

PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt / Egyptology

THE BRITISH FORWARD POLICY AND A CASE OF THE POLITICAL SYSTEM AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF DERA GHAZI KHAN DISTRICT 1849-1947

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Abdul Sattar Adnan, Dr. Nida Fatima, Naila Naz Lalwani, Nasiba Bibi. The British Forward Policy And A Case Of The Political System And The Administration Of Dera Ghazi Khan District 1849-1947 -- PalArch's Journal Of Archaeology Of Egypt/Egyptology 20(1), 413-421. ISSN 1567-214x

Keywords: Dera Ghazi Khan, Sikh, British, Administration, Tribal, Feudal, Etc.

ABSTRACT

Dera Ghazi Khan was the part of Derajat before the annexation of Punjab in 1849 during Sikh rule. British forces crossed the Indus during the great game after 1840 and entered in North West Frontier Province. British forces also defeated Sikhs during the 2nd Sikh War in 1849 and occupied Punjab. Now they reached across the Indus and faced the different Baloch warrior tribes. When they reached here, these tribes continuously created troubles for the British Government and it was the need of time to bring peace in the area and maintain law and order in the region. Keeping in mind, the seriousness of the situation British Government made to use different policies to achieve their aims and objectives¹. After the downfall of the Mughal Empire, British occupied the whole Indian Sub-Continent. Indian Sub-Continent ranges to the river Indus to the foot of the mountain ranges which separates the plains of the Indus valley from the plateaus of Afghanistan and Kalaat. These mountain ranges shaped a huge irregular of belt extending from the Khagan glen , west of Kashmir , round district of Peshawar, Kohat and Bannu and in a long stretched southward down the Indus valley to the Sindh seaboard near Karachi, measuring about 1200 miles².

INTRODUCTION

Basically, this research article covers the circumstances and events of the invasion of the British forces west of the Indus River and the occupation of Dera Ghazi Khan with the annexation of Punjab and the advance towards Balochistan, how the British forces and the policy makers of the British government established their grip on the region by dividing the local tribes and eliminating their power and the skills, policies, techniques and strategies adopted to achieve this are explained in this article.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is based on historical method. Descriptive method of research has been used in this research. Qualitative method has been used to make this research authentic. For this purpose, both Primary and Secondary sources have been used.

DISCUSSION

British forces faced strong resistance in the tribal area of Dera Ghazi Khan due to the well organized and armed Baloch tribes. Before the British aggression these Baloch tribes of Dera Ghazi Khan were against Sikh violence. They tried to stop them and started their resistance and to get rid of Sikh Government but Diwan Sawan Mal took at once action. He attacked the Buzdar. The Qaisrani tribe was also against Sikh Dynasty, joined hands with Buzdars along with Bugti tribe and started an endless series of attacks on Sikhs which made them utterly helpless in this area³. After Diwan Sawan Mal, his son Diwan Moolraj became Governor of Multan and Dera Ghazi Khan. In the meanwhile the British had been able to get control of the Punjab including D.G Khan. Moolraj was arch enemy of the British. He strongly resisted their occupation of Multan with the joint help of Hindus, Muslims and the Sikhs settled in the area⁴. The British Regime on the other hand, was fully supported by Nawab of Bahawalpur and Khosa tribe of Dera Ghazi Khan. Jalal Khan Leghari stood by the side of the resisting tribes. The British army, under the leadership of General Courtland defeated Launga Mal of D.G Khan. This is how the Sikh Empire came to an end in Multan and Dera Ghazi Khan⁵. In the year 1848, General Courtland was given the duties of the first Deputy Commissioner of Dera Ghazi Khan. Ghulam Haider Khosa provided full support to the British taking over Dera Ghazi Khan, while the Mazari Sardars welcomed the British. Qaisrani and Buzdar tribes kept on putting up strong resistance against the British. In 1853, J.B Hudson led the military operation against them. In this battle, near about nine hundred men of these tribes were massacred. The Buzdar tribe revolted once again in 1857, and as before, their revolt was crushed, resulting in heavy casualties. Despite facing heavy loss of life several tribes of Dera Ghazi Khan and Rajanpur Districts, especially, Khitran, Qaisrani and Buzdar continued their struggle which harmed the British. In the last of the battles of Fort Munro, British Army used cannons against the Khitrans. This fight resulted in heavy loss of life and damage to the property of the Baloch tribes⁶. After these bloody episodes of battles the British Government decided to change their policy of direct tussle and adopted the policy of divide and rule. Rivalries and conflicts among the tribes were fanned and they were encouraged to fight against one another. This policy proved successful enough. Even then Buzdar, Khitran and Marri tribes did not stop

their resistance against the British and caused them enormous tension. With a view to control this situation, Roberts Sandeman, Deputy Commissioner of Dera Ghazi Khan met all the tribal chiefs, and obliged them by his generous favors on their chiefs. Ghulam Haider Gurchani was made the chief of his tribe. Sardar Imam Bakhsh Mazari was given the title of Sir by the British Government. Near about all the tribal Sardars of this region were favored somehow. As a return for their cooperation, they were gifted huge estates. Sandeman was not highly educated but he proved himself an able administrator. He introduced the Jirga system in Dera Ghazi Khan in which Baloch tribes settled their disputes among themselves. This system is still in practice in some areas. The highest mountain peak of Dera Ghazi Khan Fort Munro is also situated in this area. This name was given by Sandeman after the name of General Munro, as he was he commissioner of Multan⁷. In Dera Ghazi Khan, From North to South are the Qasranis, Buzdars, Nutkani, Sori Loand, Khosa, Leghari and Gorchani, Darishak and Mazari were populated in the District.⁸ Pottinger, famous traveler, A.D 1838, wrote that the Balochs were divided into three branches, the Barohi, Rind and Mughsi, and gave a list of the Rind tribes, in which all the tribes resided in this district⁹. He explained that all the tribes were at continual war with one another and kept no engagements. These tribes share many common characters with their cousins having certain distinguishing customs and rituals. There is no considerable difference between the Sulemani dialect of Balochi and the Makrani and Rakhshani dialects. Most of these tribes were also autonomous and independent and take pride in their dialect¹⁰.

Tehsil	Tribe	Number in the plains	Number in the hills	Total
Sangarh (Taunsa)	Qaisrani	3841		3841
	Buzdar			
	Nutkani	6305		6305
D.G Khan	Sori Loand	11087	4	11091
	Khosa	24286	737	25023
	Leghari	20410	1765	22175 ¹¹

In the beginning Buzdar tribe was separate and after some time adopted the traditions of the native tribes of Koh-e-Suleman were sharing some features with other tribes of Balochistan and some distinctive features could be found. At the top of the tribe is the Tummandar, inherited arbitrator upon all matters of dispute in time of peace, and leader in time of war. The tribe is further divided into segments (phalli), each of which has its own headman, called "Mukaddam". No business of importance can be carried out by the Tummandar without discussion with the Mukaddam. A system of responsibility is upheld which runs through the tribes, and ensures the harmonious making of the whole. Power of the Tummandar is unlimited, having the impunity. Before the tribes came under British control, the Tummandar could not announce peace or war without the advice of his council of Mukaddam, but when war was declared he was charged with conduct of it. Every member of the tribe was bound to serve military service and to pay to the chief's income, and he was permitted to take a share of the product of the land authorized by the British Government¹².

These tribes are sensitive in regard to their women but their customs in regards to marriage and betrothal are very detrimental to social progress. They are perpetually at war each other. They possessed bravery and courage, and admire such qualities in others. Men of the same party will stand by one another's in danger. To their minds hospitality is the first of qualities. Any person who can make his way in to their dwellings will not only be safe but will be kindly received¹³.

In the Indian sub-continent, two strategic schools of thoughts were described and defined British India's imperial policy in its North Western frontier region. The Lawrence system or 'the close border policy' argued against any British extending to the North West beyond River Indus. The disastrous defeat of the British in first Afghan War (1839-42) and the tragically horrifying episodes at Kalaat were fresh in the mind of the British Government. It created a strong feeling against any critical interference within tribes. Governor General Lord Dalhousie known for a strong personal leadership qualities, on-spot decision making, strong-arm related methods, impartially between the communities and a material progress including canal irrigation, constructing roads, buildings and bridges. John Lawrence progressed the managing of British India in the same design. The trans-Indus plains between the Indus and the hills were divided, for administrative purpose, into five districts, extending from north to south; the district of Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan and Dera Ghazi Khan. Another was Hazara district and these become the frontier district of the Punjab region. In the beginning, these districts were directly under the control of the Board of Administration of the Punjab Government, but later on, they were divided into two divisions, the Peshawar Division in 1850 and the Derajat Division in 1861 under the management of commissioner. Whereas, the forward policy which was formulated by British Government through a network of friendly Sardar and rulers in the North West of the Sub-continent, largely dependent upon British regime for their protection¹⁴.

The British Strategy Under Closed Border System

In the beginning British opinion of the Baloch were that they did not relate them with irrigation and agriculture. The political economy of the Bloch's is rooted in the mixing of pastoral herding, agriculture, trade and raiding as cornerstone of their earning. There were three sources of water for agriculture purposes in the plateaus of Koh-e- Suleman ranges or in adjacent territories. The other way of irrigation in addition, "Kala Pani" in some parts of Baloch Hills, is by "Karez" which underground water courses were carrying water through channels which were dug into the slopes of hill. Cultivation was most fully developed on the hill torrents that dominated the skirts (Daman) of the mountains all along the Derajat Frontier¹⁵. Sardar Jamal Khan Leghari invested on famous Maneka canal of D.G Khan as it was extended. Both Legharies and British Government took keen interest to invest in the irrigation of land to make them profitable. Consequently, the authority of the Baloch chiefs or Tummandars' was dependent upon the three basic sources of livelihood of the Baloch tribes, i.e. to prepare new grazing grounds for the herds of their tribes, to check the three basic ways of irrigation, and to lead raids in plains in times of draught¹⁶. The British came to know the significance of irrigation water as a mean of political control upon the tribes of the

Frontier Border. They designed a strategy to settle these wild men who lived in the areas of mountain and hills in the Indus basin plains at last came to depend on irrigation not definite line separating the plains from the hills. British Government was successful enough in bringing the Baloch leaders into direct investment on the plains and thus more directly into the control of British authority. Hence the purpose was achieved in this way.

The British Policy of State Land for Reinforcement of British Rules

British military campaigns against the Buzdar mainly pastoral tribe occupying the north of Dera Ghazi Khan Frontier suggested a growing British awareness of the importance of agriculture and irrigation in defining relation with frontier Baloch chiefs. The British in the start of their government viewed the Buzdar as a tribe limited mostly to the hills but later on came to know that they also had a hold on “Kala Pani” in the hills. Minchin introduced a policy in the start of 1860's investing direct, self-supporting on canal on the plains of Baloch chiefs themselves. Minchin earlier tempted Musso Khan Nutkani, a wealthy Baloch Sardar of the north of Dera Ghazi Khan, who had was ally of Sikhs before capture to invest in canal construction. Some of the chiefs were promised to dig new canals or renew old ones, the cost to be fiddled by the applicants, in the form of rent free lease for duration of years of the barren land to be brought under cultivation via these canals¹⁷.

Amid the era before the British, the Leghari tribe arose as one of the most strong among the Derajat tribes as a result of a series of accord with the state, on the plains, and armed tussle with other tribes, especially the Khosas and the Gorchanis. At the time of adjoining, the Leghari Chief could govern an army of five thousand fighters from five sections of his tribe residing in the mountain. Jamal Khan Leghari declared siege to a gamut of different ways of earnings. The Leghari chief had penetration both to hill torrents and canal lands in the heath, as well as grazing lands in the mountains. They restrained, in addition, Kala Pani Lands in the valley of Barkhan, in the mountains. The British and the Leghari chief both had a potentially strong political inclination in the agricultural conversion of these lands. The rest of the chiefs also pursued the same line of action and contended for the re-excavation of another scheme named “Dhundhi” canal in the Southern part of Dera Ghazi Khan District.

The suggestions of the policies put forward by the British in the first stage were successful in Sindh, and had some success in Punjab. Unluckily, in the Trans-frontier tribes the workings of the deputy commissioner were mortally ceased by the restriction to ordeal the frontier borders. District commissioners were never permitted to endanger their lives farther the border, or to dream of its lengthening farther present limits. Lieutenant, Sandman entered on his duties was not learned in the law but had abundance of good sense, patience and a unique aptitude for frontier work he was cautious and through in his judicial probing and particularly successful in tackling with Jirgas or community of village or tribal lords and institution, he afterwards improved. Being a Deputy Commissioner of frontier district, he possessed a marvelous authority, given the general instructions, the control of district superior and a great freedom of appeal. The deputy commissioner was commanding in all his fields, judicial or administrative. He

was also given the authority of both Judge of appeal in criminal type or civil cases. He served as District magistrate chief of the police, jail, and high officer of the revenue department and of every administrative officer at local level what so ever may be the matters.

He realized the fact that tribal Sardars are powerful and he maintained that they could become a potential instrument of Imperial control. Likewise, he directed his energies to the settlement of the present quarrels and the re-establishment of the position and prestige of the Tummandars. He first of all took in hand the Baloch tribes on the British side of the border. As a second option, with the support of his assistance commissioner Rajanpur Mr. R Bruce, they were able to organize these tribes under competent chiefs and headmen, mitigated their differences, strengthened them by giving them work in canal excavations. He came to know the great potential in the person of Imam Bakhsh Khan Mazari, Tummandar of Mazari tribe owing to two reasons. Firstly, he was acting as middleman between the British and the Marri Bugti tribes with whom the Mazaris have close ties, the Mazari's often grazed their cattle's in the Bugtians, while the Bugtis in the dry season brought their cattle down to the river into Mazari lands¹⁸. Bugti named Ghulam Hussain Massori Bugti with a mixed gathering of Marris, Bugti's and Khitran's had made many raids and murders in the upper Sindh and Kachi Frontiers as well as in the Dera Ghazi Khan District. British found that Sardar Jamal Khan Leghari was providing a constant shelter to Ghulam Hussain Massori and his companions. Another most notable element was that the British had in mind that Jamal Khan had brought under his direction executive engineer irrigation and canals, which greatly increased his power. The tribes who were on the British side reorganized with the motivation of their new deputy commissioner were immediately called to arms along with 30 troops from the armed forces. They followed trouble creator group of Ghulam Hassan Massori Bugti and his companions and seized the raiders in the Chachar Pass. Ghulam Hussain along with 120 of his followers was beheaded and about 200 persons were taken as prisoner. Seven British soldiers were killed and 60 others were injured. The 200 hundred prisoners were captured by Sandeman and that was the consequences and causes of a new policy called forward policy which was named later on as Sandeman System also¹⁹.

The Creation of the Forward Policy

Sandman sent a letter to Sir Henry Green, the then political superintendent of the Sindh frontier binding him to get from the Khan of Kalaat, damages for the injury done by his fighter subjects. Sir Henry Green excused on the basis that the Marries were the nominally the subjects of Khan. Keeping in mind this situation, Sandeman felt satisfied in dealing withal these matters himself. He made it clear that the prisoners would not be set free until the chief appeared in person and submitted his reply. The chiefs, on the promise that they would be respectably treated, complied summon and a meeting was held at Rajanpur. He it was agreed that the attacking tribes should strictly remain away from committing heinous crimes in Dera Ghazi Khan and will keep the routes secure and safe from British territory to the tribes area. In return Sandman, on behalf of the British Government stroke a bargain to give service to a small number of tribal horsemen

to be recruit mainly in keeping up linkage between the chiefs and the British authorities.

The arrangement was harshly excoriated at the time by outside critics as they considered it a kind of black-mailing but it was an arrangement which was fully justified by its fruits. Peace was secured upon the frontier and free connection started between the populations on both sides of the border. Sandman followed Pathan model and organized tribunals, which was composed of chiefs and tribal head men. In spite of the fact, that at large peace was insured but, tribes kept the traditional conflict alive to some extent without being involved in military engagements.

The Launching of Political Administrative Set up of the British

In a nutshell, Sandeman's forward policy may be elaborated as under:

- To bring peace in the land
- To protect freedom of the British forces movement
- To secure the passes and roads
- To have indirect influence of the Government of British without a considerable and constant military involvements and capture the territory, if the situation demands in the region.

Sandman got these goals with marvelous skills by using three different administrative steps. First step was to use Sardars by supporting them financially, commend them with administrative functions, decorating them with fine sounding titles, partly, enticing them with privileges, and guaranteeing their position and social status even in a line of succession. Secondly, he introduced intra-tribunal counsels of elders called Jirga among the Baloch as a ways to peacefully settle the disputes and problems between the tribes of the area. Third measure was to introduce a police and administrative machinery (Levy system), comprising of warriors from the tribes concerned. This tribal levies system was meant to develop feeling of judicial responsibility among the common men of tribes. They were held responsible to the British rather than the Sardars. The Sandman system proved to be awfully winning in the frontier districts of Dera Ghazi Khan and was even practiced in Balochistan in the following years later. This is how the British Government obtained their targets and objectives by giving a sense of responsibility to the Frontier Baloch tribes and empowered the Tummandar and hence raised their social position and status as well.²⁰

CONCLUSION

English Government adopted the policy of give and take or divide and rule. Hence British Government introduced Tumandara System. The word Tuman is a Turkish word which means, an army of 10 thousand men. So British Government made Head or Tumandar of every tribe and granted lands and estates and strengthened them. These Tumandars were responsible to settle their internal disputes and be loyal to the British Government. Heads or Tumandars were also responsible to collect taxes and sending it to the British Government. British Government strengthened the feudal to such an extent that they had their personal jails and had authority to play the role of mediator in the internal disputes of the people of their

tribes. They got constructed a “Jarga” Hall in Fort Munro and the people were so much horrified that they could not go against them or their decisions. If someone disobeyed them, they were thrown into jails. English Government ensured that these warrior tribes could not be able to unite themselves under one umbrella that is why they never allowed one tribe to develop friendly relations with other tribe. So these tribes continued to indulge themselves in conflicts and fights among themselves. A Deputy Commissioner was appointed on them to solve their problems. Deputy Commissioner recommended those tribes or people for honors and estates who showed loyalties to the British Government and protected their interests. It was a common practice of English Government to appoint those persons as “Numberdar, Tumandar and Ziladar” and the people were bound to obey them. The tribes possessed a sense of unity that if a single member of their tribe was wronged the entire tribe stood by him. Briefly, under the expansionist thinking and ambitions of the British government, the British forces continued to expand in the west and before entering Baluchistan, engaged the tribes of Dera Ghazi Khan and established a new political system in the region in the form of Tamandari. Bills of officers and deputy commissioners etc. have been established. And it was maintained until the partition of India in 1947. Which is still clawing in some form or another.

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