

## INTER-TRIBAL LINKAGES BETWEEN DIR AND AFGHANISTAN: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

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### Abstract

*This paper attempts to trace the origin of the linkages between the tribes of Dir and Afghanistan. The tribes of Dir shared and continue sharing linkages of history, culture, ethnicity, origin and religion with Afghanistan. The tribes after migration from Afghanistan, developed a tradition of mutual cooperation and help in the face of any external threat. The Afghan government resisted the arrival of Sikhs in the Pakhtun areas with the help of these tribes. Likewise, Afghanistan extended help to these tribes in all their battles against British and this cooperation continued even after the establishment of Pakistan. Reciprocally, when Afghanistan was invaded in 1979 and then in 2001, thousands of tribesmen crossed over to Afghanistan to fight alongside the Afghans against the invading forces. While reviewing the relevant literature a continuous historical trend of mutual cooperation was noticed between the tribes of Dir and Afghanistan. Despite living in British India and then in Pakistan for a long time, why the tribes of Dir are not properly assimilated? And what are the factors which impel them to turn to Kabul, are the questions the paper attempts to answers by using historical sources.*

**Key Words:** Tribes, Linkages, Dir, Afghanistan, Mutual cooperation.

### Introduction

Located at the very edge of North-Western part of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, the State of Dir covered an area of 5,280 Km (Shahid, 2007) and was merged with Pakistan on 28 July 1969. The District Dir was sub-divided into Upper and Lower Dir districts in 1996 (Sultani-Rome, 2012). The Pakhtun tribes currently inhabiting Dir share a common religion, ethnicity, history and culture with the tribes across the Durand Line. These linkages owe its existence to the shared territory, Afghanistan, where they lived together for a long time. These tribes migrated to Dir and surrounding areas during the second half of the fifteen century. Despite their migration, they kept their linkages with tribes and government across the border intact (Habib, 2003).

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Mindful of their affinities, the tribes and rulers of Dir state cultivated cordial relation with Afghanistan. Although Dir, for most of its history had been at daggers drawn with its neighboring states of Swat and Chitral but no such evidence of animosity is available against Afghanistan. The study of the available literature reveals that after their migration the tribes developed a tradition of cooperation and assistance with Afghanistan particularly at the time of crisis. They mutually cooperated in all their conflicts with the Sikhs and British (SurrIDGE, 2008). This tradition of cooperation continued even after the merger of Dir state with Pakistan. In the same manner, when Afghanistan was invaded and went into political quagmire the tribes of Dir reciprocated by helping them. The tribesmen of Dir in a large number fought alongside the Afghan fighters against Soviet forces and later joined the Taliban against the US-led NATO forces (Khan N. I., 2010).

### **Migration of the Pakhtun Tribes from Afghanistan and Settlement in Dir**

Most of the Pakhtun tribes presently in possession of the area north of Peshawar up to Dir migrated from Afghanistan. The story of their migration from Afghanistan dates back to the reign of Mirza Ulegh Beg (r.1469-1502) (Samrin, 2007). The Pakhtun tribes, Yusufzai, Mandanr, Tarkalani and Gigyani, collectively known as Khakhi khel or Khashi khel, belong to Sarban who had three sons, i.e. Kand, Zamand and Kasi and Kand had in turn two sons, Khakhi and Ghauri. The other Afghan tribes being Baitan, Ghurghusht and Karlan. The original habitat of the Sarbani Pakhtun tribes i.e. Khakhy Khel and Ghoriah Khel, was Qandahar, a southern province of the present Afghanistan, where they resided side by side for centuries. However, in early 14<sup>th</sup> century quarrel arose between Khakhy Khel and Ghoriah Khel, which ultimately led to the uprooting and departure of Khakhy Khel section of Sarbanri tribe from Qandahar in the direction of north towards Kabul (Caroe, 1958).

These tribes started living in the suburbs of Kabul and raised cattle and cultivated the valleys. Yousuf and Mandanr were more powerful and numerically superior as compared to other sub sections. Meerza Abu Saeed was the Timuride ruler and had delegated the governorship of Kabul to his son, Ulugh Beg. At first Ulugh Beg was on friendly terms with Khakhi Khel and these Afghan tribes had succoured on several occasions. Nonetheless, later the Yusufzais turned recalcitrant and declined to obey him openly. And once they fought him and Mirza was routed as they were greatly numerous and powerful at that time (Shah, 1972).

Once again on the pretext of a peace treaty Ulugh Beg invited them and when the Yusufzai chiefs were assembled, the secretly kept armed men fell upon them. Malik Sulaiman Shah, the chief of tribe implored him to spare his nephew, Malik Ahmad and that spare their children and women so that they may migrate without molestation to some safe haven. Ulugh Beg yielded and consented but all the other persons numbering from 600 to 900 were massacred. The mass grave is still visited and the place is known as Siah Sang, lying in the vicinity of Kabul. This mass grave, also known as Shaheedano Qabar, contains the corpse of Sheikh Usman Malizi and until recently members of his clan from Dir used to visit that tomb. Probably, this gruesome incident occurred in 1480-87.A.D. (Shah, 1972).

After this holocaust, in extreme agony the Yousafzais headed towards Peshawar which was in possession of Dalazaks including the valley till Bajaur. After reaching Peshawar in 1480s, wrecked and exhausted they requested Dalazaks for support and a land for dwelling. Kind enough, the Dalazaks assigned to them the fertile land of Doaba, including land up to Bajaur. They were further advised to acquire for themselves the plan land of Charsadda which was under the occupation of Dehqans, the subjects of Jahangiri ruler of Swat. Due to chaotic political situations, the other sections of Sarbanri line left behind Khakhey Khel, Muhammazais, Tarkalanri, Gigiani and Ghoriah Khel which includes Khalil, Mohmman and Daudzai, had found themselves in hot water. They also migrated and joined Yousafzai. Given the reinforcement of Khakhey confederacy, Ahmad Khan, the chief of Yusufzai tribe allotted them land in the newly acquired area. Buying up this tribal support, Yusufzai got recurrent successes by occupying the whole area north of Peshawar up to Dir (Caroe, 1958). In 1523, during a grand meeting of the notaries of all the Khakhi khel, framed laws and regulations and distributed the acquired lands among sub-tribes. It is known as Sheikh Malli Daftar (Shah P. M., 1972: 203).

### **Allied Tribes of Yusufzais in Dir**

Following in the wake of Yusufzais some other tribes also migrated from Afghanistan and got settled in Dir alongside the Yusufzais.

### ***Uthman Khel***

This is the fourth largest Pakhtun tribe of Kodai branch of the Karlanri lineage. The original habitat of Uthman Khel tribe was located in North West of Suleiman range at Kandahar, Afghanistan. However, they accompanied Yusufzais in their migration to Kabul and then to Peshawar. Despite their closeness in lineage with Dalazaks who are

their Karlanris kinsmen, the Uthman Khel sided with Yousafzais and defeated them (Caroe, 1958). During Yusufzai's occupation of the whole area from Doaba till Dir and Swat, the Uthman Khel remained their allies. Consequently, in Shiekh Mali's distribution of lands, the Uthman Khels were allotted the barren lands of Arang Barang, Agra (Malakand), and Kohi Barmul. Thereafter, they remained completely independent and paid tribute to no one. (Branch, 2018). Following are the major clans of Uthman khel tribe who are still not only possessing the land allotted to them but have moved to the adjoining areas as well.

1. Ismailzai 2. Gorai 3. Mandal 4. Peghozai 5. Alizai 6. Bimmarai
7. Mutakki 8. Sinazai

Instead of a particular area, Uthman khels are scattered in the whole of Dir. The cause of their migration from Arang Barag to Dir is partly due to the infertility and barrenness of their land and partly due to infighting and animosities among the families. They are currently settled in Dir from Malala, Makhai Dara, to Lajbok Dara, which include the areas of Shantai Dara, Malakand Dara, and Islam Dara. They are living in these areas as a tenants of Yusufzais or have bought these land (Shahid, 2007).

### ***Wardag and Mashwani***

They both are Pakhtun tribes who consider themselves as sayyids, descending from Syed Muhammad Gisu Daraz (having long locks). The original habitat of Wardag tribe in Afghanistan was Barmal Ghar of Suliman mountain range. Wardag tribe migrated along Yusufzais and accompanied them in their battle against the Dalazaks. Among the sons of wardag Baba, the descendants of Mayar increased and became clans such as Malak Yar khel, Khuram Khel, Aden Khel and Mesri Khel. On account of their services, they were allotted land in Kalpanri area of Buner along Daulatzai tribe, in Jandul and Barawal in Dir along Malizi tribe while in Swat they were allotted some land along Babuzai tribe. Presently, in Dir they are settled from Barawal to Jandul, Dir proper, Rabat, and Dapur Maidan. Majority of the Wardag are still settled in Afghanistan (Shahid, 2007).

Similarly, among the eight sons of Mashwan Baba, the descendents of Taghmaz increased and became a clan which is further divided into four branches namely Kesorr, Mohmand, Badur and Tarak. In Dir, apart from their presence in Dara Barawal to Jandul, Mashwanis are settled in Dir proper, Rabat, Dapur (Maidan). They are also located in Srikot, Kundi amarkhan, and Gadwalia. Besides that, Uthmanzai, a sub tribe of Mandnr allotted them the area of Koh-i-kangro. Majority of the Mashwani are still settled in Afghanistan.

***Tajak***

Tajak is one of the non-Pakhtun tribes that migrated along others from Afghanistan to Dir. After Uthman Khel, it is the second largest tribe residing in Dir. Muhammad Ameen, the ancestor of Tajak tribe of Dir is buried in the Sattara village of Maidan from where the tribe sprung and got settled in different parts of Dir. Following are the main branches of Tajik tribe in Dir.

Degaan, Marezai, Haji Khel, Akhun Khel

In Dir, they are settled in areas such as Adenzai, Asbanr, Talash, Timargara, Balambat, Malakand, Jandul and Barawal. Tajak, is one of the major non-Pakhtun races presently inhabiting Afghanistan (Ramsay, 1991).

***Shenwari***

The ancestor of the Shenwari tribe inhabiting Dir, was one Fakhru-Din, buried in the Sarkhrud area of Afghanistan. The tribe has sprung from that very place in Afghanistan. Fakhru Islam, one of the sons of Faru-Din, on the advice of his father visited Madina and Baghdad for getting religious education. He went on to become one of the respected and famous mystic of this tribe. He is also reverentially known as Sheikh Baba. The Shenwaris of Dir are the descendants of Muhammad Ilyas, the son of Sheikh Baba. The original village of the Shenwaris of Dir is Ghwargi from where they gradually spread in the whole of Dir. Presently, they can be found in Barun, Munjai, Kad, Jarando Dheri, and Hajiabad. On account of their population, Shenwari is one of the smallest tribe of Dir (Shahid, 2007).

***Quresh (Saddat)***

Two tribes of the Quresh are settled in Dir. The tribe located in Uch, Talash, Maidan, Kotigram and Ramora, are related to the offspring of Hazrat Fatma (RA). While those living in Batkhela, Moha, and Usheri Dara claim to be the descendent of Hazrat Abu Bakr (RA). Their progenitor Mullah Abdul Qayum had migrated from Kabul to Dir and settled in Usheri Dara (Ramsay, 1991).

Apart from Saddat, there are a large number of Miagaan, the children of religious and pious men. They include Benori Miagan, who are the children of the famous religious Alim, Hazrat Benor and settled in Adenzai, Chakdara and the surrounding areas. Besides that, Akhun Darweza Miagaan, are the offspring of the famous religious Akhun Darweza. Their forefathers had migrated from Nangrahar Afghanistan to Dir. They are located in Danwa village of Dir (lower) (Khan K. R., 1986).

***Syeds, the Offspring of Pir Baba (Syed Ali Shah Tirmizi)***

Pir Baba belonged to a Syed family of Qundoz, Afghanistan. In search of religious knowledge he had come to Ajmer Sharif, and after completing his education, he moved to Buner for the purpose of spreading the religious education among the people. He passed away there and his tomb is located in Buner.

The Syeds of Dir are the Children of Mustafa, the son of Pir Baba who is buried in the Kunar Province of Afghanistan (Khan, 1986). They are currently located in Mian Kali, Kambat, Timargara, Mian Banda, Rabat, Gandegar, Barawal, Ganorai, Dir (proper), Maidan, Kumbar, and Takatak (Shahid, 2007).

**The Relationship between the Tribes of Dir and Afghanistan**

Ahmad Shah Durrani (b. 1722- d. 1772), a cavalry general under Nadir Shah Afshar (b. 1688- d. 1747), founded the modern state of Afghanistan in 1747. He integrated the area up to Kashmir in East, Indian Ocean in South and Amu Darya in the North, into his empire (Lally, 2018). But the Durrani emperor made no serious effort to bring the Yusufzai country under his direct administrative control. They made allegiance to Ahmad Shah, for his prestige of being an Afghan and founder of a new Afghan state. He exercised great influence over the whole of eastern Pakhtun tribes. But Ahmad Shah never sought to subject to his direct administrative control the tribes of Dir and Swat and instead adopted a policy of matrimonial alliances with tribal Maliks. He caused each tribe to calculate its military strength roughly for his army. Moreover, he distributed Jagirs among Yusufzais and through the grant of services in the army enriched these tribes (Caroe, 1958). This policy enabled Ahmad Shah to overcome the dangers which had threatened to submerge even the armies of Nadir Shah Afshar. He had failed twice to capture Lahore but when the Yusufzais of Dir and other Pakhtun tribes threw in their lot with him, he succeeded in 1749. The Yusufzais had also played a prominent role in the third battle of Panipat against Marathas in 1761 (Caroe, 1958).

After the death of Ahmad Shah, his son, Taimur Shah Durrani, proclaimed himself as Amir of Afghanistan in 1773 (Huma Qayun, 2017). He followed the policy of his father by making alliances through marriages with various tribes, and Yusufzais was one of the prominent tribe among them. During Taimur's reign, the tribes of Dir paid their tribute regularly. For which they were not subjected to any additional taxes and were enjoying maximum autonomy. Following the death of their father in 1793, Zaman Shah and Shah Shuja, the sons of Taimur's favourite Yusufzai wife became his successors. Yusufzai tribe tried to sustain the weakening cause of Taimur sons, to whom loyalty of

Yusufzais tribe was due through his mother. The Yusufzais twice assisted militarily Shah Shuja in regaining the throne of Kabul in 1801 but failed (Ramsay, 1991).

### **The Role of Eastern Tribes in Afghan Wars with Sikhs**

The Sikh army had started their forays into Peshawar in 1818 and by 1836 had subjugated the Eastern Pakhtun tribes (Caroe, 1958). During the same period, Dost Muhammad Khan, founder of the Barakzai dynasty, supplanted the Durrani and became the king of Afghanistan in 1826. The presence of Sikhs at Jamrud had caused great concern to Dost Muhammad Khan, which was a prelude to expansion into Jalalabad. He cultivated close ties with the Eastern Pakhtun tribes. Mirza Sami Khan, an able minister of the Afghan Amir was deputed to organise resistance with the help of local Pakhtun tribes. All the five sons of Amir Dost Mohammad Khan headed this lashkar. Mir Alam Khan of Bajaur, Saadat Khan Mohmand of Lalpura, were to engage the Sikh garrison of Sardar Lehna Singh Sindianwala at Doaba and Hashtnagar. Similarly, he had invited the cooperation of Abdul Ghaffur, known as Akhund of Swat, against the Sikhs in 1829. Owing to his popularity as a religious person, Akhund had a large following of devotees in the Pakhtun tribes of Dir, Swat and Bajaur. Akhund headed a large contingent of Yusufzais and joined Dost Muhammad at Sheikhan village near Bara. However, in spite of the united front of Pakhtun tribes and saintly presence of Akhund, the Sikhs came out victorious (Ramsay, 1991).

In 1823, the battle of Nowshera, commonly known as battle of Naukhar (Pirsabak), was fought against the Sikhs in which Azeem Khan, the brother of Dost Muhammad Khan was leading the Afghan forces. In this battle, 20,000 Yusufzais from Sama up to Dir had participated under Akbar Shah, where majority of the Yusufzais were killed while fighting valiantly. Whereas Azeem Khan and his forces went back to Afghanistan unharmed (Rashid, 2002).

Similarly, during the Great Game between Russia and England, the Russian advanced from Merv hundred miles towards Pajandeh and defeated the Afghan forces in 1885. A mission from Dir, Swat and Buner under Muhammad Qasim and Ahmad Khan went to Kabul and offered their services to Amir Abdur Rehman for Jihad against the foreign invaders. Similar delegates from other Eastern Afghan tribes approached the Amir but he turned down all with thanks (Marwat, 1997).

### **British Arrival in Malakand Agency and Malakand Ghaza (Holy War)**

Till the arrival and occupation of area by the British, neither their migrations nor the suzerainties of British had brought any fundamental changes in the mode of life of the tribes nor had their identities been drifted away. Common language, religion, code of life and contingency of lands and hills had kept them intact and identical. Memories may have receded but the common folklore kept them alive to their same identity. Durand Line had not severed the ties between the tribes as until recently crossing and re-crossing of it by the tribes for social functions like marriage and death of the kin was a routine phenomenon (Ramsay, 1991). The Pakhtun tribes of Dir and adjacent areas strongly resisted every encroachment in their area of any outside force. They frustrated the attempts of Mughal emperors to bring the Yusufzai country under their direct control. In the same way, with the help of Afghan government, they opposed the arrival of British in their area and remained a constant source of tension for them. The instructions and assistance from Kabul to rulers and Maliks of Dir state, continued even after the creation of Pakistan (Caroe, 1958).

British under the agreements of Amritsar and Lahore took possession of the frontier territory from Sikhs in 1849 (Caroe, 1958). British observed that there was a strong nexus between the Eastern Pakhtun tribes and Afghanistan, crossing border was continual, and both socially and economically the people seemed as one. Due to undetermined border, the Afghan ruler claimed the allegiance of Eastern Afghan tribes. The British, therefore, developed a mechanism for dealing with these tribes. They appointed Deputy Commissioners, each officer was made responsible to deal with the tribes bordering his district on his own. (Baha, 2017). The direct British involvement in the remote land of Dir was partially due to the conduct of the tribes and partly to counter the Russian advances in to Pamir region (Caroe, 1958).

### **Afghan Allowances and Majibs to Local Maliks**

Before the British entry into Malakand Division in 1895, it was a routine of the tribal chiefs of Dir, Swat and Bajaur to pay visits to Kabul, where they would receive grants of money from the Amir and participated in Jashn-i-Nauroz (New Year Celebrations). The Khan of Nawagai, Safdar Khan, received huge amount of about 13,000 annually, whereas small allowances were paid to headmen in Dir and Swat which continued even after the British arrival in the area (Caroe, 1958).



After the demarcation of Durand Line, the number of allowances were decreased but to some important men the payment continued. The notables who continuously received the grants included Haji Mir Zaman, a Shamozaï Uthman Khel, who received 2000 to 35,00 Kabuli per annum and the Khan of Jhar, Fateh Muhammad Khan, received 2000 per annum. In 1895, Adam Khan, Arbab Khan and other notables from Malakand visited Afghanistan and applied to Amir for renewal of their allowances (Ramsay, 1991).

Besides that, there were several men from Dir who due to family feuds or other reasons had migrated to Afghanistan, they had been obliged by offering maintenance and received kind treatment from the Amir. The most important among the migrated families were that of the Umara Khan, the ruler of Jandul. Moreover, the brother of the Nawab of Dir, Inayatullah Khan, also migrated and resided in Kabul and received allowances 6000 per annum. Apart from the grants, the Afghan government had hired many men as Afghan spies and News writers in Dir, Swat and Bajaur (Asar, 2017).

### **Umara Khan's Attack of British Army**

Umara Khan (1860-1903), the son of Aman Khan was a courageous man who fought odd ends and has preserved his name in the annals of history. Umara Khan, succeeded in occupying throne of Jandul in 1880 (Younghusband, 1910). After establishing himself at Jandul, Umara Khan turned his attention towards Dir. By that time Muhammad Sharif Khan ruled Dir as Khan of Dir. After completing preparations, he attacked Dir at the head of a large army. He defeated and expelled Sharif Khan and incorporated Dir state into his rule (Shahid, 2007).

Umara Khan had personal relations with Afghan King Abdur-Rehman. One of the daughter of Umara Khan had been betrothed to Nasrullah Khan, the son of King. The English Government of India was looking with great anxiety and potential repercussion to this relationship. And in order to wean the family of King from siding with Umara Khan, Nasrullah was invited by Queen Victoria of England, to participate in the annual Golden Jubilee celebrations, as a trick of diplomacy (Ramsay, 1991).

When the war between Russia and England was imminent in 1885, the British Indian government despatched a mission to Chitral via Gilgit. The mission after spending one year in Chitral was successful in establishing closer ties with Mehtar of Chitral. From then onward the British communicated with Chitral state from Gilgit side through Shandur pass. The shortest route through Dir over Lowari pass into Chitral was unknown to the British. In 1895, the Chitral relief

campaign, however, necessitated the British intervention in Dir (Caroe, 1958). In 1895, Umara khan of Dir had besieged British officers in Chitral. The British at Chitral, Gilgit and Peshawar issued warnings to Umara khan but he ignored them and continued the siege of Chitral fort which had started on March 3, 1895. This made the Chitral relief campaign necessary. While most of the British officials had no information of the impending despatch of force against Umara khan until 11 March, the Amir of Afghanistan and Hadda Mullah, and all the tribes knew very well about it (Thomson, 2012).

The British before dispatching the force made a proclamation to the tribes informing them of the causes of their passage through their area to Chitral. In alliance with Sharif Khan, the former ruler of Dir, the British brigades from Mardan marched to Dir against Umara Khan. On their way, they were attacked in Thana, Chakdara and Munda by the local people. On March 17<sup>th</sup>, the British forces entered Jandul, where in Munda a final engagement took place and on the following night Umara khan fled to Afghanistan. In all the engagements with Umara Khan's forces, the British observed that Afghan soldiers in uniforms were present and most of them were killed (Thomson, 2012).

On entering the Munda fort, the British found the letters sent by Afghan government promising military assistance to Umara khan against the British. Hadda Mullah and Afghan officials were doing their best to induce the tribes against the British throughout the campaign. The Afghan Amir allotted land to Umara Khan where he lived till his death in 1903. Before his death, the rumours of Umara Khan's return with the support of Amir to Jandul were of daily occurrence. Following this episode, the Malakand Agency or the Agency of Dir, Swat and Chitral was formed by the British. The history of Frontier revolt of 1897 reveals how the Agency was used by the Afghan officials (Younghusband, 1910).

### **The Role of Afghanistan in the Frontier Uprising of 1897**

The tribes of Dir and Bajaur were more cognizant of the outside events than before and the reason was that Amir Abdur-Rehman (r.1880-1901) was influencing the affairs of the Frontier. Tribal delegations were frequently invited to Kabul, troops had been kept near border and provocative pamphlets were distributed. On the directives of Afghan Amir, Hadda Mullah in Mohmand Agency, Palam Mullah in Dir, and Mullah Mastan in Swat, declared Jihad against the British in the area. The vitriolic teachings of these Mullahs had made aware the tribes of the distant new worlds (Churchill, 1898).

The centre of the uprising was Malakand and Mohmand Agency, but the intensity with which it had been started, the whole

tribal and surrounding areas also felt the tremors of this revolt against the British. For the priestly classes, so many in this country, Malakand Agency proved to be a launching pad for fostering any fanatical or political intrigue (Churchill, 1898). The revolt had been started on the advice and instruction from the Afghan Amir, the British held the following religious leaders responsible for the initiation of uprising in the North West Frontier. According to the British chronicles the principal instigator of the uprising of 1897, was Hadda Mullah (Najim-ud-Din), who belonged to a village, Hadda in Jalalabad. As a disciple of the Akhund of Swat, he had shifted from there with Amir's covert consent to wage Jihad against the British. He had a large following in Dir, Bajaur, Swat, Asmar, and Jalalabad and was residing at Chmarkand, in Bajaur. The Afghan Amir, Habibullah was one among his devoted followers (Fakhrul-Islam, 2017).

The most important religious person in Dir in 1897 was Palam Baba, who had been dwelling at a village, Palam near Darora. Palam Baba was basically a native of Afghanistan and a devoted follower of Hadda Mullah. He missed no opportunity of pouring invective upon the British and always preached a vehemently anti-British sermon. He supported Sadullah, popularly known as Mullah Mastan or Sartor faqir in his struggle against the British. In the spring of 1897, Hadda Mullah had made great endeavours to bring about a simultaneous uprising in alliance with Mullah Mastan, the Mianguls of Saidu, and Said Akbar of Tirah against the British. However, disappointed with failure of other Mullahs to start Jihad, Mullah Mastan raised the standard of Jihad and swept down on Malakand. He took the British by surprise and provided some of sternest and hardest fighting the British had known on the North West Frontier (Marwat, 1997). During the revolt of 1897, Palam Mullah prepared the people of Dir in favour of Mullah Mastan and Hadda Mullah against the British. Besides that, there were numerous other religious leaders who worked for Afghan government against the British. To deal with the rebellious tribes, the British government had deployed 40,000 to 75,000 troops to the tribal area (Marwat, 1997).

Similarly during the Third Anglo-Afghan war, the support of the Eastern Pakhtun tribes was sought by the Afghan government. In 1919, Nadir Khan was made Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C), who convened meetings of the tribal which was attended by leading Maliks from North West Frontier. He, to a great extent had succeeded in forging unity amongst the Eastern tribes against the British (Rashid, 2002). Nadir Khan believed that due to Afghanistan's proximity with Soviet Union, the only option was to be friendly with them and on the other hand, in case of any threat from British India the Eastern tribes

could be used as the main defence weapon against them. (Rashid, 2002).

### **Tribal Contacts with Afghanistan after Independence of Pakistan**

After the creation of Pakistan in 1947, in order to gain support for Pakhtunistan, King Zahir shah increased his influence on the tribes and Mullahs of tribal area of Pakistan. The Afghan government established contacts with leading Malikis so that tribes could be used against Pakistan. On the other hand, keeping in view the past influence of Afghan Government over the Pakhtun tribes, the Indian government utilised Afghanistan's services to destabilise Pakistan. They supported and financed the Afghan claim of independent Pakhtunistan. With Indian support, the Afghan government started an intensive propaganda dubbing Pakistan as a British puppet and India as a legitimate country. Moreover, it stated that for gaining independence, India was ready to help the Pakhtun tribes by providing loans to be distributed amongst them (Rashid, 2002).

### **Nawab of Dir and Khan of Jandul, Allowances and Majibs**

To keep the Khans of Bajaur in his hand and to encourage them to work for Afghan government, the Nawab of Dir, Shah Jehan, distributed money and paid regular allowances to the Khan of Pashat, Nawagai, Khar and Kota including Uthman Khel tribes. In 1960s, all the Khans of Bajaur worked under the instructions of Afghan government. To keep the situation in favour of Afghanistan in Bajaur, the Afghan government paid in cash and arms to the Nawab of Dir (Rashid, 2002).

### **Afghan Army Enters Bajaur and Pakistani Forces repulse them**

For connecting Khar, headquarter of Bajaur with Munda, a road project was started by the government of Pakistan. Shah Jehan, under instruction from Afghanistan instigated the Uthman Khel Shamozaies against the project. On hearing of the tension between the Government of Pakistan and Uthman Khel tribes, the Afghan government moved its forces to Chagha Srai and Asmar. To boost the morale of tribes, Afghan troops infiltrated into Bajaur on 23 September 1960. Sardar Daud twice visited Chagha Srai, where Ghulam Farooq, Governor of the Eastern provinces was conducting the operation against Pakistan. However, Pakistani forces effectively tackled the situation and repulsed the attack (The Heros of Bajaur, 2017).

Immediately after the episode, apprehensions of Nawab of Dir of his removal increased, hence, he turned towards Afghanistan. Shahb-u-Din Khan, the chief of Jandul along with Badshah Gul, a leader of the

Pakhtunistan Movement, secretly visited Afghanistan. They called on Sardar Daud and apprised him of their apprehension. Sardar Daud assured them of their full support in case of clash with the government of Pakistan. However, the Nawab of Dir, Shah Jehan was arrested and taken to Lahore in 1960 (Rashid, 2002).

### **Participation of the People of Dir in Afghan Jihad**

After the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, USA started supporting Mujahideens (Islamists resistance fighters) against the Soviet forces. Later on, Britain, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Pakistan also joined USA in its efforts of training, equipping and funding Mujahideens. In collaboration with USA, training camps were established for them in tribal areas of Pakistan. By combining different Afghan Jihadi factions, a coalition of Mujahideen was formed which was supported by USA in her allies. Apart from Afghans, a countrywide campaign for recruitment of fighters was launched in Pakistan. In partnership with religious political parties and *Ulemas*, this purpose was best served as they easily recruited students from madrassas, schools and colleges for Afghan Jihad (Sial, 2013).

As a result, a large number of tribesmen from Malakand Division had also crossed over to Afghanistan and fought alongside the Mujahideen against the Soviet forces. Tribesmen of Dir under the umbrella of many Jihadi organizations had fought against the Soviet troops and paved the way for their withdrawal from Afghanistan (Maula, 2019).

In the same manner, following the US invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, reviving the old tradition of cooperation with Afghans, Sufi Muhammad under the banner of Tahrik-Nifazi-e-Shariat-e-Muhammadi (TNSM), led a contingent of thousands of tribesmen for Jihad to Afghanistan. They wanted to help the Taliban government against the USA-led NATO forces. However, as majority of them were untrained and poorly equipped, many of them died either in US Air strikes or in fighting against the Northern Alliance (Khan N. I., 2010).

### **Conclusion**

Though, due to historical and cultural affinities, the tribes of Dir kept their relationship intact with Afghanistan. But after the independence of Pakistan, the influence of Afghan government could easily be curtailed as they had got tired of the Nawab's harsh rule. The tribesmen of Dir wanted to have their area developed at par with other districts of the former North West Frontier Province. For that reason, the tribes neither resisted the arrest of Nawab Shah Jehan nor did they protest against the merger of Dir state in Pakistan in 1969. However,

the post-merger extension of an anomalous and defective judicial and administrative structure in the shape of Provincially Administered Tribal Area Regulations and half-hearted efforts of integrating the area further frustrated the people of the area.

Though, it was high time to win the tribal over by introducing effective administration but the extremely tepid response of the government towards problems of the people, left them with no other option but to continue with their old traditions. Moreover, it caused the people to adopt an increasingly radical religio-political stance which culminated in the shape of Tahrik-Nifazi-e-Shariat-e-Muhammadi. While, patriotism could have been created amongst the tribals through administrative reforms which in turn would have discouraged centrifugal tendencies among them. Similarly, the identical ethnicity of the tribesmen on the both sides of the border could have been employed for normalization of relations between the two countries.

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