

AN ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL CONDITIONS AND TRANSFORMATION IN DIR STATE (1925-1969)

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Abstract

This paper examines the social conditions and transformation in Dir State from 1925 to 1969 focusing on key aspects such as education, health care, *jargah* system, women rights, *baigar* (forced labour) and religion and other social fabrics during the reign of Nawab Muhammed Shah Jahan Khan until his ouster in 1960. The study also examines the changes that occurred in this area during his rule and the subsequent shift after the Government of Pakistan took control. The analyzed period was marked by significant developments and challenges in various social areas that affected the lives of people in Dir State. By analyzing historical records, archival documents, conducting personal interviews and scholarly sources, this research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the social dynamics, reforms and challenges that shaped Dir State during these pivotal years. Through this analysis, the article sheds light on the historical significance of the transformation in the state of Dir and its significance in the wider context of the social history of the region.

Key Words: *Jargah* System, Women's Rights, *Baigar*, Religion, Healthcare, Education, *Dushmani* or *Tarburwali*

Introduction

Located in the Hindu Kush Mountains of Pakistan, the Dir region has a rich history dating back thousands of years. The Yusufzi tribe played a significant role in shaping the social and tribal structure of Dir after migrating to the area in the 16th century. In the following century, Sayyid Akhund Ilyas Painsa Khel, founded the Dir State, which later expanded by annexations.

Umara Khan, the ruler of Jandul, posed a threat to Dir independence, leading the British Raj to intervene in the region to protect its strategic interests. They supported the Nawabs of Dir to maintain control over the area and protect the vital route to Chitral. However, this support has led to a perception among some locals that the Nawabs were British stooges. In 1947, there was a significant shift in the relationship between the newly established state of Pakistan and the Nawabs of Dir. On 8 November 1947, Nawab Shah Jahan Khan signed the accession agreement with Pakistan. During the Nawab's rule, Dir followed the Pukhtun code of conduct with some modifications in its social affairs until 1960.

Together with other princely states, the state of Dir saw a decrease in autonomy as a result of the One Unit policy's implementation. The Nawab's authority was reduced, and the central government of West Pakistan took over the management of Dir. During this time, the Nawab's position became primarily ceremonial.

However, under the Nawab's rule, the people of the area faced a despotic regime in which their basic rights such as freedom of speech, movement, access to healthcare and education were curtailed. This authoritarian rule continued until the Dir Rebellion forced General Ayub Khan to replace Nawab Shah Jahan Khan with his son Muhammad Shah Khisru Khan in 1960.

After 1960, Dir witnessed a significant transformation in its social landscape. The government of Pakistan started various developmental projects, including the construction of schools, colleges and roads, which were not previously built during Shah Jahan's reign. The official language was also changed from Persian to Urdu. In addition, political activities were allowed and flourished in Dir. Muhammad Shah Khisru Khan retained the nominal title of Nawab of Dir until the merger of Dir state with Pakistan on 28 July 1969. This merger further integrated Dir into the fabric of Pakistan and brought about changes that facilitated progress and development in the region.

Social conditions in Dir were deeply influenced by its tribal structure and traditional Pashtun code of conduct. The Yusufzi tribe, along with other cultures and civilizations that flourished in the region for thousands of years, contributed to a diverse social fabric. There, the arrival of the Yusufzi tribe in the 16th century played a vital role in shaping the social dynamics of the area. Under the rule of the Nawabs, especially Nawab Shah Jahan Khan, social conditions were marked by despotism and deprivation of basic rights for the local population. Basic

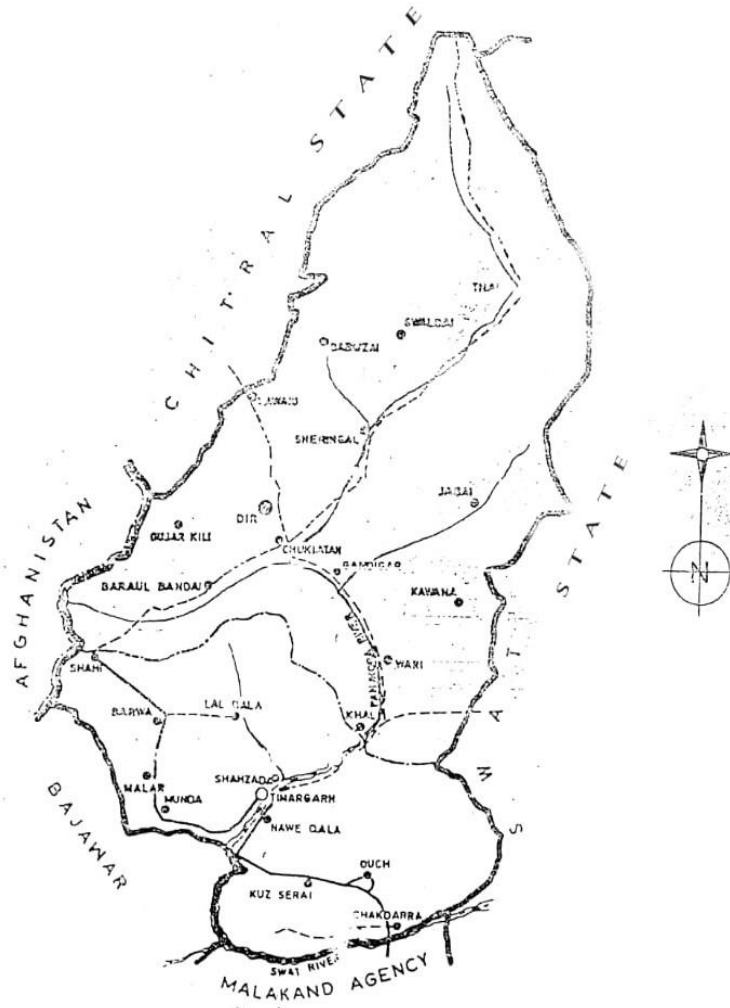
freedoms such as freedom of speech and movement were curtailed, limiting the development and progress of the people.

Education

Education plays a vital role in the development of any society. Without education, nations cannot progress. A nation's level of civilization is often measured by its educational progress. Dir was an ancient state founded by a religious figure. As a result, religious education flourished in Dir, but modern education was completely neglected from the very beginning. No ruler of Dir tried to establish modern educational institutions. However, some individuals outside Dir tried to establish educational institutions but failed. One notable example is Abdul Ghaffar Khan, commonly known as Bacha Khan. Around 1924 he tried to establish a school in Khal with the help of Fazal Mahmud Makhfi. Unfortunately, the school was burnt down by Nawab Shah Jahan Khan, instigated by the political agent in Malakand.¹

When Nawab Shah Jahan Khan became the Nawab, it is widely believed that he will also continue the politics of his ancestors and will not give priority to education nor will he build a single school as he wished to keep the people in the dark so that he could control them easily. This opinion and perception is greatly exaggerated. Although he did not pay due attention to the promotion of education, but he did not prohibit or completely ignore education. He tried to build educational institutions, but due to the constant difficulties and economic backwardness of Dir, it was not possible for him to establish and maintain schools throughout the state. He was well aware of the importance of modern education and therefore sent his son Shah Khisru Khan abroad for higher education.²

The people of Dir could get religious education anywhere they wanted, but because of the very hard economic life few people received religious education. Only children from wealthy families received religious education. Some people also sent their children to other areas for religious as well as modern education.³ The Political Agent for Dir, Swat and Chitral wrote in his memorandum dated 12 March 1940 that recently the Nawab of Dir had sent a delegation and requested for a loan of two lakhs of rupees as the state expenditure had recently increased. The delegation forwarded many reasons for getting the loan, one of them was the construction of the Anglo-Vernacular Middle School in Dir. The founding date of the school is unknown. He further wrote that Nawab hopes to compete with the Wali of Swat in developmental projects.⁴



Dir State Map

According to Fazal Zaman Shelman, in 1946, when a difference of opinion took place between the leaders of Khudai Khidmetgar and Fazl Mahmud Makhfi, the latter personally went to meet the leaders. Upon hearing this news, Nawab Shah Jahan called Makhfi and appointed him as the head of the School in Dir Khas and paid him a monthly salary of 120 rupees.⁵ According to Maulana Mahmud al-Hassan, there was a middle school in Dir Khas and also many private schools but the Nawab

did not like them. The Nawab announced that a primary school would soon be opened, but for whatever reason, he did not do so.⁶ One school was not enough for most of the Dir population (as late as 1941 the population was 119,203)⁷ but this shows that the Nawabs were not against education. Due to external and internal threats, economic problems and the influence of mullahs, the Nawab did not give a suitable space to modern education.

In 1960, Nawab Shah Jahan's deposition by the Government of Pakistan marked a turning point in Dir State, leading to an educational revolution. Ashraf Durani's account of the year 1961 revealed significant advancements in education within the region. Among the population of Dir, there were nineteen graduates, a noteworthy milestone that included one female. Furthermore, four hundred and fourteen individuals had successfully completed their matriculation exams, with three women among them. The push for education continued, resulting in eight hundred and eighty-eight people achieving middle-level education, including twenty-nine women. In the realm of primary education, six hundred and forty-three individuals, alongside twenty-seven women, had passed their examinations.⁸

The impact of this educational transformation was further amplified by the religious institutions in Dir. A substantial number of two thousand, nine hundred and thirty-nine individuals, including thirteen hundred and seventy-seven women, were now receiving formal education through these institutions. The advancement of education in the region not only empowered its residents with knowledge and skills but also opened doors to new opportunities for personal and economic growth. This educational revolution fostered a brighter future for both male and female in Dir State.⁹ The above figure shows the social backwardness of Dir, but it also shows that people have shown enthusiasm to get education and besides men, women also tried to get education in a very conservative society.

As stated before, Nawab Shah Jahan was deposed in 1960, an era of modernization in the education sector began in Dir. In a short span of nine years, 157 schools were opened by the Government of Pakistan: ten of them were high schools, seventeen secondary schools, and one hundred and thirty primary schools. There were seven hundred and seventy teachers for sixteen thousand students. The number of the students is exaggerated, because how was it possible to accommodate such a large number of students in the given schools. Secondly, people were mostly against modern education so how is it possible to get admissions in such large numbers. Even in modern days it can be very

difficult. Teachers were mostly recruited from settled districts of Pakistan.¹⁰ In 1969, the Government of Pakistan opened a degree college in Timargarh, which proved to be a milestone in educational progress.¹¹ The government of Pakistan also provided scholarships to promote education in Dir, as the government wanted to avoid any kind of disturbance.¹²

The literacy rate in Dir remained very low between 1951 and 1961 but improved since then from 0.91 to 1.27 percent, which later increased over time.¹³ It means that the literacy rate during Shah Jahan's reign was very low but not zero. Due to the influence of the mullahs, one of the issues back then was the lack of desire among the populace to pursue modern education. They were vehemently against building schools in their communities.¹⁴

Access to education was indeed limited for common people due to their low social and economic backgrounds. Modern education systems were often available only to those who could afford to pay school fees and buy books, which created significant barriers for many families living in rural areas and villages. The distance between these villages and schools further exacerbated the issue, making it challenging for children to attend schools regularly. As a result, families faced financial difficulties in meeting their basic needs, such as food, shelter, and healthcare. In such circumstances, education became a secondary priority for them as survival took precedence. Many families had to allocate their limited resources to support the family's immediate needs, leaving little or no room for investing in education. The lack of access to education and the prevalence of financial struggles contributed to widespread illiteracy in the region of Dir and other similar areas. Illiteracy, in turn, perpetuated the cycle of poverty and limited social mobility, as individuals were unable to access higher-paying job opportunities or improve their living conditions through education.

Health

Throughout the history of the Dir state, until the time of Nawab Shah Jahan, no ruler attempted to establish hospitals. However, the British Government of India established a hospital in Chakdarah for the first time in 1895.¹⁵ The people of Dir usually used local and traditional remedies like herbs and plants for treatment. Common diseases were *shakandarl*, *tukhay*, *kalusaray*, *tabgi*, *salanay*, *nanaki* etc. For example *guday war aghustawal* were used for *kalusara* patient. Most people believed in *dam ta 'wiz* (charms) and *babagan* (shrines).¹⁶

The Political Agent Dir, Swat and Chitral in his memorandum of 1940 writes that two years before the hospital at Dir was put on a proper foundation and a qualified doctor and processor employed but exact date of the establishment of the hospital is unknown. In 1939, a veterinary hospital was opened in Dir and a qualified veterinary assistant was placed in it.¹⁷ The veterinary hospital was known as *Da Sarwu Haspatal*. There were also dispensaries for dogs, in which the Nawab spent seventy thousand rupees annually. Dr. Khalil-u-Rahman and Hakim Faqir Ahmad were on duty at the Medical Hospital. A large number of patients came for treatment daily. These doctors visited different areas. When there was fear of disease spreading, precautions were usually taken to control it. In addition, doctors and *hakims* practiced privately.¹⁸

One hospital was not enough for a large population, nor did all people have access to the hospital due to the distance from the capital. Although most people say that Nawab Shah Jahan Khan did not establish a single hospital, the facilities of the hospital testify that he tried to build hospitals. So the common claim and belief of people of Shah Jahan Khan about establishing not a single hospital for human beings is baseless and biased. After the removal of Nawab Shah Jahan by the Government of Pakistan in 1960, the Government of Pakistan started the construction of more hospitals in Dir.

Between 1960 and 1969, four hospitals and seventeen dispensaries were established in various parts of the Dir state. Dir Hospital, Wari Hospital, Timergarah Hospital and Munda Hospital. Each hospital had one doctor, three clerks and one nurse. Serious patients were sent to populated areas of Pakistan.¹⁹ To address the healthcare challenges in Dir state, where a substantial number of patients were being treated daily as outpatients, it became apparent that there was a significant issue with accessibility and availability of medical services. People from remote areas had to travel long distances and wait for their turn, which often resulted in the absence of sufficient doctors to attend to everyone. As a consequence, a considerable number of patients were unable to receive the necessary medical attention and had to return without treatment.²⁰

To improve the situation, authorities took steps to establish multiple hospitals and dispensaries in the region. This initiative brought about some positive changes in terms of healthcare, but it was not enough to cater to the needs of the large population residing in Dir. Despite the establishment of these medical facilities, a significant portion of the population still lacked access to hospitals due to their remote locations and limited resources. As a result, many individuals in the region

continued to rely on traditional methods of treatment to address their health concerns. Traditional treatments and remedies have been an integral part of the local culture and practices for generations. The lack of accessible modern medical facilities and healthcare services left people with no choice but to resort to these traditional methods.

Languages

Before 1960, the official language of the Dir state was Persian, and education was primarily conducted in Persian. However, only the literate population could speak Persian fluently. Pashto, on the other hand, served as the *lingua franca* and was widely spoken across the region.

When Nawab Shah Jahan was deposed, significant changes occurred in the linguistic landscape of Dir. The Persian language was replaced by Urdu and English as the official languages.²¹ Over the next two decades, the majority of the residents in Dir became proficient in Pashto, which became the dominant language of communication. Interestingly, among the Pashto speakers, a small percentage (3%) also spoke Kuhistani, 1% spoke Farsi (Persian), and another 1% spoke Urdu, showcasing the linguistic diversity of the region.²²

With the establishment of modern educational institutions after Nawab Shah Jahan's expulsion, English was introduced in Dir. This resulted in some people gaining an understanding of the English language. Additionally, Urdu, which became one of the official languages, gained significant influence to the extent that it was even considered a religious language by some residents.

Religion

The region of Dir is predominantly inhabited by Sunni Muslims, but it is also home to people of other religions such as Hindus, Christians, and Sikhs. Among these communities, there are several families of Hindus residing in areas like Kumber, Mayar, and Nawagai.²³ An example that attests to the presence of Hindus in Dir is an incident in the Rabat area, where a Hindu shop was targeted and looted by a robber. When the Nawab (ruler or local leader) became aware of the incident, he took action and punished the perpetrator. This incident serves as evidence of the coexistence of different religious communities in Dir, with the Nawab ensuring justice and protection for the Hindu residents.²⁴

Despite the diversity of religious beliefs in the region, the people of Dir are known for their adherence to Pukhtu (also known as *Pukhtunwali*) a traditional ethical code and way of life followed by the Pashtun people. Pukhtu emphasizes principles such as hospitality, honor, courage, and justice. It is deeply ingrained in the social fabric of the region and shapes the behaviour and relationships of the people, regardless of their religious affiliation.

While the majority of the population in Dir follows Islam, it is essential to recognize that their religious practices may sometimes be influenced by superstitions rather than strictly adhering to religious tenets. This highlights the coexistence of various cultural elements within the broader framework of their religious identity.

***Baigar* or *Khatah Gatah* (forced labour)**

Baigar, a system of unpaid labour, was a common practice throughout the history of Dir State until its merger. Those who performed *baigar* were known as *baigaryan* singular *baigari*. Their services were utilized in various state works, including the construction of forts, roads, bridges, and other infrastructure projects. These laborours worked without receiving any payment and had to bring their own food. Missing a *baigar* day resulted in punishment, and the village khan or *malak* was accountable to the Nawab if any individual was absent. Certain segments of society, such as the Sultan Khel, Painsa Khel, *khans*, *malaks*, and religious figures, were exempted from participating in *baigar*. This system continued until 1960. The year in which Shah Khisru Khan announced the abolition of *baigar*.²⁵

The abolition of *baigar* led to various problems in the state. Tenants refused to provide unpaid labour to their landlords or landowners, and they began to claim ownership rights over the land where they lived. This change in dynamics led to armed clashes between tenants and landowners, with the dispute initially starting in the Adinzi area and spreading throughout the state.²⁶ Although *baigar* was not entirely abolished until 1969, the announcement by Shah Khisru Khan had already created awareness among the people about their rights. They started refusing to participate in *baigar*, which marked a positive step towards bringing about social changes in the lives of the people.

Status of women

In Pukhtun society, women were predominantly confined to their homes and primarily engaged in domestic chores. A Pashto proverb,

khazah ya da kur dah ya da gur (a woman has to be in home or in the grave), reflects the traditional view of women's roles within the household. The situation was similar in Dir, where women were perceived as one of the main causes of enmities.

Despite this confinement, women were still respected in Dir society, and the practice of "*pardah*" (seclusion or covering) was obligatory for them. However, women from poor families often worked alongside men in the fields.²⁷ If women needed to go outside of Dir, even with their husbands, fathers, or brothers, they required special permission from the *tahsildar* (a local administrative officer) to ensure their safety and prevent their smuggling from the Dir State.²⁸

Unfortunately, honour killings were not uncommon in Dir, where both men and women could be killed for suspected or confirmed illicit relations. The Nawab of Dir, Shah Jahan, appreciated those who carried out such killings and even encouraged the practice. If a man was accused of sexual harassment and subsequently killed, his murder was not to be avenged by his family. Widows had a challenging life, and if they chose to remarry, they were often limited to marrying within their deceased husband's family, such as his brother or a close relative.²⁹ Women had no right to inheritance, and any claims regarding inheritance were decided by a *jargah* (a traditional council of elders). Only the *nikah* (marriage) was conducted according to Islamic law. Men could divorce their wives without providing a genuine reason, but it was mandatory to inform the *tahsildar* about the divorce.³⁰

In the context of marriage, the father of the bride would receive money for his daughter's marriage expenses, and the amount was often demanded in public. Even the Nawab of Dir practiced this tradition, as demonstrated during his daughter's marriage ceremony. However, some changes came about when Shah Khisru Khan became the Nawab of Dir. For instance, if a woman was accused of having illicit relations, it had to be proven, and men could not kill women without proper witnesses.³¹ Despite these minor changes, the overall condition and roles of women remained largely unchanged until around 1969. The society was resistant to altering the position of women, and women themselves often believed that their primary purpose was to fulfill domestic duties. The influence of religious leaders (*mullas*) also contributed to the continued seclusion of women within Dir society.

The *Jargah* System

The *jargah* is a traditional institution in Dir State which plays a crucial role in resolving various issues and disputes within the tribes and communities. During the reign of Nawab Shah Jahan, the *jargah* system was highly influential, with its authority extending even to the village level. It was responsible for resolving cases related to women, loans, mortgages, murders, and injuries, and its decisions were respected and honoured by the Nawab.³²

The *jargah* held significant power in adjudicating various types of cases. These cases included matters concerning women's rights, disputes over land and property, loans, and criminal offenses like murders and injuries. Whenever a dispute arose, a *jargah* was appointed to hear the case in consultation with the *tahsildar* (local revenue officer). Once the *jargah* reached a decision, it was sent to the Nawab for approval. After obtaining the Nawab's approval, the *jargah*'s decision was implemented. If a party appealed against the *jargah*'s ruling, a new *jargah* reconsidered the case.³³

During the rule of Nawab Shah Khisru Khan, the *jargah* system underwent significant changes. He introduced the concept of a Central *Jargah*, known as "*luyah jargah*," headed by the Nawab himself. This central *jargah* comprised fourteen members, including prominent *khans* and *malaks* from various tribes of Dir, such as Sultan Khel, Painsa Khel, Tarklanri, and others. Notably, a member of the Pakistan government was also included in this central *jargah*.³⁴ One of the strategies involved in the establishment of the central *jargah*, was that their representative were bound or tried to show their loyalty to the Nawab and the government. Despite these efforts, the *jargah*'s deep-rooted position in society meant that its significance persisted until as late as 1969.

The *jargah* system in Dir State has been a vital institution for centuries, serving as a platform for dispute resolution and decision-making within tribes and communities. Its authority extended to various matters, including those concerning women, land, property, and criminal cases. Despite attempts to reform and centralize the system, the *jargah*'s influence endured due to its strong connections with local customs and traditions.

***Wesh* system and permanent land settlement**

Since the occupation of Dir by the Yusufzais, the land was distributed according to Shaikh Mali's system of "*wesh*." Under this

system, the people would change their abode and move to another place every five, seven, or ten years. This practice continued in Dir until the time of Nawab Shah Jahan. However, the system had several drawbacks. People did not consider their homes and land as permanent, which led to a lack of developmental work in the fields. Additionally, conflicts arose when some individuals refused to leave fertile and good land.³⁵

When Nawab Shah Jahan became the ruler of Dir, he decided to abolish the *wesh* system with the support of Sultan Khel and Painda Khel clans. Without their backing, this change would not have been possible.³⁶ According to Dr. Sultan-i-Rome, the *wesh* system was prevalent in Dir in April 1929.³⁷ After this time, the permanent settlement of land was established, but at the village level, the practice of "*garzindah wesh*" persisted until 1975.³⁸

The land distribution among the Pukhtuns followed a hierarchical structure. The land was divided between the sub-divisions of each tribe, known as "*tapah*." Each *tapah* was further divided among the various *khels* of the tribes, and individuals received a share called "*barkhah*." The same method in Dir divided all the Pukhtuns' country. Each primary division's component, or *dawtar*, was referred to as *tapah*. Each *tapah* was shared among the several tribes' *khels*. The division of each *khel's dawtar* among individuals was known as *barkhah*. Any individual who owns a piece of *dawtar* is referred to as a *dawtari*. A person was known as *faqir* if he lost his *dawtar*. After that, he is not allowed to speak at the tribal council. *Khel* received the portion based on the condition of the land, like *da ubu landay zmakah*, *shuwanra*, *zangal*, *kas*, and *Shurgarah*. Every *dawtari* owned a portion of each type of land. The land was measured in the local unit, like *pacha*, *rupai*, *paisah*, *taral*, *pau* etc.³⁹

Landed property played a significant role in a person's social status in the society. Losing one's land would lead to them no longer being considered a true Pukhtun. Moreover, if someone gave their property to their sons, it could strain their relationship. Selling land to outsiders was also frowned upon, as it was seen as a loss of self-esteem. The passage also mentioned "*serai*" land, which was owned by religious individuals. These lands were sometimes disputed among *khel* and were ultimately given to the religious class people.⁴⁰ A person who does not have complete control over his land is not regarded as a true Pukhtun. If persons transferred their property to their sons, they would lose their social standing. As a result, the relationship between the father and sons has not been good. When someone wanted to sell land, they were required to first sell it to their *tarbur*. He had every right to sell it to someone else if they decided not to buy it. Someone was referred to as *beghairatah*

(having no self-esteem) when he sold his land.⁴¹ Despite the abolition of the *wesh* system by Nawab Shah Jahan, the traditional land distribution practices remained unchanged until 1969.⁴²

***Dushmani* or *Tarburwali* (traditional enmity)**

In Pukhtun society, like in many other cultures, enmity (*dushmani*) has been a prevalent social issue. The root causes of such enmity have often been associated with three main factors: *zan* (women), *zar* (wealth), and *zamin* (land). These enmities have persisted for generations, leading to conflicts and feuds among various clans and families. During the rule of Nawab Shah Jahan Khan, measures were taken to control and address the issue of *dushmani*. The Nawab imposed heavy fines on those involved in violent conflicts as a means to discourage such behaviour. The strict rule of Nawab Shah Jahan Khan contributed to a significant reduction in traditional enmities within the Pukhtun society during his reign.

To further control *dushmani*, the Nawab implemented a system of double fines for those who engaged in more aggressive and violent actions. For instance, in Lajboke Miangan, the Nawab imposed double the standard fine, which served as a deterrent for potential aggressors.⁴³ In cases where a person was killed, and the identity of the killer was unknown, the entire village was held responsible for identifying the culprit or paying the fine. If the perpetrator managed to escape, the fine was extracted from their personal property. The burden of the fine solely rested on the murderer, and other family members were not held accountable for the crime.⁴⁴

It was observed that when a murderer sought asylum in another location, pursuing them was avoided to prevent further clan conflicts and retaliation. Instead, the cases of murder were mostly resolved through the traditional assembly of elders known as *jargah*.⁴⁵ During Nawab Shah Jahan Khan's rule, there was no formal written law, and the resolution of disputes was primarily based on traditional customs and Islamic law (*shari'ah*).⁴⁶ However, when Shah Khisru became the Nawab of Dir in 1963, he introduced written laws with minor modifications, but the laws related to *dushmani* or *tarburwali* (enmity) remained largely the same. Under Shah Khisru's rule, the decisions regarding murder cases were not as promptly addressed as during Nawab Shah Jahan's time, leading to prolonged proceedings.⁴⁷ The concept of "*tarbur*" was significant in Dir's society, where it was used interchangeably for both cousin and enemy. However, in the context of enmity, "*tarburwali*" primarily referred to enmity or rivalries between individuals or clans.

While *dushmani* remained a social evil in Pukhtun society, the control and management of this issue were more effective during Nawab Shah Jahan's reign, as its prevalence increased after his deposition. It is believed that Nawab Shah Jahan often decided murder cases according to Islamic law (*shari'ah*), although this practice was not consistently followed.

Social structure

During Shah Jahan's rule, the region of Dir was divided into two opposing groups or "*dalahs*" in Pashto. One group favoured Nawab Shah Jahan, while the other opposed him. The Sultan Khel and Painsa Khel were considered first-class citizens, while others were regarded as second-class. Sultan Khel and Painsa Khel were exempted from certain taxes like *ushr* and *baigar*. However, they still had to perform military duty when required by the state law.⁴⁸

To fulfill the military service requirement for the Nawab, individuals who held the position of *daftari* (*dawtari*) were liable to serve in the military during the time of need. Those with higher social status did not personally perform military service; instead, they sent their *malatars* to serve on their behalf. *Malatars* were individuals who either paid no rent or nominal rent to their landowners (*malak*) or were given land for the purpose of performing services for the landowners.⁴⁹

The Nawab gradually gained control over the *faqir* (religious beggars) and *malatar* by bringing them under his direct authority. The Nawab appointed *malaks* or *khans* to oversee specific areas, and the position of *malaks* changed approximately every three years. The appointment as a *malak* required paying a sum of money, ranging from Rs. 500 to Rs. 1000, to the Nawab as *pagrai* (the title of *malakship*).⁵⁰

In Dir, people adopted various occupations for economic reasons, and over time, these professions became their identities. This led to different social classes in Dir, such as traders (*paracha*), blacksmiths (*tarkan*), tailors (*darzi*), shopkeepers (*dukandar*), religious leaders (*imam*), carpenters (*chamyar*), weavers (*jula*), potters (*kulal*), and others.⁵¹

After 1960, tribal warfare came to an end, and the *mlatars* were used for state wars against other tribes, leading to a loosening of the rules governing their obligations. The power of Sultan Khel and Painsa Khel also diminished, and the government of Pakistan disregarded their previous status. As a result, the influence of other tribes, like Tarklanri,

increased, and they actively participated in politics. The status of *khans* and *malaks* was also reduced, and justice became delayed as the control over state affairs weakened.⁵²

Transportation System

Transportation indeed plays a crucial role in the development of a society, as it facilitates connectivity, exchange of ideas, and overall progress. The historical account provided highlights the significant changes in the transportation infrastructure of Dir. Before 1960, transportation infrastructure in Dir was lacking attention from its rulers. However, the British took the initiative to construct a road from Chakdarah to Lawari pass in 1895. Though built for military purpose, this road served as an essential link for the region, improving accessibility and connectivity.

When Nawab Shah Jahan Khan became the ruler of Dir, he recognized the importance of communication during the times of disturbances and took measures to connect each tehsil by roads. The introduction of bus services in 1932 further improved transportation within the region. These buses, known as "*dag buses*," were utilized for both passenger transport and postal services. The buses were under the control of Nawab, who also had personal cars for his own visits.⁵³

During this era, most people still traveled by foot, and animals like donkeys, horses, and mules were also used for transportation purposes. Although telephone services connected the state forts with each other, traditional methods like *damamah wahal* (beating drums) and *wur balawal* (lighting fires) were used as alarms during emergencies.⁵⁴ Electricity was initially provided to state buildings and a few houses, while common people used alternative sources like *latin*, *diwah*, and *litkay* for lighting. Access to information was limited, as only one newspaper was brought daily for Nawab, indicating the lack of a vibrant media landscape.⁵⁵

After 1960, there was a significant improvement in communication infrastructure. Over 300 miles of roads were constructed, facilitating better connectivity within and beyond Dir. Several post offices were established, and the press expanded its presence in Dir State, allowing for greater dissemination of information.⁵⁶

Hujrah, Jumat, Ashar, Milmastya

Hujrah and *jumat* (mosque) hold significant importance as meeting places in the culture of the Pukhtun people. These places served

as centers for discussing and deciding matters of common interest for the community. They were like community halls or *jargah* halls, where tribal elders and members were gathered to address various issues and make decisions that affected the entire community.⁵⁷ Aside from their administrative role, *hujrahs* and *jumats* also played a central role in religious activities. Prayers were offered in these places, making them places of worship and spirituality. Moreover, they served as religious seminaries, where religious teachings and knowledge were imparted to the community members.⁵⁸

In addition to their religious and administrative functions, *Hujrah* had multiple other uses. They provided a space for people to enjoy music, particularly with the use of musical instruments like the *rabab*. They also served as guest houses for travelers passing through the region. Furthermore, unmarried individuals often slept in *Hujrah*, highlighting their role as communal living spaces.⁵⁹

The concept of *ashar* served as a symbol of unity among the people of Dir. Due to their poverty, they couldn't afford to hire labourers for their work, so they adopted a system of collective labour. People would come together to help each other without any monetary payment, but they would be provided with food during these communal work efforts.⁶⁰

Hospitality is a core value among all Pukhtuns, including the people of Dir. They are known for their warm and welcoming nature towards guests and visitors. Southern Dir people are portrayed as peaceful and honest but may exhibit slightly less hospitality compared to their northern counterparts. The Pukhtuns of northern Dir are depicted as more aggressive and hostile due to their warrior-like nature, but they compensate for this with their generous and lavish hospitality towards guests.⁶¹

From Isolation to Integration: The Transformation of Dir through Infrastructure, Education, and Communication

Before 1960, Dir was characterized by its backwardness, and the Nawab's policies were a significant factor contributing to the lack of progress. The Nawab showed little interest in improving the lives of his subjects due to various factors, including economic considerations. Consequently, Dir remained economically deprived, and the Nawab's approach played a crucial role in maintaining this situation. Additionally, both internal and external threats to Nawab Shah Jahan's power hindered any efforts to advance the civilization of the people in Dir. The

geographical factors of Dir State also played a role in its underdevelopment. The challenging terrain and geographical isolation made it difficult for external influences and development initiatives to reach the region easily. Furthermore, the people of Dir, with a few exceptions, did not show much interest in improving their lifestyle. This lack of motivation and proactive approach from the local population added to the overall stagnation and backwardness of the region.

However, a turning point came when Nawab Shah Jahan was deposed in 1960. With the change in leadership, the life of the people in Dir began to transform. The Government of Pakistan took special interest in the development of Dir State to prevent any disturbances or unrest among the population.

Various measures and tools were employed to change the social life and improve living conditions in Dir:

The government focused on building roads, bridges, and other essential infrastructure to connect Dir with the rest of the country and facilitate trade and communication.

In the past, the education facilities in Dir were limited, but with the deposition of Nawab Shah Jahan, the government took initiatives to construct schools, and their numbers increased over the years. The introduction of modern education had a significant impact on the people, changing their outlook and aspirations. Educated individuals started seeking new opportunities and aimed to improve not only their own lives but also the lives of their fellow citizens.⁶²

The expansion of modern education also brought about changes in the media landscape of Dir. Before 1960, there was only one newspaper available, primarily for the Nawab. As a result, the local population had little knowledge about the world outside Dir, and neighbouring villages remained isolated from each other. However, the introduction of Urdu and English languages and the establishment of newspapers in Dir helped in disseminating information and broadening the people's horizons.⁶³

Political parties, particularly the Muslim League and Jamat-i-Islami, played a crucial role in raising social and political awareness among the people of Dir. Their activities and propaganda led to increased consciousness about their rights and the need for change. This awareness ultimately resulted in the rejection of the former Nawab of Dir in the 1970 elections, after which he lived a secluded life.⁶⁴

Improvement in communication was another pivotal aspect of the transformation in Dir. The government's focus on enhancing communication infrastructure connected more people to the outside world. This increased connectivity significantly influenced the social behaviour of the people and enabled them to interact with individuals from other regions.⁶⁵ Prior to modernization, the exposure of the people of Dir to the outside world was minimal. They were confined to their own villages and knew little about what was happening beyond their territory. However, the combined effects of education, improved communication, trade, political parties, and the press brought about a revolutionary change in their lives. People became aware of the outside world and sought better economic opportunities by connecting with other parts of the country. The influx of teachers, doctors, and government officials into Dir also fostered interactions with the local population, igniting a desire for further progress and change in their lives.⁶⁶

Overall, these developments led to a significant shift in the lifestyle and mindset of the people of Dir until 1969. The region witnessed notable social and economic transformations, all of which were attributed to the introduction of modern education, improved communication, and increased exposure to the world beyond Dir's boundaries.

Conclusion

The findings presented here delves into a comprehensive analysis of state social conditions and transformations within the time-frame of 1925 to 1969. The study has unveiled a multifaceted tapestry of factors that interplay to shape the socio-cultural landscape of this period. Through an exploration of various dimensions, including education, healthcare, women's status, the *jargah* system, forced labour, languages, religion, the *wesh* system, communication, traditional enmities, and social structures, a clearer understanding has emerged regarding the intricate dynamics of change and continuity.

Throughout this research, it has become evident that these decades were marked by profound shifts in social paradigms. The emergence of new educational opportunities laid the foundation for altered gender roles, while advancements in healthcare contributed to improved well-being among communities. The *jargah* system, once a traditional pillar of governance, underwent modifications, adapting to the evolving needs of society. Simultaneously, the forced labour system experienced transformations that reflected changing economic realities,

and languages began to embrace new dimensions due to increased communication and interconnections.

Religion remained a resilient force, simultaneously acting as a source of continuity and adaptation. The *wesh* system, deeply embedded in cultural contexts, showed signs of both preservation and modification as societies underwent transformation. The evolution of communication technologies facilitated unprecedented levels of interaction, reshaping traditional enmities and allowing for the exchange of ideas on an unprecedented scale. These transformations were further nuanced by the intricate interplay of social structures and hierarchies.

The period from 1925 to 1969 serves as a crucial juncture where historical legacies intertwined with nascent modernization efforts. It is within this complex interplay that the roots of contemporary social conditions are discernible. This research underscores that change is not a linear process; rather, it manifests as a blend of preservation, adaptation, and innovation.

This work contributes to a deeper comprehension of the intricate tapestry of state social conditions and transformation. The interwoven nature of education, healthcare, gender dynamics, cultural systems, and communication pathways has been dissected, shedding light on the various driving forces and their cumulative impact. By examining the historical trajectory from 1925 to 1969, this study lays a foundation for continued exploration of socio-cultural evolution and paves the way for further research into subsequent phases of transformation. As societies continue to evolve, embracing change while acknowledging the significance of their heritage remains an ongoing and delicate endeavour.

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