

THE ROLE OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA PROVINCE IN FREEDOM MOVEMENT FROM 1901-1930

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Abstract:

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa remained a part of the Punjab when it was separated from Punjab in 1901. This province was kept deprived from its constitutional rights and the act of 1909 and Act of 1919 was not extended to it. However, the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, former NWFP played a key role in Freedom Movement. They took an active part in all offshoots of Freedom Movement like Handkerchief Movement, Caliphate Movement, Hijrat Movement and Civil Disobedience Movement. Though the province was under the influence of Congress, yet the hearts of the people of this province were beating with Muslim League.

Introduction: In Indian Sub-Continent, the struggle for independence from the British clutches lasted for long time and took many shapes and stages. It can be roughly divided into two stages; the first phase was an armed struggle ended with the uprising of 1857, which brought disaster for the Indians as a whole and for the Muslims in particular. On one side, the war brought an end to the long established Mughal Empire in India and on the other side established the British Raj over Indian Sub-continent. The second phase gave birth to the movement for independence; partially constitutional, partially illegal, clandestine and violent. It was not even a single movement, but, a series of movements connected with each other's. This struggle took hundred years and ultimately resulted in the Independence of India but also the birth of Pakistan carved out of the yoke of British India. Like other Muslim majority and minority provinces, the province of K.P.K played a key role in the struggle for Pakistan as well¹.

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Most parts of NWFP were remained under the control of Ahmad Shah Abdali, the ruler of Afghanistan till his death in 1772. Ahmad Shah Abdali was succeeded by Timur Shah and Zaman Shah respectively. Zaman Shah attacked Punjab thrice between the period 1795-98. Sardar Ranjit Singh, the son and successor of Sardar Maha Singh served Zaman Shah well during the course of his third attack. In return of his services, Zaman Shah appointed him the subedar of Lahore in 1799 and awarded him the title of Raja. Ranjit Singh revolted against the Afghan ruler, Shah Zaman and declared his independence in 1802. He brought all Sikh fraternity under his control. After consolidating his position, he began to expand the frontiers of his Empire. During the Second Anglo -Maratha War (1803-1805) Maharaja Ranjit Singh invaded Malwa and in 1809 the British forces successfully attacked Singh's forces and compelled him to sign a treaty with the British Government. Thus a treaty was signed between Ranjit Singh and the British Government to be known as Anglo-Sikh Treaty of 1809. This treaty stopped him from further territorial expansion to cis-Sutlej. The Cis-Sutlej states were a group of small states in Punjab region in the 19th century, lying between the Sutlej River on the north, the Himalayas on the east, the Yamuna River and Delhi District on the south, and Sirsa District on the west. These states were under the suzerainty of the Scindhia dynasty of the Maratha Empire. Small Punjabi kingdoms of the Cis-Sutlej states paid tributes to the Marathas, until the Second Anglo-Maratha War of 1803–1805, after which the Marathas lost this territory to the British), but permitted him to expand the boundaries of his empire towards north and thus he captured Peshawar in 1818². As a result of Anglo-Afghan War of 1849 the British emerged victorious and captured Punjab from Sikh rulers and thus the frontier region also came under the domination of British Government³. From 1849 to 1901 the frontier region remained a part the Punjab province. On November 9, 1901 Lord Curzon, the then Viceroy of India, separated five districts Hazara, Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu and D.I. Khan from the Punjab and created a new province to be known as North West Frontier Province. The formal inauguration was held on April 26, 1902 and the new province was placed under charge of the Chief Commissioner who was directly responsible to the government of India. Colonel Herald Dean was appointed as the first Chief Commissioner of NWFP. Even after the birth of a new province, the British Government did not extend the constitutional reforms of 1909 and 1919 to this area due to internal insecurity and strategic location⁴. Lord Curzon had hoped that this creation under the direct rule of the government would be beneficial both for

the government and for the people of the new province. The government, however, did its best to keep the public of NWFP away from politics. Because of its aggressive attitude the place was termed as “powder magazine”. That’s why the political activities were discouraged there from the very start. Initially the branches of All Indian National Congress and All India Muslim League were established in Peshawar but within a short time were banned by the government⁵. The government reforms of 1909 and 1919 also for the same reason could not be shared with the NWFP because of the uncertain and unfavourable conditions of the province.⁶

The Caliphate Movement and the People of North West Frontier Province:

At the end of World War I, when the victorious powers imposed the humiliating treaty upon the Turkey, the Muslims of India launched a movement of great religious and political enthusiasm to save the Othman Empire known as Caliphate Movement with its central Caliphate Committee. When the Central Caliphate Committee started its activities against the decision of the British Government in every nook and corner, the people of N.W.F.P. also responded with zeal and vigour which was the first mass mobilization on the religio-political basis. The network of Caliphate Committees was setup in almost all the districts of NWFP and every step taken by the Central Caliphate Committee was actively followed by the Caliphate Committees of the province.⁹

The All India Khilafat Committee set up its sub-committee on provincial levels. The Peshawar Khilafat Committee played a leading role in the entire province. Its leaders toured the interior regions of the Province and established contacts with other Khilafat Committees in the Province. Each district was placed under the District Khilafat Committee while committees were formed in Tehsils, villages and towns. The Peshawar Khilafat Committee had its sub-committees in Charssadda, Mardan, Swabi and Nowshera. Among these the Swabi Khilafat Committee had its own name as Afghania Majlis-i-Khilafat, Yousafzai Afghan Khilafat Committee.¹⁰

In Bannu District Barrister Muhammad Jan, Hakim Abdur Rahim, Hajji Abdur Rahman, Sheikh Ghulam Sarwar and Amir Mukhtar took the initiative and asked Mazullah Khan, an ex-police inspector to lead the Bannu Khilafat Committee. During the Hijrat Movement Mazullah Khan migrated to Afghanistan and was replaced by Mir Mukhtar. **11**

In Hazara, Khilafat Committee was constituted led by Maulana Muhammad Ishaq as president and Maulana Muhammad Irfan as secretary of the district committee. The government took notice of the activities of the Committee and arrested its leaders and were expelled from the district. Qazi Muhammad Azam and Ali

Gauhar Khan were selected as the president and secretary of the Committee respectively. The local committees were setup in Abbotabad, Haripur, Sarai Saleh, Sufada, Kaghan and Dhodial to expedite the activities of the Khilafat Committee.¹²

In Kohat District, following were elected as office bearers of the Kohat Khilafat Committee on June 30, 1921; Pir Shah Zaman Gul, president, Pir Ashiq Shah, vice president, Sayyed Pir Kamal, secretary, Maulawi Ahmad Gul, Assistant Secretary, Abdul Aziz, treasurer, Mian Rahmatullah, assistant treasurer, Mian Inayatullah, finance secretary and Juma Khan, captain of volunteers. In Dera Ismail Khan, Khilafat Committee comprised of Sardar Muhammad Gul, president, Muhammad Sadiq Khan Kutikhel, secretary; Seth Muhammad Hussain, treasurer; Maulawi Matiullah, account advisor and twenty seven other members.¹³

Non- Cooperation Movement in North West Frontier Province:

When Maulana Muhammad Ali Jauhar and Syed Sulmain Nadvi were leading a delegation in Europe to explain the view point of the Muslims of India to the world, Maulana Abdul Bari and Maulana Shaukat Ali took on their shoulders the responsibilities of the All India Khilafat Committee. In May 1920, the committee met at Bombay and passed a resolution to stage a country wide non-cooperation movement. Gandhi lend full support to the movement and tried his best to spread the movement to every nook and corner of the Sub-continent¹⁴. The movement recommended the following four staged programme.

1. At the first stage, the titles awarded by the British Government would be returned and the educational institutions of the government would be boycotted
2. At the second stage, the government servants would put up resignations except holding the police and Military Departments.
3. At third stage, the police and Military Departments would also be quitted.
4. At the last stage, the payment of the taxes would be refused.¹⁵

In November, 1919, All India Khilafat Committee decided to boycott the peace celebrations and Dr. M. A. Ansari, the head of Anti-Peace Celebration Committee made a forceful appeal to the Muslims of India to boycott peace celebration ceremonies and observe shutter down strike on this occasion. Like other parts of India the non- cooperation movement was also launched in NWFP with full enthusiasm and followed the programme stage by stage. The inhabitants of Peshawar boycotted the celebrations and they considered it a time of mourning rather than rejoicing. The students of Islamic High School refused to accept their share in the sweets distributed on the occasion¹⁶.

Like other parts of India, the non-cooperation movement also began in NWFP soon after the appeal made by Dr, Ansari. Mian Hamid Gul Kaka Khel gave up his title of *Khan Sahib* and the *Qaisar-i-Hind* medal. He resigned from the post of superintendent in the Survey Department. He was given the title of *Fakhar-i-Qaum* (Pride of the Nation) by the people. In Hazara, response to the non-cooperation was very affirmative. Qazi Muhammad Azam of Abbottabad resigned from the post of sub-divisional officer. He joined the Caliphate movement and became one of its leaders in district Hazara. In those days, a local union of *lambardar* and about 15 *patwaris* tendered their resignations. In Bannu district, Barrister Muhammad Jan gave up his profitable practice in the government courts. He resigned from the membership of the Municipal Committee and the District Board. Malik Khuda Bakhsh, another lawyer of Bannu, resigned for the same reason, Mazullah Khan and Malik Zardard Khan tendered their resignations as honorary magistrate and assessor respectively. Gul Ayyub Khan Saifi stated that almost all Maliks of the Bannu district resigned which led to attack of the British Army on Daud Shah, Amandi, Kamesh Khel and Mando Khel. According to Dr. Lal Baha, there were 60 resignations in the Police Department, 31 in the Mohmand Militia, 71 among other employees, 88 *patwaris* in the Charsadda Tehsil and many in Peshawar Tehsil as well¹⁷

On the eve of Non-Cooperation Movement, the students of M.A.O. College Aligarh refused to attend the classes and decided to join Jamia Millia Islamia (National Muslim University) at Aligarh which was established under the supervision of Maulana Muhammad Ali Jauhar in 1920. Following the students of M.A.O. College Aligarh, the students of Islamia College Peshawar, also demanded a similar independent Muslim institution in the N.W.F.P. Led by Abdul Qayyum Khan, the Non-cooperation was also started in Islamia College Peshawar by holding meeting on the night of September 29, 1920 in Butler Hostel, in which the following resolutions were adopted;

1. Approval of non-cooperation in the college.
2. Disaffiliation of the college and non-acceptance of the government aid.
3. Adoption of Swadeshi.

The September 30 was observed as black day. On that day, a complete strike was observed in the college. As soon as the news of arrest of the leaders of the local Khilafat Committee reached the college, about 100 students came out in

Peshawar city to protest against the arrest. Among these students, twenty-four left the college for Jamia Millia Delhi¹⁸.

Hijrat Movement in North West Frontier Province 1920:

When Khilafat movement grew stronger and stronger on each passing day, meanwhile in July, 1920 Moulana Abdul Kalam Azad, Moulana Abdul Bari Farangi, Moulana Muhammad Ali and Moulana Abdul Majeed Sindhi issued a Fatwa declared India, the Land of the Infidels, the land of war, Dar-ul-Harb (Home of war) and urged the Muslims of India to migrate to the land of Islam, Dar-ul-Aman (Home of peace). To them Afghanistan seemed to be. Nazims were appointed in every big city and a central office was established in Delhi known as Khuddam-ul-Muhajireen to motivate Muslims to migrate to Afghanistan, being the nearest, independent and Muslim country¹⁹. After issuing the Fatwa of Migration, the Movement got momentum in the rural areas of N.W.F.P province such as Peshawar and Mardan. The Hijrat Committee was constituted on May 20, 1920 with the assignment to make necessary arrangements for *Muhajirine*. Following were the office bearers of the Hijrat committee;

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| 1. Syed Maqbool Shah | President |
| 2. Maulavi Abdul Ghafoor | Secretary |
| 3. Haji Jan Muhammad | Treasurer |
| 4. Mir Yahya | Chairman ²⁰ . |

The people of NWFP wrote and sang songs expressing their emotions in favour of migration from India to Afghanistan. The local Hindus motivated Muslims for migration and started buying their land and cattle at throw-away price. A land worth of ten thousand was sold for one hundred and a Bull worth of two hundred was sold for forty rupees only. The carvans of emigrants who were moving towards Afghanistan via Peshawar and Khyber Pass were brought up and nourished by the locals. A proper setup was made for their hospitality. The people of Peshawar warmly welcomed the refugees. They collected donations from locals and dedicated their time and energy for the help of refugees. A Sarai at Namak Mandi Peshawar was reserved for the stay and hospitalization of the emigrants. Majority of Muslims leaders from N.W.F.P were in favour of Hijrat movement including, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Abbas Khan, Muhammad Akbar Khan and Ali Gul Khan and they themselves migrated to Afghanistan with common refugees²¹.

A large number of people majority from lower class of society, the common people, the poor people left from India for Afghanistan. The emigrants carried out their journey on foot and carts because sources of transportation were not

that mush developed at that time. In the beginning the Afghanistan government welcomed Indian Muslims and Amir Amanullah Khan, the ruler of Afghanistan appointed Muhammad Iqbal Shedai as his minister to look after the affairs of refugees. Afghan government later on closed down their frontiers when they found influx of refugees were coming, because it would be too difficult for them to handle. Even those who have managed to enter successfully were spending miserable life and disgusted because Afghanistan was a poor country and facing many internal problems. Eventually, the unhappy *Muhajirin* had to return to their homes. A great number of old men, women, and children died on the way back to India. Those who were lucky to escape death and reached their former places, found themselves homeless and penniless.²² Hijrat movement was an emotional, ill-advised and meaningless movement. Majority of Ulema and leaders of public opinion, including Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi, Habib-ur-Rehman, Hakeem Ajmal Khan, Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum Khan and Alama Inayatullah Khan were not happy with the decision of the movement. Hijrat movement ended up with misery because it was unplanned and was based on the emotions. Moreover, Afghanistan was not taken into confidence. The Muslims were suffered a lot, anyhow, the movement of *Hijrat* reinforced their courage for the ideology of Islam²³.

North West Frontier Province on the Road of Constitutional Reforms:

The NWFP came into being as an independent province in 1901, but, the British Government intentionally tried to block the political awareness in the province. That's why the province was kept away from the constitutional reforms and the Government of Indian Acts, 1909 and 1919 were not extended to NWFP like other provinces. After its creation the province was placed under the direct control of the Government of India through Chief Commissioner and Agent responsible to Governor General²⁴. After its birth the Governor General in Council issued a number of Regulations by the authority of Governor General, e.g.

1. The Frontier Crimes Regulations of 1901.
2. The Murderous Outrages Regulations of 1901.
3. The North West Province Law and Justice Regulations of 1901.
4. The Court of words Regulations of 1904.
5. The Hazara Forest Regulations of 1911.
6. The NWFP Constabulary Act of 1915.
7. The NWFP Validation and Indemnity Regulations of 1920.
8. The NWFP Security Regulations of 1922²⁵.

The aforesaid Regulations added nothing to the destiny of the province, but, encouraged the political elites of the province to struggle for the introduction of Constitutional Reforms in the province.

The Frontier Enquiry Committee Report (Bray Committee):

Over the issue of reforms in NWFP, Muhammad Ali Jinnah was much anxious. Jinnah asked Barrister Mian Abdul Aziz, the president of Provincial League (NWFP) to prepare a scheme of reforms for NWFP²⁶. When the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms, (Indian Act of 1919) was not extended to NWFP, as expected by the people of the province, the Muslim intelligentsia became restless and pressed the government to introduce reforms in NWFP as other parts of India. The Hindus in the province opposed the introduction of reforms and emphasised on strengthening of power and authority of the executive. They sought official protection against the armed tribesmen and the re-amalgamation of the province with Punjab. This demand was due to their fear of losing the voice in the Muslim majority area and of strengthening their co-religionists in Punjab. Another reason was that the separation deprived them of the reforms introduced in other parts of India. The issue of re-amalgamation with the passage of time faded away into oblivion, because the Hindus had realized that the re-joining of NWFP with Punjab will create the overwhelming majority of the Muslims. Realizing the persistent demand of the Frontier Muslims for reforms, the government appointed eight members inquiry committee, Frontier Inquiry Committee under Sir Dennys Bray, the then Foreign Secretary of Government of India in April 1922. The committee comprised of two Hindus, three Europeans and three Muslims members. The Committee toured the various parts of the province and discussed the following three questions with the leaders of various parties;

1. Re-amalgamation of NWFP with the province of Punjab.
2. Retaining its separate status as a province.
3. Introduction of Constitutional Reforms²⁷.

The Committee had to face the following difficulties while conducting interviews from the political leaders of different shade of opinion;

1. There appeared a division of opinion among the members of the committee over the question of either giving full provincial status to NWFP or to re-amalgamate it with the Province of Punjab.
2. Hindu and Sikh leaders of the province were not only against the introduction Constitutional Reforms in the Province, but were in favour of its re-joining to the province of Punjab.

3. The Muslim leaders wanted the extension of Constitutional Reforms to the Province²⁸.

The Hindu Sabha, a representative organisation of the Hindus in NWFP launched a campaign against the extension of Constitutional Reforms in the Province and demanded the committee to propose the re-joining of the Province²⁹. The meeting held at D.I.Khan, the Sabha strongly opposed the separation Scheme in the following resolution;

- . “Owing to the peculiar conditions obtaining in the NWFP, its contiguity to the border and facilities with which raids, decoities, kidnapping, murders and other serious crimes against the Hindus are committed with impunity or connivance of local Pathans; the fanatic and unruly temperament of the illiterate masses easily misled by bigoted educated agitators; the recent incendiarism and loot in Kohat, fires in Nowshera, D.I. Khan and other places; the existence of secret Muslim revolutionary societies; the open advocacy of Muslim press of the Muslims Raj with the help of Afghanistan and the dream of pan-Islamism engendered by recent events in other Muslim lands, this meeting is of the opinion that it is absolutely necessary for the safety of Hindus that the hands of the executive should not be weakened by transferring authority to the class already dominant in the administration. The meeting further puts on record its firm conviction that the introduction of elective system is sure to aggravate factional feelings and promoted riots and disturbances”³⁰.

Sardar Muhammad Gul Khan of D. I. Khan advocated before the Bray Committee not only demanded the extension of Constitutional Reforms to the Province, but, also the division of India between the Hindus and Muslims, allotting to the Muslims the area from Peshawar to Agra³¹. The committee after collecting facts submitted its report in October, 1922 and recommended the status of an Independent province for N.W.F.P. and also suggested the introduction of Constitutional Reforms in the province in the line of other provinces³².

Simon Commission in North West Frontier Province:

The Bray Commission was followed by another Statutory Commission commonly referred as Simon Commission, dispatched by the British Government under the section 84-A of the Indian Act, 1919 to revisit the Indian Act of 1919 and putting forward recommendations for the future constitution suitable to the Indian people.

It was an “All White Commission” consisted of the following members of the British Parliament.

1. Sir John Simon Chairman
2. Lord Strathcona Member
3. Mount Royal Member
4. Edward Cadogan Member
5. Stephen Walsh Member. Later on Walsh resigned and was replaced by Vernon Hartshorn
6. Richard Lane-fox Member
7. C.R. Attlee Member³³.

The Simon Commission visited India in February-March, 1928 and again in October, 1928 and April, 1929. The major political parties boycotted the commission because no Indian was included in it. Everywhere the Indians demonstrated against the commission with black banners in their hands and anti-commission slogans “Simon Go Back” was on their tongue³⁴. The Commission was scheduled to visit Peshawar on November 18, 1928. According to Dr, Fakhru-Islam;

“Many people hailing from Kohat, D. I. Khan, Hazara and other parts of NWFP gathered in Peshawar to register their protest against the Simon Commission. The government wanted to avoid the protest, but the protesters wanted to register their demonstration at any cost. Finally, Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum Khan and Khan Bahadur Quli Khan (Assistant Commissioner Peshawar) opened talks with the protesters which resulted in an accord with the demonstrators. It was agreed that they will be allowed to assemble in a specific place and register their concern. The protesters gathered in the front of Balahisar Fort and shouted “Simon Go Back”³⁵. The Commission published its report in May, 1930. The report recommended that NWFP should be given a legislative council but no measure of responsible government³⁶.

Conclusion:

The history of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has always been marked with the invasion of invaders. It had been a part of Afghanistan till 1799 when Sikh governor of Punjab revolted against the Afghan ruler, Shah Zaman and declared his independence in 1802. As a part of Punjab, KP was ruled by Ranjit Singh when it was captured by British government in 1849. It remained a part of Punjab when it was separated from Punjab in 1901 and was placed under Chief Commissioner. Keeping in view the peculiar location of KP, the British Government did not extend constitutional reforms to this province. The people of this province played a key role in Caliphate Movement, Hijrat Movement and Non-cooperation

Movement. The inhabitants of Peshawar warmly welcomed the emigrants while going from different parts of Indian Sub-continent via Peshawar to Afghanistan. Following the decision of the All India Khilafat Committee, the people of KP took part in Non-Cooperation movement. The students of Islamia College Peshawar boycotted the classes and many people left the government jobs. The issue of the Constitutional reforms was raised by the Muslim leaders. Realising the gravity of the situation, the British government appointed the Bray Committee to deal the constitutional status of the province. After collecting the first hand information from political leaders of different shade of opinion, Bray Committee suggested the extension of constitutional reforms to KP. Keeping in view the suggestion of Bray Committee and Simon Commission, the British government extended a status of full province to KP in 1932.

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