

## POLITICAL DIMENSIONS OF DIR STATE IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

په تاريخي لحاظ د دير ايالت سياسي اړخونه

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### ABSTRACT:

*The valley of Dir is situated in the North Western part of form North West Frontier Province now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Dir was a princely state and was merged in Pakistan in 1969. History of genesis of Dir state goes backed to the seventeen centuries when a spiritual leader of Malezai clan of Yusufzai tribe Mullah Ilyas known as Akhund Ilyas Baba got political power and became the leader of his clan. Slowly and gradually the surrounding areas came under his suzerainty and his descendants (Mullah Ismail, Khan Ghulam Khan, Khan Zafar Khan, Khan Qasim Khan, Khan Ghazan Khan, Khan Rahmatullah Khan, Khan Muhammad Sharif Khan) ruled the State as Khan till 1890. But in 1890 Umara Khan of Jandul deposed Sharif Khan and ruled the State for five years till 1895. In 1895 Sharif Khan once again became the Khan of Dir with the support of British. In 1897 he was given the title of Nawab and his rule was formally recognized by the British. After him Nawab Aurang Zeb Khan (1904-1924), Nawab Muhammad Shah Jahan Khan (1924-1960) deposed by the government of Pakistan on 8<sup>th</sup> Oct 1960) and Nawab Khisru Shah with nominal powers ruled the state. Society was divided into different factions and every faction had a leader called Khan or Malik. Politically there was complete autocracy in the Dir State and the ruler was all in all. People were not allowed to commence political activities and have no freedom of expression but there was complete peace in the state and no one can challenge the writ of the State. Regarding that circumstances the government of Pakistan deposed Nawab Muhammad Shah Jahan*

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and nominated his son Nawab Muhammad Shah Khirsu as the Nawab but with nominal powers. In 1969 the State was merged into Pakistan and in 1970 it was became the district and became the integral part of NWFP (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa).

**Key words:** Dir State, Nawabs,,Party politics, Dir State Muslim League, Jma'at-e-Islami.

### Geography of Dir

Dir valley is situated in the North Western part of former North West Frontier Province (Imperial Gazetteer of India, 1991, pp. 216-217) now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. (On April 10, 2010, under the 18th amendment in the 1973 constitution of Pakistan the North West Frontier province was renamed as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa., 2010) The valley is surrounded by green lush mountain of Hindu Kush rang. The valley is surrounded by Chitral, Malakand, Swat, Bajaur and Afghanistan. It is bordered by Chitral to the North, to the East by Swat. To the Southwest by Malakand and from West by Afghanistan. The main source of draining in the valley of Dir is River Panjkora. It has about 220 kilometers long in the Northern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The river is made of five major Stream and hence taken the name Panjkora (Five *Nullahs*) but later on it's changed to Panjkora. (A.H.McMohan, 1901). The lower part of the valley comprised on plain areas while the upper part of the valley is mountainous. The valley is geographically has a pivotal position because famous generals of the world passed through the valley in the ancient and mediaeval times such as Alexander the great, Asoka, Mahmud of Ghazna and Mughal Emperor Babur who also married here. Akbar the great also invade here. (Shahid, 2005, p. 36) The great Pashto poet Khushal Khan Khattak also narrated the valley in his poem in a lovely manner. The Ex-prime Minister of great Briton also stayed in Chackdara Fort during British Indian period. (Shahid, 2005)

### Valleys

There are some important valleys in Dir, such as Sharingal, Barawal, Miandan, Ushera, Tormang, Charmang, Dogg Darra, Nehag, Karo etc. The valley is connected with its surroundings through different passes. (Nasim, p. 11)

### **Division into two District**

Keeping in view the growing population and administrative responsibilities the District of Dir was divided in two separate district in 1996 in Lower and Upper Dir. The head quarter of Lower Dir was made Temergarah while the headquarter of Upper Dir was Dir (*Khas*). But with some administrative complication both districts were administered by one Deputy Commissioner till 2001. (DCD, TARC, Peshawar. SN 12, File No 94-5/48 Kw/ Dir. Subject Division of District Dir. , 1996)

### **Etymology**

The etymology of the state of Dir is unknown and the writers and historians are not agreed upon the etymology of Dir State. It is controversial because those civilization which prevailed in the valley have diverse languages. (Shahid, 2005) So regarding that the word Dir has been used in different languages and has different meanings. (Riyaz-Ul-Hassan, 1984) According to Riyaz-Ul-Hassan the word Dir have four possible literary meanings *Butkhana, Maikhana, Jailkhana, and Ghamkhana*. (Riyaz-Ul-Hassan, 1984)

### **Ethnology and linguistics**

The population of Dir State was about One hundred thousand (100,000) in 1901. (A.H.McMohan, 1901). In 1961 the population of Dir was 387413 and in 1981 it was 767409. (Shahid, 2005) Most inhabitants of the valley belong to the Yusufzai Pashtun tribe (General Staff Army Headquarter, 1910) migrated from Afghanistan in sixteenth century after the massacre of their leader by Afghan ruler Mirza Ulgh Baig. (Yusufi, 1960) When they

set on the present day Khyber Pakhtunkhwa they deposed some native tribes such as Dlazaks and Swatis respectively from their native land. (Yusufi, 1960) With the passage of time the Yusufzai tribe in valley of Dir divided into sub branches (Malazai, subdivided into Sultan Khel Painsa Khel). (Shahid, 2005) Besides these Syed family, Mashwani, Tarkolani, Ismailzai, Kohistani, Swati, Wardag, Roghani also reside in the valley. (A.H.McMohan, 1901)

Pashto is widely spoken in the area. Besides Pashto, Kohistani and Gujiri also spoken in upper part of Dir Valley. (A.H.McMohan, 1901) The valley remained as princely states and merged in Pakistan in 1969. (DCD. Merger of Ex-State of Swat, Dir Administration, 1969)

### **Genesis and political History of Dir State.**

History of genesis of Dir State goes back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century AD, when a spiritual leader of Melazai clan of Yusufzai tribe Mullah Ilyas (popularly known as Akhund Ilyas Baba) who had a great and respectable position among his tribe and people gave him a respectable position in their clan, got political power and became the Khan of his clan. Slowly and gradually his popularity spread in the surrounding areas and the neighboring areas came under his suzerainty. (Yusufi, 1960) Later on his successors ruled the state of Dir for about three centuries till 1969.

**Mullah Ismail** After the death of Mullah Ilyas his son Mullah Ismail succeeded him. He resided in Bibyawar Dir and was much interested in the welfare of the state a man of virtues and worked for reconciliation of the people. He died in 1742 and was buried in Bibyawar and his tomb is famous as “Loe Baba”. (Dirvi, 2013)

### **Khan Ghulam Khan**

After the death of Mullah Ismail his son Khan Ghulam Khan succeeded him. He had abundance of worldly outfit such as horses, ammunitions and lands etc. (Dirvi, 2013) Which diverted his attention from spiritualism to worldliness and taken keen interest in regal affairs. (Shahid, 2005)

### **Khan Zafar Khan**

Khan Zafar Khan succeeded his father Khan Ghulam Khan and stuffed his suzerainty on the surrounding areas by force and changed his residence from Bibyawar to Dir. (Dirvi, 2013) He formed a paid army and destroyed the rule of Kohistani *Kafir* with the support of Sultan Khel and Pinda Khel and demolished their fort. Khan Zafar Khan had four sons named Qasim Khan, Naseem Khan, Zahir Shah Khan and Baku Khan. The elder son Khan Qasim Khan succeeded his father. (Dirvi, 2013)

### **Khan Qasim Khan**

Khan Qasim Khan succeeded to the throne of Dir after the the death of his father. He extended his suzerainty in south to Skhakot and in west to Asmar. (Shahid, 2005) He had killed by his son Azad Khan. (Dirvi, 2013)

### **Khan Ghazan Khan**

As mentioned above that Khan Qasim Khan was killed by his son Azad Khan. After his death there was quarrel among brother on the throne of Dir. (Dirvi, 2013) Regarding the prevailed circumstances Khan Ghazan Khan who was at that time in Chitral was awarded with throne of Dir with support of some *Khans* in the age of seventeen years. He killed and exiled his brothers and became the unanimously the ruler of the state. (Shahid, 2005)

### **Khan Rahmatullah Khan**

Khan Rahmatullah Khan succeeded his father and maintained the borders of his father's rule. He had a vast experience of warfare and statesmanship because he remained the commander of his father's army for about twenty years. (Yusufi, 1960) He exiled his son Muhammad Sharif Khan. He approached to Umara Khan of Jandul and attacked on some areas situated on the bank of river Punjkora. Khan Rahmatullah Khan died in 1870. (Dirvi, 2013)

### **Khan Muhammad Sharif Khan**

Khan Rahmatullah Khan had nine sons. Among them Khan Muhammad Sharif Khan ascended to the throne of Dir by force. He faced the enmity of his brothers and escaped from their attacks so many times. (Shahid, 2005) He faced the invasion of Umara Khan of Jandul he became a refugee in Swat area. He ruled Dir state as Khan till 1890. (Khan K. R., 1986)

Meanwhile in 1890 Umara Khan of Jandul attacked the territory of Dir state when Dir was ruled by Khan Muhammad Sharif Khan. Umara Khan occupied Dir territory and exiled Khan Sharif Khan to Swat. After occupying Dir, Umara Khan attacked on Chitral. (Yusufi, 1960) At that time Chitral was administered by the British Political agent stationed in Gilgit. He warned Umara Khan but the later refused to repulse from Chitral. (EX.DD.Files No.36.B,no.05/ Dir Chitral Road and Negotiation with Umara Khan Of Jandul, 1995) So the British mobilized Chitral Relief Force to rescue the Chitral operation. But as the only route to reach Chitral was passing through Dir, due to which the prevailing situation the importance of the Khan of Dir increased for the British authorities. At that time the British wanted to indulge the exiled Khan Muhammad Sharif Khan of Dir in the skirmish, because they already knew about the mutual clashes between Umara Khan of and Khan of Dir. They invited the Khan of Dir for the purpose of solving the issue and signed an agreement with Muhammad Sharif Khan of Dir. For the said purpose the Khan was offered by the British authorities the throne of Dir, but

he will provide a safe route to the British forces to reach Chitral to tackle with Umara Khan's dispute. (EX.DD. Files S.No.931, File No.11.B.No.12 Proceeding of Umara Khan of Jandul)

Khan Muhammad Sharif Khan, who was at that time a refugee in Swat accepted the British offer. Muhammad Sharif Khan with the support of his tribes captured the Umara Khan's forts situated on the banks of River Panjkora and made the route clear for the Chitral Relief Force for Chitral operation. By this mutual support the British forces then able to reach Chitral and then the British forces came in position to crash the power of Umara Khan. So by that way the powers of Umara Khan was crashed and his suzerainty over Chitral territory came to an end. (Dirvi, 2013)

On resolving the Chitral dispute with the support of exiled Khan of Dir, the British authorities awarded Sharif Khan with the throne of Dir State and Khan Sharif Khan came into power as Khan of Dir State as per agreement with British authorities. Then the British authorities declared Sharif Khan as the first Nawab of Dir State in 1897 and his rule was formally recognized by the British authorities. (Yusufi, 1960) Sharif Khan ruled Dir State till 1904 for nine years. However, under Sharif Khan's rule, the state didn't progress properly. Because during Sharif Khan's rule the State of Dir faced financial, political and social problems. (Shahid, 2005)

### **Muhammad Aurang Zeb Khan**

On the death of Sharif Khan in 1904 his son Muhammad Aurangzeb Khan (known as *Charra* Nawab in people) (Chara Nawab lost his proper speaking power in his childhood due to some incident by which people called him chara Nawab or dumb which later on became his pet name in the State. ) Ascended the throne of Dir State and became second Nawab. During his ascendancy to the throne of Dir the State faced a

great number of internal instability threats and external aggressions which limited Muhammad Aurangzeb Khan's capacity to lead the state of Dir towards prosperity, peace and development. He ruled the State of Dir for 20 years. (Shahid, 2005) Major time of his rule was spent in a situation of insecurity and foreign aggressions from the adjacent state of Swat on account of boundaries demarcation. It is said that Aurangzeb Khan fought 45 battles on the issue of boundary demarcation with Swat State. (Shahid, 2005)

The British authorities wanted to resolve the problem of mutual clashes of Swat and Dir States which creating security problems for the British authorities through Dir-Chitral route. So finally, the British authorities compelled both the rulers and an agreement was signed between the Wali of Swat (Mian Gul Gul Abdul Wadood) and the Nawab of Dir and the demarcation issue between the two states was resolved in 1923. (Sultan-I-Rome, 2008) Due to that agreement, between the Nawab of Dir and Wali of Swat state no conflicting threats and insurgency occurred from the Wali of Swat state but the Jandol rebellious issue still persisted with Dir State. (Sultan-I-Rome, 2008)

### **Muhammad Shah Jahan Khan**

On the death of Aurangzeb Khan in 1924 his son Muhammad Shah Jahan Khan ascended to the throne of Dir. Shah Jahan Khan knew the importance of British authorities, regarding that he established good ties with the British authorities and Political Agent of Malakand in order to strengthen his position and get their full support. (EXDD. S.No. 1876, File No. 71-22/ Dir, ) Nawab Muhammad Shah Jahan Khan ruled Dir State for about thirty six years and his ruled came to an end on 8<sup>th</sup> October 1960 when was dethroned by the government of Pakistan and his son Nawab Shah Khisru was declared the Nawab of Dir State with nominal powers because real powers were exercised by the political agent of Malakan Agency. (Dirvi, 2013) Then in July 1970 Dir State was merged into the State of Pakistan and made it the integral part of North West Frontier Province

(Khyber Pakhtukhwa). (DCD, TARC, Peshawar. SN 12, File No 90-5/48 Kw/ Dir. Subject regarding the merger of Malakand Division., 1970)

### **Political Dimensions of Dir State.**

Politically Dir has a pivotal position because it has boundary with Afghanistan and there were rivalries existed between the British (prior to Pakistan) and Afghanistan. Regarding that circumstances political stability was essential in the State and the Nawabs were blamed that their declivity was towards Afghanistan. Internally party politics or *Dala* System was present in the Dir state from the very beginning. (Dirvi, 2013) Every Clan of the tribe has its own leader called *Khan* or *Malak*. The Nawabs made these *Malaks* or *Khans* loyal to themselves and by them they could easily control the whole clan. (Yusufi, 1960)

Regarding that the Nawabs used it as tool to control the subjects of their suzerainty from the very beginning through (*Dalah* System) party politics for strengthen their rule and oppressed their opponent through their allies. (Dirvi, 2013) Every tribe have had its own (*Dalah*) faction and that was internally sub-divided under such *Dalah* system. The Nawabs created rivalries among these factions and maintained a balance between these factions to control them easily. (Dirvi, 2013) The Nawabs compensated these factions by state services and state privileges. These party politics were the main tactics used a tool as divide and rule by the Nawabs. Main motto of the Nawabs by these *Dalah* system or party politics to suppress their opponents. (Riyaz-Ul-Hassan, 1984)

On commencing the freedom movement by the Indian Muslims to gain self-determination from their British colonial master through political struggle. Hence to accelerate their movement Indian Muslims commenced their political struggle which inspired the Indian princely state for some extent. Regarding the

prevailing circumstances in the Indian Sub-Continent the people in the princely State of Dir also wanted to take part in these political activities but there was complete ban on such political activities in the state which the rest of Indian Muslims could participate. (Shahid, 2005) In 1930 when Khan Abdul Ghafar Khan Known as Bacha Khan (leader of *Khudai Khidmatgar* or Red Shirt movement) visited Dir state and established Azad School at Khall Dir during the rule of Nawab Muhammad Shah Jahan. (Khan Abdul Ghafar Khan, Zama Jawand au Jadujahad, 1983) The Nawab didn't wanted that the people of their state became politically conscious. So that may endanger his rule in future. (Dirvi, 2013) Regarding that the ruling Nawab Shah Jahan demolished the School. (Shahid, 2005)

#### **Dir State Muslim League.**

The historical 27<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of All India Muslim league was held 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1940 at Minto Park Lahore and the considerable Pakistan Resolution was passed and freedom movement of the Indian Muslims diverted to Pakistan movement to achieve their goal of self-rule from the British. (Raza, 1968) Regarding these circumstances Muslim League become a major political party of the Indian Muslims. (Raza, 1968) The wave of political consciousness also interfused in the minds of the people of Dir. Akhonzada Bahrawar Seed of Khal Dir a student of law in Lahore met Quaid-e-Azam at Lahore and founded Muslim League in Dir. (Shahid, 2005) He propagated Muslim league manifesto in the State and then he instigated Malak Haroon of Turmang to join Muslim league and Turmang was the first village in Dir State to float the Muslim League flag. (Shahid, 2005) But when the ruling Nawab Muhammad Shah Jahan informed about these activities he took action against the Muslim league. (DCD, Dir State Affairs, TARC, S.NO. 20, File No 90.S/48/ Dir. Subject.: Activities of the Dir State Muslim League, 1948) The Nawab sent his men burnt the village and exiled Muslim Leaguers from the State. (Shahid, 2005) In 1948 Nawab Muhammad Shah Jahan

wanted to re-allow the exiled Muslim Leaguers into Dir State to demonstrate himself loyal to them and consolidate his position politically because after Independence he wanted to ascertain himself loyal to Muslim League. ( DCD, Report on the administration of Dir State, TARC, Peshawar, SN39, FN 117(a) Sts(I), Subject: Pakistan State Muslim League and the Formation of other Political Party. , 1952)

### **Dir State Jamat-i-Islami**

Jamat-i-Islami was formed by a great Muslim scholar and philosopher, Maulana Abu al Ala Maududi in 1941 before the partition of India. According to Dr. Muhammad Yaqub, that Jamat-i-Islami was introduced in Dir State by Maualan Shams-u-Rahman in 1949 during the rule of Nawab Muhammad Shah Jahan by distributing the literature of Jamat-i-Islami among the people in Khal Dir. (Khan M. Y., 2009) They were performing their activities secretly and propagated their manifesto among the people because there was complete ban on political activities in the state. When Nawab Muhammad Shah Jahan was dethroned by the government of Pakistan in 1960 Jamat-i-Islami boosted its activities. (Khan M. Y., 2009) In 1963 a secret organization named *Tanzim-Ul-Ulama*, was formed actually it was not the part of Jamat-i-Islami but later on it merged into Jamat-i-Islami. Jamat-i-Islami played a significant role in creating political awareness and bringing democratic values among the people of Dir. (Khan M. Y., 2009) After the merger of the State into Pakistan in 1969 and general elections were announced in 1970, the then Deputy Commissioner of Dir, Jahanzeb Khan, wanted to nominate Muhammad Shah Khisro the last Nawab of Dir State for National and Provincial Assemblies Seat from Dir District. Regarding that he convened some notable *Malak* and *Khans* of Dir for the purpose but Jamat-i-Islami strongly opposed his suggestion and he failed to do so. So by the struggle of Jamat-i-Islami in Dir a new class entered into the political scenario. When elections were held in 1970 and Nawab Khisro Shah contested the election on Muslim League ticket but he was defeated. (Khan M. Y., 2009)

## Conclusion

The princely State of Dir has historically a prominent position in the princely states of Indian Sub-Continent because of its borders with Afghanistan. The State was founded by a spiritual leader of *Malazai* clan of Yusufzai Tribe in the seventeen century and the state was ruled by his descendent as Khan Khan till 1890. But in 1890 Umara Khan of Jandul dethroned Khan of Dir Muhammad Sharif Khan. He became a refugee in Swat territory. In 1895 with the support of the British Imperial powers he one again came into power as the ruler of Dir State and awarded the title of Nawab in 1897 and the state was ruled by different Nawabs till 1969 and was declared as the district of the then N.W.F.P in 1970. Politically there was *Dala System* or factions in the state and every clan (sub section of a tribe) has its own leader called *Khan* or *Malik*. The Nawabs easily made loyal through these *Maliks* or *Khans*. There was complete autocracy in the state. The ruler was all in all in state matters. There were some example that subjects of Nawabs tried to commence political activities in the state but unsuccessful such as Jama'at-e-Islami and Dir State Muslim League and they were exiled from the state by the Nawab. Once *Khudai Khidmatgar* leader Khan Abdul Ghafar Khan known as Bacha Khan visited the state and established Azad School in Khall Dir but the ruling Nawab Muhammad Shah Jahan Khan demolished his school. After the deposition of Nawab Muhammad Shah Jahan political activities were commenced for some extent in the state and after merger into Pakistan and becoming the integral part of the then North West Frontier Province political activities were commenced in full swing and as the rest of Pakistan general election was also held in Dir.

## NOTES & REFERENCES.

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