

Role of Mardan in Freedom Movement



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Abstract: *Mardan played an important role in the freedom movement. The area constituting district Mardan was an integral part of Peshawar district till 1937, but afterward Mardan was separated from Peshawar to constitute a separate new district, Mardan. The status of district Mardan was elevated to division level on July 1, 1988 and it became the 6th division of NWFP. The people of Mardan provided men and money for achieving Pakistan and successfully resisted the tidal wave of British imperialism. Political affiliation of Pukhtuns of Mardan to All India Muslim League was not wholly based on ideological commitments but also role of big land lords, khan was counted.*

Keywords: Mardan, Movement, All India Muslim League, Elections, Quaid-e-Azam

Introduction

Mardan was mostly known as Yusufzai plain which regarded as a part of Gandhara civilization the main tribe of Mardan was Yousafzai with other number of Pathan tribes Utman Khel, Muhammadzai, Gagiani, Daudzai, Afridis, Mohmand and Khattaks. It became a flower shed agriculture land after establishment Dargai hydro-electric power station. My research area the first Indian political organization which persuaded number of people here was red shirts. But due to hostile policies of the Congress towards the Muslims, the people of Mardan and Khudai Khidmatgar Leaders like Maulana Midrar Ullah and Maulana Shoaib started their political struggles from Muslim League platform.

On 1st January 1937 Tehsils of Mardan was separated from District Peshawar. Before it Mardan agriculture was mostly depended on rains. When these rained areas were irrigated from canals of river Swat, then Khans *Khawaneen* purchased more lands for agriculture.

On 23rd April 1937 Lord Lithgow visited NWFP and established Malakand Hydro-electric power station. After establishment of Malakand hydroelectric power station, Swat River became able to irrigate three lakh acres land of Mardan. Mardan became populous day by day due to availability of irrigated agricultural lands and electricity. Dargai power station and Mardan Sugar Mill enhanced this land opportunities.

ROLE OF DISTRICT MARDAN IN PAKISTAN MOVEMENT 1937-1947

Legislative Assembly 1937:

Initially in 1937 the only disciplined party which contest election was the Congress. Other candidates contest election on independent basis, having no party ticket and were considered British oriented by common people. Peshawar legislative assembly has only two Muslim seats, for which three Muslim candidates had to contest.

- Pir Bukhsh Khan
- Abdur Rab Nishtar
- Abdul Qayyum Khan

So, Pir Bakhsh Khan and Abdur Rab Nishtar succeeded. Sahibzada Abdul Qayum Khan contested the election from Mardan seat but didn't succeed, however he succeeded from Khanpur, Hazara.

So, Abdul Aziz of Zaidi became victorious from Mardan division in 1937 election after 12 years of continuous struggle, Sahibzada Abdul Qayum Khan and other prominent leaders successfully organized the constitutional reforms for this land which call. "Sarameen be Ayeen." In 1937 first time general election were taken place.

Gandhi visit to Mardan and a message of non-violence

During the Congress hostile ministry Nehru visited the frontier in January 1938. After his visit Gandhi's private secretary came to frontier on exploratory visit and submitted a clearance report to Gandhi for his visit which was ensured on the first day of May 1938. Gandhi visited Peshawar, Shabqadar, Utmanzai and then Mardan preaching his philosophy of non-violence, deploring Muslim killing in Allahabad and Lucknow at the hands of Hindus and expressing his anguish over death of Sikhs in Mardan.

The weekly Khyber Mail had been since early 1938 publishing items of political interest to the area. Jinnah's messages and appeals formed regular part of its reporting warning that Congress was out to enslave the Muslims;

Muslim league leaders would necessarily take weird clues from Nehru & Gandhi visits to frontier.

Emerging Power of Muslim League in Mardan for Muslim Plight:

Mardan a hub of red shirts, present an interesting story of league formation. In early 1938, a number of meetings were held in Mardan area, foremost amongst them was, one held at Dagai (Kalu Khan) under a local elder Qazi Amanullah. It was attended by around four hundred persons. Prominent men from the area and around were Saadullah Umarzai, Mir Alam Khan of Tangi, Sahibzada Fazle Rehman of Kotha, Abdul Shakur Bamkhel, Shah Pasand of Char Guli, Abdul Qadir Khairabad, Bahadur Khan Shahbaz Garhi, Risaldar Taj Muhammaq of Mardan, Fida Muhammad, Amiruddin, Bahram Khan, Faqir. Muhammad Turu, Mian Matiuddin Surkh Dheri, Aurangzeb Khan MLA, Mian Ziauddin, Faujdar Khan Yar Hussain, Habeeb Khan Dhobian, Maulana Abdul Ali Yaqubi, Abdul Wadud Sarhadi, Akbar Khadim of Charsada. The meeting was addressed by many speakers, all urging for a united front under the banner of Muslim League to forestall Hindu domination and Muslim discrimination in India.

Reports of the League meetings held at Manki, Turlandai, Shahbaz Garhi, Lahore (Swabi), Rustam, Gujrat (Shahbaz Garhi) and Ismaila are available in the same record during the month of January 1938. Attendance in these meetings was quite sizable like Ismaila 700, Rustam 1200, Manki 550 and Shahbaz Garhi 1750.

Another police intelligence report for this period states that Muslim League activities had increased manifold in district Mardan. The numbers of meetings amongst area elders in the province for the Muslim causes were speeding up and in one Week period in February 1938, thirteen meetings were held in Mardan, Peshawar and Bannu districts.

Muslim League Provincial Level bodies in Mardan District

Muslim League assembled on March 10, 1938, at Islamia High School, Nowshera, and elected

executive bodies of party at all levels.

District wise Committee for Mardan

District	President	Secretary
Mardan	Barran Khan	Hadaitullah

On November 20, 1938, leading league men of frontier gathered at Islamia club building in Peshawar city, elected new office bearers for the party. They were Saadullah Khan as president, Main Ziauddin as vice president and Ismail Ghaznī as secretary for provincial Muslim league following members were nominated for Mardan council.

Bahram Khan,

Hamidullah Khan,

Fida Muhammad Khan.

Large Gatherings reported in Mardan against Congress Government Failures

Congress Ministry in Frontier faced internal and external problems. Worst communal riots couldn't manage by Dr. Khan Sahib. In March press reported Frontier Congress had discontinued teaching of some prescribed books, Islamic in nature published by Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islami Naubati Pehra system in municipality abolished by government brought unemployment to dozens of Muslims. Governments introduce Panchayat system to bring in their men.

The leaguers caught public attention and large numbers of gatherings were reported as government fallacies, under the auspices of Frontier League during this period. I reproduce a list of league meetings in Mardan Preserved in police intelligence section for month of May 1939.

S. No	Date	Place	No. of Attendance	Speakers
1	19-5-39	Sarai Saiful Mulk (Hathian)	3000	Mohd. Shuaib, Nawab Saqib, Khan Mohd, Sarwar Shah, Hamidullah Lundkhwar
2	19-5-39	Sarai Abdul Qayyum (Mardan)	500	Akbar Khadim, Mian Aminuddin, Mohd. Asghar, Nawab Saqib Maulana Qamar
3	19-5-39	Shahbaz Garhi	600 100 Khans	Maulana Qamar Aurangzeb Khan

The meetings as would be gleaned were address mostly by local men, Peshawari leaders and by the member of delegation of Muslim leaders from province of India now administered by Congress.

League mission was assigned ma specific duty to apprise Muslims in majority areas. The police intelligence report indicates that year 1939 emerged new figures. In league list which create embarrassment for ratting party in frontier.

MARDAN NOTICED THROBBING WITH PRO-LEAGE ACTIVITIES:

By November 1937, Mardan was also noticed for pro-league activities. A local police diary mentions holding of a lawyer's forum on Nov 18, at the residence of a local *wakeel* Pir Muhammad Khan. The subject under consideration was how to response to the

growing influence of the Congress in the area. It mooted the idea of initiating the league branch in Mardan which was followed by two more meetings. Finally interested individuals gathered in the house of Pir Muhammad Khan (Hathian) on Dec 8, 1937. The meeting besides offering *fateha* for departed soul of Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum Khan and condemning British brutalities in Waziristan, decided to establish the league wing of Mardan & Behram Khan was elected as president, Fida Muhammad, Political secretary, Hussain Raza, propaganda secretary and Mir Akbar the treasurer of organization.

Diaries of Jinnah reveal that Jinnah had asked the Frontier League in August 1939 to prepare a volunteer corps of around 2000 men for incoming Lahore convention, but Frontier League faced shortage of funds, so resorted to a program of collecting donations the provincial

Muslim league reorganized and new offices bearers for Mardan were elected on 29th Oct 1939 in Peshawar.

For Mardan: Badshah Abdul Shakoor Hamidullah Khan Lundkhwar Faqir Muhammad Khan, Toru were elected.

LEAGUE SESSION AT LAHORE AND MARDAN REPORTS

Punjab organizing committee met in August 1939 and decided to hold the league session in Lahore in March 22-24, 1940, at Minto Park (now Iqbal Park).

Mardan reports spoke of 500 men leaving for Lahore conference Firdos Khan of Gadun, another report said, left for Lahore following by many more. An earlier report from Mardan speaks of 46 persons nominated to participate in Lahore Resolution. They were sultan Muhammad, Ehsan Illahi, Taj Muhammad, Mir Dad, Sadiqullah, Abdul Hameed, Sher Dil Bakht Jamal Yaqoob, Mian Mohad Shah, Syed Wahab of Ismaili, Abdul Shakur, Asim Khan, Roshan, Shad Mohd, Habib Khan, Sher Ali, Khwaja Mohd, Daud Khan, Ilyad Khan, Qaiser Mohd, Rehmat Khan, Ihsanullah, Sahib-e-Haq, Abdul Ali, Shah Syed, Mir Alam Khan, Saifur Rehman, Mohd Akbar, Sohbat Khan, Molana Farooq, Gazi Ismatullah Pir Muhammad Khan, Sher Zaman, Mohammad Ibrahim, Mian Mohammad Shah, Gul Mohammad, Rafiuddin, Khwaja Mohammad Nambardar, Taj Mohad, Sarfaraz Khan, Syed Ghulam, Mir Dad Khan, Mahmood Khan, Yar Muhammad, Muhammad Qamar and Hayat Khan.

Jinnah reached Lahore by train on morning of March 21 from Delhi. Jinnah speech on March 22 declared that Muslims would not accept any constitution which rendered them minority in India. On 23rd March came out with a final draft called Lahore resolution urged upon a Muslim independent state. (Akbar, 14 -08-2018)

Lahore's was great event and central league decided for urge upon its regional branches to acquaint the Muslim public with contents and message of resolution. In Mardan the meeting at Ismaila was presided over by Syed Muhammad Shah, *tappa Baizi* (Lundkhwar) and passed on to

headquarter by Hamidullah. The meeting was presided by Bharam Khan.

THE ENTERANCE OF KHUDAI KHIDMATGAR LEADERS IN FRONTIER LEAGUE

Before principal and central assemblies' election Khan Ghulam Muhammad Khan Lundkhwar, Muhammad Ali Hoti from Mardan entered the folds of Muslim league they held socio-political status in the province. Their entry infused new determination in party line.

Samin Jan and Ghulam Muhammad Khan tried their level best to take out Khudai-Khitmatgars from Congress influence, so they opposed Congress policies because they know Congress tentacles.

Maulana Shaukat Ali visited Mardan in 1937. In his visit he invited Samin Jan, to Muslim League. After reading the Pakistan resolution, he wrote a letter to Jinnah from Mardan, in which, he mentioned Samin Jan struggle for Pakistan on Muslim league forum. In a reward of his struggles, he was offer to contest 1946 election of Muslim League ticket but he denied and strongly supported Muslim League candidates against Khudai Khitmatgar candidates.

Mardan Leaders enthusiasms at the second visit of Quaid-e-Azam to NWFP:

A report of October 1945, discuss Mardan's Leadership enthusiasm about his visit. Akbar Khan of Hathian had arranged five hundred sawars (riders) from Swat to guard the grand trunk road, from Attock to Peshawar on his travel to Frontier to celebrate his arrival. It was later on learnt that he would be coming in November and traveling by air.

Qaid Visit to Mardan:

On 24th November 1945, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah visited Mardan. (Shah, 2020) At that time Maulana Midrar Ullah was secretary information of Muslim league Mardan. Maulana in dual capacity of information secretary of Muslim League and president of Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Sarhad publicized the said visit. Jinnah delivered his speech in Urdu which

was reported in both Urdu and English. In Mardan a huge crowd greeted Jinnah near Mardan railway station with volley of guns and pistol fired in air. People rushed towards Jinnah's car which passed very slowly in the

ocean of people his procession passed through the well decorated bazaars where people showered petals of flowers till company Bagh. (Dani, 1969)

Election Results of Frontier Legislative Assembly (Jan 26- Feb 14, 1946)

District	No. of seat won by Congress	No of seats won by ML	Jamiatul Ulema	Akali
Mardan	4	1	-	-

(Ahmad M. S., July 2018)

In Mardan bye-election, Muslim league awarded ticket to Ishaq Khan while the Congress nominee was Mian Shakirullah. In the general election Dr. Khan sahib challenge that in case Ishaq Khan win the election, he will resign from the chief Minister ship. Ishaq Khan won the election and Indian papers highlighted Dr. Sahib challenge, but Dr. Khan Sahib kept quiet. The Mardan victory boost up the moral of Muslim League and after a short internal the restarted the civil disobedience movement. (Dr.fakhr-ul-Islam, 2014)

Role of Mardan Women in Independence Movement:

Quaid-i-Azam Said: "No nation can show any progress unless the women of that nation also go side by side their men."

Till 1944 no women political gathering had been held at Mardan. The agents of Congress were flocking the Muslims toward Gandhi-ism.

Zari Sarfaraz daughter of prominent chief of Mardan, Khan Sarfaraz, who spared his daughter for the organization of Muslim League, took the responsibility to awaken the Muslim women at Mardan in utter disregard for influence and money of Hindus and their agents. Zari Sarfaraz and Begum Kamaluddin embarked upon tours throughout NWFP. Women Muslim League National Guard was organized with financial help of Begum Zari Sarfaraz. (Khan, 1980)

In 1945, Begum Nasrat Haroon wife of Sir Abdullah Haroon sent message to organize women meeting in Mardan. She started

preparing meeting which was difficult to gather women for political cause and selected her own house for meeting: Zari Sarfaraz acted as translator in this meeting. It was the first ever women political gathering in the history of Mardan in which women took part to work collectively for the independence of their homeland. At the end of this meeting, the foundation of Mardan Women Muslim League was laid down.

During a visit of Jinnah to Peshawar in 1945, a delegation of women led by Zari Sarfaraz assured him that women had united under the banner of Muslim League. During 1945-46 women Muslim league Mardan elections were held, in which she was elected as president of women Muslim league Mardan. She served the party in this position till 1950 Zari Sarfaraz played a dynamic role to make the civil disobedience movement successful among the people of Mardan. (National Archives of Pakistan, 1993).

SOME NOTABLE LEADERS OF MARDAN

1. Mohammad Ali Khan of Hoti:

Mohammad Ali Khan was born on 15 October 1923 in Hoti Mardan. He passed his senior Cambridge from Dera Dun (India), intermediate from Allahabad Board. While graduate from Government College Lahore. In this college he joined the Muslim student's federation. After completion of studies came back to native town Mardan. His father was supporting the Muslim League. In 1944, NWFP Chief Minister invited him to join Muslim League, soon he was appointed secretary general of NWFP. Muslim

league and member of all India Muslim League Council. In 1946 election his nomination paper was rejected because he had not yet attained the required age. However, his ticket was given to Mr. Ishaq, who inflicted crushing defeat on Congress candidate. In 1947 civil disobedience movement he was arrested, apart from his untiring struggle, he donated thousands of rupees to Muslim League fund. (Dr.fakhr-ul-Islam, 2014)

2. Salar Mohammad Ayub Khan

Salar Mohammad Ayub Khan was born in 1906 at Mardan. His father Fateh Mohammad Khan belonged to Nawab family of Mardan who played a vital role in foundation and organization of Muslim League in Mardan. His uncle Khan Sarfaraz Khan was also among the founder of Muslim League in Mardan.

Salar Ayub Khan joined the Muslim League in 1944. He was elected as president of Mardan city. Later on, he was elevated to post of Frontier Muslim League National Guards. He was the moving spirit behind the enthusiastic welcome of Quaid-e-Azam during his visit of Mardan in November 1945. He spent huge amount from his own pocket on hiring vehicles for transportation of the leaguers to Mardan. (Dr.fakhr-ul-Islam, 2014)

3. Ghulam Muhammad Khan Lundkhwar

Khan Ghulam Muhammad Khan was born in rich landowner family of Lundkhwar Mardan in 1908. His father Khan Khadi died in his early childhood because of which he could not continue his education. Khudai Khidmatgar Tehreek attracted the spirited young Ghulam Muhammad to join it and he played a leading role in it. He was arrested in 1930, and was sentenced to rigorous three year imprisonment due to active participation in civil disobedience launched by Congress. He was so popular in locality that thousands of people gathered and demonstrated against his arrest by government.

In 1930, the Government had to shoot the demonstrators at Takkar Village Mardan when people attacked on policemen. In response Ghulam Muhammad Khan was badly scourged in Haripur jail but could not bring him down on

his knees. After release from jail, he became president of provincial committee of Congress. Due to his revolutionary ideas he favored Subhash Ghandara Bose against Maulana Azad for president ship of All India Congress. Due to voting for Subhash, Ghulam Muhammad Khan was expelled from Congress in 1940. So, he joined Muslim League in 1940. He played active role in referendum and civil disobedience against Congress.

Khan Ghulam Muhammad Khan was General Secretary and information secretary of Sarhad Muslim League and also in formation secretary of All Pakistan Muslim League (Qayum group). He was president of Anjuman-e-Kashtkaran and Zamindaran. He died at the age of 68 years due to liver cancer at Albert Victor Hospital, Lahore on 12th April 1972. (Farkhanda, 2010-2012)

CONCLUSION

Mardan is a very historical region of Pakistan; because numerous historians and invaders visited this region through the famous Khyber Pass. The topic “Role of Mardan in the Freedom Movement” is a vast and important subject as could hardly be encompassed within a few pages of an essay. But here an attempt has been made to discover its political role in Pakistan Movement.

In addition to those already mentioned, there are many more who deserved to be discussed in for their role in freedom movement. Mardan has rich cultural and historical heritage. The main centers of old civilizations are the relics of Shahbazgarhi, Jamalgarhi, Sawaldher, Takht-i-Bhai. Sehri-Bahlol. Yusufzai is the predominant tribe of Mardan. However, in the recent decades Mohmand. Utman Khel and other tribes have settled here. In movements like Tehreek-e-Khilafat, Khudai Khitmatgars, Non-Cooperation and civil disobedience, Pakistan resolution, Jinnah visit, and other lineal activities the people of Mardan have made valuable contributions. Some personalities of Maulana Muhammad Shuaib, Maulana Maulvi Muslihudin, Bakht Jamal Khan, Ghulam Muhammad Khan, Salar Muhammad Ayub, Fazle Haq, Akbar Khan Hoti, Nawab Sadat Ullah Khan Toru, Begum Zari Sarfaraz and Mary more sacrificed in the

struggle for independence. The Pakistan study center has carried out admirable research in this regard, however, more work is required to further highlight the history of the region.

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