

History of Swat till to the Rise of Taliban and the Role of FM Radio

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Abstract

The present study has been analyzed the history of Swat from the ancient Buddhist till to the rise of Taliban. The study conducted to find out historical background, the governmental and military relation and the factors of effects of Taliban regime in the area.

A qualitative method was used for the collection of the data, for which primary resources were review and justified the objectives of the study.

The study reveals that the history of Swat is full of controversial ruling system while the rulers didn't bend to the foreign aggression. It is also disclose that government and military relation was full of confidence and there were no confusion in any decision taken by the rulers. The study proved that Taliban spread fear and fright among the public and challenge the writ of the government with support of illiterate people particularly by women in the area. It is also confirmed that the FM Radio know as Mualana Radio played a vital role in the molding opinion of the illiterate people toward the support of Taliban in Swat.

Key words: Clergies, Waali's, Rah-i-Rast, Taliban, Maulana Radio, TNSM

Introduction

The Swat region is a gorgeous and peaceful valley in the round of vegetative sky-high mountains, with everlasting snow on their snooty peaks and everlasting source of attraction for the tourists. Their beauties draw the concentration of visitors from all over the world to enjoy the tranquil and peaceful panoramas, and the congenial behaviors of its residents. Any tourist comes to Pakistan would never return without visiting to Swat.

Objective of the study

- To evaluate the history of Swat.
- To analyze the ruling practices in the region of Swat.
- To measure the effects of the current issue of Talibanization in Swat.
- To examine role of Mualana radio in the causes of conflict.
- To determine the role of women in the support of the Taliban.
- To search out the role of illiterate population in the rise of Talibanization in Swat region.
- To find out the reaction of the government of Pakistan.

Research Design

To justified the objectives of the study the researcher used qualitative method and review all the possible related documents about the history and current conflict of Talbanization in Swat region.

According to the Census of 1998 the population of Swat is 1,257,602. The main language of the area is Pakhto also called Pashto. The people of Swat are mainly Pakhtuns, Yusufzi, Akhundkhel, Miangan or Sadatgan (Syed), Nooristani, Awans, Kohistan and Gujar. Northern Swat, Kalam region is known as Kohistan.

Geographical Location of Swat

Mugus, Mardan Benjamin & D. Hapkin (2012), said that the charming Swat valley is located in the north of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, old name North-West Frontier Provence (NWFP), 37° North Latitude and 71° and 32° East Longitude, and in the centre of haughty crests of mountains. Its area is about 4,000 sq miles while its height from the sea level is 2,500 ft to 7500 respectively.

District Dir is located in the west; Chitral and Gilgit are in the north and Mardan in the south, while Indus splits it from Hazara in the east.

I. Physical Features

Swat can be divided into two physical regions

a. Mountains Series

Swat is called as the Switzerland of Asia due to high mountains and green plain areas. The mountains series can be divided into two ranges; eastern and western ranges

The eastern range starts from the eastern range Kohistan-e-Swat, which separates the Kohistan-e-Swat from Abasin Kohistan by Mankial. This mountainous series serves as a barrier among Gigilt, Chitral and Swat. The Mankhial ranges then join Shangla range in the southern

area till to Dwasaray range. Dwasaray range one side the Buner from Puran, while the other side Swat from the Puran. The Elum Hills are the biggest wall between the proper Swat and Buner and also the Elum mountains the Malakand hills.

The western hills range starts from the Gabral and join the mountains of Kundal (Utrro). Daral ranges meet there to Kundal hills on the border with Dir District comprising Lalko, Manrai and Chaprai range according to the locality. At the last they join Adenzai and Shamozaï.

b. Plain area

Abdul Qayum Balala (1999) states in his book "The Charming Swat" that actually the Swat area is, mostly comprises of hilly areas, but local people call plain surface. He divided the area into two parts.

II. The valley of Swat

The valley of Swat emerges from the Malakand hills, but the administrative boundaries are settled from Landakay to Gabral (Gulabad) area, the length of which is 91 miles from each other. Two narrow built of plain area run along the banks of Swat River from Landakay to Madyan, while the widest plain portion of the valley is between Barikot and Khwazakhela.

III. The Buner dale

The area of Buner district also consists of both hilly and plain areas where the local people are divided into two parts Upper Buner and Lower Buner (Chmala). Only one river named Barandu, which has a little water- flow in a year, while the other source of water is Khwars (seasonal streams) and rain water. There are three big Khwars, namely, Bar Shamnal, Gulbandai and pander.

Some of the plains can be found in the Upper Buner area, such as Jowar, Anghapur and Swarai to Budal, while in Lower Buner Chinglai, Khadukhel, Kawga and Sora are the plain areas.

History of Swat

The history of Swat can be divided into four steps;

I. Ancient Era

Abdul Qayum Balala (1999) says the ancient history of Swat started from the aggression of the Alexander The Great in 326 BC. Alexander entered Swat via Kunar after defeating Persia. At the time Buddhism was flourished in the area. He defeated the Buddhist rulers and captured the Swat valley. He preceded his plan and reached to Bandai in Nekhbekhel. He crossed the river Swat and camped near Manglawar.

Salukis the great general of Alexander, gave Swat to Chandragupta back in 346 BC. King Kanishka a ruler of Peshawar shifted to Swat as well as Raja Ram Bhatti to worship his divinities with full satisfaction in the area. Raja Gira was the last Buddhist king of Swat, who was defeated by Mahmood Ghaznavi.

Sultan-e-Rome, (2008),Swat was a mixture of Buddhist and Greek culture of Hinayana Buddhism and of the Mahayana school of thought in second century BC. Around 403 AD the Chinese pilgrims Fa-Hsien visited the Swat valley.

Sultan-e-Rome, (2009), identified the name of the Buddhist culture as Vajrayana instead of Hinayana in Swat, where 18,000 priests in 1400 Buddhist Sangharamas (monasteries).

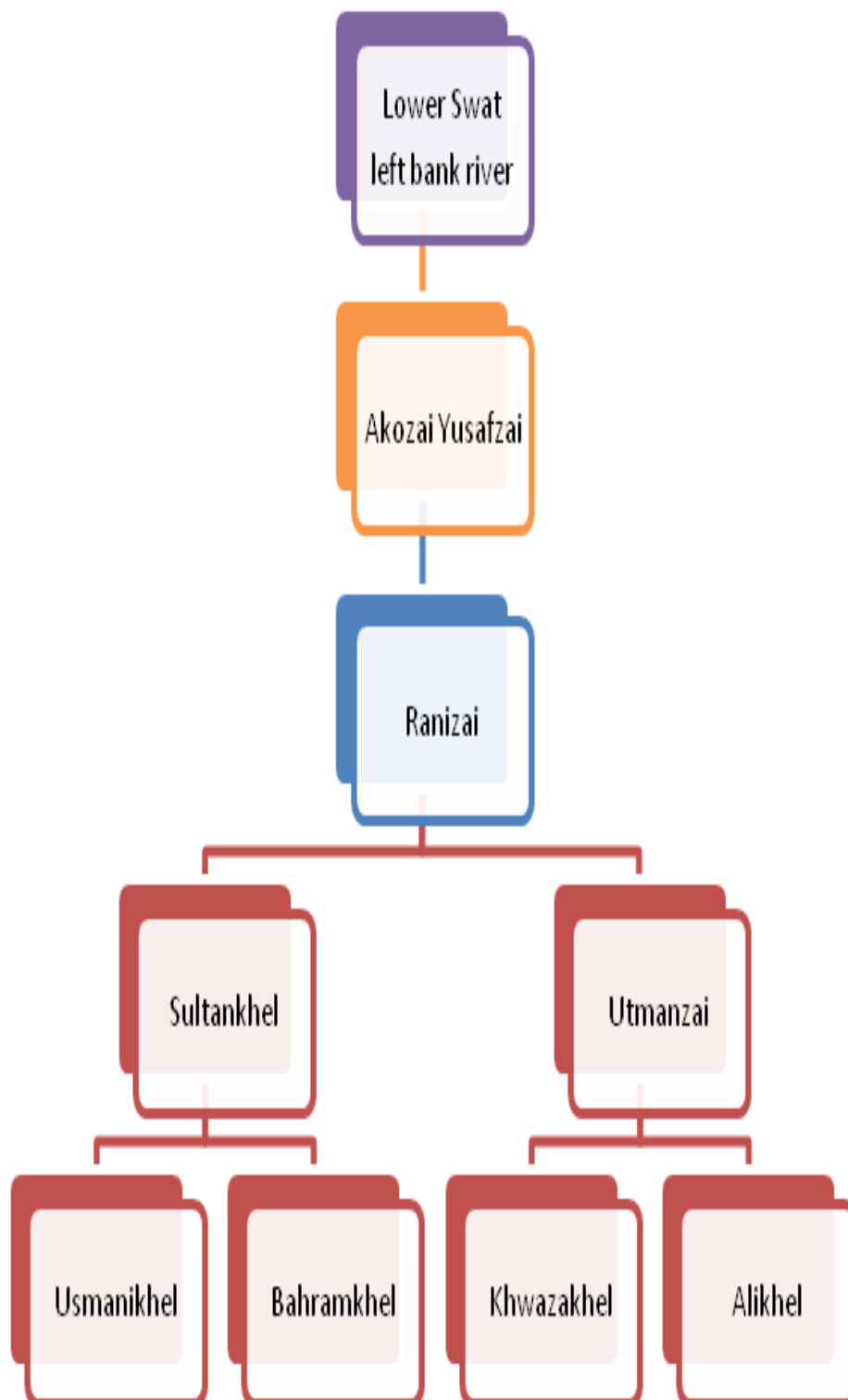
In eleventh century, Khwaja Ayaz moved on the Right Bank of Swat River and occupied the areas of Adenzai, Shamozaï, Nekpikhel. While Mahmood Ghaznavi stepped forwarded on the

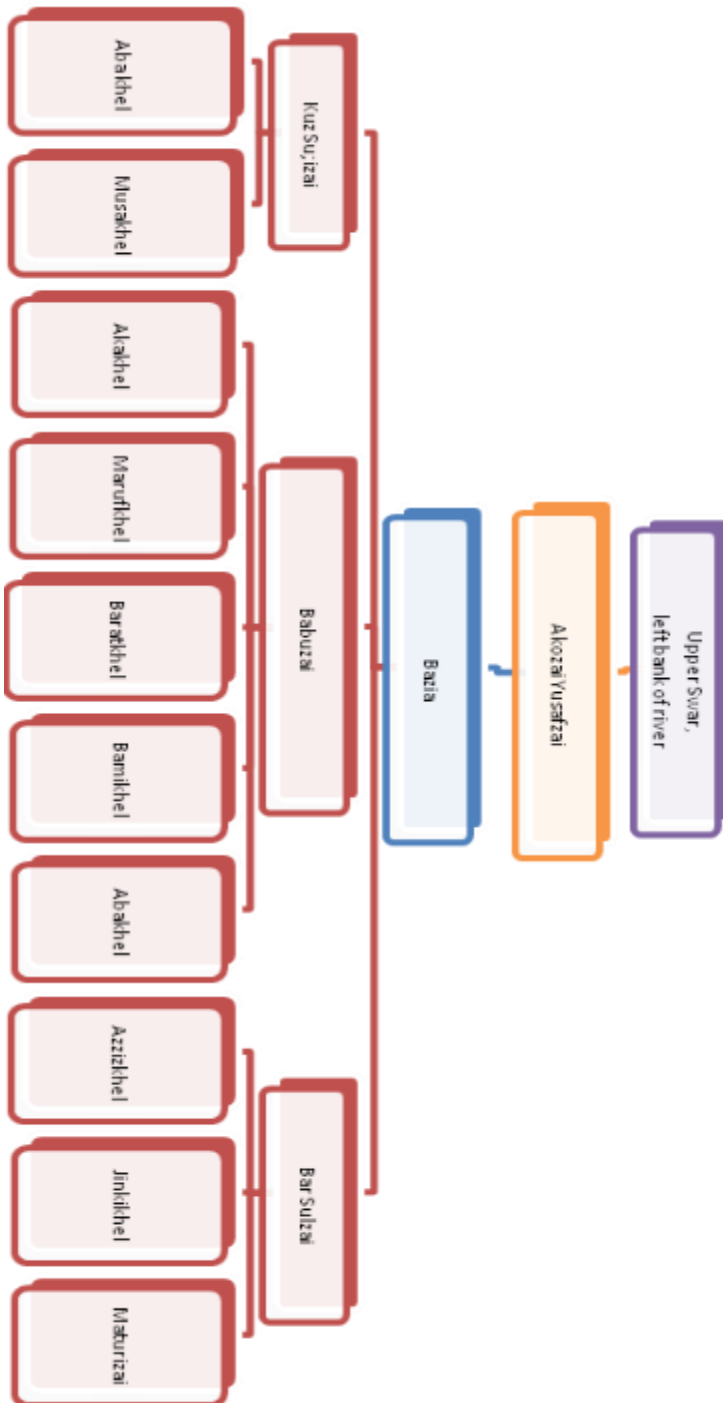
Left Bank of the river and reached Hudigram, where was the fort of Raja Gira, strongly constructed on a peak. Mahmood commanded to a skilful general Peer Khushal to conquer the fort. Invasion on the fort was much more risky, but the order of the commander was also complied.

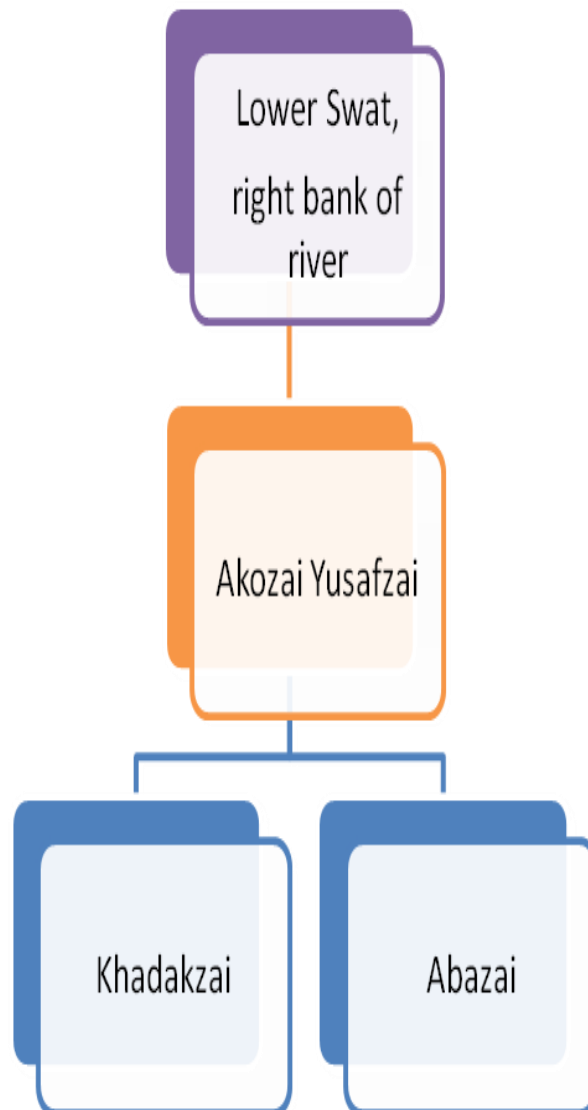
The creative-minded general overwhelmed the fort for three days and cut off the underground connection of water link. On the fourth day, he attacked the fort. The attack was a stern one and many soldiers were martyred as well as Peer Khushal himself, but the fort was captured. After that Mahmood went on and occupied the whole Swat.

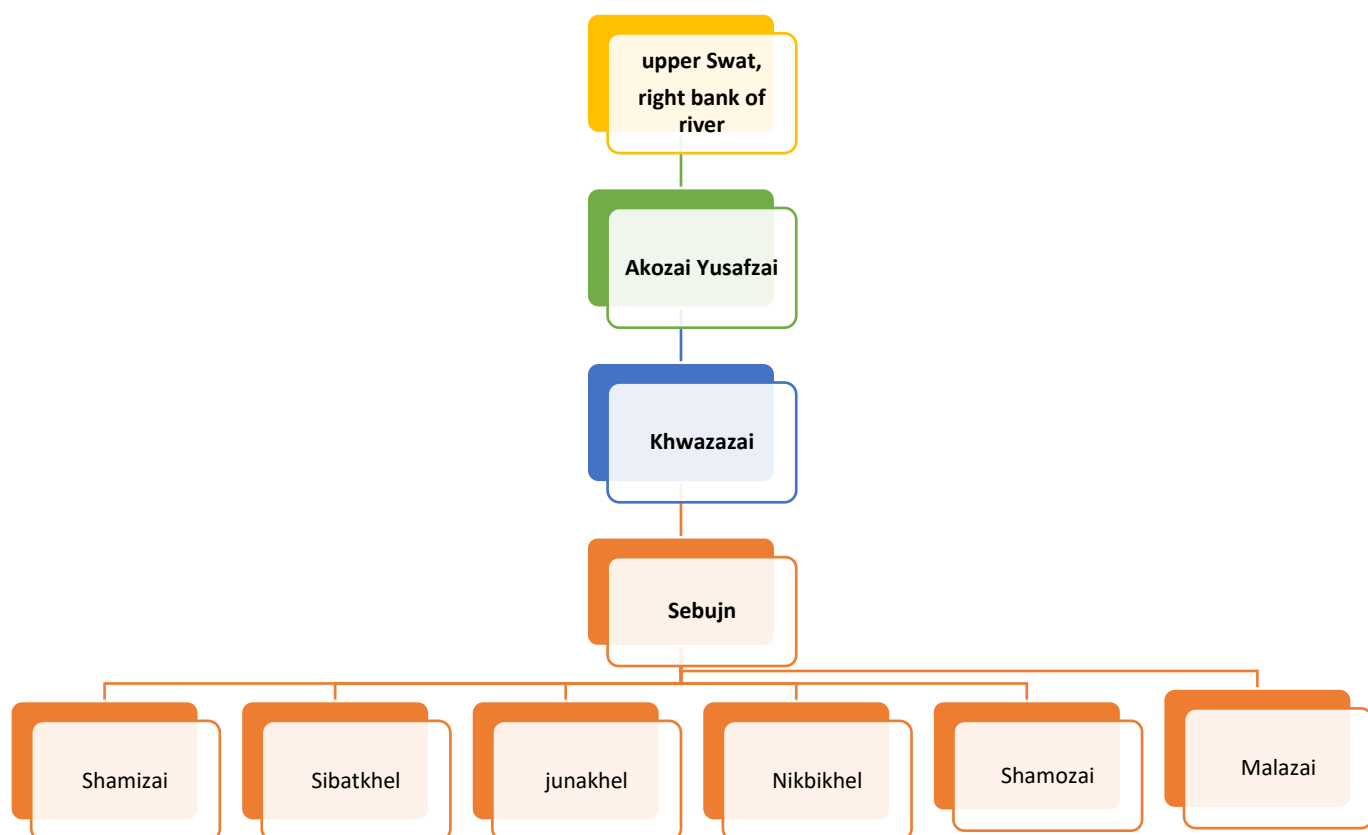
Swati and Dalazak tribes were settled in the area after the defeat of Raja Gira. Both the tribes were Afghan living happily till the invasion of Yousafzai tribe.

Captain A. H McMahan & Lieutenant A. D .G. Ramsay, (1981), identified the ruler after Raja Gira government on the Swat as Akozia Yusazai. They also presented their genealogical report and the area of the Yousafzai tribe and clans in the State of Swat as following;









II. The Clergies Era

Sultan-e-Rome, (2008), after the occupation by the Yousazai tribe, the religious scholars (locally termed as Babas or Saints of era) such as Akhund Darwiza his son, Main Karimdad, his grandson, Mian Noor Wieldad, came and ruled in Swat. In the 19th century, Akhund Abdul Ghafur alias Saidu Baba ruled in the area with great zeal and passion by preaching Islamic teachings. Subsequently, the descendent of Sayyed Ali Tarmizi alias Peer Baba, Sayyed Akbar Shah become the ruler of Swat from 1850 to 1857.

In the early 20th century Saadullah Khan a.k.a. Sartor Faqir gained the administrative powers of the area. He was against the British government in Swat as well as the Sub-Continent. Preceding the influence of the Saints (Babas) in the region Sandakai Baba emerged as eminent figure and played vital role in economical, administrative and political stability of Swat state. He organized a force against the enemy named “Sheikhan” to secure the state from the foreign aggression. The other religious figure Abdul Jabbar Shah was appointed a ruler in 1915 by the local people, but Sandakay Mullah blamed as Qadyani (a person having belief in the prophet-hood of Mirza Ghulam Amad Qadyani), on him, therefore, he left Swat. He was the descendent of Sayyed Ali Termizi, alias, Peer Baba.

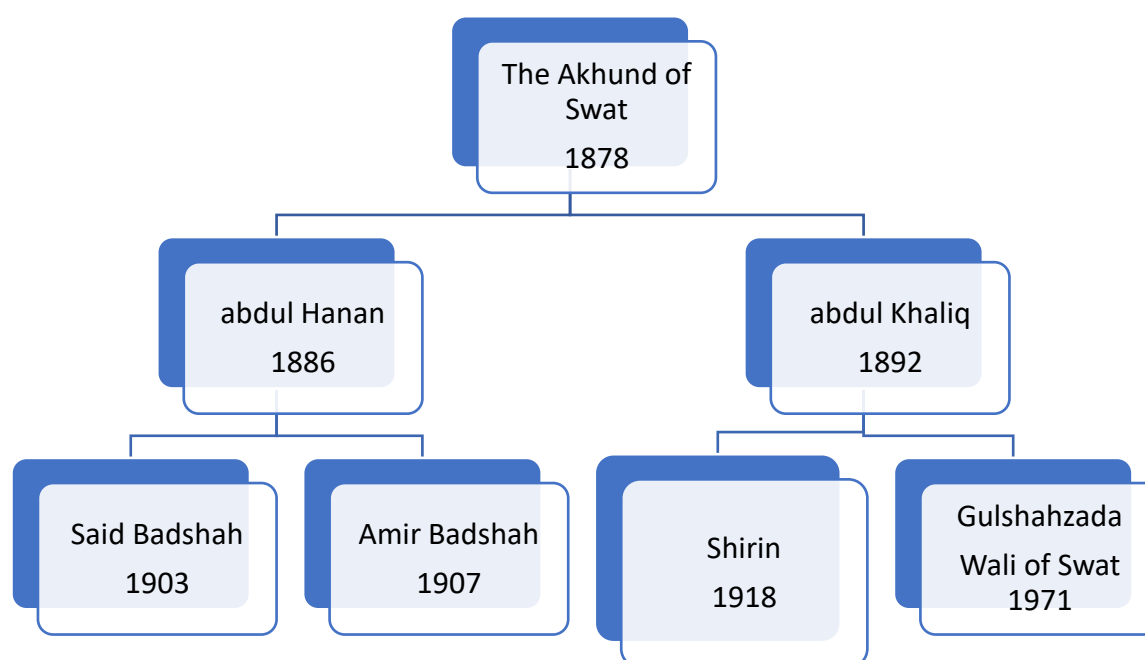
III. The Waali’s Era

Maingul Jhanzeb & Fredic Baoth (1985) explained that the term ““Waali” which means Magistrate, is used in some of the Arab countries as administrative title. It shouldn’t be confused with the term ““Wali” which means custodian, guardian, helper and protector. In Pashto the term “Waali” used for the man whose charterer is clear of any mistakes and sins and has vast knowledge of religion.

But recently the term “Waali” used for the descendent of Abdul Ghafur Baba alias Sadu Baba. Captain A. H McMahon & Lieutenant A. D .G. Ramsay, (1981), explored the whole story of the Swat State. They say that the term “Waali” (ruler) was recognized by the British government to the ruler of the time of Swat due to stable government in the area.

He presented the genealogical graph of the Mianguls family as well as known as Akhund Family as following;

Maingul Abdul Wadud and Maingul Shirin Jan were the grandsons of the famous personality



Sadu Baba who fought for the religious and political power in Swat. In 1916 the local Jirga appointed Mainagul

Abdul Wadud as the ““Waali” (chief), of the area. In his regime, he expended the Swat geographical boundaries up to Gilgit. Subsequently, in 1949 Maingul Abdul Haq Jahanzeb was selected as ““Waali” of Swat is called ““Waali” Sahib”. His era is considered as the golden time in the history of Swat, because his developments in field of schools, colleges, hospitals, roads and communication system were fully equipped and beyond comparison. In his regime there was a complete peace in the state of Swat.

Sirajuddin (1970) says that “Waali” of Swat wanted Swat to be modern and full of all needs, but some of the internal and external elements had not agreed to the plan. So the “Waali” of Swat Maingul Abdul Haq jahanzeb decided to amalgamate state to the Pakistan government in 28 July 1969. He handed over the power to the Chief Martial Law Administrator and President of Pakistan, General Yahya Khan in 15 August 1969.

IV. The rise of Taliban in Swat

Sultan-e-Rome, (2009), says that the demand of the Islamic law is not a new story but it was also demanded by the Sirjuddin (the brother of Muzafar Mulk alias Kaki Khan MNA and the uncle of Wajid Khan MPA) in 1949. He asked the ruler that the only solution to the problems in the state is the implementation of Islamic laws. After the merger of the Swat State in 1971 Dani Gul (a resident of Mingora) argued that the enforcement of Islamic laws is the solution to the problems of the region due to the temperament and mood of the public.

Sufi Muhammad launched a movement named Tanzim Nifaz-e-Sharia-e-Muhammadi (Movement for the enforcement of Islamic laws) in 1989. The manifesto of the movement was to convince the Pakistan government to enforce the Islamic laws in judicial system in Malakand Division. The movement gradually spread to Swat valley. Due to prolonged legal process, bribery, exploitation of Riway and fall under the Federally Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (PATA) regulation had distressed the people of Swat.

Subsequently the judgment of Peshawar High Court and the Supreme Court of Pakistan hurt the executive circle in the Malakand Division. The executive declared that the enforcement of Islamic laws is not possible alone in the Malakand Division.

The government introduced another regulation of the nature the redundant the PATA regulation. Under the new regulation, Dir and Swat once again exercised enormous powers. Therefore, it was a support and free hand activity order as such for the TNSM. Due to the regulation the movement expended to Swat region. At first time Sufi Muhammad headed the TNSM, talked to the public and the government administrative authorities in peaceful manner about the implementation of the Sharia Laws. Even he opposed the armed struggle in the beginning, but in 1990, he ordered in his speeches to the residents to sell their jewelry and purchase arms. He emphasized the people to train themselves to fight for achieving the goal of the Sharia Laws. The insignia of the time of TNSM was "Ya Sharia Ya Shahadat" means either Sharia or Martyrdom". Even he ordered the supporters of the movement in Dir, Buner and Bajaur to shoot at sight any government personnel in the area.

In 1994, the government promulgated Nifaz-e-Nizami-Adle in PATA, which had not satisfied the TNSM organizational members. The TNSM was not feeling at ease by the promulgation of NNA and launched a movement named "Jail Bharo Tehrik" (Jail spend movement) in June 1995.

As a result, the government implemented new regulation in the area named "Nizam-e-Adle: regulation in 1999, but the regulation also failed after bringing practical changes in the area in accordance with the motto of TNSM.

The head of TNSM Sufi Muhammad was continuing the efforts of the enforcement of the Islamic Sharia to change the judicial system. In the meantime, the United State of America invaded Afghanistan in 2001, due to the attack of Pentagon and World Trade Centre by the Al Qaeda fighters led by their chief Osama Bin Ladin.

Sufi Muhammad along with thousands of supporters crossed into Afghanistan to fight against American troops and its coalition forces though the Taliban high command asked him not to do so. After heavy casualties, he along with his son-in-law Fazlullah returned to Pakistan where both were caught by the security forces of Pakistan in border area and sent them behind the bars.

After 17 months Fazlullah was released while Sufi Muhammad remained in jail. He came to his home town Swat and started campaign for the implementation of Islamic Sharia in Malakand Division with full swing in the area.

In January 12, 2002, General Pervez Musharraf banned TNSM organization due to the terrorist activities inside the country. Fazlullah restored the organization in October 8, 2005 in Swat valley as chief commander in government of Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA).

Initiation of Radio Broadcasting

Maulana Fazlullah started an illegal local FM Radio station in Swat valley in 2004, which gained extraordinary popularity in 2006-07. His demagogue speeches had an anti-western stance of Jihad. Fazlullah was pro-Taliban and a very authoritative figure in the area. Though he used most sophisticated communication based electronics as “sources of sin”, he transmitted the broadcast of his sermons on his illegal radio channel, nicknamed as “Radio Mullah”, “Mullah Radio” or “Maulana Radio”.

Frequency of the Maulana Radio

The Maulana Radio was broadcast from various locations in the area due to law and order situation. The signals were transmitted from mobile transmitters built-up on motorcycles and trucks. The on-air time was mostly evening to midnight. The frequency kept changing so that the Pakistan Army could not jam the signals and location of the operator placement should not be traced by the security forces.

Contents of the medium

The broadcasting had been started from morning to night, but mostly the people listening time was evening to night as most of the people were free and loadshedding in the area also giving preference to the medium. At night broadcasting the orator used to announce the prohibited activities to the listeners as well as violators’ names declared for assassination. At the time they were also announced threats and harassments to those who violated the order of the Taliban in the area. They publicized the names of the beheaded bodies in their broadcasting.

Maulana Fazlullah, Maulana Shah Dauran and Maulana Muhammad Alam were the operator of the medium mostly. They used to change each other due to the situation in the area. In their messages they used to warn the people not to keep television, compact discs (CDs), computers and other equipment in the area even in their houses as these were the major sources of sin.

Fazlullah was anti-polio immunization in the country, claiming that it is the conspiracy of the non-Muslims against the Muslims. He ordered the people that it is against the Islamic rules and laws.

He also banned the female education in the area, claiming that female could get Islamic education instead of British and American type of education due to the Islamic customs and laws. As well as he opposed the women’s voting system in the country.

Agenda of the Maulana radio

The agenda of the Maulana radio was to spread their motto among the people to support them. He announced that he and his organization were working to implement the Islamic laws (Sharia) in the area and made an assurance of speedy justice system in Swat.

Due to the use of radio, he rapidly became famous in the area of Swat, Dir, and Buner. As setting popularity in the areas he soon started the construction of Madrassa (seminary) or Markaz for the Taliban in his home town Imamdherai in Swat area. The village is situated on the left bank of Swat River. He announced to contribute for the construction of the Madrass or markaz on Maulana Radio.

The people showed generous response and donated thousands of rupees as well as jewelries contribute by the women of Swat on a short notice. Due to the second foremost step of construction of Madrassa spread his popularity in the area.

Audience of the Maulana Radio

The on-airing time of the Maulana Radio was evening when all people were free. Among the listeners of the Maulana Radio were included people from all walks of life but commonly the women and government officials, who were threatened and asked to leave government jobs while the women would be asked to not immunize their children and the girls not to attend their schools and colleges. Most of the locals would listen to the Maulana Radio daily. And when one missed the speech a day, they would ask about the sermons of Fazlullah that, "what he said today" or "yesterday"? Who is to be whipped or beheaded next? Who was exonerated and who was reprimanded today?

Alternative media in the area

As the announcement of Fazlullah on his radio that to eradicate the sources of sin such TVs, computers, CDs , camera Mobiles and other form of informative resources, while the other side the supporters blew up the boosters of the different informative systems in the area. They also destroyed different communication bridges to cut the link with the other areas. So due to the factors the alternative media was lost the placement in the area, no matter, be it a local, national or international media in the chapter of Swat.

The effect of the Maulana radio

Due to the announcement of implementation of Islamic Laws, construction of Madrassa, elimination of sin spreading sources, considering unlawful immunization, and limited alternative media were the factors which increased the popularity of Maulana Fazlullah in the Swat region. Due to the physical, financial and moral support of the audience gave strength to the TNSM members and consequently Fazlullah and his supporters challenged the writ of the government several time.

In 2007, after the siege of Lal Masjid in Islamabad, he announced as allies to the banned movement Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) led by Baitullah Mahsud. The clashes were started with the security forces in Swat. With the support of more than 4,500 armed militants, Fazlullah had established a parallel government in the 59 villages of the Swat district in late October 2007. They were started Islamic courts to implement Sharia laws in the region by force.

Reaction of the Government

Fair and Jones (2010), say that the above mentioned factors made the situation extremely unstable in Swat because both the government and Fazlullah group refused to change their respective stance. In first phase of Operation Rah-i-Rast in November, 2007, the government sent security forces to control the situation. As well as some of the government authorities suggested to solve the problem with peaceful dialogue with the militants. While the Swat Taliban demanded to withdraw the troops from the area, adding to release Sufi Muhammad the founder of TNSM.

The clashes sustained in the area but Fazlullah talked to his Shura (counseling body of the organization) which had decided temporary ceasefire and ordered the fighters to evocate the

roadside. He announced through his radio that they were not afraid of the fight but only changing their war strategy according to the situation.

Sufi Muhammad was released in 2008 by the law enforcement agencies, which gave additional power to the TNSM organization in Swat region. They started again his terror activities in the area. As a result, the second phase of the operation Rah-i-Rast was launched in the area, which not only caused heavy losses of live and property to the civilians, but also displacement of a large number of the people to other parts of the province.

Dr Noorul Haq, Dr Ahmad Rashid Malik and Nargis Zahra say that in February 2008, general elections were held in Pakistan and Awami National Party (ANP) Pro-Pakhtun party formed a coalition government in the province. As the elections were held under the slogan of "restoring peace and bringing normalcy to the province" the provincial government decided to negotiate with Taliban in Swat region.

As the result of negotiation with the Taliban commander Fazlullah and TNSM chief Sufi Muhammad, peace deal comprised of 14-point was signed in a commitment of enforcement of Islamic Laws in Swat. According to the peace deal on February 16, 2009, the Taliban should lay down the arms and the government should implement the Nizam-i-Adle regulation in Malakand region. The peace deal was called Malakand Acoord 2009.

The clashes were ended in February with an agreement, but on 09 April 2009, Swati Taliban refused to hand over their heavy weapons or remove their check-posts as agreed to the government. Sufi Muhammad the chief of the TNSM also began abusing the Pakistani top institutions such as parliament and Supreme Court.

The militants had instigated occupying public shops, properties and government buildings in Mingora. They also moved to other parts and neighbouring districts of Swat. They started attacks on police stations and Frontier Constabulary. They seized the offices of the government and non-governmental organization in the area, besides destroying several boys and girls schools and built checkposts along the roads in Swat.

Fair and Jones (2010), say that due to the uncontrolled situation in the area, Pakistan Army launched the final phase of the Rah-i-Rast operation in the month of May, after the decision of the all political parties. The motto of the operation was to "Capture or Kill the key militant leaders". The security forces started a major operation in Mingora with the support of Special Service Group (SSG) including airstrikes. The security forces destroyed about 300 hideouts and captured buildings in different areas of the Swat.

On May 30, 2009 the military announced that they gained the control of the area and had demolished the concrete bunkers and seized arms, ammunition, and explosives concealed in caves.

Due to heavy fighting between the militants and Pakistan Army in the area and nearby districts, the residents were forced to migrate to safer places. The number of the internally displaced persons (IDPs) was about 2.5 million reached Mardan and other parts of the province.

Dr Noorul Haq, Dr Ahmad Rashid Malik and Nargis Zahra, presented the summary of the Swat operation, saying that on 27 April 2009 the operation was started in Lower Dir at Maidan and the stronghold of Taliban at Lal Qila was seized. The security forces landed in Daggar the Headquarters of Buner district on April 29, 2009, while ground force moved ahead to the target place and captured the area.

The troops commenced the operation in Shangla sector on May 3, 2009, while SSG landed at Peochar, the centre of Maulana Fazlullah, in 17 May 2009. A wide-range training faculties, bomb, 100 feet long tunnel and heavy arms were captured. At the time, security forces seized

the militants from four sides in Lower Dir, Buner, Peochar and Shangla sectors. As well as the troops besieged the Banai Baba Ziarat, the training centre of the militants. They also started operation from Khwazakhela towards Matta to Dureshkhela. At the time security forces launched operation in Chakdara and subsequently in Barikot to seal all the exit ways to Militants in the area. On 27 May 2009, troops entered Mingora and successfully cleared it from the militants. Simultaneously, the stronghold areas in Charbagh, Kanju, Kabal, Tutano Bandai and Sarsanai were secured from the militants. At last, on 23 June 2009, Shamozaï was cleared from the militants.

After the heavy operation the security forces started search operation in the area to secure from the militants and till the end of June security forces cleared the Swat district.

According to the Inter-Services Public Relation (ISPR), June 24, 2009, 2635 militants were killed and 254 sustained injuries in the operation and 168 army personals were martyred (Shaheed) and 454 were wounded in the clashes with the militants in the Operation Rah-i-Rast.

End of propaganda radio

The heavy operation in the Swat finally brought an end to the propaganda radio of Maulana Fazlullah. Propaganda radio is in sense that the operators were spreading fear in the area on the base of the medium. He and his colleagues Maulana Shah Dauran and Muhammad Alam spread the information of threats and harassment among the people of Swat district and hollow claim of making efforts for enforcement of Islamic Laws, which broke in the shape of the peace deal named Nizam-i-Adle regulation in Swat. The agreement is known as Malakand Accord in the history of the Taliban regime.

Conclusion

It is concluded that the history of Swat region is full of controversial ruling regimes from the ancient Buddhist till to the rise of Taliban regime. But the other side the government and the military rations were strongly confident and believe in each other due to which the residents and rulers of Swat didn't bend to the foreign aggression and defeated them.

The study also proved that with the support of illiterate people, Taliban spread fear and fright in the area and challenged the writ of the government in Swat region. It is also confirmed that FM radio known as Mualana Radio played a vital role in the molding opinion of the women and illiterate people toward the support of Taliban in Swat.

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