

## **PAKHTUNS: FROM ALIENATION TO NATIONAL INTEGRATION**

Muhammad Ayaz, Dr. Sadaf Farooq

Author 1: Muhammad Ayaz (PhD Scholar in History)

Educator Elementary and Secondary Education Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa,  
Pakistan

E.mail: [Muhammadayaziui@gmail.com](mailto:Muhammadayaziui@gmail.com)

Mobile No. 03003160948 - 03337241490

Institution: Department of History & Pakistan Studies,  
Faculty of Social Sciences, International Islamic University, Islamabad.

Author 2: Dr. Sadaf Farooq

Assistant Professor, Department of International Relations & Politics Faculty of Social  
Sciences, International Islamic University, Islamabad.

E.mail: [Sadaf.farooq@iiu.edu.pk](mailto:Sadaf.farooq@iiu.edu.pk)

## **Pakhtuns: From Alienation to National Integration**

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### **Abstract**

*Before the emergence of Pakistan, few Pakhtun leaders could be convinced of the Idea of Pakistan. However, they are now a significant part of the political system and are represented in the civil and military bureaucracy in a good number. Pakhtun nationalism had bounced initially due to the Pakhtunistan issue; later owing to the demand for maximum provincial autonomy; renaming of the province and opposition to the then proposed Kalabagh dam. As the history of Pakistan progressed, Pakhtuns gradually integrated to the state-system of Pakistan. Internal and external factors played a key role in the formulation of Pakhtun leaders' attitude regarding provincial politics in the KP. This study is analyzing problems in the process of Pakhtuns integration in the state of Pakistan. It also explores the effects of external factors on national integration.*

**Keywords:** Extremism, Integration, irredentist, Nationalism, Provincial Autonomy.

### **Introduction**

National integration is the determination of the people aimed at living together sharing traditions, ideals, culture, history, religion, language, customs etc. (Liddle, 1970). "National integration refers to a sense of territorial nationality which overshadows or eliminates subordinate parochial loyalties (Zahid 2015). Integration is a "system of cohesion, adaption to structures, abridging of elite-mass gap, the establishment of common norms and commitment to pattern of political behavior" (Gulshan, 2014). Thus, the process of integration in a particular society brings distinct cultural and social groups to common feelings of oneness.

The beginning of the twentieth century was a turning point in the history of the subcontinent. All over India, anti-Imperialist feelings had been strengthening. The North West Frontier of the British India, inhabited by the Pukhtuns, was not oblivious to the changing environment. New leadership comprised of the lesser khans had started questioning the centralized nature of the bureaucratic system of colonial India serving the interests of the bigger khans. Pukhtun nationalist feelings gained strength when peasants, comprised of the small khans, resisted the heavy revenue imposed on them. The Pakhtun rulers of Afghanistan, Amir Abdul Rahman (1880-1901), Amir Habibullah (1901-1919) and Amir Amanullah (1919-1929) had initiated nation building which also encouraged Pakhtun nationalists in the North West Frontier of India. Pakhtuns were angry with the British when Amir Amanullah was dethroned by Habibullah Kalkani in 1929 as they believed that the British had conspired against the Amir of Afghanistan (Safi Ullah, 2017).

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Abdul Ghaffar Khan (Bacha Khan) started his anti- colonial, non-political nationalist movement in 1929, to address the social problems of the Pukhtun society. Bacha Khan affiliated his movement to the Indian National Congress in 1931. Due to this alliance, Congress was able to form Ministry in the NWFP (Now KP), as a result of 1937 elections. Due to the consistent support of Bacha Khan, the Congress again won majority in the province in the 1946 elections and formed its ministry.

Bacha Khan did not believe in the idea of Pakistan. Bacha Khan and his brother Abdul Jabbar Khan (Dr. Khan) were stunned when the Partition Plan was being finalized. They were left with nothing, except to come up with a new idea, to demand *Pakhtunistan* (Ayaz, 2012). This demand could not be accepted by the British due to its regional repercussions. A referendum was held in KP to ascertain the choice of the people. The people of the province voted for Pakistan. After the referendum, Khan Brothers declared that their demand of *Pakhtunistan* would be for an autonomous province within Pakistan and committed allegiance to Pakistan. Prior to independence of Pakistan, although, some Pakhtuns leaders were reluctant to join Pakistan but gradually they integrated in the state system of Pakistan. Since the partition in 1947, the Pakhtun nationalist politics has come a long way. Their politics at times revolved around the rejection of the proposed Kalabagh Dam, giving their own name to the province of NWFP and demanded provincial autonomy as was promised in the 1973 constitution of Pakistan. All these demands have been accepted.

### **Pakistan: Problems in attaining National Integration**

Pakistan is a multi-ethnic modern state. It had been facing problems in building a common sense of nationhood right from its existence. The ethnic nationalities e.g. Bengali, Punjabi, Sindhi, Pakhtun and Baloch were identifying themselves as different nationalities. That is why none of them had been objectively devoted to the national cause soon after independence. Those serious ethno-lingual feelings caused disunity in the country and resulted in secession of East Pakistan in 1971.

Since the beginning of the history of Pakistan, establishment in the country has been fostering Pakistani nationalism. The selection of national language happened to be the first obstacle in the way of national integration. When Urdu was declared the national language; an issue arose because East Pakistan rejected and demanded Bengali to be the national language of Pakistan as East Pakistan had more population than the West Pakistan. This issue turned serious and East Pakistan reacted strongly. The creation of Bangladesh had its roots in the language controversy (Ayaz, 2012). Urdu was widely understood in West Pakistan; however, it was not owned by any of the provincial units in the country (Choudhry, 1969).

Another big hurdle was un-necessary delay in making of constitution for the country. This delay was mainly due to disagreement on representation in the national government. Almost after nine years, Pakistan had its first constitution in 1956. General Ayub Khan (1907-1974), imposed Martial Law and abrogated the constitution in 1958. Prior to that, One Unit System had merged all the West Pakistan provinces into one unit of West Pakistan in 1955 to keep parity at the Centre. This was a very unpopular scheme which alienated the smaller provinces of West Pakistan. The centralized nature of the

political and bureaucratic system created a sense of deprivation in the smaller provinces and affected national integration (Zahid, 2015).

In Pakistan the high elite class always mattered in national politics, responsible of slowing down the process of national integration in Pakistan. Dismissal of governments by undemocratic means, i.e. the dismissal of Dr. Khan's ministry (1945-1947) in KP and dismissal of Ayub Khuro's ministry in Sindh (1947-1948) were great mistakes of the then leadership. At the Centre, seven governments were uprooted in initial eight years. The state's control over resources had also given impetus to ethnic feelings. Civil and military bureaucracy, water and energy resources, and economic opportunities etc. all are important fields in which the provinces had their ownership.

### **Problems in Pakhtuns early Integration in the State System**

In the post partition era, the stigma of *Pakhtunistan* had been attached to the Pukhtuns that created a sense of alienation. However, things changed gradually, and one could see that by 1960s Pukhtuns had been present in the politics and government system in Pakistan and took full advantage of the business opportunities available elsewhere in Pakistan.

### **Colonial Heirlooms**

Prior to the British occupation of KP, majority of the inhabitants of the province were having combined family property. On the contrary, the British awarded big land to loyal individual Khans. The colonial government had a considerable number of landlord elites, who were also awarded the titles of *Khan Bahadurs*, *Nawabs* and *Khan Sahib*, just to use them to control the local inhabitants (Shah, 1999). This created social division in the society giving birth to a sort of class struggle between the big Khans and the small Khans. Patronage of the elites by the British and the creation of a salaried class, e.g. Pakhtuns recruited in the British bureaucracy and army, further alienated the small land holding Pukhtun class. There was a sense of resentment against the British and the big Khans who served their masters (Khan, 2018).

The British imperialist power in India used the policy of divide and rule, to avoid facing any challenge. Pakhtuns were unhappy with the Durand Line border, dividing them into two countries. This issue always aroused public sentiments easily. The relations of Pakhtuns living on both sides of Durand Line had been going on. This encouraged the Pakhtunistan propaganda that impacted the progress of integration in Pakistan.

Pakistan has not been successful in coming out of the yoke of colonial legacy. The terms like "rural/urban, tribal/settled, traditional/modern" still had the colonial hues. Moreover, dividing people on racial and ethnic basis is a colonial heirloom. Consequently, it affected the process of Pakhtun integration in the state system of Pakistan.

Bacha Khan (1890-1988) was disturbed by the ever present Pakhtun feuds. He, therefore, launched his *Khudai Khidmatgar* (Servants of God) movement in 1929. The

strength of the movement came to the forefront when the British government used brutal force and killed 200 supporters of the movement during a demonstration at *Qissa Khwani bazaar*, Peshawar on April 23, 1930 (Banerjee, 2000). After this incident, the KKs felt the need to affiliate the movement with a stronger party and thus they affiliated with the Congress.

The nationalist history of India took a sharp turn when Muslim League demanded separation of Muslim territories from India in the Lahore Resolution (1940). The Congress rejected the Resolution and demanded Independence of India by launching Quit India Movement in 1942 (Marwat, 2016). This Movement had little effect in the KP (Shah, 1999), and it initially remained silent (Marwat, 2016). To popularize the movement in the tribal area, Bacha Khan mobilized *Khudai Khidmatgar* volunteers, also known as Red Shirts due to their red uniform (CID Diaries, 1942). The intensity in the movement was recorded in October 1942 when the courts were picketed for six days continuously. The government baton charged the crowd and fired shots. Bacha Khan was arrested on October 27, 1942. The Quit India Movement, however, had little impact on the North West Frontier as the people generally considered it a conflict between the Congress and the British (Shah, 1999).

The Cripps and Cabinet Missions were not enough to solve the communal issues in India. The British wanted to leave India by June 1948. Thus, to complete and supervise the process of dividing India into two states, Mountbatten (1900-1979), the last Viceroy of India arrived in Delhi on March 22, 1947 (Rasheed, 2004). He prepared the plan for the partition of India, took it to England, and came back to India with the approved partition plan on May 31, 1947 (Rasheed, 2004). The provision about the NWFP in the plan mentioned, "As regards N.W.F. Province a referendum will be made to the electors of the existing Legislative Assembly to choose between the existing and the new Constituent Assembly" (Rasheed, 2004).

Bacha Khan's political alliance with the Congress (August 1931 to September 1947) crippled when the Congress Central Command accepted the 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1947 Partition of India Plan, without taking into confidence its ally in the NWFP (Safi Ullah, 2017). Bacha Khan was very much dejected and considered it as a treachery by the Congress. Therefore, he demanded a referendum on the question of Pakistan and Pakhtunistan instead of India and Pakistan which the British rejected; consequently, he boycotted the referendum. This demand gave birth to a controversy which continued in the post partition years. The plebiscite held in July 1947 and overwhelmingly came in favor of Pakistan.

## Constitutional Issues

The first permanent constitution of Pakistan was promulgated in 1956 but the Martial Law regime abrogated it in 1958. To create parity, One Unit system was adopted in West Pakistan. The Pakhtuns disliked this system. Bacha Khan and Abdul Wali Khan (1917-2006) struggled hard to restore the provincial status of the province. One Unit was later abolished, and Yahya Khan restored the four provinces of West Pakistan in 1969.

This system had suppressed the political identity of the smaller provinces of West Pakistan Zahid, et al., 2015) that had negative impacts on integration.

### **Centralized Attitude of the Rulers and Provincial Autonomy**

Pakhtun nationalist leaders had been demanding a loose federation with stronger provinces having maximum provincial autonomy. On the other hand, the central government always remained reluctant to devolve powers to provinces. The Centre mistrusted the Pakhtuns due to the Pakhtunistan issue. This mindset at the Centre delayed the devolution of constitutional powers to the provinces. The constitutional promise of granting full provincial autonomy in ten years was not fulfilled. Establishment had the fear that Provincial autonomy could cause feelings of disintegration in Pakistan (Rizvi, 2014). The state failure to share powers and authority with local ethnicities had provided a strong argument to Pakhtuns to win the favor of the masses. This mindset at the Centre had marginalized the Pakhtuns and caused obstructions in the way of national integration.

### **Role of the State and Media**

In a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual state, the central government should behave carefully to deal with ethnic issues. But the state, particularly in the case of Pakhtuns, did not pay any attention to the socio-economic issues of their society. The media did not play a positive role which augmented the gaps between the state and Pakhtuns. The media showed Pakhtuns as terrorists. It had furthered misunderstandings vis-a-vis Pakhtuns. The state should execute the issues more sensibly to bring harmony and demonstrate equity rather than to suppress ethnic diversities and ethnic cultures (Choudhry, 1969).

### **Equal Distribution of Resources**

Just distribution of state resources is the main determinant of peace and national coordination. Economic deprivations and inequality cause resistance in a political society. This is true about Pakhtuns in terms of hydropower resources. They used to struggle hard to retrieve the royalties of hydroelectric power. Until the recent past, there was over eighteen hours power blackout daily in K.P. The province contributes more than 5,000 Megawatts of cheap hydroelectricity to the national grid (Mahmood, 2018). Moreover, there was reasonably low presence of large-scale industries and system of irrigation. Punjab had dominated the civil and military bureaucracy. Pakhtuns considered that Punjab used the establishment against their economic interests. Such resentment could be seen when Pakhtuns opposed the proposal of Kalabagh Dam, because they thought that the dam would inundate their land and only irrigate Punjab.

### **Religious Extremism and War against Terrorism**

The effects of militant activities of *Tehreek-i-Nifaz-i-Shariat-i-Muhammadi* (TNSM), started in 1990, are still present in Pakhtun society. This militant group had advocated for the implementation of *sharia* law in the Malakand Division of KP. The incident of 9/11 had brought a fresh wave of extremism and militancy in FATA and other Pakhtun areas. Since 2007 the Pakhtun areas have seen many military operations carried out by military against the Taliban. The terrorist activities and religious militancy

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bumped this area. The military operations and the fear of militants had internally displaced thousands of indigenous Pakhtuns. The militants (TTP) had brought havoc to the Pukhtun society as Hundreds of Schools, colleges were destroyed, *Madrasahs* were attacked and murdered many Pukhtun leaders. In all this difficult situation Pukhtuns remained strongly associated to Pakistan and proved their loyalty to Pakistan. “To question their patriotism and loyalty will be a big misjudgment and injustice” (Zahid, et al., 2015).

### **Pakhtuns National Integration**

After the creation of Pakistan, a meeting of *Zalmy* (young) Pakhtun and *Khudai Khidmatgar* was held at Sardaryab (a town on the bank of River Kabul). In this meeting they declared Pakistan as their own country and pledged to devote themselves to work for the safety and the best interests of Pakistan (Nawabi, 2006). Bacha Khan also committed allegiance to Pakistan by taking oath as member of the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan on February 23, 1948 (Khan, 2009). In the first session of the First Constituent Assembly of Pakistan in Karachi, he addressed the Assembly:

I confess that I was against the division of India. It was my selfless opinion that India should not be divided. But now, when it has occurred, our differences and disputes have also vanished. Now all the energies of my friends and mine only be devoted to the service of our country.... (Safiullah, 2018).

In the history of Pakistan, separatist and ethno-nationalist sentiments happened twice: (i) prior to the creation of Pakistan and in immediate post-independence era and (ii) such sentiments of separatism were witnessed in 1973. The bellicose intervention of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (1928-1979) to disband NAP's government in Baluchistan and the subsequent resignation of KP ministry in protest (Abdul Wali, 1998), accentuated Pakhtun nationalist sentiments. During this time, some Pukhtun leaders remained in self-exile in Afghanistan. Afghanistan had strategic interests in the Pakhtunistan issue that is why the separatists were helped and sheltered. Afghan leader, Sardar Dawood (1909-1978), was among the staunch supporters of the Pakhtunistan demand. A revolutionary poet Ajmal Khattak who lived in self-imposed exile in Afghanistan for years before coming back to Pakistan. His pro-Pakhtunistan speeches in Kabul were conspicuous, resulting in bad relations between the two countries (Ahmad, 1998). Afghanistan created problems for Pakistan at a time when Pakhtuns (NAP) had been in the process of integration and actively participated in the electoral politics in the elections of 1970. Due to this parliamentary electoral process, the NAP had set up ministries in KP and Balochistan. In these circumstances, the centralized policy of the PM Bhutto's government and its undemocratic approach to dismiss an elected provincial ministry gave birth to separatist feelings among the nationalists. In the post 1973 period, the armed intervention in Balochistan on the instruction of the central government (Shahida and Ayub, 2015), contributed a lot to separatist feelings. However, it is notable that after failure of these two waves of alienation, the Pakhtuns felt strong feelings towards integration (Shahida and Ayub, 2015). The smaller provinces of West Pakistan and East



Pakistan had common feelings against the Punjab dominated central government and Urdu speaking Mohajirs (Shahida and Ayub, 2015).

It is notable that in 1955, the appointment of Dr. Khan Sahib as the Chief Minister of the West Pakistan according to One Unit Scheme and somehow lenient policy of the central government regarding the smaller federating units had attenuated the separatist feelings. Moreover, the gradual increase in presence of the Pakhtuns in civil bureaucracy and military had soothing effects on separatists. Contrary to Balochistan and Sindh, the resources of KP are in the firm control of local officers and its elites. This factor strengthened the sense of integration among Pakhtuns.

The Pakhtuns are participating in the electoral politics of Pakistan. In the elections of 1970, the NAP got 3 National Assembly seats with 18.4% votes were polled in their favor. In contrast, the centralist parties e.g. Pakistan Muslim League (PML) received 22.6% votes and the JUI 25.4% votes. The PML, the PPP, the Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) and the JUI secured 69.4% of the total polled votes (Chaudhry, 1974). In the elections of 1993 and 1997, Awami National Party (ANP) performed poorly and the centralist parties obtained the highest figure of votes. The ANP had won majority in KP in the elections of 2008 and formed its ministry which remained in office till 2013.

The most important event in Pakhtuns integration to the state system is the Pakhtun nationalist leader's positive attitude to frame and pass the Constitution of 1973, the present constitution of Pakistan. Wali Khan, who was the then opposition leader, admitted that he and his colleagues had performed a great role in the promulgation of the 1973 constitution. "If we had not extended our cooperation on the matter of provincial autonomy, the agreed constitution might not have come into existence. As a President of the NAP, I overlooked the constitutional principles of the NAP regarding provincial autonomy" (Utman Khel, 2015). Khan, even said in his address pointing at Bhutto, "I cast vote of confidence in favor of you..." (Utman Khel, 2015). This was the expertise, adherence and ardor of Wali Khan that he brought all the 28 opposition members on one page on the draft Constitution of 1973 and its passage from the legislature. He compromised the issue of provincial autonomy because he was aware that Pakistan might not be able to bear any political venture in a situation when the East Pakistan had dismembered in 1971.

The Province of NWFP could not be renamed in the constitution at that time because the establishment could not accept the ethnic name for the province lest the dead issue of Pakhtunistan emerged again. In the later years, military dictator Zi-ul-Haq, however, was willing that if Bacha Khan came with some modified name of the province instead of Pakhtunistan (Safi Ullah, 2017), it would be acceptable to him. Consequently, Bacha Khan put forward the name "Pukhtunkhwa" to rename the province with, but Zia never fulfilled his promise.

The demand of renaming of the province was the top priority of the regional political parties particularly of the ANP. The ANP remained in alliance with the PPP, however, it failed to achieve its desired object (Safi, 2010). The ANP gave so much importance to the issue of renaming of the province that even they broke their alliance with Nawaz Sharif on this and the Kalabagh Dam issues (Yousafzai, 2006). The ANP at last, achieved its topmost objective in April 2010, when the Eighteenth Amendment to



the Constitution of 1973 was passed, which renamed the province as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Besides, the renaming issue, the passage of Eighteenth Amendment provided for more provincial autonomy, led to a strong wave of integration. Opposition to the Kalabagh Dam had also been a top priority of the ANP. When in 1998, the then Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif announced the construction of KBD, demonstrations and strikes started throughout the province (Yousafzai, 2006). Wali Khan, although sick and retired, participated in those demonstrations and strikes. He clarified his position to stop the construction of KBD and threatened the authority of its bad consequences (Nawabi, 2006). The dam issue aroused the chauvinist tendencies in Pakhtuns. Due to the strong opposition from the provinces of KP, Sindh and Balochistan, the proposal of the dam was finally buried during the PPP government (2008-2013).

After the incidents of 9/11, the religious militancy came to prominence in the province. Sensitive about religiosity and asceticism, Pakhtuns are known as the junkie of Shariat who had wanted complete implementation of its principles (Shahida and Ayub, 2015). Probably it was the reason of 'ethnicizing islam' that the MMA claimed majority in the Provincial Assembly of KP, obtained 29 out of 45 seats (Shahida and Ayub, 2015). In the elections of 2008, the ANP won ten general seats and three seats reserved for women (total 13) in the National Assembly (Report of General Elections 2008 Vol-II, 2008). In KP, the ANP attained majority by securing total forty-eight seats in the Provincial Assembly and formed its ministry with Amir Haider Hoti as Chief Minister (Report of General Elections 2008 Vol-II, 2008). However, a wave of terrorism affected regional politics in KP. During the KP's Assembly tenure from 2008-2013, twelve lawmakers were killed in which three were targeted in terrorist activities.

The ANP led provincial Assembly did a good number of legislations during its tenure and met for 439 times and passed 102 bills. Apart from this, 320 resolutions were passed (Tunio et al., 2013). It had introduced several reforms in educational sector and police department of KP. Pashto was made a compulsory subject up to middle classes in public sector schools. However, severe waves of extremism and terrorism hit the province during the provincial government of the ANP.

The US-led Afghan war pushed several Taliban into the neighboring countries. Some of them took refuge in the border areas of Pakistan. It severely affected tribal areas and the KP province because of geographical closeness to Afghanistan (Ahmad, 2010). Pakistan had started military operations in Waziristan to clear the area from Taliban and the suspected *Al-Qaida* members. In September 2005, over Eighty thousand troops were fighting against Taliban in Waziristan. This was probably the beginning of the third phase of Pakhtuns (mostly tribal) alienation since independence of Pakistan. The ANP government had strongly opposed militancy and fought against the hidden enemy.

The military operations in FATA had internally displaced millions of Pakhtuns. The end of 2009 witnessed 428, 000 internally displaced people (IDPs) from South Waziristan only. This large-scale internal mass shifting had provoked emotionalism in Pakhtuns due to some unbearable circumstances, e.g. violation of women *pardah* (veil, gobo), economic, social and educational problems and burden on available resources. The

return of these IDPs was a great headache for the authority. The IDPs were also reluctant to go back due to insecurity and economic issues (Ahmad, 2010).

The MMA and other regional political parties had condemned the alliance of USA and Pakistan against terrorism on the ground that it was a foreign war which the internal leaders had brought into Pakistan. The Pakhtuns suspected over the military operations in Pakhtun belt on the name of war against terror. Such kind of feelings gave impetus to nationalistic conception. Pashtun Thaffuz Movement (PTM) was the ultimate offshoot of these feelings. The PTM rose to prominence in January 2018 when mostly the youth from then FATA reacted to the brutal killing of Naqeebullah Mehsud (Pakhtun shopkeeper in Karachi) by the police. The movement did not get support from the settled district but was successful in bringing to the forefront the problems faced by the people of FATA.

### **Pakhtuns in Pakistan Army**

According to an estimate, the British Indian army recruitment was 77% from the present Punjab and 19.5% from NWFP (Cohen, 1984). Even, in the post-partition period the praxis continued and most of the recruitment in the Army came from Punjabis and Pakhtuns. This gave a share to Pakhtuns in power structure in Pakistan. According to Hassan Askari Rizvi, Pakhtuns presence in Pakistan Army is between 15-22% among officers and between 20-25% among the regular rank-and-file. This proportion is second after Punjabis who have a share of 65% in officers and 70% among other ranks in Army. Among 11 Army Chiefs four were Pakhtuns. In such situations, Pakhtuns should have been very keen towards integration rather than separation. By economic viewpoint, Pakhtuns concentration moved southwards rather than northwards due to the economic attraction. Thus, Pakhtun investors in different fields were interested in southward for better opportunities (Khan, 2009).

### **What Nationalism and Regional Politics Means to Pakhtuns**

The demand of Independent Pakhtunistan was an objectionable act on the part of Pakhtun nationalists. However, Dr. Khan assured Lieutenant Lokhart that the KKs would not create disturbance in the shape of Pakhtunistan state declaration. He affirmed, that they would not attend the celebrations of August (Lieutenant Lokhart (NWFP) to Mountbatten, *Telegram*, 1947) in order to avoid any possible violation of law by either side. Moreover, they felt being cheated by the Congress and they thought that they would have no place in Pakistan too. Moreover, Afghanistan was also supporting Pakhtunistan issue (Khan, 2009). However, soon after the independence, in the first session of the first Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, Bacha Khan took the oath of allegiance to Pakistan. Thus, his demand of Pakhtunistan converted to greater provincial autonomy within the state.

Bacha Khan, Wali Khan and their supporters opposed One Unit Scheme. It was a political difference and their right to protect provincial status, therefore; it could not be linked to disintegration. Pukhtuns loyalty can be judged from their role in the 1973 constitution (Utman Khel, 2010). Renaming of the province and opposing the proposal of KBD were the core demands of the ANP. Renaming was a legal demand and there was

The Khudai Khidmatgar movement was basically the beginning to awaken the Pakhtuns to get their rights which were denied to them during the colonial rule. They had realized that the British only considered Pukhtuns land vital for the defense of India against any adventure from the North. The British had delayed constitutional reforms in the province, leaving them with no socio-economic development. Similar treatment was meted out to Pukhtuns in the post partition India. They had questionable loyalty to Pakistan owing to the Pakhtunistan and the role of Afghanistan as the latter never accepted the Durand Line. This feeling against them alienated Pukhtuns from integration into the mainstream.

In the present-day Pakistan, the situation has changed. Pukhtuns are now one of the prominent segments of Pakistan Politics and utilize economic opportunities available in other provincial capitals. The Eighteenth Constitutional Amendment Act abolished the concurrent list of the 1973 Constitution, devolved all powers to the federating units and got the province renamed as Khyber-Pukhtunkhwa. Pukhtuns resilience during the prolonged war against extremist in the former FATA and settled districts also enhanced integration to Pakistan. Merger of FATA eliminates the administrative lacuna that had inhibited the socio-economic development of the Pakhtun territories on the border with Afghanistan, hence better for the national integration.

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