THE SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL SCENARIO OF THE KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA, IN THE EARLY DECADE OF THE 20TH CENTURY

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Abstract

The paper explores the socio-educational scenario of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, then N.W.F.P during British rule, and explains how wretchedly this province was treated in education. Before its establishment in 1901, being part of the Punjab province, the five districts that are Peshawar, Hazara, Dera Ismail Khan, Kohat and Bannu were the most backward amongst 31 districts. Similarly, the province was the last in education amongst all provinces of the India.Pashtuns, were ignored in education by the Britishers, due to their geo- strategic location. It was the gateway of the invasions, so there must have been no or low resistance in the strategic way of it, which needed illiterate subordinates. Their energies were diverted towards other social multiplicities, detached them from trade, commerce, business and decision making stakeholder ship. Several primary schools in the province were offered to be established after successful participation of the villagers in the World War 1.

Key words: Socio-educational, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 20th Century **Introduction**

The Indian North-West Frontier region was faced with multifaceted issues, including social and educational during the 19th Century. The British annexation of the Punjab, in 1849, brought them in direct contact with the inhabitants of Pashtun land. For this region, they

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devised rather revised their policy and initiated the concept of *Tribal* and Settled areas with their sole objective to serve their ulterior motive of civilizing this uncivilized race. The Pashtun race was called as 'Martial' but in a time when they needed their services², yet they were considered 'Savage' and divinely ordained with the inability to be ruled by the White Man, and Rudyard Kipling was very much active in propagating the deserving authority of the British Raj as the Britishers were thought to have been divinely appointed to rule the inefficient and irresolute Pathans. The coming years witnessed the passage and approval of the FCR in the British parliament, and which is, unfortunately, existing till present day but in a slight modified manner. The second Anglo-Afghan war, the treaty of Gandamak, the forward policy of Lord Litton (1876-1880) and supported by Lord Rippen (1880-1884), strengthened their place in the Indian North-West Frontier Region. After that, Amir Abdul Rahman Khan, the Afghan Ameer during 1880-1901, settled his boundaries with Russian Empire and was desirous to move in the same direction of the British Indian government. Initiated at his request the British government sent a mission under Sir Mortimer Durand and concluded the boundary agreement as and how they wished for in 1893. Ameer Abdul Rahman Khan halfheartedly accepted the agreement and then concentrated on internal stability of his country. The famous Frontier uprising set this region ablaze and from South and North Waziristan through Mohmand and Kurram up to the Malakand and Chitral, the whole Frontier region turned against the Raj. Mullah Paiwanda, Mulla Siad Akbar, Hadda Mulla, Sartor Fagir and Akhund of Swat rose in open revolt after the famous Maizer incident.³

With the arrival of Lord Curzon as viceroy to India, in 1899, the process of re-formation started and the settled areas of the Indian North-

West Frontier region were grouped into a province in 1901. The region was lagging behind in the educational, political and social fields. According to then educational records/census report, there were only 17 high schools, no middle school and 135 primary schools in the province. Interestingly, all these schools were not under the direct control of the regime. Yet there existed other parallel systems of education in the region. They were affiliated with Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam, Missionary schools (Christian), the Islamic schools of Haji sahib of Turangzai and the DB (District Board) Schools run by the district boards-independent from government authorities. Similarly, we notice eleven Dar-ul-Ulooms purely run and funded by the religious multitudes of the province which operated till 1947.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa formerly (North West Frontier Province) has a long and unique chronicle, which is molded by its significant Geo strategic nature. It is the junction of three significant geographical areas like Asia- South Asia, Central Asia, and China. It remained part of the Sikh Kingdom of Punjab. The settled area of the province remained part of the Punjab Province until it was made a separate province in 1901 during the tenure of Viceroy Lord Curzon and named as North West Frontier Province.⁶

There were five settled districts at the time of formation, namely Hazara, Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu, and Dera Ismail Khan. The agencies of Dir, Swat, and Chitral; the Khyber Agency; the Kurram Agency; the North Waziristan Agency; and the South Waziristan Agency were also linked as part of political agencies beside the narrow line of territories which separates the tribal and settled belt called Frontier Regions FRs. The FRs were not part of the province, but have been connected to the adjoining settled or administrative districts for administrative purposes.

According to Mehmood, S (1973), the agencies of Swat, Dir, and Chitral included the princely states of Chitral, Dir, and later the newly Swat state, as well as the Malakand Protected Area or as it is commonly called the Area of the Malakand Agency.

The areas of Kala Dhaka now Tor Ghar and Kohistan area were defined as part of the provincially administered tribal area (PATA). Under the Interim Constitution of Pakistan, 1972, and their status was retained in the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973.⁷

Before the formation of NWFP, The Districts of Peshawar, Kohat, and Hazara were under the direct control of the Board of Administration at Lahore. However, they were formed into a regular division, under a commissioner, in about 1850. The territories of the, then districts of Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan were put under one deputy commissioner, forming part of the Layyah division, till 1861 when two deputy commissioners were appointed and both districts were included in Derajat division. This administrative structure continued till the formation of the NWFP now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The new province of North West Frontier Province was formed on 9th November 1901, on the same date, on which the British king was born. The inaugural ceremony of the province was held on the 26 April 1902 by Lord Curzon, in a big procession of 3000 in the Shahi Bagh, Peshawar. 9

According to Olaf Caroe¹⁰, the creation of the new province puts a solution to the Pakhtun concept and demand of oneness, beside all other things. He commented that "It did something to get together the districts and the tribal territory"

The first type of administrative structure of the province was as;

- 1. Peshawar District with headquarter in Peshawar
- 2. Hazara District with headquarter in Abbottabad

- 3. Kohat District with headquarter in Kohat
- 4. Bannu District with headquarter in Bannu
- 5. Dera Ismail Khan with headquarter in Dera Ismail Khan

The present study has focused the above regions in the field of educational promotion and their impact on the society, however studying the role of Anjuman-i-Islahul Afghana in the entire region, the educational institutions established under the umbrella, will be studied in detail.

Education never remained the priority of the British rulers for one reason or other in this part of the subcontinent. The negligence was attributed to the Punjab government's pre- occupation with the problem of security, law and order than with other, administrative matters. Besides, the subordination of administrative developments into strategic consideration by the British authorities remained a root cause of slow progress.¹¹

The Frontier now KP districts made very little progress in education. The department of Public instruction of the Punjab took place in 1854, when it was put under a Director. Educational institutions were made under the new system in Punjab; however, the frontier districts were ignored. Amongst the 31 districts of the Punjab, the five Frontier districts were by far the least advanced in regard to education in 1901, when the NWFP came into existence.¹² The total expenses that were made in education in 1902-03 were only Rs. 29,937.

Punjab's attitude was considered as a stepchild in the frontier region, as portrayed by Sir George Ross Keppel (1911) in these words.".....Very little interest was taken in Pathans education by the Punjab government, which always looked upon the trans- Indus tract more as a stepchild than as a child". The table shows the number of educational institutions¹⁴ in different provinces of the Subcontinent from 1901-02.

Table-1.1: Number of educational institutions in different provinces of the Subcontinent from 1901-02.

Name of the province	Total number of schools		
Madras	19093		
Bombay	8219		
Bengal	45922		
East Bengal	2776		
United Provinces	6773		
Punjab	2257		
Burma	3927		
Central Provinces	3035		
NWFP	154		

Source: NWFP Gazetteers 1914

The number of schools, in NWFP, shows the attitude of the authorities towards education and social upheavals of the masses of the region. This educational despoil also made a significant effect on social, economic and even on constitutional developments. The reforms in 1909 were not introduced in the then NWFP, on the plea, that the Frontier people were backward and uneducated. ¹⁵

Socio-educational background of the province

According to the census report of the 1921, the total population was 50, 76,476. Out of it, 93 percent were Muslims. The remaining 7 percent inhabitants were non-Muslims¹⁶. Hindus were in high proportion, followed by Sikhs and Christians. The dimension of the population that was residing in towns was recorded as 7 percent. Trade and supplying food stuff to the military made the Hindu community to prefer towns and urban centers. The Sikhs too, were followed by the Hindus in trade and

commercial enterprise. The Army and administrative officials were mostly European Christians. The Pakhtuns were relatively dominating the province, even so, there were other factions like Awans, Gujars, Jats, Balochis in Hazara and Dera Ismai Khan. Beside tribal territory, where Pashtu was spoken by almost all, 56 percent of the population of the province mother tongue was Pashtu. Withal, the remaining 42 percent were either Hindku speakers or others. The rural population was making their livelihood from farming.¹⁷

The province was one of the most backward in education in the Indian provinces before 1947. Muslims in general and Pakhtuns in particular were far behind in Education as compared to other communities of the province. Christians were better educated, followed by Sikhs and Hindus.

The accompanying board indicates the education by religion, sex, and locality, number per mille who were literate. 18

Table-1.2: Education by religion, sex, and locality, number per mille who were literate.

Districts	Muslims	Hindus	Sikhs	Christians
	M/F	M/F	M/F	M/F
Hazara	17-1	392-41	321-59	858-676
Peshawar	27-1	340-124	450-180	915-616
Kohat	28-1	330-21	578-67	818-730
Bannue	22	351-13	572-90	603-639
DeraIsmail Khan	32-1	442-44	465-109	834-683

Source: Census of India 1911, Vol XIII, P.188

Granting to the census report of 1911, only 25 males could fulfill the criteria of literacy, out of every 1000 individuals. ¹⁹ The next decade

noticed improved figures of 25 to 43. The inhabitants were more inclined towards the sword than the pen. As shown by the 1911, census report as, ".... Has always despised education as fit only for Hindus and cowards. He had little need for spelling, but much for swordsmanship, and if the *Hamsaya neighbor* of an alien creed, whom he employed to look after his money matters, cheated him so flagrantly that even his ignorant master could not overlook it, there was short "shrift" for the accountant, and a fresh start was made with a clean sheet". ²⁰

The significant approach towards agriculture was another case of low literacy, as there was no need of literate individuals in it.²¹ The secular nature of education and course content also made the people detached from interest towards getting their kids educated²². Poverty was another strong agent, boys were considered economic assets, and thus were attractive towards small wages. Another cause of the slowness was the pre-existing illiteracy, as; it is directly proportional to illiteracy. The rivalries amongst Pakhtuns was also the main obstacle towards establishment of schools.²³

The above table also indicated a more significant literacy ratio of the Sikh community. It is believed that the high proportion of literacy amongst Sikhs was due to the fact that Sikhs picked up rudimentary Gurumukhi for the purpose of reading the scriptures. It was adverse in the case of the Pakhtuns, to whom, Hindi and Urdu, both were foreign languages.²⁴

Since, Islam was central to the society of the province, the role of religious leaders was as much, significant, too. They included the *Mullah*, *Sufis*, *Pirs*, *Sayeds*, *and Mians*. A great variation was observed in the sacred opinion of these institutional powers. Many of them were against

the modern education²⁵. Since, they have a strong hold in the society, their sayings, were obeyed.

When the NWFP was formed in 1901, there were three kinds of educational institutions: private schools, community gifted schools and local board schools.²⁶

According to Progress of Education in India, 1897-98_ 1901-02, Government of India "In NWFP the government does not manage any schools and colleges. The 17 secondary schools and 135 primary schools which are under public management are all maintained by Municipal and local Boards. There are also 11 secondary and 27 primary schools under private management. The former receives grants mainly from provincial Revenues: the latter from provincial, local boards and municipal funds in nearly equal proportion".²⁷

Educational institutions were divided amongst following categories according to the Gazetteer of the district Peshawar 1901-02.²⁸

- 1. Public Schools
- 2. Private Institutions
- 3. Indigenous schools
- 4. Native institutions of western type
- 5. Aided Institutions

The private schools or indigenous schools were set up by three main communities, the Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs. The Muslims established their Mosque schools, Maktabs and Madrassas. In Maktabs the Maulvis and Imams taught chiefly the Quran by rote, taking no fees from the pupils. In madrassas, instruction was confined to the teaching of Arabic and Persian. Girls also attended schools where the Holy Quran was taught to them by the wives of men who were teachers by profession.

The Hindus had their Patshalas and the Sikhs their Gurumukhi schools: instruction in both was confined mainly to sacred scriptures. They also maintained mahajani schools where commercial instruction was imparted to students. The private schools could not draw any attention of the government, particularly those schools that were imparting religious instructions. In 1901, there were 927 private schools (indigenous) in the settled districts with 13,636 pupils.²⁹

The aided and government schools were divided into two main categories, primary and secondary, the latter having middle and high classes. Secondary schools were further classified into Anglo vernacular and Vernacular; according to whether instruction in English did or did not form part of their regular curriculum. High schools were all Anglo-Vernacular, while middle and primary schools were of both kinds. In the Anglo- Vernacular school's emphasis was given to the teaching of English, and in the higher classes, instruction in all subjects was imparted through the medium of English. The high schools had two classes; the middle schools three. The primary school level comprised of two stages: the upper primary with two classes and the lower primary with three classes. More than half of the school- going children did not study beyond the upper primary stage.³⁰

The course of study in the secondary schools was the same as those prescribed for them in Punjab. In the Anglo- Vernacular middle schools, the curriculum consisted of vernacular languages, English, arithmetic, history, geography, mensuration, elementary science and drawing; geometry and algebra were optional. The same course was taught in the vernacular middle schools with the difference that the English did not form part of the curriculum. The high schools prepared students for the matriculation examination of the Punjab University.³¹

In 1901-02, there were 154 primary schools for boys in the province, of which 131 were maintained by local Boards, 16 were aided, and 7 unaided. These primary schools enrolled 7,365 students.

The 1901 census report shows, that the Muslim community was the most backward in education, amongst three main communities, the Hindu and Sikh. Though, they were 92 percent of the total population in 1901, from among its, the percentage of boys attending any kind of educational institution was only 11.7 compared with 36.3 and 22.3 percent in the case of Hindus and Sikhs, respectively.³²

There were Khalsa schools run by the Sikh community which were established before 1912³³. The Islamia College Peshawar had been established in 1913 under the co-auspices of Sahibzada Abdul Qayum (1863-1937) and Rose Keppel (1866-1921). However, the system of education which excelled in quality and quantity in the entire region were, those of the Anjuman-i- islahul Afaghina, 134 according to Wiqar Ali Shah (2008)³⁴, 67 to Dr. Abdur Rauf-(2007)³⁵, 87 to Sadiq Jarhak 2012³⁶, 92 to Fazlur Rahim Marwat-1996³⁷. But the archival records, personal sources and other secondary sources have confirmed this number as103 till this day.³⁸

1.2 Education in Swat state

The effectiveness and fame of the schools of the Anjuman-i-Islahul Afaghina spread over to other areas like the one in the state of Swat, the very first school in the state, was also established by the Anjuman.

According to the Dr. Sultan-i- Room the areas that were attached to the state of swat were deprived of formal education before the partition of the subcontinent. The situation was same as was in NWFP. The tribal territory was also suffering during the British Raj. The modern approach of education was not travelling through these valleys, as it was the buffer

zone. The Geo strategic position of the area also made it a zone of negligence in education. A small proportion of the population was enjoying the indigenous education which was, too, of religious worth. There was no movement of education from the government, unlike, other parts of the province. Nor was there any public interest shown to send and educate their children outside their state. The statements of Mian Gul Abdulwadood and Mian Gul Jehanzeb also show that there was complete illiteracy in the state. However, the letters between the British Raj and the state owners show that there were rare knowledgeable persons of oriental languages like Persian and Arabic.

Mian Gul Abdul Wadood, illiterate himself, knew the importance of education in the affairs of the state.

1.3 The School of Maulana Fazli Mehmood Makhfi

The first ever school, that was established in the state of Swat, was that of Fazli Mehmood Makhfi on the eve of Anjuman-i- Islahul Afaghina movement. This school was established in March 1922. In the intelligence reports of the British regime, it was blamed that faction of the Balveshk movement had found in the area by Makhfi. It was the Russian organization, and the Indian chapter was headed by him, according to the extracts from intelligence. It was operated by Maulvi Ubaidullah and Ahmed Hassan. The report said, "The movement is led by Makhfi of Balveshak ideas. His intention is to open schools in the whole tribal areas. It is learnt from different sources that three such like schools are already being established, two in Bajaur and one in Swat. Education is free in these schools. The education will be imparted like the Irish method of ten fain, where the students will receive history and other amended subjects.

The inculcation of hatred towards the British, be given in these schools, so as to spread amongst tribes".

Maulvi Abdul Aziz was very near to Mr. Abdul Wadood. Maulvi. Abdul Aziz was the companion of Bacha Khan's educational movement in the settled districts of Peshawar valley. It can be concluded by his close relation with Abdul Wadood that a school was formed well before 1922.⁴⁰

The formation of Aitchison College, Lahore, Edwards and Islamia College Peshawar like institutions, were the direct intentions of the Britishers to win the sympathy of the elite class. According to Singh, R (1989), after 1857 when India was brought under the direct control of the British royalty and parliament, some serious thought was given to providing higher and better education to a class of people whose sympathy it was necessary to win in the political interests of the Britishers.⁴¹

The Edwards Mission High school and college was established in 1855 for the purpose of missionaries. In 1853, Lord Dalhousie appointed Major Herbert Edwards as commissioner Peshawar division. He was a deeply pious Christian. Edwards in his speech remarked.⁴²

"It is, of course, incumbent upon us to be prudent; to lay stress upon the selection of discreet men for missionaries; to begin quietly with schools, and wait the proper time for preaching."

The students were attracted towards the school, as the number reached to 219 from 90, by the year 1861. The school received Rs. 240 annually as grant in aid from the government. The school was raised to the status of a high in 1883-84 and the number of students increased to 500. In 1872, a boarding house was established for the Pathans of good families.

Other missionary schools were started in DI Khan, Bannu and Nowshera in 1872-73. Of them, the successful one was that of D.I. Khan. The famous Darul Uloom Sarhad- the Islamia collegiate school was

established in 1911, by two renowned scholars, Sir George Ross Keppal and Sahibzada Abdul Qayum Khan. It was upgraded to college in 1913. The main purpose of the establishment of Islamia College, as framed by Ross Keppel, is to keep tribal and influential Pathans, quite. 43

In 1890, the Anjuman-i-Himayat Islam opened a primary school in a tenanted building in Peshawar city.⁴⁴ The Anjuman members collected Rs. 4000 subscriptions and purchased land for the school. The building was established in 1905. It was named as Islamia School. The school is now, called as GHSS No. 3 Peshawar city.

The civil society of the Peshawar cantonment established, Frontier high school in 1910. The president of the organizing committee was Deputy Commissioner Peshawar. The school was nationalized in 1950 and named as GHS No 2 Peshawar Cantt. 45

A Hindu Seth PT Gardhari Lal Salwan, established a primary school in missionary style in 1895. It was nationalized after 1947, and it is called GHS Salwan now a days. Former Pakistan president, Gen, Mohammad Zia ul Haq remained a student over here. 46

The church missionary society started a school for girls in 1908. It was named as 'Elizbeth School. It was established in Dabgari Garden near the mission Hospital. Perhaps, it was the first girls' school in the province. The missionary society also established Saint John Cathedral School, for the children of their servants. It was initiated in 1904 in the area of Lalkurthi. 47

The National High school, Peshawar was established on 5th June, 1895. The building was constructed by Roose Kepel in 1913 during his premiership of the Province.⁴⁸ It was shifted to the new building in 1916. A hall of 80× 40 feet is named after him. The new name is Government Centennial Model School Peshawar city, formerly known as GHS No 2,

Peshawar city. The Government High school, Peshawar was established before 1888. It is called GHSS No 1, Peshawar city now a days. However, the inaugural board fixed in front of the school, shows the year of establishment, as 1927. 49

Conclusion

The Muslims populated province of N.W.F.P was the most backward province in education in the entire India. The inhabitants of the province, mostly Pashtuns, were ignored in education by the Britishers, due to their geo- strategic location. It was the gateway of the invasions, so there must be no or low resistance in the strategic way of it, which needed illiterate subordinates. Their energies were diverted towards other social multiplicities, detached them from trade, commerce, business and decision making stakeholder ship. Several primary schools in the province were offered to be established after successful participation of the villagers in the World War 1.

The Pakhtuns, as a nation, is very passive in combating with collective efforts, did not materialize the situation, as was deemed, as far as education was concerned in the early decades of the twentieth century. The other three communities, Christians, Hindus and Sikhs, individually and collectively, generously participated in establishing schools of their own desires. The education lovers Muslims, too, benefited from those schools.

The mode of education at the time, offered to produce servants to the government. For the purpose, most of them were picked during the education, either in 5th grade or above. Education was forcibly, as a discontinuation, did not sparkle the self-esteem and self- realization, hence the purpose was dipped.

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