



RESEARCH PAPER

Prospects and Challenges for the Implementation of Revised National Action Plan (2021): A Contextual Perspective

Dr. Sharaf Ali

Associate Lecturer, Department of Political Science & I.R., University of Gujrat, Punjab, Pakistan

***Corresponding Author:** shaarif.ali@uog.edu.pk

Abstract

During the last decade, Pakistan has implemented a consolidated- original –National Action Plan in 2014 (NAP-2014) and later an updated version of the same i.e. the Revised National Action Plan (Revised NAP-2021) has been launched in 2021. This paper provides a contextual appraisal of the genesis and the respective developments achieved under the ambit of the aforesaid NAP-2014 and the Revised NAP-2021. Further, it also highlighted the prospects and challenges regarding the implementation of the proposed Revised National Action Plan (2021). The study has mainly used the descriptive research design and it has used the secondary data sources for achieving the objective of this study. This research recommends that state authorities of Pakistan need to incorporate suitable reforms in the investigation, prosecution and adjudication departments of her criminal justice system i.e. for achieving the successful implementation of the Revised NAP-2021.

Key Words

Anti-Terrorism Laws, Anti-Terrorism Policy, Internal Security, NAP-2014, NAP-2021, National Action Plan

Introduction

The global security scenario had totally changed after the terrorist attacks on the world trade center on September 11, 2001 (Zalman & Clarke, 2009). In the post 9/11 scenario, the already deteriorated internal security conditions of Pakistan became more worsened as the USA unilaterally demanded Pakistan to join her as ‘front line state’ in the international war against terrorism e.g. which was ought to be initiated under the leadership of USA (Khan, 2013). Accordingly, the Pakistan joined the international war against terrorism which was ought to be fought against her own neighboring state i.e. Afghanistan. The aforesaid state policy to participate in the US led international war-against terrorism -against her own neighboring state resulted to gradually aggravate the internal law and order situation for at least the next whole decade (Kayani, 2011). During the next decade i.e. after the outbreak of international war against terrorism, Pakistan tried to overcome the ever increasing menace of terrorism through the introduction of various legal and administrative reforms but such efforts hardly achieved the desirable outcomes (Zaidi, 2012).

The state authorities in Pakistan took a whole decade i.e. after the outbreak of international war against terrorism to initiate a full scale military operation against the on ground operational networks of the terrorist organizations i.e. operating within the territorial boundaries of Pakistan. In 2011, Pakistan military started a full scale war like operation for dismantling the alleged terrorist bases operating in the erstwhile FATA and PATA regions of the present Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) province (Shah, 2012). Despite of conducting the aforesaid military operation, the overall internal security condition of Pakistan remained fragile and terrorist incidents kept almost the same frequency as was prior to the military operation. Up till the end of 2014, although Pakistan was trying to overcome the rampant menace of terrorism through applying its maximum available means but it was not backed by any national level consolidated state

policy i.e. for counter-terrorism. The foremost possible reason behind the aforesaid national level policy lacuna was divergent views of various political stake holders i.e. about the possible counter terrorism strategies. It was not up till the unfortunate terrorist attack on the Army Public School in Peshawar (on December 16, 2014) when finally, a national level consensus was developed for crafting a consolidated state level anti-terrorism policy (Khan & Saeed, 2016).

To materialize the aforesaid policy objective, on December 24, 2014, the parliament of Pakistan- quite haphazardly -approved a 20-point National Action Plan (NAP- 2014). The relevant state authorities quite effectively tried to implement the aforesaid- original -National Action Plan (2014), and accordingly it brought some fruits (Khan & Saeed, 2016). After six years of the relatively successful implementation of the NAP-2014, in 2021, the state authorities decided to revise the aforesaid original National Action Plan (2014) and verged onto implement a Revised National Action Plan (2021). This study endeavors to provide a critical review of the recently adopted Revised National Action Plan (2021) in the historical context of the originally adopted National Actin Plan (2014). Further this study aimed to provide an appraisal of administrative developments achieved under the original National Action Plan (2014) and it also highlights the impact of the aforesaid changes onto the ongoing internal security situation in Pakistan. After providing a detailed review of the contextual perspective of the early adopted National Action Plan (2014) this study has also highlighted the prospects and challenges related to the successful implementation of the Revised National Action Plan (2021).

Literature Review

After the state level policy decision to participate in the international war against terrorism, coping with the ever increasing menace of terrorism, and stabilizing the overall internal security condition became a constant challenge for every ruling regime in Pakistan e.g. in the post-9/11 internal security scenario (Jawad, 2022). Although the state authorities of Pakistan were trying to deal with the day to day terrorist incidents but there existed no state level consolidated internal security policy in Pakistan i.e. for providing some concrete policy guidelines and accordingly the relevant desirable integrated institutional framework for dealing with the surging militancy in the country was also missing. For the first in the history of Pakistan, it was the- then newly -elected government of Mian Nawaz Sharif which formally introduced a National Internal Security Policy (NISP) in 2014. The NISP-2014 was the first ever state level consolidated policy document which reflected the state level serious resolve for dealing with the menace of terrorism in Pakistan. The NISP-2014 mainly projected three state level policy objectives for recovering the state and society from the menace of terrorism e.g. on permanent basis. The aforesaid three policy objectives of the NISP-2014 included: firstly, engaging in dialogue with the various militant groups so as to possibly resolve their issues through peaceful means; secondly, dismantling the operative structures of the militant structures through the use of state forces; thirdly, strengthening the basic internal security infrastructure through enhancing its capacity to navigate and neutralize the terrorist elements which may become the potential threat to the internal security of state i.e. in advance (Rana, 2017).

With a view to achieve the above said policy objectives of the NISP-2014, the state authorities initiated peace talks with the insurgent groups, especially, with the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). The main aim behind engaging in peace talks with the militant group was to restore peace and improve the overall internal security situation in Pakistan (Golovina & Ali, 2017). The aforesaid peace talks failed due to the persisted terrorism incidents in the country and uncompromising behavior of the relevant terrorist groups.

The state authorities found no option other than to start a fresh full scale military operation against the TTP, accordingly in June 2014, a military operation named 'Zarb-e-Azab' was started in the erstwhile FATA region e.g. against the TTP (Sherazi, 2014). Responding to the aforesaid operation, the TTP revolted back by increasing the frequency and intensity of its attacks over the state installations and institutions. During the course of the aforesaid military operation, on December 16, 2014, the TTP attacked on the Army Public School (APS in Peshawar). The APS Peshawar incident was historic one in the sense that it brought the civil-military leadership on the same page i.e. for creating a much needed national level political consensus to adopt some serious state level policy for dealing with the rising menace of terrorism.

In the backdrop of the aforesaid militant attack on the APS-Peshawar the civil-military leadership of Pakistan became actively engaged for creating some comprehensive national level policy for uprooting the menace of terrorism from Pakistan. Accordingly, the then newly elected government of Nawaz Sharif decided to convene an All Parties Conference (APC) for seeking national level political consensus i.e. to craft some policy guidelines for curbing the menace of the prevalent terrorism in the state. The aforesaid APC recommended to form a National Plan of Action Committee (NPAC) which was comprised of the membership from all of the major political stake holders i.e. representing both of the treasury and opposition benches of the then elected parliament. The major task of the aforesaid NPAC to draft some concrete and practically viable policy recommendations for curbing the prevalent terrorism in country. On dated December 25, 2014, the recommendations of NPAC were duly discussed and adopted through the consensus of both the civil and military leadership. Later, on the same day, the then prime minister Nawaz Sharif issued a twenty-point National Plan of Action (NPA) providing major policy guidelines for dealing with the various aspects of terrorism, the same NPA later became popular as National Action Plan or NAP-2014 (Haider, 2014).

It may be pertinent to refer here that the virtual consensus of the various political stake holders over the adoption of NAP-2014 was not free from doubts and almost all of the political stake holders, including both of the treasury and opposition benches, showed their potential concerns over the various policy options e.g. which were ought to be included in the proposed NAP-2014. The Pakistan People's Party (PPP), the then biggest opposition party in the parliament, showed its main concern about the operational mandate of Military Courts as the aforesaid courts may be used to prosecute various politicians sitting in the opposition benches by purposively linking their alleged corruption charges with the terrorism (Ghumman, 2014). The Pakistan Tehrik-i-Insaf (PTI), the then second largest opposition party in the parliament, also posited against the proposed civilian trials in the military courts as seemingly it was contrary to the long-standing demands of liberal democratic values i.e. by the overall civilian political leadership of country (Ghumman, 2014). The Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islam of the Fazlur-ur-Rehman group (JUIF), a major group in the then treasury benches of the parliament, expressed its reservations about many operational agenda items of the proposed NAP-2014 by claiming that those points may be used to negatively affect the conventional operative mechanism of the traditional religious seminaries/madrassahs, which in turn may result to disturb its available political base/space (Karamat, et. al. 2019; Dawn, 2014). Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), another major group in the then treasury benches of the parliament, showed its concern that the NAP-2014 may be used to suppress its workers or local leadership as it was done in late nineties (Ghumman, 2014). Furthermore, the regional nationalist political parties from Baluchistan and KPK which have minority representation in the then parliament e.g. Baluchistan National Party Mengal group (BNP) and Pakhtun Khuwa Milli Awami Party (PKMAP) had shown their

serious concerns that the proposed NAP-2014 may be used to victimize their respective political base(s).

Material and Methods

This study mainly deals with the description and explanation regarding the prospects and challenges in implementation of the NAP-2021 i.e. in the historical context. Keeping view of the nature and objectives of the study, this study has mainly employed the descriptive research methods. Further, for achieving the purpose of this research the researcher has primarily used the secondary data sources, and accordingly, the researchers have conducted a systematic literature review of the relevant published material i.e. Books, published reports of the various think tanks, periodicals, research journals, news reports, online resources etc. After conducting an extensive and systematic literature review of the relevant published material, the researchers have presented the relevant facts in the form of results/discussion, conclusion and recommendations i.e. by adjusting those facts according to the scope of this research.

Results and Discussion

Up till the end of 2014 i.e. before the formal approval of the NAP-2014, the state of Pakistan was struggling to overcome the rampant menace of terrorism through applying its maximum available means but her efforts were hardly proved as successful. Following figure presents the post 9/11 data related to the annual terrorist incidents in Pakistan. The following figure clearly indicates the overall terrorism situation was worsening day by day e.g. right up till the introduction and implementation of the original National Action Plan (NAP) in 2014.

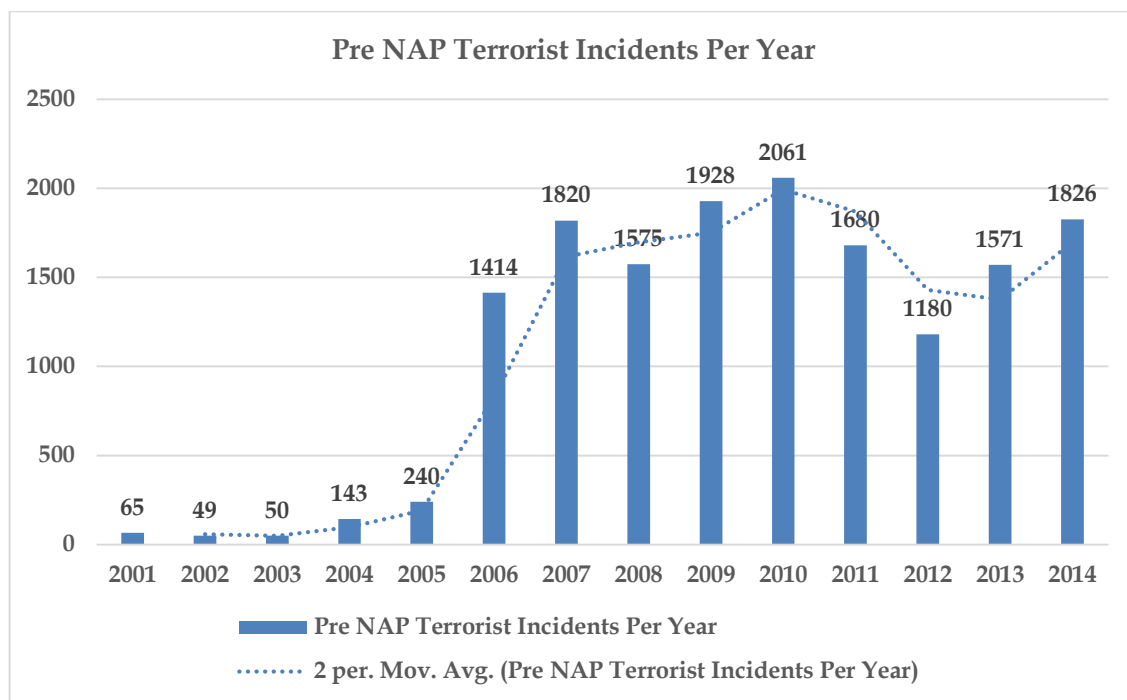


Figure: 01- Post 9/11 data showing the annual terrorist attacks in Pakistan, Source: NACTA Annual Report for the year 2019

Terrorism in Pakistan, unlike other countries, is a multidimensional, deep-rooted and wide-spread phenomenon in terms of its underlying causes, novelty and variety of techniques (Gillani, 2021). For breaking the complex terror structure operating and to effectively curb all kinds of terrorism in Pakistan, the NAP-2014 included a variety of policy goals. The major policy goals which were ought to be achieved through the

implementation of the NAP-2014 mainly included: Establishment of military courts for the trial of terrorists; Curb the terrorism networks and terror financing; Curbing the hate speech, sectarianism and persecution of religious minorities; Strengthening the NACTA and creating independent Counter Terrorism Departments (CTDs) in all provinces; Administrative reforms in the erstwhile FATA and PATA regions; Madrassa regulation and reforms; Reforms in the criminal justice system; Registration of Afghan refugees. The state authorities of Pakistan effectively implemented most of the policy objectives of the NAP-2014 which resulted significant improvement in the overall law and order and internal security conditions in the country.

Following figure presents the post NAP-2014 data related to the annual terrorist incidents in Pakistan. The data set clearly indicated that after the introduction and effective implementation of the NAP-2014, the overall terrorism situation had started declining day by day.

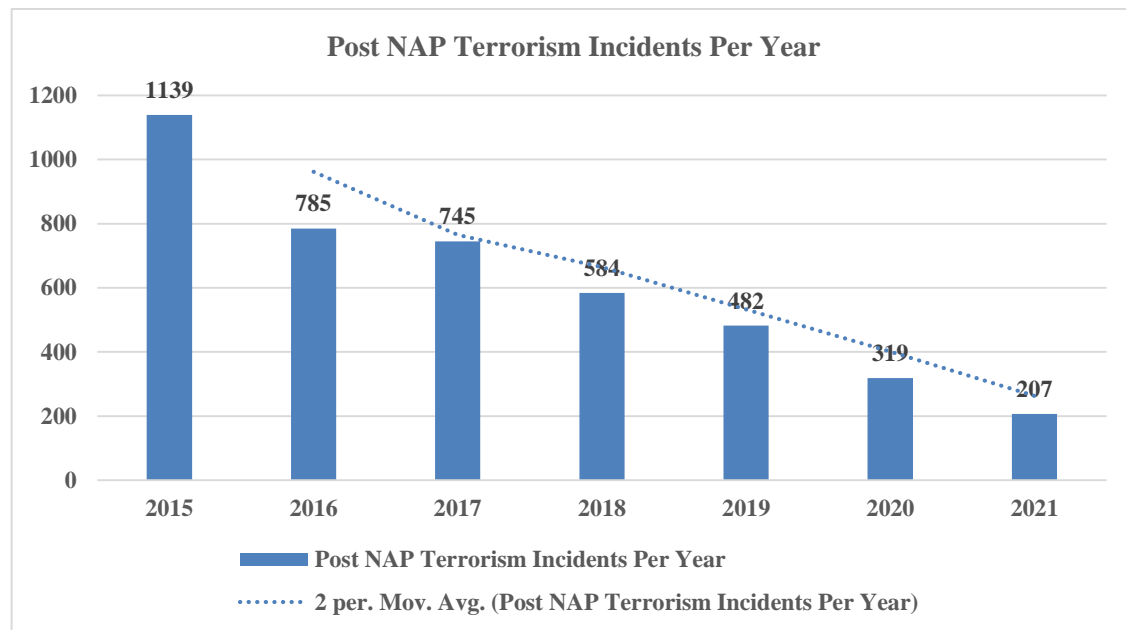


Figure: 02- Post NAP-2014 data showing the annual terrorist attacks in Pakistan, Source: Annual reports of NACTA

During the last decade, fighting the war against terrorism has become the top agenda of the state authorities in Pakistan. After the introduction and partial implementation of the national commitments under NAP-2014, Pakistan has managed to reduce the frequency of the terrorist incidents but seemingly the roots of terrorism are seemed to be found intact (Afzal. 2021). In the Following lines, a brief overview of the major accomplishments which have been achieved through the effective implementation of the aforesaid NAP-2014 is presented.

Generally speaking, the NAP-2014 mainly entailed an overall success in the formation of military courts for speedy trials of the terrorists, dismantling the openly operational bases of the various terrorist organizations, regularization and registration of the madrassa system, effective checking of the re-emergence of the proscribed organizations, ban on the spread of violence i.e. through the instigating speeches and publishing of hate-spreading material including misuse of loudspeaker and reactivation of NACTA. As per the basic mandate of NAP-2014, all provincial governments have successfully established their independent anti-terrorism forces/counter-terrorism departments (CTDs). Although the issues about the operational capacity and availability

of sufficient resources are still persisting, but the basic administrative structure of CTDs is effectively functional in all provinces (Zahid, 2016).

For fostering an ideological counter-narrative against the hate speech, sectarian violence and religious extremism under NAP-2014 mandate, the federal government has successfully launched "*Paigham-i-Pakistan*", a seminal religious declaration (*fatwa*) signed by more than eighteen hundred renowned religious scholars i.e. belonging to all major/mainstream Islamic sects in Pakistan. The *Paigham-i-Pakistan* declared the hate speech leading to sectarian violence, suicide attacks on public places/state assets, and pursuing jihad without the consent of state authority as prohibited under Islam. The counter-terrorism narrative built through launching the *Paigham-i-Pakistan* has played an effective role in the reducing the overall intensity of religious extremism/terrorism in Pakistan (Yaseen & Muzaffar, 2018; Iqbal et. al., 2019).

The federal government in collaboration with the federal Higher Education Commission (HEC), the provincial governments of all of the four provinces and Ittehad-e-Tanzim-ul-Madaris has managed to create Madaris (Islamic religious seminaries) database, and has successfully registered more than seventy percent of the madaris from all over Pakistan. But reportedly, some persistent challenges in the madrassa regulation and reforms are still existed (Dawn, 2021).

With a view to impede the use of telecommunication technology for terrorism, the government successfully revised/implemented the new sim registration policy which required the biometric verification of all the registered users of the GSM technology. For example, just only during the year of 2021, a total of 7,35,000 sims were blocked e.g. due to the non-compliance with the aforesaid bio-metric registration policy (Macdonald, 2021).

The NAP authorized the relevant security departments to contact the friendly countries for detaining the financiers of such terrorist networks in Pakistan e.g. through effectively using the formal diplomatic mechanism called Mutual Legal Assistance (MLA). For example, through the aforesaid mechanism more than 1200 persons were detained on the charges of hawala/hundi and around Rs. 1.5 billion have been recovered since 2015 (Jawad, 2021).

For the purpose of curbing the various funding channels which were operating to generate financial support for the various terrorist organizations in or outside Pakistan, a National Task Force on Suffocating Terrorism Finance has been created under the NAP-2014. The aforesaid task force is an inter-departmental administrative coordination body which works in liaison with the more than twenty federal and provincial agencies, and institutionally it is fully empowered to take necessary actions against the various elements which may be working for providing/generating financial support to any of the proscribed terrorist organization e.g. operating inside or outside Pakistan (NACTA, 2021).

For achieving another policy objective under the NAP-2014, the federal ministry of interior, in liaison with the respective provincial interior ministries of the all four provinces of Pakistan, have substantially revised and regularly updated the fourth schedule which is maintained under the legal mandates of the already implemented Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997 (ATA-1997). Further, according to the updated version of the aforesaid fourth schedule of ATA-1997 and as per the legal mandate of the ATA-1997, the name of many person and organizations have been added into the respective lists of proscribed persons/organizations. Moreover, the assets of many proscribed terrorist

organizations/persons i.e. newly added into the aforesaid schedule have either been confiscated or stand frozen now (Jawad, 2022).

Another important policy objective of the NAP-2014 was to promulgate administrative reforms in the erstwhile FATA and PATA regions as the aforesaid region had become the safe haven for the various militant groups, and the writ of state was very weak in those regions. For achieving the aforesaid policy objective of the NAP-2014, in 2018, the federal government incorporated the twenty-fifth amendment in the constitution according to which the aforesaid FATA and PATA regions have been administratively merged in the KPK province. Although the aforesaid turbulent regions have become part of the regular constitutional framework of country, but the overall economic and security situation is persistently fragile and the people living in those regions are facing the same difficult conditions i.e. as they were facing prior to the aforesaid merger of FATA and PATA (Ali, Ansari, & Firdous, 2020).

The NAP-2014 has also aimed for the potent utilization of the modern means of mass media i.e. television, film, music etc. for fostering the counter-narrative against the perverted religious discourse. Accordingly, some serious institutional efforts are done for gauging the public sentiments e.g. in favor of law enforcement agencies and against the various terrorist groups. The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the public relations wing of the Pakistan army has played a leading role in creation/production of such counter-narrative oriented media content i.e. through the effective use of film, drama and songs. The aforesaid media content e.g. TV dramas and movies has effectively helped to expose the various methods/means of the terrorism oriented religious perversion and the other related causes of extremism/terrorism (Iqbal, Zafar, & Mehmood, 2019).

The basic state law for providing a legal framework to deal with the terrorism oriented crimes is ATA-1997. Various policy objectives given in the NAP-2014 required to introduce suitable reforms in the prevalent legal framework for dealing with the terrorist persons/organizations i.e. in ATA-1997. Accordingly, various suitable reforms have been incorporated in the aforesaid ATA-1997 (Jawad, 2021).

Just to conclude the above given details i.e. about the successes achieved through the effective implementation of the NAP-2014, it may be pertinent to denote that the NAP-2014 included very complex and multivariate long-term policy objectives, some of which have now been accomplished and development over the remaining policy objectives is still underway.

The Challenges and Prospects for the Revised National Action Plan (2021)

After the withdrawal of the US led NATO forces from Afghanistan and Taliban led change in the government in Afghanistan, the national and international security scenario for Pakistan had been totally changed, and accordingly the state authorities in Pakistan were sensing to incorporate suitable/substantial changes into the internal security policy of state (Yameen, 2020). In 2021, keeping view of the changing regional and national security scenario, the state authorities of Pakistan decided to revise the aforesaid original National Action Plan (2014) and verged onto implement a fresh Revised National Action Plan (NAP-2021). In contrast with its earlier version e.g. NAP-2014 which was comprised of 20 agenda points in total, the NAP-2021 was comprised of only 14 points (NACTA, 2021). The following figure provide the detailed contents of the both versions of NAP e.g. NAP-2014 and NAP-2021.

The major policy objectives included in the Revised NAP-2021 are substantially similar to those of included in the NAP-2014, rather, it may be safely said that the policy

objectives of the NAP-2021 are the refined version of the same policy objectives which were part of the early implemented NAP-2014. The major policy objectives under the aforesaid NAP-2021 included: capacity building/strengthening of the already operational Counter-Terrorism Departments (CTDs); curbing terror finance; reforms in the criminal justice system; managing cyber security; Reforms in the newly merged areas of KPK e.g. the early FATA and PATA regions and repatriation of Afghan refugees (NACTA., 2021).

The NAP-2014	The Revised NAP-2021
1. Implementation of death sentence of those convicted in cases of terrorism.	1. Intolerance for Militancy – No Militant / Armed / Identified Criminal Gangs be Allowed to Operate
2. Special trial courts under the supervision of Army. The duration of these courts would be two years.	2. Action Against Spread of Terrorism Through Media (Electronic, Print & Social Media) Communication & Cyber networks
3. Militant outfits and armed gangs will not be allowed to operate in the country.	3. Taking Effective Measures Against Religious / Sectarian Persecution & Terrorism
4. NACTA, the anti-terrorism institution will be strengthened.	4. Choking of Terror Financing & Proscribed Organizations.
5. Action against the literature, newspapers and magazines promoting hatred, extremism, sectarianism and intolerance.	5. Curb Increasing Trends of Illegal Spectrum (Narco , Weapons & Human Trafficking).
6. Choking financing for terrorist and terrorist organizations.	6. Follow up of Counter Terrorism (CT) cases in Courts to conclusive end
7. Ensuring against re-emergence of proscribed organizations.	7. Capacity Building / Strengthening of CTDs
8. Establishing and deploying a dedicated counter-terrorism force.	8. Formulation, Institutionalization & Implementation of CVE Policy
9. Taking effective steps against religious persecution.	9. Regulation & Registration of Religious Seminaries / Madaris .
10. Registration and regulation of religious seminaries.	10. Balochistan Reconciliation Process
11. Ban on glorification of terrorists and terrorist organizations through print and electronic media.	11. Merged Areas of KP Reforms (NFC, Capacity Building of LEAs, LG Elections & Land Reforms).
12. Administrative and development reforms in FATA with immediate focus on repatriation of IDPs.	12. Reforms in Criminal Justice System (CJS).
13. Communication network of terrorists will be dismantled completely.	13. Legislative / Legal Oversight for Espionage / Subversion.
14. Measures against abuse of internet and social media for terrorism.	14. Repatriation of Afghan Refugees and dealing with their issues
15. Zero tolerance for militancy in Punjab.	
16. Ongoing operation in Karachi will be taken to its logical end.	
17. Balochistan government to be fully empowered for political reconciliation with complete ownership by all stakeholders.	
18. Dealing firmly with sectarian terrorists.	
19. Formulation of a comprehensive policy to deal with the issue of Afghan refugees, beginning with registration of all refugees.	
20. Revamping and reforming the criminal justice system.	

Figure-3: The Detailed Contents of the NAP-2014 and Revised NAP-2021 Source: <https://nacta.gov.pk>

The potential major difference between the original version of the NAP-2014 and the Revised NAP-2021 is the institutional strategy for the implementation of NAP-2021. Earlier the core objectives of the NAP-2014 were ought to be implemented through NACTA secretariat, and now the core objectives of the NAP-2021 are ought to be achieved through establishing an independent NAP-secretariat. Further, the aforesaid NAP secretariat would operate in parallel to the already operating NACTA secretariat, and it is headed by a serving brigadier rank officer from Army. (Gillani, 2021). So far as the prospects for the effectiveness of the newly implemented NAP-2021 is concerned, it is too early to predict its future. Some important prospects and challenges for the effective implementation of the NAP-2021 are noted in the following lines.

As per the early practice, the NAP-2021 continued to further empower the already powerful military e.g. by undermining the role of civilian law enforcement agencies. The law enforcement agencies under the civilian control e.g. Police, FIA etc. still lack in capacity and resources. In the long term perspective, Pakistan has to build capacity of the relevant civilian law enforcement agencies e.g. by bringing them onto the center-stage of fighting against the menace of terrorism, and for that purpose the aforesaid agencies must be provided with enough resources and socio-political support.

A new regulatory body called the “NAP-Secretariat” (in addition to already functional NACTA) has been established under NAP-2021. Further, the aforesaid body would function under the control of a serving brigadier of the Army. The critics have showed concerns over the expected functions and role of the newly established authority

as it seems to jeopardize/undermine the role of already struggling NACTA. The potential duplication between the aforesaid regulatory frameworks may hamper the effectiveness of the already weak monitoring and evaluation mechanism e.g. for implementation of NAP-2021.

Although all provincial governments have successfully established their independent anti-terrorism forces/counter-terrorism departments (CTDs), but the issues about the operational capacity of the aforesaid CTDs and the availability of sufficient resources i.e. for ensuring the smooth/effective functions of the CTDs are still persisting. The availability of sufficient resources/funding and devising a transparent institutional mechanism to efficiently utilize the available resources/funding is crucial for achieving the real time success of the NAP-2021. Accordingly, the state authorities have to revise their financial priorities so as to ensure the availability of sufficient funding and the other required resources for the CTDs as it would help the CTDs to build/enhance their capacity for effectively handling the terrorism oriented activities.

Under the original NAP-2014, the state authorities have successfully introduced various legal reforms in the basic legal framework for dealing with the terrorist elements, especially, in the ATA-1997. But there exists sufficient room for the further improvement in the institutional mechanisms related with the investigation, adjudication and prosecution of the terrorist elements. There are serious issues of competence and capacity in the prevalent institutional mechanisms of the investigation and prosecution departments of the existing criminal justice system due to which it is often reported that the cases against the terrorist element did not reach their logical conclusion (Imran & Qasim, 2020). Introducing and effective implementation of the aforesaid reforms in the investigation and prosecution departments of prevalent criminal justice system still remains as a vital challenge for ensuring the effective implementation of the Revised NAP-2021.

Conclusion

During the last two decades, Pakistan has experienced a constant turbulent internal security situation due to its policy of participation in the US led international war against terrorism i.e. in Afghanistan (Fair, 2012). Further, during the aforesaid period Pakistan has taken effective policy measures for eradicating the terrorism from its land (Jawad, 2022). The NAP-2014 and the Revised NAP-2021 were the two main national level policy frameworks which were especially implemented e.g. during the last decade for the purpose of curtailing the terrorism in Pakistan.

The relatively effective implementation of the NAP-2014 has resulted a significant declining trend of the terrorism incidents in the country but the underlying socio-political factors i.e. which are resulting to create/support the terrorism are still persistent. The aforesaid socio-political factors i.e. contributing to exacerbate the terrorism in Pakistan included: extremist sectarian views, relatively unregulated borders with the neighboring countries (especially, Afghanistan), Illegally settled Afghan refugees, militancy in the Baluchistan province, the poor administrative/economic conditions in the erstwhile FATA and PATA regions of the KPK province. Further, Pakistan is also constantly suffering from the issues of the degrading economic conditions, weakened institutional mechanism and political instability.

Recommendations

The Revised NAP-2021 would successfully achieve the desirable outcomes only in case if the state authorities successfully overcome the above said structural deficiencies i.e. which are present in the prevalent structure. For achieving the successful

implementation of the Revised NAP-2021, and in the light of above noted facts, this paper strongly recommends that state authorities of Pakistan should incorporate suitable reforms in the investigation, prosecution and adjudication departments of her criminal justice system.

Further, the political leadership of Pakistan should have to make some practical efforts for improving her performance by incorporating suitable reforms in the basic governance structure of the state and society of Pakistan. Such efforts of the political leadership would surely help to eradicate the main causes of terrorism from Pakistan. Introducing and effective implementation of the aforesaid reforms in the investigation and prosecution departments of prevalent criminal justice system

It may be pertinent to refer here that the parliament represents the elected political leadership of Pakistan and the parliament of Pakistan had preferred to play a relatively passive role in the formation and monitoring the implementation of the both versions of the NAP i.e. the NAP-2014 & the Revised NAP-2021. It is an open secret that both of the aforesaid versions of the NAP were mainly discussed and finalized outside the parliament and there occurred no formal/serious debate in the parliament, the parliament gave just a formal approval to both of the aforesaid policy documents. Interestingly, the parliament has not shown any serious concern in creating some independent parliamentary forum to directly steer the monitoring and implementation of such an immensely important national concern i.e. the NAP-2014 or the Revised NAP-2021. The active engagement of the parliament regarding the monitoring of progress in the implementation of NAP was and is quite crucial. Such endeavor of the parliament i.e. to create some parliamentary body/forum (proposedly, having the representation from both of the treasury and opposition benches) can definitely help in promptly resolving all of above said issues and challenges related to the implementation of the Revised NAP-2021. It is hoped that, in near future, the parliament of Pakistan would assume a relatively more assertive role/position for ensuring the effective implementations of the recently adopted Revised NAP-2021.

References

- Afzal, M. (2021, January 15). Terrorism in Pakistan has declined, but the underlying roots of extremism remain. *Brookings*.
- Ali, G., Ansari, M., & Firdous, M. (2020). FATA Merger to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Problems and Prospects for Federalism in Pakistan. *Global Political Review*, 5(1), 224-233.
- Fazl opposes establishing of military courts 'in principle'. Dawn. (2014, December 25). *Dawn*.
- Registering madressahs. (2021, May 17). *Dawn*.
- Fair, C. (2012) 'Pakistan in 2011: Ten years of the "war on terror"', *Asian Survey* 52(1), 100-113. doi: 10.1525/as.2012.52.1.100
- Ghumman, K. (2014, December 25). Military courts to try terror suspects: Political parties thrash out consensus after marathon meeting. *Dawn*.
- Gillani, D. (2021). The History of Terrorism in Pakistan. In R. English, *The Cambridge History of Terrorism* U.K.: Cambridge University Press.
- Gillani, W. (2021, October 10). Eradicating terrorism. *The News International*
- Golovina, M., & Ali, A. (2017, February 17). Peace talks between Pakistan and Taliban collapse after killings. *Reuters*.
- Haider, M. (2014, December 26). Nawaz constitutes special committee to implement National Action Plan. *Dawn*.
- Imran, M. & Qasim, R. (2020). Anti-terrorism legal framework in Pakistan and challenges before the criminal justice system', *Pakistan Journal of International Affairs*, 3(2), 236-262
- Iqbal, K., Zafar, Kalim, S & Mehmood, Z. (2019). Critical evaluation of Pakistan's counter-narrative efforts. *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism*, 14(2), 147-163
- Jawad, A. (2022). An evaluation of anti-terrorism laws in Pakistan: Lessons from the past and challenges for the future. *Security and Defence Quarterly*, 38(2), 16-30.
- Karamat, S., Muzaffar, M., & Shah, A. S. (2019). Politics of Religious Extremism in Pakistan: An Analysis, *Review of Economics and Development Studies*, 5 (2), 315-322
- Khan, H. (2013). Pakistan's Contribution to global war on terror after 9/11. *IPRI Journal*, 13(1), 37-56.
- Khan, A., & Saeed, A. (2016). *National Action Plan: Performance so far*. Pak Institute for Peace Studies.
- Kayani, S. A. (2011). Global war on terror: the cost Pakistan is paying. *Margalla Papers*, 15(2), 1-16.
- Macdonald, A. (2021, October 19). *Pakistan blocks 732K SIMs issued without biometrics, Nigeria registers 180M*. BIO-METRIC UPDATE.COM
- NACTA. (2021). *Counter Financing of Terrorism*. NACTA.

NACTA. (2021). *Revised National Action Plan – 2021*. NACTA.

PTI and PPP having second thoughts about their support to military courts. *Pakistan Herald*. (2014, December 31). *Pakistan Herald*.

Rana, M. (2017). *A review of National Internal Security Policy (2013-18)*. PIPS

Sherazi, Z. S. (2014, June 15). Zarb-e-Azb operation: 120 suspected militants killed in North Waziristan. *Dawn*.

Shah, S. A. (2012, February 12). *Pakistan's War Against "Miscreants"*, Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU)

Yameen, T. (2020). Afghan Peace Process and Security Implications for Pakistan. *Pakistan Journal of Terrorism Research*, 2(II), 1-17

Yaseen, Z., & Muzaffar, M. (2018). Extremism in Pakistan: Issues and Challenges, *Journal of Politics and International Studies*, 4 (I), 31-42

Zahid, F. (2016, July 19). *Counter Terrorism Policy Measures: A Critical Analysis of Pakistan's National Action Plan*. The Mackenzi Institute:

Zaidi, M. (2012, December 31). Laws against terrorism. *Dawn*

Zalman, A., & Clarke, J. (2009). The global war on terror: A narrative in need of a rewrite. *Ethics & International Affairs*, 23(2), 101-113.