Historical Roots of Radicalization in Pakhtuns Society

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Abstract:
This research article aims to trace the history of radical movements in the North-West frontier of sub-continent. Historically, radical movements have long roots in Pakhtun Society. People recruited in different epochs from Pakhtun society branch into various freedom movements before the partition of sub-continent. Freedom movements against the Sikh, Hindu and the British lifted radical impact on Pakhtun Society before the partition of sub-continent. Radical movements after the partition of sub-continent also established their roots in the North-West region of Pakistan. These radical movements engineered the pluralistic cultural values of Pakhtun Society. These movements have lifted radical trends in the North-West frontier of sub-continent. Pakhtuns and their cultural values were not only exposed to violence but the evolution of their culture had been disturbed.

Key Words: *Radicalization: Freedom Movements: Pluralistic Cultural Values*

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Freedom Movements and Wars before the Partition in the North-West Frontier:

Historically speaking, NWFP (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) and Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan FATA (recently merged to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) accommodated various radical movements. Most of the *Jihadist* movements[1] were launched against the Sikhs, Hindus, and Britishers from the *Pakhtun* belt before the partition[2]. In 1826 Syed Ahmad Shaheed provided an Islamic challenge to an expanding Sikh empire when he along with few hundred disciples, supported by his network, arrived in Peshawar (now in Pakistan), to establish an Islamic state among Pakhtun tribes[3]. In the sub-continent these movements against the Sikhs, Hindus, and Britishers left radical trends in this

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region before the partition of sub-continents[4]. Such *Jihadist* movements injected violence and radical ideologies into the socio-cultural fabrics of Pakhtuns.

Moreover, Hindus and Muslims' conflict before 1947 also left radical impact on the socio-cultural milieu of the sub-continent in general and in the *Pakhtun* society in particular. Before, the British invasion on the sub-continent the region was comparatively peaceful. However, Syed Ahmad Shaheed used this region as battle field against the Sikh regime. It is argued that after the defeat of the Sikh in 1849, the British came into direct contact with the Pakhtuns and Afghanistan under the "Forward Policy" adopted in 1878, the British tried to occupy Afghanistan, or a part of it, in order to defend India against any possible Russian or foreign attack on the border[5]. The British initiated three military expeditions respectively (1839, 1878, and 1919) against the Pakhtuns in the North West frontier region. They fought against Najmuddin Alias, Hadda Mullah, Saadullah Alias, Mad Mullah, Mohyuddin Alias, Mullah Powindah, Mawlana Hamza Khan, and Sayyed Akbar[6]. The Bristish solely used Pakhtuns and their geographical location for political interest. After these wars they deliberately left this region under developed.

Moreover, the British too in his literature and elsewhere romanticize the bravery of Pakhtuns. Pakhtuns as compared to the British were not politically matured. They exploited their culture and also stopped socio-economic and political evolution of Pakhtuns after these military expeditions deliberately. It is argued that the British interest and their policies against Pakhtuns further radicalized these tribal people[7]. The British defeated Pakhtuns and imposed policies in this region which later on, provided radicalizing environment to these tribal, people.

After the British Wars, the people of the frontier region were motivated by the name of Turk Caliphate. *Zamindar Magzeen*[8] motivated Pakhtuns for the protection of Turk Caliphate[9] on the name of religion. Pakhtuns were illiterate, therefore, Zamindar Magzeen were translated to them in Pashtu language in different place such as Hujra, (a place of community gathering) bazaar (city) and Mosques to motivate them for the protection of Turk Caliphate. Finally, a number of Pakhtuns were participated in this war in 1922 for this cause. The Turk Caliphate like other freedom movements also left radical impact on the people of this region. From 1852 to 1944 in North-West province of the subcontinent, the protection of Turkey was the sole topic of discussion. Historically, time and again they participated in outside wars. The people of this region under the leadership of Haji Sab Turangzia motivated the Pakhtuns to fight against the Bristish because they were against the Turk Caliphate.

Hajji Sahib Turangzai, on June 20th went to Buner, a border area with the British cantonment in Mardan, and organised the local forces against the British. In this war about four thousand people entered the British territory and after a heavy fight, twenty people lost their lives. The tribesmen were severely handled and Malandari villages were burnt by the British army. Moreover, a fine was imposed upon the tribe. At the same time, Mullah Babara organized about nine

thousand men including one thousand Afghan volunteer and thus started war against the British in this region. It is reported that the entry of Turkey in the war stirred up the voice of the *mullah* to preach jihad against the British in more forceful way. Several attacks were made upon the British levies in Dir and Swat. The British imposed a blockade against the tribes of upper Swat and Bajur. The people under the leadership of Sandaki *mullah* and Sartor Faqir, threatened the British in the Chakdarah Fort. In another encounter, Gujar *mullah*, who attacked Chakdara via Panjkora Bridge, was killed and the lashkar was dispersed. However, in these expeditions Pakhtuns were not only divided but they fought against each other. These expeditions lift Pakhtun regions under developed in the colonial time. These movements have lift radical impact on Pakhtun society.

Roots of Radicalization in Pakhtun Belt after the Partition of Sub-continent:

The roots of socially engineered violence are associated with the major historical events. There are several levels of historical background of radical movements such as before the partition of sub-content and after the partition of sub-content. After the partition of India, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was considered primary. At that time various states deliberately promoted socially engineered violence for political interests in this region[10]. In response to Soviet invasion, the United States, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia began to arm and fund conservative Islamic organizations in this region to fight the forces of communist regime in Afghanistan[11]. During the Soviet-Afghan war, the Afghan refugees resided inside the Pak-Afghan border and *Khyber Pakhtunkhuwa* (henceforth KP). At that time, they were manipulated in camps to join the so called *Jihadist* organizations in the name of holy war. For this purpose, deliberately *"Madaris"* (Religious schools) were established with the help of Saudi Arabia in *Khyber Pakhtunkhwa* and FATA to promote the so-called holy war against Soviet Union forces in Afghanistan. The Afghan refugees were radically manipulated to advance the political interests of United States (US) and Pakistan. They (United States, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia) manipulated them through violent literature to get a space for conservative organizations and violence. In this regard, different kinds of strategies were used for the manipulation of Afghan refugees and especially of their youth in refugee camps[12].

Violent literature was taught in refugees' schools to manipulate the mind of students. In refugee camps, they were motivated through violent literature to join the holy war against the Soviet forces. The Afghan refugees' camps were considered radical universities which were mostly situated inside FATA and KP. They (US, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan) adopted violent teaching methods to easily manipulate students in refugees' schools. Violent examples were given to the students in refugee camp to promote violence for political ambitious of United States. As for example two plus two guns = four guns (*Yaw topak jama dowa topak da saluru topaku barabar de).*   In addition, the new *Klashankove*

culture[13] was introduced in *Pakhtun* society in the time of the Soviet-Afghan war by such violent examples.

Moreover, the traditional secular cultural traits of *Pakhtun* society were manipulated to get space for conservative organizations. The traditional power structure of *Pakhtun* society was changed and resultantly the religious clergy became a powerful man after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. During the Soviet-Afghan war the legitimacy of their traditional institutions[14] were deliberately undermined by Saudi Arabia and was also funded as *Wahabist*[15] organizations (religious based organization)[16]. The *Wahabist* organizations were supported by Saudi Arabia and United States to achieve certain political interests[17]. The hidden outfits were provided to the national and transnational terrorists' organizations particularly in the tribal belt of Pakistan to defeat the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. Such terrorist organizations left various socio-cultural impacts including radical impact on *Pakhtun* society. In addition, during the Soviet-Afghan war *Pakhtuns'* traditional socio-political institutions lost importance. *Mullah* (Religious clergy) became the dominant socio-political figure in this region. The traditional *Pakhtun Malaki* system[18] got replaced by *Mullah* under the patronage of Islamism.

The impact of the distortion of *Pakhtun* socio-cultural institutions can also be associated with the current radical trends. The distortion of the *Pakhtun* culture started in the colonial thus got more intensified with the Soviet invasion. It is commonly believed that in the absence of actual *Pakhtuns* cultural traits the religious leaders, clergy and military establishment easily promoted violent social engineering in *Pakhtun* society. The importance of their cultural institutions was deliberately undermined to set stage for violent social engineering[19]. Such kinds of violent social engineering in *Pakhtun* society provided ample opportunity to *Taliban* in this region[20].

Furthermore, *Pakhtuns* warrior attitude was romanticized to promote violence for the sake of political interests. They were introduced as a marshal race[21]. In the name of marshal race theory they were exploited by the name of marshal race to romanticize their bravery. In this regard, *Pashto*[22] literature was used for violent social engineering to motivate them towards extremism. For this purpose, *Pashto* literature songs and dramas in general and *Pashto Tappa*[23] (typical *Pakhtun* poetic literature) in particular were used to put emphasis on violence after various conflicts in this region. In this case, there are and were numerous *Pashto Tappas* that existed and exist in *Pashto* literature. For instance, males have accepted their deaths, and wives may be blinded as they do not accept to be widows (zwaanaano *murg pa zaan qabool kro peghlay randey kre che kundthun Na qablaweena*).

There is another *Pashto Tappa*, which also romanticize war and bravery. Illustrated with, O my lover it would be better to become a heap of dust in far-flung *Deccan*[24] than the news of your cowardly flight from the fight (*pa thore dakan dey salay jor sha da benangay awaz dey raa masha mayena*). Similarly,

Pashto Tappa romanticize bravery such as, O, my lover it is better to see you dead than hearing the news of showing your back in the war (*pa tore topak wshtalay rashey, b bay nangay awas dey raa masha mayena).* Similarly, there is another *Pashto Tappa*, O! My friends it's again an evening like the one, on which *Bakht Munir's* German made gun, sounded (*hamzulo biya hagha maham day, da Bakht Munir da Garmanay takkaar raazeena).* Hence, *Pashto* literature was used during various conflicts to motivate them for political purposes. Moreover, *Pakhtuns* were radicalized in this way to recruit them into non-state organizations.

However, the non-state actors from the very inception have been supported inside Pakistan [25]. The non-state actors have been encouraged to achieve strategic interests in Afghanistan and Indian occupied Kashmir[26]. The roots of such non-state actors can be seen generally in Pakistani society but such organizations have strong hold in *Pakhtun* society in particular[27].This region has been socially engineered to provide fertile environment for the non-state actors[28]. The non-state actors, as described above, also distributed violent literature in Pakistan and particularly in Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and *Khyber Pakhtunkhwa*. They (non state actors) exploited the tribal people and recruited them into the terrorist organizations in the name of holy war. They also exploited religion (here it means Islam) to promote radical ideologies for political interests[29]. They exploited religion for their own political interest not only during the Soviet-Afghan war but also in the wake of war against terror.

Moreover, the complex putative causal factors of radicalization can be associated with the non-availability of economic opportunities to inhabitants of tribal society. They are socially marginalized as a result of poverty, alienation and lack of social services. Even today more than 40 percent people are living below the poverty line in *Pakhtun* belt. The radical organizations easily exploit underprivileged people of *Pakhtun* society. Such kind of radical organizations can easily recruit people from this region. Along with the socio-economic problems, the continuous disruption of the democratic process has also accelerated its process .The lack of democratic institutions has created space for radical forces in Pakistan in general and *Pakhtun* belt in particular. Moreover, radical trends have got momentum in Pakistan as a result of provincialism, ethnic strife and suppression of minorities.

Conclusion:

It is revealed that historically this region had been used for freedom movements and proxy wars since long. Wars against the foreigners had been fought in this region before the partition of Pakistan. In the first and second world war various movements attracted people from this region. During colonial time freedom movements against the British also emerged in Pakhtun belt which badly affected this region. After the birth of Pakistan, in the Soviet-Afghan war this region had been as a strategic point for three decades. Recently, post 9/11 once

again, the war against terror has been imposed in Pakhtun belt. These freedom movements and wars have further radicalized this region.

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8.   **Zamindar** was an Indian Muslim newspaper in the urdu language. The founding editor of this newspaper was Maulana Zafar Ali Khan, poet, intellectual writer and Muslim nationalist.

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13. *Klashankove* culture refers to the romanticization of guns in *Pakhtun* society.

14. *Pakhtuns* traditional institutions refer to the traditional organizations such as *Jirga* (council of elder) *Hujra (*community centre) and *Ashar* (collective forming), etc.

15. *Wahabism* is a religious movement or sect of *Sunni* Islam.

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18.   A tribal elder was given some socio-political authority to make decisions within the tribe; the title is hereditary.

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22.   *Pashto* literature refers to *Pashto Tappa* (typical *Pashto* poetic literature), dramas, *ghazal* and songs

23.   *Pashto Tappa* is considered the oldest and integral part of the *Pashto* folk literature. There are two parts in *Pashto Tappa:* one consists of 9 words while the other is comprised of more than 13 words.

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