

*The Role of North West Frontier
Province Women in the Freedom
Struggle for Pakistan
(1930-47)*

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**National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research,
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2018**

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North West Frontier
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We dedicated this book to our two eyes;
our beloved parents

Mammy aw Baba (Sonerin)
Mr. & Mrs. Shamaas Gul Khattak

And

Mor aw Daji
Mr. & Mrs. Rashid Ahmad

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Foreword

The National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research (NIHCR) has been publishing research works pertaining to history and culture of Pakistan with special focus on the Pakistan Movement since its inception in 1973. Taking the leap in this direction, the present work titled ***The Role of North West Frontier Province Women in the Freedom Struggle for Pakistan (1930-47)*** by Dr. Shabana Shamaas Gul Khattak and Dr. Akhtar Hussain has focussed on the domain of knowledge which had been comparatively neglected by the researchers. Moreover, in the traditional society of the then NWFP, now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the active participation of women in the freedom struggle had a unique sort of contribution *vis-à-vis* emancipation from the colonial rule. However, it was the great urge for freedom and wide spread hatred in the society against alien rule that attracted the women to play an active role, putting aside the social and cultural taboos of the locality. Consequently, rural, urban, educated and uneducated women took part in the freedom struggle. They worked shoulder to shoulder with the men folk for the larger national cause. Those freedom fighters may be little known or commonly unknown, but their contribution was great and at the same time they performed it with an admirable degree of sacrifices. Those women were deeply involved in the freedom struggle initially from the platform of the Khudai Khidmatgar Movement primarily during 1930's and afterwards they joined the All-India Muslim League women workers during 1940's. The women workers of the League actively worked to stimulate the campaign for Pakistan. They enthusiastically participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement against the then Chief Minister, Dr. Khan Sahib. Nonetheless, the efforts of those women contributed considerably to the success of the All-India Muslim League in the Referendum of July 1947.

This book discusses at length the role of women under the Khudai Khidmatgar Movement as well as the Frontier Muslim League. This study analyses the events and circumstances, which led to women participation in the politics of the area and the sources of their inspiration, encouragement and support along with a discussion on their methods and techniques they adopted to contribute to the Freedom Struggle that eventually resulted into the creation of Pakistan.

In the end, I would like to express my thanks and gratitude to Dr. Shabana Shamaas Gul Khattak and Dr. Akhtar Hussain, who throughout the various stages of publication process, cooperated closely with team of the NIHCR. I would also like to thank all the concerned scholars and other officials of the Institute for their valuable input in the manuscript. Thanks to the editorial and publication team, who worked hard in the process.

25 December 2017

Syed Umar Hayat

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We wish to express our warm and sincere thanks to Professor Sayed Wiqar Ali Shah. As a supervisor, teacher, mentor and critic, he was a constant source of encouragement for this project.

Special thanks and appreciation goes to Professor Razia Sultana for her valuable suggestions and evaluation of the final draft of the book.

We were whole heartedly supported by Mian Saeed-ur-Rehman, who extended his help and cooperation during our frequent visits to consult his home library. Uncle Saeed and his wife proved very loving and accommodating during the project.

This work would never have seen the light of the day without the loving support of our parents, family and friends. We want to especially thank our interviewees for sharing their memorable life experiences of the freedom struggle. To them we are forever grateful!

We are indebted to the NIHCR for considering and publishing this book; their evaluation and reviewing feedback gave new life to this manuscript. We extend to them our profound thanks for giving us the confidence to believe that we had something valuable to say.

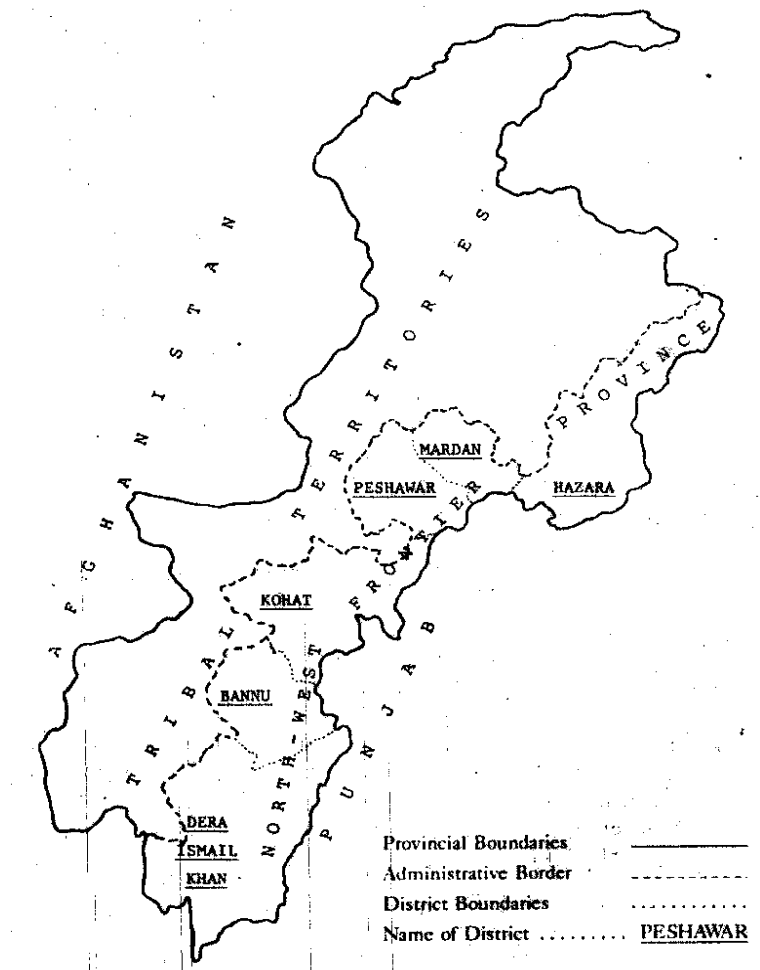
**Shabana Shamaas Gul Khattak
Akhtar Hussain**

List of Abbreviations

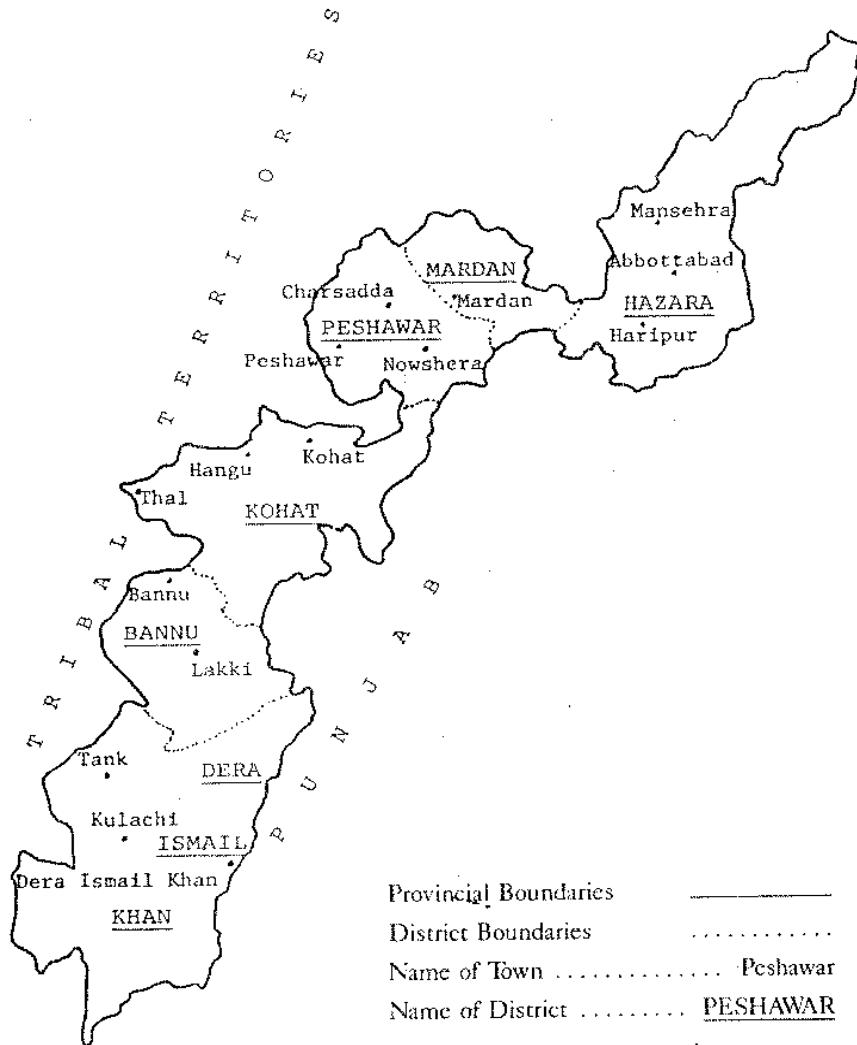
AICC	All-India Congress Committee
AIML	All-India Muslim League
AINC	All-India National Congress
CID	Central Intelligence Department
CWC	Congress Working Committee
FCR	Frontier Crimes Regulation
FPCC	Frontier Province Congress Committee
FPML	Frontier Province Muslim League
FZML	Frontier Zanana Muslim League
HDP	Hazara Democratic Party
HSNP	Hindu-Sikh Nationalist Party
JUH	Jamiat Ulema-i-Hind
JUS	Jamiat Ulema-i-Sarhad
MIP	Muslim Independent Party
NWFP	North West Frontier Province
SBP	Special Branch of Police

MAPS

North West Frontier Province and Tribal Territories



North West Frontier Province (Settled Districts)



Introduction

Women's political participation is a long-fought battle that has involved legal and peaceful actions and voices to persuade both government's administration and society's traditional norms. Through political participation, women across the world have played and continue an influential role in the decision making of national policy. A great deal has been written on women's political participation in the freedom struggle of the Muslims in the Indian subcontinent, but the bulk of this literature has been concerned with the familiar women leaders and the big events of the freedom struggle. Little has been written about more minor leaders and volunteers, both men and women, who functioned at grassroots level in various parts of the country and made an extremely valuable contribution to the freedom struggle. In particular, there is no major academic research that deals with the less-known leaders and activists of the North West Frontier Province (NWFP).¹ Particularly, there is no specific study dealing with the contribution made by the women leaders and volunteers of the freedom struggle, most of whom are unknown or little known even in the NWFP.

Most of the visible women in our history books belonged to the elite or upper middle-classes of the society. Indeed they were backed by their family men to join the freedom movement.² In contrast, there were also traditional women of enormous importance to the freedom struggle from poor conservative families with little or no schooling.

1 North West Frontier Province (NWFP) is renamed as Khyber Pukhtunkhwah in 2010 after the 18th amendment in the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan. However, for the purpose of this historical study, we chose to stick with its old name 'NWFP'.

2 Thapar-Bjorkert, S. (2007) *Women in the Indian National Movement: Unseen Faces and Unheard Voices, 1930-42*, New Delhi: Sage.

These women committed themselves to the national cause, and whether they could be considered revolutionaries or not, no one can deny that they fought against great personal odds for the freedom of the country.³ Their courage and patience was profound, and at times tragic, for some of them were present at their own sons' hanging. Many women participated indirectly in the political affairs of the country: they found a way around their domestic constraints, such as using secret envoys and messengers, passing on proscribed material, helping fugitives from the law shift from one place to another and ensuring that they were fed and looked after.⁴ Many stopped buying foreign factory-made clothes and wore *Khaddar* (hand-made clothes) by spinning the 'charkha' as a mark of support for the Khudai Khidmatgar Movement.

Gul Marjana from Sawaldir was one who always saved money from the household expenses to give it to the Khudai Khidmatgar Movement.⁵ It is worthwhile to mention here that both the Pro-Congress nationalist women of Khudai Khidmatgar and Pro-Muslim League women struggled against British rule; they fought with the sole aim of freedom for their motherland, the Indian subcontinent. They stood behind their men and sacrificed their precious assets for this national cause.

An Indian writer, Thapar-Bjorkert argues that the history written in the 1960s did not register the role of ordinary women in the freedom movement because the historians of that time implicitly projected only a select group, and this gave rise to a distorted vision.⁶ We agreed that the entire depiction of the freedom struggle was generally male-centric, bourgeois and upper-class, with the participation of women

3 *Ibid.*

4 Shah, W. (2012) *Pukhtaney Khazi ow Da Qam Khidmat* [Pukhtu] Peshawar: Bacha Khan Research Centre.

5 *Ibid.*

6 Thapar-Bjorkert (2007) *Women in the Indian National Movement*.

being seen as an extension of their domestic roles of serving their families.⁷

There are several reasons for the non-availability of common women's participation in history—for example, the historians only relied on official records and neglected the significance of 'creative sources' like personal diaries, family histories, newspaper reports, magazine articles and oral narratives.⁸ The representation of the women in the history of the Indian subcontinent is going beyond archival, official and unofficial written sources because of oral narratives, a methodological tool that reveals the individual subjectivities of participants in the freedom movement.⁹ The new tools of historiography will reveal new feminists' struggle stories to the world: a more realistic world rather than based on available official records.

We all are familiar with the Muslim freedom fighter 'Bi Amma' (Abadi Bano Begam, mother of Maulana Mushammad Ali Jouhar and Shaukat Ali); she inspired most of the women in the subcontinent. She observed strict *purdah*, but when the time came to speak on behalf of her jailed son, she did so from behind her *burqa* (veil) in 1917; this was, perhaps, the first time a Muslim woman in *purdah* had addressed a political gathering.¹⁰ The same is the case in the NWFP because of strict *purdah* observance most of the Khudai Khidmatgar and Muslim League's women are invisible because the traditionally conservative nature of the NWFP society. The active participation of women in the freedom struggle through modern political techniques was a novel and interesting phenomenon while keeping in view the social trends that forbade womenfolk from participating in

7 Devi, B. (2012) *Unsung Heroines of Independence*, New Delhi: The Hindu Archives.
<http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Delhi/unsung-heroines-of-independence/article3764609.ece> [27/12/2015].

8 Thapar-Bjorkert, S. (2007) *Women in the Indian National Movement*.

9 *Ibid.*

10 Minault, G. (1998) 'Purdah Politics: The Role of Muslim Women in Indian Nationalism, 1911-1924' in H. Pappanek and G. Minault. (eds) *Separate Worlds: Studies of Purdah in South Asia*, New Delhi: Chanakya.

such activities. However, the unjust rule of the British imperialism invoked women to enter into the political mainstream of the Indian subcontinent, leaving aside their traditional care-giving roles. Fortunately, that was the time when their men counterparts supported them truly to violate the social and cultural taboos of society. As said earlier, indeed it was a bold step of those women freedom fighters, because the area where they were brought up (NWFP) was socially conservative, but had a yearning for freedom. We should not underestimate their little struggle which they performed on the price of their lives or the lives of their dear ones. This book focuses on analysing those events and circumstances that led to women participation in the Frontier politics. It further argues that despite what conventional histories of the freedom struggle have suggested, Frontier women took an active role in the freedom movement and in the creation of modern Pakistan.

Why this Book?

This book explores the Frontier women's participation and contextualised their political role in the freedom struggle of Pakistan. As such, there are not ample studies that grapple sufficiently with the social, cultural and religious factors and forces underlying women participation in the NWFP politics. Given the increasing centrality of women's political participation in contemporary politics, the need for this academic research is absolutely vital.

We found some Pakistani writers specifically theorise about the feminist aspects of the freedom struggle, such as Ikramullah's (1963) *'From Purdah to Parliament'*; Mumtaz, and Shaheed's (1987) *'Women of Pakistan: Two Steps Forward One Step Back?'* Ali's (2000) *'The Emergence of Feminism among Indian Muslim Women 1920-1947'* Sultana's (2004) *'The role of Women in Social and Political Development of Pakistan'* Mirza's (1969) *Muslim Women Role in the Pakistan Movement* [Urdu], and Javid's *Tehreek-i-Pakistan main Khwateen ka Kirdar* [Urdu]. In addition, a number of modern Indian writers of the freedom struggle of the Indian subcontinent also theorise about women's

participation (see bibliography). However, very few studies highlighted the NWFP women; Mirza's (1969) comprehensive study main focus is the Muslim League women's role in other parts of the subcontinent along with a brief secondary information about the NWFP women, while Shah's (2007) *'Women and Politics in the North West Frontier Province 1930-1947'* is a chapter of his compilation book about the history and politics of the NWFP; the chapter gives some details of women's socio-culture and their literary role in the Frontier region. And another book of Shah (2012) *'Pukhtaney Khazi ow da Qaam Khidmat'* [Pukhtu] covers an ample amount of Pukhtun women's literary role under the patronage of the Khudai Khidmatgar Movement. However Shah (2012) did not theorise how and why the literary struggle of the Frontier women switched to mainstream street politics during the freedom movement. Nor did he address why most of these women are unknown and invisible. Shah (2012) also collected the primary scattered data of the Journal *'Pukhtun'* that provides a scholarly treatment of the subject, but the book's readership is confined to Pukhtu-speakers only. On the other hand, Javid's (nd) book had been written in the Urdu language, highlighting Muslim League women's perspectives, but was considered an unauthentic piece of writing by most of our interviewees.¹¹ The author exaggerated some of the historical events, such as the role of Mai Malangi in the train incident near Bala Hisaar Fort Peshawar (see Chapter-6 for further details).

Thus, we located our book in the feminist paradigm to explore the invisible role of women in the freedom struggle of Pakistan with special reference to the NWFP. This book extends its readership across the country to familiarise the nation with the NWFP women's active participation in the freedom struggle rather than the pro-Congress Khudai Khidmatgar or pro-Muslim League standpoint. Since the issue of Pakistan and Pukhtunistan emerged at the end of

11 Interviews with Jamila Sharif Hussain and Mian Saeed-ur-Rehman, 10th February 2002, Peshawar.

freedom struggle in 1947, the historians acknowledged the struggle for the liberation of the Indian subcontinent from the British Imperialism was initiated long ago. So our book covers both mainstream political parties of the time; the nationalist and the League's women freedom fighters. The book begins with a simple question: what were the roles and contributions of the NWFP women contemplating and participating in the freedom struggle of Pakistan? Furthermore, what are the traditional features of the NWFP culture and society that constrained or encouraged their active political participation? The book not only investigates women's participation in Frontier politics, but also attempts to hear untold experiences and stories of the living Pukhtun and non-Pukhtun Frontier women freedom fighters.

When we look at the history of women's participation in the freedom struggle, Hindu and Muslim freedom fighters from other parts of India were the first to enter the mainstream of politics. The Frontier women got their inspirations from them. Women's participation in the freedom struggle in the Indian subcontinent began as early as 1817.¹² Bhima Bai Holkar fought bravely against British commissioned military officer Sir John Malcolm and defeated him in guerrilla warfare. Many women, including Rani Channama of Kittur, Rani Begam, and Hazrat Mahal of Awadh fought against the British East India Company during the 19th century; thirty years before the War of Independence (1857).¹³ The role played by women in the War of Independence was creditable and invited the admiration even of the leaders of the revolt. Rani of Ramgarh, Rani Jindan Kaur, Rani Tace Bai, Baiza Bai, Chauhan Rani, Tapasvini Maharani daringly supported their troops into the field.¹⁴ And Muslim women, not unlike men, had entered the field in order to defeat British Imperialism. For example,

12 Singh, M. (2014) 'Role of Women in India's Struggle for Freedom' *International Journal of Research*, 1(2) 37-56.

13 Aftab, T. (2008) *Inscribing South Asian Muslim Women: An Annotated Bibliography and Research Guide*, Netherland: BRILL.

14 Singh, M. (2014) 'Role of Women in India's Struggle for Freedom'.

Hazrat Mahal acted as a barricade against the advancing of the English forces.¹⁵ Similarly the courageous role of Afghan national freedom heroine Malalai of Maiwand in the Second Anglo-Afghan War (1878-1881) cannot be forgotten in the history of Pukhtun women across the Durand line.

The War of Independence (1857) changed the political scenario of the subcontinent. Muslim and Hindu leaderships compromised with their new rulers because they realized that, in the near future, they could not overthrow them. Therefore, they adopted their educational systems and started to work for social progress. The majority of Muslim women were illiterate, except the women of the upper or elite class. Likewise other peoples of the subcontinent, Muslims adopted some measures for women's social and educational development. Therefore the first traditional response to call for Muslim education came from the Islamic educational institute, Darul-ulum-Deoband: they demanded modern education for women, but were against the complete familiarization of Muslim women with Western customs.¹⁶ Its most prominent scholarly work, Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi's '*Bahishtti Zewar*' (Ornament of Paradise), was compulsory reading for women at the time. The book content was full of teachings of Islamic principles and how to follow a traditional way of life.

During this period, women in Europe were fighting for their human rights and for universal suffrage. Some voices were being raised in their favour, whereas the Indian woman was fettered with old customs and norms. In the subcontinent, many Hindu and Muslim reformers came forward to rescue the state of affairs prevailing at that time. Among other issues, the education of women was also discussed. Many Muslims decided to educate women so that they could recognize their rights and duties as provided by Islam.¹⁷

Furthermore, to prepare society for further reforms, the British government was criticized for keeping the

15 Shabbir, S. (2011) 'Struggle for Muslim Women's Rights in the British India, 1957-47' *Pakistan Vision*, 12(2) 35-70.

16 *Ibid.*

17 *Ibid.*, 3.

subcontinent women backward. Many critics attacked the colonial setup of women's plight that was responsible for Indian society's backwardness; they demanded radical changes in the social condition of women.¹⁸ However, the British government did not do much for the status of women in practical terms due to the strong hold of patriarchy. The movement towards women's emancipation was acted out against a background of nationalist struggles aimed at achieving political independence, asserting a national identity and modernizing the society.¹⁹

Social reformers of the 19th century diverted their attention towards women's education, their care-giving role, religious training and social consciousness. Badar-ud-Din Tayyabji was a prominent one, who took the initiatives by sending his daughter Atteya Faizi to England to for higher education,²⁰ while Miss Khadijah Ferozuddin was the first Muslim woman to study her doctorate later in 1940, on the topic of the 'Pushtu Poetry of Khushhal Khan Khattak'. Such individual efforts proved that Muslim women were supported by their family men for higher education and social well-beings. This positive attitude and efforts of Muslim men for educating their women encouraged the British government to institute educational reforms in the subcontinent. Hence, the general British policy of promoting education in general and for women especially stemmed not so much from an altruistic desire to educate the Indian population rather than from their need to create a class to serve them and as a means for propagating their ideology.²¹

The 20th century was also witness to feminist journalism for women education and socialization. Examples of this were Rashid-ul-Khairi's '*Asmat*' (Delhi, 1908), Abdullah's '*Khatoon*' (Aligarh, 1909), Sayed Mumtaz Ali's '*Taleem-e-*

18 Saiyid, D. (1998) *Muslim Women of the British Punjab, from Seclusion to politics*, London: Macmillan Press.

19 Shabbir (2011) 'Struggle for Muslim Women's Rights'.

20 Ali, A. (2000) *The Emergence of Feminism among Indian Muslim Women 1920-1947*, Pakistan: Oxford University.

21 Shabbir (2011) 'Struggle for Muslim Women's Rights'.

Niswan (Lahore, 1898) and the Fatima Begum's '*Sharif Bibi*' and '*Daily Tehzeeb-i-Niswan*' (1918).²² These journals played a vital role in women's awareness and understanding of their rights but also encouraged them to fight for their legal and political rights.²³ However without contemporary education it was impossible, because in 1911, only two out of every 1000 women were educated.²⁴ Therefore, in 1915, an All India Muslim Ladies' Conference²⁵ declared education as an indispensable need for uplifting women in the subcontinent, but the main struggle was awareness among the Muslim community for women education. Amongst Muslim women, the struggle was to make education for women socially acceptable.²⁶

As far as the arrival of western education in the NWFP is concerned, it came very late as compared to other parts of Indian subcontinent. It was many years after the British conquest of the NWFP that modern education, which was in fact western education, began to spread among the people. Of course, the first attempts in this direction had been made by the Christian Missionaries, but western education had no immediate effects in the NWFP. The status of women did not improve much with the opening of the Frontier society to modernity. 58 out of every 1000 men were literate, and only 2 out of 1000 females were literate.²⁷ Interestingly, only one Muslim female out of 1000 in the Frontier was able to read and write.²⁸

The active politics of the Muslim women commenced during the Khilafat Movement when, in the absence of our Muslim leaders due to their imprisonment, Bi Amma jumped

22 *Ibid.*

23 For further details see Shabbir (2011) 'Struggle for Muslim Women's Rights'.

24 *Ibid.*

25 *Ibid.*

26 Saiyid (1998) *Muslim Women of the British Punjab*.

27 *Census Report of India 1931*, Vol. xv Delhi: Government of India Press, Directorate of Archives Peshawar.

28 *Ibid.*

into the political minefield. They really proved political trend setters, paving the way for women's participation in the independence movement. The Khilafat and Hijrat Movements took out the Frontier women to street politics when Bi Amma and Amjadi Begum (wife of Maulana Muhammad Ali Jouhar) made frequent visits to the NWFP and encouraged women to sacrifice their savings, jewelry and sons for their noble religious cause. They were also willing to leave their homeland and migrate to Afghanistan (see Chapter Three for full details of Women in the Khilafat Movement).

The participation of Begum Jahan Ara Shah Nawaz in the First Round Table Conference (1930-31) is worthwhile to mention here, because a memorandum was presented to the conference that there should be no discrimination in political status, government service, business or vocations on the basis of caste, creed and clan or sex.²⁹ Later, the Government of India Act 1935 gave women the right of franchise; out of 160 seats of Council of State, six were reserved for women and nine seats in the 250 member house, were to be occupied by women.³⁰

Now the direction of Indian women struggle was changed from women's social and educational development to the nationalist freedom struggle. The Pakistan Movement divided the Muslim and Indian women in their political struggle. The participation of women in parts of the struggle in other geographic areas has been well-documented. This book looks at how the active participation of the NWFP women in the freedom movement advanced towards the Pakistan Movement.

The first two chapters are based on the contextual and theoretical frameworks, because this is always very important to facilitate research thoroughly. These chapters conceptualise women's movements in the Indian subcontinent with special reference to the NWFP. In each

29 Shabbir (2011) 'Struggle for Muslim Women's Rights'.

30 *Ibid.*

chapter we have attempted to provide a summarised but yet comprehensive general framework and to identify relevant contexts within which our research was conducted such as socio-cultural, political, feminisation and the patriarchal Pukhtun society. These chapters are based on intense library research of many years and in many places, and information from the international community as well as personal experiences and contacts. These chapters discuss the Pukhtun code of life, and the interplay of gender, culture and politics in the country in general and the NWFP in particular. The chapters further deal with the political awakening in the province during the years 1901 to 1921, and the formation of various political bodies including the Provincial Congress Committee, the Frontier Muslim League, Khilafat and Hijrat Committees, etc.

The next three analytical chapters follow from above; first, an effort is made to merge all the collected qualitative data into a historical perspective. In the following chapter, we analyse the data in a way that allows our readers to feel themselves a part of the historical events. These chapters scrutinise the emergence of Khudai Khidmatgar Movement and its contribution to uplifting the status of women. The chapter gives a chronological detail of the events which made possible the foundation of Khudai Khidmatgar Movement and describes its impact on the Pukhtun society. Also, it includes the contribution of women through literary means under the banner of Khudai Khidmatgar Movement. Furthermore, the Pakistan Resolution and its impact on the Muslim masses of the subcontinent, the resurgence of the Muslim League, the formation of the Frontier Zanana Muslim League (FZML), and its role during World War are discussed thoroughly. An investigation is made to Muhammad Ali Jinnah's visits to the NWFP and their impacts on women mobilisation. This chapter further examines the provincial elections, the drastic changes in Delhi and its effects on the NWFP, the 3rd June Plan, the referendum and the NWFP joining Pakistan.

The book ends with a final concluding chapter outlining some of the debates to which it hopes to have contributed. These include the social taboo in Frontier politics, the defined role of Frontier women in the freedom struggle, and its impact on present politics. All the above sections are informed by the women's freedom struggle framework. While by no means claiming to provide a complete presentation of all the relevant debates or issues, an effort has been made to critically summarise the most pertinent ones in the context of this book. In the appendix, we highlight some details of the NWFP freedom fighters' biographical profiles.

We would like to acknowledge that this book is not a full picture of Frontier women politics. Since 2003, the original manuscript has been under review by different publishers. It was first reviewed by Oxford University Press, but our (the author's) own doctoral study commitments prevented us from meeting its publication deadlines. Nevertheless, the originality of the manuscript compelled us to reconsider its publication from a different venue; thus, since 2011, it has been under reviews and evaluation process of NIHCR, Quaid-e-Azam University. We tried to accommodate most of the updated published or unpublished sources in this book; however, we kept the original interviews data of 2002–2003 in hand. Thus, we can say it is a valid, yet unfinished analysis of the historical and contemporary studies of the Frontier women's political episode. Similarly, the maturation of our own research techniques forced us to revise the manuscript. However, we look forward to the constructive criticism of our readers especially the historians of the subject area who were contacted but their professional commitments did not allow them to give us feedback.³¹ We are hoping that being nascent writers, we will be encouraged by Pakistani academia.

This book is an attempt to avoid stereotyping of the NWFP women and the negligence of their participation in the freedom struggle. We highlighted many factors that

31 Authors contact details: zuvand@hotmail.com

encouraged women's participation in the freedom struggle, such as social, cultural, traditional, economic, national, political and religious, but we focused to unearth the interplay between these factors that forces women to participate in active politics without violating the cultural and traditional norms of the Pukhtun society. Therefore, we brought up six broad aims:

- To explore the contextual political background of the NWFP
- To ascertain the factors causing women's participation in the Frontier politics
- To judge the paradoxical role of men in the NWFP society that encouraged women's active part in the freedom struggle of Pakistan
- To eliminate the misconceptions of the historian about the NWFP women in the freedom struggle
- To value the struggle of literary means and street politics of women
- To encourage the existing academic scholarship to acknowledge the history of the Frontier women's active role in the politics of the time.

As far as our methodological framework for this book is concerned, it is based on historical research design as well as qualitative data collection instruments (focused interviews). However, this book is informed by an epistemological framework that is based on a realisation that all knowledge is influenced by the standpoint of the researcher and the researched. We have benefited from the feminist research critiques³² in designing this methodological framework. The women of the NWFP we interviewed and our own personal knowledge created new emancipatory

32 Hooks, B. (2000) *Feminism is for everybody: Passionate politics*, South End: Cambridge. Letherby, G. (2003) *Feminist Research in Theory and Practice*, Buckingham: Open University. Mohanty, C. (1998) 'Under Western Eyes' *Feminist Review*, 28(2) 499-535. Pourzand, N. (2003) *A Tapestry of Resistance: Afghan Educated Refugee Women in Pakistan: 'agency', Identity and Education in War and Displacement*. London: University of Greenwich.

knowledge that relates to a multifarious network of social and cultural relations that are culturally embedded and specific to a particular time and place.³³

In order to carry out this research and to trace the political activities and the part played by women of the NWFP in the struggle for independence, an effort has been made to consult primary resources particularly. Therefore, the Police Record of Special Branch (Peshawar Archives), National Documentation Centre (NDC) and India Office Record of the British Library (UK) have been consulted.

Thus, the sources for this book could be summarised as:

- Eleven in-depth focused interviews with living freedom (2000-2003); Alaf Jan Khattaka, Syada Bushra Begum, Jamila Sharif Hussain, Begum Zari Sarfaraz, Nasira Kiyani and Razia Butt and their relatives: Duri Shahwar (daughter of Sardar Haider Jaffar), Mian Saeed-ur-Rehman (son of Begum Sharif Hussain) Sarwat Ehsan (eye-witness of freedom struggle) and present woman politician Begum Nasim Wali Khan.
- Documentary evidence in the form of personal letters, pamphlets, and political parties' brochures along with badges. In addition, statistics on women's participations in meetings and processions were obtained from the Special Branch Police Record (Peshawar Archives), National Documentation Centre (NDC) Islamabad and Indian Office Record (IOR) from the British Library (UK) are used for analysis of the topic under scrutiny. Original manuscripts of the '*Pukhtun*' Journal were consulted as well as, contemporary evidence including theses, autobiographies, biographies, newspapers and books regarding the freedom struggle of Indian subcontinent.

33 Pourzand, N. (2003) *A Tapestry of Resistance: Afghan Educated Refugee Women in Pakistan*.

Chapter 1

Conceptualisation of Women's Movements in the Indian Subcontinent and the NWFP Women

We celebrate the 8th March as the International Women's Day. It has been declared by the United Nations that all forms of discriminations should be eliminated against women. The United Nations Decade of Women (1975-85) witnessed a momentous growth in women's studies related to gender-based discrimination and inequality issues in society. Gender studies are a well-known area of social science research recommended by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan. Many universities have established their Centres for Women's Studies and Gender Study Centres in each province and in the federal areas, Quaid-e-Azam University and Allama Iqbal Open University Islamabad.

This study attempts to contribute to the Gender Studies academic literature about the Indian subcontinent by analysing women's participation in the freedom movement that led to the British departure. There are very few studies of this type in the subcontinent. Some of these studies are subjectively unreliable, generalized or critically hostile, written by feminist activists in a journalistic style.¹ Feminism in such monographs is misinterpreted by the feminist

1 Shah, G. (2004) *Social Movements in India*, London: Sage.

activists; their feminism is not merely a discourse to be analysed, but a method of bringing about social change.²

Whether one argues that the discourse and methodology, strategies, tactics and programmes for social change are inseparable or not, the increasing literature certainly provides valuable theoretical and philosophical articulation and empirical data, posing relevant questions and hypotheses for in-depth studies on the social system and women's position therein. Some theoretical studies are also available, but more often than not, it is felt that they deal mainly with issues raised by western scholars. Even if this is so, this should not belittle the importance of such studies.³ We agreed with Shah that the west influenced our thought process; that our minds are slaves impressed by the west due to a long period of colonization in the subcontinent. We see the English language and culture as a modern status symbol.

Colonialization left irremovable influence of the west on all aspects of our daily life, including western education, which gives us an understanding of patriarchy and how to resist against it. Women political organisation and struggle were shaped and initiated by British women. So we can say that the women of the Indian subcontinent were inspired by the western feminists' struggle, which emphasised the 'universality' of gender oppression and therefore the 'universal sisterhood' of women.⁴ However, the freedom movement was the stimulation of Indian women's own belief for liberation of their home country. Many intellectuals argued that feminism as a movement is rooted in specific 'national history and culture'⁵ because the culture and the male domination of the east is entirely different from that of the west. We cannot apply the western theories of feminism

2 *Ibid.*

3 Niranjana, S. (2000), 'Transitions and Reorientations: On the Women's Movement in India' in Peter De Souza. (2000) *Contemporary India Transitions*, Delhi: Sage. (cited in Shah, 2004:147)

4 *Ibid.*

5 *Ibid.*

as they are to study our South Asian societies. They need a clear modification within the given context of our socio-cultural traditions, religious and political environment, ideologically; cultural imperialism has introduced the notion of female inferiority which had no part in Indian culture, where female power and its containment were stressed. Although women were segregated in the upper castes into the domestic sphere, this separation did not imply an inferior evaluation of the domestic, since that arena was crucial to the maintenance of caste purity. The inferiority notion adds a derogatory component to the gender ideology, serving to worsen women's position. It also makes for a degraded position for women abroad when added to the imperialist ideology of Western racial superiority, for, this context of imperialism creates a notion not only of women's inferiority to men, but also of Indian women's inferiority to western women.⁶

Furthermore there is a drastic need of overhauling our own customs and traditions because to separate the devastating aspects from the points of strengths within the cultural traditions, and start using the strengths to transform the traditions. Our cultural and traditions have tremendous potential within them to combat reactionary and anti-women ideas, if we can identify their points of strengths and use them creatively.⁷

However in spite of our strong tradition and cultural values, the freedom movement of Indian subcontinent attracted all castes, creeds and classes. Nevertheless the initiates were the upper elite class women, who were encouraged by their men counterparts. Diertrich complains:

The use of religion has been ignored by women's movements as an obscurant hangover. The women's movement needs to go in to cultural question more deeply. The efforts to give women a new sense of identity beyond family, caste and religion needs to grapple

6 Liddle, J. and Joshi, R. (1986), *Daughters of Independence: Gender, Caste and Class in India*, New Delhi: Kali for Women. (cited in Shah, 2004:147).

7 Kishwar, M. (ed.) (1984), *Introduction: In Search of Answers*, London: Zed Books, Pp. 46-47. (cited in Shah, 2004:148).

with the problem of cultural identity and continuity. It is comparatively easy, according to her, to point out what has been oppressive and destructive of women in our cultural heritage. But what the protest values and humanist values of our cultural traditions are, also need to be answered if shallowness is to be avoided.⁸

There are number of studies that argue for the enormous influence of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (hereafter Gandhi) on the Indian liberation movement and his encouragement for women to take active part in street politics.⁹ Under his leadership, women creatively used traditional idioms and symbols to liberate common women from subordinate positions in the social and political system.¹⁰ However Karlekar argues that

Gandhi invented the 'tradition' of a new femininity, as the Gandhian woman, using her traditional qualities, built a new positive image of action, resistance and change. The Gandhian method of self-questioning and analysis is now being picked up by the women's movement which denies the universality of incarcerating stereotypes.¹¹

However we found so many other social and political reformers of the 19th century with the same vision for women's active role in the national cause of freedom. Nevertheless, the crucial difference is that he did not see women as objects of reform, as helpless creatures deserving charitable concern. Instead he saw them as active, self conscious agents of social change.¹² He was primarily concerned with bringing about radical reconstruction. One of

8 Diertrich, G. (1986), 'Women Movements and Religion' in *Weekly Economic and Political*, 21(4) (cited in Shah, 2004:148).

9 Mazumadar, V. (1976), 'The Social Reforms Movement in India: From Ranade to Nehru' Freedom' in B.R. Nanda (ed.), *Indian Women: from Purdah to Modernity*, New Delhi: Vikas Publishers. Jain, D. (1986), 'Gandhian Contributions towards a Theory of Feminist Ethic' in D. Jain and D. Eck (1986), *Speaking of Faith: Cross-Cultural Perspectives in Women, religion and Social Class*, New Delhi: Kali for Women. Karlekar, M. (1991) *Hinduism: Revisited: Relevance of Gandhi Today*, New Delhi: Centre for Women's Development Studies (quoted in Shah, 2004:148).

10 Shah (2004), *Social Movements in India*, p.148.

11 Karlekar, M. (1991), *Hinduism: Revisited: Relevance of Gandhi Today*,

12 *Ibid.*

the more lasting contributions of Gandhi to the women's cause was that he gave them moral legitimacy.¹³

Muhammad Ali Jinnah (hereafter Jinnah) helped create a tradition and socio-political atmosphere in which even today; hardly anyone will publically stand up and explicitly oppose women's fundamental rights or deny them participation in politics. Jinnah's action was to dignify women's social and political life by breaking down the local cultural prejudices and promoting of sympathetic awareness of women's issues, which went far beyond his views and pronouncements on women's role and place in society.¹⁴ However, Jinnah and Gandhi both endorsed the fact that women's primary function is to look after the home. They did not interrogate class based forms of patriarchal oppression of women.¹⁵ Jalal argues that Gandhi and Jinnah's reconstruction of women and femininity did not make a structural analysis of the origins and nature of exploitation of women; in fact they used essentialist arguments to reaffirm her place as mother and wife in the household.¹⁶ Empirical studies show that many organizations conceptualised culture and traditions to reinforce the traditional subservient role of women rather than their citizens' rights. This is in spite of that fact the Muslim women of the NWFP tried their best to participate in the political activities without violating religious and cultural norms. And the Frontier women were successful to some extent, but during the civil disobedience, their menfolk encouraged them to violate some of their traditional norms for the grand cause of freedom. Their culture and traditions were competently moulded to mobilise women in the public sphere without major violations of the status quo.¹⁷

13 Kishwar (1984), *Introduction: In Search of Answers*.

14 Sultana, S. (2004), *The Role of Women in Social and Political Development of Pakistan*, [unpublished doctoral dissertation] Karachi: Hamdard University.

15 Jalal, A. (1985), *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

16 *Ibid.*, 186.

17 Shah (2004), *Social Movements in India*.

Women were organised and mobilised to defend and perpetuate traditional institutions with patriarchal authoritarian structures and value systems. A poignant affirmation of the prevailing patriarchal norms and women's accepted location in the private sphere was given by Sarojini Naidu (1870-1949), a most prominent woman activist of the time.¹⁸ Naidu said:

Remember that in all great national crises it is the man who goes out, but it's the woman's hope and women's prayer that serves his arm to become a successful soldier.¹⁹

The freedom struggle in Indian subcontinent did not fully move away the women from the traditional norms of 'womenhood' set by the patriarchal cultural of the society. They successfully accomplished their roles in both the domestic and political arenas.

Many scholars examine²⁰ the role of women in the freedom struggle and highlighted the Indian women activists and their visits to the NWFP to encourage women's active participation. Most of these women delegates addressed women gatherings in a house of Khudai Kidmatgaars' members. Some scholars assert that the freedom movement helped women in their struggle for 'liberation', as feminism and nationalism were closely interrelated. The main ideology of political leadership was to engage women in the community without disturbing their social role as housewives; that was the time when male supremacy came up with a compromise and gave their women counterparts a political platform. For the first time, women were accepted in

18 *Ibid.*

19 Samarasinghe, V. (2000), 'Subverting Patriarchy? Leadership and Participation of Women in Politics in South' *Asia Ethnic Studies Report*, 18 (2) 193-213 (cited in Shah, 2004).

20 Alexander, R. (1984), 'Participation and Perceptions: Women and the Indian Independence Movement' *Journal of Women's Studies Samya Shakti* 1(2) 39-71. Basu, A. (1984) 'Gujarati Women's Responses to Gandhi, 1920-1942' *Journal of Women's Studies Samya Shakti* 1(2) 11-27. Rao, U. and Devi, M. (1984) 'Glimpses: Women Response to Gandhi (1921-1930)' *Journal of Women's Studies: Samya Shakti*, 1(2) 71-89. Kaur, M. (1980) *Role of Women in the Freedom Movement (1857-1947)*, New Delhi: Sterling (quoted in Shah, 2004: 149).

the freedom struggle as 'political comrades and given equal opportunities for participation'.²¹ Such conclusions are arrived at on the basis of a few instances rather than being based on adequate evidence.²² However Kelkar asserts that women's role in the freedom movement was that of 'helpers' rather than that of comrades.²³ Women's political mobilisation promoted the creed of non-violence of Gandhi that later followed by the Khudai Khidmatgar Movement.

Thus, women's role in the freedom struggle was in diverse in form. They were not only participating in well-organised political protests or meetings, in NWFP national anthems and *Mushairas* (poets' gatherings to share their revolutionary poems) in political party's meetings and processions to arouse people patriotic feelings and emotions and a sense that they are not free citizens of British India. All over the Indian subcontinent, countless women provided food shelters for fugitive and underground women activists, visited political prisoners, relatives and strangers during their long terms, and in myriad ways dealt with the introduction of new and external stimuli into a domain normally insulated from all of these, namely the home. Much of women's involvement in the independence movement was of this nature, based on community and home.²⁴

It is very rare in the history of various movements to find an active women's role specifically. Most of women's contributions in these movements are invisible because of the dominant roles of men in leadership positions or because they are written from male perspectives. Our argument here is that women had unique active role in the area of social and political movement that has not been fully addressed in the context of the women's movement in the NWFP. Their role has been misunderstood and has been associated with theoretical weakness in the writing of history. This does not

21 Basu (1984), 'Gujarati Women's Responses to Gandhi'.

22 Karlekar (1991), *Hinduism: Revisited: Relevance of Gandhi Today*.

23 *Ibid.*

24 Alexander (1984), 'Participation and Perceptions'.

give us a full picture of an historical account about which our future generations could be proud. It is a regretful reality that women have been invisible in the previous historiography. History (like other social sciences) is to be criticised for its deficiencies, including the fact that women have emerged with less significance than some scholars suppose is their due. Historiographers have to be questioned because of the incompleteness of their evidence and therefore, the biased and wrong explanations of social and political movements.²⁵ Now we want to listen 'Her-story', a feminist coinage from the early nineteen-seventies stressed the absence of women from 'His-story' in conventional historiography.²⁶

Some studies in the NWFP context, for example, lack authentic references and sources. As said earlier, Mirza and Sultana's thorough academic studies²⁷ bring the participation of Muslim women to the forefront particularly in Lahore, Amritsar and Delhi. However both writers mentioned only a couple of paragraphs about Frontier Zanana Muslim League (FZML) and ignored the contribution of Pukhtun nationalist women.

Therefore, in our country there is a great need for such studies not to be limited only to research on women in the leadership position. We have to correct the 'feminine invisibility' in our historical events and appreciate any role played by the women who went against the odds in the freedom struggle to demolish the myth of women's passivity in political action.

Furthermore the independence movement we examine was a mass movement aiming for broad political or social change in which women had important participations. The role of NWFP women in this struggle has been fully

25 *Ibid.*

26 Weber, A. (2006), *Feminist Peace and Conflict Theory*, <https://www.uibk.ac.at/peacestudies/downloads/peacelibrary/feministpeace.pdf> [accessed: 22-04-2016]

27 Mirza, S. (1969), *Muslim Women Role in the Pakistan Movement*, Lahore: Research Society of Punjab University and Sultana (2004), *The Role of Women in Social and Political Development of Pakistan*.

recognised and highlighted, as their struggle was for freedom from the British colonialism too, like other political parties manifestoes. The fact of Frontier nationalist women's participation does not, of course, necessarily make them solely a Pakistan movement; their affiliation with the Khudai Khidmatgar Movement was supported by All India National Congress (AINC) because the All India Muslim League (AIML) refused to extend a friendly hand to the organization in order to protect itself from the British onslaught.²⁸ There are other theories too that examine their affiliation to the AINC, but this discussion is beyond the scope of this study. We argue that regardless of the ideological differences of these political parties (FZML and Khudai Khidmatgaar), their struggle was against the slavery of foreign rule and freedom for their motherland. The women in Frontier did not lag behind in this national cause. Ilna Sen argues about women's participation in freedom movement:

Indeed if we examine the freedom struggle using yardsticks of conventional or third world feminism centering on what people see as 'narrow' or 'one dimensional' women's struggle we are often disappointed. Women in freedom movement do not strive for autonomous or independent articulation of only their women specific demands. At the same time their articulation of demands for national cause extracts pressure on the British Imperialism that the women of the nation are also aware of the importance of the freedom and they can stand shoulder to shoulder with their men counterparts.

There are some questions arise in reference to freedom movement:

- Why did women participate in the freedom struggle and other forms of political mobilisation?
- What were the socio-political factors that encouraged women's participation?
- What changes took place in the form and extent of women's participation, when a freedom movement turned into a radical movement without violating their Islamic feminism?

28 Shah, W. (2000), *Ethnicity, Islam and Nationalism: Muslim Politics in the North West Frontier Provinces 1937-47*, Karachi: Oxford University Press.

We tried to revisit the freedom movement from a gender perspective and a good sign is feminist historiographers who are developing primarily a gender based approach focusing on patriarchy. It treats women as a homogenous social group: her contribution and struggle is the same or more significant because of her double role in family and society.²⁹

Gender, on both objective and subjective levels, significantly impacts social and political movements' recruitment and mobilisation, roles played and activities performed within the movements, resistance strategies and organizational structures, and the relevance and impact of movement outcomes. As a result, taking gendered patterns into account opens up a Pandora's Box of previously unmasked questions and concerns.³⁰

Furthermore,

Feminist historiography is not the tokenist inclusion of women or the numerical or even qualitative evaluation of their participation in movements. It rethinks historiography as a whole and discards the idea of women as something to be framed by a context, in order to be able to think of gender visible in her activities.³¹

The west was the pioneer of women's activity in politics, but their struggle was more general for social equality in all fields of life. Applying this view to India, one might see the involvement of women in Indian nationalist politics as a movement of emancipation, the logical extension of social reform efforts in the 19th century such as the drive to abolish female infanticide, to raise the age of consent, and to permit widow remarriage.³² However we should be careful in application of analytical constructs cross-culturally, not to assume that another, very different society will automatically follow the pattern of the west; it has become a truism that social and political movements in South Asia involve an intriguing mixture of the particularistic and the universal, of

29 Shah (2004) *Social Movements in India*, p.157.

30 *Ibid.*

31 *Ibid.*

32 Minault, G. (1998), 'Purdah Politics: The Role of Muslim Women in Indian Nationalism, 1911-1924' in H. Pappanek and G. Minault. (eds) *Separate Worlds: Studies of Purdah in South Asia*, New Delhi: Chanakya Publications.

tradition and change.³³ Indian feminism is no exception to this rule.

Gail Minault gives us an example of a study that has shown that 'male social reformers in 19th century India met a great deal of opposition from the socially conservative and the religiously orthodox, a number of Bengali women active in political life in the early 20th century were socially accepted'³⁴

There were several reasons for this, one being that the male reformers had effected some changes which made women's participation in public life somewhat less objectionable than previously. But the main reason for such acceptance was that women themselves, as also the public, viewed their involvement in social and political movements as legitimate extension of their domestic role: faithful wife, nurturing mother, tender of hearth and home, and perpetuator of domestic ritual and custom' The Ideal of Indian womanhood' were very much a part of thinking and being of these early activist women, and their adherence to tradition while working for change rendered them acceptable, and effective.³⁵

Similarly the Muslim women participation in the Indian nationalist politics of 20th century was fascinated and surprising:

The women here discussed were not only active from behind the veil, but by not challenging *purdah* directly, they were able to stretch the confines of their separate world. They did not leave their symbolic shelter behind, but rather extended it beyond previously acceptable limits. They did so in variety of ways, but throughout they stressed certain themes: 'living up to the ideal of Islamic religion and to historic examples of Islamic womanhood, and the defense of those ideals against foreign cultural and political dominance, like their Hindu sisters, Indian Muslim women adhered to tradition while working for change.'³⁶

These remarks about the strategies of Hindu and Muslim women at the dawn of their political involvement in India raise a number of questions. The first concerns motivation:

33 *Ibid.*

34 *Ibid.*, 245.

35 Forbes, G. (1999), *Women in Modern India*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (cited in Minault, 1998: 245-46).

36 *Ibid.*, 246.

why did women participate in politics? Did female emancipation play some part in their efforts for national emancipation? If so, the above tactics would seem to be retrograde or counterproductive. It could even be asserted that Indian women subordinated their own goals to those of the nationalist movement to such an extent that feminism and nationalism seem to be in conflict.³⁷ But here again, one should be aware of applying theory too rigidly. The point we are trying to make is that those feminine goals and nationalist goals were, on the contrary, complementary. The 'feminine' strategies cited above were in fact little different from the tactics of the cultural nationalists (for aspects of cultural nationalism).³⁸ Women's involvement in politics was conditional to their acceptable social behaviour as well as that their outside activities would not negatively affect their household responsibilities. In other words men were not willing to exempt them from subordination or increase their social status. Actually, it was a compromise of the male national movement leadership, because without the support of women, the dream of the freedom will not be fulfilled.

The present book addresses some debates of NWFP women status and the mechanism that forced them into mainstream politics during the period of 1930-47. The Muslims were asserting themselves in Indian politics at the time when Muslim women were just beginning to be involved in active politics.

This time alone helps to explain the essentially traditional nature of the women's political activity, but that is not the whole story. Pukhtun Muslim women's traditional role in the family gave her distinct sphere of influence. The sharp division of labour resulting from the separate worlds of the *purdah* system also implied a moral division of labour. The woman was the locus of family honour, as well as of effective relationships. She could influence her husband by appeals to the former, or her children by appeals to the latter. She was and is also the early moulder of personality and instructor

37 *Ibid.*, 246.

38 McLane, J. (1977), *Indian Nationalism and the Early Congress*, Princeton: Princeton University Press and Cashman, R. (1975) *The Myth of the Lokamanya: Tilak and Mass politics in Maharashtra*, Berkeley: University of California Press (cited in Minault, 1998).

in basic religious observances and culture attitudes. As such, she is often in a position to lay down the law when it came to important family decisions regarding the future of its members: education, marriage, choices, concerning cultural continuity or change, or even decisions about political alliances.³⁹

We found two categories of people's movements: (1) movements that let by political parties and groups, and (2) social movements. The former examine the participation of women in the movements for their parties' ideologies. We discussed both forms of women's movements in the NWFP context *Anjuman-e-Islahi Afaghina* (Society for the Reformation of the Afghans, a non-party social movements for the eradication of social and religious evils and to educate the Pukhtun) that later emerged in the Khudai Khidmatgar a political movement and the Frontier Provincial Muslim League (FPML) (led by a political group or party). Although the former women's movement was through literary as well as street active politics while the FZML was purely active politics in NWFP.

The Freedom movement united the women of Indian subcontinent to struggle for a noble national cause. The Khudai Khidmatgar Movement encouraged their women to take active part via literary and political means, in spite of their strong Pukhtun patriarchal values. The Muslim League successfully exploited the traditional Pukhtun values to its advantage by gainfully bringing out their female workers against the Congress ministry.⁴⁰ However, those women did not infringe their norms of *purdah* observance. The women protesters were given complete freedom of speech and movement throughout the agitation. In very rare cases, expulsion orders were served asking them to leave some particular locality. No women agitators were arrested, assaulted or tortured by the Congress ministry, as it is against *Pukhtunwali* (an un-written code of life of the Pukhtuns, see Chapter 2 for further details) to cause harm to women, and they faced every provocation with patience. The unfortunate train incident that took place on April 14, 1947 was the only incident when a large number of women agitators were injured or killed (the accident has been discussed in details in chapter 6, India,

39 Minault, G. (1998), 'Purdah Politics'.

40 Shah (2000), *Ethnicity, Islam and Nationalism* and Jansson, E. (1981) *India, Pakistan or Pukhtunistan: The Nationalist Movement in North West Frontier Province 1937-1947*, Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell.

Pakistan or Pukhtunistan). This was because the Sikh train driver ignored the orders of the Deputy Commissioner of the NWFP.⁴¹

41 CID (Central Investigation Department) Police Diaries (1947), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Special Branch, Government of Khyber Pukhtunkhwah Directorate of Archives Peshawar, Bundle No.15-16, F. No.759: 27.

Chapter 2

Contextual Background of the NWFP Women, Society, Culture and Political Consciousness

NWFP Geography

The area comprising the NWFP has always played a significant role in the making of Indo-Pak subcontinent history owing to its crucial geo-political location. The province has long seen settled, but as it is situated on a highway of conquest, it has been subject to the vicissitudes of fortune over a long time. It has been overrun again and again by successive invaders. The present day NWFP of Pakistan is situated in the North West of the country between the parallels of 31.4 and 36.57 north latitude and 74.7 east longitudes. The approximate area of the province is 39,900 square miles. The greatest length of the province is 408 miles and greatest breadth is 279 miles. It has to its west and north an international border with Afghanistan. To its south lie the province of Balochistan and the Dera Ghazi Khan district of the Punjab, while Kashmir and the province of Punjab are situated to its east.

The province has three main geographical divisions, namely: (i) The cis-Indus district of Hazara; (ii) the comparatively narrow strip between the Indus and the hills constituting the settled districts of Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan and (iii) the rugged mountainous

region between these districts and the border with Afghanistan, known as the tribal belt.

The province, apart from Hazara, lies west to the Indus River, and with the exception of the Isa Khel tract adjacent to Bannu and Kohat, it encompasses all the settled trans-Indus areas south to Dera Ghazi Khan. The administrative border between the NWFP and tribal territory skirts the foothills, or *daman*, as they are locally known, of the Safed Koh and Suleiman Mountains on the west of the Indus river. The province consists of four basins, separated by mountain systems of moderate height. From north to south, they are the Peshawar valley, Kohat basin, Bannu basin and Derajat Plain. East of the Indus, Hazara forms a traditional zone between the Northern Punjab and the mountains to its north and northwest.

The terrain of the province thus ranges from lofty mountains with rugged valleys to undulating and dissected sub-mountains plateaus dominated by mountains, with the highest peaks perpetually snow-clad. East of Tirich Mir (7,700 meters), the highest peaks in the Hindu Kush, the glaciers are an impressive sight. The western mountains, on the contrary, are dry, with aridity increasing towards the south, as the height decreases.¹

The northern areas of Malakand present fascinating scenic grandeur, with differentiated terrain. The valley of Peshawar, the most useful part of the province, is a fertile plain covered with alluvium and rimmed by a piedmont area in which surface gravels predominate. Kohat is a table land formed of sandstone and limestone and dissected by streams. Bannu is a plain underlain by sandstone and conglomerates and bordered by hills. Dera Ismail Khan is, for the most part, a plain formed of an alluvium, limestone and gravels, and dissected where erosion by torrents is active. Hazara in the north-east is generally mountainous, with small plains between the ranges in its southern part. The terrain of the province is so highly diversified that

1 Kureshy, K. (2001), *Geography of Pakistan*. Lahore: National Book Service.

climatic conditions vary substantially. The mountainous areas are very cold in winter, and remain cool in summer. In the plains, the summers are hot and the winters are cold.

Population

The NWFP does not have a homogeneous population. Before 1947, the province contained a mixed population which was simplified into three-way division; as Pukhtun, non-Pukhtun Muslims and non-Muslims.² Of the three, only the first category is actually an ethnic community, as mentioned by Rittenberg. The other two consisted of a variety of tribes, castes and in the case of the non-Muslims religions. The major tribes of the province are Yousafzai, Mohmands, Afridis, Khattaks, Mahsuds, Wazir, Orakzai, Turis, Bhattani, Dawar, Bangash and Baloch. The cis-Indus district of Hazara had a mixed population of Awans, Tanavals, Dhunds, Gujars and Kashmiris, while in Dera Ismail Khan District, the Baloch and Jat tribes pre-dominate.³

In the decades before independence, the Pukhtuns accounted for 37.2 percent of the population, non Pukhtun Muslims, 54.52 percent and non Muslims, the remaining 8.16 percent.⁴ These three groups were not evenly distributed throughout the NWFP as is clear from the following table.

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- 2 Rittenberg, S. (1988), *Ethnicity Nationalism and the Pukhtuns: The Independence Movements in India's North West Frontier Province*. Carolina: Carolina Academic Press.
 - 3 Baha, L. (1978), *NWFP Administration under the British Rule 1900-1919*, Islamabad: National Commission on Historical and Cultural Research.
 - 4 *Census Report of India 1931* Vol. xv (1931), Delhi: Government of India Press, Directorate of Archives Peshawar.

Table 1.1: Distribution of Pukhtun and Non-Pukhtun by District in 1931⁵

District	Total Population	Pukhtuns	% of total	Non-Pukhtuns Muslims	% of Total	Non-Muslims	% of Total
Hazara	67,0117	54,544	8.14	582,250	86.89	33,323	4.95
Peshawar	974,321	473,738	48.62	424,945	44.64	75,638	6.74
Kohat	236,273	148,089	62.68	70,347	29.77	17,728	8.55
Bannu	270,301	159,737	59.10	77,937	28.83	32,627	12.07
D.I.Khan	274,064	69,005	25.18	166,702	60.82	38,356	14.00
Total	2,425,076	905,122	37.32	1,322,181	54.52	196,733	8.16

By themselves, these figures do not fully demonstrate the division between Hazara and Dera Ismail Khan (D.I.Khan) and the rest of the province. The distinction between Pukhtun and other Muslims in Peshawar, Kohat and Bannu was blurred by the large number of non-Pukhtuns who had been absorbed into Pukhtun society as tenants and artisans. The reverse occurred in Hazara, with many Pukhtuns discarding their old ways for those of their non Pukhtun neighbours. Deculturation was a less pronounced phenomenon in Dera Ismail Khan; however, patterns of migration had produced an internal boundary which demarcated Tank Tehsil in the north-west as distinctly Pukhtun and the rest of the district as heavily non-Pukhtun.⁶

Linguistic Division

Language serves as a better indicator of the divisions in the NWFP society than other backgrounds, like tribe or religion. Pukhtun and their dependents speak Pukhtu (an east Iranian Language) which is an integral part of their self-definition. The Pukhtun are numerically dominant group of the province. However, besides them, in Hazara and in urban Dera Ismail Khan, a mixed population of Awans, Gujars, Jats, and Balochs also resides in the province. Pukhtu or Pushtu, the language of Pukhtuns, was spoken by over 56 percent of the population of the province, followed by Hindko and other languages, together spoken by about 42 percent of the population. If one includes the tribal

5 *Ibid.*, 187-201.

6 *Imperial Gazetteer of the Dera Ismail Khan District 1884*, published under the authority of the Secretary of State for India-in-Council, Oxford University Press.

territory, however, there is a preponderance of Pukhtu, as all of the tribal population was Pukhtu-speakers.⁷

Table-1.2: Language Distribution by District in 1931.⁸

District	Pukhtu speakers	% of population	Hindko speakers	% of population
Hazara	29,735	4.44	624,268	93.31
Peshawar	781,773	80.24	127,189	13.05
Kohat	186,290	78.85	35,755	15.13
Bannu	288,381	84.49	33,547	12.41
D.I.Khan	53,643	19.60	213,115	77.76
Total	1,339,882	55.60	1,033,874	42.63

Rural Urban Division of Population

The province population was mainly rural. 84 percent of the total population resided in rural areas, while the rest lived in urban areas. The major urban centres of the province shared two common features: a disproportionate concentration of Hindus and Sikhs, and more generally, a strong non-Pukhtun character. The non-Muslims were mostly traders and merchants congregated in the towns. Almost three-fourths of the NWFP's Hindus and over seven-tenths of its Sikhs resided in urban areas. These non-Muslims accounted for 32.6 percent of the province urban inhabitants, or four times their percentage of its total population.⁹ Their urban strength was even more pronounced in the southern districts where they formed 71 percent of Bannu city and 48 percent of Dera Ismail Khan city.¹⁰

The Pukhtun's poor representation in urban areas reflected their insistence that only agriculture and fighting were honourable occupations. As Elphinstone observed,

⁷ *Census of Report India 1941*, Vol. x (1941) Delhi: Government of India Press, Directorate of Archives Peshawar.

⁸ *Census of India 1931*, Part-I, Pp. 175-76.

⁹ *Census of Report India 1941*,

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

They thought its degrading to pursue the trades which assemble men in towns. Commerce, craft and even government service were scorned in highly abusive language.¹¹

Pukhtuns believed that urban life styles were inherently inferior to their own and that any one who settled in towns invariably adopted customs and mores which fell far short of the standards set by their own social code. Most of the NWFP rural people had agriculture as a profession, with no other alternate vocation to adopt. That is why their economic condition was not so good.

Women, Society, Culture and Political Consciousness

The British wanted to suppress the freedom-loving Pukhtun; therefore, they deliberately kept them uneducated. This was so that they could move forward towards Russia without the disruption of the Pukhtun belt, as there is no difference between the Pukhtuns of NWFP and those of Afghanistan. In 1901, NWFP was separated from the Punjab and given full provincial status under the direct control of the Government of India. However, in 1932 the province was given the status of a Governor's province (having full fledged constitutional status), but before this, as a commissioner's province, its people had no legal and political rights in most of the government institutions or court procedures, and had to face regulations such as the Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR) (1872), the Murderous Outrages Act, Gazi Act (1877), or Forest Act (1911).¹² The Pukhtuns had no right to challenge these regulations anywhere, but the Pukhtun did not stop their resistance.¹³ NWFP never fell under the direct rule of British imperialism.

11 Elphinston, M. (1972), *Kingdom of Caubul*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, p.74.

12 FCR comprises a set of laws that three basic rights are not applicable to the residents of FATA – *appeal*, *wakeel* and *daleel* (respectively, the Right to Appeal detention, the Right to Legal Representation, and the Right to present reasoned evidence). MOA refers to several pieces of legislation in British India which gave the government additional powers to prosecute serious crimes such as murder. (quoted from Wikipedia) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frontier_Crimes_Regulations [23/01/2016].

13 Shah (2000) *Ethnicity, Islam and Nationalism*.

In fact, the hidden purpose behind this nefarious campaign was to gag the voice of Pukhtuns, so that when the British would advance towards Russia, according to their forward policy via Afghanistan, a Muslim country which had religious, ethnic and historic ties with Pukhtuns, the entire belt could not rise against them.¹⁴ At the same time, they were following the policy of 'divide and rule'. They had used these tactics against Sikhs and other parts of the subcontinent.

The contribution of the NWFP women towards the freedom movement of the country may be viewed in relation to the socio-cultural and geographical realities of the province. The womenfolk of the area are more backward than those of the other provinces. There are wide differences between their occupations, cultures, customs, rituals and attitudes towards life. The women of the area are less responsive to socio-political change in society than their counterparts living in other regions, mainly because of their defined role and isolation from such activities in society. It is no wonder that not many women leaders, women social reformers and women freedom fighters have emerged from this part of the country. The contribution of the women of the area to the freedom struggle is somewhat limited in comparison with other provinces of British-India. However, their contribution to the freedom struggle in the NWFP is laudable when we take into account the various limitations, socio-economic, cultural, psychological etc., under which they had to work. Thus their role in the struggle for freedom is not insignificant.

Legacy of the Past

The women of the area enjoyed constrained yet fairly high positions in the society. The society benefited from the cooperation of women in every walk of life. They made useful contributions to the society and engaged themselves in many social activities. They remained dependent upon men, yet the degree of their dependence varied according to

14 *Ibid.*

their social status. The women of lower social status were free to accept services for their livelihood. On the other hand, women belonging to higher social status were dependent on their men in many respects.

The social status of the women of NWFP suffered from the ceaseless infighting amongst different Pukhtun tribes as well as various invaders coming to India through Khyber Pass. During these wars, women remained the main sufferers on many accounts. Since the honour of the family was identified with the chastity of the women, social laws and norms concerning them became more rigid and these turned into instruments for their social isolation and backwardness. They became completely subjugated to their menfolk in the society. The situation remained the same until the introduction of modern education in the country. The history of the women's movement in the NWFP underwent some change after the British rule was firmly entrenched in the country.

Women's Status

The people of the NWFP were conservative in nature. They did not like any change in their social system. They disliked western culture. The province had been considered to be one of the most important religious centres of the Indian subcontinent.

NWFP culture, language, traditions and patriarchal values are entirely different from the rest of the surrounding Muslim majority provinces. The Pukhtuns are a traditional community; male domination is a common practice in the NWFP. The culture has more strong roots than the religion Islam, and the two overlap each other, so it is hard for an ordinary person to differentiate between them. Because they are bound to follow an unwritten code of life called *Pukhtunwali* (پښتونوالی) or perhaps because of their ritualism, tribal nature and most importantly the general belief among the inhabitants of the area about the supremacy of their

social set-up, the people are conservative.¹⁵ *Pukhtunwali* transfers from generation to generation through elderly people and all the Pukhtuns are bound to follow it. For example, a woman can be compelled to marry to her cousin to keep the land and property in the family and keep their strict *purdah* (segregation) observance, because a daughter has half of share in her father's property and they do not like to marry their daughters to strangers. Similarly, there is the tradition of 'swarra', where a woman is exchanged for family or land disputes.¹⁶

Pukhtunwali, bounds the Pukhtun by honour to respect it and to abide by its rules; otherwise he will bring disgrace not only to himself but also to his family. Though *Pukhtunwali* is much extended in its meaning and interpretations, the main characteristics of this code require a Pukhtun to offer *Melmastia* (hospitality), to grant *Nanawatey* (asylum) irrespective of their creed or caste even to his deadly enemies, and to take *badal* (revenge) to wipe out insult with insult. One of the other pillars of Pukhtun society is its reliance on the *Jirga* (assembly of elders). The *Jirga* had to perform the three fold duties of police, magistracy and justice. It maintained peace and order during disorder and anarchy. The *Jirga* was the authority for settling disputes and dispensing justice. Cases of breaches of contracts, disputes about tribal boundaries, distribution of water, claims to lands and pastures, and infringements of customs, grants or inheritance were all within the jurisdiction of *Jirga*. Its members were elected by the whole body of the Pukhtun tribe, mostly from among the *Speen Geery* (elderly persons), the persons of experience, knowledge and character. No records were kept, but the memories of the Pukhtun elders served as the record office. Though, in settled districts of the NWFP, after the annexation of the province by the British, the whole tribal system was replaced by ordinary law, it is still in practice in the tribal areas and has not lost its force and validity.¹⁷

Shah further elaborates the status of the woman under *Pukhtunwali*, her likes and dislikes, her daily practices, her movements in society and must be accompanied by her husband and very near relatives like brother, son, father,

15 Shah, W. (1998), 'Women and Politics in the Frontier 1930-1947', in *Pakistan Journal of History and Cultural*, 2 (11) Pp. 67-80.

16 Shaheen, S. (1998), *Pukhto Tappey*, Peshawar: Pukhto Academy.

17 Shah (1998), 'Women and Politics', p.69.

nephew etc). She is strictly prohibited to talk to a stranger; these rules are determined under specific codes which she is not allowed to break. Any defiance is considered dishonour and disgrace for the family leading to her chastisement, which in some cases, may result in her death.¹⁸

One such instance happened in the history of Pukhtuns folklore character Mamoonai; she was killed by her cousin-cum-husband, Sher Alam, for violating this rule. Once she was found talking to a stranger in her husband's absence who came to her door step to collect some tobacco. This made Sher Alam furious and he slaughtered Mamoonai instantly during a boiling noon of summer. The famous folk song is very famous till-date; '*Takkarna garma da Mamonai alalaweena*' (Mamoonai is going to be slaughtered in the boiling summer noon).

Furthermore it is also one of the etiquettes of the Pukhtuns to lower their eyes, gaze at the ground and step aside from the path when a woman comes across his way. Indeed Pukhtuns are so protective of the modesty and sanctity of their women that they cannot tolerate even an appreciation of the beauty or other fine attributes of their women by an outsider or a stranger. They considered such an admiration as an insult to their sense of honour.¹⁹

This male-dominated traditionalist society, which treats women as lesser than men, grants utmost respect to mothers and gives them a dignified position in the decision making of the household. The birth of a baby girl is always unwelcome and the worst dilemma of the whole affair even now is that at the time of marriage, she becomes a part of her husband's property and after his death, of his heirs.²⁰ Therefore, a woman has more secured position in her in-laws when she gives birth to more sons; otherwise polygamy is common practice to have more sons for the tribal feuds. Shah beautifully quoted a Pukhtun women's voice:

18 *Ibid.*

19 *Ibid.*, 69.

20 *Ibid.*, 118.

*You are Adam and I am Eve; I am from you,
 Then why are you so careless about me?
 The birth of a baby-girl is a day of mourning for you.
 Again and again you are cursing your fate, why is it so?
 Both daughter and son are yours,
 Then why are you happy on one's birth and sad on the other's?*

Women in Pukhtun society are generally illiterate. They are mainly allocated to household chores because men are supposed to be the financial supporters of the family. Nevertheless, they contributed to Pukhtu literature and folklore. Haleema Khattaka, the daughter of the great Pukhtu poet Khushal Khan Khattak, was one such example. Nazo Ana, mother of Mir Wais Hotak, and Zainab his daughter, were others. In addition, Neik Bakhta, daughter of Allah Dad, Zargohna Kakar daughter of Din Muhammad Kakar and Rabia Qandahri were amongst many learned writers who contributed their *Diwans*, or poetic collections, to the rich body of Afghan literature.²¹ However, these women belonged to the ruling or upper classes of the Pukhtun society. In the words of Shah, who wonderfully translated Nazo's popular quatrain;

*It was dawn, the cheeks of the narcissus were wet
 Drops after drop trickled from its eyes
 I asked: O beautiful flowers what has happened?
 She replied: My life is only for a short laugh.*²²

Women in the rural areas are more vulnerable than the women of Pukhtun urban areas. They have the double duty of keeping the household as well as help their family men in the field. Historians highlighted women as helpers in the battlefield; as auxiliaries, they are exempted from reprisal because *Pukhtunwali* does not allow Pukhtun men to attack or shoot women suppliers of food, water and ammunition.²³

21 Jehan, S. (1993), *Pakhtu Adab ke da Mirmano Brakha*, [Pukhtu] Peshawar: Pushtu Academy University of Peshawar. Also see Shah, 1998:70.

22 Shah (1998), 'Women and Politics', p.130.

23 *Ibid.*

Bravery, chivalry, and fighting skills were considered the essential characteristics of the Pukhtuns²⁴ and therefore Pukhtun women love to see these qualities in their fathers, brothers, husbands and sons. Women sing *tappi/landai* (Pukhtu odes comprising of two stanzas) to celebrate the pride of their bravery. This feminine folk genre was transferred verbally from generation to generation; it is a reflection of purely female feelings and emotions and a gender-specific genre. A Pukhtun woman does not like her husband's cowardice, but rather wants to be proud of his brave death on the battlefield:

Pa spin maidan ki darsara yam
Za Pukhtana da toro nataktam ma'ina [Pukhtu]
 (You will definitely find me with you in the battlefield
 Being a Pukhtun I am not afraid of swords).²⁵

Similarly, in the battle of Maiwand, when Malalai saw the lower self-confidence of Afghan warriors, she sung her famous *tappi* that the Pukhtun women sing to show reverence for her valour even today. Malalai's impressive action and martyrdom in the Anglo-Afghan war led to the greatest defeat in British imperial history. When the Afghan troops lost their pluck, Malalai called out:

Ka pa Maiwand kay Shaheed Nashway
Khudaigo laaliya benangaye la day sateen [Pukhtu]
 (Young love if you do not fall in the battle of Maiwand;
 By God someone is saving you as a token of shame)²⁶

Malalai told her young countrymen that to die as a martyr is much better than to live like a slave of British imperialists, which would be a shame to Pukhtun honour. She exhorted them to fight back for the liberation of their land. These words instilled new spirit in the young Afghan

24 *Ibid.*

25 *Ibid.*, 70.

26 Rahimi, F. (1986), *Women in Afghanistan*, Kabul: Liestal. (cited in Shah, 1998:70)

soldiers. They reunited and attacked with their full strength and defeated the enemy. Furthermore, when the flag bearer died, she jumped into the fray, took the flag and sang:

*Khal ba da weyarr la veeno kigdam
Chi shinki bagh ki gulgulab o sharmaveena [Pukhtu]*

*(With a drop of my sweetheart's blood,
Shed in defence of the Motherland,
Will I put a beauty spot on my forehead?
Such as would put to shame the rose in the garden).²⁷*

Another place a Pukhtun woman declares her fidelity, trust and love such as:

*Sorey sorey pa golo rashey
Da benagai aawaz de ramasha ma'ina
Sorey sorey pa golo rashey
Chi perharona de gandam khula darkaoma
Sorey sorey pa golo rashey
Pa tar da zulfo ba kafan darta gandama [Pukhtu]*

*May you come riddled with bullets?
The news of your dishonour, cowardice may not reach me.
May you come riddled with bullets?
By kissing your wounds I will be praising your courage
May you come riddled with bullets?
I will be sewing your shroud with my tresses.²⁸*

A Pukhtun woman always promises her husband of not quitting from the battlefield because of the fear of swords. Even though she accepts her husband's death in the

27 Translation quoted from Wikipedia Retrieved from:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malalai_of_Maiwand [accessed: 12/12/13].

28 Shah, W. (2007), 'Women and Politics in the North West Frontier Politics 1930-1947', in *North West Frontier Province: History and Politics*, Islamabad: National Institute of Culture and Research, Pp. 117-132, (p. 119).

battlefield if he dies courageously for the freedom of his motherland, but does not accept his defeat:

*Pa Hindustan de salley jorr sha
Da benaggi aawaaz de ramasha ma'ina [Pukhtu]*

*You may die and buried in war at India
But I will not tolerate your escape from the battlefield*

*That males have accepted their death, and wives
may be blinded as they do not accept to be a widow.*

A sister encouraged her brother in following *tappa*:

*Brother is going to war and sister is soothing his
sword and accompanying with him.*

*Adoring her brother's gun she says that I love your
gun and decoration of the hilt is the art of your sister.*

According to Henderson;

Rajput women shared some characteristics of Pukhtun women, such as Rajput women of Udaipur, Rajasthan and the Pukhtun women of south western India are aspired to become the perfect wives. As a 'good wife', a woman devotes herself to her husband's welfare through her performance of religious ritual, household duties, and chastity. In extremity, she must strap on a sword and go to battle. In less dramatic mode, she contradicts, shames, or curses her husband if necessary to force him to do his duty. Through self-sacrifice, duty, and honor, a woman accrues virtue, which protects the family. She is a domestic warrior for its prosperity and the health of its members.²⁹

In general Pukhtun society, there is always a process of motivation from mothers, sisters and wife or lovers to fight against the enemy. However, wars for the independence against the foreign rule were considered as an honour of

29 Henderson, E. (1954), *Culture and Customs of India*, London: Greenwood, p. 124.

Pukhtu or *Pukhtunwali*, as depicted in the following *tappi*³⁰ of their motivation for war and patriotism:

*O my lover guard the candle of independence and
freedom on your life cost
so that people will pilgrim your grave. And you will be
remembered after your death.*

*O my lover it is better to see you dead than hearing
the news of your showing your back in war.*

*War has been imposed on my country; I will fight
even if I am destroyed along with my children.*

The following translation of a *tappa* is regarding to the Kashmir war:

*I have unquestioned confidence on my Allah that is
why I am going for Kashmir war bare hand.*

Another interesting imagery *tappa* with reference to Pukhtun and British fight in Chitral:

*London is far away from Chitral but due to extreme
shame, cowardice and dishonour British are moving to
Chitral.*

A *tappa* in reference to fight of Pukhtun and Indian in Deccan:

*O' my lover it would be better to become a heap of dust
in far-flung Deccan than the news of your cowardice
flight from the fight.*

*O' my mother give me my small sword; there is a
war on my religion and I will martyr myself for it.*³¹

30 These *tappi* are quoted from Shaheen (1998) *Pukhto Tappey*.

These are some of a huge collection of *tappi* in Pukhtu literature. It is evident that a Pukhtun man does not compromise to be a slave or to be dominated by foreign rule. The historical account of the NWFP is full of events where the Pukhtun sacrifice everything for the sake of religion, country and self esteem. The same is the case of Pukhtun women: they are not only the driving and motivating force behind all this courage and chivalry, but they face all the troubles and hardships of war with unwavering courage and bravery and pay their roles in these wars.

We also cannot ignore the earlier courageous Pukhtun ruler of Hindustan, Razia Sultana who ruled over India in the 18th century. Pourzand mentioned some of the royal Pukhtun women such as Mahasty, who was jailed in the 10th century for her outspoken views and Queen Gohar Shad, who ruled over Herat (15th Century) and is known to have been a very strong and cultured woman. Bibi Zainab, a well-known powerful Pukhtun woman, was actively involved in the affairs of the Royal Court of Afghanistan in the 18th century. She explicitly supported educating the harem women. Queen Bobo Jan trained the women of her court in military skills.³² Furthermore, Rubina Balkhi, was a famous Pukhtun poetess from 10th century, who featured certain historical narratives inspite of strict patriarchy in the area.³³

The Rise of Women's Education

The backward condition of the NWFP women was mainly due to official negligence and local apathy towards modern education. There was no government college or an institution for technical education in the Frontier region until the end of 19th century. Two colleges, Edwards College

31 All these *tappi* are quoted from Khalil, H. (nd) *Pashtoon Culture in Pushtu Tappa*, Islamabad: NIHCR.

32 Pourzand, N. (2003) *A tapestry of resistance: Afghan educated refugee women in Pakistan: 'agency', identity and education in war and displacement*. London: University of Greenwich.

33 Dupree, N. (1988), *The Women of Afghanistan*, Islamabad: UNOCHA.

(1901) and Islamia College (1913) were later on established in the province. However, the total enrolment on the part of the NWFP Muslim community was very low. Although the Muslims constituted 92 percent of the total population, only 11.7 percent of the school-age boys were Muslims,³⁴ while the percentage of Hindu and Sikh children attending the same institutions was 36.6 percent and 22.3 percent respectively.³⁵

The situation of women's education was even worse. There were some girls' high schools but they were mainly run by non-Muslims. Due to their educational superiority, the Hindus and Sikhs occupied most of the government jobs. They also dominated the legal and medical professions.³⁶ Thus, in the field of education, trade and commerce, the Frontier Muslims were dominated by the minority Hindu and Sikh community of the province.

Shabbir criticised the British government for doing nothing to improve the status of women in British India. However, they tried to enforce western norms and ideals, some of which were against the traditions and customs of India.³⁷ The colonizers claimed to be morally progressive and cultured, asserting that they protected the rights of every citizen living in India and promoted equality, irrespective of their gender. In this sense, many British rulers professed to be more civilized than Indians and more liberal in granting equal rights to women. However, in actuality it seems that the British government did not concern themselves much with the condition of women, although the reform efforts of particular individuals must not be ignored.³⁸ The socio-political consciousness of the people in general and women

34 Baha (1978), *NWFP Administration under the British Rule*.

35 *Ibid.*

36 Rauf. A. (2006), 'Socio-Educational Reform Movements in NWFP - A Case Study of Anjuman-i-Islahul Afaghina' *Pakistan Journal of History & Culture*, 27(2), Pp. 31-60.

37 Shabbir, S. (2011) 'Struggle for Muslim Women's Rights in the British India (1857-1947)' *Pakistan Vision*, 12 (2), 35-70.

38 *Ibid.*

in particular was awakened in the NWFP with the gradual spread of western education among the population.

Western education came to the NWFP rather late in comparison to the other parts of India owing to a number of factors. It was many years after the British conquest of the NWFP that modern education, which was in fact 'western education' spread among the people. Of course, the first attempts in this direction had been made by the Christian Missionaries, but western education had no immediate effects on the NWFP. The status of women did not improve much with the opening of the Frontier society to modernity. According to the Census Report of 1911, the proportion of the females' population in the NWFP was 817 women per 1000 males.³⁹ It reached 843 females per 1000 males in 1931 (Census Report, 1931). 58 per 1000 males of all religions were literate, compared to only 6 per 1000 females.⁴⁰ Only one Muslim female out of 1000 in the Frontier was able to read and write.⁴¹

Table-1.3: Education by religion, sex and locality⁴²

District and natural division	<i>Hindu</i>		Mohammedan		<i>Christian</i>		<i>Sikh</i>	
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Hazara	392	41	17	1	858	676	321	59
Peshawar	340	124	27	1	915	616	450	180
Kohat	330	21	28	1	818	730	578	67
Bannu	351	13	22	--	603	639	572	90
Dera Ismail Khan	442	44	32	1	834	683	465	109

There was a slight improvement in later years, which was regarded by the government as wonderful progress during forty years of women's education. The number reached to 12 per 1000: 2 in Peshawar, 2 in Kohat, 2 in Bannu, 2 in Dera Ismail Khan and 2 in Hazara. The main difficulty, however, according to the Census Report of 1921,

39 *Census Report of India 1911*, Vol. xiii, (1912), NWFP, Directorate of Archives Peshawar.

40 *Census Report of India 1931 (1931)*.

41 *Ibid.*

42 *Census of India 1911* Vol. xiii, (1912) p.188.

was that the elementary instructions given in primary schools does not teach a girl more than to read and write letters, which is not helpful to her in the management of her house. Even so, she often is a source of suspicion and jealousy to her husband and elder female relatives. On the other hand, the Report continued, 'Secondary education, which is generally of secular nature, is supposed to have a baleful effect on the religious side of her character to create a desire for such social environment as are not available in an ordinary Indian household'.⁴³ The popular view was that women's education should be one which would develop among women a strong religious and moral character and make them useful wives and mothers in the social grade to which they belong.

The local prejudices against women's education were so great that the government also paid very little attention to it. In 1901-02, there were only 8 government-recognized primary schools for girls in the entire province, with a total number of 491 students who were mostly non-Muslims, belonging to the families of government servants and businessmen. There was no secondary school for girls until 1906, when Arya Knaya school of Dera Ismail Khan was raised to the status of middle school. The number of girls' primary schools increased from 24 to 45 in 1920-21, middle schools from 2 to 4, high schools from 0 to 2. Girls' high schools, the Church of England Zanana Mission High school at Peshawar, and the Gobind Girls High School at Abbottabad, were non-governmental institutions; only small annual subsidies of Rs. 7296 and Rs 5988 respectively were given to them by the government. The curriculum besides reading and writing consisted of some needle work (knitting and embroidery) and in 1920-21, it was revised and domestic science which was to form the chief function of a girl in her later life was introduced. There was no college,

43 *Census Report of India 1921*, Vol. xiv (1921) Delhi: Government of India Press, Directorate of Archives Peshawar, p. 182.

and it was in 1930-31 that one female from the province passed the BA examination from Punjab University.⁴⁴

The inhabitants of the province felt the need of a government high school, as most of the people were unwilling to send their daughters to a mission school. On 27th May 1932, a resolution was moved by Meher Chand Khanna, the minority representative in the NWFP Legislative Council, demanding that the government open a high school for girls in Peshawar. He said that 'the education of boys and girls should go hand in hand. We should not starve one to feed the other'.⁴⁵ In consequence of such struggle and long standing demand, a girls' high school was created in 1933, when on the 15th May Lady Griffith Girls High School Peshawar started its classes for the female students of the province. In spite of having orthodox and conservative feelings about western education, people sent their daughters to school. In the second decade of the 20th century, education reached a significant phase of development in the NWFP but still women's education was very much neglected. Despite the initiative for co-education taken by the Christian Missionaries in the earlier days, very few women benefited from education because of poverty and the conservative nature of Pukhtun society.

Another reason that contributed to the slow progress of women's education was the unavailability of qualified female staff. Society at large looked down upon female education. In the orthodox Pukhtun society, where the general public was against female education, it is needless to expect anything worthwhile to report regarding the progress of women's education. In 1845, the Government of India recognized the importance of women education by making the provision in the Wood Dispatch on Education of the year which partly reads like the following:

The importance of female education in India cannot be over rated and we have observed with pleasure the evidence which is now

44 *Ibid.*

45 Khanna, M. (1937), *NWFP Legislative Council Debates*, 1(10), Pp. 73-89, Directorate of Archives Peshawar.

afforded of an increased desire on the part of many of the natives of India to given good education to their daughters.⁴⁶

Charles Wood, 1st Viscount Halifax GCB PC (1800-1885), known as Sir Charles Wood, 3rd between 1846 and 1866, was a British Liberal politician and Member of Parliament. He served as Chancellor of the Exchequer from 1846 to 1852. As the President of the Board of Control, Wood did a yeoman's job in spreading education in India, when in 1854 he sent a dispatch to Lord Dalhousie, the then Governor-General of India.⁴⁷ It was recommended therein that:

- An education department be set up in every province.
- Universities on the model of the University of London be established in big cities such as Bombay, Calcutta and Madras.
- At least one government school be opened in every district.
- Affiliated private schools be given grants.
- The Indian natives be given training in their mother tongue also.

In accordance with Wood's dispatch, education departments were established in every province and universities were opened at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras in 1857, in the Punjab in 1882, and in Allahabad 1887.

However, in the case of the NWFP this had no immediate effect on the people for growth and development of education due to the scarcity of funds, most of which were spent on the Punjab, and due to the apathy of the orthodox Pukhtuns towards the spread of western education.

In the NWFP, as elsewhere in India, the growth of national and political consciousness was facilitated mainly due to the rise of an educated middle class. This enlightened

46 Wood Dispatch (1884) quoted from en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Wood,_1st_Viscount_Halifax [accessed: 21/08/13].

47 *Ibid.*

and educated class remained instrumental in moulding social, religious, political and literary aspects of the Pukhtun life. These educated people, including Ghaffar Khan (commonly known as Bacha Khan), Abdul Qayyum Khan and other like-minded individuals, devoted their lives for the larger interests of the society and took initiatives to reform the then backward Pukhtun society. Their influences were also reflected on the womenfolk.

The educated middle class of the province threw up a fairly good number of women pioneers who were responsible for the growth of a socio-political consciousness among women in the province. Women consciousness in the area was due to an influential role played by the All India Congress Committee (AICC), because the role of Gandhi and AICC on the NWFP nationalistic politics cannot be ignored, especially during the civil disobedience tactics.⁴⁸ They were in fact instrumental in the growth of nationalism and patriotism in the NWFP. Their impact on society in general and on women in particular was immediately felt, because due to their reformative zeal; they crusaded against social evils among women.⁴⁹

They took the crucial steps for the gradual growth of the women's movement during the freedom struggle of the country. Durmarjan, Mehrun Nisa, Alaf Jan Khattaka, Sayeda Bushra Begum, Nagina Begum, Begum Qazi Mir Ahmad Khan, Begum Zari Sarfaraz, Begum Shireen Wahab, Begum Hamdam Kamal ud Din, Begum Nazir Tila Mohammad, Miss Jamila Sharif Hussain, Fahmida Sharif Hussain, Begum Sardar Jaffar and many others were the active participants of that struggle. They took the lead to awakening the women population in the NWFP.

The printing press played an important role in creating a powerful public opinion and thus led to the gradual growth of nationalism and women consciousness in the subcontinent as well as in the NWFP. Christian Missionaries were the

48 Shah, W. (1992), *Muslim League in NWFP*, Karachi: Royal Book Company.

49 *Ibid.*

pioneers in setting up the modern press to popularise Christianity in the subcontinent, however in the NWFP, both press and journalism too came later, like western education. In 1902-03, there were only three vernacular newspapers: *Tuhfa-i-Sarhad* (issued by Bannu Mission), the *Frontier Gazetteer*, and *Daulat-i-Hind* as against 209 vernacular, Anglo-Vernacular and English newspapers in the Punjab.⁵⁰ In 1905, the *Frontier Advocate* and in 1909 the *Afghan* came into existence; *Bangi-Haram*, *Shahbaz*, *Sada-i-Sarhad*, were the other prominent newspapers of that time.⁵¹ However, the monthly Pukhtu journal, *Pukhtun* played a significant role in moulding public opinion. Sayeda Bushra Begum, Alaf Jan Khattaka and many others took the initiative and wrote about various problems concerning education, political issues, social evils, customs, traditions and freedom struggles of the area. Initially, most of the articles contributed by Pukhtun women were published in the *Pukhtun* journal without disclosing their identity. They shied away from giving their names, and instead used pseudo names like *Yava Khor* (A Sister). Later on, a reasonable number of women belonging to the intelligentsia contributed to the growth of Pukhtu literature. They criticised the unfair customs of society which were the major obstacles in uplifting women's status in the NWFP. A spirit of revolution is clearly discernible in the best of their works. Their attempts, no doubt, ultimately gave rise to an enlightened public opinion and in spite of the hostile opposition from the orthodox section; awareness of the necessity and importance of female education and of the need for elimination of the social evil grew in Pukhtun society. It is no wonder that the sustained efforts of the women of the NWFP, a well organised women's movement, started during the freedom movement era.

50 Baha (1978), *NWFP Administration under the British Rule*.

51 Rauf (2006), 'Socio-Educational Reform Movements', p.6.

Chapter 3

Historical and Political Awakening of the NWFP

The NWFP has a very long and chequered history. It has a unique geo-strategic location. Every invader except the British came through the easily negotiable passes of this province. The historical record goes back to 518 BC, when the region was conquered by the Persian ruler Darius Hystaspes. It remained part of the Persian Empire until 359 BC.¹ These areas were under the Macedonian suzerainty that established by Alexander. Soon afterwards, it came under Mauryan rule. This was the time of the ancient state of Gandhara, in which the amalgamation of Buddhism, fostered by the Mauryan ruler Asoka, blended with Grecian art forms to produce unique sculptures and a high level of culture. Mauryan rule was followed successively by the Bactrians, Sakas, and Parthians in the early years of the Christian era, and later on by the Kushans. Thereafter, the Sassanid dynasty of Persia established hegemony about 226 AD and dominated the area until the incursions of the Huns began in the third quarter of the 5th century.²

Muslim rule began with the conquests of Subuktigin in AD 998. Subuktigin's son, Mahmud of Ghazni, invaded the area a number of times between 1001 and 1027. He was

1 *Census Report of India 1912*, Vol. xi, (1912) NWFP, Directorate of Archives Peshawar, p.7.

2 Kureshy (2001), *Geography of Pakistan*.

followed by other Muslim rulers who ruled India till 1526. Then the Mughals invaded the subcontinent and established their rule for the next two centuries. Their hold on the north-west was, however, weakened by the invasion of Nadir Shah of Persia in 1739.³ Then the area passed into the hands of Sikhs, and later, the British.

The British rulers of India realised the importance of the region and treated the Frontier as the most vulnerable point of the British Indian territories, because who ever held this strategic area could easily challenge British imperial authority. The British Indian government, in order to strengthen its hold over the area divided the province into two administrative units: settled and tribal areas. The first included districts of Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu, Hazara and Dera Ismail Khan (Mardan was also included in the district of Peshawar, and was later raised to the status of a separate district in 1936) while the second administrative unit consisted of five political agencies namely, Malakand, Kurram, Khyber, North and South Waziristan. Each of these districts was under a Deputy Commissioner, while the political agencies were under the control of the Chief Commissioner and each was administered by a political Agent.⁴

The province was not given full-fledged provincial status until 1901, when it was separated from the Punjab. It was under the direct control and supervision of the Government of India, the legislative authority was vested in the Central Legislature and the Governor General had the power to promulgate any ordinance and regulation. After its separation from the Punjab, the executive head of the province was given the title of Chief Commissioner. This practice continued until 1932, when the province was given the status of a full-fledged Governor's province, on par with the other provinces of British India.⁵

3 *Ibid.*, 6.

4 *Ibid.*

5 For more details see, Shah, (2000) *Ethnicity, Islam and Nationalism*.

The local inhabitants resented the situation, and spoke as if they were living in a *Serzamin-e-Be Aayeen* (a 'land without law') and opposed the British authority. They challenged British rule through armed resistance. Slowly and gradually, they also resorted to modern political techniques. They challenged British rule through all possible legal and political means. This urge for freedom and hatred of foreign rule was so widespread among the NWFP people that even their womenfolk participated both in armed and political struggle.

As a consequence of the British forces' victory over the Sikhs in the mid-19th century, the settled districts of the present day NWFP came under the British control in 1849.⁶ The transfer of power from the Sikhs to the British stirred up troubles all through the area. The NWFP inhabitants who had already waged a war against the Sikh rulers continued their struggle against the British troops. During 1849-1857, when there was less resistance in other parts of India, about seventeen expeditions were sent against the NWFP. These included campaigns against the Yousafzai of Swat (1849), Afridis of Kohat (1950), Maranzais (1851), Mohmands (1851-52), Hosannas (1852-53), the Machine Mohmands (1854), Akakhel Afridis (1855), Maranzais and Orakzais (1856) and Turis (1856).⁷

The year 1857 proved to be an eventful year in Indian history. A mass resistance against the British authority spread throughout India. This mass movement became an open revolt and the British authority was challenged in the subcontinent. The people of the Frontier also played their part in this movement. The *Mujahideen* of Swat and Sitana had a major role in it. They were followers of *Sar Toor Faqir* (the '*Mad Mullah*' in official records) who had launched a war against the British rulers. They joined hands with the *Mujahideen* in their battle against the foreign rule. Following

6 Khan, A. (2000), *The Role of NWFP in the Freedom Struggle*, Lahore: Research Society of Pakistan.

7 For more details of these expeditions see Khan (2000), *The Role of NWFP in the Freedom Struggle*.

the locals, the 55th and 64th Bengal Native Infantry, stationed at Mardan and Nowshera revolted. The 55th Infantry of Mardan deserted and proceeded towards Swat and joined the anti-government forces. While the Nowshera column was disarmed, the Mardan Infantry caused considerable problems for the British troops.⁸ The anti-British movement was gaining momentum with each passing day when news of the fall of Delhi to the British forces in September 1857 brought a resultant quietness to the NWFP region.

Freedom Struggle after the War of Independence (1857)

After the great upheaval of 1857, which failed to drive the British out of India, the freedom struggle acquired a different socio-political, economic and educational character throughout the subcontinent. However, the people of the NWFP, still encouraged by the *Mujahideen* movement, continued challenging the British authorities. During 1859-60, the Wazirs of Bannu and Thal were reported in arms against the British followed by Mahsud in 1860 who kept the British on the defensive for well over a decade.⁹ This period also includes two major confrontations at Ambela in 1863, when the *Mujahideen*-sponsored *jihad*, joined by the Yousafzais, Mohmands and other Pukhtun tribes, brought heavy casualties on both sides. It was repeated by another bloody war in 1868 in the Hazara valley, called 'Black Mountains' in the Kala Daka area around Oghi, Mansehra.¹⁰ The rising of Bizotis (1868), Tochi (1872), Jawakis (1877) before the commencement of the Second Anglo-Afghan War (1878) are important issues of the tribal outbursts during the latter half of the 19th century.¹¹ During the Second Anglo-Afghan War, the Utmankhel, Zaka Khel Mohmand, Zamin Khel and Zaka Khel Afridis caused considerable worry to the British authorities in the NWFP. The matter did not close with

8 *Ibid.*

9 Zafar, F. (ed.) (1991), *Finding Our Way, Reading on Women in Pakistan*, Lahore: ASR Publications.

10 *Ibid.*

11 Khan (2000), *The Role of NWFP in the Freedom Struggle*.

British occupation and re-occupation of the area, but there are on record more or less sixteen tribal uprisings till the end of the century against the Raj. This includes three significant uprisings in the year 1897, including the uprising at Malakand, in Mohmand area and by the Afridis of Tirah.¹² In short, around fifty significant tribal risings took place during the 19th century against the Raj and about fifty more are recorded by the British historians till the end of their rule in 1947.¹³

The NWFP Resorts to Modern Political Techniques

The NWFP formed part of the Punjab in 1901. Special laws and regulations were enforced in this province. The Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR), under which people could be sentenced without being brought before a court of law, was a mockery of justice.¹⁴ Pro-British landlords were invited to act as *Jirga* members, to try people even for serious offences like murder. Then the Murderous Outrages Act or Gazi Act (1877) was promulgated, under which a man could be hanged for attempting the murder of a British. No person from outside the province with national sympathies was allowed to cross the Indus. Such men were either turned back or arrested. Elections were unknown even in the Municipalities and District Boards.¹⁵

Even after the separation of the NWFP from the Punjab, the British Indian authorities preceded to set up a military regime of the most rigid type in the province. Military officers were placed in charge of the civil administration in the tribal belt and in various districts of the NWFP. Ruthless and repressive laws were at once promulgated. The FCR was readily used for political repression. The British attitude towards the people ushered in an era of estrangement between the British and the local people. Mutual suspicions destroyed natural contacts and the people had to depend on

12 *Ibid.*

13 Baha (1978), *NWFP Administration under the British Rule*.

14 Khan, A. (1945), *Gold and Guns on Pathan Frontier*, Bombay: Hind Kitab.

15 *Ibid.*

political organizations if their views and wishes were to be known by the authorities. However, the British ruled the Province with an iron hand. They preferred to rely on their own administrative efficiency and the British sense of justice, which, they thought, was good enough to resolve social and other conflicts in the society. The Pukhtuns, in their view, required a special course of treatment:

It was repeatedly given out that the Pathan was a mad fanatic, almost a savage animal, and if for no other reason, at least for the sake of his neighbours, in the Indus valley, he must be subdued. The Frontier was linked to a gun powder magazine and to introduce reforms in such a land as this, it was asserted, was like holding a match to the gunpowder and the explosion was of course inevitable.¹⁶

The British efforts to keep the people of the province away from legislative politics, and to rule them through their special laws and regulations, caused considerable anger and frustration among the inhabitants of the NWFP. Many factors were contributing to arouse public feelings against the British. Religious and political leaders gradually started to incite the people against the British authorities. As a result political arrests were made: for example, Pandut Amir Chand, who was on his way back to home after attending a Congress meeting on 15th May 1907, was arrested and imprisoned in Peshawar, which was the first political arrest in the NWFP.¹⁷

Until the beginning of the 20th century there was no organised political movement in the province. However, the people of the NWFP had begun to respond to the nationalist feelings stirring in other parts of India and the surrounding countries from the very day of the formation of the NWFP. The vanguard of nationalist politicians of the NWFP was mostly composed of Hindus, some of whom were already in

16 Khan. P. (1995), *Frontiers Contribution in the Making of Pakistan*. [unpublished doctoral dissertation] Peshawar: Area Study Center, University of Peshawar, p.21.

17 Yousafzai. N. (1998), *The Rise of Awami National Party from Provincialism to National Politics*. [unpublished MPhil dissertation] Islamabad: National Institute of Pakistan Studies, Quaid-i-Azam University, p.69.

touch with the Congress since the NWFP separation from the Punjab in 1901. Organised political activities in the NWFP started in 1906. Ram Chandra Bhargavaj laid the foundation of the Provincial Congress in February 1907.¹⁸ The NWFP administration suppressed the movement immediately. The leaders were arrested and detained for one year under the FCR.¹⁹

In 1912, a few educated Muslim youth of the Peshawar city decided to establish a local chapter of AIML in the NWFP. Ali Abbas Bokhari was keen on establishing a branch of the Muslim League in Peshawar. The secret police diary record of Peshawar Archives dated 15th February 1913, informs that an organization with the name of Frontier Muslim League (FML) had been formed. This means that the exact date of the formation of FML, according to official sources was between 8th and 15th February 1913. However, some other circles give the date of its formation as 1912.²⁰

The early organisers of the FML included Mian Abdul Aziz as president, Qazi Abdul Wali Khan, vice president, Ali Abbas Bokhari, general secretary, Qazi Mir Ahmad, joint secretary, and Hakim Muhammad Amin, as treasurer.²¹

Qazi Mir Ahmad's *balakhana* (upper storey) at the Qissa Khwani Bazar, Peshawar, which he used as his law chamber, was made office of the Provincial Muslim League.²² The initial meetings of the party were held at this office and some at Mohabat Khan Mosque, but later on

18 Rittenberg, S. (1988) *Ethnicity Nationalism and the Pukhtuns: The Independence. Movements in India's North West Frontier Province*, Carolina: Carolina Academic Press.

19 *Ibid.*

20 CID (Central Investigation Department), Police Diaries (1913) *Muslim League in NWFP*, Government of NWFP Directorate of Archives Peshawar, Bundle No. 764, Diary No. 244, p.3.

21 Yousafzai. N. (1998), *The Rise of Awami National Party*. and Sabir S. (1990) *Tehreek-i-Pakistan Mai Sarhad Ka Hissa*. [Urdu] Peshawar: University Book Agency.

22 Shah (1992), *Muslim League in NWFP*.

Islamia Club Hall, Peshawar, became centre of their activities.²³

The organisers were trying to consolidate the nascent FML against hostility from the government.²⁴ They tried to establish contacts with the Muslim leaders at the pan-India level. Both Ali Abbas Bokhari and Mian Abdul Aziz participated in the Agra session of the AIML in 1913.²⁵ However, the first formal contacts between the FML and the AIML took place when Ali Abbas Bokhari wrote a lengthy letter to Wazir Hassan, general secretary of AIML in 1914 about the conditions under which the FML was working in the NWFP. Ali Abbas Bokhari then represented the FML as a delegate to AIML's Bombay session held in 1915.²⁶ The party was however, suppressed by the provincial government under the FCR. Also, with the commencement of the First World War and the consequent developments, the major actors in the play vacated the scene of activity. Distressed at Government tactics, Ali Abbas Bokhari migrated to Afghanistan on 1st March 1917.²⁷ His father Mahmood Shah addressed a letter to this effect to Zahoor Ahmad, then general secretary AIML, telling the tale of Bokhari's flight to Kabul.²⁸ Qazi Wali, who had started his career like his father as a Pukhtu teacher to the British officials stationed at Peshawar, left India in 1919 with the intention to return to a free India only. He spent the rest of his life in Afghanistan, Turkey and Europe and finally returned to Pakistan in 1959, where he breathed his last.²⁹ Abdul Aziz changed the centre of his activities from Peshawar to other major cities of India and finally to London,

23 NDC (National Documentation Centre) (1912), *Muslim League in NWFP*. Microfilm Roll No: 227-228.

24 Shah (1992), *Muslim League in NWFP*.

25 NDC (1912), *Muslim League in NWFP*.

26 NDC (1915), *Muslim League in NWFP*. Microfilm Roll No: 229-230.

27 *Ibid*.

28 Khan (2000), *The Role of NWFP in the Freedom Struggle*, p.18.

29 Sabir S. (1990) *Tehreek-i-Pakistan Mai Sarhad Ka Hissa*, [Urdu] Peshawar: University Book Agency.

where he died in 1946. Qazi Mir Ahmad joined the government judicial services, dissociated himself publically from politics, but remained otherwise concerned with political affairs, particularly the Muslim politics in the NWFP. Glimpses of his yearnings are found in the political activities of his wife Umatul Rauf commonly known as Begum Qazi Mir Ahmad in the FZML.³⁰

Efforts for Political Awakening in Rural Areas of NWFP

With the suppression of political tendencies in the urban areas, the centre of political activities shifted to the rural areas. In the rural areas of the province the most gallant effort was made by Fazli Wahid (popularly known as Haji Sahib of Turangzai). He was born in Charsadda in 1856. He belonged to a religious family, and had a few years of formal education. In his quest for spiritual attainment, he is reported to have met Najmuddin Hadda Mullah of Ningrahar (Afghanistan), a man of divine influence, and Maulana Mahmud-ul-Hassan at Deoband. This was followed by pilgrimage to Makkah. Haji Sahib of Turangzai set himself to fight a dual war: the eradication of social evils from Pukhtun society and to struggle against the British presence in India. He died in 1937.³¹ He was the first political figure in the NWFP to turn from armed resistance to new political methods. This militant-religious man of the Mohammadzai clan participated in the anti-British war in 1897. He came back to Charsadda in 1908 and resorted to new political methods in order to mobilise the rural Pukhtuns against the British rule.³² He tried to collect the Pukhtuns on the platform of *Shariah* (Islamic law). He worked on social and religious reforms. He also founded some *madaress* (the plural form of *madrassa*, an Islamic educational institute) to impart a purified version of Islam to Pukhtun children. However, after the commencement of World War I, under the threat of arrest,

30 Sabir, S. (nd), *Shakhsyat-e-Sarhad*. [Urdu] Peshawar: University Book Agency.

31 Javid, A. (nd), *Tehreek-i-Pakistan main Khwateen ka Kirdar* [Urdu], Peshawar: Aziz Publishers.

32 Rittenberg (1988), *Ethnicity Nationalism and the Pukhtuns*.

he once again fled to the tribal areas in 1915.³³ Eventually, he settled in the Mohmand area, and from there he launched a campaign against the British with the help of his followers. The authorities closed his Islamic schools and his movement for social change also collapsed.³⁴ From the settled area he found two devoted followers; namely, Fazal Mohammad Makhfi, a revolutionary Pukhtu poet and Ghaffar Khan, who later on became the central figure of NWFP politics for years to come.

During World War I, political activities were not allowed in the NWFP. However, as political unrest spread in India, people of the province, particularly in the Peshawar Valley could not remain indifferent and distant.³⁵ The apparent isolation from main Indian political currents came to an end in the years that followed World War I. In 1919, the NWFP people moved to the forefront of nationalist politics in India. The British Government, in order to curb the revolutionary activities in India enacted the Rowlatt Act.

The Act, passed by the Imperial Legislative Council in London on 10 March 1919, indefinitely extended 'emergency measures' (of the Defence of India Regulations Act) enacted during the World War I in order to control public unrest and root out conspiracy. Passed on the recommendations of the Rowlatt Committee, named after its president, British judge Sir Sidney Rowlatt, this act effectively authorised the government to imprison for up to two years, without trial, any person suspected of terrorism living in the Raj and gave the imperial authorities the power to deal with revolutionary activities. The imposition of the Act was strongly condemned throughout the country. Like other parts of India, the Frontier people also protested. The Anti-Rowlatt Act agitation had a strong impact on the local people.³⁶

The Third Anglo-Afghan War (1919) added further fuel to the already tense situation. The NWFP inhabitants supported their fellow Pukhtuns living on the other side of

33 *Ibid.*

34 *Ibid.*

35 Yousafzai (1998), *The Rise of Awami National Party*.

36 Bhopal, L. (2014), *Rowlatt Satyagraha*, <https://prezi.com/rowlatt-satyagraha.html> [accessed: 12/11/13].

the border.³⁷ The Indian legal and political crisis coincided with the rise of Amir Amanullah Khan in Afghanistan. He, along with the Indian revolutionaries in Kabul, declared war against the British in India. Since late 19th century, Afghanistan's foreign relations were under the direct control of the British Indian Government. After the death of Amir Abdur Rahman, his son Habibullah became the ruler of Afghanistan. The situation remained the same. In February 1919, Habibullah was assassinated near Jalalabad. Amanullah's son occupied the throne at Kabul. He was anti-British. One of the first steps of the young Afghan monarch was to declare *jehad* (holy war) against the British. The Third Anglo-Afghan war was fought which resulted in Afghanistan having the right once again to control its foreign relations. In this connection they made contacts with anti-British elements of the NWFP. A Committee of Union and Progress was formed in Peshawar city, the members of which in consultation with the Afghans and subsidised by Afghan money, stirred up all the violent elements in the city and dispatched emissaries to the surrounding villages to preach resistance to the Government. The Afghan agents in Peshawar were seized by the police and the leaders of the Committee of Union and Progress were arrested.

Purdah Politics: Muslim Women in the Khilafat Episode

The most influential *purdah* woman of the Khilafat and the Hijrat movements was 'Bi Amma';

She was widowed at the age of twenty-seven, left with five sons and a daughter to raise, with the income from some property her husband had left, which however was managed by a brother-in-law who did not share her enlightened views about education. Virtually illiterate herself, she sent her first son to an English medium school, when it came time to send Shaukat Ali, his uncle refused, saying that one 'infidel' in the family was enough. Undaunted, Bi Amma pawned some of her jewellery with the help of a Hindu maid-servant in order to educate her second son. Her relative then relented, redeemed her ornaments, and paid for the education of a third son,

37 Tendulkar, D. (1967), *Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan: Faith is a Battle*. Bombay: Popular Prakashan.

Muhammad, as well. The brothers eventually went on to Aligarh College for Bas and careers in public service, journalism and politics. Bi Amma was obviously a woman to be reckoned with. She had an unassailable position as a widow, a mother of many sons, and a woman of some property, even though she had to pry it loose from her reluctant relative by hocking her jewellery, an action which of course reflected upon his honour as her protector.³⁸

Interestingly, Minault further argued that feminism was a powerful tool that played a vital role in these movements as she referenced Harcourt Butler, a leading British administrator of the time:

The priest and women are the most important influence in India... and I am not very much afraid of the politicians until they play on these two.³⁹

Influence, of course, is not the same thing as authority but by building upon their traditional roles rather than rebelling against them, Indian women were able to retain influence while expanding their realm of activity beyond the household.⁴⁰

The Khilafat movement was the outbreak of the First World War (1914), when Turkey supported the German cause. The Turkish Caliph urged the Muslims of the world to join him in *jihad* against the British. The appeal carried its effect and during Friday prayers, where the *khutba* (sermon) was read in the name of *Khalifatul Muslemin*, the *Imams* urged the Indian Muslims to support the Turkish cause. A large number of young Indian Muslims entered the NWFP tribal area to proceed to Afghanistan, Iran and eventually to Turkey.⁴¹ Maulana Mahmud-ul-Hassan (who held the title of *Sheikh-ul-Hind*) hatched a plan of action to enlist support of Afghanistan and the tribesmen of the Frontier in support of Turkey for a war against the British India. The army drawn from the tribesmen was called *Janood-e-Rabaniah*, to be organized and collected by a Pukhtun zealot named Haji

38 Ali, M. (1966), *My Life, A Fragment*, Lahore: SM Ashraf Publishers (cited in Minault, 1998:256).

39 Butler, H (1916), Butler to Lord Hardinge, January 16. In *Butler Papers*, File 116/53/II. India Office Record, The British Library, London, p.7 (Also cited in Minault, 1998:248).

40 Minault (1998), 'Purdah Politics'.

41 Khan (2000), *The Role of NWFP in the Freedom Struggle*, p. 18.

Sahib of Turangzai. He dispatched letters and envoys to the tribal Maliks for war against Britain.⁴² Peshawar was under threat of a major tribal attack. The whole scheme was exposed when a letter containing war plans dispatched by Ubaidullah Sindhi through Abdul Haq addressed to Sheikh Abdur Rahim of Hyderabad for onwards transmission and approval of Maulana Mahmud-ul-Hassan was intercepted.⁴³ The British put into operation prompt remedial measures. A large number of workers and supporters were arrested inside India and strict vigilance in the tribal belt with liberal distribution of cash amongst the Maliks of tribal area averted the situation. The area, however, remained politically tense for quite some time. The First World War, however, ended without causing any major problem in the Frontier for the government.⁴⁴

The Khilafat and Hijrat movements brought all of India into political turmoil because the British government was bent upon the complete annihilation of the Ottoman Khilafat, a symbol of Muslim unity. Religious sentiments of the Indian Muslims were shocked at the attitude of the British Government. They could not tolerate the dismemberment of Turkish Caliph. In order to force the British government to change its attitude towards Turkey, an organized agitation was launched in the subcontinent.⁴⁵

The dismemberment of the Ottoman empire, which epitomized an end of the Caliph system of Islam shocked the Muslims of India and in particular its charismatic Muslim leader Muhammad Ali Jauhar, who led an Indian Muslims delegation to Europe in early 1920, to enlighten the West about the Muslim sentimental concerns.⁴⁶ He returned highly

42 *Ibid.*

43 Rauf, A. (1991), *Muslim Politics in NWFP 1919-1930: With Special Reference to Pan Islamic Ideas*. [unpublished MPhil dissertation] Islamabad: National Institute of Pakistan Studies Quaid-i-Azam University.

44 *Ibid.*

45 Nushad Khan, (1995), *The Khilafatis Hijrat to Afghanistan*. [Unpublished doctoral dissertation] (Peshawar: Area Study Centre, University of Peshawar), p. 94.

46 Khan (2000), *The Role of NWFP in the Freedom Struggle*, p. 22.

disappointed with the British, for whom the Muslims had fought side by side in the war against its European rivals. Muhammad Ali Jauhar, on his return in October, addressed Muslim gatherings in Bombay and Lahore and thus sparked a political movement which engulfed whole of India, as it received equal attention of Hindu and Muslim communities of India.⁴⁷

During all this Khilafat episode, Bi Amma was organising Muslim women to establish the *Anjuman-i-Khwateen-i-Islam* (Muslim Ladies' Association) in different parts of the country such as Lahore and Lucknow.⁴⁸ Most of the Anjuman women from the elite educated class met periodically in one another's homes 'to discuss and formulate proposals for the spread of education and social reforms, and the securing of rights given to women by Islam and they kept record of proceedings. They also engaged in social service work among poor village women'.⁴⁹

In 1917, Bi Amma stepped out of active politics. She started her strong agitation that demanded the release of Mrs. Annie Basant and her own sons from their wartime imprisonment. Mrs. Basant was released and elected as Congress president, while Muhammad Ali Jouhar was chosen to preside the AIML, that it might result in his release from prison, but it was an unfruitful effort. Thus, at the annual meeting of the AIML, Muhammad Ali's photograph occupied the presidential chair and Bi Amma spoke briefly on his behalf from behind the veil.⁵⁰

This was perhaps the first time a Muslim woman had spoken to a mixed political gathering, as opposed to a *purdah* meeting. At the Congress, Mrs. Basant was flanked by Bi Amma and by the leading Congress woman and poet, Sarojni Naidu, an act of symbolic of the

47 *Ibid.*

48 IOR (India Office Record) (1913), *Notice of the Anjuman-i-Khwateen-i-Islam*, Lucknow, July 28. The British Library London (Also cited in Minault, 1998:254).

49 Shahnawaz, J. (1971), *Father and Daughter*, Lahore: Nigarishat. (cited in Minault, 1998:251).

50 Minault (1998), 'Purdah Politics'.

growing participation of Indian women in public life, as well as of the Hindu-Muslim entente.⁵¹



Bi Amma with members of All India Muslim League 1917

Bi Amma, with her daughter-in-law Amjadi Begum, wife of Muhammad Ali Jauhar, Begum Hasrat Mohani, and other wives of Khilafat leaders toured the country. They were joined by their prominent Hindu women, such as Sarojni Naidu, Sarala Devi Chaudhurani, niece of the poet Tagore and wife of Pandit Rambhuj Dutt Chudhuri of Lahore, and wife of CR Das of Calcutta.⁵² They urged women to encourage their men to support the Khilafat and non-cooperation movements to be loyal Muslims and contribute to the religious cause. Women often donated their gold jewellery and some cash in these gatherings.

The women of NWFP were also active during the Khilafat movement. It gave a sense of motivation, social mobilisation and political consciousness to the people of the NWFP. The traditional role of women was also questioned in

51 Sengupta, P. (1966), *Sarojini Naidu*, Bombay: Asia Publishing House, p. 134.

52 Minault, G. (1981), 'Sisterhood or separation? The All India Muslim Ladies' Conference and the Nationalist Movement,' in G. Minault (ed.) *The Extended Family*, Columbia: South Asia Books, Pp. 83-108.

the changing scenario of Indian politics. Women's participation in the political activities was realised in the political mobilisation of women in the province for the first time in the wake of the Khilafat movement. However, due to religious and cultural compulsions, separate meetings were arranged for men and women.⁵³

The bold steps taken by Bi Amma, her daughter in law and other women encouraged women's participation in the movement throughout the country. In this regard, Begum Muhammad Ali Jauhar visited Peshawar to enlist women support from this part of the country.⁵⁴ For the first time in the political history of Peshawar, women only meetings were arranged in support of the Khilafat cause. These meetings were mainly addressed by Begum Muhammad Ali Jauhar, aided by some local speakers as well. The main theme of their speeches was the political and religious condition of the country, the need and importance of freedom and women's role in these activities. One such meeting, which proved to be a landmark with regard to women participation, was held at Mundi Berri (Peshawar city) in the big house of Chawb Emarti.⁵⁵ This meeting was attended by hundreds of women. From here onwards, the Frontier women got inspiration and they participated not only in the Khilafat movement but also in the freedom struggle with greater zeal and enthusiasm in the later stages. Rauf commented that the NWFP was the most affected area in human and financial terms as compare to any other part of India.⁵⁶

Such a good response of the Frontier women encouraged Bi Amma to visit Peshawar soon after. Begum Saeeda Rauf, her father, Abdur Rauf and her uncle Abdul Aziz were the prominent members of the Peshawar Khilafat Committee, they arranged meetings and processions and Bi

53 Mirza (1969), *Muslim Women Role in the Pakistan Movement*.

54 Minault, G. (1982), *The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilisation in India*. New York: Columbia University Press.

55 Khan, N. (1995), *The Khilafatis Hijrat to Afghanistan*. [unpublished doctoral dissertation] Peshawar: Area Study Centre, University of Peshawar.

56 Rauf (2006), *'Socio-Educational Reform Movements*.

Amma stayed at Begum Saeeda Rauf's house.⁵⁷ Bi Amma's presence in the meetings blew a new spirit into the campaign and most of the Frontier women contributed open heartedly for the Khilafat cause.

It is worthwhile to mention that Bi Amma, at the age of seventy three, made a powerful appeal to the drooping spirits of the Indian masses.⁵⁸ The Muslims of India had so far tried to keep themselves away from the Hindu dominated AINC, but Bi Amma's eloquent speeches led a distinct departure from this attitude and helped in bringing about Hindu-Muslim unity to fight the common British foe. It was on account of her active participation in the movement that the masses resorted to follow in her footsteps.



Bi Amma with Muhammad Ali Jauhar and Shaukat Ali

The movement coincided incidentally with the aftermath of the Rowlatt Act 1919, which had bestowed the arbitrary authority of arrest and trial without jury on the government.⁵⁹ The AINC had launched protest meetings against the government. In Amritsar, at Jallianwala Bagh, the

⁵⁷ Javid, (nd), *Tehreek-i-Pakistan main Khwateen ka Kirdar*.

⁵⁸ Yousafi, A. (1968), *Sarhad Aur Judo Jehd-i-Azadi*. [Urdu] Lahore: Markazi Urdu Board, Pp. 437-38.

⁵⁹ Khan, (2000), *The Role of NWFP in the Freedom Struggle*, p. 22.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*.

government fired upon a protest meeting, which resulted in the death of 379 men and 1200 injured.⁶⁰

The Khilafat episode was an incredible movement. It alienated the Muslim community in India from the British administration. They boycotted the British celebration of the war victory. The NWFP Muslims extended warmest support to the movement. Khilafat Committees were formed all over the province. Meetings were held to protest against the peace terms imposed upon the Turks. The Congress alliance brought a greater audience to such gatherings, and funds were raised for the Turks and the victims of Jallianwala Bagh. Khilafatists, as a policy assumed a non-violent posture, with programme of non-cooperation with the government and organizationally, putting up a very sound presentation of their feelings.

As a mark of non-cooperation with the government, in the NWFP, several notables renounced their titles, sixty men resigned from police service, thirty-one from the militia force and 165 from lower cadre civil posts.⁶¹

The Khilafatists staged a successful programme of boycotting the Prince of Wales' visit to Peshawar in 1922 by observing a *hartal* (strike) in the city at the Prince's reception at Chowk Yadgar on 16th May 1922.⁶² Resultantly, the Government arrested twenty-six Khilafatist leaders in Peshawar with some receiving sentences of up to two years' imprisonment.⁶³

The Khilafat agitation and its by-product, the Hijrat (migration) movement, encouraged the Muslims to leave India, which was declared as *Darul-harb* (abode of war). The required *Fatwa* (decree) on Hijrat migration from India to *Darul-salam* (abode of peace) was issued by Abul Kalam Azad, Maulana Abdul Bari, Maulana Mahmud-ul-Hassan and

60 *Ibid.*, 23.

61 *Ibid.*

62 Yousafzai, (1998), *Awami National Party*, p. 12. Also see Tendulkar (1967), *Abdul Ghaffar Khan*, p. 10.

63 Mirza, (1969), *Muslim Women Role in the Pakistan Movement*, p. 31.

other prominent religious scholars. Afghanistan, the neighbouring Muslim country was declared as *Darul-salam*. Throughout India, the mosque pulpit was used for the cause of Hijrat. Muslims migration soon started from all over the country. The NWFP, particularly Peshawar, hosted the transit management and the Pukhtuns besides extending hospitality to visiting *Muhajirs* (immigrants), also joined them in the migration.⁶⁴ Properties were sold, business winded up, services discontinued and Pukhtuns in their hundreds trekked towards the northwest. Most of the immigrants were Pukhtuns and Sindhis, numbering 18,000 in British accounts and over 60,000 in local versions.⁶⁵



*Abdul Ghaffar Khan leads a march from Peshawar to Kabul.
Peshawar Street 1920*

64 Shah, (2000), *Ethnicity, Islam and Nationalism*, p.20.

65 *Ibid.*



Peshawar 1920

Afghanistan initially welcomed this migration hoping to mount pressure on British India through immigrants. Amanullah Khan, the new King of Afghanistan, who fought the third and last war against the British for freedom of his suzerainty, soon realized that a poor country like Afghanistan could not afford the prolonged stay of the *Muhajireen* in his country. He realized that these Muslims were becoming a burden on the economy of Afghanistan; therefore, he showed less enthusiasm in their prolonged stay in Afghanistan.

The Khilafat and Hijrat movements were disappointing experiences for the subcontinent Muslims, but these were blessing in disguise for the Muslims of the NWFP. They provided them with an opportunity to organize themselves politically. They also forced the Government to appoint a Committee in 1922, to inquire as to the causes of unrest and to suggest remedies; the Committee found out that people of the Frontier wanted constitutional reforms to be extended to their province as well.

The Khilafatists of the NWFP not only gained political experience, but these movements also provided the NWFP with local political stalwarts like Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Mian Akbar Shah, Abdul Akbar Khan and like-minded individuals who later on played great roles in the political awakening and freedom struggle in the NWFP. However, the women who actively participated in the Khilafat and Hijrat movement disappeared from the political scene. Both Minault and Shodhan do not mention any of the women joining AIML or other nationalist organizations. However, Bi Amma who was already a member of AIML and Nishat-un-Nisa Begum, who seems to be active both in the Muslim League and Congress even after the breakdown of the Non-cooperation and Khilafat alliance.⁶⁶ Akbari Begum, mother of Asif Ali, was a pro-Congress member of the Khilafat committee but her religious faith caused her to support the NWFP women in Hijrat Movement.⁶⁷

Struggle for Women's Social and Legal Rights in the NWFP

The freedom struggle of the Indian subcontinent was also a social and legal struggle that contributed towards women's empowerment. As mentioned earlier, the 19th century changed the scenario of politics that diverted the attention of the socio-political reformers towards women's status, especially women's education. Hussain argued:

The Indian women's movement sought to develop a broad political, social and economic agenda in which legislative changes have been the cutting edge of induced social change. The linkage between social reform, the status of women and the national movement was a major source of numerical strength for the national movement, and political support for the women's movement. This linkage further strengthened the struggle against colonialism.⁶⁸

66 Shodhan, A. (2000), 'Women in the Khilafat Struggle' in Nawaz, M. (ed.) (2000) *Women in India's Freedom Struggle*, Mumbai: Allied Publishers. (cited in Minault, 1998).

67 *Ibid.*

68 Hussain, S. (2015), 'A Socio-historical and Political Discourse on the Rights of Muslim Women: Concerns for Women's Rights or Community Identity: (Special reference to 1937 and 1939 Acts)' *Journal of International*

The first and foremost success was the enfranchisement of women in 1921 to be elected to central and state legislatures; however, women were dependent on their husbands' property to vote.

The early reforms about women's status involved the eradication of social evils and customs such as *sati* (in Hindu tradition a widow is burnt alive with her husband's funeral pyre) and in the NWFP *swara* (in Pukhtun tradition a woman is exchanged with enemy to settle down family disputes)⁶⁹ and child marriage. Throughout India, a campaign was launched, and interestingly men and women both struggled to remove these centuries' old customs and traditions from the society from all communities. The basic modification was in Hindu and Muslim personal and family law reforms.

Women's active participation in Indian national politics gave them a strong position to battle for their improving status regarding their inheritance, marriage and guardianship of children.⁷⁰ The solo aim made their struggle beyond caste and religious differences. Forbes argues that 'legal change would both remove the suffering of individual women, and allow India to join the modern and progressive states of the world'.⁷¹ Their demand was for a new personal and family law for women's emancipation for a better and more just life in society.

The Women's Indian Organization (1917) and the All India Women's Conference (1927) solely advocated women's societal issues. They were emphasised legal reforms that protected women before and after marriage; for example, early marriages, divorce and the right of inheritance to have power over family property.

They saw all Assembly bills that were introduced in the 1930s, like the Hindu Woman's Right to Property Bill, an amendment to the

Women's Studies, 16(2), 1-14. <http://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol16/iss2/1> [accessed: 25/12/2015]

69 *Ibid.*

70 *Ibid.*

71 Forbes, G. (1999), *Women in Modern India*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.113. (cited in Hussain, 2015).

Child Marriage Restraint Act, a bill to allow inter-caste marriage, the Hindu Woman's Right to Divorce Act, the Muslim Personal Law Bill, the Prevention of Polygamy Bill, and the Muslim women's Right to Divorce Bill, as a piecemeal approach to improving women's status.⁷²

Women like Muthulakshmi, Renuka, Mrs. Damle and Hamid Ali were not satisfied with these piecemeal acts, but wanted comprehensive legislation accompanied by social and economic change instead.⁷³ The main hurdle was the difference of the concepts of women's and men's organizations;

For Muslim reformers, as for their Hindu counterparts, women were symbolic not only of all that was wrong with their culture and religious life, but also of all that was worth preserving. If women personified the plight of their community: its backwardness, its ignorance of the faith, its perilous cultural and historical viability, they were also at the core of family life, the potential purveyors of ethical values and religious ideals. For Muslim reformers, considerations of women's position in the family and plans for women's education included discussions of household customs and rituals, of *purdah*, and of Islamic law as it pertained to women.⁷⁴

Nevertheless there was the conservatism of some male leaders, social and cultural pressure regarding legal reforms for women, and their demand for a say in the policy matters; the AINC appeared as a tricky collaborator because only a few members supported women's legal rights, while the Muslim League overtly supported the demand for women legal rights.⁷⁵ 'Jinnah, however, firmly supported Bhupendranath Basu's Special Marriage Amendment Bill (1912), which provided legal cover for marriages falling outside the Hindu and Muslim laws, although it caused dismay among Muslims'.⁷⁶

There were political differences among the AIML and AINC members, but they were united for the support of

72 *Ibid.*

73 *Ibid.*

74 Minault, (1982), *The Khilafat Movement*.

75 Hussain, (2015), 'A Socio-historical and Political Discourse.

76 *Ibid.*

women legal rights. Begum Jehan Ara Shahnawaz played a vital role in maintaining Hindu Muslim women unity. Against the separate electorates, all the women organizations dispatched a telegram to the British Prime Minister. They strongly condemned the separate electorates because they divided the women in different communities.⁷⁷ Consequently the Child Marriage Restraint Act was passed in 1929.

Mrs. Hamid Ali, in her presidential address to the AIWC held in Lucknow in 1932 demanded a solution for the disabilities of Hindu women, and urged the removal of customary law of the Muslims, particularly in the North-West province, which had denied Muslim women of their Islamic rights. She urged for the implementation of the Shariat law, since the Shariat gave certain rights of inheritance to Muslim women, which the customary laws did not.⁷⁸

Thus women accelerated their struggle for political as well as legal empowerment. Their activism increased with the Government of India Act 1935 because it brought communalization in women's political identity that affected Hindu-Muslim unity.

The Ulema introduced the Shariat Application Bill into the Federal Assembly to amend the Muslim Personal Law. However, 'the AIML, which claimed to represent Indian Muslims, took a long time to induce and impress upon Muslim women to come forward and assist the male members in the realization of national aspirations'.⁷⁹

Following the example of federal legislation, the NWFP passed the Muslim Personal Law that was frequently criticised.⁸⁰

Customary Law is a misnomer in as much as it has not any sound basis to stand upon and is very much liable to frequent changes and cannot be expected to attain any time in future the certainty and definiteness which must be the characteristic of all laws. The status of Muslim women under the so-called customary law is simply disgraceful. The introduction of Muslim Personal Law will

77 *Ibid.*

78 *Ibid.*

79 *Ibid.*

80 *Ibid.*

automatically raise them to the position to which they are naturally entitled.⁸¹

Thus the NWFP Muslim Personal Law Shariat Application Bill was introduced in 1934 to the Legislative Council of the NWFP. The bill was further sent to a Selection Committee for further recommendation and was received by the Council of the NWFP on 20th July 1935.

In the meantime, the Nawab of Hoti published a booklet referring to the status of Muslim women, and how the customary laws were adversely affecting their status. Under this customary law, after the death of a father the whole of his property went to his son, while the daughter would get nothing. In this particular situation the enforcement of Muslim Personal Law was considered advantageous to the Muslim women as it granted them inheritance rights.⁸²

As a result, in November of 1935, the Act was passed and secured appreciation around the Indian subcontinent. This was one of the milestones for Muslim women's empowerment, which they had long awaited:

The women struggling for their legitimate share in landed property can prove to be the single most critical some entry point for women empowerment in south Asia; and it seeks to bring this issue from out of the wings onto centre stage. The British legal interpretation of inheritance that a daughter could never inherit because they wanted the estate would pass to the tribe or the village community come to be challenged increasingly in the 1920s and 1930s by Muslim reformers, who sought to establish the Sharia as the basis of Muslim Personal Law.⁸³

The NWFP Muslim Personal Law Shariat Application Act (1935), established Sharia as the basis of inheritance rules (among other things) and superseding customs prevailing in

81 IOR (India Office Record) *NWFP*, (1930) Notification No.732 L.C. dated 29 March 1934, L/P&J/7/667, pp1-2, The British Library, London (Also cited in Hussain, 2015).

82 Ali, A. (2000) *The Emergence of Feminism among Indian Muslim Women 1920-1947*, Pakistan: Oxford University Press.

83 Rattigan, W. (1953), *Digest of Civil Law for the Punjab chiefly based on the Customary Law*, Lahore: The Civil and Military Gazette Press, p.350, and Gilmartin, D., (1981) 'Kinship, Women, and Politics in Twentieth Century Punjab' in Gail Minault (ed) *The Extended Family: Women and Political Participation in India and Pakistan*, Columbia: South Asia Books, Pp. 251-273. (cited in Agarwal, B. (1994) *A Field of One's Own: Gender and Land Rights in South Asia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

the province, because legislation relating to agricultural land had been made a provincial subject in 1935. In this context, it is interesting to note that the NWFP Muslim Personal Law Act of 1935 did include agricultural land within its purview.⁸⁴

There appears to have been little written about the imperative behind the NWFP Shariat Application Act (1935), and whether its enactment involved any significant controversy. However, the issue of affirming Muslim identity, rather than any notable concern with women's position, was probably the main motive behind the Act, since in terms of women's status in the NWFP, by all ethnographic accounts, was and continues to be perhaps the most gender-unequal region in the subcontinent.⁸⁵ Even in the 2013 and 2015 local body elections the NWFP witnessed a low turnout of women voters due to strict *purdah* observance restrictions for women, extreme control over women's sexuality with any transgressions leading to violence, and little adherence in practice to the law promising property rights to women.

84 Agarwal (1994), A Field of One's Own.

85 *Ibid.*

Chapter 4

The Emergence of the Khudai Khidmatgar Movement and Women's Freedom Struggle through Literary Means

In the aftermath of the Khilafat and Hijrat Movements, the Frontier activists found an outlet for their nationalist feelings in social work. Abdul Ghaffar Khan, who had emerged in the Frontier as a popular figure '*Bacha Khan*' during these movements, concentrated on social political and educational development for the Pukhtuns. He revived the old network of the Azad Islamia *madaress* that was established by Haji Sahib Turangzai, whom he admired for his social reform efforts. In his campaign for the spread of education, Abdul Ghaffar Khan established an Azad High School in his village Utmanzai, (Charsadda). Apart from Islamic ethics and values, Islamic history and Pukhtu was taught in the school. The Azad schools were of the most part *ad hoc* bodies, which were eventually scrapped due to lack of funds. However, the main school was at Utmanzai, which was affiliated with Jamia Millia Islamia at Delhi and prepared the students for the matriculation examination of the Punjab University. However, the main goal of the Azad School scheme was to offer instructions in Islam, foster Pukhtu

language and culture and promote a sense of ethnic self-awareness and nationalism among Pukhtuns.¹

The Formation of Anjuman-e-Islahul Afaghana (AIA)

The social and educational activities of Abdul Ghaffar Khan remained suspect in the eyes of the British rulers. Sensing the possibility of any action from the government and the resultant failure of his individual efforts, he realised that any reform movement without a proper organisation and mass support was impossible. He consulted and won the support of a group of educated Pukhtuns from the settled districts of the Frontier. Some of his close associates included Mian Ahmad Shah, Abdul Akbar Khan, Mian Jaffar Shah, Mian Abdullah Shah, Muhammad Akbar Khadim and Maulana Muhammad Israel; however,

They belonged to various social groups but concerns like creating awareness among the Pukhtuns about modern education, freeing the Pukhtun society of evils like blood feuds and factionalism, prevention of crime and the use of intoxicants etc. brought them together.²

These social workers, for the greater benefit of the Pukhtuns organised *Anjuman-i-Islahul Afaghana* (AIA) (Society for the Reformation of the Afghans) on 1st April 1921; Abdul Ghaffar Khan was selected as its first president and Ahmad Shah as its secretary.³

The aims and objectives of the AIA included the eradication of social evils, the promotion and encouragement of Pukhtu language and literature and the creation and development of real love for Islam among the Pukhtuns.⁴ Moreover, to create love for education among the Pukhtuns, stress was laid on the study of science as well as religious education. It also intended to persuade the people to keep themselves away from un-Islamic customs, rites and rituals,

1 Khattak, S. (2001), *An Attempt of Early Muslim in Establishing Azad School* [unpublished MEd Thesis] Peshawar: Institute of Education and Research (IER) University of Peshawar.

2 Shah, (2000), *Ethnicity, Islam and Nationalism*, p. 22.

3 *Ibid.*

4 *Pukhtun*, (1928), June, Utmanzai.

particularly lavish spending on social events. Apart from it, the AIA members wanted to create the feelings of unity, love and affection among the Muslims in general, and the Pukhtuns in particular. It also emphasized settling the mutual disputes among themselves rather than consulting the British law courts and also to create love of freedom, self-confidence and independence of thought.⁵ Women were excluded from their right of inheritance and could only rarely access education.

In 1901 there were 162 primary schools in the NWFP out of which only 8 were for girls. The numbers of these schools increased to 494 in 1924-25 but there were only 21 schools for girls. These numbers of institutes were considered enough for them to be able to recite the Holy Quran and to know how to offer prayers five times a day. They hardly had a say in choosing their spouse and making of other choices regarding their lives. In fact, women in the Pukhtun society like in any other primordial society were considered a private property. Men were, and are, responsible for looking after them as they would take care of their other property. In those days fighting and farming were two main preoccupations of the Pukhtuns and modern education was considered a passport to Hell by the religious minded.⁶

There was a famous saying in Pukhtu that:

Sabaq da madrasse wai
Dapara da pisi wai
Pa Janat ki bai zay nawe
Pa Duzakh ki ba ghoppey wai [Pukhtu]

[Those who learn in schools
 Are none but money's tools
 In heaven they will never dwell:
 They will surely go to Hell]⁷

Rauf further commented that religious education was not a priority of the upper and ultra modern strata of the society;

5 *Pukhtun* (1928), July, Utmanzai.

6 Rauf, (2006), 'Socio-Educational Reform Movements'.

7 Khalil, M. (2001), *Da Abdul Khaliq Khaleeq Juwand aw Adabi Khidmaat*, Peshawar: Khaleeq Academy, p.43 (cited in Rauf, 2006:38).

therefore, the establishment of AIA was welcomed by the lower and middle classes of the community.⁸

In order to achieve the above mentioned aims, the first and the most important task before the AIA was to spread its message to the masses. For this purpose, the AIA members toured the villages and arranged public meetings to address the common people. The AIA also resorted to some unique techniques, as it published *khutbas* (Friday Sermons) and distributed them widely. The main theme of such *khutbas* was the spread of education and reform among the Pukhtuns.⁹ These *khutbas* greatly served the purpose of popularising the AIA and drew the attention of the Pukhtuns to their weaknesses and their due rights which were denied them by the British rulers. The AIA remained engaged in a wide spectrum of activities. Its first step was to educate the Pukhtuns through Azad schools, branches of which were opened in different parts of the province. The main source of funding the Azad schools was donations from the AIA members.¹⁰ As education was free and the schools were open to all without any discrimination, the AIA gained popularity within a short span of time. The message of AIA was also for women's education and uplift that was spread by folklore such as '*Khadey*' and '*Tappi*'.¹¹

Da Khadey da Bacha Khan de

*Alli wal jori ye sahiya badshah [Pukhtu]*¹²

[we are praising Bacha Khan for his great efforts because he is our only true king]

Za ba kalam pa gutto walam

*Wa ba za nakhlam da singaar bekaar sizoona [Pukhtu]*¹³

8 Rauf, (2006), '*Socio-Educational Reform Movements*'.

9 *Pukhtun*, January 1929, Utmanzai. (Also see Rauf, 2006).

10 Khattak, (2001), *Azad School Utmanzai*.

11 A Pukhtu ode which is comprised of two stanzas and which is a unique feminine literary genre of Pukhtu poetry.

12 Interview with Begum Nasim Wali Khan, 20th May 2002, Wali Bagh, Charsadda.

13 *Pukhtun*, February 1929, Utmanzai.

[I will take a pen in my fingers but will never take other useless things of beauty].

The AIA also tried to make trade and commerce respectable in the eyes of Pukhtuns. To improve the economic condition of the Pukhtuns, they were advised to sell their products directly, instead of relying on someone else. Therefore they encouraged others to wear and make the '*khaddhar*' by the spinning wheel (*charkha*). This was done in order to save them from the high-handedness of the 'middle men', who in the case of the Frontier were mostly non-Muslims. Abdul Ghaffar Khan himself started a *Gur Mandi* (brown sugar depot) at Utmanzai and urged upon other Pukhtuns to join him in the business.¹⁴

The AIA's leadership was indisputably in favour of universal education for all despite of gender and class; therefore, women members of their own family were encouraged to participate in these educational institutions. Abdul Ghaffar Khan was criticised by his family for his support of women's rights, but he initiated this tradition and it was later reported that he elicited the consent of one of the women members of his household before finalising her matrimony.¹⁵

A local inhabitant Muhammad Akram Khan provided his mud-made house for the Azad School.

It had a few rooms. There were no chairs and desks for the students. Classes were held in the open fields and the student had to sit on the grass while for the teachers there were only *daris* (cotton mats). People from the tribal areas in general and from Dir and Bajaur in particular, were attracted to the school. The school had a boarding house whose expenses were borne by Bacha Khan's paternal uncle's widow, who would send breakfast, lunch, supper, and evening tea from her home to the students in the hostel.¹⁶

Women's participation was expected in the AIA activities, and women enhanced their participation in the

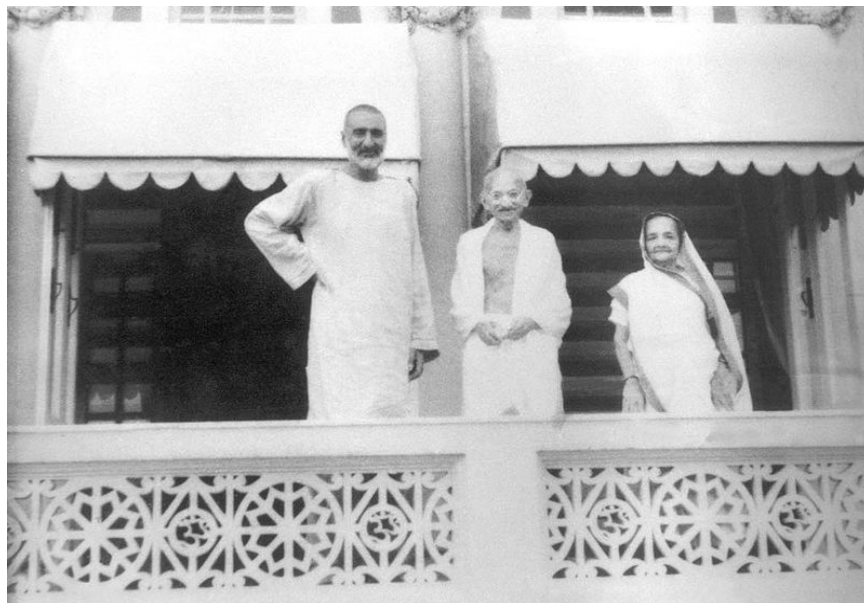
14 Shah, (2000), *Ethnicity, Islam and Nationalism*.

15 Rauf, (2006), '*Socio-Educational Reform Movements*'.

16 Niaz, J. (2005), *Zama da Juwand Qisa sa Auridali sa Katili*, Lahore: Millat Printer, Pp.14-15 (cited in Rauf, 2006).

meetings and gatherings with their men counterparts. They did not fail to contribute to this national cause and generously donated their money and jewelry.¹⁷ For example, a report of the Chief Commissioner's Office of Charsadda stated that a woman named Kunda Bibi and the mother of Abbas Khan donated one hundred rupees and sixty rupees respectively. On another occasion, the mother of Abbas Khan also donated five hundred rupees for the Azad School¹⁸

The efforts of the school were largely appreciated by the AINC, therefore their prominent leaders, Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi, visited the school to encourage the local community.¹⁹ Gandhi was accompanied by his wife Kasturba Gandhi to encourage the women folk while touring different parts of the province.



Bacha Khan, Mahatma Gandhi and his wife Kasturba Gandhi 1938

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- 17 Khan, G. (1983), *Zama Juwand ow Jadujihad*, [Pukhtu] Kabul: Government Press.
- 18 *Charsadda Situation*, Chief Commissioner's Office, NWFP, S.No.459. D.O.A., Peshawar, p.3.(cited in Rauf, 2006:43)
- 19 CID (1938), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 7, F.No.671.

The AIA also held annual literary and cultural meetings to revive Pukhtu literature and culture. Pukhtun poets, including women, were encouraged to participate.²⁰ Thus the AIA contributed to Pukhtu language and literature as well.

A remarkable contribution of the AIA was the publication of a socio-political and reformatory journal, the *Pukhtun*, because there was not a single newspaper or journal in the Pukhtu language at that time. The first issue of the *Pukhtun* came out in May 1928 with the following aims:²¹

- i. To create a sense of brotherhood and love among the Pukhtuns and to extirpate mutual enmity, *Para Jamba* and litigation etc.
- ii. To create a real sense of patriotism and meaningful struggle for freedom and to teach them how to fight for it.
- iii. To promote the cause of the Pukhtu language and to equip it to meet scientific and literary demands.
- iv. To eradicate useless customs and ceremonies amongst the Pukhtuns and to advise them against prodigality and to teach them lessons on frugality and austerity so that they might improve their economic lot.
- v. To reform the Pukhtun character morally.
- vi. To teach them true Islam, and to do away with false beliefs and superstitions.
- vii. To teach them value and selfless service and to expose the weaknesses of their national character.
- viii. To remove all sorts of group rivalries and to create among them qualities of toleration and broad mindedness.
- ix. To warn them against the lack of modern education and technical know-how.
- x. To root out the vicious practices of lying, gambling, drug addiction and bloodshed.

20 CID (1939), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 7, F.No.769.

21 *Pukhtun*, December 1928, Utmanzai.

- xi. To teach them importance of women education and realization of women's due status in the society.²²

The *Pukhtun* was an educational and enlightening journal that published a variety of subjects including Pukhtun culture, patriotism, Pukhtu language and literature, religious and political essays, dramas, news as well as the importance of education and gender issues. However, the *Pukhtun* gave women a unique platform for their freedom of expression. They overwhelmingly contributed to the journal. As mentioned earlier, most of the women contributed anonymously as *Yava Khor* (a sister) because of the Pukhtuns' honour and over-protective measures for their women. And the women realised that their own individual identities were not important,

[Translation: *It is not crucial who is saying rather than what she is saying*].²³

Therefore we did not find names of those invisible Pukhtun heroines of freedom struggle who struggled via the pen. Dr. Amna Khatoon of Dodher wrote the following letter to the editor of the *Pukhtun*:

I am extremely happy on the publication of the *Pukhtun* that encourages Pukhtun women to express their feelings through literary means. It seems that the Pukhtuns are illiterate and ignorant. He who deposits one rupee in the *Pukhtun's* fund and produces a receipt for it, I will not charge him any fee and will provide him free medical treatment [Translation].²⁴

Inspired from such appeals, many Pukhtuns contributed to the funds and writings for the journal. These also included many Pukhtuns from abroad, particularly from the United States of America.²⁵ Thus, with the untiring efforts of the AIA, the journal became popular not only in Pukhtuns living in the Frontier but also among the Pukhtuns living abroad.

22 *Pukhtun*, June 1931, Utmanzai, p.8.

23 *Pukhtun*, July 1938, Utmanzai, p.17.

24 *Pukhtun*, January 1941, Utmanzai, p.33.

25 *Ibid.*

Pukhtun the pioneer socio-political journal in Pukhtu played a reformative role in the Pukhtun society. Great religious teachings, high quality proverbs, reformative verses, dictums from the Holy Quran and *Ahadees* (sayings of the Prophet, PBUH) were published in the journal. The main emphasis of the writers remained focused on the reformation of the illiterate Pukhtuns, who were following the old customs of their ancestors. It was aimed at getting rid of the social evils of Pukhtun society and bringing up the Pukhtuns shoulder to shoulder with the other nations of the world. These reformative essays, letters and verses are numerous; however, for the general benefit of the reader, some of these will be discussed in the following few lines.

The columns of *Pukhtun* were open for women to write about their problems. The main inspiration, of course, was provided by Abdul Ghaffar Khan and his close associates.²⁶ However, before elaborating on the contributions of the *Pukhtun*, the importance of the Khudai Khidmatgar (Servants of God) cannot be ignored. This movement was a kind of reformative body, but later on it became active in the political stream of the province. This was the offshoot of the AIA, with the objective of removing the social evils, spreading education and bringing into existence a peaceful life in the province. It remained a social reform movement initially, but soon after developed into a political movement. Most of its members and leaders regarded foreign domination as the root cause of the prevailing poverty, backwardness, illiteracy and ignorance in the Pukhtun society. It urged the Pukhtuns to unite against alien rule. It also stressed upon joint struggle against social evils. In order to propagate the Pukhtun cause on these lines, the AIA leaders undertook extensive tours of various parts of the province. The AIA exerted all the Pukhtuns to join its ranks, to resist the British imperialism and its native supports. Later on it was transformed into the

26 Shah, W. (2007), 'Women and Politics in the North West Frontier Politics 1930-1947', in *North West Frontier Province: History and Politics*, Islamabad: National Institute of Culture and Research, Pp. 117-32.

Khudai Khidmatgar Movement in November 1929 by Abdul Ghaffar Khan.²⁷

Initially, the Khudai Khidmatgar Movement was launched to carry out the AIA's programme of reformation and the political awakening of the Pukhtuns in the villages. For this purpose, a volunteer core was needed. Several people presented themselves for the task that was encouraged by the enthusiastic response of Pukhtuns.

This new organisation was formed to accommodate the majority of illiterate sympathisers of the Pukhtun nationalists and the aged members of the community. Its primary focus was social reforms, with little interest in politics. This body was even kept a separate entity devoted to the cause of ordinary Pukhtuns. The organisation appealed the Pukhtuns to join hands with it to help them eradicate social evils from the society. It urged unity among their rank and file to liberate the country from foreign rule.²⁸

A network of the the Khudai Khidmatgar organisation was established throughout the province in a very short span of time. The remarkable feature of the organisation was the overwhelming support it enjoyed in the rural areas, which was hitherto ignored by other organisations. Its popularity was due to many reasons and factors. Its progress was interpreted by various sections of the society in their own ways. According to Shah:

To the Pukhtun intelligentsia, it was a movement for the revival of Pukhtun culture with its distinct identity. To the smaller Khans, it was a movement that demanded political reforms for the province that would enfranchise them and give them a greater role in governance. Its anti-colonial stand suited the majority of the anti-establishment ulema, who always regarded British rule in the subcontinent as a curse. For the peasants and other poor classes it was against their economic oppressors, British Imperialism and its agents – the Pro-British Nawabs, Khan Bahadurs and the big Khans.²⁹

The leaders of the organisation put great emphasis on discipline to instil the capability of self-discipline and self-rule in the Khudai Khidmatgars. The volunteers were organised

27 Shah (2000), *Ethnicity, Islam and Nationalism*.

28 *Ibid.*

29 *Ibid.*, 27.

and drilled in military formation and were given military ranks. Most of the volunteers of this quasi-military body were poor and could not afford a uniform, so shirts were dyed in brick-dust and the organisation got the name of '*Surkh-Poosh*' or 'Red-Shirts' in the British records.³⁰

Before joining the movement, the members had to pledge that they would abstain from the use of violence, intrigues, family feuds and other vices.³¹ The volunteers were trained to undertake long marches on foot. The adoption of non-violence as their creed and their strict adherence to it was one of the main features of the Khudai Khidmatgars' enormous popularity in the province, and within a short period of time they dominated the *Afghan Jirga* (council). The *Jirga* was merged with Khudai Khidmatgars and both organisations functioned as one platform from then onwards. It emerged as a mass movement in the Frontier and played a vital role in the freedom struggle in the years to come.

The Khudai Khidmatgars' main focus was on the *Pukhtun* journal that opened the door for Pukhtun women to publish their own written opinions and reflect upon their present condition in their native language. In one of the *Pukhtun* journal articles entitled '*Reformation of the Pukhtun*' written by Syeda Bushra Begum (popularly known as *Seen Bay Bay*), the author mentions that women's rights must be safeguarded and it is the duty of every Pukhtun to give women the rights as given by Islam. She urged upon the Pukhtuns to get rid of the old *Riwaj* (traditions) which does not give rights to women and to act according to *Sharia* (Islamic Law).³²

A glance even at our present society shows that it is still a man dominated society and the womenfolk are deprived of their due rights, particularly their lawful inheritance. Side by

30 CID (1930) *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 3, F.No.115.

31 Shah (2000), *Ethnicity, Islam and Nationalism*.

32 *Pukhtun*, October 1928, Utmanzai, p.11.

side with these reformatory essays and verses, stories were also published for the sake of edification and advice. In the early issues of the *Pukhtun*, most of the articles were related to the genuine rights of women. To achieve their rights, the need for untiring social work is also emphasized. An essay, 'Women Education and Talk with Womenfolk' by a 'lady from Charsadda' writes;

You are crying for education but the real education is at your home. Be constructive. Don't talk and sleep hours and hours, mend your character and habits. Use your wits to full capacity and refrain from useless discussions [Translation].³³

Another essay entitled 'Women and National Service' contributed by Mian Jaffar Shah, a veteran Khudai Khidmatgar, also emphasised the importance of women's education. He laments that our boys become educated while girls remain illiterate. This practice must be stopped and women must be given education, otherwise many social problems will arise.³⁴ In addition, Jaffar Shah ridiculed that the Pukhtuns regarded their women only as 'means of entertainment'. Women, he argued, shared lots of responsibilities in times of peace and war. 'If a woman is uneducated and cowardly' remarked Jaffar Shah, 'it will naturally effect the coming generations. If she knows how to educate her offspring in the cause of the nation that would definitely result in getting rid of slavery.'³⁵

Abdul Ghaffar Khan endorsed the views of Jaffar Shah and cited examples from the Holy Quran according to which education for men and women is essential to our religion. He stressed the need of education for women and urged the Pukhtuns to give their women the best education otherwise their period of slavery would definitely be prolonged.³⁶ Responding to the call of Abdul Ghaffar Khan, one Syeda of Adina (Swabi) questioned the discriminatory behaviour of the Pukhtun males with regards to their women in every field of

33 *Ibid.*, 12.

34 *Pukhtun*, June 1929, Utmanzai, Pp. 16-19.

35 *Pukhtun*, February 1929, Utmanzai, p.17.

36 *Pukhtun*, March 1929, Utmanzai, p.20.

life. She analysed that they kept them in confinement in the four walls of their houses and considered the ignorance of the women as one of the main causes of slavery. The panacea for this backwardness, according to her, 'is to educate your women, enabling them to utilise the latest technology'.³⁷

In spite of the limited education of the Pukhtun women, they were aware that the only solution to their gender issues and the slavery of the British Raj was education; therefore most of the *Pukhtun* topics were about women's education. Then they would be able to participate in the national cause in future. Similarly, many letters were published in which there was a fervent plea for granting women their lawful rights. In '*A Letter to Bacha Khan*' one Qeemata writes:

Someone should write an essay or a poem in which there is a detailed commentary on the women '*Purdah*'. She should prove that our present '*Purdah*' system is un-Islamic. In other nations complete liberty is given to the women, while here, there is all over ignorance. If any one writes on it a poem or an article in detail then I will give him a prize worth twenty five rupees [Translation].³⁸

We noticed a great keenness of education and empowerment for women in this letter that is evident also in the Pukhtun women's courageous and bold act to fight for their rights.

In another poem written by Khadima Mumtaz Begum, it had been stated that the real beauty of women is not jewellery but her character. She further elaborated:

37 *Pukhtun*, February, Utmanzai, Pp. 11-15.

38 *Pukhtun*, March 1946, Utmanzai, p. 15-16.

د غریب قوم له حالته خورې تابکېلنه وینم
 دمجانز په محبت کښ د سړمال شکرانه وینم
 د تعلیم د ترقی کښ سرگردان دی ټول قومونه
 ستاد علم په دفتر کښ څه ناول افسانه وینم
 د قومونو نېغې کوره آزادۍ گټې زینت خپل
 تاخو شحاله غلامی کښ له آزاد شاهانه وینم
 د قومونو داکو شش دی چې پردی سړو خاڼه شي
 نرمون دوه خویاندې په کور کښ له یو بل پرته وینم
 د قومونو نېغې واره او به خور د کښ خپل کړی
 ستادا سبکې باغ د مکر خورې بی خصانه وینم

[Translation: I find you indifferent towards the plight of the poor nation. I find you sacrificing your life and wealth for the mundane love. All the nations are striving hard for that education which should lead to progress. But in your knowledge's storehouse I find only fictions and novels. Look at the womenfolk of other nations adorning themselves with the ornament of liberty. I find you happier in slavery than a queen in freedom. Other nations are trying to forge unity even with aliens. In our homes I find even two sisters at loggerheads. The womenfolk of other nations are all busy nurturing the garden of their Homeland but, O, sisters; I see the beautiful garden of your country suffering from negligence].³⁹

There are numerous articles and verses related to women rights, their education and reformation written by Pukhtun women. The first seventeen issues of the journal are full of such articles and other issues of gender discrimination. One of the famous writers of the *Pukhtun* was

39 *Pukhtun*, November 1938, Utmanzai, p.25.

س.ب.ب (Seen Bay Bay, Syadah Bushra Begum). She was a daughter of the famous Pukhtu poet Mian Azad Gul and was a regular contributor of the *Pukhtun*. She was born at Ziarat Kaka Sahib (Nowshera) in 1922.⁴⁰ She received her early education at her home. Apart from studying the Holy Quran (in translation) she also studied other Islamic books and Pukhtu literature. She started writing articles at the age of twelve. In her childhood, she participated in the meetings and processions of the Khudai Khidmatgar Movement along with her grandfather who inspired her greatly and added a revolutionary touch to her prose and poetry. Later she became a prominent writer of Pukhtu prose and poetry. She took a leading part in bringing social upheavals during the freedom movement through literary means.

Seen Bay Bay discussed the position of women in Pukhtun society. She pressed upon the importance of women in the society and pointed out how their position can be elevated. Her revolutionary poems were normally sung at the public meetings of the Khudai Khidmatgars. Through her poetry, she tried to encourage and inspire not only men but also women to make sacrifices and face hardships for the cause of their nation and freedom. In the following poem, we can hear her voice for advocating sacrifice for freedom struggle:

40 Interview with Seen Bay Bay (Sayeda Bushra Begum) 23, November 2000, Rahatabad, Peshawar.

يا به آزاد شو يا مودا و سبه دي سرونه ، مونږ جنګي ميدان ته خونه
 په قرباني قومونه خپري ، تمامي عمر دادستور دي
 په عشق کين سيمال لاکيري ، تمامي عمر دادستور دي
 د قام په ونيو باغ د ملک سپري گلونه ،

مونږ جنګي ميدان ته خونه
 اترلرنگي جنگ د ملک دياره ، لينتنو خونيند و تيارې کړي
 شي به سنگاره د عروج لاره ، لينتنو خونيند و تيارې کړي
 د زنانه و په لاس به جوړ شي وړان کورونه ،

مونږ جنګي ميدان ته خونه
 اوس د وطن مينه سنگار دي ، نظام بدل د نرمانې شو
 شور د کالي جامي بي کار دي ، نظام بدل د نرمانې شو
 طرحه چې پوري کړو به ټول فلشين اوړونه ،

مونږ جنګي ميدان ته خونه
 سترګي د عشق په نشه سري کړي ، دغه بناکت دي خيالو
 زلفي د چاه غم خوري کړي ، دغه بناکت دي د خيالو
 اصلي صفت صديق ، اخلاص پاکيزه نړونه ،

مونږ جنګي ميدان ته خونه

[Translation: We will die or we will be liberated, therefore we women are going to the battlefield. Because it was always a tradition that human sacrifices make and develop nations. Similarly in the tradition of love, the lovers sacrifice themselves and their wealth. If our blood can bring a new spring in our garden (homeland),
 So we women go to the battlefield,
 O, my Pukhtun sisters! Get ready for the upcoming war of freedom that will take us to the development of our nation hence as women will make the ruined houses of our people,
 So, we the women go to the battlefield,
 Now the love of our homeland is our beauty because our social system has been changed. In this new social system, the desire for new clothes and jewelry is devastated. Lets burn all these fashion,
 So, we the women go to the battlefield,
 The extreme love of freedom intoxicated my eye, which beautified my dream, in the same way my heart is filled with the grief of our beloved ones who lost their lives during the freedom struggle. However the main characteristics of all these feelings and emotions are truth, sincerity and pure love that compel us to serve for our nation,
 So, we the women go to the battlefield].⁴¹

In this enthusiastic poem, Seen Bay Bay urges the Pukhtun women to be aware of their significant roles. She sees them as the savior who will show the path of progress, do the repair work. She says that the best ornament of a woman is her patriotism. For the order of the day is that she should show her conventional jewellery. She calls on Pukhtun girls to prepare themselves for all sorts of hardships and to embellish themselves with suffering for national causes as qualities like sincerity devotion, and commitment can help them. She thus tried to arouse social and political consciousness in the minds of Pukhtun men and women. She also contributed significantly to the growth of Pukhtu literature. Through her writings, she created social awareness and courage among the Frontier women to face all odds for the sake of freedom and the national cause. One of her verses is famous even now:

Ka nagyalee zalmi pa sha sho
Fakhr-e-Afghana jinakai bade gattena [Pukhtu]

41 *Pukhtun*, December 1940, Utmanzai, Pp. 32-33.

*[If the men folk lag behind in the battlefield, then O, Pride of Afghan!
(Ghaffar Khan), the women folk will make you victorious].*

This poem shows Seen Bay Bay's intense love for her fellow Pukhtuns and her leader Bacha Khan whom she trusted that for the freedom of our motherland.

Another prominent contributor to the journal *Pukhtun* was Alaf Jan Khattaka. She was born in 1927 at Ahmadi Banda, Kohat.⁴² She received her early education at the middle school in Ahmadi Bonda.⁴³ Due to family restrictions, she had to continue her study privately after passing the middle standard examination. She got her Master's degrees both in Urdu and Pukhtu literature. She served in the NWFP educational department as headmistress.⁴⁴

She was an ideological follower of the Khudai Khidmatgar Movement. Alaf Jan Khattaka was a regular contributor of the journal *Pukhtun*, like Seen Bay Bay in writing prose and poetry. According to Alaf Jan Khattaka, her father in law Haleem Gul was a source of inspiration for her.⁴⁵ She concentrated on the social customs and status of women in the Pukhtun society. She condemned the evil customs and worked for the spread of education and raising the status of women. She instilled the spirit of nationalism in the Pukhtuns through her writings published in the journal *Pukhtun*. Her fight was against illiteracy, thus she stressed upon the importance of education for the NWFP women. She was strongly against the prevailing system of *purdah* imposed upon women. Her following verses are of immense importance;

42 Interview with Alf Jan Khattaka, 4 January 2002, Ahmadi Banda, Kohat.

43 Jehan, Shah. (1993), *Pukhtu Adab ke da Mirmano Brakha*. [Pukhtu] Peshawar: Pushtu Academy University of Peshawar.

44 Interview with Alf Jan Khattaka.

45 *Ibid.*

پښتانه پوره شه قامونو کښ خپل قام پوره کړه
 بيا به دنيا کښ د پيروني پښتون نام پوره کړه
 کوره قامونه ټول به بام د ترقی او خستل
 ته څه له کورې د ترقی به لوري کام پوره کړه
 بيا به دنيا کښ د قامونو انجن جوړېږي
 دې انجن کښ د ملګرام پښتون نام پوره کړه
 د پوځو کسورتي ته ترقی مه ګڼه
 که ترقی غواړې د قام هر خاص و عام پوره کړه
 فخر افغان هم پيغام د ترقی لاره دي
 به دواړه د لاسو پيغام به احترام پوره کړه
 نرکه دماغ دی ستا د قام بښي ټي نرکه اولکڼه
 که ترقی دی وی مقصد د دوی مقام پوره کړه
 به بنياد مو چي احسان دين د اسلام کړي دي
 به ښه عمل سر ته هم دين د اسلام پوره کړه

[Translation: O, Pukhtun wake up and raise the status of your nation in the world community. Other nations have made progress while you are waiting and not keeping up with the pace of your progress. Like others, do something for your nation and earn its name. Organize yourself as without organisation nothing can be achieved. The progress of few cannot make differences in the life of a nation, you need to awaken all and sundry, to make your nation prosperous. Listen to the message of Fakhr-e-Afgan, act on it, and spread education and awareness among your people. And if you are serious in helping your people, you have to not only make use of men who are the brains of the nation, but also of women who are the heart. Follow the footsteps of your courageous forefathers and help the down trodden. Islam is blessing for humanity. Follow its teaching and by doing so raise the status of your nation in the world communities].⁴⁶

She was, however, scolded by her family members and others when her revolutionary writings appeared. The family was conservative and full of prejudices towards females and even her relatives did not favour her publications, and treated this as an evil omen for the whole family.⁴⁷ However, undaunted, she wrote for the journal *Pukhtun*, for the cause of her motherland and for raising the status of Pukhtun women.

Nagina *khori* (sister) was another woman writer of the journal *Pukhtun* (her biography is not available). Her writings were mainly based on women education in the NWFP. She realised the importance of women's education and tried to make women aware of it. In one of her essays entitled '*Female schools?*'⁴⁸ She writes that the education of women is in a deplorable condition due to social customs, prejudices and superstitions prevalent in the Pukhtun society; she further appealed the people for cooperation and sincere efforts for female education. She suggested at least opening primary schools for women in the NWFP to get basic education about domestic science i.e. physiology, hygiene and similar subjects important in their day to day life. In one of her poems she advocates for female education in the following way:

يوشان فرض په سړي بنځه دې علم
دا حديث د پاك رسول خير الانام دې
په ميدان د ترخه كبر پاكه خدايه
مجاهد پښتون غاړي وړې گنام دې
هر پښتونه تگينه سر توره نارې
نو شته د نړۍ په وينو نه پيغام دې

[Translation: According to the Saying of the Prophet (PBUH) seeking of knowledge is equally incumbent upon both genders. Why

47 Interview with Alf Jan Khattaka.

48 *Pukhtun*, November 1938, Utmanzai.

*are the Pukhtuns backward in every field of development? Nagina is crying to every Pukhtun and pleading for her message for equal rights of women]*⁴⁹

In the above verse, the poetess laments the neglect of women's education in NWFP, and gives her message with depth of feelings. She is aware of her culture-dominated society where people culturised Islam instead of Islamising their culture. Strong cultural barriers enforced people to violate the religious norms that still prevail in Pukhtun society.

Mahira Sultana also expressed her feelings through the journal *Pukhtun* about the pathetic condition of women's education in the province. She remained a student of the Azad School, Utmanzai. In one of her essays, '*Need of Women Education*', she explains women's education in light of the day-to-day problems and difficulties they are confronted with. She writes that Islam has given equal rights to men and women, and so why have women been deprived an education? She gave arguments in favour of female education by counting some of the benefits. She writes that an educated woman will remain informed about the local and international events taking place around her. She can bring up her children in a much better way. Also she can teach the poor children of the nation.⁵⁰

Nagina, another writer of the journal *Pukhtun*, echoed similar views and accused the Pukhtun men that they loved freedom but denied the same for their women. According to her, their greatest enemy was 'no one else but the Pukhtuns, for they are treating us like inhuman. Our hands our feet and our brains are kept in a state of coma. If you want us to share the responsibilities of national work, then give us education'.⁵¹ The Khudai Khidmatgar leadership advised the women that they should help themselves instead of waiting for help from their men. Abdul Ghaffar Khan reiterated that his aim 'is to struggle for the rights of the depressed and

49 *Pukhtun*, July 1939, Utmanzai, p. 34.

50 *Pukhtun*, November 1938, Utmanzai, Pp.24-26.

51 *Pukhtun*, October 1938, Utmanzai, p.4.

especially for the women who were lagging far behind their men in education. However, progress in that connection is possible only when they talk for themselves'.⁵²

The central leadership of the AINC also helped to organise the Frontier women on the pattern of educated Indian women who were sharing the burden of their men in different walks of life. In 1939, Bibi Amtus Salam and Mirabehn were sent to the NWFP to assist Abdul Ghaffar Khan to spread women education and social reforms among the Frontier women.⁵³

Apart from these writings, where the identities of the writers were known, still there were numerous anonymous letters from women, who expressed their views about the need and importance of female education as well as eradication of various evil customs and social injustices from the society. In one such letter, a woman expressed her views regarding various social evils by addressing other women in a poetic style:

اې زيا خانلو خويندو مستورالو	څه خبر يمد د دنيا د واقعاتو
داسې چې مو موږ د سرکېو تاجونه	يې خبر چې په موږ څه کوي ظلمونه
علم عقل خو موږ نه کمډو د تاسو	هر يو حق موږ نه پر اوږو زړه تاسو
د ميراث نه يې موږ پياښي کوم محرومي	هر يو حق موږ نه کوي خوږاږزي بونظومي
لا په شا ټي د خاږو موږ نه خږږينه	تاسي خدمت د کور په موږ نه کوږينه
په دعوه خوځان گڼي مسلمانان	خو موږ د پاره نه مني قرآن
دوی چې هر عمل کوي لري اختيار	په زړ او ناروانه لري کار
مگر موږ نه چېرې نه دوي چا قدم	په کورنۍ موږ نه دوي په هغه دم
که هر څه له دوی سره کور موږ نه مينه	خو ضرر د دوی په لټو موږ نه وهينه
که هر څه کوي دوی ټول عمر جفا	خو يې نوم د نبې النبي ټي وفا
دا که هر څه ودرې موږ نه تېرول	له پخوا نه دا درد موږ نه تر غول
ټول ستم د دوی منلي موږ نه پخواني	هر يو ناستر غټه د دوی په موږ نه نازي

[Translation: O, my ignorant sisters! are you aware of the world affairs, these men whom we consider our accredited masters they have taken all our rights away. They deny our rights of inheritance

52 Khan, G. (1936), 'Female Education in Pukhtun Society' *Pukhtun* (February), Pp.7-8.

53 Tendulkar (1967), *Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan*.

*thus violating the teachings of the Holy Quran. They have restricted our freedom of action and have imposed strict cultural hurdles for us. Despite all their inhuman behaviours they demand love and respect from us. We bore all these hardships silently. The men have acquired now new trends, what women did yesterday is what men do today].*⁵⁴

Abdul Akbar Khan, a famous dramatist and writer in one of his articles entitled 'An uneducated wife to her husband' shows how an uneducated woman laments over her pathetic condition. In the poem an illiterate Pukhtun wife says to her husband, 'When you have kept me in ignorance and slavery then how can you expect me to bring up your children in a better way and how can I be acquainted with love?' A verse from the poem is:

جي تمام عمر يہ نہ موز بہ غیر او ترخ کن تیر شی
بیاقہ امید تری، دغانری، کمال، شوکت لری تہ

[Translation: *If a child is brought up in our bosom and hands, then how could you expect him to become a Ghazi [Amanullah] Kamal [AtaTurk] and Shoukat (Ali)].*⁵⁵

However at the same time, all these writers and reformers were not unaware of the negative impacts of modernism and liberal trends in education. In order to make the people aware of the negative results, some pathetic stories about the bad results of freedom were also published in the journal *Pukhtun*. In one such story, entitled 'Results of the Freedom of Women', which was published in few episodes, the writer observes, how a wife who does not observe respect to her husband does her own will and goes out from her home without her husband's consent. The writer then describes how the life of such a woman really becomes miserable. She becomes more remorseful than anyone else in society).⁵⁶ Educational reforms for women faced religious

54 *Pukhtun*, December 1940, Utmanzai, p.23.

55 *Pukhtun*, February 1938, Utmanzai, p.31.

56 *Pukhtun*, July 1929, Utmanzai, Pp.19-20.

and cultural resistance under the rationale that they would result in discord and confrontation between them and their family men.

In 1946, however, the tone of the writings of the women contributors changed. Most of the articles appeared in that year and subsequently carried the political message of Abdul Ghaffar Khan and the Khudai Khidmatgars. The main insistence was on Indian unity and opposition to the AIML's proposed Pakistan. It is worth mentioning here, that the Pukhtun women had a good political and social awareness of the Indian subcontinent as well as the surrounding world. So they enthusiastically contributed their views in the journal *Pukhtun*. A letter from a sister Iqbal Perveen highlights:

Whoever supported you in the freedom struggle than you need to assume as a sincere and protecting friend. In Islam raising voice against the unjust and cruel master is a kind a *jehad* too. Now in Hindustan the English is playing a role of unjust master therefore our religious scholar should declared jehad against them. And how anyone believes that Congress is only Indian political party? Which is not, the reason is that Congress is a major Indian party and our clever English master are deceiving our Muslims Khan Bahadurs, Sirs, Nawabs, Landlords and pensioners with their fake promises and alleged Khudai Khidmatgar Movement. However as Jamiatulma-i-Hind affiliated with the Congress will never allow Congress to violate Muslim rights. Our English master wants Muslims to criticise each other rather than focus on struggling for the freedom as they want to prolong their stay in the subcontinent. Lets! Support Bacha Khan to kick out our enemy and then will divide the home between the two brothers; the Hindu and the Muslim [Translation].⁵⁷

Thus the journal *Pukhtun*, apart from reforming the Pukhtuns in the fields of morals, played an important role in raising various political gender issues. Most of the writers particularly emphasized various lawful rights of women, which were denied them in the then prevailing Pukhtun society. Great importance was given to make the Pukhtuns realize the importance and need of women education and their due rights in inheritance. The rights of widows, orphans and women were also touched upon and the Pukhtuns were

57 *Pukhtun*, July 1946, Utmanzai, p.12 (Also cited in Shah, 2012).

urged to realize them. The women were also encouraged to come forward and work for their rights but at the same time were given advice not to make it a plea and destroy the whole setup. Rather, they were encouraged to get good education to protect their due rights as emphasized by Islam.

Another main contribution of the journal *Pukhtun* was that it not only encouraged but it provided a channel and platform to the NWFP women to express their feelings about the pathetic condition of women in particular and of the society in general. It also encouraged women's participation in the freedom struggle. As a result, many women writers contributed to the journal *Pukhtun* on regular basis. Their revolutionary writings not only inspired other women to fight for their due status in society, but also contributed towards the active participation of women in the freedom struggle.

Chapter 5

The Pakistan Resolution and the NWFP Politics

The NWFP was raised to the status of a Governor's Province in April 1932. The Government of India Act 1935 provided for granting full provincial autonomy to all Indian provinces, including the NWFP. Hence the NWFP got its own elected legislature and cabinet responsible to its legislature.¹ Elections for the fifty member provincial legislature were scheduled to be held in February 1937. Most of the political parties decided to contest the elections to utilise the Act for what it is worth.

After 1935, the AIML took up the task of mobilizing Muslim women. Begum Mohammad Ali was nominated to the Working Committee of the AIML by Jinnah and represented the Muslim women in the Working Committee. While sitting on a chair of the Working Committee of AIML, she addressed the gathering of the party members and appealed to the Muslims to have patience and maintain unity within their ranks. She appreciated that Muslim women had been given an opportunity in the political field. Realizing women's participation in the freedom movement, the AIML adopted the following resolution regarding the formation of a Women Subcommittee at the Annual Session held at Patna from 26th - 29th March 1938:

1 Khan, A. (2000) *The Role of NWFP in the Freedom Struggle*, Lahore: Research Society of Pakistan.

Whereas it is necessary to afford adequate opportunities to women for their development and growth in order to participate in the struggle for social, economic and political emancipation of the Muslim nation in India, this Session of the All India Muslim League resolves that an All India Muslim Women's Subcommittee be formed.²

The prominent members of this sub-committee, some of whom served with the AINC were: Lady Abdullah Haroon, Begum Shah Nawaz, Mrs. Rashida Latif, Begum Shahabuddin, Mrs. M.M. Ispahani, Miss. Fatima Jinnah, Mrs. Faiz Tyabji, Begum Habibullah, Begum Aizaz Rasul, Begum Nawab Siddique Ali Khan, Lady Imam, Mrs. Hussain Malik, Salma Tassaduq Hussain and Mrs. Ayisha Kulhamoro Haji.³ These women were given the responsibility to organize Muslim women for the freedom struggle. Begum Habibullah, Mrs. Hussain Malik and Salma Tassaduq Hussain frequently visited the NWFP for women's mobilization.

Jinnah's First Visit to the NWFP: An Effort to Re-organise Frontier Provincial Muslim League (FPML)

For the forthcoming provincial elections, the AIML, at its 24th session held at Bombay in April 1936, authorised Jinnah to organise election boards at the central and provincial levels. Jinnah who had earlier advocated raising the status of NWFP to a Governor's Province, was keen in organising the FPML there. He decided to visit NWFP in October 1936.⁴

He contacted Allah Bakhsh Yousafi to apprise him of the exact conditions in the NWFP. Jinnah was unhappy over the strong connections of this Muslim majority province with the AINC.⁵ He also asked Abdul Qaiyum for help and support during his proposed visit. Abdul Qaiyum extended a formal invitation to him through the Muslim Independent Party (MIP) via its general secretary Pir Bakhsh. He also introduced him

2 Ali (2000), *The Emergence of Feminism*, p.37.

3 IOR (India Office Record) (1935), *Proceedings of the All India Muslim League* Vol.11. The British Library, London, p. 311.

4 Shah (1992), *Muslim League*.

5 *Ibid*.

with other prominent members of MIP.⁶ It must be noted here that,

The proposed visit sharpened the already existing rivalries of the local urban politicians of Peshawar. Abdur Rab Nishtar and Pir Bakhsh both lawyers and aspirants of leadership could not see eye to eye with each other.⁷

Nishtar sensed the probable benefits Pir Bakhsh could get from Jinnah's visit and tried to postpone the visit. However, Jinnah remained adamant about visiting Peshawar to organise the PML in the province. He reached Peshawar by train on 18th October 1936.⁸ He was greeted by some 400 persons, including prominent leaders of MIP and other notables of the city.⁹ In the evening, some local Congressmen including Dr. Khan Sahib, Sayed Qaim Shah and Abdul Qaiyum Khan Barrister and C.C Ghosh met Jinnah. The next day, Jinnah addressed a political meeting at Shahi Bagh, Peshawar. The meeting was attended by about a thousand people. The main theme of his speech was the organisation and party programme of the AIML. He advised the people to organise themselves under a strong political party, the AIML, representing the Muslim population of the Indian subcontinent.¹⁰ The same day he addressed the students of Edward's College and elaborated on the policy and programme of the AIML. He also visited Islamia College, Peshawar on 20th October 1936. He addressed the students and greatly emphasized the need for the unity of Muslims. He urged them to come forward and unite under a single platform and a single flag, and to speak with one voice.¹¹

6 *Ibid.*

7 *Ibid.*, 7.

8 CID (1936), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 4, F.No. 119.

9 *Ibid.*

10 CID (1936), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 5, F.No. 121.

11 CID (1936), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 5, F.No. 765:382.

During his week-long visit, Jinnah also visited Landi Kotal and Torkham. On 23rd October, he continued his meetings with the local politicians and met with Hakim Abdul Jaleel, Ali Kuli Khan and Abdur Rahim. A branch of the FPML was formed with Khuda Bakhsh as president, Pir Bakhsh as secretary and Hakim Abdul Jaleel, Lal Bakhsh, Rahim Bakhsh, Sayed Ali Shah and Abdul Latif as members of the executive council. However, no further details are available regarding this branch of the FPML.¹²

During his visit, which came to an end on 24th October, Jinnah met men of all shades of opinion both from pro-Congress and pro-League groups. However, he learned from his talks with Muslim Leaguers in the NWFP that they were hesitant to bid on the League-ticket. Elections were closing in for the provincial assembly and the formation of any solid platform for the FPML sounded a far off cry. Most of the Frontier men believed that they had better chances of winning the assembly seat by contesting the elections in an individual capacity rather as nominees of the FPML.¹³ It was to the utter disappointment of the FPML's high command that no one contested the election on League's ticket. This demonstrated the failure of the efforts to organise the FPML in the province on part of the Central League. Election results turned to be in favour of the Khudai Khidmatgars backed by the AINC, as the non-Congress candidates remained with daggers drawn against each other. The faction-ridden groups had no match to the well-organised Congress. The Frontier public found Abdul Ghaffar Khan a leader in the struggle against foreign rule. Eventually, the results showed that the AINC succeeded in winning 19 seats in the House of 50 and thus became the largest party.¹⁴

When it came to the formation of ministries, the AINC adopted a strong stance about the Governor's special powers. It conditioned formation of ministries in the

12 Shah (2000), *Ethnicity, Islam and Nationalism*.

13 Shah (1992), *Muslim League in NWFP*.

14 Khan (2000), *The Role of NWFP in the Freedom Struggle*.

provinces only if the provincial governors abode by not using their statutory special powers, or set aside the advice of the ministries. This created a constitutional row, and the AINC party in the Frontier also held back from forming a ministry. This came as a pleasant surprise to non-Congress members.¹⁵ Rather, it ensured a race for the formation of alliances and political bargaining to fill the vacuum.¹⁶ Abdul Qaiyum regained attention in political and government circles. Sir George Cunningham, Governor of the province tipped Abdul Qaiyum for the slot - a counter measure against the Congress boycott.

Abdul Qaiyum was sworn in as Chief Minister on 1st April 1937. This was criticised by the Provincial Congress Committee, which maintained that this ministry lacked popular support. Dr. Khan Sahib tried to move a no-confidence motion against the Ministry during the first session of the Frontier Assembly held on 14th April 1937. However, the Speaker disallowed him and prorogued the House.¹⁷ Abdul Qaiyum's Ministry was, however, challenged in the second session of the Assembly, held at Abbottabad on 1st September 1937. Dr. Khan Sahib moved for a no-confidence motion in the session on 3rd September 1937, which was passed by twenty-seven votes to twenty-two. The twenty-seven members who voted against Abdul Qaiyum Ministry included nineteen from Congress, four from the Hazara Democratic Party two independents and two from minorities the Hindu Sikh Nationalist Party.¹⁸ Dr. Khan Sahib was sworn in as the next Chief Minister on 6th September 1937.¹⁹ The AINC agreed to the formation of Ministries after the assurance from the Viceroy on 21st June 1937, that in all matters falling within the ministerial field, the Governor will ordinarily be guided by the advice of his ministers and that

15 CID (1937), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 6, F.No.123.

16 *Ibid.*

17 Shah (2000), *Ethnicity, Islam and Nationalism*.

18 CID (1937), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, F.No. 125.

19 *Ibid.*

these ministers will be responsible not to the British Parliament but to the Provincial Legislature.²⁰

Revival of the Frontier Provincial Muslim League

The re-emergence of the FPML took place exactly the same day that the Abdul Qaiyum Ministry was defeated in the Assembly on 3rd September 1937.²¹ A convention of the Frontier elite was held at Islamia High School, Abbottabad. This meeting resolved to set up the PML to meet the challenge posed by the AINC to the Muslims of the NWFP.²² Maulana Muhammad Shuaib of Mardan was elected as its first president, while other office bearers included Maulana Shakirullah as vice president, Ismail Ghaznavi as general secretary, and Maulana Muhammad Ishaq as joint secretary.

Prior to this, efforts had already been underway to organise branches of the FPML in Peshawar, Mardan, Bannu, Kohat, Abbottabad and different other areas of the province since February 1937, but all these efforts were confined only to their respective areas. The formation of the FPML at Abbottabad was the first effort to organise the AIML on a provincial level. However, different branches of the League continued to function independently. To bring these branches into the mainstream, a meeting was held in Nowshera on 3rd November 1937, in which a new League Council emerged with Maulana Shuaib as president. Other office bearers included Muhammad Ismail Ghaznavi as secretary with two joint secretaries, one from Abbottabad, Sajjad Ahmad Jan and other from Nowshera, Abdul Wahid Khan, with Qazi Abdul Hakim as propaganda secretary and Arbab Shams-ud-Din as treasurer.²³

Maulana Shuaib activated the League's programme in the province. He along with Maulana Shakirullah, Sayed Sultan Shah, Wadud Sarhadi and Abdul Rauf visited

20 *Ibid.*

21 Shah, (1992), *Muslim League in NWFP*.

22 Khan, (2000), *The Role of NWFP in the Freedom Struggle*.

23 *Ibid.*, p.114.

southern districts of Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan in 1938.²⁴ Initially the attendance was low at the FPML convened meetings but gradually it made appeals to the public as the leaders fully exploited their position by utilising the pulpits for this purpose.²⁵ Dr. Khan Sahib's Ministry took numerous measures curtailing privileges and striking against other interests of the big Khans and it proved blessings in disguise for the FPML.²⁶ Sir Sahibzadah was died on 4th December, 1937. With his death the elite became vulnerable to the AINC onslaught.

The Khans and landlords lamented his ouster and death at all levels, spurred to organise a platform where from they could meet the new challenges. Few months back they cared little about the League were now evincing keen interest in its political programme as they found it bulwark against Congress' anti-Khan measures.²⁷

Moreover, the anti-Congress elements in search of a platform flocked to the FPML to ventilate their common grievances against the Congress Ministry.²⁸ The influx of the Khans and other landlords created rifts in the ranks of the FPML, as they started bypassing Maulana Shuaib. He was ultimately compelled by their intrigues to resign in November 1938.²⁹ The FPML was now fully under the influence and control of the landed elite and the big Khans. Its influence remained confined only to the urban areas and non-Pukhtun areas of Hazara until the adoption of the Lahore Resolution by the AIML in 1940.³⁰

Wartime Politics in the NWFP

With the outbreak of World War II in Europe, the Viceroy of India also declared that India was too at war with the Axis

24 *Ibid.*

25 Shah (2000), *Ethnicity, Islam and Nationalism*.

26 *Ibid.*

27 Khan (2000), *The Role of NWFP in the Freedom Struggle*.

28 Shah (2000), *Ethnicity, Islam and Nationalism*.

29 Rittenberg (1988), *Ethnicity Nationalism and the Pukhtuns*.

30 Shah (2000), *Ethnicity, Islam and Nationalism*.

Powers. As the declaration was made without the consultation of major political parties in India, Congress high command directed its provincial ministries to resign in protest.³¹

In the NWFP, Dr. Khan Sahib called a special session of the Assembly on 7th November 1939, passed the Congress resolution against the War, and tendered his resignation.³² On this, Jinnah immediately urged Aurangzeb Khan, the FPML leader in the House, to frame a coalition at any cost to show that the NWFP accepted AIML as the representative of Indian Muslims.³³ However, communal antagonisms and factionalism among the non-Congress Muslims prevented him from doing so. Cunningham thereafter assumed control of the provincial administration which continued till May 1943. On 25th May, Aurangzeb Khan was sworn in as the next Chief Minister of the NWFP, ending the Governor's rule in the province.³⁴

The Lahore Resolution and the Frontier Response

In the absence of the AINC from active politics during the War years, AIML got an opportunity to represent itself as the representative of Indian Muslims and demanded a separate homeland for Muslims. The AIML convened its annual session at Lahore on 22nd March 1940.³⁵ A resolution demanding the partition of India into Muslim and Hindu areas was moved on 23rd March by Fazal Haq, Premier of Bengal. The resolution was passed unanimously amid great enthusiasm on 24th March 1940.

The Pakistan Resolution was an ideological landmark in the history of Muslims in the subcontinent. Most of the organisational responsibilities of this annual meeting were given to the Women's Reception Committee, which was

31 *Ibid.*

32 *Ibid.*

33 *Ibid.*

34 Shah (2000). *Ethnicity, Islam and Nationalism*.

35 CID (1940). *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 7-8, F. No. 127, p. 63.

presided over by Lady Abdul Qadir and Nawabzadi Qaisari Begum as chairperson. They nominated volunteers throughout the FPML sub-committees to accommodate guest women. The FZML also sent their volunteers under the supervision of Begum Kamaluddin. A large number of women delegations attended the meeting according to the CID Report of 1940; Jinnah appreciated women's participation and said:

A prominent feature of this meeting is our women participation; I am really impressed by their organisational and political efforts. Women can take part in every field of life and I am sure their household responsibilities and purdah observance will not become a hurdle in their way.³⁶

On the next day, 24th March 1940, Begum Muhammad Ali Jauhar accepted the resolution in women's meeting. The Lahore Resolution made clear the future course of action to the members of AIML. Their members started explaining and propagating the idea of Pakistan with its ideological approach to the Muslim masses. They carried on the same campaign in the NWFP and explained to the people that they were not ready to concede to Hindu majority rule. They called upon the Frontier women to support the cause of Pakistan by joining the FPML. They started approaching the Muslim masses both in rural and urban areas, vehemently explaining to them the future programme and creed of the AIML. They fully utilised the idea of Pakistan to popularise the AIML amongst the Muslims of the NWFP.

Formation of the Frontier Zanana Muslim League (FZML)

The first branch of the FZML in the NWFP was opened on 23rd April 1939 at Peshawar.³⁷ The meeting presided over by Qanita Bibi (sister of Mian Ziauddin, secretary of the FPML). Begum Habibullah (United Province), the main speaker, appealed to the Muslim women of the Frontier to join the FPML in order to combat the Hindu women who had formed their own societies. Mofti Abdul Wadud was made the president of the nascent branch of the FZML and Qanita

36 *Ibid.* F. No. 745, p. 63.

37 *Daily Khyber Mail*, 23rd April 1939, Peshawar.

Bibi became its vice president.³⁸ No further details are available of other office holders. Nothing was heard of this branch of the FZML for a year. Then in April 1940, some activities of the women Leaguers were reported from Peshawar, but on the whole, the branch remained dormant for a long time.³⁹

The first serious foray of the FZML was their full-fledged participation in the election campaign of 1945-46. Therefore, on their return from Lahore, the FZML started a vigorous propaganda campaign for the popularisation of the AIML in the NWFP. The organisers also realised the importance of awakening and organising the FZML for the cause of Pakistan. Getting encouragement and inspiration from the women activists in other areas of the country, the FZML sought the assistance of the AIML women workers. In this connection, on 13th April 1940, a meeting was held at Peshawar. Begum Habibullah participated on behalf of the All India Zanana Muslim League (AIZML) briefed the participants, numbering 20 to 30, about the idea of Pakistan and the importance of women's role in furthering the cause of Muslim community. According to her, it was highly imperative in the interest of Muslim women to promote the welfare of their country and community.⁴⁰ She also re-organised the FZML on this occasion. She persuaded Begum Qazi Muhammad Aslam to become its first president. Begum Qazi Abdul Wahab a one time staunch Congressite was made secretary general of the FZML.⁴¹

The FZML started its activities with great zeal and soon its city branch was founded at Peshawar. Fatima Begum, Principal Islamia College Lahore and an active member of Punjab Zanana League, also participated in this meeting. Begum Mir Ahmad Khan was made president and Begum

38 CID (1939), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 7, F.No. 769, p. 75.

39 *Daily Khyber Mail* 30th November 1945, Lahore. CID Police Diaries (1940) Bundle No. 7-8, F.No. 803, p. 3.

40 CID (1940), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, F.No. 177, p.67.

41 CID (1940), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, F.No. 191.

Shirin Wahab vice president of the Peshawar City. Apart from them, Begum Nazir Niaz (later Nazir Tila Muhammad) was nominated as secretary and Razia Niaz (later Razia Butt) as propaganda secretary of this branch.⁴²

At this occasion, Fatima Begum elaborated on the idea of a separate homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent. She also explained the importance of women's role in this regard. The FZML thereafter arranged regular meetings, and its branches were opened in many areas of the province. Slowly and gradually, the organised wing of the Central Zanana League emerged as well during the vital years of 1945-47.⁴³ Central leaders of the AIZML including Fatima Begum, Begum Salma Tassadduq Hussain, Begum Shah Nawaz, Lady Abdullah Haroon, Begum Karim Dad, Begum HA Hakim, Begum Zahida Shah and Begum Nasira Siddique played an important role in establishing the FZML in the NWFP. All these ladies visited the Frontier and on most occasions they stayed at the house of Mian Sharif Hussain. His whole family actively participated in the freedom struggle. The women of this family had a notable role in the organisation of the FZML.⁴⁴ Mian Saeedur Rehman (son of Mian Sharif Hussain) further elaborated these delegations from AIZML which frequently visited the NWFP for the organisational matters.

At the start of World War II, the nationalist leaders of the Congress Party were of the view that Britain was vulnerable and hence would be open to political pressure and negotiation. They undertook to commit the AINC to cooperate with the war effort in return for Indian Independence upon the conclusion of the war. Abdul Ghaffar Khan, however, was furious at this decision and resigned from the AINC membership. He argued that the principle of non-violence could not be put aside in any context, whether local or international. He was of the view that neither he nor

42 CID (1940), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, F.No. 745. P. 3.

43 Interview with Mian Saeed-ur-Rehman, 10th February 2002, Peshawar.

44 *Ibid.*

Khudai Khidmatgar could participate in any way in the war efforts.⁴⁵ By this stand, he emerged as the most determined non-violent of the AINC members. The failure of the AINC to negotiate a suitable political trade off with Viceroy Linlithgow for its cooperation in the World War resulted in the civil disobedience movement. The Party decided at Ramgarh in March 1940 to resort to civil disobedience. However, in July, the Working Committee suspended that decision in hopes of reaching an understanding with the Government. It once again reversed its decision in September, when a new impasse developed after the August Offer of the Viceroy.⁴⁶ Gandhi was given the sole responsibility for directing the civil disobedience campaign. He decided on individual, rather than mass, *satyagraha* (non-violent resistance) over the right to preach against the war.⁴⁷

Gandhi, instead of choosing any *satyagrahs* from the province, entrusted all the NWFP responsibilities to Abdul Ghaffar Khan who rejoined the AINC after its decision of not favouring the World War. He launched the *satyagraha* in the province by selecting twenty leaders to shout slogans against the World War on 14th December 1940.⁴⁸ However, the party leaders in the NWFP, including many of the nominated *satyagrahis*, remained unconvinced of the efficacy of the campaign. The *satyagrahs* started on schedule, shouting the approved slogans against the World War but soon, the slogan shouting dwindled away. Gandhi declared a Christmas truce which was extended to the NWFP until after *Eid-ul-Adhah* in the first week of January.⁴⁹ In the subsequent month, a few men half-heartedly resumed slogan shouting but stopped by the end of the month. Abdul Ghaffar Khan tried a new strategy in March 1941 by sending Khudai Khidmatgars to shout slogans in rural areas.

45 Banerjee, M. (2000), *The Pathan Unarmed: Opposition and Memory in the North West Frontier*. London: Oxford University Press.

46 *Ibid.*

47 *Ibid.*

48 *Ibid.*

49 Rittenberg (1988), *Ethnicity Nationalism and the Pukhtuns*.

However, the public response was so negligible that the next month he gave up and called a halt to individual *satyagraha* altogether.⁵⁰

Responding to the limited nature of British promises on India's future, particularly after the failure of Cripps Mission (1942), the AINC subsequently reversed its position on cooperation with the war effort. On 8th August 1942, it passed its 'Quit India' Resolution, authorising Gandhi to lead a mass non-violent campaign for independence on the wider scale.⁵¹ In the NWFP, Abdul Ghaffar Khan was entrusted with the responsibility of organising the campaign. He toured the settled districts to popularise the Congress initiative, urging the population not to pay their rents and taxes, to leave their jobs if they were government servants and most importantly to desert the British army. He explained that since the British had not consulted the Indians before getting embroiled in the war, it would reflect a lack of political maturity and weak sense of independence to accede to that decision.⁵²

Abdul Ghaffar Khan had realised earlier the importance of active participation on the part of women. It is also a fact that since the inception of Khudai Khidmatgar Movement, he had long argued for the importance of educating women. He also emphasised the *Shariah* laws relating to women's proper inheritance rights. At that time, keeping in view the cultural taboos of the NWFP society, he stressed that women had to be included in the enlarged political consciousness in order to ensure the success of the movement.⁵³

He emphasised that success of the movement demanded that women be made aware of the political climate and the issues involved, since without support and

50 Tendulkar (1967), *Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan*.

51 Burke, S. and Qureshi, S. (1999) *The British Raj in India: A Historical Review*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.

52 Banerjee (2000), *The Pathan Unarmed*.

53 See Banerjee (2000), *The Pathan Unarmed*. Tendulkar (1967) *Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan*.

backing from home, it would be much more difficult for men to undertake civil disobedience and cope with its accompanying trauma. He praised the Pukhtun women that they had always been key supporters of their nation and pillars of their family honour, and that they had a reputation for dealing with moments of crisis and responding to them with extraordinary fortitude.⁵⁴

He further emphasised the unity of the Pukhtun nation and asked women to show solidarity with the nationalist struggle by assisting their men in non-violent civil disobedience. The women, who had already responded to the earlier calls of Abdul Ghaffar Khan in the 1930's, once again came forward and this time decided to actively participate in the civil disobedience and the 'Quit India' movement. Durmarjan and Mehrunnisa were the prominent ones; Durmarjan was the party organiser while Mehrunnisa was her assistant and the flag-bearer of Khudai Khidmatgaar meetings and processions.⁵⁵

The Special Branch Police Record at Peshawar Archives shows that there was a sizeable participation of the Frontier Pukhtun women in the Congress meetings and processions during 1941-44. The following table showing dates, places and the number of women participants is ample proof of women's participation:

Data	Place of procession/ meeting	No. of Women Participants	Date	Place of Procession / Meeting	No. of Women Participants
24-3-1941	Peshawar	300/400	8-3-1943	Shahidan – Peshawar	250/275
09-4-1941	Nowshera Kalan	12	3-4-1943	Do-Sara-Charsadda	80
11-4-1941	Domal Gang-Charsadda	100	8-4-1943	Charsadda	10
28-4-1941	Mar Mahi – Charsadda	25	21-4-1943	Babra – Mardan	40

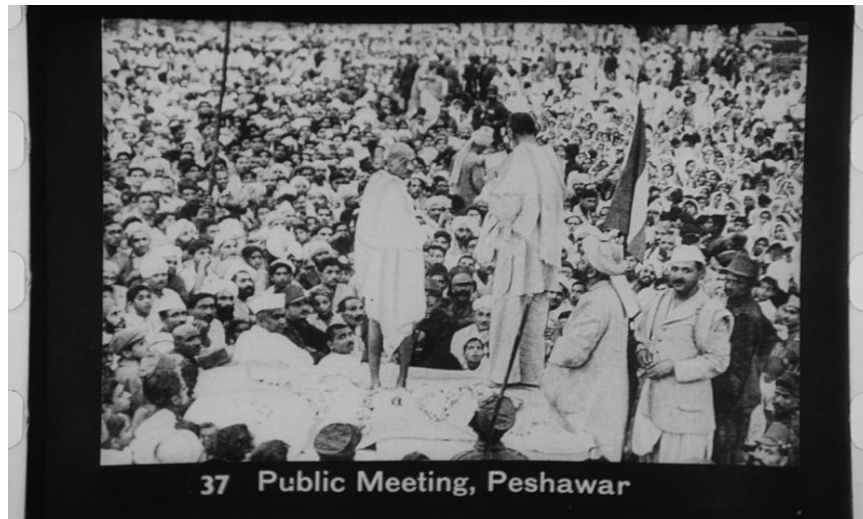
54 *Ibid.*

55 CID (1940), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, F.No. 765.

16-5-1941	Kalu Khan – Mardan	20	11-10-1943	Badh Bair – Peshawar	25
13-5-1941	Tehkal Bala – Peshawar	600	3-4-1944	Do-Sara – Charsadda	80
10-8-1941	Maidan – Charsadda	100	3-4-1944	Serdheri – Mardan	80
01-9-1941	Charsadda	30	17-4-1944	Jamal Garhi – Mardan	15/16
22-7-1942	Charsadda	300	30-4-1944	Tangi – Charsadda	80
23-7-1942	Charsadda	300	28-5-1944	Takkar – Mardan	100
27-7-1942	Charsadda	300	7-4-1944	Tangi – Charsadda	80
9-9-1942	Bannu	100	12-7-1944	Takhat Bai-Mardan	50
11-9-1942	Bannu	30	3-8-1944	Shakar Garh – Charsadda	50
12-9-1942	Babra – Mardan	30	4-8-1944	Shakar Garh – Charsadda	50
16-12-1942	Nisatta – Charsadda	35			

Source: *CID Diaries, 1940-42 File Nos. 125, 177, 191, 745, 765, 803 Special Branch Peshawar.*

The above Table shows that women's participation in the Khudai Khidmatgar Movement was of limited scale. Yet keeping in view the cultural taboos and conservative nature of Pukhtun society, it is a substantially good number. It also shows that the AINC had the backing and support of both men and women in wider areas of the province. However, the main centre of women's participation remained confined to Peshawar and Charsadda.



Ghaffar Khan and Gandhi meeting at Peshawar 1937 (on the right hand side women are standing)

As the movement progressed, Abdul Ghaffar Khan became increasingly convinced of the need for women's participation and involvement in active politics, so he encouraged his Pukhtun women; out of respect he always called them 'mothers' and 'sisters' explicitly. In the end, he took the decision to welcome the women activists from other parts of the country. In this regard, Bibi Ghulam Fatima and Ms. Amar Kaur were welcomed to speed up the propaganda campaign among the NWFP women.⁵⁶ Both of the ladies were active members of the Congress Committee. During the civil disobedience movement, they addressed a number of women's meetings and processions in the NWFP. Bibi Ghulam Fatima, who was a good speaker, encouraged women's participation in the national cause. According to a CID Diaries report about one of her speeches, she praised the NWFP women for giving birth to such brave sons who served the cause of the nation.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Banerjee (2000), *The Pathan Unarmed*.

⁵⁷ CID (1941), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No.9, F.No. 135, p. 37.

The major participation of women during the wartime meetings and processions, as noted earlier, was at Peshawar and Charsadda. In one such meeting, held at Tehkal Bala on 13th June 1941, approximately 600 women participated. The total number of the audience was reported to be 8000.⁵⁸ Abdul Ghaffar Khan, while addressing the women, praised their participation. He encouraged them and stated that he was very glad at their participation in the movement. He also exhorted the use of *khaddar* and the boycott of British-made goods. He added:

I was always impressed by the Indian women who work side by side with their men. Today is the happiest day of my life that my Pukhtun mothers and sisters are standing beside their fathers and brothers.⁵⁹

The CID Report further confirms another visit of Ms. Amar Kaur and Mrs. Desai on 20th April 1942. According to the report, they arrived at Nowshera where a small audience, including some women, was present to greet them. Later, they held a procession, which was addressed by Ms. Amar Kaur, thanking the participants for their good will. She also praised and encouraged the women's participation.⁶⁰ The women participants assured their future participation in every possible way for the liberation of the country.

Following the advice of Abdul Ghaffar Khan, they boycotted the foreign goods and also started using *khaddar* as their clothes. The NWFP women encouraged the use of domestic clothes for their menfolk as well. They started participating in the Congress held meetings wearing *khaddar*. In these meetings, they criticised foreigners for exploiting the Indian economy and plundering its wealth. They reiterated their pledge that they would resist foreign rule and would never allow the British to rule the country anymore.

58 *Ibid.*, 7.

59 Shah, W. (2012), *Pukhtaney Khazi ow da Qam Khidmat*, [Pukhtu] Peshawar: Bacha Khan Research Centre.

60 CID (1941), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No.9, F.No. 135, p. 127.

Ms. Amar Kaur and Mrs. Desai's second visit to the NWFP was on 13th April 1943. They were received at Nowshera by a group of women and men Khudai Khidmatgars. They were accompanied by a procession to a meeting at Charsadda. A big amount of money was raised for the Khudai Khidmatgar funds.⁶¹

In order to provide boost to the civil disobedience movement, the Frontier Congress started a protest of schools from 1st September 1942, which resulted in some property damage in the towns of Mardan and Charsadda. Women participated in this campaign by convincing the local people in their house to house visits in some areas of Mardan and Charsadda. Attempts were also made to organise student *hartals* (strikes) but these met with minimal success.⁶²

The Provincial Congress intensified public meetings, and on 4th September 1942, a 'Declaration of Independence' was read throughout the province. However, in spite of all the activity and rhetoric, party workers failed to generate a sufficient level of public interest to carry on with the civil disobedience campaign. Only in the month of October, with the sheer efforts of Abdul Ghaffar Khan, large groups of Khudai Khidmatgars from the countryside, numbering up to 750 in Peshawar and 300 in Mardan, picketed the district Courts for six consecutive days. The Police responded only when their activities attracted crowds. One such crowd clashed with the police in Mardan, in which three people died while thirteen others were injured on 10th October 1942.⁶³ Thereafter, the Government modified its tactics and started selective arrests of the Congress organizers. In Mardan, 131 persons were detained, including Abdul Ghaffar Khan on

61 CID (1942), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 10-11, F. No. 15. P.187.

62 CID (1942), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 10-11, F.No.17.

63 *Ibid.*

27th October 1942.⁶⁴ The Provincial Congress activists continued their agitation by starting picketing of the jails in Peshawar and Mardan. They continued presenting themselves for arrest until mid November. Thereafter only sporadic agitation took place, which continued in a spasmodic manner until April 1943, when the Frontier Congress called it off.⁶⁵

It must be mentioned here that despite all the activities of the Provincial Congress, the whole campaign during the World War II years failed to win public sympathies and support in the NWFP. One reason for this was the half-hearted involvement of the Khudai Khidmatgars in the movement. They had lost all interest in the activities of the Congress due to the initial differences and resignation of Abdul Ghaffar Khan from the Congress. The second reason was that the theatre of World War was so far away that very little impacts were felt in the NWFP. Another reason was the lenient attitude of the provincial authorities in handling the movement. The Frontier Governor, Cunningham, was of the view that taking strict measures against the activists would win them public sympathies and support. The best way to combat them, according to him, was to let them carry out their activities.⁶⁶ Another factor was the strong anti-Congress propaganda of the *Mullahs*, *Maulanas* and *Sajjada Nasheens*, as well as their *mureed* support for the British war effort.⁶⁷

However, one can sum up that by and large, the Congress civil disobedience movement failed to attract substantial public support. Yet women's participation in the war time agitational politics can be considered as an event of great importance in developing political consciousness and awareness among women of the area. Their sacrifices and bold steps encouraged both men and women to work for the freedom of the country in the years to come.

64 CID (1942) *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement* Bundle No. 10-11, F. No. 15.

65 Banerjee (2000) *The Pathan Unarmed*.

66 Rittenberg (1988) *Ethnicity Nationalism and the Pukhtuns*.

67 *Ibid.*, 171.

Chapter 6

India, Pakistan or Pukhtunistan?

After the termination of the World War II, the events on the all India stage determined the direction and tempo of the NWFP politics. Lord Wavel, the Viceroy of India, convened a conference at Simla in June 1945 to discuss a possible Interim Government for India. However, the talks collapsed over the question of who represents Indian Muslims, as the Congress leaders refused to accept the Muslim League's claim that they were the sole representative body of the Muslims.¹

Meanwhile, in July 1945, during the general elections in Britain, the Labour Party emerged victorious. The new government under Clement Atlee decided to address the Indian problem on a priority basis.² The Viceroy announced on 21st August 1945 that general elections to the Central and Provincial Legislatures would be held in the coming winter. The elections for Federal Legislature were held on 4th and 5th December, 1945 and the Provincial Legislatures elections were held from 26th January to 13th February 1946.³

The elections were of immense importance to the AIML, as it had to prove that it was the sole representative of Indian Muslims. The AINC, on the other hand, had to disprove this

1 Mirza (1969), *Muslim Women Role in the Pakistan Movement*.

2 Shah (2000), *Ethnicity, Islam and Nationalism*.

3 CID (1945), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 12, F. No. 91-92.

claim of the AIML by securing as much success as possible in the Muslim constituencies. In the NWFP, the elections were like a trial for the AIML as the AINC enjoyed enormous public support in the province, being the ally of the local Khudai Khidmatgar Movement. The elections were open for all major and minor political organisations, but the real contest was expected to be between the Congress and the League.

NWFP and the Provincial Elections (1945-46)

The provincial elections were contested by both the Congress and the League with enthusiasm to secure a role in the future legislature.⁴ Both the parties tried to utilise all the resources available to them to win as much public support as they could. They sought guidance from their respective high commands at the all India level. In this regard, in the NWFP, Congress had the upper hand over League as it was better organised and well-disciplined due to the support of Abdul Ghaffar Khan and many of the Khudai Khidmatgars.⁵

The Frontier League, however, presented a disillusioned body at this critical juncture as it suffered from factional divisions inside its ranks. The League high command, therefore, decided to organise the party on better lines for the forthcoming elections. Some of the top leaders of the AIML started pouring into the NWFP. Qazi Isa made a flying visit in September 1945.⁶ This was followed by two men's delegations, which included: Muhammad Ismail and Khaliq-uz-Zaman, to Peshawar. They, in their week-long visit (26th September to 2nd October 1945) appointed three boards at the provincial level to make suitable arrangements for the coming elections. The boards included the Selection Board⁷,

4 Khan (2000), *The Role of NWFP in the Freedom Struggle*.

5 Banerjee (2000), *The Pathan Unarmed*.

6 CID (1945), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 12, F. No. 134.

7 The Selection Board included Iftikhar Hussain Mamdot as Convener while Abdul Qaiyum Khan, M.R. Kiyani, Sohbat Khan, Jalaluddin, Habibullah Khan, Pir Sahib Zakori and Arbab Abdul Ghafoor.

to choose candidates, the Election Board⁸, for organising and managing the election campaign and the Finance Board⁹ to collect funds and maintain proper records.¹⁰

Next, Lady Abdullah Haroon organised her visit to the NWFP to help in re-organising FZML, because the AINC was stronger than the FPML in the area. In addition, there was a great need to increase the political participation of women voters for the FPML. Therefore, the Central Women's League organised delegations from time to time to create a sense of self awareness among the Muslim women of the NWFP to vote in favour of Muslim League. This was followed by a visit of Jinnah himself in November 1945 to further boost the League organisation and election campaign in the Frontier.

Jinnah's Second Visit to the NWFP and its Impacts

No nation can rise to the height of glory unless your women are side by side with you; we are victims of evil customs. It is crime against humanity that our women are shut up within the four walls of the houses as prisoners. There is no sanction anywhere for the deplorable condition in which our women have to live. You should take your women along with you as comrades in every sphere of life.¹¹ (Jinnah)

The central leader of the AIML, Jinnah, in order to reorganise the FPML and to give a new life to the party for the forthcoming elections, decided to visit the NWFP personally. He reached Peshawar on 19th November 1945, where he was warmly received by the local League

8 The Election Board included Abdul Rab Nishtar as Convener while Abdul Qaiyum Khan, Samin Jan Khan, Bakht Jamal Khan, Pir Muhammad Khan, Niamatullah, Taj Ali, Jalaluddin, Arbab Sher Ali, Mir Alam Khan of Tangi and Nawab Nasrullah Khan. (Further details see Shah, (2000) *Ethnicity, Islam and Nationalism*.

9 The Finance Board included Mian Ziauddin as Convener while Ghulam Hyder Khan Sherpao, Ayub Khan, Muhammad Ali Khan Hoti, Haji Karim Bakhsh and Muhammad Yousaf Khattak.

10 Shah, (2000), *Ethnicity, Islam and Nationalism*.

11 CID (1944), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 9, F. No. 103.

leaders.¹² The next day, he attended a public meeting at Shahi Bagh, Peshawar. A large number of leaders, workers and supporters had gathered from different corners of the NWFP, including women of the FZML. Jinnah elaborated on the representative character of the AIML and its role as the main party against the Congress. He explained that the forthcoming elections are the first step towards the achievement of Pakistan and if they succeeded in winning those elections, half of their work would be done. He warned that if they failed, they would be wiped out of the political scene.¹³ He further argued that the only solution to the Indian problem lies in the creation of Pakistan. In the end, he appealed to the NWFP Muslims to vote for the FPML candidates, as every vote in favour of the League candidate would mean a vote for Pakistan and every vote against it would mean a vote for the Hindu Raj.¹⁴

On this occasion, appeals were made for contributing to the FPML election funds. A large amount of 50,000 rupees was received on this occasion.¹⁵ Jinnah spent 22nd November in receiving and meeting League leaders from different areas of the NWFP. He learnt their views and opinions on the League's position in the emerging election scenario. The next day, Jinnah visited Manki Sharif, Nowshera. He met Aminul Hassant, the Pir of Manki Sharif, and asked him to support the League candidates. His support for the League indeed was a significant landmark in the political history of the FPML. He brought with him a large number of disciples into the League fold.¹⁶

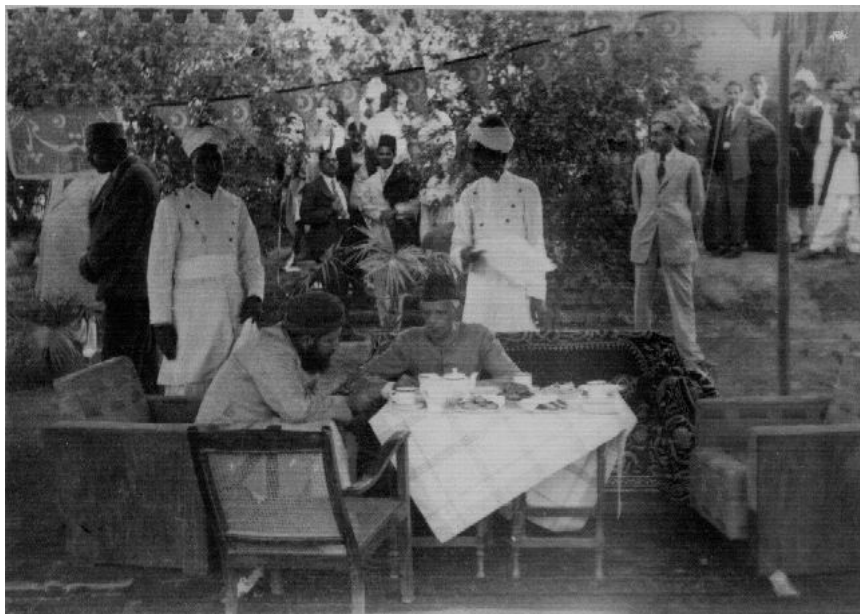
12 CID (1945) *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 12, F. No. 134.

13 CID (1945), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 13, F.No.280.

14 CID (1945), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 13, F.No.339.

15 CID (1945), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 12, F.No.340.

16 Rittenberg (1988), *Ethnicity Nationalism and the Pukhtuns*.



*Jinnah meeting with Pir of Manki Sharif at Manki Sharif, Nowshera
(1945)*

During Jinnah's NWFP visit, women Leaguers also attended his meetings. The women delegation also discussed at length the forthcoming election and its strategy with Jinnah. He encouraged the women by saying:

I am very glad that our women are coming forward... women can always play a great part. It is said that the hand that rocks the cradle rules the nation...our Islamic history shows that women have always worked shoulder to shoulder with men...no nation can ever achieve any big thing unless it take its women with them.¹⁷

Jinnah's visit gave a new life and spirit to the activities of the FPML and the FZML. The Provincial Women sub-committee took up the task of the organisation of women for the Pakistan cause with remarkable courage and determination.

On 24th November, Jinnah visited Islamia College, Peshawar. He addressed a largely attended meeting of the

¹⁷ CID (1945), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 12, F.No.438, p. 29.

students and local League women.¹⁸ Jinnah also visited Edwards College, Peshawar. In both these places he urged the youth to keep themselves aware of the political happenings.¹⁹ He is also reported to have visited the Khyber Agency to meet and win the local Afridi and Shinwari Maliks.²⁰

Jinnah's visit to the NWFP gave a new spirit to the League organisation. It gave the Leaguers' confidence of success in the next election. The support extended by Pir of Manki Sharif was an additional success of the League. Apart from Pir of Manki, some prominent individuals had already started joining League. They included prominent Khudai Khidmatgars and Congressmen, including Arbab Abdul Ghafoor and Abdul Qaiyum Khan²¹. The League, thereafter, put up their best in reliance and enthusiasm in bolstering the morale of their candidates, calling for public support inside the NWFP and in other parts of India. The Muslim youth in particular was called upon. In this regard, two batches of student volunteers were reported to have toured the NWFP in support of the League. A group of about forty Pukhtun students studying at Aligarh vowed to work for the League in the ensuing elections.²² Besides students, women were also encouraged to mobilize support for the League.

In this regard, a special meeting of the Central Women sub-committee of the AIML, held in October 1945 at Lahore, called upon the Muslim women all over India to take up the

18 *Ibid.*

19 CID (1945), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 12, F.No.343.

20 CID (1945), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 13, F.No.437.

21 Abdul Qaiyum Khan remained as Deputy Leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party in the Central Legislature before joining the AIML. While Arbab Abdul Ghafoor was a staunch Khudai Khidmatgar and remained General Secretary of Frontier Provincial Congress Committee. For further details see Jansson, E. (1981) *India Pakistan or Pukhtunistan*, Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, Pp. 160-162.

22 CID (1945), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 12, F.No.289.

challenge by whole heartedly supporting the League in the forthcoming elections to prove to the world that Muslim India stands solidly behind its national organisation.²³ It further demanded that the Muslim women should organise themselves for the elections and support only Muslim League candidates. It urged them to boycott those who were opposed to the AIML programme and ideal. It further directed the like-minded women to hold meetings in the different cities and towns for the collection of election funds.²⁴

The Committee also decided to send a delegation under the leadership of Lady Abdullah Haroon to the NWFP. Other members of this delegation were Begum H.R. Hakim, Begum Salma Tasadduque Hussain, Fatima Begum, Begum Zubaida Shah and Begum Karim Dad Khan.²⁵ It further explained that the NWFP, being a stronghold of the Congress, needed more attention.

The above-mentioned delegation reached Peshawar on 17th October 1945.²⁶ It was welcomed by the NWFP women along with Sardar Aurangzeb Khan and Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar. The delegation addressed two largely attended meetings at Peshawar. It re-organised the FZML. The new FZML came into operation with Begum Sardar Ali as president, Begum Mian Sharif Hussain as vice-president and Mumtaz Jamal as its secretary. The delegates made inspiring speeches, exhorting the audience to stand solidly behind the League. At the end of these meetings they appealed the audience to contribute to the League election fund, which resulted in a contribution of 1500 rupees from the participants.²⁷

23 Mirza (1969), *Muslim Women Role in the Pakistan Movement*.

24 *Ibid.*

25 *Ibid.*, 76.

26 Daily *Inqilab* 12th April 1945, Lahore.

27 Interview with Mian Saeed-ur-Rehman, 10th February 2002, Qafila Valley, Peshawar.

The delegation then moved to Nowshera on 20th October for organising the Women's League and propagating its message. Next day they visited Mardan where Begum Zari Sarfaraz Khan offered her support for FZML. The delegates addressed a large number of women who came from far-flung areas to attend the meeting. The majority of the women were Pukhtun, so Zari Sarfaraz translated the views of the delegates to the audience in Pukhtu.²⁸ At this occasion, the participants expressed confidence in Jinnah's leadership and promised to make sacrifices for the League's cause. Lady Abdullah Haroon also read the message of Jinnah:

I am happy that the women of Peshawar are coming forward in the forthcoming elections campaign. The Frontier women could play a great role in the achievement of Pakistan by keeping all their culture and strong religious norms. None of the nation can get freedom without the support of their women.²⁹

A branch of the FZML was also established at Mardan on this occasion. Kokab Sultana became the president and Zari Sarfaraz its general secretary.³⁰ While appreciating the efforts of Zari Sarfaraz, Lady Abdullah Haroon appealed for election funds. The participants contributed 2000 rupees to the League election fund.³¹

The women leaders arranged meetings at various places in the major districts of the province. New branches of FZML were established at Abbottabad and Kohat. The Abbottabad branch was established at the residence of Raja Aziz Ahmad in a meeting attended by 250 women. Begum Hamdam Kamal-ud-Din was made its president.³²

Another branch of the FZML was founded at Kohat. Nazir Tila Muhammad organised this branch in collaboration with Saeeda Muhammad Ahmad. Nazir Tila Muhammad explained the programme and ideal of the FZML to the

28 Interview with Begum Zari Sarfaraz, 5th April 2002, Islamabad.

29 *The Eastern Times* 15th November 1945, Lahore.

30 Interview with Begum Zari Sarfaraz.

31 CID (1945), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 12, F.No.438.

32 *Ibid.*

audience. A branch of FZML with Begum Zabardast Khan as president, Mrs. Masoom Shah as vice president Saeeda Muhammad Ahmad as general secretary and Rabia Gul as propaganda secretary was established at Kohat.³³ The FZML thereafter chalked out a comprehensive election campaign. Largely attended gatherings were held at Peshawar, Mardan, Bannu, Kohat, Abbottabad, Dera Ismail Khan and other parts of the province.

During the election, it was considered essential that the maximum number of voters be mobilised. This was a serious challenge in the NWFP for the FZML. However, this challenge was taken up by both the men and women wings of the provincial League. They toured both the urban areas and the countryside relentlessly canvassing for the League. The Leaguers launched a forceful election campaign and preached its programme to the voters. The FZML carried on the campaign with remarkable courage and determination. It arranged meetings at various places in the major districts. Whenever the meetings were held, a large number of veiled women enrolled themselves as members of the FZML.³⁴

As the election approached, the women intensified the election campaign. Largely attended meetings were held, where the women were urged to cast their votes in favour of AIML candidates. The FZML thus tried its best to prepare the ground and make the election campaign successful. The next steps were to make voter lists and assign duties polling stations duties to make the elections process free and fair. This was the most challenging task for the FZML as they need to prove that the AIML was the only representative party of the Muslims of the subcontinent. Therefore, the Muslim Girls Students Federation and Women National Guards that was founded in 1944 in different parts of the country were re-organised for election purposes.³⁵ These

33 Interview with Nasira Kiyani, 5th June 2002, Satellite Town, Rawalpindi.

34 CID (1946), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 13, F. No. 756.

35 Sultana (2004), *The Role of Women in Social and Political Development of Pakistan*.

groups, under their women leaders' supervision, visited far-flung rural areas of the province to increase their voters' lists. They were also responsible for the supervision of the polling stations as well as transportation and escorting women voters to the polling stations. According to Salma Tasadduque Hussain, 90 percent of the Peshawar City women voted for the AIML.³⁶

It is worthwhile to mention here that most of the Peshawar City women were not Pukhtun; rather, the majority of the women were Hindko- and Persian-speaking migrants from Central Asia and Indian origin families. Secondly, the Khudai Khidmatgars had strong hold in the rural areas of the NWFP because most of the population was Pukhtun. Also, the FZML women were more formally educated than the rural Pukhtun women.³⁷

As mentioned earlier, the Provincial Congress, which was well-organised, countered the FPML propaganda of Islam and Pakistan by campaigning on the liberation of India. It fought the elections in the NWFP in the name of the Khudai Khidmatgar Movement without ever challenging Islam or the ethos of the society.³⁸

The Congress also utilised all available resources from inside and outside the province. Its supporters also visited the NWFP to extend their blessings to the local command. It also resorted to women mobilisation. The Congress high command sent Bibi Ghulam Fatima, Ms. Amar Kaur, Mira Behan and Amtus Salam to give support to the Congress election campaign.³⁹ They visited some areas of the NWFP to organise women's support for the election. In one such meeting at Charssadda, attended by this delegation, Ms. Amar Kaur exhorted the participants to support the national

36 *Ibid.*

37 CID (1946), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 13, F. No. 756.

38 Khan (2000), *The Role of NWFP in the Freedom Struggle*.

39 CID (1945), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 12, F.No.134:339.

cause. She criticised the Leaguers by accusing them as the supporters of the British Raj.⁴⁰

Bibi Ghulam Fatima also addressed the same meeting in a comprehensive way. She appreciated the Pukhtun women and encouraged them to participate in the election campaign. She urged for unity among all Indians. She emphasised that unity should be their motto, through which they could defeat any enemy. She criticised the British for their Indian exploits and communalists. She termed Jinnah and other League leaders as communalists. She carried on her criticism by terming the League propaganda against the Congress as false and added that there would be no danger to the religion and moral values of Muslims if Congress came to power, as was propagated by the League. She concluded that Pukhtuns should not be misguided by such propaganda, because their own faith is much stronger than that of the Muslim Leaguers.⁴¹

These ladies participated in many women's meetings and explained the Congress ideology and programme to the audience. Most of these meetings were arranged at the houses of Khudai Khidmatgar members. The local speakers normally delivered speeches to arouse nationalistic feelings. In some cases, young girls were encouraged to recite nationalistic poems.⁴²

Both FZML and Khudai Khidmatgar supporters intensified their meetings and processions. In one such meeting arranged at the house of Sarfaraz Khan of Katlang, Mardan, approximately 120 women participated. During the meeting, the women were appealed to vote for Khudai Khidmatgar candidates because they were the true followers of Islam and were struggling for liberation of the country. The participants were also requested to generously donate in the

40 CID (1945), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 12, F.No.134:340.

41 CID (1945), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 13, F.No.134: 343,438.

42 CID (1945), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 13, F.No. 449).

Congress election fund. At the end of the meeting the women marched through the village shouting slogans against British rule.⁴³

In another such meeting, held at the house of Ahmad Gul, a Khudai Khidmatgar, at Charsadda, five hundred women participated. Ahmad Gul's mother, while addressing the audience, said:

All the nations of the world had fought for their independence and liberation of their homelands and why should we Pukhtuns lag behind? We will fight till the last breath of our life. If your men are not ready for this national cause, don't give them any thing to eat nor anything to wear, even don't talk to them.⁴⁴

The women also participated in the meetings organized by Khudai Khidmatgars. But during these meetings, separate seating arrangements were made for them. Although they never delivered speeches in such joint meetings but they took part in the slogan chanting at the end. They expressed their emotions and enthusiasm by chanting slogans like *Inqilab Zindabad* ('long-live the revolution'), *Fakhr-e-Afghan Zindabad* ('long live pride of the Afghans', a reference to Bacha Khan) and *Nara-e-Takbeer-Allah-o-Akbar* ('Slogan of Greatness—Allah is the Greatest').⁴⁵

However, despite of all these meetings and activities of organising women support, by and large, the participation of women was limited in the Congress election campaign in comparison to the FZML. Yet the Congress women tried to mobilize the NWFP women for supporting the election campaign and cause of the Congress.

The elections were held from 26th January to 13th February. On 18th February, the results were announced. In all, 137 candidates took part in the race for 50 places in the

43 CID (1945), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 13, F.No.178, p. 57.

44 CID (1945), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 13, F.No.437-39, p.17.

45 CID (1945) *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 13, F.No.443.

assembly. About twenty percent of the province population was enfranchised.⁴⁶

The results were in favour of Congress winning 19 Muslim seats in addition to 11 minorities' seats, as compared to Muslim League which stood second by winning 17 seats, while in the remaining seats two went to Jamait-e-Ulema and one to Akali Dal both Congress allies.⁴⁷

Thus, in a House of 50, the Congress and its Allies secured 33 seats, while the League was confined to 17. The League's failure in the NWFP elections brought an outcry from all quarters of the AIML. Workers were dismayed and leaders were disgusted. The League criticised the Congress Ministry for undue interference during the polls and considered this as the main reason for its failure. It raised the issue in the very first session of the Provincial Assembly in March 1946.⁴⁸

Qaiyum Khan, the League leader in the House, charged the Congress ministers of cheating, assaults, practices of bribery and corruption in the elections of 1946. He further highlighted that Hindu gold, Hindu press and Hindu government changed the fate of the FPML in the Frontier.⁴⁹ However, the charges were denied by both the Congress and the Provincial Governor. While refuting the charges, Cunningham said, 'to him the main reasons for the League's failures were lack of the organisation it desperately needed, internal feuds and factionalisms in the Party'.⁵⁰ He further added that 'the Pakistan cry has little reality to the average Pukhtun villager to whom the suggestion of Hindu domination is only laughable'.⁵¹ However,

One thing which went in favour of the League and proved encouraging for them was the fact that the total votes polled in favour of the League were slightly larger than those polled for

46 Shah (2000), *Ethnicity, Islam and Nationalism*, p. 165.

47 Khan (2000), *The Role of NWFP in the Freedom Struggle*, p. 208.

48 *Ibid.*

49 Shah (2000), *Ethnicity, Islam and Nationalism*, p. 165.

50 *Ibid.*, 166.

51 *Ibid.*

Congress. Out of the total polled Muslim votes numbering 347,632 the League secured 145,510 while the Congress received 143,571.⁵²

The Civil Disobedience Movement and Campaign of FZML

The new ministry in the Frontier under Dr. Khan Sahib was formed on 7th March 1946. The ministers were sworn on 9th March 1946.⁵³ It was the third time that Congress succeeded in forming a ministry in the province, but this time it faced staunch opposition from the AIML during its tenure. The FPML gave a tough time to the ministry through its civil disobedience movement. Many factors contributed to the civil disobedience, but the main factor behind it was that the FPML wanted to show its presence in the overwhelmingly Muslim majority province and that's why it started opposing the ministry and reorganising the party from the very beginning.

Defeat in the provincial election in the NWFP was taken as a serious setback by both 'old' and 'new' Leaguers. Local organisational meetings of the League were convened in all districts of the NWFP following the election debacle. Regional and provincial leaders jointly appointed organisational committees both at the provincial and district levels with the view to bring normalcy in the working of the party. However, new political developments within India overshadowed all other arrangements and programmes. The Cabinet Mission⁵⁴ arrived in India on 24th March 1946 to resolve the constitutional issues. It met with all shades of political opinion during the next three months, ending on 29th June 1946. Thereafter, it presented a new formula for settlement of the Indian question. The Cabinet Mission noticed the Hindu and Muslim poles and in its proposal advanced a formula of minority rights to determine their

52 Khan (2000), *The Role of NWFP in the Freedom Struggle*, p. 207.

53 Shah (2000), *Ethnicity, Islam and Nationalism*, p. 167.

54 The Cabinet Mission consisted of Lord Patrick Lawrence, the Secretary of State for India, Sir Stafford Cripps, president of the Board of Trade, and A. V. Alexander, the First Lord of Admiralty (cited in Khan, 2000:218).

future, which paved the way for the partition of India. The formula also enunciated an All India Union Government with representation for the Muslim majority provinces, and power to the provinces to frame their own constitutions if they so wished, after an initial period of ten years.⁵⁵

The FPML found a kind of relief in the Cabinet Mission because of their positive attitude towards partition, while the Congress felt it to be a process of losing their cohesion and strength over the subcontinent. However, the Congress and the League accepted the Mission Plan, the most prominent leader of the Congress Jawaharlal Nehru in a speech stated that the plan could be altered after the constitution making body was set up. The FPML was alarmed and compelled to revise its previous decision. In response, the AIML Council, in its Bombay Session of 29th July 1946, resolved to reject the offer contained in the Cabinet Mission proposal.⁵⁶ It also asserted that 'the League would not be content with anything less than the establishment of an independent, all fully sovereign state of Pakistan'.⁵⁷ The AIML decided that now 'the time has come for the Muslim nation to resort to direct action to achieve Pakistan and to get rid of the present slavery under the British'.⁵⁸ The resolution also demanded that the Muslim elite to renounce forthwith the titles conferred upon them by the alien government. The AIML also refused to join the Interim Government which had been proposed by the Cabinet Mission.

The AIML declared 16th August as the 'Direct Action Day' which saw Hindu-Muslim riots in Calcutta, Bihar and Noakhali. This horrified all as the casualties on both sides were very heavy. The riots lingered on in the following months of winter and spilled over into the north western

55 Khan (2000), *The Role of NWFP in the Freedom Struggle*.

56 CID (1946), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 13-14, F.No.756).

57 Ahmad, J. (1970), *Historic Documents of the Muslim Freedom Movement*. Lahore: United Publisher, p.536.

58 Mirza (1969), *Muslim Women Role in the Pakistan Movement*, p. 84. Jansson (1981) *India, Pakistan or Pukhtunistan*.

areas also. Both the Congress and the British government felt the flames of civil war in the country. The AIML was persuaded to join the ministry. The AIML agreed to join the Interim Government but recommended a Hindu Minister, Jogendra Nath Mandal of Bengal that contradicted the Congress' claim of representing the entire Indian population. On the other hand, they brought in Asif Ali, a Muslim, to the Interim Cabinet.

The Joint Interim Cabinet was led by Nehru which included five more ministers from the Congress, one each from Sikh, Christian and Parsi communities besides five ministers from AIML. The Congressmen in the Interim Cabinet included Vallabhai Patel, Rajendra Parsad, Rajgopalacharia, Asif Ali and Jagjiwan Ram, while the League nominees were Liaquat Ali, I. I. Chundrigar, Abdul Rab Nishtar, Ghazanffar Ali and Jogendra Nath Mandal. Baldev Singh was from the Sikh community and Matthai represented the Christians. However, the Interim Government failed to bring any relief to the already tense situation. Communal disturbances spread to the United Provinces and then to Bombay, where a strong community of Pukhtun resided. The slaughter of Muslims in the Hindu-ruled provinces could not remain unnoticed in the rest of India and repercussions followed in north western India.⁵⁹ Meanwhile, it remained a strategy of the AIML to pressurize the non-League ministers in the Muslim majority areas to quit. It succeeded in the Punjab, forcing Khizar Hayat Tiwana to resign the coalition government, which encouraged the FPML to resort to the same pressure tactics to compel the Congress Ministry to resign.

The FPML had already flexed its muscles, when in compliance with instructions from the high command; it observed the 'Direct Action Day' in the NWFP. It arranged a general strike in Peshawar. A large public gathering attended by 20,000 Leaguers was addressed by the local

59 CID (1946), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 13-14, F.No.756.

leaders on the Direct Action Day. Twenty three leaders from the NWFP renounced their titles. Similar meetings were reported from Dera Ismail Khan, Mardan and Abbottabad.⁶⁰ The 2nd of September was observed as black day in the Frontier by the League, waging protest rallies and meetings against Congress' induction into the Interim Government.

Hindu-Muslim riots in India, coupled with the civil disobedience movement under the 'Direct Action' programme increased the activities of the FPML. On 20th February 1947, a FPML meeting was held in Peshawar. Pir of Manki Sharif presided over the meeting in which it was decided to start a civil disobedience movement against the Frontier Congress Ministry.⁶¹

The Civil Disobedience Campaign of the FZML

The civil disobedience against Dr. Khan Sahib's Congress Ministry started on 21st February 1947.⁶² Initially it remained confined to processions, meetings, demonstrations and chanting slogans against the ministry, but soon picketing of the offices, courts and blocking of the rail and road services also started when Article 144 was imposed in the province to ban political gatherings in public. However, Dr. Khan Sahib's policy was not to arrest, injure, or torture women, so there was no restriction on the members of FZML, they acted freely against the ministry.⁶³ Furthermore, being a Khudai Khidmatgar leader, Dr. Khan Sahib also believed that the politics of non-violence as well followed the *Pukhtunwali*. However, the women in the Punjab were physically tortured and imprisoned for engaging in agitation. On one occasion, the 24th January 1946, when the police arrested Syed Ameer Hussain Shah, Fatima Begum, Begum Salma Tasadduque Hussain and a Frontier woman from

60 CID (1946), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 14, F.No.756. P. 203.

61 CID (1946), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 14, F.No.760. P. 96.

62 *Ibid.*

63 CID (1947), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 15-16, F.No. 812. P.7.

Abbottabad Begum Kamaluddin presented themselves for arrest. They were very enthusiastic about their personal arrest; as a result, Begum Kamaluddin was arrested and was imprisoned in a women's jail in Lahore.⁶⁴ Therefore, the Frontier women's agitation was more organised and less violent.⁶⁵

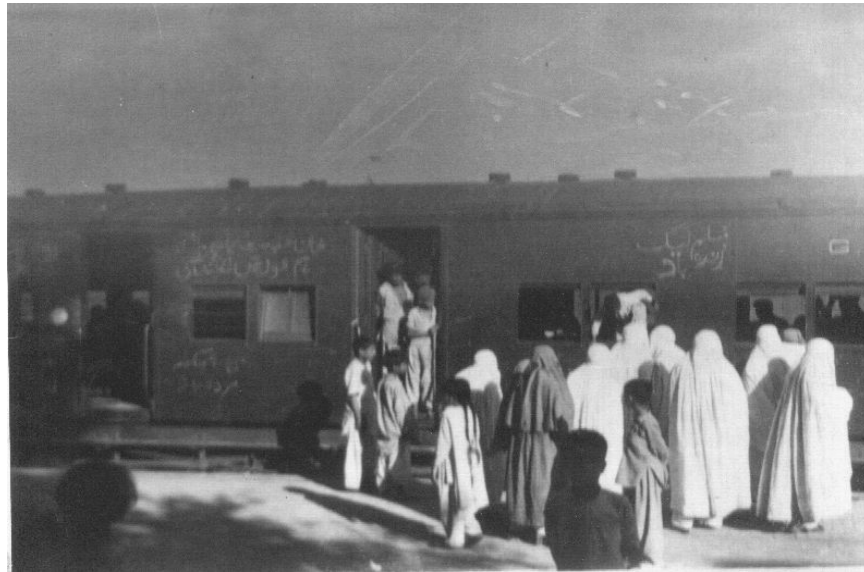
The movement along with its political programme also talked of the atrocities perpetrated on the Muslims of Bihar and United Province. In order to win public sympathy, eye witnesses from the effected areas were also presented to the audiences.⁶⁶ Funds were also raised for those affected by the riots. The success against the Unionist Ministry in the Punjab, which fell due to the women's successful agitations, encouraged the Leaguers to mobilise the NWFP women too. A similar base for women's activities was built with the assistance of a large number of the League's women workers from the Punjab. Prominent women from the Punjab and other parts of India, who visited the Frontier to support the FZML in its campaign against Congress Ministry included Fatima Begum, Nasira Saddiqui, Zubeda Shah, Begum Karim Dad, Mumtaz Shahnawz and Hussan Ara.⁶⁷ The women agitators disrupted the government machinery to a great extent. Following are a few of the original photographs of women processions in Peshawar, shared by Mian Saeedur Rehman during his interview.

64 Zafar. Z. (1991) *Peshawar under the British Rule 1849-1947* [unpublished doctoral dissertation] Peshawar: Area Study Centre, University of Peshawar.

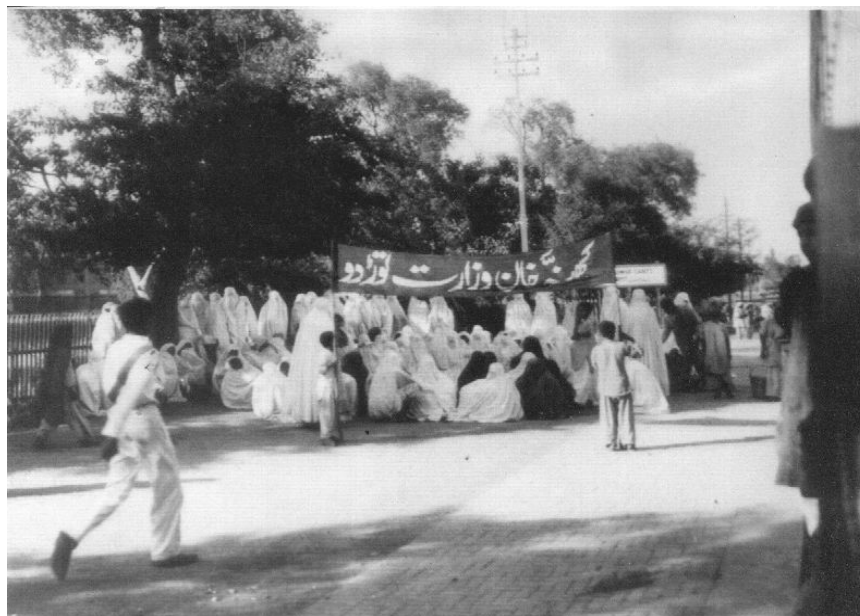
65 CID (1947) *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 15-16, F.No. 812.

66 CID (1947) *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 15-16, F.No.760:103-105.

67 *The Pakistan Times*, 27th December 1947, Lahore.



Women procession at Peshawar Cantonment Railway Station, July 1946



FZML agitating against Dr. Khan Sahib's Ministry at Peshawar Cantt Railway Station, April 1947



FZML Meeting at Chok Yadgaar, Peshawar, April 1947

The *burqa*-clad Frontier women for the first time came in public, chanting slogans against the Congress Ministry for a Muslim homeland.⁶⁸ The first women's procession during the civil disobedience campaign was taken out from the residence of Begum Abdul Wahid, president of the Peshawar City Women's League in the first week of March.⁶⁹ The procession, consisting of some thirty women, roamed different bazaars and streets of Peshawar, carrying the League's flag and banners with slogans against Dr. Khan's ministry. There were a number of women's processions begun at the office of the FPML on 12th, 13th and 15th March 1947.⁷⁰

To provide a further boost to the Civil Disobedience Movement, the FZML was reorganized at the end of March 1947. Begum Qazi Mir Ahmad became the president and Zari Sarfaraz the vice president, and Abdul Qaiyum's house

68 CID (1947), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 15-16, F.No.803, p.93.

69 *Ibid.*

70 CID (1947), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 15-16, F.No. 804, p.98.

in Mohalla Khudadad, Peshawar City became the centre of their activities.⁷¹

Another delegation under the leadership of Fatima Begum, Begum Karim Dad Khan, Begum Zubaida Shah and Nasira Siddique was sent to Peshawar on 20th March 1947 to establish a strong co-ordination among the provincial and central women Muslim League committees. The delegation met the local women leaders and discussed the future plans of agitations and meetings and the party strategies.⁷²

Life was becoming more and more paralyzed in the provincial capital on account of mass participation in the League-led agitations. During February and March 1947, the Government arrested Abdul Qaiyum Khan, Samin Jan, Pir Sahib of Manki Sharif and some other leaders of the FPML.⁷³ This further intensified the movement; calls were made to the district leaders to initiate action for civil disobedience at their own levels. Coinciding with this, the women also intensified their activities. Excitement ran high and masses swelled the processions each time.

The Punjab Provincial Women's sub-committee also came to the aid of the FZML by sending delegation after delegation to strengthen the FZML activities. A delegation comprising of Fatima Begum, Begum Karim Dad Khan, Begum Zubaida Shah and Nasira Siddique (later on Nasira Kiyani) reached Peshawar on 29th March 1947.⁷⁴ They met the local workers and leaders and helped them to organize future activities by sharing their own experiences during the movement launched against the Punjab's Unionist Ministry. On 1st April 1947, a meeting of the FZML's sub-committee was held under the presidentship of Begum Khwaja Allah Bux in Peshawar. A large number of women attended the

71 CID (1947), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 15-16, F.No. 805, p.98.

72 *Daily Inqilab*, 12th May 1947, Lahore.

73 CID (1947), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 15-16, F.No. 805, p.99.

74 CID (1947), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 15-16, F.No. 803, p. 9.

meeting, and the usual anti-Congress speeches were delivered at this occasion. Dr. Khan Sahib was accused of being a friend of the Hindus and an appeal was made to the NWFP people to support the FPML to combat the repressive policy of the Government with perseverance. Resolutions were also moved against the Government, indicating that the Government had lost the confidence of the masses and therefore should resign immediately.⁷⁵ That was the 6th meeting after the promulgation of Article 144 in the province.⁷⁶

The next day (2nd April 1947), a huge crowd assembled at Lady Griffith Girls High School Peshawar. Begum Sardar Jaffar and Nazir Tila Muhammad addressed the gathering. They highlighted the aims and objectives of the League's agitation. They also criticised the Congress ministry and termed it a Hindu body.⁷⁷ The participants then rushed in towards the Civil Secretariat, raising slogans in favour of the League and Pakistan. Nazir Tila Muhammad, with the assistance of two other ladies replaced the Union Jack with the League's flag on the roof of the building. During the whole time, the activists chanted slogans of *Pakistan Zindabad* (Long live Pakistan) and *Quaid-i-Azam Zindabad* (long live Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah).⁷⁸

On 3rd April 1947, a huge procession of about 1500 women gathered around Dr. Khan Sahib's residence and hoisted the League's flag above his official residence.⁷⁹ The procession then marched towards the Government House but on the way it was stopped by police. The processionists demanded the immediate dismissal of the Congress ministry

75 CID (1947), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 15-16, F.No. 806, p. 193.

76 Mirza (1969), *Muslim Women Role in the Pakistan Movement*.

77 CID (1947), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 15-16, F.No. 806, p. 193.

78 Interview with Duri Shehwar (daughter of Sardar Haider Jaffar), 25th December 2001, Frontier College for Women, Peshawar.

79 *Ibid.*

and urged the holding of fresh elections in the province and the release of the arrested FPML leaders.⁸⁰

Another large procession on 9th April 1947, under the leadership of Fatima Begum expressed its indignation against the 'unwarranted and uncalled for black laws' of the Congress Government.⁸¹ The processionists unanimously adopted a resolution calling upon Dr. Khan Sahib's ministry to resign. They also urged the Governor to dissolve the Assembly and hold new elections.⁸²

The so far peaceful campaign of FZML was marred by an ugly incident on 14th April when a huge procession of 1000 veiled women, while marching towards the Governor's House, was stopped by the authorities. They sat on a railway track and were run over by the Bombay Express on the railway crossing near Bala Hisar Fort. The Sikh train driver ignored the orders of the deputy commissioner. As a result five women were seriously injured including Jamila Sharif Hussain, who was then a year eight student, while another thirty women received minor injuries.⁸³ The incident paralysed Jamila Sharif Hussain for life. She was forced to sit in a wheelchair and was cared for by her brother, Mian Saeedur Rehman and her sister-in-law. She admitted that all the civil disobedience movement was peaceful except this dreadful event that made her dependent for ever.

All the League women were enthusiastic and overwhelmed for the creation of a new separate homeland. However this incident was shocking but did not discourage us. My mother (Begum Sharif Hussain) and sister (Fahmidah Sharif Hussain) were more active in the struggle for Pakistan afterwards.⁸⁴

The procession, however, immediately reorganised itself and marched towards the residence of Dr. Khan Sahib,

80 CID (1947), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 15-16, F.No. 806, p. 195.

81 *The Eastern Times*, 4th April 1947, Lahore.

82 *Daily Inqilab*, 22nd May 1947, Lahore.

83 Interview with Jamila Sharif Hussain, 10th February 2002, University Town, Peshawar.

84 *Ibid.*

where they expressed their bitter resentment and later dispersed peacefully.⁸⁵ This incident created considerable excitement amongst the Muslims all over subcontinent. They held meetings and passed resolutions against the Government and urged it to take necessary action. Fatima Begum, as head of the Provincial Muslim Women sub-committee, sent the following telegram to the Governor NWFP and copies of the same to the Viceroy and Jinnah

The Punjab Muslim women are horror-stricken. They strongly condemn the barbaric action of the engine driver in Peshawar... urge strong action.⁸⁶

The Frontier women thereafter intensified their struggle with fresh vigor and determination. On 22nd April 1947, a women's procession in which all were wearing *burqas* (veils), first picketed in front of the All India Radio Station, Peshawar, then entered the station's premises and hoisted League's flag on its building.⁸⁷

The following day, hundreds of Muslim women demonstrated in front of the district court, shouted slogans and hoisted League's flag on the court building.⁸⁸

Our motto was to hoist the League flags around the city of Peshawar. Every single day we plan our new target building/s or place for agitation. Because we wanted to realise the government that only AIML flag deserves to be hoisted in this Muslim majority province.⁸⁹

After the flag hoisting, they held a special meeting in which prominent women leaders including Sardar Jaffar, Nazir Tila Muhammad, Shirin Wahab, and Begum Amir Muhammad Khan delivered anti-government speeches. Deep resentment was expressed against the repressive measures adopted by the Congress ministry to suppress the peaceful movement of the FPML. The meeting also decided to continue the struggle until complete civil liberties were

85 Badar, S. (1949), *Aftab-i-Haram*. [Urdu] Karachi: Wadud Publishers.

86 *The Eastern Times*, 12th April 1947, Lahore.

87 *The Eastern Times*, 30th May 1947, Lahore.

88 *Ibid*.

89 Telephonic interview with Razia Butt, 2nd May 2002.

restored. They also urged upon Dr. Khan Sahib to resign forthwith, as he had forfeited the confidence of the people and called upon the Governor to hold fresh elections in the province.⁹⁰

Besides these activities, a secret organization of the Muslim women known as the 'War Council', along the lines of the War Council of the male members of FPML, was also organised.⁹¹ The council played a commendable role during the civil disobedience campaign by establishing an underground Pakistan Broadcasting Station.⁹² From this station, news bulletins were broadcasted in favour of Pakistan. A detailed account of the daily progress of the civil disobedience movement in the province was given twice a day, at 08:30 hours and 20:00 hours. Usually, the news bulletin began and ended with *Pakistan Zindabad*.⁹³ This broadcasting station supplied the necessary information about the developments in the province. Ms. Fahmida Rauf and Sardar Hyder Jaffar were the moving spirits behind this broadcasting system.⁹⁴ This showed Muslim women's enthusiasm for the achievement of Pakistan. It was a challenge to the Government, which in spite of all the sources at its disposal could not trace out this secret Radio Station because the League workers consistently transferred it from place to place.⁹⁵ The Frontier was considered a traditionalist area of the subcontinent, but when they decided to support the Pakistan national cause the Frontier women came out from their traditional roles and well-participated.⁹⁶

The movement was not confined to the provincial capital; with the passage of time it spread to other major towns as

90 CID (1947), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 15-16, F.No. 807, p. 129.

91 Badar (1949), *Aftab-i-Haram*.

92 *Daily Inqilab*, 22nd May 1947, Lahore.

93 *The Eastern Times*, 30th May 1947, Lahore.

94 Interview with Sarwat Ehsan, 31st May 2002, Hayatabad, Peshawar.

95 Interview with Mian Saeed-ur-Rehman, 10th February 2002, Peshawar.

96 CID (1947), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 15-16, F.No. 806, p. 195.

well. Meetings and processions were held at Kohat, Mardan, Abbottabad and even Dera Ismail Khan.⁹⁷

The moving spirit behind these activities was the enthusiasm and determination of the women activists. In Mardan, Begum Zari Sarfaraz remained active in organising the masses, while in Kohat it was Saeeda Muhammad Ahmad who more than once organised the women of the area. In one such meeting organised by her, the processionists forcibly crossed the boundaries of a local school to hold a meeting there. At the end of the meeting they brought out the girls of the school to join them in the procession.⁹⁸ Similarly, at Abbottabad, Begum Hamdam Kamaluddin whole-heartedly worked for the cause of the League and organised the women of Hazara for the cause of Pakistan.⁹⁹ She on numerous occasions appealed the women of Hazara to rally behind the FPML and joined the civil disobedience against the Congress Ministry.

This civil disobedience movement of the League was getting more and more support with the passage of time and the tide of events was against the Congress government but it proved a hard nut to crack.¹⁰⁰ However, the Frontier Governor Sir Olaf Caroe became convinced that the continuation of the Congress ministry was a major threat to peace, not only in the province but in the surrounding turbulent tribal areas as well. He, therefore, pressed for the holding of fresh elections. When Mountbatten, the then Viceroy of India, raised this idea to Nehru, he strongly protested. The situation was going from bad to worse for the authorities. Mountbatten decided to visit the province to see the situation himself. He visited the NWFP in late April and stayed there for two days 28th and 29th April 1947. According to the official historian Johnson, on arrival at Peshawar,

97 CID (1947), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 15-16, F.No. 807. P. 131.

98 *Ibid.*, 139.

99 *Ibid.*

100 Shah (2007), 'Women and Politics in NWFP'.

The Viceroy was confronted with the news of a formidable Muslim League procession estimated to be well over seventy thousand people. The processionists wanted to place their grievances before the Viceroy. He further explains that the processionists had been gathering from the most remote parts of the Province, many of them having been on march for several days...which had a surprisingly large number of women and children in its midst. The Viceroy was astonished to find such an overwhelming number of Muslim demonstrations despite the fact that the Congress ministry had exercised all possible means of checking the large caravans of Muslims coming to participate in the demonstration.¹⁰¹

Salma Tasadduque Hussain, Zari Sarfaraz, Begum Karim Dad, Begum Mumtaz Jamal, Begum Qazi Mir Ahmad, Begum Shirin Wahab were among the prominent processionists.

Governor Olaf Caroe advised the Viceroy that he should show himself to the crowd prior to their entrance into the Cantonment area, otherwise they might break through the Government House. Mountbatten readily agreed and waved to them from the railway embankment. It presented a mighty roar of the public including women and children carrying green flags and chanting *Pakistan Zindabad*.¹⁰²

The same afternoon (28th April), Mountbatten initiated meetings with local leaders starting with Dr. Khan Sahib and his Cabinet members, followed by a meeting with a delegation of the Hindus and that of the Muslims. Mountbatten, in his discussion with Dr. Khan Sahib, made clear that public in the Frontier would be ascertained through a new election or plebiscite on which he had not yet finally decided. Dr. Khan Sahib brought the issue of Pukhtunistan, which he brushed aside as outside his terms of reference.¹⁰³

The next day, Mountbatten travelled to the Khyber Agency. He also met a combined *jirga* (council of the tribal chiefs) of the Wazir and Ma'sud tribes in the Government House. Both the tribes expressed their support for the FPML

101 Johnson, A. (1951), *Mission with Mountbatten*. Bombay: Jaico Publishing House.p.75.

102 *Ibid*.

103 *Ibid*.

and Pakistan. Mountbatten apprised Nehru on his return of the ground realities in the Frontier. By now Mountbatten decided that although fresh elections were not practical, a referendum must be held before the Frontier's future was decided.¹⁰⁴

The Frontier Congress leaders were bitterly opposed to the idea of a plebiscite. From the beginning of May, they began to raise their slogan for Pukhtunistan, an autonomous Pukhtun state. This demand emerged so late that it was easy for the FPML to dismiss it as merely a bargaining counter.¹⁰⁵

Later on, the AINC agreed to hold a referendum in the Frontier provided the polling administration reorganized. The Frontier Congress felt badly let down by the AINC leadership. The Government announced on 3rd June 1947 that the British Government would transfer power to Indian hands with immediate effect from 15th August 1947.¹⁰⁶ It also recommended the holding of a referendum in the NWFP on the issue of joining Hindustan or Pakistan. The same day, the civil disobedience was called off by Jinnah through a broadcast message in which he said:

I request the provincial Muslim League of the Frontier province to withdraw the movement of peaceful civil disobedience which they had perforce to resort to; and I call upon all the leaders of the Muslim League and Mussalmans generally to organize our people to face this referendum with hope and courage, and I feel confident that the people of Frontier will give their verdict by a solid vote to join the Pakistan constituent.¹⁰⁷

Jinnah also praised the role of women on this occasion, referring to the unostentatious efforts of the selfless Muslim women. He remarked:

I cannot but express my appreciation of the sufferings and sacrifices made by all the classes of Mussalmans and particularly the great

104 Shah (1992), *Muslim League*.

105 Talbot, I. (1988), *Provincial Politics and the Pakistan Movement: The Growth of the Muslim League in North West and North East India 1937-47*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.

106 *Ibid*.

107 Shah (1992), *Muslim League*, p.183.

part the women of the Frontier played in the fight for our civil liberties.¹⁰⁸

In response to Jinnah's appeal, the Muslim women doubled their efforts in urging their fellow women to vote for Pakistan. They also tried to influence their menfolk of the province and their family relatives to vote in favour of Pakistan in the referendum.¹⁰⁹

The FZML launched a comprehensive campaign in the referendum for the cause of Pakistan. They visited many areas of the province, going from house to house canvassing for the FPML. While preparations for referendum were in full swing in the Frontier, the Punjab Provincial Women's sub-committee also sent a small group of women to tour the province. The FZML intensified its activities as the dates for referendum came closer. In a meeting held on 2nd July 1947 at Abbottabad under the chairmanship of Begum Salma Tassadduque Hussain, about one thousand women pledged and promised to vote for Pakistan. Begum Salma Tassadduque Hussain, along with other members of the FZML, toured the areas of the southern districts as well, convincing the people to express their preference for amalgamation with Pakistan.¹¹⁰

Meanwhile the tide of events further turned in favour of the FPML when three weeks before the referendum, Ghaffar Khan declared in a public meeting at Bannu that the Frontier Congress would boycott the referendum and would continue to work peacefully for its Pukhtunistan demand.¹¹¹

Despite the Congress boycott, the FPML left nothing to chance and mounted a vigorous referendum campaign. They sent workers into all the villages popularising the Pakistan demand. The Congress boycott was denounced as

108 *Ibid.*

109 *Daily Inqilab*, 12th May 1947, Lahore.

110 *Ibid.*

111 Talbot (1988), *Provincial Politics and the Pakistan Movement*.

un-Islamic and it was clearly spelled out that it is the religious duty of every Muslim to vote for Pakistan.¹¹²

The referendum was scheduled from 6th to 17th July 1947; the total votes cast in the referendum were 292,118.¹¹³ When the polling began in July, Muslim women in large numbers went to the polling booths to cast their votes. In Peshawar, the FPML secured 2,880 votes out of 3,400 female votes on the very first two days.¹¹⁴

Eventually, the FPML came out victorious in the referendum when the results were announced on 20th July 1947.¹¹⁵ According to the official results, there were 289,284 total valid votes for Pakistan and 2,874 for India it, giving a majority of 286,370 votes to the League and its cause of Pakistan. The total electorate entitled to vote in referendum amounted to 572,798 persons. The votes for Pakistan were 50.49 percent of the total electorate, while those for India were just 0.50 percent.¹¹⁶

The success in the referendum was a great achievement of the FPML and its circles were jubilant at these results. This success became possible with the joint efforts of both the FPML and the FZML. As a whole, the Frontier women helped the male workers to make possible the creation of Pakistan.

112 *Ibid.*

113 CID (1947), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 15-16, F.No. 807.

114 *Ibid.*

115 *Ibid.*

116 CID (1947), *Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgar Movement*, Bundle No. 15-16, F.No. 808. And Talbot (1988), *Provincial Politics and the Pakistan Movement*.

Conclusion

Freedom for the people of the NWFP always remained the most cherished goal throughout the period of British rule. They challenged the British Raj through all possible means, resorting to armed struggle as well as legal, constitutional and non-violent political methods. These include scores of movements, ranging from those of the Muslim revivalists under the banner of Tehrik-e-Mujaheedin, Haji Sahib of Turangzai, to the Khilafat and Khudai Khidmatgar movements. The freedom struggle terminated with the end of British rule and at the creation of Pakistan in 1947.

Throughout these years, the urge for freedom and hatred of foreign rule was widespread, engulfing both men and women in the entire province. The NWFP women greatly contributed to the freedom struggle and fully supported their menfolk during the movement. However, their contribution towards the freedom movement of the country may be viewed in relation to the social, cultural and geographical realities of the NWFP. The womenfolk of the area are relatively more backward than those of the other provinces. There are wide spread differences between their occupations, cultural customs, rituals and attitudes. Those are the main reasons that the women of the NWFP are considered less responsive to socio-political changes in society than their counterparts in other regions. It is no wonder that not many women leaders, women social reformers and women freedom fighters emerged from this part of the country. The contribution of the women of the area to the freedom struggle is, therefore, limited in comparison to the women movements in other parts of British India. However, the contribution to the freedom struggle in the NWFP is laudable when one takes into

account the various limitations (socio-economic, cultural, psychological etc) under which they had to work. Thus, their role in the struggle for freedom is not insignificant. The main issue in this regard is the status of women in the NWFP, where they enjoyed well-defined but constrained yet fairly high positions in society. The society benefited from the cooperation of women in every walk of life. The socio-political consciousness about understanding the modern political tactics of the people in general and of women in particular was awakened in the NWFP with the gradual spread of western education among the population. Western education came to the NWFP rather too late in comparison with other parts of India. In the second decade of the 20th century, education reached a significant phase of development in the province but still female education was neglected despite the initiative for co-education taken by the Christian missionaries in the earlier days. Only a marginal number of women benefited from modern education because of the conservative nature of Pukhtun society or because of poverty. Another reason for the lack of women's education was the non-availability of qualified female staff.

In the NWFP, the growth of national and political consciousness picked up the pace mainly due to the rise of an educated middle class amongst the male population, which was the product of western education, and no doubt was instrumental in moulding the social, political, religious, and literary aspect of Pukhtun society. Their influences were reflected on their womenfolk too. In this regard, the women of the educated middle class produced a fairly good number of women pioneers, who were responsible for the growth of social and political consciousness among women in the NWFP. They were, in fact, instrumental in the growth of nationalism and patriotism. Their impact on society in general and on women in particular was immediately felt, as due to their reformatory zeal, they struggled against the social evils amongst women. They took the crucial steps for the gradual growth of the women participation during the freedom struggle of the country.

In the NWFP, the freedom struggle can be divided into two streams: one directed by the Congress cum Khudai Khidmatgars, urged for the liberation of a united India, while the other, directed by FPML, demanded the division of India. The Khudai Khidmatgars, being the first organized movement for social and political change among the Pukhtuns, did yeoman services for developing social and political consciousness amongst the Frontier women as well. However, it never tried to organise its female political wing in the province, yet the Frontier women took part in the civil disobedience movement during 1930-1934. They also supported the AINC during wartime politics and the 'Quit India' movement by participating in its activities. They also worked for the AINC in the 1946 elections.

The Khudai Khidmatgars supported the AINC in the national struggle for freedom and remained a major political power in the province until the creation of Pakistan. Nevertheless, during the final years before partition and independence, events turned against it and the FPML emerged as a formidable challenge to it. The FPML successfully steered the people to the freedom and division of India. The triumphant emergence of the FPML in these years, to a great extent, was due to the significant contribution of women. They organised themselves under the banner of the FZML and worked vehemently for the cause of the AIML. They participated passionately in the civil disobedience movement against the Congress Ministry in the province. They worked for the League both in the 1946 election and during the referendum. Most of the women leaders of the FZML belonged to the educated middle and upper strata of the Frontier society. They organised the FZML on better lines and utilised all their resources, abilities and capabilities to work towards freedom. They were successful in mobilising and organising the Frontier women, which was the main reason behind the increased number of women actively participating in AIML activities. In the words of Shah, the FPML successfully exploited the traditional Pukhtun values to its advantage by usefully bringing out their

women workers against the Congress Ministry.¹ The women protesters were given complete freedom of speech and movement throughout the agitation. In very rare cases, expulsion orders were served, asking them to leave some particular locality. According to Jamila Sharif Hussain, no woman agitator was arrested, assaulted or tortured by the Congress Ministry, as it is against *Pukhtunwali* to cause harm to women and so they faced every provocation with patience. The only unfortunate incident was the train collision that took place on 14th April 1947, resulting in several casualties.

On the other hand, the Khudai Khidmatgar leadership did not organise their women branch separately. They formed a part of the nationalist politics but no information is available regarding a separate organisation exclusively working for raising the status of women under the banner of Khudai Khidmatgar. However, the contribution of these women encouraged other women to participate in the freedom struggle. They were, of course, inspired by the women activists throughout the country who time and again visited the Frontier to mobilise them. It can safely be concluded that there was a difference of opinion and approach but the ultimate aim of all these women activists was the same; the liberation of their country and the elevation of the status of women in society.

The Muslims and the Hindu women stood side by side in the political field of the Indian subcontinent for women's emancipation and empowerment with special reference to their political, legal and educational rights. The decade of 1930-1940 was full of national organisational activities that gave a platform for women in educational institutions in support of social legislation. Minuault commented:

Returning to the question of women's participation strategies in the freedom struggle, their collective substance, well-being and ideology, and the significance of their actions for the nationalist freedom movement, one must organise both the women's strength and the limitations of their situation. One should also recognise that

1 Shah (1992), *Muslim League*.

while national freedom seemed more immediate and compelling goal, the attainment of freedom and justice for all is a never-ending task in any society. All of these Muslim women recognised the power that women's traditional roles in the family gave them, and built on that foundation. They thus remained within the bounds of traditional feminine roles, while engaging in a form of political activity. They continued to observe *purdah* with very few exceptions. Most of their work was done among women, and their appeals and justifications emphasised feminine themes: cultural pride and continuity of religious and moral duty. These were themes especially relevant to non-violent politics, courage through self-suffering, and the quest for national economic and cultural self-sufficiency. Without storming the citadels of male supremacy, these women gained social acceptance for an expanded role in society, albeit their own female society. A study of the succeeding generation would show a greater complex of actions, motivations and social groups involved and many more breaches in the curtain.²

At the last phase of the Pakistan movement women's enthusiasm and dedication was overwhelming, and it convinced the British authorities that the freedom of the Indian subcontinent was inevitable. Their power to resist independence was in vain. Minault further commented:

Not only those Hindus, who used to ridicule the veil of these women, were taken aback seeing the courage and valour of these women, but even Jinnah could not remain without offering deep appreciation to these women for their services. It is worth admiring that they maintained the degree of their devotion, dedication and service throughout the freedom struggle. It is hard to find such examples of courage and perseverance of women in the history of the world.³

Furthermore, we used some categories of women's participation in the NWFP politics to locate important strands of women's involvement in active politics, because the NWFP women, in spite of violating some of their traditions were still supported by their family men. Their gender and societal differences came to an end at the point of national cause of freedom from foreign rule. While we are aware of firm differences between the ideology of the NWFP

2 Ikramullah, S. (1963), *From Purdah to Parliament*, London: Cresset. Shahnawaz, M. (1957), *The Heart Divided*, Lahore: Mumtaz Publications. Hosain, A. (1954), *Sunlight on Broken Column*, London: Chatto and Windus. (cited in Minault (1998), *Purdah Politics*).

3 Minault (1998), 'Purdah Politics'.

nationalist Khudai Khidmatgars and the FZML, the way these women of these two organizations participated in street politics was more or less similar. Although the characteristics of patriarchy in the NWFP and in the rest of the Indian subcontinent was absolutely different, the Frontier women rejected the theory of Samarasinghe that women are bound to operate within the existing system to gain access to the public space of political leadership and participation.⁴ We have demonstrated that the NWFP women challenged the traditional roles of women and opened a new system of feminist politics. Women were visible at every stage of the freedom movement and their political participation was carried out in addition to their household responsibilities. But regardless of this, there was a clear flexibility that reduced their limitations to access the world outside the four walls of their houses and encouraged them to participate in the public discourse of politics.

The women who assumed political leadership or active participation also demonstrated very clearly their powerful leadership skills and were able to endure violence and topple the system. They fortified their own position and cleverly maintained their feminine labels. But in fact, their contribution was more successful than that of men in setting up their own way to struggle for freedom.⁵

The strength of the female political leadership, at the national, sub-national and in the new wave of right wing communal politics show that it is certainly not a flash in the pan orchestrated by a few women. It is a reflection of a growing involvement of a group, which has been made to wait in the wings. They have ingeniously used the very patriarchal structures to subvert the known political system and emerge from an enclosed private sphere into the visible public sphere, but also to bring issues from the reproductive sphere as legitimate political concerns.⁶

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- 4 Samarasinghe, V. (2000) 'Subverting Patriarchy? Leadership and Participation of Women in Politics in South Asia', *Ethnic Studies Report*, 18 (2) Pp. 193-213.
 - 5 Interviews with Begum Nasim Wali Khan, 20 May 2002, Wali Bagh, Charsadda.
 - 6 Samarasinghe (2000), 'Subverting Patriarchy'?

There is clear evidence that the women who emerged into the political arena at this time did not reject patriarchy. At the same time, by creating political spaces, they seem to challenge the male hegemony over political leadership and active participation.⁷ The women of the Indian subcontinent seemed to identify themselves with the roles that patriarchy designated for them, primarily as mothers, wives, and sisters with responsibility in the reproductive sphere, and making use of that role as a base to emerge into politics. For women engaged in politics, the two spheres are but a range from one to the other. Thus in the realm of politics for women, the personal does indeed become an effective political tool.⁸

We found Chowdhury's comment more interesting in this discussion:

The women heroism was blatantly camouflaged by male chauvinism. Multiple shades of heroism, heterogeneity of diverse cultures and religions were encapsulated in the early 20th century of freedom movement. The super-imposed patriarchy held women's actions at bay; and in the last, they were drawn into the whirlpool of the movement. Nonetheless, the subtlety of women heroism created a deep mark in the history of modern India and Pakistan. This integration of disparate ideological and political groupings; and an eclectic blend of women's aestheticism and the chivalrous masculinity of men created women nationalism.⁹

The important roles played by women for freedom and political rights made them indispensable to males. While reflecting upon nationalist and women's movements, we agree with the argument of Shabbir that when women in the developed countries were agitating against their own males regarding their rights, a similar struggle had begun in the subcontinent where men were fighting for their rights against the imperialists.¹⁰ In the subcontinent, therefore, women were not countered as fiercely as was done in the colonizing

7 Chowdhury, A. (2013), *Cutting against the grain: Women in politics, picking up the gauntlet of nationalist struggle from-1857-1947*, Munich: GRIN Verlag <http://www.grin.com/en/e-book/263802/cutting-against-the-grain-women-in-politics-picking-up-the-gauntlet-of> [accessed: 27/12/2015].

8 *Ibid.*

9 *Ibid.*

10 Shabbir (2011), 'Struggle for Muslim Women's Rights'.

countries. For example, in the industrially superior countries, women's education was opposed by male chauvinists, whereas, in the subcontinent, the issue of women's education was raised by men at the Muhammadan Educational Conference in 1886.¹¹

We discovered that Muslim men and women protested against barefaced violations of cultural and social norms and succeeded to a great extent. Women's participation in the freedom movement was initiated for their educational, social, legal struggles, which further encouraged them to mould their struggle direction towards the freedom of the country. Therefore, to this day we can see the profound effect of women on the daily life of the subcontinent. All are aware of the social changes that occurred during those days, but very few people admit that women were instrumental in bringing about these changes. It is not overstating the facts to say that women made phenomenal progress during these times and blazed a trail for further reforms.¹²

Furthermore, with the advent of the Pakistan movement, women's participation in the freedom struggle became a dire necessity, to increase the Muslim voters as well as to display their numerical strength at the AIML's political rallies. In 1940, Jinnah encouraged Muslim women to create a sense of general political consciousness. He urged them to stand shoulder to shoulder with men in practical politics. This saw the removal of cultural and social restrictions on their travelling for purposes of attending political gatherings. Following the example of their counterparts in other provinces, the NWFP comrade women in *burqas* came out too. Unfortunately, 1948 saw an abrupt end to this long struggle for political freedom. However, a few determined women continued to play very important roles in the political empowerment of the women of Pakistan afterwards. The Pakistan Movement was an important watershed event in the social history of Muslim women. While there is a long line

11 *Ibid.*, 63.

12 *Ibid.*

of writers who, in the late 19th and early 20th century, were advocating that Muslim women be educated, there were none who had the audacity to suggest that they emerge from the physical seclusion of their homes. When the Pakistan fever caught the hearts and minds of the Muslims, it seemed but natural that the women should be drawn into it too.¹³

We agreed with the findings of Vijay,¹⁴ most of the famous politicians' families participated in the freedom struggle of present India and Pakistan. He further argues that later the political parties, especially in unstable regimes across South Asia, were often family-run political enterprises that enabled elite women's participation but serve as major barriers to non-elite women's political participation.¹⁵

We want to encourage women's continued participation in politics and to secure their right of franchise meaningfully rather than symbolically or in constitutional documents, because key to progress of the country as a whole lies in the leadership of the women of Pakistan in general and the Pukhtun women in particular. The policy makers and wielders of power at all levels in both Pakistan and the world should better understand this reality at this important time.

13 *Ibid.*

14 Vijay, A. (1979), *Elite women in Indian Politics*, New Delhi: Vikas Publishing.

15 *Ibid.*

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Appendix

Abadi Bano Begum (Bi-Amma)¹

Bi-Amma was married to Abdul Ali Khan, a senior official of Rampur State. She was a mother of six (five sons and a daughter); her famous children are Shaukat Ali and Maulana Muhammad Ali Jauhar. At a very young age of thirty she became a widow. She had no formal education but was aware of the importance of contemporary education that she preached throughout her life. She sold her gold jewellery to pay for her sons' education and sent them to Aligarh and Oxford. In 1917, during the sessions of the AIML, she delivered the most touching and forceful speech which left a lasting effect on the Muslims of the subcontinent. During the Khilafat Movement, she toured the country to convince the people to support her sons in their struggle for Muslim unity. She died on November 13, 1924. Her death was indeed a great loss to the Muslim *ummah*; however the Muslim women continued their work on the footsteps of Bi-Amma and became a political force later in the freedom struggle of Pakistan.



Syeda Bushra Begum

Syeda Bushra Begum (popularly known as س, ب, ب (Sin Bay Bay) was born in 1929 at Ziarat Kaka Sahib, District

¹ Most of the information in this section is derived from personal interviews data, some authentic information from Javid, A. (nd) *Tehreek-i-Pakistan main Khwateen ka Kirdar*, [Urdu] and Mirza, S. (1969) *Muslim Women Role in the Pakistan Movement*.

Nowshera. She got her early education at home. She was greatly concerned about the backwardness of women from the very beginning in her early childhood. She participated in the meetings and processions of the Khudai Khidmatgar Movement, which affected her mind. Abdul Ghaffar Khan and the Khudai Khidmatgar Movement greatly inspired her. She decided to contribute personally, and started writing for the *Pukhtun* journal. She contributed enormously by utilizing her genius both in prose and poetry. Her first article, entitled 'Shariat Bill', was published when she was only twelve years old.

Her revolutionary and reformatory poetry was published in different contemporary newspapers and journals, including *Pukhtun*, *Afghan*, *Shahbaz*, and *Bang-i-Haram* etc. She published a book of poetry, entitled *Zairy* (Good News). Her main emphasis was on Pukhtun nationalism, moral values, women education, gender issues and the responsibilities of womenfolk regarding their household and family life. She died soon after her interview on August 17, 2002 and was buried at her ancestral graveyard in Ziarat Ka Ka Sahib.

Alf Jan Khattaka

Alf Jan Khattaka was born in 1927, in Ahmadi Banda, Kohat. She received her early education in her home town. She studied MA Pukhtu Honours degree as a private candidate. She studied double MAs; Urdu and Pukhtu languages. She was an ideological follower of the Khudai Khidmatgar Movement and Abdul Ghaffar Khan. Before independence, her poetry and articles were published in the *Pukhtun* journal. Her poetry is full of Pukhtu (honour), and love for her people and country. She considered ignorance as a curse and pleaded for women's education. At time of her interview (4th January 2002), she was retired from her position as Headmistress of Government Girls High School Lachai, Kohat.

Durmarjan and Mehrun Nisa

Durmarjan was born in the village of Tarru Jabba in the early 1920s, as estimated by the Municipal Committee

Peshawar records of 1925. According to her family sources, she was an active member of the Khudai Khidmatgar Movement. She did not receive any formal education but was very much fluent in her mother tongue Pukhtu. She was an outspoken and straightforward woman. She arranged meetings and processions in her area and participated in the Khudai Khidmatgar meetings regularly. She was assisted by Mehrun Nisa, another prominent figure of the same area, and was always seen in the Khudai Khidmatgar's processions carrying the party flag. These two ladies played a vital role in the street politics of Pabbi and Noweshera district for women's awareness. No other biographical details are available.

Begum Qazi Mir Ahmad

Um-tur- Rauf (popularly known Begum Qazi Mir Ahmad) was born in 1908 in Peshawar. Her father, Qazi Abdus Salam Khan, was a well-established person. She got married to a prominent lawyer, Sir Qazi Mir Ahmad. She represented the Frontier province in the All India Women Conference held in Calcutta, Ahmadabad, Delhi and Karachi. There she got the firsthand opportunity to meet prominent Indian ladies including Sarojni Naidu, Vejay Lakhshmi Pandat, Amar Kaur, Murrsala Bai etc. and was inspired by their struggle for women's rights. Later she joined the FZML and became its provincial president. She took a keen interest in supervising meetings and processions and other activities of the FZML. She died on 20th January 1963.



Begum Zari Sarfaraz

Zar Nigar was born on 28th July 1923. Her Father Sarfaraz Khan was a landlord of Mardan. She became popular as Zari Sarfaraz. She got her early education from Presentation Convent School Srinagar and did Honours in Pukhtu and Urdu languages. She participated the Annual meeting of



AIML in 1940 with her father at the tender age of 17. In 1944, she became a member of the Muslim League and contributed in the struggle for the cause of Pakistan. In 1945, she became secretary general of Mardan Zanana Muslim League (MZML). She remained member of Provincial Assembly in 1952, 1958, and in 1962. She was a president of Pakistan TB Association NWFP and member of NWFP Social Welfare Council at the time of interview on 5th April 2002.

Begum Shirin Wahab

Begum Shirin Wahab's original name was Anjuman Ara, but was known as Shirin Gul in her family. She was born on 18th August, 1919 in Peshawar. She received her early education in Peshawar, and then went to Lahore where she completed her Senior Cambridge from Queen Mary College. In 1934 she got married to Qazi Abdul Wahab, an advocate. Mrs. Olaf Careo associated her with the Girl Guides Association. She became the General Secretary of the All India Women's Association for seven years. She got an opportunity of meeting other prominent women social workers, including Begum Mohammad Ali, Sarojni Naidu, Mrs. Moti Lal Nehru, Mrs. Mehar Chand Khanna etc. After partition she rendered great services in the rehabilitation of refugees. Later on she joined the All-Pakistan Women's Association (APWA). She became General Secretary of Anjuman Khwateen-e-Pakistan. She died on August 12, 1983.



Sardar Haider Jaffar

Sardar Haider Jaffar was born in October 1926 in Peshawar. Her family origin has been linked to Iran; her grandfather was a trader by profession. She received her primary education at the Municipal Girls Primary School, Peshawar. She studied her matriculation from Lady Griffith Girls High



School, Peshawar. Later on, she got her MA degrees in Urdu and Persian languages. After the establishment of the FZML, she became its active member. She remained general secretary and propaganda secretary for some time. She gave inspirational speeches during meetings of FZML. After the partition, she remained busy in the settlement of refugees. She served as a lecturer at Frontier College for Women Peshawar and later moved to the Urdu Department in the University of Peshawar. She was the editor-in-chief of a monthly magazine '*Awaz-e-Niswan*', Peshawar. She died on 20th July 2001.

Begum Kamallud Din

Hamdam Sultan was born on 12th August 1897, at Jahangirpura, Peshawar. Her father, Sardar Nusrat Jang Khan, was exiled from Afghanistan. He settled in Peshawar. When Hamdam Sultan was three years old, her father died. She studied the Quran and Islamic books at her home. Persian was her mother tongue. At the age of eleven she was married to Kamallud Din, who served as Jamadar in British Army. Begum Kamallud Din continued her studies at Queen Mary College, Lahore. She also received Girl Guide training, as well as training in Shipping, Home Economics and First Aid. She got a degree in Persian language from the Punjab University. She took part in social work activities during her student life. Her political life started in 1931, when she became member of the All India Women Conference. In 1934, she visited many European countries including England, Switzerland, Germany, Holland and France. She also attended the Asian Women Conference at Istanbul, Turkey. There she got an opportunity to meet Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the founder of modern Turkey. In 1940, her husband Kamallud Din died. She left all other activities and worked only for the cause of the AIML. She was appointed as president of the FZML, Abbottabad branch. She actively participated in the meetings and



processions of the AIML. She vigorously took part in the civil disobedience movement. She also mobilized the masses to support the referendum in 1947. After the creation of Pakistan, she worked for the rehabilitation and settlement of refugees. She also joined APWA (All Pakistan Women Association).

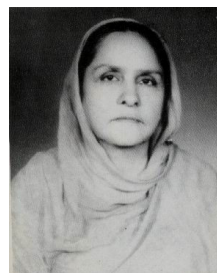
Begum Nazir Niaz

Nazir Niaz was born on 21st November 1920 at Sialkot. She got her primary education at Rawalpindi. Due to her father's settlement in Peshawar, she gained admission to Lady Griffith Girls High School, Peshawar. She also went to Lahore for further education. During her stay at Lahore, she got inspiration from Fatima Begum, a freedom fighter and principal of Islamia College, Lahore. While in Lahore, she attended the 1940 annual meeting of AIML. She joined Lady Griffith Girls High School, Peshawar as a teacher. She was among the pioneers of the FZML, as it was founded at her home. She took active part in the organizational matters of the FZML. During the civil disobedience movement, she hoisted the League's flag atop the civil secretariat of Peshawar. She was immediately dismissed from her job. After partition she was restored to her old job, remained in the Education Department and retired as Directress of Education. In 1948, she married to Mr. Tila Muhammad Khan. She died in 1989.



Razia Niaz

The well-known Urdu novelist Razia Butt was actually Razia Niaz. She was born on 19th May 1924. She was the younger sister of Nazir Niaz, the famous freedom fighter. She got her early education at Elizabeth Primary School. She studied her Intermediate secondary education from Lady Griffith Girls High



School, Peshawar. She was very intelligent and developed a taste for Urdu literature. From 1942, she started publishing her short stories and dramas. When Fatima Begum founded a branch of the FZML at Peshawar, she was designated its propaganda secretary. She launched a campaign of women awareness from the platform of the FZML. She arranged meetings and processions of women. She carried out a campaign of fundraising for the AIML. She herself contributed much to the AIML funds and convinced the people to contribute in it. She even participated in stage dramas that arranged for fund raising. She also met with Muhammad Ali Jinnah on his visit to Peshawar in 1945. In 1946, she visited many rural areas along with Mumtaz Jamal to convince people to vote for the AIML. She rendered great services to the cause of the AIML during referendum. At the time of her interview she was permanently settled in Lahore and was busy in her literary pursuits.

Begum Sharif Hussain

Begum Sharif Hussain's original name was Khurshid Begum. She was born at Betala, Gurdaspur. Her father Mian Hussain Bakhsh served as Session Judge at Peshawar. She got her early education at Peshawar. She got married to a businessman of Betala named Mian Sharif Hussain. Later they permanently settled in Peshawar.



The couple actively participated in the freedom movement. Her sons, Mian Abdur Rehman, Mian Khalil-ur-Rahman and Mian Saeed-ur-Rehman, Mian Faiz-ur-Rehman were active Leaguers. Her daughters Fehmida Sharif, Jamila Sharif, Dr. Mumtaz and Nusrat all contributed in the freedom struggle. She generously contributed money for the settlement of refugees. She died in 1956.

Miss Fehmida Sharif Hussain

Fehdima Sharif Hussain was born in 1924. She was a daughter of Sharif Hussain. She got her early education at Lady Griffith Girls High School, Peshawar. She studied her MA in Economics from Punjab University. During her student life she became an active member of the FZML. She was a good speaker, and participated in all the meeting and processions of the FZML. She was also nominated as *salar* (leader) of the Women National Guard. She went from house to house in Peshawar and encouraged groups of young girls and volunteers to join the Woman National Guard. After independence, she became a lecturer at Abbottabad. Later she became the principal and retired after 20 years of services in education department. She died on 9th May 1984.

**Jamila Sharif Hussain**

Jamila Sharif Hussain was the second daughter of Sharif Hussain. She was born in 1928 in Peshawar. She also got her education at Lady Griffith Girls High School. She actively participated in the street politics of the FZML. She was one of the main victims of the rail incident during the civil disobedience movement against Khan Sahib's Ministry. She lost one of her legs. She had been awarded a Gold Medal by the Government of Pakistan for the services which she rendered during the freedom movement.



Begum Saeeda Mohammad Ahmad

Saeeda Begum was born in 1909 at Kohat. She belonged to an educated family of Kohat. She studied her matriculation from Kohat. In 1945, when Begum Nazir Tila Mohammad went to Kohat, she met Saeeda Mohammad Ahmad. The inaugural meeting of the Kohat branch of the FZML took place at her house. Thereafter, her house became a centre of Kohat Zanana Muslim League. During the referendum, she visited many villages of the area to win support for Pakistan. After partition, she worked as a social worker. She gave her lifetime services to Peshawar University as secretary in the University Volunteers Service. She died in June 1977.

**Begum Sheikh Abdul Wahid**

Feroz Bano was born in 1899 at Betala, District Gordaspur. Her father, Dr. Ghulam Muhammad, was a well-known doctor at Lady Reading Hospital, Peshawar. Her father remained with the royal family of Afghanistan for 12 years. Feroz Bano accompanied her to Afghanistan at the age of nine and she got her early education in Afghanistan in the royal environment. During her stay in Kabul, she studied Islamic Studies, Urdu, Persian language and Islamic History. In 1914, she got married to a famous businessman of Amritsar, Sheikh Abdul Wahid. The couple lived for some time in Amritsar. Later, they settled permanently in Peshawar. Her brother Abdul Hakim gave her one of his business firms for her to earn her livelihood. In 1942, she became a member of the FZML. Most of the delegation from the Punjab often stayed at her home. After partition, she continued her social activities and became the vice president of APWA Peshawar branch. She died in 1971.



Begum Agha Sardar Ali Khan

Begum Agha Sardar Ali Khan belonged to the Qazilbash family of Peshawar. Her date of birth is unknown. Her son Khan Baba Khan, a formal session judge and prominent lawyer, was also a member of the AIML Working Committee. Despite her old age, she participated in FZML functions. During the civil disobedience campaign against the Congress Ministry and referendum of 1947, she traveled through the southern districts of NWFP and tried to motivate the people in favour of Pakistan. She died in 1973.



Begum Sultana Ahmad Hussain

Begum Sultana's date of birth is unknown, but the records of Special Branch at Peshawar Achieves show that she was the contemporary of Begum Saeeda Mohammad Ahmad. In 1945 she joined the FZML and became one of its regular participants in all activities and street politics. She did not get a formal education but had a political consciousness. During the referendum of 1947, she worked for the awareness of Frontier women to vote for Pakistan. She died in 1991.

Begum Sayed Mehmood Shah

Begum Mehmood Shah was born in 1901 in the house of Sayed Ahmad Ali Shah belonging to a well-known family of Peshawar Cantonment. Her original name is unknown. She got her early education at home. Her family remained active participants in Frontier politics. Her brother Sayed Ayub Shah was known as Lala Ayub, a strong Congressist, while her elder brother Sayed Mushtaq Ahmad Shah was a supporter of the AIML. In 1945, she became an active member of the FZML. She remained in charge of the Cantonment Board Ward Committee of the FZML. She got injured when some of the women arranged to



stop the Bombay Express as a protest during the civil disobedience movement. She refused to take treatment from English doctors instead she took treatment at her home. After independence, she worked for the settlement of refugees. She also joined APWA and participated in many of its meetings. During the wars of 1965 and 1971 with India, she helped the injured and provided food to the war-affected areas. In 1987, in recognition of her services she was awarded Gold Medal by the Frontier Government. She died in 1988.

Begum Faqir Mohammad Tikadar

Begum Faqir Mohammad Tikadar was more commonly known as Rabia Bibi. Her date of birth and death is unknown. She was not formally educated, but had great political consciousness. She remained the President of Peshawar city FZML Committee. No other biographical details are available.

Begum Mufti Yaqoob Jan

Nothing substantial is available about Begum Mufti Yaqoob Jan's early life. She belonged to a respectable family. Her father was a Mufti of Peshawar. She actively participated in the activities of the FZML. Her house also served as a meeting place for the FZML. The important meeting in which Begum Qazi Mir Ahmad was nominated as President of Provincial Zanana Muslim League was also held at her home. She died in 1951.

Begum Mumtaz Jamal

Begum Mumtaz Jamal was born on 10th October 1926 in Peshawar. Mumtaz Jamal completed her matriculation from Lady Griffith Girls High School, Peshawar. She actively participated in the dramas and debate competitions of her school and college. Her father Taj Mohammad Khan was an army contractor. After the death of her father, her mother joined the freedom struggle.



Begum Mumtaz Jamal's whole family participated in the freedom struggle. Apart from her, her three sisters, Sardar Jamal, Badsha Jamal and Munawar Jamal as well as her three brothers Tila Mohammad Fida Mohmmmad and Saleh Mohammad were active members of the AIML. She also remained a member of Peshawar University Senate. She worked for women rights, education and awareness of women in many capacities. She got married in 1948 to Major Khurshid Anwar, an activist of the Muslim League. At the time of this research she was living in America with her family.

Badshah Jamal

Badshah Jamal was born in 1921 in Peshawar. She got her secondary education from Lady Griffith Girls High School, Peshawar. She became a teacher in the same school after receiving some professional knowledge in the Montessori Method of teaching. She was an active member of the FZML like all other members of her family. During the civil disobedience movement and referendum, she worked hard and toured many areas of the province. After independence she got married to Major Nisar Ali Durrani.



Sardar Jamal

She was born in 1924. She got her elementary education from Mission High School and completed her Bachelor of Teaching (BT) from Lahore. She worked as a teacher in Lady Griffith Girls High School for some time. She left her job after her marriage with Khalid Mehmood, brother of Begum Qazi Mir Ahmad. She fully participated in the freedom movement. During the referendum campaign



she worked for the cause of the FZML. No further details are available about her life.

Qanita Begum

Qanita Begum was born on 21st April 1908, at Surkh Dhari, Mardan. Her father Mian Wasi-ud-Din Kaka Khel later settled in Peshawar. She got her primary education from a primary school near Jehangir Pura, Peshawar. She studied her proficiency and honours exams in the Pukhtu and Urdu languages. She developed an interest and love for literature and politics. She was a regular contributor to a number of contemporary women's magazines including '*Tehzib-i-Naswan*', '*Asmat*' and '*Mesbah*'. She also wrote in the journal '*Pukhtun*' as 'a sister'. During 1936–37 she also participated in radio programmes. She was an active member of the FZML. She delivered impressive speeches during their meetings. She went on a worldwide tour and wrote her famous travelogue '*Zama Safarnama*' (My Travelogue). She died in 1996.

Miss Mumtaz Majeed

Mumtaz Majeed was born in 1913, at Peshawar. Her father Abdul Majeed died soon after her birth. She was the only sister of six brothers. She was an active member of the FZML, although other members of her family, including Yahya Jan (son-in-law of Ghaffar Khan) and Mohammad Younas Khan, both maternal uncles were staunch Congressists, but she joined the FZML. She worked as volunteer of the Muslim League National Guard. She also participated in the funds raising campaign for Bihar Relief Fund. She died in 1989.



Begum Ghulam Sarwar Thikadar

Begum Ghulam Sarwar Thikadar was born in Peshawar but her date of birth is unknown. She was a wife of freedom fighter Ghulam Sarwar and sister of Khuda Bakhsh, another great freedom fighter of the Frontier. She was an active member of the FZML. Begum Ghulam Sarwar Thikadar

never missed a meeting or procession of the FZML. She also arranged meetings at her home. Her sister Begum Fazal Karim Khan was also a member of the FZML Working Committee. She died in 1978.

Fehmida Akhtar Ali Kozai

Fahmida was born on 4th March 1932 in Peshawar. Her father was an active member of the FPML. She completed her matriculation from Lady Griffith Girls High School, B.A from Convent College, Lahore and MA (Urdu language and literature) from Punjab University and MA (Persian language and literature) from Peshawar University. During her student life, she started writing short stories and fiction. She served as a lecturer of Urdu in Frontier College for Women, Peshawar. She published two collections of her fictions entitled '*Kashmala*' and '*Appne Des Main*'. She also published a novel '*Gulmarjan*'. She died in 1977.



Begum Fazal Karim Khan Ghalzai

Begum Fazal Karim Khan Ghalzai's real name was Zamrud Jan. She was born in 1901. Her father Ghulam Haider Durrani migrated from Afghanistan and settled in Peshawar. Begum Fazal Karim got only a primary education along with Quranic study. In 1945, in Murree she met with Punjab Women League leaders including Begum Shah Nawaz, Mumtaz Shahnawaz, Salma Tasaduq Hussain and Fatima Begum. They encouraged her patriotic feelings and convinced her about the importance of Pakistan. She joined the FZML the same year. During the referendum, she worked for the cause of Pakistan. After independence, she became member of APWA. She died on 26th May 1976 in Peshawar.



Miss Saeeda Aslam Sha'wa

Saeeda Aslam Sha'wa was born on 5th January 1925 in Mardan. Her father, a staunch Muslim Leaguer, Mohammad Aslam Khan, was a landlord and a famous poet and scholar of Pukhtu. She got her early education at her home. Arabic literature was her favourite subject. She attained a command of this language. When a branch of FZML was founded at Mardan, Saeeda became a member. She developed a close association with Zari Sarfaraz. Zari Sarfaraz spoke of her admirable contribution during her interview. She was nominated as treasurer. She actively participated in the civil disobedience campaign and referendum. She generously contributed to the Muslim League fund. She took great interest in the settlement of refugees. She spent the rest of her life as a social worker. She was assassinated in 1962.



Naeema Shehnaz

Naeema Shehnaz was a daughter of Abdus Samad Khan. She got inspiration from her aunt Saeeda Sha'wa and joined the FZML. Her husband Tariq Baig was an army officer. He encouraged her to participate in the FZML meetings and worked for Pakistan. After partition, she gave up the politics and confined herself only to literary activities. She is a good and impressive writer. She published two novels, '*Rohoon Ke Saat Guftagu*' (Conversation with Souls) and '*Aayeeney*' (Mirrors). No further details are available about her life.



Begum Sayed Mushtaq Ali Shah

Begum Sayed Mushtaq Ali Shah belonged to a political family of Peshawar. Her uncle Sayed Mohammad Ayub

(Lala Ayub) was a staunch supporter of Congress, but she joined FZML. And later, became president of the FZML Cantonment Board area. She regularly participated in the meetings and processions of the FZML. She was also amongst the ladies who got injured during the rail incident. No other details are available about her life.

Begum Saeeda Rauf

Begum Saeeda Rauf was born in 1929 in Peshawar. She got her early education from Lady Griffith Girls High School and graduated from Convent College Lahore. Her father Abdul Rauf and Uncle Abdul Aziz were members of the Peshawar Khilafat Committee. In 1930, when Maulana Mohammad Ali Jauhar, Maulana Shaukat Ali and their mother Bi-Amma visited Peshawar, her father arranged meetings with these women and Bi-Amma stayed at her house. She recited 'na'at' (praising of Prophet Muhammad Peace be upon him in poetry) and other poems almost in every meeting and procession she participated in. She was the younger daughter of famous fiction writer Fehmida Akhtar Ali Kuzai. After partition, she got married to Army Major Qazi Abdul Wahid.

Sultan Begum Sardar Hussain

Sultan Begum Sardar Hussain was the elder daughter of Sardar Hussain Khan and the sister of Ejaz Hussain Khan. She got her matriculation certificate from Lady Griffith Girls High School and her proficiency from Punjab University. She became a teacher in Forward Girls High School, Peshawar for few years. On the request of Nazir Tila Mohammad, she joined the FZML but did not want to disclose her name. She even denied accepting any designation. She secretly worked day and night during the freedom movement. In the civil disobedience movement, she actively participated in every meeting and procession. After partition, she worked as a politician in the Muslim League but left this field soon due to corrupt politicians. She got married to Mohammad Ali Khan Banghash but her husband died soon. She served as a

warden of Home-Economics College, Peshawar University. She died in March 1987.

Mai Malangi

Mai Malangi was born in a village in Mohalan District, Hazara. Her father's name was Sher Zaman. Her father died in her childhood. Her brothers left home seeking livelihood without informing their mother. She, along with her mother, searched for them but failed. They started residing at a shrine in Peshawar. At the shrine she was married to a disciple. Initially, she was hired to participate in the processions of the FZML to carry the AIML's flag. Also, her services were hired by other leaguers. However, later on she became an active participant of these meetings. She was very brave and outspoken. She stood in front of all processionists ready to do or die. She was ready all the time to fight not only with police but also with those people who wanted to block the way of the processions. Due to her poverty and children, she was given one rupee per day from the Muslim League fund. She toured all over the province. No other details are available about her life.



Begum Mumtaz Safdar

Mumtaz was born on 5th March 1906 at Peshawar. Her father Khan Bahadar Saadullah Khan served as Additional Judicial Commissioner in the NWFP for eleven years. Mumtaz got her education at home. In 1926 she was married to Khan Bahadur Safdar Khan, who was also a Session Judge. After her marriage, she became popular with the name of Mumtaz Safdar. In 1926 she began to do social work and became an active member of the All India Women Association. She



dealt directly with Sarojni Naidu and other Hindu and Sikh women. She participated in the All India Women Conference held in 1929 at Calcutta, as representative of the NWFP Muslim Women. She also attended its meeting at Karachi in 1934, and gave valuable suggestions about raising the status of women. During civil disobedience and the referendum, she worked side by side with other active members of the FZML. After partition, she became vice president of the All Pakistan Women Association (APWA) Peshawar Branch. She died in 1961.

Begum Attaullah Jan

Her name was Najum-Nisa. She was born in 1906 in Peshawar. She got her early education in Peshawar. She got her medical education from Ludhyana College Amritsar, and was appointed a doctor at Lady Reading Hospital, Peshawar in 1929. In 1934, she was married to a well-known lawyer Attaullah Jan. In Peshawar she became secretary of the Red Cross Committee.

She was in-charge of the 'Child Centre' in Peshawar. She worked for the poor children at the centre. She also played a vital role in the establishment of APWA branches throughout the province.



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