

PUKHTUN RESISTANCE AGAINST THE MUGHULS DURING 1670s

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Mughul-Pukhtun conflict is one of the important chapters of Indian history. They on number of occasions locked horns with each other. However, the 1670s resistance of the Pukhtuns occupies a significant place in Mughul-Pukhtun tussle. A specific incident in 1672 ignited the controversy which, afterwards, turned into a resistance movement. Aimal Khan Mohmand and Darya Khan Afridi were the torch bearers of the movement. Aimal Khan crowned himself king and struck coins in his name. In this research paper an attempt has been made to scrutinize the aforementioned issue and reach an understandable conclusion, as different sets of scholars have viewed in with their own perspective.

Keywords: Pukhtuns, Mughuls, Resistance, Aimal Khan, Darya Khan.

Introduction

The 1670s resistance movement was the third and the last one staged by the Pukhtuns¹ in the seventeenth century. Prior to it *Roushniyabs* and Yusufzis made unsuccessful attempts to root out the Mughuls if not from India, at least from the Pukhtun region. The immediate cause of 1670's resistance movement was the insult of a Paracha girl by Mughul soldiers. A few Safi Pukhtuns present on the occasion put to death the soldiers. Instead of admitting their fault, the Mughul authorities

held the Safis responsible, which sparked the controversy. The Mughul folly provided an opportunity to Aimal Khan and his followers to rise against them.

The Pukhtun resistance movement was mainly joined by Mohmand, Afridi, Shinwari and Orakzai tribes. Khushal Khan Khattak was initially not a part of the movement he rather half heartedly accompanied Amin Khan towards Kabul. He, however, later on joined the Pukhtuns against the Mughuls.

Aimal Khan crowned himself a king and struck coins in his name. The Pukhtuns in large numbers gathered under his banner and launched an organized resistance movement against the imperialists. They on a few occasions gave severe blows to the Mughuls and put many of them to death. The situation was so grim that Aurangzeb Alamgir personally came to Hasanabdal, in order to monitor the operation carried out in this connection. The elaborate steps taken by the Emperor, at least, weakened the resistance if not finished it completely.

The Resistance Movement

The 17th century witnessed three resistance movements by the Pukhtuns against the Mughuls. The last of these was staged by Mohmands and Afridis. Amin Khan was the Governor of Kabul at the time of the uprising. He is said to be a wealthy and arrogant person. Saqi Mustaid Khan, in this connection, states: "True, he (Amin Khan) was unique in counsel and honesty but his nature harboured the vile characteristics of self-will and pride".² The general attitude of the Mughul officers even with those Pukhtuns who were loyal to them was derogatory. Hussain Baig, the central figure of the controversy, held antagonistic views about Pukhtuns and looked down upon them. *Tārīkh-i-Muraṣṣa'* writes, once some Pukhtun Malaks wanted to meet Muhammad Amin Khan at Jamrud. Hussain Baig (Faujdar of Kunar, Afghanistan) was also present on the occasion, who told Amin Khan that the Nawab's dogs desired to make their obeisance³, which shows how arrogant they were.

Causes of the Uprising

The immediate cause of the uprising was the insult of a girl by the Mughul soldiers. The legend goes that some soldiers of Hussain Baig, Faujdar of Kunar, insulted a Safi girl, who had come to the place at which they were stationed to buy and sell.⁴ Almost all the historians,

including Raverty, Olaf Caroe⁵ and Dost Muhammad Khan Kamil⁶ agree that the girl was from the Safi⁷ tribe. Pareshan Khattak, however, has a different stand regarding the tribal connection of the girl. He asserts that a number of writers misquoted the girl as Safi.⁸ He mentions that at that time even the Pukhtun men were not involved in business what to talk about their women.⁹ He seems to be correct because Pukhtuns, at that time, were very conservative and would not allow their women to engage business. Nevertheless *Tārīkh-i-Muraṣṣa'* has shed light on this incident. It states Hussain Baig was Faujdar of Kunar. A *Parachgai* (Paracha girl) of the villages of Safis went to the *Thana* (fort or check post) of Hussain Baig for trade. When she came out of the *Thana*, the soldiers of Hussain Baig taunted her. There were sitting two or three Safi (tribesmen) who stopped the soldiers from insulting her. There followed a scuffle in which some Mughul soldiers were killed and the Safis escaped to their area.¹⁰ The passage from *Tārīkh-i-Muraṣṣa'* is self explanatory regarding the origin of the stated girl, which proves her to be a Paracha¹¹ whereas the aforementioned writers have wrongly mentioned her to be a Pukhtun.

The Movement

Killing the Mughul soldiers was undoubtedly a serious offence in spite of the fact that the Safis had acted according to the norms of *Pukhtunwali* (Pukhtun code of life). It was, therefore, hard for the imperialists to ignore. Hussain Baig accordingly called upon the elders of Safi tribe to seize the men; which they refused to comply with and replied that his soldiers had done no wrong.¹² In reaction other neighbouring tribes and vassals were called on to burn their (Safis) villages. "These attended under the terms of service under which they held fiefs, but secretly sent word to the Safis warning them of what was brewing and to tell them they considered they had acted like men"¹³ and "let them know that they would not draw sword for the Mughuls, but remain passive spectators".¹⁴ This they did, and Hussain Baig was defeated. Pukhtuns realized that Hussain Baig was aware of their disloyalty and rightly thought that he might arrest them. Hussain Baig attempted to seize the chiefs of the Pukhtuns, but their clansmen gathered around them and prevented it. Afzal Khan is of the opinion that the incident further increased the feelings of distrust between the Mughuls and Pukhtuns.¹⁵

Hussain Baig, annoyed at his failure, dispatched an exaggerated report of the affair to the Governor, Muhammad Amin Khan.¹⁶ The

Mughul court historians, as well, have ignored the real cause of the uprising and describe that Pukhtuns once again stood up due to the negligence and lethargy of the (Mughul) officers.¹⁷ Muhammad Amin Khan, after receiving the report, got infuriated and vowed to take revenge, without enquiring into the matter.¹⁸ However *Tārīkh-i-Muraṣṣa'* gives a different version and writes that the Pukhtuns as a precaution had blocked the way of Amin Khan when he was on his way from Peshawar to Kabul. Accordingly the Pakhtuns, expecting the Mughul onslaught, in advance blocked Khyber Pass when Amin Khan moved to Kabul from Peshawar.¹⁹ Raverty has also shared the same view.²⁰ Both the opponents knew the intentions of each other and the Pukhtuns expecting the backlash took a prudent decision to block the way of Amin Khan and got hold of a strategic position.

Aimal Khan, after the Mughul/Pukhtun conflict, had emerged as the leader of the Pukhtuns. He had crowned himself a king and had struck coins in his name. *Ma'thir-ul-Umara* states that Aimal Khan had declared himself a king and struck coins in his name.²¹ It further mentions that he gallantly and courageously faced the hard time.²² There is some controversy regarding the tribal connection of Aimal Khan. Sir Wolseley Haig,²³ Sir Olaf Caroe²⁴ and Sir Jadunath Sarkar²⁵ consider him an Afridi, whereas Dost Muhammad Khan Kamil is of the opinion that Aimal Khan was from the Mohmand tribe.²⁶ Meera Jan Seyal, in detail, has discussed the issue and asserts that Aimal Khan was a Mohmand of Hazarnau, where his family still resides.²⁷ The most authentic proof in this connection is, however, one of the verses of Khushal Khan Khattak, who was not only a contemporary of Aimal Khan but his close friend as well, which proves Aimal Khan a Mohmand. Khushal says:

افريدو، شتوارو زړپه يي ائجه بته كړو

ايمل خان مهمند په تنگ پر ائجه دواړو²⁸

Translation

In booty the Afridis and Shinwaris found their heart's content,
And Aimal Khan Mohmand in honour and booty both.

One can, in the light of Khushal's above mentioned verse, say that Aimal Khan was a Mohmand and not an Afridi.

The Mughul disaster in Khyber

Aimal Khan blockend The Khyber Pass in 1972. Muhammad Amin Khan, like all the previous governors of Kabul, moved from Peshawar, to his summer capital Kabul. He was accompanied by a few Pukhtun Sardars, including Khushal Khan Khattak²⁹ and Arbab Mustajab Mohmand. Pukhtun tribes of Mohmands, Afridis and Shinwaris had blocked the way of the Governor at Gharib Khana, situated at a distance of four miles to the northwest of Landi Kotal (present day District Khyber). Arbab Mustajab was sent to negotiate with Aimal Khan but negotiations failed. He along with other aides of Muhammad Amin Khan at last mustered courage and informed him of the danger. He advised a parley with Pukhtuns, but met with an angry rebuff. Amin Khan sought the advice of Khushal Khan Khattak. Khushal suggested to him not to fight with Pukhtuns as they were not a match to the government.³⁰ Amin Khan, in reply said: "O Khushal, a man put a winter-stricken snake into a bag, which when warmed, bit the same men, I did good to you, and you give me this advice! How shall I account for my conduct before the king."³¹ Afzal Khan writes that Khushal became alarmed and said, If His Excellency was pleased to have an ecounter, he would go ahead of His Excellency.³²

Amin Khan reached Ali Masjid and passed through it unharmed.³³ Haroon Rashid states that the battle took place at Ali Masjid³⁴ but it seems incorrect. He has most probably followed Sir Jadunath Sarkar, who mentions the same place for the battle.³⁵ Olaf Caroe considers Lawargay³⁶ (Landi Kotal) as the scene of battle while Afzal Khan, writes that the Mughuls went through Ali Masjid and halted at Lawargay. The Pukhtuns had positioned themselves above it.³⁷ Khafi Khan, however, accurately mentions the name of the place as Gharib Khana, which was between Peshawar and Kabul,³⁸ situated four miles to the north west of Landi Kotal or Lawargay.

When the Mughuls reached the place they found that the Gharib Khana Kotal (saddle) was closed by *Sangars* or breastworks thrown right across the defile. The army was accordingly halted, and the troops of the advance, the strongest in point of fighting men, were positioned on the right and left in readiness to attack these defenses. Mahmood Khan Khweshki (an Indian Pukhtun) led them. The elephants with force were also placed in front, and the main body kept well up with the advance column. As soon as the troops were near enough, the musketeers, under Mubariz Khan, were sent to attack the right and Mahmood Khan

Khweshki, the left flank. When the Mughuls approached the breastworks, Pukhtuns, who were commanded by Aimal Khan and other Malaks, and who had piled up fragments of rocks and great stones or boulders ready for use, hurled them down upon the Mughuls. The elephants were forced back, Mahmood Khan Khweshki was killed, and his troops were repulsed with great loss. Mubariz Khan, met with no more success, and was also forced back, and the Afridis used their swords upon the retreating Mughuls with disastrous effect.³⁹

The fighting, after a short interval, was again renewed, and continued for nearly the whole day, but the Mughuls could affect nothing, and their Pukhtun allies, for most part, kept aloof except Khushal Khan Khattak who along with his men, fought for the Mughuls.⁴⁰ A number of commanders were soon killed, and disorder seized the Mughul army. Amin Khan and some of his high officers escaped to Peshawar but every things was lost.⁴¹

He lost everything-troops, treasure, elephants, family including his mother, wife, sister, son, daughter and brother-in-law as well as the wives and families of other Mughul nobles.⁴² For three days the massacre continued.⁴³ According to Khafi Khan, Amin Khan paid a large sum of money to Pukhtuns for the release of his daughter and mother, however, his wife from a high sense of honour, refused to return and having donned the garb of a recluse, she devoted up the remainder of her life to prayer and religious solitude.⁴⁴

Amin Khan, Saqi Mustaid Khan writes, from his high sense of honour wanted to sacrifice his life in fight but his servants seized his bridle and brought him away from the place of danger.⁴⁵ Raverty, regarding the escape of Amin Khan, writes: "The shattered force proceeded in the direction of Tahtarah, (a mountain in District Khyber) but it was the road to destruction. When Muhammad Amin Khan reached the spur or head of spur, some Afghan Jamadars, who were with him told him that if he went down towards Tahtarah he would be lost, but that if he would come along with them, they would take him through the Khyber in safety, by a route known to themselves and they brought him safely to Peshawar.⁴⁶ The rest of the Mughuls when they reached Ali Masjid through the normal route were again attacked by the Pukhtuns. Thousand of them were put to death, and only a few survived.⁴⁷ The disaster was complete and the only parallel could be found when in 1586 the entire Mughul army under Raja Bir Bal and Zain Khan Koka had been cut off by the Yusufzis in Karakar pass (Buner). This singular victory had increased the prestige and resources of the Pukhtuns, particularly Aimal Khan Mohmand.⁴⁸

The disaster the Mughuls came across at Gharib Khana and afterwards at Ali Masjid was largely due to the folly of Muhammad Amin Khan. He, as mentioned earlier, was an arrogant person, who in spite of being cautioned by Arbab Mustajab and Khushal Khan, adopted the route on which the Pukhtuns had positioned themselves. Amin Khan most probably considered the Pukhtuns no match for himself which resulted in catastrophe for the Mughuls. He, like a prudent and realistic leader, should have listened to the advice of Mustajab Khan and Khushal Khan.

The disaster was, no doubt, an issue of great concern for emperor Aurangzeb Alamgir, who was not only upset by the carnage but feared a Pukhtun uprising affecting the whole Pukhtun land from Qandahar to Attock.⁴⁹ The Emperor took strong measures to stop any further Pukhtun incursion. He ordered Fidai Khan, the Governor of Lahore to hasten to Peshawar to guard against any Pukhtun incursion. Fidai Khan, after reaching Peshawar, put to death Arbab Mustajab Khan on suspicion of having instigated the Pukhtuns in Khyber which resulted in the defeat of the Mughuls.⁵⁰ Muhammad Amin Khan was degraded; Mahabat Khan, who had governed Afghanistan thrice before and achieved success in dealing with these people,⁵¹ was recalled from Deccan and sent to Kabul as Governor for the fourth time. Much was expected from his earlier experience and local knowledge. However, the new Governor shrank from risking the fate of his predecessor.⁵² He avoided confrontation with the Pukhtuns, and made a secret arrangement with them, each side promising not to molest the other. He won over the nephew of Aimal Khan Mohmand and brother of Darya Khan Afridi and started negotiations with Aimal Khan and Darya Khan.⁵³ Mahabat Khan, after bribing a few Mohmands, went to Kabul through Karappa pass. But the Khyber Pass remained closed as before. As Mahabat Khan was sent for taking a stern action against the Pukhtuns, Aurangzeb, therefore, was not happy with his performance. *Ma'thir-ul-Umara*, in this connection, writes that Mahabat Khan moved forward from Peshawar without taking action against the rebel group (the Pukhtuns) and reached Kabul not giving any harm to them, which displeased the king.⁵⁴

The Battle of Karappa

The emperor Aurangzeb in November 1673 sent Shuja'at Khan in independent command of a large force with abundant war-material and artillery to punish the Pukhtuns. Jaswant Singh was to co-operate with

him. Shuja'at Khan was a man of humble origin who had risen to high rank by his success in quelling the Satnami (they were Hindus of Narnaul and Mewat, who had staged a revolt, however, Shuja'at Khan successfully crushed it) rising. He was, therefore, regarded with jealousy and contempt by high born officers like Mahabat Khan and Jaswant Singh.⁵⁵ Shuja'at Khan due to the confidence the Emperor had in him and his past triumphs ignored Jaswant and took his own line of action. This lack of co-operation among the Mughul officers, according to Sir Jadunath Sarkar, caused the disaster of 1674.⁵⁶

Shuja'at Khan, after spending some time in Peshawar, proceeded towards Kabul via Karappa Pass, situated to the north west of Peshawar and to the north of Kabul River in Mohmand Agency. He reached that place in February 1674 where he was intercepted by Aimal Khan Mohmand. It snowed heavily that night. The Mughuls were not prepared for such extreme cold and wet weather. The Pukhtuns from heights began to harass the suffering army. Unfamiliar with the hilly terrain the Mughuls were unable either to advance or retreat. Shuja'at Khan began to fight with bows and muskets. The Pukhtuns showered stones, arrows, and bullets. What the imperialists discharged missed the marks while the missiles of the Pukhtuns all took effect. The imperialists retreated to a safer position for the rest of the night. At dawn the Pukhtuns charged the miserable army from all sides. Shuja'at Khan met a soldier's death in the front rank. *Ma'thir-ul-Umara* states that although a tough battle took place, he (Shuja'at Khan) tried his best but during the course of battle, lost his life in the service of his master (Aurangzeb).⁵⁷

The Arrival of Aurangzeb at Hasanabdal

The second consecutive defeat of the Mughuls, forced Aurangzeb Alamgir to look after the operation himself against the Pukhtuns. In June 1674, he arrived at Hasanabdal, situated between Rawalpindi and Peshawar. Saqi Mustaid Khan states that after learning about the defeat of Karappa and death of Shuja'at Khan, the Emperor decided to go there in person,⁵⁸ for the restoration of imperial prestige. Aghar Khan, a Mughul general of repute, was called from Deccan (India) for opening the Khyber Pass. According to Khafi Khan, Aghar Khan covered the distance of four months just in forty days.⁵⁹ The Emperor provided four to five thousand horsemen and sent him forward against the Pukhtuns. Meanwhile Mahabat Khan was removed from the governorship on the charge of having connived at the destruction of Shuja'at Khan.⁶⁰ He was replaced

by Fidai Khan. Aurangzeb, in Hasanabdal, tried to win over the Pukhtuns by grant of presents, pensions, fiefs and posts in the Mughul army. Many clans, according to Sir Jadunath Sarkar, were won over.⁶¹ The Bangash and some of the tribes of Peshawar at once joined the Governor's side, and sent contingents of their men to fight under his banners.⁶²

Aghar Khan, who had previously fought against the Pukhtuns and was aware of their war tactics, when reached Peshawar, was attacked by the Pukhtuns. He utilized his previous experience of war with them and compelled the enemy to flee. The Pukhtuns were pursued and about three hundred of them were put to death.⁶³ Aghar Khan, after the initial success, came back to Peshawar. Aurangzeb honoured Aghar Khan for his achievement and ordered him to attack and open the Khyber Pass.⁶⁴ The Khyber Pass had immense importance for the Mughuls as it was the easiest route to Kabul. It was so important to the Mughuls that Aurangzeb had ordered Aghar Khan to open it or die.⁶⁵ The pass was closed after the defeat of Muhammad Amin Khan by Aimal Khan and Darya Khan in 1672. Aghar Khan moved from Peshawar towards Khyber Pass but came across a stiff resistance by the Pukhtuns, under Aimal Khan and Darya Khan. After a long contest near Ali Masjid in which both sides lost heavily and Aghar Khan was severely wounded, the attempt was abandoned.⁶⁶ Khafi Khan, on the other hand, in his usual hyperbolic manner, claims the victory for the Mughuls, but at the same time concedes that the pass could not be opened.⁶⁷ Aurangzeb Alamgir had sent Aghar Khan with the clear task of opening the Khyber Pass. He would have definitely shown bravery and would have killed some of his opponents but, as Khafi Khan writes, failed to open the pass. It can be, therefore, concluded that Khafi Khan's claim of Pukhtun's defeat seems to be mere boasting.

Khafi Khan further states that due to the mutual jealousies in the royal army, Fidai Khan was not able to go through the Khyber Pass.⁶⁸ So Aghar Khan took the command of the vanguard and escorted Fidai Khan to Jalalabad (Afghanistan) through Bazarak (Shalman, District Khyber)⁶⁹ Fidai Khan, after reaching Jalalabad, deputed Aghar Khan, Murad Kuli and Sultan Lashkari, with a force of five thousand soldiers for an attack on Nek Bahar (Ningrahar) which was for long in the possession of the Pukhtuns.⁷⁰ In Ningrahar, Aghar Khan, according to Khafi Khan, fought a few battles with Ghalzai tribe, inflicted heavy losses on them and other Pukhtuns. He was able to open the Jagdalak pass (between Jalalabad and Kabul) and stationed himself at Gandamak. The same writers state that when the Pukhtuns realized that fighting

Aghar Khan in the open field was not possible, they attacked Aghar Khan at night with a force of thirty to forty thousand men, but the Mughuls inflicted heavy losses on them and they were compelled to flee.⁷¹ According to Mera Jan Siyal the claim of Khafi Khan that the Jagdalak Pass had been opened, seems not to be completely correct, because when Fidai Khan was coming back to Peshawar from Kabul, the Pukhtuns had blocked the same pass again.⁷² As Khafi Khan himself states that when Fidai Khan was coming back to Peshawar from Kabul, he found the way blocked by the Pukhtuns and on that occasion a fierce battle took place.⁷³ He further writes that due to jealousy of other Mughul officers, Fidai Khan did not call Aghar Khan for help; rather an Arab led the vanguard but was killed in an encounter and a thumping defeat was inflicted on the Mughuls.⁷⁴ It was after that defeat when Aghar Khan was called from Gandamak, who with a few thousand soldiers reached there. A fierce battle was fought again with the Pukhtuns. The Pukhtuns showered arrows, fired gun shots and rolled stones from the hill-top that the royal army could hardly move,⁷⁵ but at last the Pukhtuns were defeated. Fidai Khan, when he reached Jalalabad, got busy in constructing forts and check posts on the route.⁷⁶

One, from the above discussion, can conclude that although the Mughuls were able to inflict losses on the Pukhtuns and opened way on some occasions but infact they could not fully establish their control in Ningrahar.⁷⁷

The Battle of Khaposh

Khaposh is situated in District Bajawar. It was here that the Pukhtuns had given a thumping defeat to the Mughuls. Saqi Mustaid Khan, referring to it, writes that Mukarram Khan, with his younger brother Shamsir Khan, Muhammad Yaqub and a strong force, was ordered to punish the Pukhtuns near the *Kotal* of Khaposh.⁷⁸ Haroon Rashid, throwing light on the background of the encounter, remarks that the Mughuls wanted to distract and draw off the attention of other Pukhtuns from Fidai Khan,⁷⁹ who was at the same time moving from Kabul to Peshawar. According to Olaf Caroe, the battle of Khaposh took place in 1674.⁸⁰ However, *Ma'thir-i-Alamgiri*, an earlier source, mentions the year of the battle as June 1675.⁸¹

The Pukhtuns, on this occasion, were again led by their able and trusted leaders Aimal Khan Mohmand and Darya Khan Afridi. They turned their attention to Mukarram Khan, who was operating with a

large force against the Pukhtuns near the saddle of Khaposh, where he burnt, destroyed and plundered many of the Mohmand villages.⁸² There took place a battle, the Mughuls were out numbered and lost heavily. The youthful Shamshir Khan was killed by Darya Khan Afridi whereas Mukarram Khan got wounded. According to Saqi Mustaid Khan, the Emperor was perturbed to hear of the death of his servants, especially young Shamshir Khan.⁸³ It was the month of June; lack of water and loss of way further caused the death of many soldiers. Mukarram Khan with a handful of survivors escaped to Bajawar and took refuge with its *Thanadar*, Izzat Khan, where they stayed for quite some time before they could get back into Mughul territory.

On 14th June, 1675, the Emperor sent a fresh force into the Pukhtun territory, about 9,000 men, with a vast quantity of material. Aghar Khan was posted at Jalalabad, and other capable officers at Jagdalak, Laghman, Gharib Khan, and Bangashat (Kohat and the adjacent areas), in command of other posts. Fidai Khan, the governor of the province was given the title of Azam Khan Koka in reward of his punishing the Pukhtuns.⁸⁴ In August, the Pukhtuns killed Hazbar Khan the *Thanadar* of Jagdalak with his son and other Mughul soldiers. Abdullah, the *Thanadar* of Barang- Ab and Surkh-Ab was driven out of his post. But, on the whole, the Mughuls held their sway by means of establishing out-posts and forts at strategic points in the Pukhtun country.

The Departure of Aurangzeb from Hasanabdal

By the end of 1675 Aurangzeb Alamgir left Hasanabdal after a stay of eighteen months. Sir Jadunath Sarkar states that the Emperor left Hasanabdal because the situation had sufficiently improved.⁸⁵ However, Haroon Rashid, on the authority of Khushal Khan Khattak and Manucci, says that the Emperor returned with failure.⁸⁶ One can say that Aurangzeb had gained success to some extent by winning over some of the Pukhtuns to his side by distributing money, fiefs and gifts.⁸⁷ Moreover, his presence at Hasanabdal was a constant threat for the Mughul officers, whose performance was under scrutiny. But the events which took place even after his departure are a testimony to the fact that the Pukhtun threat was still lurking and it took some time to be completely overcome.

In October 1675, Prince Muazzam was appointed to lead the Kabul expedition. He was given the title of *Shah-i-Ālam* (king of the world), a hundred thousand gold pieces, and two lakh of rupees in jewelry, and sent from Delhi with a splendid retinue of the most distinguished officers,

artillery, and material. One of his lieutenants was Amir Khan, son of Khalilullah. Amir Khan was made the Governor of Kabul province at the recommendation of prince Shah-i-Alam, in place of Azam Khan Koka.⁸⁸ The prince arrived at Kabul on 15th August 1677 and after a few months stay returned to Delhi. Throughout the year 1677 peace was observed between the Mughuls and the Pukhtuns as both sides were smarting under the effects of seven months drought and famine.

Success of Amir Khan Against the Pukhtuns

Amir Khan arrived at his post on 8th June 1678, and continued to govern Kabul with ability till his death twenty years later. The first Mughul/Pukhtun encounter during the governorship of Amir Khan took place in Ningrahar. Aghar Khan, who had been deputed there, built a fort which was a cause of great concern for the Pukhtuns who gathered in large number at Lamghan (Laghman).⁸⁹ Amir Khan, when came to know about the new development, sent Muhammad Raza along one thousand horsemen as a reinforcement for Aghar Khan. Aimal Khan Mohmand led the Pukhtuns and started the battle. According to Khafi Khan, the Mughuls were at the verge of defeat but the heroics of Aghar Khan, his son and brother saved them from defeat.⁹⁰ Khafi Khan pays tributes to Aimal Khan as well and states that although the Pukhtuns were defeated and many of them fled away but Aimal Khan stood firm and was prepared for death, when a few Pukhtuns took him away (from the battle field).⁹¹ Aurangzeb Alamgir rewarded Aghar Khan for his achievement and raised his rank.⁹²

Amir Khan did not confine himself only to war with the Pukhtuns; rather he set about to win over them through favours and entered into social relations with them. With such success the chiefs of the clans began to visit him without any suspicion. They became very friendly to him and every one of them looked up to him for advice in conducting his domestic affairs. Dost Muhammad Kamil, on the contrary, looks at the issue from a different angle. According to him Amir Khan very cleverly and successfully pursued the policy of sowing the seed of dissension among the Pukhtuns by different methods, one of them being the distribution of silver and gold to bribe them.⁹³ Haroon Rashid, remarks that under the astute management of Amir Khan, the Pukhtuns ceased to harass the imperial government and frittered their energies away in internecine quarrels.⁹⁴ *Ma'thir-ul-Umara*, however, has mentioned the reason in detail which created internal dissension among the Pukhtuns.

It states. Amir Khan, upset by the situation, sought the advice of Abdullah Khan Khweshki (an Indian Pukhtun), who was famous for his shrewdness, (Abdullah Khan) wrote a fake letter to the chiefs of every (Pukhtun) clan, in which it was stated that they (Abdullah and other Pukhtuns serving under Mughuls) for long were waiting for the Sultanate of the Afghans. Thank God our long awaited desire bore fruits. We are not aware of the details of this man (Aimal Khan). If he is a suitable choice for kingship write to us so we can join you because we are serving the Mughuls under compulsion. They (Pukhtuns) in reply praised Aimal Khan and induced Abdullah Khan Khweshki to join them. Abdullah Khan wrote again that he acknowledged Aimal Khan but for a king, it was required that he should be just. So for the sake of justice, tell him (Aimal Khan) to divide the conquered territory among you. All the chiefs of clans did the same and asked Aimal Khan (for the division of territory). He resisted, saying how a small territory could be divided among so many men. It sparked a controversy and many people left him. Aimal Khan had to make a division of the land, but as he showed great consideration to his own clansmen and kinsfolk his other followers were also disgruntled and left his camp and were grateful to Abdullah Khan.⁹⁵

This method worked for the Mughuls and the resistance movement of Aimal Khan Mohmand and Darya Khan Afridi lost momentum. The Emperor triumphed in Pukhtun territory by following the policy of paying subsidies and setting clan against clan.⁹⁶ The raids and forays ceased for the time being. The Khyber route was kept open by paying regular pensions to the hill men.⁹⁷

Conclusion

As far as the question of the real culprit of 1670s uprising is concerned one can easily fix its responsibility on the Mughuls. It is difficult to disagree with the argument that the Safis had acted in accordance with the norms of *Pukhtunwali* (Pukhtun code of conduct), when they killed the Mughul soldiers for disgracing a girl who was not even a Pukhtun. So much so that the Pukhtuns who were on Mughul pay roll secretly supported their brothers for they thought the Mughuls were not justified in taking action against the killers and their tribe. The Mughuls instead of accepting their fault tried to punish the Safi men, which ignited the whole issue. The attitude of the Mughuls shows their despotic behaviour as well as the arrogance with which they would usually address an issue. Had they shown prudence in this specific problem they could have easily shirked it.

The folly of the Mughuls provided an opportunity to Aimal Khan to stage a resistance for the revival of their lost power and glory. He along with Darya Khan Afridi defeated the Mughuls on many occasions and dealt a severe blow not only to their prestige but to their military and financial resources as well.

The Mughuls attached great importance to the Khyber Pass as it was the easiest and shortest route between Delhi and Kabul. However, the presence of the Pukhtuns all along it was a great threat for its safety. Moreover, for a King like Aurangzeb it was very difficult to overlook a disturbance in an area where the Mughuls had usually a nominal control. The situation compelled him to personally come to the troubled zone. His arrival was successful to the extent that he was able to win over the support of some Pukhtuns with the help of presents, fiefs and posts in the Mughul army, which undermined the uprising to a large extent. However, they continued to pose threat to the Mughuls.

The demand of the Pukhtuns, on the instigation of the Mughuls, to distribute land among them demoralized Aimal Khan, who decided to live a recluse life till his death. The resistance of Aimal Khan and Darya Khan had petered out towards the end of 1670s.

Notes and References

1. Khushal Khan Khattak in his poetry and prose has used the terms of Pakhtuns and Afghans for them. They had the realization among them that they belonged to the same stock and were one people because otherwise Aimal Khan Mohmand would have not taken up the cause of Safis. Moreover, we can find references from Khushal Khan writings where he clearly states that he wish to unite Pukhtuns or Aghans.
2. Saqi Mustaid Khan, *Ma'thir-i-Alamgiri*, English Trans., Jadu Nath Sarkar, Lahore, Suhail Academy, 1981, p. 69
3. Afzal Khan Khattak, *Tarikh Murassa*, Edited, Dost Muhammad Khan Kamil, Peshawar, University Book Agency, 2006, p. 346
4. Henry George Raverty, *Notes on Afghanistan and Baluchistan*, Lahore, Sange-Meel Publications, 1976, p. 40
5. Olaf Caroe, *The Pathans*, Karachi, Union Book Stall, 1980, p 233
6. Dost Muhammad Khan Kamil, *Khushal Khan Khattak*, 2nd ed., Peshawar, Shaheen Books 2006, p.1981
7. Safi is a Pukhtun tribe of Karlan lineage. The two main chunks of its population live in Kunar (Aghanista) and Mohmand Agency (Pakistan)
8. Pareshan Khattak, *Pashtoon Kaun*, 2nd ed., Peshawar, Pushto Academy, Peshawar University, 2005, p. 424
9. *Ibid.*, p. 426

10. Khattak, p. 347
11. According to Denzil Ibbeston the term Paracha is used on the frontier and in the central districts of the Punjab also, for any petty Muhammadan (Muslim) trader. They were originally settled in Persia, they were said to have migrated subsequently and settled in Dhangot on the Indus, near Kalabagh and 11 miles south-west of Makhad, as a ruling race, but after a time they were subdued by the Delhi kings, and all of them left the place and settled in Attock, Nowshera, Kohat, Peshawar, Delhi, Ahmadabad, Jalalabad and Kabul in Afghanistan. Denzil Ibbeston, *Glossary of the tribes and castes of the Punjab and N.W.F. Province*, Vol III, Lahore, Aziz Publishers, 1978, p. 200
12. Khattak, p. 247
13. Caroe, p. 233
14. Raverty, p. 41
15. Khattak, p.347
16. Raverty, p.41
17. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Ma'thir-ul-Umara, Vol. I, Urdu Tran., Muhammad Ayub Qadri, 2nd ed., Lahore, Urdu Science Board, n.d, p. 195.*
18. Kamil, p. 182
19. Khattak, p. 347
20. Raverty, p. 41
21. Nawaz Khan, p. 196
22. *Ibid.*
23. Wolsely Haig, *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol IV, Delhi, S.Chand & Co, 1971, p.238
24. Caroe, 234
25. Jadunath Sarkar, *A Short History of Aurangzeb*, 2nd ed., New Delhi, Orient Black Swan, 2001, p. 111
26. Kamil, pp. 175-176
27. Mera Jan Seyal, *Aimal Khan*, Peshawar, Danish Khparawandy Tolana, 2006, pp. 5-15
28. Mian Syed Rasool Rasa, *Armaghan-i-Khushal*, 2nd ed., Peshawar, University Book Agency, 1967, p. 33
29. Akor Khan, the great grand father of Khushal Khan, had been deputed by Empror Akbar for the protection of the highway between Khairabad and Nowshera. Yahya Khan, his son, was assigned the same duty. He was succeeded by his son Shahbaz Khan while after his death the responsibility fell on the shoulders of Khushal Khan Khattak.
30. Kamil, p. 182
31. Afzal Khan, p. 348
32. *Ibid.*
33. Caroe, p. 234
34. Haroon Rashid, *History of the Pattan*, Vol 2, Islamabad, Printo Graphic, 2005, p. 437
35. Sarkar, p. 111
36. Caroe, p. 234
37. Afzal Khan, p. 348

38. Khafi Khan, *Muntakhb-ul-Lubab*, Vol III & IV, Urdu Trans., Mahmood Ahmad Farooqi, 4th edi., Karachi, Nafees Academy, 1985, p. 214
39. Rashid, p. 437
40. Afzal Khan, p. 349
41. Sarkar, p. 111
42. Rashid, p. 437
43. *Ibid.*
44. Khafi Khan, p. 214
45. Mustaid Khan, p. 72
46. Raverty, p. 42
47. Kamil, p. 185
48. Rashid, p. 438
49. Sarkar, p. 112
50. Bahadur Shah Zafar Kaka Khail, *Pashtoon Tarikh Key Ayeny Mey*, Urdu Trans., Syed Anwaar-ul-Haq Jilani, Peshawar, University Book Agency, 2007, p. 396
51. Sarkar, p. 112
52. *Ibid.*
53. Syal, p. 31
54. Nawaz Khan, p. 366
55. Sarkar, p.112
56. *Ibid.*
57. Nawaz Khan, p. 448
58. Mustaid Khan, p. 81, 2
59. Khafi Khan, p. 219
60. Rashid, p. 440
61. Sarkar, p. 113
62. Rashid, p. 440
63. Khafi Khan, p. 219
64. *Ibid.*, pp. 219-220
65. Dost Muhammad Khan Kamil, *On a Foreign Approach to Khushal*, Peshawar, Maktabah-l-Shaheen, 1968, p. 69
66. Sarkar, pp. 113-114
67. Khafi Khan, p. 220
68. *Ibid.*, pp. 220-221
69. *Ibid.*
70. *Ibid.*, p. 221
71. *Ibid.*
72. Seyal, p. 45
73. Khafi Khan, p. 221
74. *Ibid.*
75. *Ibid.*
76. *Ibid.*, p. 222
77. Seyal, p. 46
78. Mustaid Khan, p. 89
79. Rashid, p. 441
80. Caroe, p. 235
81. Mustaid Khan, p. 89

82. *Ibid.*
83. *Ibid*, p. 90
84. *Ibid*, p. 89
85. Sarkar, p. 114
86. Rashid, p. 443
87. Kamil, *Khushal Khan Khattak*, p. 210
88. Mustaid Khan, p. 97
89. Khafi Khan, pp. 222-223
90. *Ibid.*, p. 223
91. *Ibid.*
92. Khafi Khan, p. 225
93. Kamil, *On a Foreign Approach to Khushal*, p. 74
94. Rashid, p. 444
95. Nawaz Khan, Vol. I, p. 197
96. Rashid, p.444
97. *Ibid.*