 2017). The famous *Turi* tribe (the only Pashtun Shia tribe) is inhabited in the Upper Kurram Region whereas the Lower Kurram is mostly populated by the Sunnis (Khan, 2010). Up until the 18th century, the *Turi* tribe was dominated by the *Bangash* tribe, but then the *Turis* attacked the Sunni *Bangash* populous and changed the whole status quo of the region, so much so, the *Bangash (Sunnis)* tribe was forcibly pushed to be contained within the Lower Kurram region. It is to be understood here that the *Bangash* tribe consists of both, Sunnis and Shias, but the ones residing in the Lower Kurram region are mainly the Sunni ones. (Ali and Ayub, 2013)

After the Treaty of Gandamak in 1879, the Afghans renounced their claim over Kurram, and the *Turis* asked the British to take over the administration of the region (Tomsen, 2013). This happened when the Kurram Agency was founded in 1892. The agency headquarters at Parachinar is less than 100 km from Afghanistan's capital Kabul (Abou Zahab, 2009).

Since the 1930s, disputes over land and water resources have taken place between the tribes, and as well as occasional outbreaks of sectarian and tribal violence has also taken place, particularly during the Islamic month of Muharram or the day of Nowruz which is also known to be the Iranian New Year (Rieck, 2015). In the eighties, the massive influx of Afghan refugees distorted the complete demographics of the region and also introduced the extremist backed Sunni militant ideology at the point when the Shia's in Parachinar, under the leadership of Alama Syed Arif Hussain Al Hussaini, undergoing radicalization in the face of the Iranian revolution (Limaye *et al*, 2004). As the availability of modern weapons got mainstreamed, the intensity and frequency of violent clashes increased, whereas the local government had started to be viewed as being biased towards the other (Sunni) side (Dawn, 2007). The breakthrough of these large scale violent clashes started after the Turis blocked the movement of Sunni mujahideen to Afghanistan via Parachinar, in the year 1986. At the time, General Zia ul Haq allegedly permitted the Afghan mujahideen and the Sunni populous of the regions to eliminate the Turi Shias (Daily Times, 2007).

### **3.3 Sectarianism over the years**

Since the early eighteenth century Shi'ism was introduced in the Kurram valley, present-day province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, by the Turis, a Pashtu-speaking Afghan tribe, possibly of Turkish stock. The Turis vanquished the Pashtun Bangash, which had conquered the valley at the turn of the 15th century, and have since converted half of its members and some sub-sections of the Orakzai tribe to the Shia faith. (Rieck, 2015)

Until the early twentieth century some Syed families, who had reached the era with the armies of Muslim invaders passing through the Kurram valley, had been most influential among these Shia tribes (Zaman, 1998). In 1892, after a prolonged revolt against the Ameer Abdur Rahman of Afghanistan, the Turis appealed to the British for help, who in turn established the



Kurram Agency as the first of seven “Tribal Agencies” which were later incorporated into then North-West Frontier Province, now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Tomsen, 2013). Since the times of British India and the creation of Pakistan, Kurram agency, which stretched from Thall to Paiwar Pass via Parachinar, has been under the control of Shi'ism, providing manpower to all the countrywide Shia movements (Abbas, 2010).

### 3.3.1 from the 1970s to 1990s

Repeated clashes took place in Parachinar from the 1970s to the 1990s. These disputes mainly occurred over water and land. However, in 1973 the quarter of Shia muhajirs in the former Sikh settlement Gobindgarh (Sheikhupura Dist.) were surrounded and attacked by armed locals (Lionel, 2008). The grounds for this clash had been prepared long since by local Sunni Maulvis, but the authorities had not reacted the situation there became worse for Shias after parts of the Kurram Militia started recruiting the locals in 1982, were deployed in other parts of Pakistan from 1971 onwards. The Agency thereafter became more vulnerable to occasional attacks by (*Sunni*) Afghan *lashkars*. (Daily Times, 2007)

In 1980, on the day of 10<sup>th</sup> Muharram, Afghan refugees, who were alleged to have been settled deliberately near Shia villages, attacked the home village of Syed Hussaini. Similar incidents occurred repeatedly in the following years around Parachinar (Rafiq, 2014). Anti-Shia propaganda by religious extremists was again given almost free rein, while Shia preachers had become more militant, as well. The significance of Parachinar, being involved in the sectarian conflicts, mainly in the ‘80s was due to Alama Syed Arif Hussain al Hussain being the leader for the Tehreek Nifaaz-e-Fiqah Jafferiyah (TNFJ), the only Shia organization of the time. Hussaini was elected by the TNFJ leadership when he was merely thirty-seven years old (Rafiq, 2014). He was appointed on this position due to his energy, courage, political acumen, and religious learning.

Hussaini gave TNFJ both renewed vigor and a profound change of direction. It is believed that he was probably the most ardent admirer of Ayatollah Khomeini among Pakistan's Shia *Ulema* (Abbas, 2010). He was born and bred in Parachinar until one of the ulamas took him to Najaf (Iraq) in 1967 is said to have been one of the first Pakistani *Talib* to attend the lessons and prayers of Khomeini regularly. He is also known to be urging his fellow-students, who were then still shunning contact with the controversial Ayatollah, to support Khomeini's political stance. Since then, he was believed to be a great supporter of Khomeini's political movements and would teach his students within Pakistan to follow his suite as well (Fuchs, 2014).

After the victory of the Iranian revolution, the Shia youth of Kurram valley, which had always been at the forefront of Shia communal movements in Pakistan, became thoroughly indoctrinated by the new political radicalism (Fuchs, 2014). Hussaini led thousands of volunteers from Parachinar and made a strong contribution to the success of his several conventions in Pakistan. The government retaliated by instigating attacks of Afghan refugees on Hussaini's home village (Perlez and Zubair, 2008). After such attacks, he went back to Parachinar and organized armed self-defense, but also pleaded not to hold all Afghan refugees responsible for the acts of some misguided elements who were "executing an international conspiracy" (Rieck, 2015). He intensified his efforts to organize the local youth, and by 1983 he felt strong enough to challenge the Political Agent and the tribal chieftains on the issue of the distribution of development funds in the Kurram Agency. But sectarian tensions in his hometown Parachinar had been on the rise ever since 1980 (Fuchs, 2014).

In July 1987, severe fighting started in the Kurram valley. Tensions rose there once more after a fresh influx of Afghan refugees in 1986 and attempts of the Shia Turis to disarm some of them (Abou Zahab, 2009). Following incidents in the Sunni village Bushara, these Afghans

spearheaded an all-out offensive against Turi villages, allegedly with the full connivance of the government, which had planned to turn the Kurram Agency into a permanent base for the Afghan mujahidin at the expense of the local Shias (Bhattacharya, 2019). The fighting lasted until 3 weeks, with fifty-two Shias and 120 Sunnis killed according to official figures (unofficially many more) and fourteen villages partially or wholly destroyed. For the first time some Turis, sensing themselves being pushed to the wall, appealed even to the Soviet-backed Afghan government for help (Rieck, 2015).

Later in the year 1996, heavy fighting started in Parachinar and lasted for several days, this time started by local Shias and with the majority of the more than 200 victims being Sunnis (Rieck, 2015). Apparently, after these clashes, a ceasefire agreement took place, which involved the government as well, and the clashes were reduced to a minimum till 2017.

### **3.4 Wave of Violence 2007-2017**

Kurram had remained fairly quiet for six years after Shia Sunni clashes in April and May 2001, but April 2007 marked the beginning of a prolonged ordeal for the local Shias which had become increasingly vulnerable after militant extremists had established their writ in the neighboring Tribal Agencies of North Waziristan and Orakzai Agency (Abbas, 2010).

Violence against Shias in Kurram, which reached an unprecedented level in the years since 2007, had paralleled the terrorist campaign to which Shias were being exposed in other parts of Pakistan (Abbas, 2010). But the situation was different there in several respects. First, the escalation of Shia-Sunni conflicts in the agency had been closely related to the situation in Afghanistan, where the Taliban insurgency against NATO troops and the post-2001 political order had gathered steam since 2006, and to the mushroom growth of extremist groups in the FATA which were organized under the umbrella of the TTP since December 2007 (Riffat, 2015).

Secondly, while anti-Shia terrorists all over Pakistan had always targeted unarmed gatherings or individuals, Shias from Kurram were not only victims of terrorists and other armed attacks; rather they have also fought back vigorously, as had been the case in former decades (Vatanka, 2012). Thirdly, perpetrators of violence against Shias in Kurram were not only being motivated by sectarian fanaticism (Riffat, 2015). In the case of local Sunni rivals of the Shia Turis and Bangash, tribal solidarity and traditions of revenge were probably more important, while Islamist militants of the Tehreek e Taliban Pakistan from neighboring areas and Afghan Taliban confronted the Shias of Kurram mainly for the sake of power and strategic goals.

The trigger for the most serious period of conflict in the history of Kurram was a Sunni procession on 1 April 2007 in Parachinar (Abou Zahab, 2009). Mansur Khan Mahsud gives the following account:

“In April 2007, Sunnis in Parachinar chanted anti-Shia slogans during their Rabi-ul-Awwal procession (marking the birth of the Prophet Muhammad), angering the Shia community. Shia leaders complained to local political authorities, who arrested some of the Sunni chiefs involved in the incident. The Sunnis, for their part, claimed the Shia had thrown stones at the procession. The situation escalated, and the next day Shia leaders claimed Sunnis had attacked a Shia religious procession with rockets and hand grenades fired from a Sunni mosque in Parachinar. Sectarian violence soon engulfed the entire city and spread to nearby villages ... When soldiers in the Pakistani Army and the Frontier Corps attempted to intervene, they too were attacked by both sides, and more than a dozen security personnel were killed. More than 100 people in total were killed in this series of conflicts. As bloody

violence spread across Kurram, a Jirga of Sunni and Shia elders from Hangu was convened and managed to broker a cease-fire between the two sects in Parachinar. The fighting stopped, but the residents of the city were forced to spend 45 days under a curfew implemented by the government as the situation settled down. However, sporadic clashes continued across the agency, forcing roads to close down, trapping many Shia and Sunnis in their villages.”

(Mahsud, 2010)

According to Shias from Parachinar interviewed by Andreas Rieck, a former Political Agent of Kurram in December 2006 had predicted deterioration of the situation there “after March 2007”, while the Governor of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, had warned of the same just a few days before the clashes described above (Rieck, 2015). Dr. Mohammad Taqi has later explicitly blamed “the deep state” for “working overtime to manufacture a sectarian crisis in Kurram in April 2007”. The main issue already then was a safe passage via Parachinar for insurgent operations in Afghanistan, because the “Parrot’s Beak” of Kurram was the shortest route from the FATA to Kabul (Demkiv, 2009).

As in former decades, the Turis had flatly refused to provide such a safe passage through their areas. Shia elders from Parachinar alleged that two Political Agents had asked them to facilitate the Pakistani and Afghan Taliban’s movement or be ready for the consequences (Rieck, 2015). The actual fighting started on 6 April 2007, and when a cease-fire went into effect on 12 April sixty-three people from both sides had been killed and 162 were injured according to the Political Agent. A formal peace agreement was signed on 1 May in Parachinar, but a majority of Sunni tribal elders believed that it did not address their main apprehensions and initiated a fund-raising campaign to buy arms (*ibid.*)

However, on 4<sup>th</sup> August, a suicide bomber rammed his car into a parked vehicle in the Eidgah Market of Parachinar to attract a crowd and then blew it up (The News, 2007). Five people died on the spot while forty-eight others sustained injuries. Another round of fierce sectarian clashes erupted in Parachinar in November 2007 and spread to several villages in Upper and Central Kurram, claiming 109 lives and 245 injured already during the first four days (South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP)). Despite heavy deployment of troops and many cease-fire agreements, new flare-ups in various places of the Kurram Agency continued for almost two months. The Thall-Parachinar road remained closed a few days forcing the locals belonging to Upper Kurram to take alternative routes from Afghanistan to make their way to Peshawar (Ali, 2009). When an agreement was signed on 13 January 2008 after continuous efforts by the Hangu reconciliation Jirga, the political administration, and elders of the area, 335 had died and 750 had been injured. Allegedly militants from other parts of FATA had a large part in the fighting already in late 2007 (Siddique, 2010).

Another similar incident took place in February 2008, when a suicide bomber rammed a car loaded with explosives into the election office of the PPP-backed independent candidate Dr. Riyaz Husain Shah in Parachinar, killing forty-seven people (SATP). This attack again fueled clashes in Parachinar and several houses and markets were burnt down. The Frontier Corps deployed also opened fire to suppress the clashes but could not completely stop the ambushes (Rieck, 2015). This was followed by several other attacks and killings and even Shia locals were being taken hostages by the militants. A new round of severe Shia-Sunni fighting started in Lower Kurram in August 2008, and within a week had spread to most of the Agency (Dorsey, 2018). Heavy weapons were used extensively by both sides, and there was massive displacement from many villages. Sunni members of the Bangash tribe alleged that the Afghan government was

supporting the Turis, while the latter claimed that TTP militants were helping their rivals. Allegedly, in August 2008, the deputy commander of the Tehreek Taliban Pakistan, Wali Ur Rehman, offered that if the Shia community wishes to save the lives of their beloved, they need to stop blocking the access routes from Afghanistan to Kurram and in return TTP will not attack any Shia travelers (Mahsud, 2010). His offer was rejected by the elders of the Turi tribe, as they suspected TTP to take over their areas. When a partial cease-fire was reached on 13 September, casualties had added up to more than 500.

From 19 to 27 September 2008, a 100-member peace Jirga from the Turi and Mengal tribes, including some MNAs and Senators, met in Peshawar and Islamabad and agreed on a cease-fire in Kurram until December 31<sup>st</sup> 2008. All the places taken by the rival sects would have to be evacuated and handed over to the real landlords, detainees would be exchanged and the Thall-Parachinar Road would be reopened for general traffic. The Jirga also resolved that there was “no Sunni-Shia tension in Kurram Agency, rather a third hand is involved in pitting the two tribes against each other” and that “we will foil all conspiracies against our tribal people”(Dawn, 2008). On 16 October a written agreement was signed in Murree confirming the above terms. The road to Parachinar was reopened, hostages were exchanged, and occupied villages were vacated during the last weeks of 2008.

Implementation of the Murree Accord was found lacking in 2009, with the blockade of the main road to Parachinar resuming in already in late February (Rieck, 2015). In June 2009, renewed fighting broke out in Lower Kurram which ended the army finally intervened on the side of Turi lashkars fighting TTP militants. The driving force behind the new round of violence was the fervently anti-Shia extremist Hakimullah Mahsud, then TTP commander for Kurram, Orakzai, and Khyber Agencies (Dorsey, 2018). This was the time when the TTP militants had escaped the full-

blown military operations in the Swat Valley and its surrounding districts and continued to provide reinforcements to the expanded and renewed anti-Shia assault in district Kurram.

In late 2009, after the army had started another major offensive in South Waziristan, there were signs that it took the militant threat in Kurram more seriously (Tankel, 2013). In November 2009, Pakistan Air Force jet fighters pounded the compounds and hideouts of TTP militants in Central Kurram for the first time. Later on, in the same month, the first convoy of twenty-five trucks of security forces carrying food, medicines, and other necessary items reached Parachinar (Yousaf, 2020). More military action against the TTP in Kurram followed during the last weeks of 2009. The Pakistan Army and the Frontier Corps pursued their operations against TTP militants in the central Kurram throughout the year 2010, but little was done to free the road from Thall to Lower Kurram from their stranglehold (Jamal, 2010). Even local Sunni tribes, which resented the presence of TTP fighters from other parts of FATA in their areas and tried to put up resistance, were subdued in March 2010 by militants under the command of Mullah Tufan and had to pledge allegiance to the TTP. From May 2010, militants started ambushing Shia convoys, traveling from Parachinar to Hangu, some were killed and some were kept as a hostage. Even the convoys being escorted by political and frontier corps officials were not left free by the TTP (Rieck, 2015).

The second half of 2010 renewed fighting between the Mangal and Turi tribes in Upper Kurram. These clashes are said to be related to local water and forest ownership disputes claimed more than 150 lives. The security forces played their part, but this time another fraction, under the name of Haqqani network played its part (Dressler, 2011). The leadership of the said network was determined to drive the TTP out of Kurram valley, as well as was interested in bringing sectarian harmony in the valley. Hence made efforts to bring the Maliks (elders) of both the tribes on one forum for negotiations, and were finally able to get a new peace accord signed in February 2011



by a Jirga of Shia and Sunni elders from Kurram, presided over by the Minister of Interior (Dawn, 2011). This accord confirmed the tenets of the 2008 Murree Accord (return of captured or deceased tribesmen, the opening of the Thall-Parachinar road, and resettlement of internally displaced persons), while additionally granting the Haqqanis and militant groups affiliated to them access to Afghanistan through formerly hostile Shia terrain (Rieck, 2015). At that time casualties from almost four years of conflict in Kurram were estimated to have reached 2,000 killed and 3,500 wounded. While the new agreement was celebrated with a convoy of cars carrying Shia and Sunni leaders as well as government officials to Parachinar and local people distributed sweets and danced in the streets there and Sadda (*ibid.*). A wave of displacement followed later in 2011, as a repercussion to these violent acts, and the people started fleeing as they felt ignored by the concerned authorities (The New Humanitarian, 2011).

But as expected, new ambushes on the Thall-Parachinar road occurred already in March 2011, including the kidnapping of forty-seven Shia passengers from three vans on 25 March committed by TTP (SATP). The TTP militants were much less satisfied with the peace accord and continued to press for their demands with violence and attempts of extortion. In April MNAs who had been signatories of the February, agreement raised the issue of its implementation in the National Assembly, followed by the agitation of the Youth of Parachinar in Islamabad (The News, 2011).

On 3 July the Pakistan Army and Air Force launched a full-fledged operation against the TTP in Central Kurram, focusing on the mountainous areas adjacent to the Orakzai Agency (Rieck, 2015). It was later backed up by a Lashkar of the Sunni Masozai tribe joining the fight against the militants. But the strongholds of Fazl Sa'ïd in Lower Kurram, the focal point of security problems, were spared in this offensive which was suspected by local Shias to be just a prelude to the planned

disarmament of the Turis in Upper Kurram. The Thall-Sadda road was still not safe for Shia travelers when the Army chief General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani flew to Parachinar on 18–19 August and declared Kurram free of “miscreants” (Dawn, 2011).

The operation had also forced thousands of civilians to leave their homes temporarily, allowing TTP militants to burn down sixteen vacated villages with an average of fifty to sixty houses. While the military operation against the TTP was still going on, a rare terrorist attack was committed by Shias near Parachinar. The militancy still did not stop but at the same time, Pakistan Army and Frontier Corps personnel took over security checkpoints in Parachinar from Shia militiamen (Jan and Worby, 2011).

In January 2012 attacks by TTP militants against an outpost of the Pakistan Army near Jogi village, overlooking important pathways between the Orakzai and Kurram Agencies triggered another round of heavy fighting (SATP). February, while the military operation was still going on, a suicide bomber killed dozens in a busy market outside a mosque in Parachinar. TTP again claimed the responsibility saying: “We have targeted the Shia community of Parachinar because they were involved in activities against us. We also warn the political administration of Parachinar to stop siding with the Shia community in all our disputes” (Rieck, 2015). According to another report, Fazl Sa‘id had specifically blamed the Shias for taking sides and backing the government and armed forces in the ongoing military operation against the TTP in Kurram. In another protest rally in February, the Shia group Youth of Parachinar demanded the execution of Fazl Sa‘id and punishment of those who had allegedly opened fire on protesters (Dawn, 2012). A previously unknown Ghazi Group of the TTP also came to the front and claimed responsibility for several attacks said it was aimed at the Shia community (SATO), Some other terrorist attacks occurred in

Kurram in the autumn of 2012, but the hazards for Shias traveling the Parachinar-Thall road had slightly decreased as compared to previous years.

In 2013, right before elections, a remote-controlled improvised explosive device attack took place and TTP spokesman claimed responsibility for it and pointed the target had been the former MNA, who fled the blast unhurt (SATP). Thus the TTP, which was further pushed by military operations in Kurram in 2013, did not even spare the leaders and supporters of a Sunni Islamist mainstream party. In July 2013, terrorists struck once again the Shia community in Parachinar. Two hours before iftar in the month of Ramadan were carried by suicide bombers consecutively, killing sixty people shopping in a major bazaar and caused widespread devastation (SATP). The spokesman of Ansar-ul-Mujahidin, a front organization of the TTP, declared that similar attacks against the Shia community in Pakistan were planned “to seek revenge for the brutalities of Shia on Sunni Muslims in Syria and Iraq” (Abbas, 2010). On the same day, another passenger car was attacked with an improvised explosive device in Lower Kurram. Again there were questions as to how the terrorists had been able to cross several security check-posts, and Shia leaders demanded that the security of Parachinar town should be handed back to local volunteers.

The balance sheet of the February 2011 Kurram peace agreement has so far been hardly encouraging. Although the worst-case scenario which some of its detractors have evoked, disarmament of the Shia Turis to leave them at the mercy of Afghan Taliban and their militant allies, had not come true until the autumn of 2013, the new series of bomb attacks may be a foretaste of worse to come (Abbas, 2010). There were no major armed clashes between local Shia and Sunni tribes since 2011 and the blockade of Upper Kurram was also now eased, but the road from Parachinar to Thall was still far from safe for Shia travelers (Rieck, 2015).

Since 2013, several militant attacks took place in Kurram agency but the frequency of these attacks somewhat decreased. Until 2017 on Jummatul Wida, the holiest of days among the days of Ramadan, the day was turned into one of the biggest tragedies that had hit Parachinar (Yusufzai, 2017). Eid ul Fitr has to be celebrated with immense joy and happiness for the Muslims, however, for Parachinar, it was the most heart-wrenching eve that year. The day was spent in mourning for the lives lost, nursing the injured, and consoling the bereaved. For Parachinar, it was not a news story, as they had already been feeling neglected not only by the government of Pakistan, but also the media, civil society, parliament, and other institutions of the state (Rieck, 2015). The bomb attack took place in the Turi Bazaar which was followed by another blast as rescuers rushed to the site of the first blast to assist the wounded and rescue the dead bodies. The fatalities were doubled this way as they rescuers as it now included the rescuers and survivors of the previous attack. In addition to this, when the locals came out to protest for these events, the Kurram militia personnel opened fire on these protestors, these soldiers belonged to the Frontier Corps. It was later communicated that the fire from militia was meant to stop the protestors from entering into the declared “red zone”, this red zone mainly had the government offices for the political administration and the security forces (Yusufzai, 2017).

By now the patience of the locals of Parachinar had run out as now the already existing distrust in the government had taken legitimacy for them. This added to the total of two massive terror attacks in Parachinar, for 2017 alone. Another three bomb attacks had already taken place in the same region before these and the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi al-Alami claimed the responsibility for all of the attacks. Lashkar-e-Jhangvi al-Alami is a fragment of Tehreek e Taliban Pakistan and is believed to be strictly anti-Shia. They have also been targeted the Shia community in Quetta,

Karachi. The total death toll in the three bombings was about 133 while the injured numbered 555 (Yusufzai, 2017).

However, General Qamar Javed Bajwa the Chief of Army Staff finally flew to Parachinar on the eighth day of this attack. The delay was said to be due to General Bajwa being abroad and the inappropriate weather conditions for him to fly to Parachinar. The chief met with the tribal elders (*mashers* and *maliks*). He listened to the demands of the people of Parachinar and accepted a few, and gave them certain assurances, in the matters that concerned the security of the region (Afzal, 2017). This time, all the determination was to put a top on these fatal attacks and ensure security and safety of the locals but the militant fractions had something else in their minds as they wanted to inflict more pain. These militant fractions included Islamic State and its allies, including Lashkar-e-Jhangvi al-Alami and Jamaatul Ahrar (Yusufzai, 2017). The eight-day sit-in, which had the domination of the youth of Parachinar and the families of the victims, finally ended their *dharna* (protest).

The youngsters that had come of age were given special time by the army chief as the children shared their energetic thoughts. This visit was among the demands of the elders and protestors of Kurram. This visit ensured the people of the region that they are not the ignored ones in the country and the military stands beside them, however, the visit from the Interior ministry was still pending (Afzal, 2017). The Army Chief accepted their demand for a trauma center in Parachinar, as it would be one step ahead in saving the lives of the victims in case of any further militant attacks, and an investigation was also ordered to investigate the militia's firing the protestors. The COAS also announced the deployment of additional troops in Parachinar and on the border with Afghanistan (Yusufzai, 2017). He said the Frontier Corps had separately compensated the families of the four protestors killed by the Kurram Militia personnel.

The renaming of the Parachinar's Army Public School was also accepted and now it was named after the local hero, Major Gulfam Hussain, as he had lost his life while fighting the Taliban during an operation in Orakzai. The up-gradation of this school to a cadet college was also approved by the COAS. He also announced a safe city project for Parachinar, specifically, to ensure the safety of Shia tribes and securing the city from further terror attacks (Yusufzai, 2017). Gen Qamar Bajwa also promised local Turi Razakars, who had been volunteering for security duties, to accompany the troops during patrolling and for deployment at the roadside checkpoints (Afzal, 2017).

Rather belatedly, Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, also visited Parachinar and met the elders and the relatives of the victims, visited the hospital to enquire after the health of the injured, and handed over compensation cheque to the heirs of those killed and injured (Yusufzai, 2017). Bruised and battered yet again, Parachinar gradually returned to life as the bazaars and schools reopened and offices resumed work. The scars of the tragedy though took time to heal (Afzal, 2017).

The big question was whether Parachinar could be secured from future attacks. By the end of 2017, Parachinar resembled a city under siege with trenches stretching for nearly 24 kilometers dug and widened to eight and eight feet deep. The number of roadside checkpoints was increased and the total strength of the local Turi Razakars (volunteers) being recruited was enhanced from the promised 70. (Yusufzai, 2017)

#### 3.4.1 Internal Displacements

Between 2009 and 2014, insecurity and sectarian violence forced the displacement of people in Kurram Agency. These IDPs were displaced to other areas within Kurram or to neighboring districts. From March 2015 to March 2016, more than 3,000 families returned to their areas of

origin in Kurram Agency. The remaining 20,500 IDP families, 14,000 are expected to return between April and May 2016. New Durrani camp located in Lower Kurram was established in 2011 and currently has an estimated population of 3,225 IDPs (as of April 2016), including over 2,500 families displaced from Khyber Agency. These families continue to await their return despite being issued with voluntary return forms and the suspension of food rations since March. Administratively Kurram is divided into Lower, Central, and Upper Kurram. The Political Agent noted that IDPs either need to return before Ramadan (which starts early June) or delay due to poor weather conditions until 2017, increasing the period of their displacement to seven years. The IDPs the mission met with expressed their wish to return as soon as possible.

During the 2013 intense clashes between the Pakistan army and non-state armed groups in Kurram subsequently displaced around 10,600 families again, in early May. Most IDPs took refuge in host communities, mainly in Lower Kurram, while others sought shelter in the New Durrani displacement camp in FATA (Global Overview, 2014). However, later in 2016, it was reported, that all IDPs from Kurram, who were residing in the new Durrani camp (some 10 thousand internally displaced families) were successfully repatriated by FDMA (Dawn, 2016).

The return of another one thousand families was reported, as of June 2018 (Dawn, 2018). This process of repatriation is credited to the efforts of security forces, local elders, and elected representatives the issue was resolved amicably (Dawn, 2018). Several reports mentioned interviews of group elders and mashers claimed that these returns were forced, rather voluntary (Dawn, 2018). However, a study conducted by Humanitarian Coordinator and OCHA Head of Office in 2016, reports the successes in its key findings and reports these returns to be willful (Field Mission Report, 2016).

According to the IDP Return Intention Survey of 2015, which was carried out under the Global Protection Cluster, reports certain cases, where IDPs indicated that they do not intend to return due to the following reasons: destroyed/damaged houses. This is by far the biggest problem reported by the consulted IDPs from Kurram, the report says. A range of other challenges followed, expressed security/safety concerns, the possessed land is destroyed or damaged, they have better livelihood opportunities here, whereas a small number of respondents claimed that they don't possess the land in the area of return, as well as lacking health facilities in the area of origin and 1% said that assistance is insufficient to allow them for return. (Global Protection Cluster, 2015)

### **3.5 Economy over the years:**

The policies that the new state of Pakistan planned to adopt towards the Tribal Areas were clearly outlined by the Quaid e Azam in 1948, in his address delivered to the tribal elders in Peshawar during his first visit to the tribal areas, and assured the tribal chiefs that "Pakistan would not hesitate to go out of the way to give every possible help financial and otherwise to build up the life of our tribal brethren across the border." (Quaid e Azam, April 198) He made it clear that Pakistan "had no desire to interfere in their internal freedom, rather it wanted them to put them on their legs through educational, economic and social uplift as self-respecting citizens, who have the opportunities of fully developing and producing what is best in you and your land." (Quaid e Azam, April 198) But these words could not be put into practice as the political leadership that succeeded him preferred to continue with the policies which were put up by the British to serve their colonial interests.

However, the period from 1979 to 2001 can be seen in a division of two periods, the period of occupation (1979-1989) and the period of Mujahidin rule including Taliban rule. Tribal Areas of Pakistan in general remained the most affected areas due to close geographical proximity and



the common frontier with Afghanistan (Abbas, 2010). In the conflict of resistance against the invading forces, with Pakistan being a frontline territory, the tribal areas got the brunt of battles between the Afghan rebel groups and the Soviet forces. The flood of refugees into these areas was dense; and all the tribal agencies were filled with canopied refugee camps. The tribal areas became Afghan Mujahidin's training and staging ground, which also used those areas to treat the wounded Afghan fighters (Rieck, 2015).

As this war of rebellion had the highest priority, it was all secondary to its goals. During this time the already underdeveloped economy suffered tremendously. Local services were under tremendous pressure because of a sudden and enormous rise in the population due to the inflow of millions of Afghan refugees (Rieck, 2015). The same situation continued until the end of the Taliban regime in the year 2001. This served as a catalyst to drug trafficking and gun culture which resulted in lawlessness in the region (Khan, 2010). After that, a sudden and catastrophic change took place in the international communities. The US was challenged by religious fundamentalists and Afghanistan faced a sprint of allegations for harboring Islamic zealots like Osama Bin Laden etc. (Abbas, 2010).

When the United State attacked Afghanistan and pressurized Pakistan to seal off its borders adjoining Afghanistan to disallow any infiltrators into its territory, the tribal areas of Pakistan once again came into the limelight (Abbas, 2010). Once Pakistan Army ventured into these areas it was confronted with strong resistance furthering the undeveloped communication infrastructure and poverty hindered the path of a peaceful settlement.

Then after 2005, as mentioned earlier, the sectarian clashes and the violent hostilities took over a decade of potential development. The region was all under the siege of TTP and it was impossible to foresee any brighter future. The infrastructure of Kurram district, to be specific, was

destroyed and the social fabric was destroyed. It was then, the realization of nurturing economic potentials came to light to the policymakers. The militancy lasted till 2017, and during this period, the developmental projects were nearly dead. However, in 2016, an amount of 2422 million was received from the FATA secretariat under developmental funds. Under the small dams sector, working on various multipurpose small irrigation schemes was initiated for the first time in the Kurram district. These irrigation schemes were meant for drinking water, irrigation, and power generation for which around 100 million rupees were allocated. These drinking water and irrigation components are considered to be economical in terms of cost as compared to the small dams. Sadda Weir irrigation scheme met completion in 2018, whereas progress is still underway in other cases (The Nation, 2018). As a result of studies carried out for oil and gas exploration, the camp office for Kurram started functioning at Tirah (Annual Report, 2018). For skilled technical education development in district Kurram around 80 million rupees were expended on the establishment of government polytechnic institute at Parachinar where 308 students were enrolled for obtaining a diploma and short courses (Annual Report, 2015-16).

From 2017 to 2018, the FATA Development Authority had allocated of Rs 450 million was approved for the design and construction of small dams sector, for example, the Daradar Malota, Chappari Charkhel Hydropower projects, 500 KW mini-hydropower station Shalozan, Malana, and Sadda multipurpose water projects which are currently in completion phase.

Another approval of Rs 300 million was given for the skilled education at polytechnic institute Parachinar, many other funds have also been allocated and approved for the improvement of commerce and vocational colleges in District Kurram, as well as for the introduction of electrical and civil subjects at Government technical institutes (Annual Report, 2015-2016).

### 3.6 Post Conflict Community Response

Despite having an enormous amount of economic potential in the region, district Kurram still lacks key developmental standards. A common response in regards to this backwardness included the aforementioned sectarian violence, massive influx of Afghan refugees after the end of the Afghan war, militancy causing blockade of trade routes, inefficient government policies, the cultural restraints, and most important of all, the general psyche of the locals.

It is often seen that the tribal areas have a very different attitude towards the people of other tribes as compared to the local communities. This tribal setup is characterized by love and affinity to the inner group and hatred towards the others (Shinwari, 2010). Intra tribal rivalries are one major outcome of this setup and have also been a major deterrent for developmental projects (Khan, 2017). Ashraf, Ali, Habib, and several other interviewees reiterated times and again that the local community always has and always will be resilient to the external based developments. Sectarianism is a key factor in the case of Kurram. However, the tribal rivalries have kept the area inaccessible to the outside world confining it to certain primitive and outdated traditions. Intruders have always been taken with suspicion therefore no meaningful economic activity has ever been generated in the region (Shinwari, 2010) This was also evident in the case of the Pakistan Army, as when they carried out operations against the militants in the regions, the locals had always stood against them, as they felt being intruded by foreign actors, and destroying their tradition of *parda and chardiwari* (Shinwari, 2010). Furthermore, decades-long sectarian uneasiness, particularly in the Kurram district, has remained a major cause for economic backwardness, as both the sides would indulge in illegal activities in their capacities, but would blame the other party for doing so, and also this hindrance was created in the case of establishing social structure and allotment of funds (Personal Communications, 15,17 and 17 September 2020).

This is also linked to another key factor that has undermined the economic growth of District Kurram, which is the Pashtun psyche. Kurram has a predominant Pashtun population. The psyche of Pashtuns over the centuries has been defined as very aggressive, independent, and war-loving (Shinwari, 2010). People, in general, have conformed to the same psychic pattern. Resistance has been fierce whenever any attempt has been made to impose any laws, not in line with the culture and traditions of FATA. This has been a major hurdle in the path of progress, especially in the social development sector (Shinwari, 2010). The social and political instability, therefore, has not allowed any worthwhile activity in the region. Investors from outside have always found themselves unsafe and threatened in the tribal districts.

Adding to these factors, government policies, since the independence of Pakistan, have not wholeheartedly thought through about the developmental and economic potentials of the erstwhile FATA districts at large. The policies adopted by the British were not to interfere in the internal issues of the tribes but to use them as a buffer to contain any aggression from Russia or Afghanistan. The importance of Kurram due to its proximity to Afghanistan is undeniable (Community Motivation and Development Organization). The availability of three traditional trade routes, i.e. Shurku, Kharlachi – Borki, and Gavi further increased the strategic and economic importance of Kurram (*ibid.*). Unfortunately, the government policies affected no major change in the political or social setup of the area. Resultantly these areas remained aloof from the settled areas. Lack of clear policies allowed for minute developmental projects. On the contrary, the special status of the area and culture made it a haven for criminals, and smugglers (Khan, 2010).

Weather conditions have also played its part in the developmental processes as there is only a short term available which is favorable for any work (Planning & Development Department, 2019). Lack of incentives for medical specialists, transportation for education officers, and

surgeons is also one of the many reasons why the region lacks economic developments to date (Personal Communication, 12 August 2020).

In recent years, climate change has changed weather patterns, making agriculture less stable and therefore less competitive. Kurram used to supply tomatoes earlier than other regions, but late, unexpected rainfall in March has delayed plantations of tomato crops which reduce outputs and income. Similarly affected rice plantation before summer (Planning & Development Department, 2019).

## Chapter 4

### Post Conflict Economic Potential of Kurram District

#### 4.1 Introduction

In 2018, around 1303.778 million rupees were allocated for several various developmental projects in district Kurram, this constitutes around 9.13% of the total allocated budget for development in FATA (Economic Survey, 2018-19). A breakdown for proposed new schemes is presented in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1**

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Allocation (millions)</b>	<b>No of new schemes</b>
Education	544	4
Health	212	4
PHE	120	3
Communication	410	5
Housing	36	2
Power	36	2
Agriculture	44	2
Livestock	30	1
Forest	58	1
Urban and rural development	90	4
Irrigation	118	2
Social welfare	8	1
Sports and culture	45	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1751</b>	<b>32</b>

These funds were allocated for almost all sectors under renewed schemes. These sectors include health, communication, education, housing, energy, agriculture, livestock, irrigation, and forestry, as well as social welfare, which include rural and urban developments and sports. The major focus of these funds is to be devoted to the education and health sector, respectively (The Economic Survey, 2018-19). The guidelines that were followed, before the allotment of the aforementioned funds were focused on consolidating, improving, and upgrading the existing infrastructure to improve service delivery. It also focused on the establishment of higher and secondary level schools (50% budget), strengthening of secondary health care facilities, generation of economic livelihood for development, and prioritized bypasses in congested localities (Economic Survey, 2018-19). The policy guidelines also focused on community-based value chain promoting agricultural schemes, introducing integrated concepts for agriculture and farming, social forestry promoting fruit-bearing trees, sanitization and solid waste management, irrigation water distribution system, and the provision of sports facilities and promoting inter-district sports games (Annual Report. 2015-16).

## **4.2 Available Economic Potential**

In the Kurram district, there is a variety of economic potential, considering the population, land, geography, and vicinity of the Afghan border (Planning & Development Department, 2019). District Kurram covers an area of about 3,380 square kilometers. Few other factors contributing to economic potentials are:

### **4.4.1 Agriculture:**

The data from the ex-FATA Development Statistics (2012-13) shows that 7% of the total geographic area of Kurram is cultivated, whereas the irrigated area is quite high (51%) in comparison to other merged districts (Planning & Development Department, 2019). while more

than 91% of the land is not available for cultivation. This puts intense pressure on the available agricultural land. Some 12% of the land consists of cropped area, out of which 27% is sown for more than once per annum. The total forest cover, both manmade and natural, is 22% of the total forest area of FATA (Community Motivation and Development Organization). Table 4.2 provides a statistical display of the land-use indicators as per the Planning and Development Department ex-FATA Secretariat (March 2014).

**Table 4.2**

Land Use Indicators (2012-13)		
Land Use	Overall Merged Districts	Kurram
Geographical area (ha)	2,722,042	338,052
Cultivated Area (ha)	227,162	22,962
% of Cultivated Area (%)	8	7
Irrigated Area (ha)	80,800	11,806
% of Irrigated Area against Cultivated Area (%)	36	51
Current Fallow (ha)	64,844	9,515
Current Fallow as % of Cultivated Area (%)	29	41
Forest Area (ha)	54,004	13,020
Forest Area as a percent of geographical area (%)	1.98	3.85

*Source: Socio-Economic Indicators of FATA 2013; Planning & Development Department FATA Secretariat (March 2014)*

In addition to this, in the areas that are naturally bestowed with water has highly productive soil. The *Kurrami* rice (also known as *Kurramiwal-y-war* is the staple food of the region, and is incredibly tasty and is served across all households usually once a day (Muhammad et al, 2019).



Also very popular are numerous dry fruits from Kurram, among which the *Shalozan* apples near the Afghan border are remarkable. The major crops in this region are maize, wheat, rice, barley, and clover. Apples, pears, grapes, cherries, pomegranates, peaches, and a fruit peculiar to the Kurram and Tirah, known as the '*Shalil*' also grow in abundance and are one of the huge sources of income. It is said that famine is unknown in Kurram (Plant Science Research Division).

Renewed plans are underway on that front for major tree plantation in the region. Great emphasis is placed on social forestry when mobilizing society. The planting of more than 145,000 wild olive trees with fruit-bearing species by the soldiers was completed in 2019, with the assistance of tribesmen (Annual Report, 2017-18). The success of this plantation was also expressed by three other interviewers of this thesis (all from the local community). Under the Pakistan army's overall management, fruit cultivation and off-season vegetables are being introduced with free fruit saplings and expert advice. One of the previously employed personnel of the Ministry of Planning and Development shared that of the total recorded land area of 845130 acres, 92822 acres is a cultivable wasteland. 100085 acres are irrigation-based while 245000 acres is rain-fed land. In addition to this, some model fish farms were also designed to enable the local people to adapt to new income enhancement systems. So far more than 0.5 million trees have been planted by the forest department and 0.2 million fruit trees (Planning & Development Department, 2019).

According to one of the officials from the local agriculture department, for recurring maximum crop production, the best use of the available land has to be made and the latest method of vegetable and fruit husbandry put into practice, but all of this depends upon the availability of technical staff and scientific information and guidance in all aspects of agriculture in an easily digestible form. He further added that this is the need of the district, that agricultural needs would

be fulfilled by launching a horticulture promotion project which will research various aspects of vegetable and fruit production and put forward this information to farmers, which will better utilize it and increase their income. Misappropriation and negligence of resources have been the hallmark of various govt. departments. Both Agriculture research and extension departments are going through the same crisis. The official complains about the scarcity of resources. The problem however is the effective utilization of the available resources.

However, it was revealed in a conversation with an ex-employee of the Kurram local administration that recently, the government of Pakistan has announced plans for the transformation of conventional farming methods. These plans come under one of the programs of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), in which new agricultural methods being used in China and other agrarian setups are now to be provided to the local farmers of the Tribal areas of Pakistan. Although, the plan still is under process, and will take at least three more years to be implemented.

In another interview, Zafar Ali Habib, working as Land Settlement Consultant at UNDP, expressed his concerns with the effectiveness of the planned and undergoing implementation progress of the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Pakistan, as far as the agriculture of district Kurram is concerned.

#### 4.4.2 Health:

The ex-FATA directorate of health in collaboration with Khyber Medical University Institute of Public Health and World Health Organization Pakistan completed the health facilities assessment “Health Resource Availability and Mapping (HeRAMS)” in FATA, in April 2018. The purpose of this assessment was to assess the health infrastructure and services in all government

health facilities in all seven agencies (now districts) and the six frontier regions (FRs). A total of 996 health facilities in the ex-FATA overall, only 78 facilities reside in district Kurram.

For district Kurram, the health sector has undergone a revolution in recent years under government programs, to relieve people's sufferings. A district headquarters hospital (DHQ), along with two tehsils headquarter hospitals, one civil hospital, and 22 basic health units are also functional in the district. The district headquarters hospital Kurram is also facilitating Afghan nationals on special requests and permissions from the authorities (Personal Communication, 12 August 2020). Furthermore, these health facilities are divided into seven categories as the district headquarter hospital (DHQ H), tehsil headquarters hospital (THQ H), civil hospital (CH), Basic health unite (BHU), community health center (CHC), and maternal neonatal and child health (MNCH). A statistical display of this assessment report is presented in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3**

<b>Health Facilities of District Kurram</b>								<b>No. of Health Facilities</b>
<b>DHQ H</b>	<b>THQ H</b>	<b>CH</b>	<b>BHU</b>	<b>CD</b>	<b>CHC</b>	<b>MNCH</b>		
Kurram	1	2	1	22	49	2	1	78
Total Merged Districts	7	4	23	174	461	215	16	996

In 2017, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), in partnership with the directorate for health services in the now merged tribal districts of Pakistan, launched a Programme to prevent stunting in the Kurram district. The effort was aimed at preventing chronic malnutrition in children under five years of age as well as in pregnant women and nursing mothers. At that time,

district Kurram had a percentage of 57.6 in stunting rates, which was alarmingly high and well above the global average (World Food Program, 2017).

For the health facilities mentioned in Table 4.3, further categorization for the human resource for these units is presented in Table 4.4. The categorization is based on the availability of health staff in the basic health units. These staffs are categorized as medical officers (MOs), women medical officers (WMOs), lady health visitors (LHV), medical technicians (MTs), and health educators (HEs) present, as required at Basic Health Units (BHUs) The statistics in Table 4.4 present the gap between availability and requirement status of these health human resources.

**Table 4.4**

<b>Human Resource (Health) at BHU level – District Kurram</b>								
	<b>MOs/WMOs</b>		<b>LHV</b>		<b>MTs</b>		<b>HEs</b>	
	<b>Available</b>	<b>Required</b>	<b>Available</b>	<b>Required</b>	<b>Available</b>	<b>Required</b>	<b>Available</b>	<b>Required</b>
Kurram	18	19	15	20	30	40	0	19

In addition to these, Ashraf, an ex-employee of the previously known FATA secretariat added, that post the merger of tribal districts, there has been an increase in the basic health units, and with that, severe competition is observed as for the selection of medical officers and the supporting staff.

#### 4.4.3 Education Sector:

Realizing the fact that illiteracy remained one of the major factors for the deprivation of tribal areas, special attention has been given to this sector. To enhance the literacy rate (28.418%) 594 educational structures are functioning (Planning & Development Department, 2019).

**Table 4.5**

<b>Education Sector Statistics: by Merged Districts (% of total Households)</b>		
<b>Education</b>	<b>Overall MDs</b>	<b>Kurram</b>
<b>Literate Population (10 years and above)</b>		
Both Sexes	33.3	34.8
Male	49.7	53.5
Female	12.7	12.5
<b>Adult Literate Population (15 years and above)</b>		
Both Sexes	28.4	30.3
Male	45	48.9
Female	7.8	9
Population (10 years and above) that have completed Primary or Higher Education	26.1	25.7
<i>Source: FATA Development Indicators Household Survey (FDIHS) - 2013-14: Bureau of Statistics P&amp;DD (October 2015) * For NWZ Socio-Economic Indicators -2013- (MICS 2007)</i>		

Against an estimate of 388,095 million, rupees 210,668 were released for utilization in the education sector in the Annual Development Plan 2018-19. Out of 10 projects including reopening of functional community schools, provision of missing educational facilities, reconstruction of damaged educational facilities, up-gradation of existing educational facilities, regularization of existing community schools, and construction of new schools along with the provision of furniture only 3 projects have met completion whereas others are under progress (Annual Development Plan, 2018-19).

To bring the youth of the tribal areas at par with the developed cities, industrial and technical education facilities are also being provided through the establishment of 62 skill development centers and five technical institutes (Annual plan, 2019-20). Feasibility studies for the establishment of medium/ small industries are also in the pipeline. A statistical layout of educational facilities is as follows:

**Table 4.6**

<b>Institute</b>	<b>Upper Kurram</b>		<b>Lower Kurram</b>		<b>Central Kurram</b>	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Colleges	2	2	2	2	0	0
High Sec Schools	1	1	1	-	1	-
Governor middle School		1		1		-
High Schools	24	10	9	3	5	-
Middle Schools	15	6	3	2	15	9
Primary Schools	142	86	40	33	110	34
Masjid Schools	6	3	4	-	10	-
IHC	-	6	-	4	-	1
	191	114	60	44	141	44
<b>Total</b>				594		

From Table 4.6, out of 594 institutions, 19 are nonfunctional for which allocated funds are being utilized of the area 300 community schools are in the pipeline. 56 new schools have been planned, out of which 24 have been completed while 32 are underway. Up-gradation of 51 primary schools to Middle and 37 Middle Schools to High School status is in progress. 22 colleges are planned and construction work of an intermediate college at Thall is in progress. In addition to

this, books amounting to Rs 6.5 million have been distributed free of cost among students (Annual Development Program, 2018-19).

In addition to these statistics, it was revealed during multiple interviews, from the locals, the local teachers, and administrative employees that the literacy rate in Upper, Lower, and Central Kurram varies, as 80%, 60%, and 40%, respectively. Three different reasons were brought to light with regards to the education sector. According to two of the interviewees, the reason for this inequality lies in the fact that in the lower and central Kurram, the majority of the population is from the Sunni sect, and prefers madrasah culture above the modern education. Another reason which was brought to light by Zafar Habib Ali (land settlement consultant at UNDP) was that due to the sectarian grievances that are deeply rooted within the Sunni populous, due to which the Shia's have always been the target and made to be felt as a religious minority of the country. Therefore to fulfill these insecurities, the Shia populous preferred getting modern-day education to empower themselves and their generations to come. The third reason for this difference in the literacy rate, as according to Ashraf Hussain Toori, was the difference in terrain in the three regions. The mountainous terrain of the lower and central Kurram has limited the accessibility of schools for most of the villagers, hence lower literacy rates.

#### 4.4.4 Employment Sector

As for the employment sector is concerned, Table 4.7 displays the employment statistics of District Kurram in the total of merged districts. The data has been taken from the Qabail Led Community Support Program (2019), by the Directorate of Projects under the Merged Areas Secretariat.

**Table 4.7**

Employment Statistics by Merged Districts (% of total Households)		
<b>Description</b>	<b>Merged Districts</b>	<b>District Kurram</b>
Labor Force participation of Age 10 - 64 Population (Crude Activity Rate) Both Sexes (%)	24.2	24.7
Labor Force participation of Age 10 - 64 Population (Refined Activity Rate) Both sexes (%)	35.2	33.5
Children aged 5-14 Involved in Child Labor (Employed and unemployed) Both sexes (%)	6.9	3.8
Unemployment Rate in Adult (aged 15 -64) Population Both sexes (%)	7.1	5.6

*Source: FATA Development Indicators Household Survey (FDIHS) - 2013-14: Bureau of Statistics P&DD (October-2015)*

Furthermore, adding to these statistics, after the merger of ex-FATA, more and more employment opportunities are being created in district Kurram, as well as in the other merged districts. Ashraf pointed out, that the establishment of the judiciary and the installation of police stations has created a huge space for employment, mainly for the supporting staff. In another interview, it was revealed to me that during and after the militancy in Kurram Valley, around 400 plus families moved to either Middle Eastern countries or Europe, and a huge number moved to Australia. This opened the way for foreign remittances and an improvement in the livelihood of the local populous.



#### 4.4.5 Trade:

Kharlachi and Borki's crossing points carry historical importance concerning trade and the economic activities of the Kurram district. Trade through these routes started in 1954 after the Federal Bureau of Revenue passed the notification, and initially, only timber trade was allowed. However, the trade through Kurram valley remained closed till January 2005 due to the Afghan war. Trade re-opened and the customs station was established at the Karachi, Tari Mangal, and Sheedanu Dand in February 2005, whereas the Borki trade route was reopened in May 2005. As discussed in chapter 3, after the 2007 clashes and the blockade of Thall – Parachinar road, the trade activity was seriously affected and also, the trade was suspended for another four years, from 2008 to 2012. From 2015 to 2016, the bilateral trade between Afghanistan through Kurram witnessed a sharp increase. This was due to the closure of customs station Ghulam Khan (North Waziristan Agency) and the peaceful atmosphere prevailing in Kurram Agency, both imports and exports at the Customs Station of the later had picked up (Business Recorder, 2016). However, the series of terrorist attacks that followed in the year 2017 (as mentioned in Chapter 3) trade was interrupted again for another three months. The Kharlachi border terminal was again closed for a month, later in October 2017 due to an IED attack. However, in the wake of these events, the Borki route was permanently closed after the consent of all stakeholders on April 18. Table 4.8 shows an overview of the trade flow from Pakistan to Afghanistan, from 2017 till May 2018.

**Table 4.8**

<b>Month</b>	<b>Pak-Afg</b>		<b>Total</b>
	<b>Kharlachi</b>	<b>Borki</b>	
Feb 17	1321	119	<b>1440</b>
Jun 17	158	56	<b>214</b>
Jul 17	1392	186	<b>1578</b>

Aug 17	1837	254	<b>2091</b>
Sep 17	743	90	<b>833</b>
Oct 17	830	133	<b>1770</b>
Nov 17	979	791	<b>1934</b>
Dec 17	926	622	<b>1548</b>
Jan 18	1208	666	<b>1874</b>
Feb 18	1609	897	<b>2506</b>
Mar 18	588	405	<b>993</b>
Apr 18	2303	2068	<b>4371</b>
May 18	2801	-	<b>2801</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>16695</b>	<b>6287</b>	<b>22982</b>

The regulation of trade routes under the Pakistan Army, FWO, NLC, and the customs officials, has negatively impacted the trade of Kurram district (Ashraf, Personal Communication, 16 September 2020). In addition to this, fencing has also played an immense role in formalizing the trade. Many markets, for instance, the gun market and certain local markets that used to sell smuggled goods, are now being shut and loss in business has been noticed. However, one of the locals from Parachinar city expressed their confidence in the formalization of trade, as now the local markets and industries might benefit from this initiative.

#### 4.4.6 Tourism:

Kurram valley is full of scenic beauty and has a vast heritage in the form of ancient castles and forested mountain peaks. Sadly there has been no development of the tourism industry in these regions. If built and promoted in an organized manner, this industry can bring huge foreign exchange. The hills provide fresh springs, and pipelines carry spring water for drinking into homes in Zeran and other areas. Among those springs, noteworthy is the "Foladi Chashma." Dozens of famous tourist points surround Parachinar. Some of this point's natural wonders include the Zeran

Mast Baba, Shalozan's garden, Malana Dam, Maikay, and the Chapri Bangla (16000 ft above the sea level). (Afzal, 2017)

The worth mentioning tourist attractions in the district include Parachinar's renowned Chinar tree and the oldest imam bargah of Pakistan, the Shrine of Fakhre Alam Baba and the precious stones of Kirman, the dam and site of the grave of mast baba in Zeran, the Robert garden where a tree planted by Fatima Jinnah exists in Shalozan, Kharlachi Fort which was constructed in 1902, Bab e Kurram in Chapri, Terimangal site near the Pak–Afghan border, the scenic Koh e Sufaid mountain ranges as well as the adventure attraction of sikaram at 15620 feet, clutter up the valley. Koh-e-Safed's tall mountain ranges, which get covered with snow every year, are a natural border between Afghanistan and Pakistan (Afzal, 2017). Luckily, during the last two-three years, after the construction of the Parachinar bypass and the construction of Kurram Kharlachi Border terminal (underway) has given rise tourism in the region as now people have started visiting the valley's attractions (Personal Communication, 23 August 2020).

#### 4.4.7 Flora and Fauna:

District Kurram has pockets of thick forest and vegetation cover. The mountain terrain, good forest, and vegetation cover provide favorable habitats to flora (and fauna). Dwarf Alm, Mulberry, Poplar, Willow, Ailanthus, Robinia Platinus, Walnut, Oleander, Oak, Pistacia. Eucalyptus, Phulai, Beri, Cynopylla, and different species of Conifers like Cedar and Pine, etc. are found in the area (Planning & Development Department, 2019).

This region is known to have a good production of medicinal plants (Hussain and Manzur, 2018). Several pieces of research have been carried on these plants and their usage. This can be one of the most benefitting industries for Kurram district. The inhabitants of lower Kurram still practice medicinal plants and these plants can also be used for the treatment of fatal diseases like

malaria, hepatitis, and blood cancer. Haphazard cutting of plants and overgrazing are major threats that can affect plant biodiversity in the Kurram region (*ibid.*).

Another study, which was carried out in 2018 found, a total of 52 plant species that were reported by the people from the region, to have medicinal value, fall within 48 genera and 35 families. The family Asteraceae comprised most of these herbs (6 species) followed by the family Lamiaceae (4 species) and Solanaceae (3 species). Leaves (24.3%) and fruits (21.6%) were the frequently used parts in the preparation of remedies. The reported plants were used for the treatment of 50 ailments with most of these plants (35 species; 30.97%) being used for the treatment of digestive problems. *Seriphidium kurramensis* had the highest relative frequency of citation (66.18) and use value (1.10). The Fidelity level of *Caralluma tuberculata* and *Artemisia scoparia* for diabetes was (61.22) and (55.56), respectively. The highest fidelity level for malaria was reported for *Artemisia absinthium* (43.66) and *S. kurramensis* (40.00). (Hussain and Manzur, 2018)

The tradable value of these resources is immense, as well as it also has the capacity for further researches to be conducted. Unfortunately, the importance of these plants is still unknown at the scholarly level and needs proper consideration by the central administration.

#### 4.4.8 Energy and Water:

Energy is among life's fundamental needs. Many tribal areas also lack electricity, and people burn productive wood for heat and oil. Realizing the dire need of evolving a strategy for the provision of alternative sources of energy to conserve rapidly depleting forests, approval of funds for the ongoing rehabilitation of damaged power infrastructures in various villages was subjected to be released whereas schemes for rehab power transmission lines from Thall to Parachinar and transformer provision to various villages was approved and the work is now

underway. To bring an end to the misery of people and ensure the provision of clean drinking water, water supply schemes have been given priority in the uplift Plan. The water-related projects include the installation of tube wells, provision of dug wells, installation of hundreds of hand pumps, and construction of other water supply schemes.

The Planning and Development Department of the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa included several new and completed schemes in the Annual Development Program (2018-19). Table 4.9 shows the names and approved cost of these new schemes for the Energy and Power sector.

**Table 4.9**

Small Dams & Power Sector – New Schemes	
Name of Project	Approved Cost
Shakh Daulat Khel Upper Kurram.	34.943
Sangina Lower Kurram.	33.692
Rabbi Villa Upper Kurram.	50.813
Kunj Ali Zai Upper Kurram.	31.754
Bilamin Lower Kurram.	45.798
Micro Hydro Power Station at Shalozan Upper Kurram	130.450
Sadda Multipurpose Water Project Lower Kurram.	199.160
Malana Multipurpose Water Project Upper Kurram	95.500

*Source: Annual Development Programme (2018-19), Planning and Development, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa*

Table 4.10 shows the names of the schemes that have been completed in the Upper, Lower, and Central Kurram, according to the Annual Development Programme of 2018-19.

**Table 4.10**

Small Dams & Power Sector – <b>Completed Schemes</b>	
Name of Sub Division	Name of Schemes
<b>Lower Kurram</b>	Viers and Irrigation Channel Sadda
	Viers and Irrigation Channel Makhezai
	Drinking-Water Supply and Irrigation Scheme Pir Qayyum.
	Irrigation Channel Maro Khel
<b>Upper Kurram</b>	Jalandar Irrigation Channel
	150 KW Micro Hylde Station in Pewar
<b>Central Kurram</b>	Viers and Irrigation Channel in Shahbaz Sam

*Source: Annual Development Programme (2018-19), Planning and Development, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa*

Kurram Agency is blessed with an abundance of renewable energy potential, but so far this potential remains unharnessed. Presently, district Kurram has two small dams, Kot Ragma in Upper Kurram and Maidani in Lower Kurram. According to one of the interviewee, these two small dams are irrigating about 500 and 1308 acres of land, respectively. A few more sites have been identified for the establishment of power plants including Zeran, Shalozan, Malana, Pewar, Shorko, and Tendo (Pakistan Today, 2018). These plants aim to meet the ever-increasing demand for cheap power in the region, not only that they will also be able to improve the agricultural production but ultimately will improve the livelihood of the general public (Asian Development Bank, 2019).

In 2018, to reduce load shedding in the region, the local government in Upper Kurram decided to set up a micro-hydel power station on the banks of River Kurram at Norkhan Kanda.

This hydropower plant, which bared the cost of 10 million rupees freed the citizens from the shackles of constant load shedding (Hussain, 2018). It is pertinent to mention that there are several feasible sites as well, wherein micro hydel power, in small and large sizes, can be developed. Particularly, on the main Kurram river leading to Kurram Tangi Dam. At present, SRSP & FDA authorities have already developed small micro hydel power of 150 KM at Pekar, Pekar Tangi & near Noor Khan Kanda. Adding to this FDA authorities have already submitted a scheme for approval of CDWP having 10.5-megawatt capacity but is awaiting approval. This project will enable us to cater to the power needs of the entire district of Kurram (Pakistan Today, 2018). As per the recent economic survey for 2018-19, more than 32 percent work on the Kurram Tangi Dam has been completed in Phase I. (Economic Survey, 2018-19)

#### 4.4.9 Communication and Telecommunication:

To link habitations within the valley and to the outside world to introduce basic amenities of life, a comprehensive network of 114 kilometers of roads, link roads and tracks by Army at Rupees 5019 million has been planned / under progress (Annual Development Program 2018-19). Under the US AID program, 24 kilometer of the road at a cost of Rupees 500 million is in progress. Rupees 429.421 million were released in the annual development program 2018-19 by the Planning and Development Department, KP province, for the completion of 15 projects. Currently, Kurram has the lowest telephone density i.e. one telephone for 70 persons with no telecommunication facilities in the far-flung areas of the agencies. In the year 2003 PTCL approved to provide 5000 connections to FATA by 2005. For this purpose 120, telephone exchanges are being installed which will also provide employment opportunities to the locals. A statistical display for the source of information of the people of the district is detailed in Table 4.11.

**Table 4.11**


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**Mode of Major Information Source by District Kurram (% of total Households)**

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	<b>Radio</b>	<b>Television</b>	<b>Newspaper</b>	<b>Internet</b>	<b>Mobile</b>	<b>Others</b>
<b>Kurram</b>	71	13.6	0.3	0.1	14.7	0.3
<b>Overall Merged Districts</b>	71.8	9.5	2	0.1	16.4	0.3

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*Source: FATA Development Indicators Household Survey (FDIHS) - 2013-14; Bureau of Statistics: P&DD; FATA Secretariat (October-2015)*

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## Chapter 5

### Discussion and Conclusion

As a result of the massive refugee influx from Afghanistan in the face of the Afghan war in the 1970s, the social fabric of the tribal areas of Pakistan was majorly altered. This continued the already existing sectarian-based conflict in District Kurram and later on added to the War on Terror in 2007. Although many ceasefire agreements were signed by all the relevant authorities, the tribal areas lacked in even the basic facilities of life. In light of chapter 2, the post-conflict reconstruction is dependent on certain key factors that constitute a reduction in threats of conflict recurrence. These key factors may differ among cases of conflict-stricken societies in terms of the length and severity of the conflict.

The post-conflict economic development includes all the factors that contribute to the revival of a community through economic developments. The findings of this paper, therefore, can be interpreted in terms of post-conflict economic development. Meaning all the economic implications of the development projects that are ongoing and have been completed in the Kurram district, as well as the need to further explore the resources of the region and make the most out of them.

As discussed in chapter 2, the indicators for conflict to enter the post-conflict phase includes the reinforcement of law, the successful repatriation of internally displaced persons, reintegration, and the development of economy and reconciliation in the community. In the case of Kurram tribal district, these conditions were met successfully in late 2017. The major contributing factor to initiate the post-conflict process was the relocation of Army Brigade headquarters from Thall to Parachinar. This initiated the community restoration process as the

lacking social contract and trust between the local populations with the state. Following this development in the face of law enforcement, the government started launching several other projects, including health, energy, agriculture, and communication and telecommunication as mentioned in chapter 4. A number of these projects are underway and others still need fund allocations and approvals, however, the economic conditions have improved in the district, as per government surveys held in 2019.

The security conditions of Kurram district have improved manifolds, as the violent conflicts have not been witnessed since 2017 till date. However, the threat for the conflict to reoccur still exists, and the constituting factors, the horizontal inequalities, are still present in the society. As also discussed in the literature review that the threats of conflict to recur are rarely eliminated, so is the root cause of the conflict. The case of district Kurram can be a perfect example in this matter, as sectarianism persists and minute skirmishes still take place, however are tackled timely and effectively by Pakistan Army with the local administration's support.

Another key factor, as discussed in the chapter discussing the literature, in the post-conflict development is the establishment of a social contract. This stands true for the case of Kurram district, as for years, the local populous had always craved the attention of the state. It was unable to get the required attention up until the emergence of militancy. The sectarian conflict as well as the increasing militancy, as mentioned in chapter 3, has been seen facing this gap. These grievances were heartfelt to the extent that when Pakistan Army came for the support, they did not initially accept it openheartedly and showed their reservations, as, by this time, this region had learned to stand for themselves. However, the situation has seen an evident transformation.

Keeping in view the main focus of this research that is the economy based policy making is a necessity for development and reconstruction in the post-conflict scenarios. It is pertinent to

note the restoration of physical and social infrastructure, as a result of the post-conflict development efforts. The two factors which are essential as development indicators in this regard possible only if an environment for development is established. In this view, the data in chapter four has provided evident examples for current development status and projects under process, hence it would not be an exaggeration to say that a safe environment for development and reconstruction have successfully been established in the case of Kurram tribal district. It is important to mention here, that this environment had been a result of successful communal restoration. The evidence of this success can be assessed in comparison to the challenges from the community's side, as they persisted throughout the pre, during, and now the post-conflict phases. These challenges have been discussed in chapter three. While meeting the economic aspects, the Pakistan Army was able to reconstruct the damaged physical infrastructure, under many schemes. This reconstruction includes hospitals, trauma centers, schools, markets, and houses (to prepare for the return of IDPs).

For recovery, chapter 2 discussed, that the essentials for life, i.e. food, health, and shelter, are to be ensured. In addition to that, the post-conflict economic reconstruction needs to focus on the recovery of trade, educational, and financial services. District Kurram still lacks the establishment of a proper financial system. Banking and other opportunities lack exploration at a higher level. However, considering the trade and educational systems, it is evident from the data in chapter 4, that both the sectors have been worked and focused on, and the efforts have been seen fruitful for the region. Trade has seen almost three times an increase from 2017 till May 2018. Adding to it, the educational sector has also been on the priority as according to the Qabail Led Community Support Program for 2019. An evident shift in the priorities of the local populous was

also noted in the surveys since 2016. The education of females in comparison to prior years was now given more importance by the locals.

As in any other case of post-conflict development, the threat of the recurrence of conflict remains in the case of Kurram as well. In addition to sectarianism, it has also been discussed in the previous chapters that the influx of Afghan refugees also altered the social fabric. Although a prominent number of refugees have been repatriated, the legacy remains at the communal level. Certainly, it creates an environment of “us versus them”, in the context of the locality. It has been reported recently, that the elders of Kurram also feel the hazards for violence over land disputes.

Chapter 2 discusses the political aspects of post-conflict reconstruction in Torjesen’s view, and talks about the outcomes of the post-conflict reconstruction, in all aspects, from economic to political. According to Torjesen, post-conflict reconstruction does not and should not focus on the reconstruction concerning what the conditions were before the conflict, but it should be focused on a better and more sustainable environment in terms of economy, politics, and community. For Kurram, the sustainability of these developments can be viewed in the light of changing communal behavior from the grass root. A piece of evidence could be presented in this regard through the regulation of trade. Initially, in the pre-conflict phase, the trade routes were under the Frontier Corp, but a trend of smuggling was at its bloom, the custom stations were somewhat inactive in the region and there were non-existent check and balance. This concern was time and again raised by the majority of locals in the region, as the cross border traveling would mostly receive no proper security checks, hence the threat of skirmishes and disputes due to foreign presence existed. However, certain fractions of the society still opposed this point of view as they were benefitting from the smuggling and related illegal activities. These concerns of the former have been considered and worked on since 2017. The border terminals have been rebuilt to the international

standards and proper custom stations under National Logistic Cell have been set up, to regulate legal trade and control cross border movements.

In the case of Kurram, the repatriation of internally displaced people (IDPs) played an important role in future policymaking and development projects. Surveys conducted under the auspices of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) provided key insights. As mentioned in chapter 3, a major chunk of internal displacements took place between 2009 and 2014. By 2016, surveys were being conducted for the return of these IDPs. As a result of the key findings of these surveys, several developmental potentials were used to be incorporated in further policing. For instance, the focus on women education and education overall, the lack of educational and health facilities, and limited employment opportunities.

An overall view of the discussion above provides us with a clear interpretation, that lack of proper policymaking on behalf of the central government can question the sustainability of these developments, however, so far, the situation has been under control as several grievances that existed before are now somewhat resolved and the government's initiatives are being taken well by the locals of Kurram tribal district.

## **5.1 Conclusion**

This research was intended to highlight the economic development potentials that are available in district Kurram. The valley had gone through decades of violence, one after another. Since 2017, there have been negligible disputes, that too among the tribes, whereas the development projects have been picking up pace. The local administration, the security forces, and the tribal elders are making their way towards progress and prosperity. The merger of FATA with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province has opened several doors. There is still a need to explore the

potentials in these regions further, particularly due to the existing community divide in the face of multi sectarianism. Furthermore, there is still a need to offer economic incentives to the people of the Kurram district to see positive changes in their outlook as a community. This strategically important but neglected part of the country needs immediate attention from the central and provincial governments. Moreover, the problems of the tribal population in district Kurram needs to be properly addressed so that it can be integrated into the national mainstream.

The Kurram district has great potential in terms of human resources as well. The people of Kurram, although are less educated, they are good potential in terms of hard labor. These people are extremely hardworking and robust. These people are seen all over the country and even abroad doing extremely hard work, e.g. the people are mostly involved in the transporting industry, road construction, and cattle farming. Adding to this, the people from Kurram are known as very well linked and are posted in government offices countrywide. A good majority of this population is also present in foreign countries, mainly the Middle East and even Australia, these people are also benefitting a lot in the means of foreign exchange. The concerns regarding the employment opportunities have also been well catered to by the government and the eligible lot has been accommodated in armed forces and other areas as well.

Further recommendations for exploring the opportunities in Kurram district can be in the trade, agriculture, forestry, mineral, livestock, industrial, and mineral sector. For tourism, there is still a great amount of romance and attraction attached to these areas owing to their peculiar history and status. Moreover, several beautiful places exist which can be developed for tourist ventures. Exploring this sector further while promoting tourism, can act as a two-way process in integration as well as local economic uplift. It will also remove the veil of mystery that hangs on the Tribal Areas.

It is the need of time to further promote the vital & essential agriculture for district Kurram's economic and social growth and stability as well as all the tribal districts. It is the most important sector along with the forestry, mineral mining, and hydel project opportunities. The agriculture sector can provide a substantive base for economic development. Kurram District has great potential in the field of fruit farming as well. However, it is recommended for the government to grant easy loans for the local farmers as a meaningful improvement can be caused in the agriculture sector through small loans. In addition to these loans, irrigation network needs to be developed by the construction of small dams, check dams, and channels. The central government must adopt a public participatory approach particularly in the implementation of irrigational projects and efforts that must be made to meet the requirements of the local farmers in district Kurram. As already mentioned, a land settlement system should be evolved on modern lines. This way, the decades-old land disputes could be solved by making district establishment more effective in the region. Processing facilities should also be provided to ensure proper packing and canning of fresh and dry fruit for international markets.

The forestry sector also needs to be explored further for economic improvements in the area. Therefore it would be recommended to launch a conservational campaign for these forests at the international and national levels. It will also be a substantial step ahead to encourage further plantation of new trees by the provision of free saplings. Regarding trading and smuggling of timber to Afghanistan, it is important to further strengthen the trading policies over the trading routes. The point here is to modernize the timber industry of the region (Zafar Ali Habib, Personal Communication, 17 September 2020).

Another sector that needs the government's attention, is the livestock sector. Livestock development can be a major source of economic development for this region, because of the

existence of great potential in this field (Habib Ali, Personal Communication, 16 September 2020). The following steps are recommended in this regard, however, lack of veterinary hospitals is a drawback for this sector. Therefore, the establishment of new veterinary hospitals and artificial insemination centers is required for benefiting from this sector. It is also required to set up government-subsidized livestock markets as well as provide incentives in the form of easy loans for the keepers. One of the locals from upper Kurram shared that a great take out of the livestock sector can be the canned meat and for that food processing facilities for the canning of meat should be established by the authorities.

Kurram has great potential for mineral resources. Soapstone mining in particular can be tapped through setting up small industrial enterprises. For further improvements in this regard, it is needed for the authorities to encourage the exploration and development of these resources in consonance with tribal desire and values, one best way would be to involve tribesmen either in joint ventures or lease agreements with public and private sectors. Kurram district also needs to be brought under geological survey mapping because of its great mineral potential, and special funds should be provided for organizing mineral exploration and development on modern lines.

In terms of infrastructure development, being remote, backward, and inaccessible, this region needs special emphasis on development projects with the sole aim of improving the quality of life. This development process should progress uninterruptedly and should precede other phases whatever, the case may be. In addition to this, the existing formal trade routes between Pakistan and Afghanistan require the development of communication infrastructure on both sides of the border, establishment of custom and immigration facilities, and improvement in the overall security environment in the area. The custom's regulations should be slightly relaxed as it would encourage the legalization of informal (smuggling) trade. The tribal people have been involved in



trans-border trades for centuries; however, their trade transactions could not be modernized and institutionalized due to lack of leadership and vision on the part of the tribal elders, so a chamber of commerce needs to be established.

These recommendations can add to the potentials of development in the Kurram valley. To ensure sustainability, in terms of peace and development, after such a prolonged period of instability is surely a challenging task, but requires utmost responsibility. The sectarian grievances still exist, but the violence the once instilled has stopped due to minimal inequalities in the region. The people of Kurram, have started to put their trust in the military and the government authorities, and the authorities have also been including the regional culture and traditions into formulating development programs. The communal prosperity is possible if the policymakers don't let the locals fight their wars alone, and in the case of the War on Terror in Pakistan, this has been proven at many levels.

However, the academic discourse still needs to be explored, in the case of the Kurram valley. The focus has to be shifted ahead, from militancy to the prospects of development and prosperity. A sustainable society, in terms of peace and economic development, is dependent on the loyalty of its stakeholders and the efforts they put in, collectively. The flora, fauna, forests, minerals, and agriculture need special attention by the academia, as already been done in the field of medicine and the value of the medicinal plants in this valley, have been of great value.

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