

Azad Islamia Madrassa Utmanzai & Its Role in The Indian Freedom Struggle

Dr Zahid Shahⁱ

Samin Janⁱⁱ

Absract

The Azad Islamia Madrassa Utmanzai, an educational institution founded by Abdul Ghaffar Khan in the Charsadda area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, served as a breeding ground of freedom fighters in the first half of the twentieth century. Abdul Ghaffar Khan, a feudal lord of Hashtnagar and the Red Shirt leader, was impressed by the thoughts of Sheikhul Hind Maulana Mahmoodul Hassan, Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi and Maulana AbulKalam Azad, the well-known political stalwarts of India being in the forefront of the Indian freedom struggle. The Deoband Madrassa and the JamiaMillia Delhi, the two known religious Institutions of the time, looked after by the political stalwarts, served as role model for the Azad Madrassa Utmanzai. Deoband and JamiaMillia, however, survived the adversities of the time and serves the subcontinent up to the present day. The Azad Madrassa, on the other hand, could not survive longer than two decades. This article explains the structure, goals, resources, functions and direction of the Madrassa and explores facts as to why the institution remained shrouded in obscurity.

Key words: Education, reformation, freedom, confrontation, politics

Introduction

The British rule in India marked the beginning of politico-cultural changes in the Indian landscape. Indigenous rule was supplanted with foreign rule and local culture was deliberately mutilated by alien masters. Ridicule of Islam and the Muslims by the Christian evangelists combined with Lord Macaulay's statement in the British Parliament suggesting a cultural change in India as a basis of British perpetuation in power are cited as proof of the evil intentions of the British imperial masters in India.

The Muslim religio-political elite were unanimous with one simple answer to the grave situation which was religious revivalism and political activism. The result was mushroom growth of educational institutions spear-headed mainly by the Deoband Madrassa, the NadwatulUloom Madrassa and the JamiaMillia Delhi.

Among the foregoing educational Institutions, some aspired for political ascendancy, others eschewed politics. The religio-political program was pursued chiefly by the Deoband Madrassa. The Azad Madrassa Utmanzai received inspiration mainly from the Deoband Madrassa and the JamiaMillia Delhi.

The founder of the Azad Madrassa Utmanzai, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the Khudaikhidmatgar or the Red Shirt leader, commonly known as Bacha Khan, a feudal lord of Hashtnagar in the Charsadda area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, evinced interest in

ⁱ Assistant Professor, Department of Humanities, Comsats Institute of Information Technology, Abbotabad, Pakistan

ⁱⁱ Ph.D research Scholar, Department of Political Science, University of Peshawar, Pakistan

politics and abhorred British rule in India. He espoused the cause of Muslim Turkey during World war-1 and subsequently participated in the Khilafat and Hijrat Movements. He drew inspiration from the ideas of Sheikhul Hind Maulana Mahmoodul Hassan, Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi and Maulana AbulKalam Azad, the well-known Muslim political stalwarts of the time. Freedom from the British rule and religio-political revivalism among the Pashtuns were the chief motives that drove Abdul Ghaffar Khan to lay down the foundation of an educational institution in the Pashtun area called the Azad Madrassa Utmanzai.

The Azad MadrassaUtmanzai also had an agenda of social reform among the Pashtuns. Abdul Ghaffar Khan, it may be argued, was inspired by the practical conduct of the Prophet of Islam and was painfully concerned to impact the Pashtuns to rise and contribute in the eradication of social evils prevalent in the society. Also, as a young student of the Mission school at Peshawar, Abdul Ghaffar Khan had been impressed by the spirit of social service of the school Head Master, Mr. Wagram. He cited the devotion of this missionary evangelist in his book titled "*Zama Jond Aw JaddoJahad*" and with the same spirit pursued his agenda of social reforms among the Pashtuns. The Pashtuns were religious minded, but tradition-bound to the extreme degree. This latter quality had pushed them to the verge of destruction owing to internal strife and dissensions. To Abdul Ghaffar Khan the greatest service to Pashtuns was to reform them on religious lines, achieve peace and tranquility, acquire social cohesion and to awaken them to the necessity of self-rule in India.

The Azad Islamia Madrassa Utmanzai

The founder of the Azad Islamia Madrassa(School) at Utmanzai was Abdul Ghaffar Khan popularly known as Bacha Khan. Bacha Khan, as a social reformer and torch-bearer of education, was impressed by the Head Master of the Mission school Peshawar, Mr. Wagram, who did welfare work in a selfless way (1). Ghaffar Khan, since the time of his schooling, had developed the passion to eradicate social evils from amongst the Pashtuns and this appeared to him to be possible only through the means of education. Thus Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Maulvi Abdul Aziz jointly established a Madrassa in village Utmanzai in 1910 followed by a number of other Madrassas in the surrounding areas (2).This was the first endeavor of the educational missionary.

In the second decade of the twentieth century, Abdul Ghaffar Khan supported the Educational Movement of Haji Sahib of Turangzai and accompanied him in establishing Madrassas in Pakhtunkhwa (3).The Haji Sahib of Turangzai worked under the command of Maulana Mahmudul Hassan, popularly known as Sheikhul Hind, a renowned scholar of the Deoband Madrassa and the founder of the Silk Handkerchief Movement which sought to join hands with the enemies of the British and oust them from India during World War War-1. Abdul Ghaffar Khan, impressed by the thought of Sheikhul Hind Maulana Mahmoodul Hassan, Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi and Maulana Abulkalam Azad also participated in political movements such as the Khilafat Movement and Hijrat Movementswith the object to help Muslim Turkey and if possible to get rid of the British rule in India (4).

Painfully concerned about the pathetic condition of the Muslim world, Abdul Ghaffar Khan had a strong desire to transform their condition through the means of education.Speaking at the anniversary of the Ziaul Islam Madrassa at Tarnab, Charsadda on 7th March, 1925, Abdul Ghaffar Khan observed that Muslims were very

much backward in education and their miserable plight was attributable chiefly to this cause. The English people ruled Muslims because the former were thoroughly educated. Why the Muslims suffered from backwardness was because they did not obey the commandments of the Holy Quran. He appealed to Muslims to rise and acquire education, renounce the customs contrary to Sharia law, forget faction-feeling and avoid murders on petty matters (5).

Concomitantly, Abdul Ghaffar Khan had a passion for freedom from the British rule. He opined that the Muslims ought to be free in their own country, but they had been enslaved by the British. What they needed was to rise and get themselves free from the yoke of slavery. They should love their nation, country and religion and sacrifice their all in the achievement of freedom (6).

Abdul Ghaffar Khan's effort for the spread of education among the Pashtuns stood objectionable in the eyes of the British authorities who availed every resource to stop him from carrying out his work. A confidential report of 29th October, 1925, observed that the ostensible aim of the Utmanzai Azad Madrassa with all its branches in the Peshawar District was to impart religious education to Muslim boys, but its activities manifested from time to time in meetings held in various parts of the District tended to point to the fact that they were by no stretch of imagination void of propaganda calculated to poison the minds of the young boys against Government Institutions and the Government itself. The report added that the spirit of imparting religious education to reform the Muslim community was undoubtedly commendable, but preaching against the Government and its institutions under the cloak of religious education was certainly to say the least of it, such as should be stopped without further delay⁷.

The Azad Islamia School at Utmanzai was started in April, 1921 by Abdul Ghaffar Khan on the lines of the Aligarh National School started by Ali Brothers (8). As soon as the Azad Islamia Madrassa was established at Utmanzai, the elders of Hashtnagar, upon the persuasion of Abdul Ghaffar Khan, laid the foundation of an Association called *AnjumanIslahulAfaghana* which aimed at safeguarding the interests of the school and the community. The office bearers included: Abdul Ghaffar Khan as President, Mian Ahmad Shah as Manager and Mian Abdullah Shah, Abdul Akbar Khan and Muhammad Abbas Khan as Members. The Government of NWFP, after an interval of six months, arrested Abdul Ghaffar Khan for running the Madrassa and the Anjuman and sentenced him to three years imprisonment for refusing to give surety not to speak against the Government and its Institutions (9). The school, however, functioned as usual under the care of Abdul Akbar Khan Akbar of Umerzai.

The school was started in a humble way, but it progressed as time passed. On 19th May, 1921 the number of students was reported to be 45 with four honorary teachers lent by the Aligarh University. On 23rd July, 1921 the roll number stood at 135 with seven teachers; the Head Master was a graduate and worked on honorary basis. On 27th April, 1922 the staff was reported to consist of nine teachers and the school having its standard upto 6th class with 200 students on its roll. The school also started staging dialogues and dramas, the first having been staged in its anniversary on 27th April 1922 before an audience of 800 (10).

The teachers received meager salaries and the school was run on donations collected by the *AnjumanIslahulAfaghana*. The school also helped the poor students in granting books free of cost together with other necessary items, including free

boarding and lodging, if needed (11). The students of the Azad Madrassa *Utmanzai*, in order to promote the Madrassa, worked as marketers. Ahmad, author of the book, “*Khudai Khidmatgaar Tahreek*” narrates that it was *Eid* (Muslim Festival Day) and the people had assembled in a Mosque in Charsadda that a young charming boy stood near the pulpit and addressed the assembled multitude, introducing himself as the student of the Azad Islamia School at *Utmanzai*. He recited a poem and a few verses from the holy Quran with translation and informed the audience that the school helped destitute students financially with a free of charge education. He invited students to come and seek admission in the school so that they may become aware of their religion and at the same time to acquire school education (12).

Ahmad was impressed by the speech and being a destitute boy made up his mind to seek admission in the school. After getting admission in the Azad Islamia School *Utmanzai*, Ahmad informed Abdul Ghaffar Khan that he was an orphan and was unable to pay fee and to get books. Abdul Ghaffar Khan wrote a letter in the name of a teacher, asking him to grant books to Ahmad from the side of the *AnjumanIslahulAfaghana*. Ahmad got the books free of cost and started education at the Madrassa. (13)

Subsequently, Bacha Khan presented Ahmad before the members of the *Anjuman* and informed them about his destitution with a request to the *Anjuman* for financial assistance for him- a request which was granted by the *Anjuman*. Ahmad lived in the house of his sister in *Utmanzai* and continued to receive aid from the *Anjuman*, not in cash but in kind, which enabled him to continue his education in the school (14).

Bacha Khan motivated the well-off people of the society to extend financial support to the destitute boys studying in the Madrassa. He explained the case of Ahmad in front of the Executive Committee of the *Anjuman* and exhorted them to ponder over Ahmad’s condition and work for the betterment of the society. He opined that Ahmad, being an orphan, was unprotected and unsupported and if such a destitute boy remained deprived of education and his conduct spoiled, all would be held responsible by God Almighty for that negligence. He observed that the streets of Hashtnagar were filled with boys like Ahmad, and if they remained unlettered and hence spoiled morally, the society would not remain unaffected. He reminded that among them were men who certainly possessed a sense of responsibility and who shared the joys and sorrows of others. He appealed to them to come forward and help the needy. Strengthening the cause of the school was the best way to fulfill their responsibility (15).

In 1924, the Convocation of the Azad Islamia School was held at *Utmanzai* with Mian Said Umar alias Spin Mian of Ziarat Kaka Sahib (Nowshera) in the chair. Around 2000 persons including 500 women participated. Speeches were made by Said Umar Mian alias Spin Mian, Abdul Akbar Khan of *Umererzai* and the secretary of the Institution. An account of the expenses, income and progress of the Institution was presented before the audience. Prizes were also distributed among the students. The income and expenditure of the preceding three years were stated to be Rs. 14000/- and Rs. 7000/- respectively. Abdul Ghaffar Khan was in jail and prayers were made for his release from prison (16).

In August 1924, a meeting was held in the premises of the Azad School *Utmanzai* attended by around 200 persons with Abbas Khan of *Utmanzai* in the chair. Abdul Akbar Khan of *Utmanzai* addressed the meeting and eulogized the services rendered by Abdul Ghaffar Khan, then in jail. He informed the audience that Abdul Ghaffar Khan was being released from jail and proposed to present him with a medal inscribed with “*Fakhr-e-Afghan*” (Pride of the Pashtuns) and a *Chogha* (cloak) of

Khadadar(local cloth) on behalf of the people of Hashtnagar. He asked the audience to receive Abdul Ghaffar Khan at Peshawar. He also made an appeal for subscription to meet the expenses of the school. A donation of Rs.200/- was collected on the spot (17). Abdul Ghaffar Khan was then released from jail and was warmly received.

The school was run on donations and Abdul Ghaffar Khan himself was one of the chief donors of the school. In 1927, he contemplated to construct a boarding house for the school. For this purpose, a site with a cash of donation of Rs.2000 each by Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Muammad Abbas Khan were granted (18).

Likewise, Abdul Ghaffar Khan gave Rs.7000/ to Sultan Muhammad to support the expenditure of the school. Sultan Muhammad Khan purchased twenty five acres (50 jareeb) of irrigated land from which an income of Rs. 600/- was paid annually to the school funds. Muhammad Akbar Khan was another donor of the school. He paid Rs.500/- annually to the school funds out of his own income. A widow named KundaBibi, a relative of Abdul Ghaffar Khan, paid Rs.300/- to 400/- annually to the school fund with the total annual income of the school rising to be Rs.1600/- to 1700/-. The total expenditure of the school in 1933 was stated to be Rs160 to Rs170/- per month (19).

In 1933, the Azad Islamia School at Utmanzai started a hand written monthly Magazine titled "*Nargas*" and was being published. In the opinion of the Publicity Officer, North West Frontier Province, the publication of such Magazine by the School was to cultivate among the students the taste of journalism to enable them in future life to run newspapers (20).

Curriculum of The Madrassa

It was probably the consciousness about the curriculum of education taught in the Government schools that drove Abdul Ghaffar Khan to start independent schools in Pakhtunkhwa so that the minds of the youth were not corrupted in favor of alien masters which could be the primary cause of the perpetuation of British rule in India. The utterances of Lord Macaulay in the British Parliament concerning a strategy to transform India spiritually perhaps reverberated in the mind of the founder of the Azad Madrassa Utmanzai.

Speaking at the annual meeting of the *Azad Madrassa Utmanzai* on 27th April, 1925, Abdul Ghaffar Khan opined that one reason why European nations were in a state of progressiveness was that the curriculum of education was in their own hands. So long as the curriculum in Muslim schools remained in the hands of aliens, they could neither make any progress, nor could they make themselves free from the clutches of slavery. If they were able to acquire fully religious education, only then could they become masters of their destiny' (21).

The second reason why the founder of the Azad Madrassa was concerned about school curriculum was that education was not being imparted in mother tongue which in his view could undermine the local culture and hence could cause a dent on national identity. Abdul Ghaffar Khan and his associates, therefore, considered it essential to impart education to their children in their own language, and not in the language of other nations. The Institution as such aimed at imparting education to children in Pashto language with the hope that the educated youth would be helpful in creating literature in Pashto language which would serve the interest of the community. The founder of the Azad Madrassa *Utmanzai* viewed that an independent curriculum would inculcate a sense of nationalism and thus infuse the spirit of liberty among the youth (22)

The Azad Islamia School Utmanzai followed the curriculum of the Jamia Millia Islamia Aligarh founded in 1920 by Sheikhul Hiind Maulana Mehmudul Hassan. The Jamia aimed at stimulating “the anti-colonial Islamic activism...and pro-independence aspiration of the politically radical section of Western educated Indian Muslim Intelligentsia” (23)

Pursuing that curriculum, the students had to study a course of nine years in religious and secular education (24).

The courses taught at the Azad Islamia Madrassa included the study of the Holy Quran, Hadith (precepts of Prophet Muhammad P.B.U.H.), Jurisprudence, Islamic History, Geography, Arabic language, Urdu, English and Mathematics. Concomitantly, the students learnt practical tailoring, carpentry, Kulla-making and Khaddi (hand –made textile); the latter being a least preferred skill as in Pashtun tradition it was regarded as low-caste profession. The aim of the ancillary training programs was to enable the students to earn their livelihood in an independent way (25).

The Azad Madrassa & Politics

Abdul Ghaffar Khan made no secret of his intentions operating behind the establishment of the Madrassa. On the one hand he endeavored to educate the Pashtuns and on the other he talked about getting freedom from British ‘slavery’. The latter assertion made his Madrassa a seat of political activities. The British authorities, because of its involvement in politics, kept a vigilant eye over all its activities. A report stated that the teaching in the school was ‘out and out political’ and the management of the Madrassa left no stone unturned to promote agitation that was going on in India.

The Madrassa yearly celebrated its anniversaries and invited agitators from all over the province to exchange views. In these anniversaries, political dramas were staged which appealed to the feelings of the audience. According to a report, the Madrassa extended sympathies to the people ‘disaffected in mind and riches’. It also served as a platform for political and social propaganda. ‘It took advantage of agitation and came to the forefront in such times not only to advertise itself but also to infuse in its supporters the need to further agitation’ (26).

The Madrassa tried to inculcate in the minds of its students the spirit for freedom and a dislike for rule by alien people. This prompted the British authorities to conduct a search operation in the Madrassa. During the operation, some papers were seized from the possession of the students which supported the British perception about the Madrassa. One of the examination papers, for instance, stated that India had received and had been receiving great losses from the British Government. Before the advent of the British Government, India was rich and free from care and anxiety. The people of India had been degraded as a result of foreign rule. All wealth had been carried by British and India had become so poor that many of its people had died of hunger; the collar of serfdom has been put round their necks (27).

According to the paper, the British had caused disunion among Indians. The father was angry with his son and vice versa. On account of disunion, the Muslims had been prepared to kill one another and the English continued to rule over them. Further, the English people had opened schools in every country and had been imparting the education of slavery. On account of this, the people had become involved in various sins such as adultery, liquor-drinking, paying visits to brothels. The English people had ruined Indians and had made the Muslims spiritless. They as

such had uprooted the national and independence-loving zeal of the Muslims and tyrannies were being perpetrated upon Indians day by day (28).

The same paper further stated that the British claimed that they were civilized people and did not interfere in the religion of others. But their claim was not true as anyone who preached his religion was arrested on the ground that he was reforming his internal affairs. The British, according to the paper, claimed themselves to be civilized, yet no more savage nation than them existed in the world. May God save Muslims from the tyrannies of the English, the paper prayed (29).

At another place the paper advocated the Soviet system. It said the system of the Government of the Soviet Republic was very good as there was no distinction between the poor and the rich. Equality found in the Soviet society was considered a good thing and it was conjectured why its effect was spreading in other countries. Accordingly, efforts were said to be made to spread its effect in India (30).

Substantiating the idea, the paper stated that in Russia, before the advent of the communist revolution, there were only a few people who utilized the earnings of the poor farmers and lived luxurious life while the poor farmers had nothing to eat. As a result of that repression, a movement was started which saved the whole country from tyrannies of those tyrants. It was argued that the Soviet Union was a good country as the rich and the well-to-do class could no longer rob the poorer segment of the society (31).

One of the examination papers targeted the British Indian Government, saying that the English had done nothing in least for the Indians. Instead they had tried to demoralize the Indians, had ruined their health and financial position and that was why they had kept brothels and had opened liquor shops. The British, according to the paper, wished Indians to live a luxurious life so that they become idle and remain without education. The English people, contended the paper, had drained Indian money on the pretext of taxes and revenues. If the Indians could get united and could acquire the education of freedom, they would no longer remain in servitude and the tyrannies and trouble which they suffer was bound to vanish, the paper opined (32).

One of the papers mocked the Government, saying that the Chief Commissioner claimed in his notification that Government did not interfere in religious matters which was beyond comprehension, asking whether submitting applications for *Janaza* (burial ceremony) not an interference in religious matters. The Chief Commissioner might see the condition of Charsadda and Prang where the Government had prohibited the people from offering prayers and restrictions had been placed upon *Janaza*. The mistake of the Government, according to the paper, was that it practiced tyranny upon people and forced them to adopt a program which was not their own. To achieve freedom was not a crime, the paper contended (33).

Amir Nawaz Jalya, Secretary of the Azad Islamia School Utmanzai, held extremely revolutionary views. An Urdu pamphlet, seized and translated by the British authorities, revealed his anti-British sentiments. He addressed the Indians in an inflammatory language and tried to make them to rise against the British Government. He claimed that India comprised as much as one-fifth of the world population, but the country had for the past one hundred fifty years been governed by a people who were far less in number; whose creed, caste and color were different and who belonged to quite different civilization. He contradicted the British claim of spreading education

and civilization. He said that the British werethere in India for more than two hundred years, yet they could not educate seven percent of its people.

According to Jalya , the British had taken all the trade and commerce of the country in their own hands and had taken more out of India every year than Mahmud of Ghazni, Muhammad Ghori and Tamerlane collectively were able to take away during seventeen invasions. He contended that the children of India were hungrybecause the English had taken away every grain of corn.

Jalya claimed that many of India'slearned people and statesmen had been languishing in Jails because they loved their mother land andbecause to love one's country was a sin British in eyes. He termed the British as more thanbrutes because even brutes loved their feeding pots. To Jalya, distinction between the White and the Black found place in the penal law of India. Black men offending White men were awarded severe punishment, but 'black-hearted White men' who always kicked the Blacks with their boots got no punishment. He lamented that Indians got bad-named if they sighed but no voice was raised if an Englishman committed murder.

Jalya cautioned that no angle or Prophet or an awtar would appear to rectify the dreadful and pitiable condition of India until an initiative had been taken by the Indians themselves which could only become a cause for the freedom of India (34). The anti-British sentiments of the school management were evident and the same prompted the British Government to take adverse action against the Institution.

Decline of The Institution

As is evident from the fore going paragraphs, the Government, because of revolutionary teaching in the school, dealt the Institution with an iron hand; the Red Shirt leadership was put behind the bars and the school discouraged in all respects. As a result of the adverse action of the Government, the overall performance of the school deteriorated.

In August, 1933 a letter addressed to the Chief Secretary, N.W.F.P. stated that the school had of course been in the past nothing less than a training ground for the teachings of Abdul Ghaffar Khan, first under the aegis of the Frontier Youth League and finally the Red Shirts, but its activities had decreased for the past one year. Earlier a boarding house was maintained, but the same had then been abandoned. There was no evidence to show that serious political teaching was taking place, other than talks about economics, which could also have some subversive effect. The authorities felt satisfied that the attendance in the school had been steadily decreasing and the hand- written monthly Magazine*Nargis* had not surfaced (35).

On 22nd August, 1933, it was reported that Faqir Muhammad of Utmanzai, who had been released from Jail, had expressed the opinion that the state of the school was going bad and while there were ample pupils, there was a paucity of teachers. From the tone of his comments, it was evident that there existed some local dissatisfaction with the education provided at the school (36).

In its declining state, the Azad School Utmanzai looked to financial support from the Congress leadership. A letter from Gopichand to Devi Dasji dated May 31, 1934 stated, "...As for Azad School, I got Rs.1600/- for it last year through Acharya Kripalani and Miss KhurshidBehn-a sum of Rs.250/- or 300/- was lying with us. I was on the lookout for a reliable man through whom the money could be sent. I made several efforts, but failed. Luckily, Khan Obaidullah's brother came here on his way back from Multan. I sent Rs.1000/- through. After this PanditMalaviyaji asked me to

send the other Rs.850/- balance lying with me at his command. This money was sent through a man recommended by him. This man was SevaSamiti's man. So we have sent Rs.1850/- to them so far since August last. This money came from Bombay. Now I have got nothing left with me, I do not know why they complain about it. If these people have not paid to School, I cannot help it. I cannot go to Peshawar. Sardarji might be going now. I shall ask him to make enquiries" (37).

In August, 1934, it was reported that a rumor had spread in the Charsadda sub-division that some teachers of the school had been involving in activities which were unbecoming of their profession and as such the school was alienating the sympathy of the general public. Taj Muhammad, secretary of the school was also contemplating to resign. Haji Abdul Ghaffar and Sadullah Khan were looking for a suitable hand to replace him (38).

As several changes had been introduced in the management of the Azad School, so a secret enquiry was conducted to discover realities. It came to light that Master Abdul Qadir of the Azad School had joined Government School, Utmanzai and only five other teachers served the school whose salaries per teacher per month ranged from Rs.20/- to Rs.30/-. The number of the students from class 5th to class 8th was reported to be 263. It was opined that the school was declining, but owing to its permanent source of income being Rs.1800/-, the school still functioned (39).

A month later, it was reported that Azad School *Utmanzai* was on the verge of bankruptcy and the ex-red Shirts were devising means to collect subscription for the school. Further, Amir Mumtaz of Bannu, ex-Head Master of the school, was asked to resume charge, but owing to its deteriorating financial position, he declined the offer. Amir Nawaz Jalya then sought to obtain Dr. Khan Sahib's consent to collect one-quarter seer of flour from each house-hold in Charsadda sub-division and crediting the sale-proceeds to the income of the school, anticipating a monthly income of Rs.1500/- by this means (40). It, however, could not be known whether his proposal was implemented or not.

On 8th June, 1935, Amir Nawaz Jalya replaced Taj Muhammad Khan as Secretary of the Azad School Utmanzai. In 1936 it was reported that the teaching staff was split into two factions; one led by Abdul karim, the Head master and another led by Ihsanullah, the Second Master, and maligning one another. The relations among the staff as such remained strained for some time due to which the situation was getting worse. Amir Nawaz Jalya, the Secretary of the School as such with the consent of the managing Committee decided to dispose off the services of the entire teaching staff within two months. About one month later, Amir Nawaz Jalya resigned his post and was replaced as Secretary of the School by Obaidullah Khan, son of Dr. Khan Sahib. Owing to the dissensions among the members of the staff, the school deteriorated considerably (41).

In the following year, the financial position of the school was reported to be 'unsound' due to which the teachers could not receive their salaries for months. The salary of the teaching staff was reported to have been reduced to Rs.4/ per month (42). Thus in the month of May, 1937, Qazi Ataullah, Member Legislative Assembly, on his return from Delhi, brought with him Rs.3000/- from Congress Funds. This amount was expected to be used in an effort to put the finances of the Azad School on sound footing 43.

In March 1938, it was reported that a meeting of the Trustees of the school was held in the office of Abdul Ghaffar Khan to consider the question of continuing or dissolving the school. In the meeting it was decided that the school should be continued and grant in aid should be demanded from the Government (44).

On 21st April, 1938, the Minister for Education visited the Azad School Utmanzai and after examining the students gave Rs.200/- as reward to the teachers. In the month of October, the same year, an annual grant of Rs.1115/- was sanctioned by the Government for the school. In 1939, the school was raised to the standard of High School and was shifted to the building of the Government School in Utmanzai (45). Thus the Institution raised with so many hopes could not survive in an unpleasant political climate.

The dwindling conditions of the school may also be attributed to the fact that some of the trusted colleagues of Abdul Ghaffar Khan who had stood by his side in thick and thin such as Khadim Muhammad Akbar (Charsadda) and Bakht Jamal of Kalu Khan (Swabi) parted ways with him for political reasons. Bakht Jamal in particular had helped in the establishment of dozens of other Madrassa in different parts of Pakhtunkhwa specifically in the Swabi region and had espoused the educational endeavor of Abdul Ghaffar Khan. As one of the greatest contributors in the spread of educational network in Pakhtunkhwa, Bakht Jamal's parting ways with Abdul Ghaffar Khan must have adversely impacted the educational movement initiated by Abdul Ghaffar Khan.

Conclusion

The AzadIslamia Madrassa Utmanzai was the training ground for the realization of Abdul Ghaffar Khan's religio-political objectives. Abdul Ghaffar Khan owned a missionary zeal to reform the Pashtuns on religious lines, eradicate social evils and to make them to work for the freedom of India. In his religio-political ideals, Abdul Ghaffar Khan followed the line of thought of Shaikhul Hind Maulana Mahmoodul Hassan, Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi and Maulana AbulKalam Azad who were imbued with the spirit of freedom from British domination.

The Azad Madrassa served as a parallel educational system aiming at countering the influence of the Government educational practices. The public utterances of AbulGhaffar Khan condemning the British rule combined with his denouncing the Government institutions caused him to appear before the authorities and to give surety not to indulge in anti-Government activities. His straight refusal to abandon what he believed caused him to undergo incarceration. The Madrassa, however, functioned as usual with the support of his devoted followers.

The Azad Madrassa Utmanzai was under the constant watch of the Government and the authorities left no stone unturned to do away with the parallel education system initiated by Abdul Ghaffar Khan. In spite of tough government measures, the Madrassa continued to attract students and to serve as a meeting place of freedom fighters. The graduates of the Madrassa were imbued with the spirit of freedom and they together with their families proved as a source of strength to the freedom endeavor of Abdul Ghaffar Khan.

The Madrassa, however, could not attain the fame of educational institutions like Deoband Madrassa, JamiaMillia Delhi or the NadwatulUloom Madrassa. This deficiency is attributable to two reasons: one that Abdul Ghaffar Khan was more interested in politics than education which caused the Government to target the institution and impede its growth. The second reason was that some of the adherents of Abdul Ghaffar Khan attempted to spread Bolshevik ideas through the institution and the same, tinged with atheism, might have been a cause of lack of widespread support for the Madrassa.

The goals of the Azad Madrassa Utmanzai have been evaluated by certain scholars who have arrived at the conclusion that the Madrassa spear-headed socio-

educational Movement in the Pashtun area. This evaluation perhaps ignores the political intent of the Madrassa- a motivation that it got from the Movements of Sheikhul Maulana Mahmudul Hassan, Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi and Maulana AbulKalam Azad, the biggest political stalwarts of India at that time. The political intent of the Madrassa is not only manifest from contemporary literature available mostly in the Peshawar Archives, but also is evident from the discourse of Abdul Ghaffar Khan in his auto-biography titled “*ZAMA JOND AW JADDO JAHAD*”.

As a consistent and resolute individual, preaching practical work to reform society, consolidate man power and work for the freedom of India, Abdul Ghaffar Khan attracted people from the nook and corner of Pakhtunkhwa which strengthened his support base in the accomplishment of his mission in the early years of his career. His subsequent tilt towards the All India National Congress, however, dismayed some of his devoted followers such as KhadimMuhammd Akbar and Bakht Jamal which impacted negatively upon the educational endeavor of Abdul Ghaffar Khan. Abdul Ghaffar Khan’s too much reliance on Congress, which perhaps he considered necessary as a matter of political expediency, did not auger well for the mission initiated by him. He himself, at the tail end of his struggle against the British, lamented his too much trust on the congress leadership including M. K. Gandhi- a complaint which has found expression in the concluding pages of his book, “*ZAMA JOND AW JADDOJAHAD*”.

References

- 1- Abdul Ghaffar. *Zama Jond aw Jaddujahd* (Pashtu), (Manuscript: 1981). P-65-66.
- 2- Ibid. p-66).
- 3- Ahmad. *KhudaiKhidmatgarTahreek* (Pashtu), Vol-1 (University Book Agency: Peshawar, 1991), p-3-5.
- 4- (Abdul Ghaffar. *Zama Jond aw Jaddujahd*. Op. Cit. pp-70-77.
- 5- Diary No. 66 dated 27-10-25, File No. 25/1/15, Vol-2/1782-24 of 1924, Bundle No.85, Serial No.1564, Special Branch List-2, Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Peshawar, p-44, Hereafter cited Peshawar Archives.
- 6- Ibid. p-25.
- 7- Ibid. Confidential Report No. 2489/1782-I.B., Diary No. 71 dated 29-10-1925, File No.25/1/15, vol-2/1782-24 of 1924, pp-52, 53.
- 8- The Aligarh National School was popularly called Jamia Millia, Aligarh and was founded by Maulana Mahmoodul Hassan. The School was later shifted to Delhi. The chief aim of this institution was to revive the spirit of freedom from British domination.
- 9- Op.cit. Confidential Report No.2489/1782-I.B., Diary No.71 of 29-10-1925, File No.25/1/15, Vol-2/1782-24 of 1924, pp.47-49. See also Abdul Ghaffar: *Zama Jond aw JaddoJahad*, pp-183-193.
- 10- Note on the Azad School Utmanzai, File No 1782 of 1931, B.No. 85, S. No. 1569, special Branch List-2, Peshawar Archives, p-1.
- 11- Ahmad: *KhudaiKhidmatgaarTahreek*, Op. Cit. p-7.
- 12- Ibid.
- 13- Ibid. p-9.
- 14- Ibid. p-10.
- 15- Ibid. pp-11,12.
- 16- Extract from the Superintendent of Police Peshawar, Confidential Diary dated 7-6-1924, File No. 25/1/15, Vol.-2/1782-24 of 1924, B.No. 85, S. No. 1564, special Branch List-2, Peshawar Archives, p-8.
- 17- Extract from the Superintendent of Police Peshawar Special Diary No.130-S.B. dated 5-8-1924, File No. 25/1/15, Vol.-2/1782-24 of 1924, B.No. 85, S. No. 1564, special Branch List-2, Peshawar Archives, p-13.

- 18- Internal Section Diary No.85 dated 22-4-1927, File No.25/1/15, Vol.2/1782-24 of 1924, B.No.85, S.No.1564, Special Branch List-2, Peshawar Archives, p-99.
- 19- Letter No.4255/1782 dated 4-8-1933 from Assistant to I.G.P. to Chief Secretary, File No 1782 of 1930, B.No.85, S.No. 1565, Special Branch list-2, Peshawar Archives, p-245.
- 20- The Daily *Sarhad* dated 13-7-1933, File No 1782 of 1930, B.No.85, S.No. 1565, Special Branch list-2, Peshawar Archives, p-227.
- 21- Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Azad Madrassa Utmanzai, Internal Section Diary No.66 dated 27-10-1925, File No.25/1/15, Vol.2/1782-24 of 1924, B.No.85, S.No.1564, Special Branch List-2, Peshawar Archives, p-44.
- 22- Internal Section Diary No.85 dated 22-4-1927, File No.25/1/15, Vol.2/1782-24 of 1924, B.No.85, S.No.1564, Special Branch List-2, Peshawar Archives, pp-98-101.
- 23- http://jmi.ac.in/aboutjamia/profile/history/historical_note-13.
- 24- The Annual Report of the *AnjumanIslahulAfaghana* for the year 1927, File No.25/1/15, Vol.2/1782-24 of 1924, B.No.85, S.No.1564, Special Branch List-2, Peshawar Archives, p-103.
- 25- Ahmad, *KhudaiKhidmatgarTahreek*. op.cit. p-7.
- 26- Note on the Azad School Utmanzai, File No. 1782 of 1931, B.No. 85, S.No. 1569, Special Branch List-2, Peshawar Archives, p-1.
- 27- Translation of Examination and other papers found during search of Azad School Utmanzai, File No 1782 of 1930, B.No. 85, S.No.1565, Special Branch List-2 Peshawar Archive, p-145.
- 28- Ibid.
- 29- Ibid.
- 30- Ibid. p-147.
- 31- Ibid.
- 32- Ibid. p-153.
- 33- Ibid. p-149.
- 34- Amir Nawaz Jalya, Azad Islamiya School, Utmanzai. A Translation from an Urdu Pamphlet, Address: Muhammad Ashraf, Iqbal Steam Press Peshawar, n.d., B.No. 85, S.No. unknown, Special Branch List-2, pp-1-5
- 35- Letter No.4255/1782 dated 4-8-1933 from Assistant to I.G.P to Chief Secretary to NWFP, File No.1782 of 1930, B.No.85, S.No.1565, Special Branch List-2, Peshawar archives, pp-245-247.
- 36- File No.1782 of 1930, B.No.85, S.No.1565, Special Branch List-2, Peshawar archives, p-249.
- 37- Letter from Gopichand to Devi Das Gandhiji dated 31-5-1934, File No. 1782/25/1/15 Vol.2 of 1934, B.No.85, S.No.1566, Special Branch list-2, Peshawar Archives, p-11.
- 38- Inspector C.I.D. Political Section dated 10-8-1934, File No. 1782/25/1/15 Vol.2 of 1934, B.No.85, S.No.1566, Special Branch list-2, Peshawar Archives, p-25 (page no to be confirmed from original).
- 39- Report of Inspector Political Section dated 15-3-1935, File No. 1782/25/1/15 Vol.2 of 1934, B.No.85, S.No.1566, Special Branch list-2, Peshawar Archives, p-27.
- 40- NWFP Secret Abstract of Intelligence No.14 dated 2-4-1935, File No. 1782/25/1/15 Vol.2 of 1934, B.No.85, S.No.1566, Special Branch list-2, Peshawar Archives, p-29.
- 41- C.I.D Daily Diary dated 21-8-2936, File No. 1782/25/1/15 Vol.2 of 1934, B.No.85, S.No.1566, Special Branch list-2, Peshawar Archives, pp-87-91.
- 42- CID Daily Diary dated 11-3-2937, File No. 1782/25/1/15 Vol.2 of 1934, B.No.85, S.No.1566, Special Branch list-2, Peshawar Archives, p-103.
- 43- NWFP Secret Abstract of Intelligence No.21 dated 24-5-1937, File No. 1782/25/1/15 Vol.2 of 1934, B.No.85, S.No.1566, Special Branch list-2, Peshawar Archives, p-119).
- 44- The "Milap", Lahore, dated 10-3-1938, Report by Publicity officer, NWFP, File No. 1782/25/1/15 Vol.2 of 1934, B.No.85, S.No.1566, Special Branch list-2, Peshawar Archives, p-133.
- 45- C.I.D Daily Diaries, 1938, File No. 1782/25/1/15 Vol.2 of 1934, B.No.85, S.No.1566, Special Branch list-2, Peshawar Archives, pp-135-145.