

Resistance and Resilience: Bar Areas of Punjab's Struggle against Colonial British Rule in 1857

Muhammad Imran Jaffar

PhD Scholar, Department of History and Pakistan Studies,
University of the Punjab, Lahore

Email: imrankamyana@gmail.com

Tahir Mahmood

Professor, Department of History and Pakistan Studies,
University of the Punjab, Lahore

Email: tahir.history@pu.edu.pk

Abstract

Punjab was the last state annexed by the East India Company in 1849. It was subjugated by the help of Bengal Army. British played religious card to annex Punjab. They sought the help of Muslim population against Sikh Raj. After eight years, Bengal Army revolted and this conflict converted into full scale mass revolt by the Indians. Bar areas of the Punjab were the arid area in the province between Sutlej, Bias, Ravi, Chenab and Sindh Rivers. The main war against British in Punjab was fought in this area especially Ganji and Sandal bar on the both banks of river Ravi. Gogera as district headquarters was the center of the War along with cities of Harappa, Chichawatni and Kamalia. This are closed the British communication between Lahore and Multan and this way halting the supply line to Delhi. Conflict in this area remains continued till 1958 summer even after an year of Delhi fall. Folk lore of the area describe valor, highly civilized manners of the society and their love for land. Official record confirms the events of the war and mass movement in the area described in the folk lore. Events of war in this area told the untold part of first war of Indian Independence.

Keywords: Colonial Punjab, War of Independence, Bar Area, Mass Movement, Gogera

INTRODUCTION

Geography

Bars are the part of Punjab, a food basket of India most fertile of the lands of India. Punjab the land of five Rivers, enclosed by the Sutlej, Beas, Ravi, Chenab and Jhelum. Imperial Gazetteer of India, Punjab V-I (1908) On north western side Indus is its boundary. Mufti Ghulam Sarwar Qureshi, (1996)

DOABS:

Punjab is comprised of five Doabs. Imperial Gazetteer of India, Punjab V-2(1908) These names were given by the King Akbar combining first words of Rivers. First one is Beth Jalindhar and second is Bari Doab. Abual Fazal (1891) Rachna is the third Doab, between the Ravi and Chenab. Imperial Gazetteer of India, Punjab V-, 2 (1908)

Fourth Doab is Chenhet. Fifth and last Doab is Sind-Sagar between Jhelum and Indus Rivers. Abual Fazal (1891)

BARs

Bar in the local language is area which is forested and where there are no sources for cultivation like water. There were four famous bars in Punjab, Neeli bar, Ganji Bar, Sandal Bar and Kerana Bar. Dr. Harkeerat Sing (2007) The Neeli Bar is between Bias and Sutlej. Ganji Bar lies between Bias and Ravi. Sandal Bar extends from cultivation on the northern bank of Ravi River to the Chenab River. Gazetteer of Montgomery District (1990)

Gogera

District Gogera was consisted of Syed wala, Gogera, Harappa, Pakpatan, Hujra Shah Muqem Tehsils in 1857. Kharal, Kathiya, Wattu, Fatyana, Murdana, Wehniwal, Makhdum, Bedi, Langrial and Arain were the main tribes of the district. Bharwana, Jappa and Harrals belong to Sandal Bar and all others are from Ganji Bar. Ahmed Khan had impact on both sides of the Ravi. Muhammad Imran Jaffar (2015)

In Gogaira, Ahmed Khan Kharral was important figure and Sarfraz Khan Kharral was from Kot Kamalia Sarfaraz was ally of British Govt. He helped them in defeating Sikhs in Punjab. He conquered Chichawatni. Basta Sarfraz Khan Kharal (1848), Harappa and fort of Tolamba. Basta Sarfraz Khan Kharal (1849) He demanded British for his ancestral jagir in turn. Basta Sarfraz Khan Kharal (1849)

After the annexation of the Punjab, he was to stand by with British from Shaikh Imam Din, Hakim of Multan. Marasla No 1, Tasalli Nama (1849)

ایشان درخواست خدمت گزاری کردہ بنا برا ے قلمی می رود برفاقت شیخ امام الدین حاضر
 بودہ کمر ہمت چشت بستی بدلو جان خدمت سرکار بمع تمامی زمینداران و رفیقان خود نمایند
 بشرط خدمت ایشان پرورش ایشان بخوبی بے خور بر شد دلجمعی کل دارن

Marasla No 1, Tasalli Nama

And so he joined him. It was clear political position in the District Gogera.
 غریب نواز آنچہ کاتہہ ہائے، بہروانہ ہائے و کھہل ہائے و وٹووان و جب ہائے و ہرل ہائے
 وغیرہ ملک اندسرہ و پزمان تکیہ و پناہ آندرسٹ، شودہ صفت است و ہر آن وقت کہ آندوسٹ
 والا طلب نمایندہ مذکور ہا حا ضر فواہد شد. خاطر جمعدارند Marasla No 1, Tasalli
 Nama(1849)

War

On 10th of May, it was Sunday. English residents in Mirath were preparing for their ministrations when native troops at Mirath had revolted. Sir John kay (1976) This way 1st war of Indian Independence 1857 begun.

A day after the beginning of the war, Montgomery, Judicial Commissioner of the Punjab made it possible to unarm the Mian Meer Cantonment along with other Cantonments of Ferozpur and Jhelum. British focus was to handle Punjab.

In bar region, Shamo Das broke the news. He was released from Sarsa Jail after bail. He told the people about revolt and this showed people a ray of hope to get rid of British. A.D Aijaz(1986)

Robert Montgomery warned districts administration of the Punjab about the mass dissatisfaction and to keep eye on it. Iqbal Asad (1986)

Two months were over. War was at its peak in Delhi and around. Punjab was still cool and calm. Mutiny Record (19 Cantonments were under observation and British were unable to reach the uprising sentiments culminating in the hearts of the layman.

Deputy Commissioner of Gogera informed the commissioner Multan about unarming the forces task. He was of the view that there was found no unusual activity in the district.

Ahmed Khan Kharal and his friend Nadir Shah Quraishi had a very special type of Mares named Morni (Peacock). In Jhang such type of horses belonged to Pir Fateh Shah. As a pre emptive measure, British wanted to get these horses to stop their use in war. Gogera was attached with Multan division where mutiniers were subdued by the help of Makhdom Shah Mahmud Qureshi and Ghulam Mustafa Khakwani. J. Royal Roseberry (1988) Makhdum's Murid were opposing freedom movement. J. Royal Roseberry (1988)

On 8th of July 1857 when a village "Bely Lakho Kay" of Joiya Tribe, in Pakpatan, refused to pay Agricultural Tax and expelled the official after torture. In reaction, British arrested many of them and sent to jail in Gogera. M.A Ashraf (2018) Ahmad Khan Kharal was the ally of Joiya tribe. He visited D.C Elphinstone. Arrested people from Joiya tribe were released.

They told Ahmad Khan about political prisoners which were arrested as a pre-emptive measure to stop them from any activity against British. Iqbal Asad (1986) Preaching of the Christianity was another issue for locals. A.D Aijaz

اوپناں نوں دین مذہب دی خبر نہ کائی
حلال پئے رلیندے وچ حرام دے
اوہ کلمہ نبی دا نہیوں بھر دے
نالے سوہیں ناہیں رام دے

A.D Aijaz (1986)

Ahmad Khan planned first major attack on the night between the 26th and 27th July 1857 to break the Jail. During the ambush prisoners ran away. A.D Aijaz (1986) Eighteen prisoners succeeded to escape, 18 were killed and 33 wounded. Mutiny Record (2005) According to natives, 100 prisoners were killed in this incident. More than hundred British official were killed which were not mentioned in official letter. A.D Aijaz (1986)

Deputy Superintendent Menchord was gunned down by Ahmad Khan. Deputy Commissioner Elphinstone was dismissed and Major Siddon replaced the Lieutenant Elphinstone. J. Royal Roseberry (1988)

British were already suspicious of Ahmad Khan's activities against Raj but after this event, He was arrested and released conditionally. He and other chieftains of Ravi tribes were bound not to leave Gogera without informing the authorities. J. Royal Roseberry (1988)

Now Ahmad Khan was under observation and his activities were informed to D.C and E.A.C Berkley. These things were adding fuel to people anger and this made Ahmed Khan was a king pin of the revolt. Area was ignored and this facilitated people to join hands. J. Royal Roseberry (1988)

This was really an administrative fault but Revolt was inevitable, if they would be in jail, it came earlier and more ferocious but their release delayed it for few days. India was fighting and how could the Bar people avoid the wave.

Ahmad Khan started to contact other tribes. He contracted Bahlak Wattu, the chieftain of Wattu tribe. On Chenab Mehr Muhammad Bharwana welcome him.

Murad Fatiyana ensured his tribe. He offered them to make his village Jallhi as the centre of war. A.D Aijaz (1986)

Men of 62nd and 69th regiments mutinied during a parade on 31st August in Multan. J. Royal Roseberry (1988) Makhdum Shah Mahmud helped the Commissioner to hold a key bridge on the Wali Muhammad Canal. J. Royal Roseberry (1988)

Langrial family was supporting British in Bar area. A group of 150 mutineers entered the Bar to cross the Sutlej. These were Machia and Bahawal Langrial who intercepted them at Karampur on the Dewanwah

canal on 5th September. J. Royal Roseberry (1988) Out of 1323, 580 were killed and 719 were taken prisoners. After summary trials, they were executed, transported or imprisoned also. Thus the Mutiny chapter of Multan closed. J. Royal Roseberry (1988)

Gatherings of Bar tribes for uprising were being arranged at Pindi Sheikh Musa, Muhammad Pur, Harappa, Chichawatni, Murad Kay Kathia, and Jallhi. It was clear that they were ready for mass revolt now. A.D Aijaz (1986)

During this Ahmad Khan and Murad Fatiyana visited the State of Bahawalpur; they met Malik Hasil Khan a chieftain of Dawood puta tribe and got six guns and ammunitions. A.D Aijaz (1986)

On 16th of September 1857, Chieftains of allied clans of the Bars swear to save the mother land. In that meeting Sarfraz Khan Kharal and Machia Langrial were also invited. A.D Aijaz (1986) Sarfraz Khan Kharal informed the district authorities about the meeting on the night of 16th. Zaheer Hasan Wattu (2005)

Revolutionary army was more than a Lac around 125,000 according to a report after the fall of Delhi. A postman told with wet eyes that people rose in revolt and they are 125,000 in numbers. This few thousands were not trained. But this was a lay man revolt against the anti Indian British Policies. Imran Jaffar(2015) District administration blamed weak police for this. Mutiny Record(2005)

On 17th of September 1857, Mr. Berkley, Extra Assistant Commissioner Gogera was sent to arrest Ahmad Khan who was heading toward his village Jhamra. British wanted to arrest him before he reached Jhamra. Berkley with 150 men of new raised levy reached the Banks of Ravi River. Mutiny Record(2005) At the same time Ahmad Khan was crossing the river, Berkley ordered boatman to make him to follow Ahmed Khan. But he refused and was killed for the refusal. Zaheer Hasan Wattu (2005) In reply to Berkley, Ahmad khan renounced his allegiance to the British. Zaheer Hasan Wattu (2005)

انگریز برکلی آہندا آئے
 ہنہ ولایت نوں ٹریساں
 جٹا منہ توں بھوں جسٹیی نوردی شانی
 جے رہسن جوڑ سلامی
 رائے احمد اکھیا:
 او تن تائیں بھو نہ کوئی
 جسے رہسن جوڑ سلامی
 تیریاں تے میریاں مک جا سن اور
 انگریز متھے لگیاں وچ مدانی

A.D Aijaz(1986)

Berkley crossed river and headed to Jhmara but could not find Ahmad Khan. He attacked the village of Kharal chief, took 70 prisoners and seized 200 herds of cattle. Mutiny Record (2005)

Sikh Horse from Lahore was only hope only hope for District administration to combat Bar fighters.. Zaheer Hasan Wattu (2005)

Wali Dad Broke the communication link between Lahore and Multan from Muhammadpur. Zaheer Hasan Wattu (2005) It was so important that even Karl Marx mentioned it. Mutiny Record (2005)

On 17th of September from Sutlej to Ravi River were under the fierce attack of freedom fighters. Archives Lahore Secretariat (2014) Multan division from Gogera to Depalpur and Kheeror to Multan became a battlefield. Archives Lahore Secretariat (2014) On the same day, Major Voyle was directed to intercept fighters on the Boundary of Bahawalpur state along with Sutlej River and Captain Frasier sent to Harappa. Archives Lahore Secretariat (2014)

On 18th of September 1857, E.A.C Berkley of Gogera was sent to revive the postal communication in the area. Zaheer Hasan Wattu (2005)

لندنوں چڑھیا انگریز برکلی، لے کے فوج بے شماری
سیدھا سو، ابھا تے لما
جھانبرے چوں آنکلیا مار بھوانی
آکھے راوی تے منسن راٹھ نہ وپس دے نی

A.D Aijaz, (1986)

On the 19th of September, Ahmad Khan Kharal along with Wattu clan attacked the District Headquarter Gogera. Zaheer Hasan Wattu (2005)

In Neeli Bar Machia and Bahawal Langrial were accepting the instructions of Hamilton, Commissioner Multan. They were told that if they would arrest rebel Leaders, they would be rewarded with 100 rupees and for ordinary rebel rewards was 20 rupees. Machia and Bahawal raised a force of 500 men which performed the duty. Zaheer Hasan Wattu (2005)

Ahmad Khan Kharal again attacked Gogera on 21st of September 1857. A.D Aijaz (1986) First of all captain Black's group was target. He retreated and left the field after the death of his Risaldar and lot of Soldiers. He came with Captain Chester again and repulsed with heavy casualties.

دوئی گھوڑی گھتی سوج امداد علی دے وٹو عنایت کے
اوس ڈانگاں دیا کیتیاں حق ادائیاں
تیجی گھوڑی گھتی بابلک، نتھو وٹو بیگ کے، لکھو دا پوترا
یار ہاں فرنگیاں دے پنچر چوں سانگاں پار لنگھائیاں

A.D Aijaz (1986)

Bar fighter fought with such valor that British had to retreat again after hundreds of casualties. Malik Bahlak Wattu the Chieftain of Wattus along with Mutli, Jhanda, Rahm, Majhi, Shehra, Masoda, Kisso, Said, Hassanli, Jalla, Suja, Bahawal, Samail, Turaij and other Wattus won the day for Sacred home land. From Kharals Muhammad Khan, Sarang and Jahana were distinguished along with kallu, Karmalli, Makhana and Dana Janjoa's. Zaheer Hasan Wattu (2005)

احمد خان وضو ساز کے نماز چانیتی
 فرض پڑھو ہے چارے
 توڑوں گئیں مک حیاتی راٹھ دے بنے کھلے ہیں کارے
 سر سجدے دے اتے جا دھریا گلاب بیدی تپک چلائی
 کیڈا جا کیتا کھوٹ ہتیارے
 احمد خان شہید ہو یا خلقت نوں تلیوں لگی

A.D Aijaz (1986)

Ahmad Khan was gunned down by Gulab Rai Bedi. Zaheer Hasan Wattu (2005) British beheaded him and took his head with them along with the head of Sarang. Ahmad Khan kharal was killed by the authorities but war was not stopped. A.D Aijaz (1986) It was public revolt not one from nobles or Princely states as in Delhi, Awadh, Jhansi etc.

Berkley reached Kauray Shah on 21st September 1857 there. Iqbal Asad (1987) He wanted to reach Muhammadpur to revoke the communication.

مار گھتیونیں برکلی نوں
 کوئی سنیندا اے مراد فتیانہ
 مراد ورگنا نہ راٹھ کوئی اے

A.D Aijaz (1986)

Murad Fatiyana planned to hunt the Berkley in the forest he was leading the fight after the death of Ahmad Khan. A.D Aijaz (1986)

Berkley was attacked by fighters. A.D Aijaz (1986) Murad Fatiyana traced Berkley and attacked with spear and Suja Bhadrhu hit the last. More than fifty British were killed in this ambush. A.D Aijaz (1986)

Two relatives of Berkley Martha and Margret were also captured who were sent to Gogera with respect later. The act proved the civic norms and values of Bar people.⁷³ On the same day 22nd September, Colonel Hudson also arrested the last Mughal king Bahadur Shah Zafar in Delhi completing its fall. A.D Aijaz (1986)

Major Chamberlain, the hero of Multan mutiny, was now sent to reopen the communication. A.D Aijaz (1986) He was attacked by freedom fighters and forced to take shelter in a Serai. J. Royal Roseberry (1988) Colonel Paton, Major Jackson, Capt. Tronson, Captain Cureton and Captain Hockins jointly attacked to make free Major Chamberlain.

Murad Fatiyana was leading revolt after Ahmad Khan and his village Jallhi became the centre. During 16th to 21st of October more British forced joined the Jallhi. Here Bar freedom fighter took a new move.

They tried to get help from Nawab of Bahawalpur. Mutiny Record (2005) unfortunately their request was rejected. Mutiny Record (2005) Jallhi was captured on the 4th of November 1857. Mutiny Record (2005)

Nathu and Rajab Kathia surrendered on 7th of November. On 19th of November 1857 "commissioner of Multan considers that the Gogera insurrection is at an end. A.D Aijaz (1986)

In November 1857, British were assuming of end of revolt in Bar. They thought that the killing of Ahmed Khan and Surrender of some notables would led to the end but it was still a dream in 1857 as they were waiting for European regiments from Delhi. A.D Aijaz (1986)

Nadir Shah Quraishi, Wali Dad Murdana, MokhaWhenival and Majhi Basherah were arrested in November 1857. BahawalFatiyana was arrested in January 1858. This way the movement entered the year 1858 when all the other India regions were subdued already. Imran Jaffar (2015)

Arrests were made in the whole Bar area. Hundreds were sent to Andaman, Black water Island. MokhaWehniwal, Wali DaadMurdana, Majhi Basherah, Muhammad Yar Murdana, Rehmat Khan and Qadir Murdana were sent in exile to Andaman. A.D Aijaz (1986)

British Govt. rewarded their Native Loyalists. Sarfraz Khan was given the title of Khan Bahadhar. Murad Shah was given the reward of 2000 Rs. Makhdum Shah Mahmud was rewarded with 3000 Rs in cash and Jagir of 23000 and eight wells. Jeway Khan was given the title of Son of Queen and Jagir.

Conclusion

War of Indian independence 1857 is considered as a mutiny started by the annoyed faction of army. This way every event was painted as mere military reward. It was folk lore which made alive the mass revolt in poetry. Later official record supported the view maintained by the folk lore. It concluded that the strongest ever resistance by the masses was presented by the tribes of Bar area. This was put under the curtain by official historian so the mass movement must be kept away. Now record has proved the mass movement as the real Independent move taken by the Punjab folk.

REFERENCES

- Aijaz ,A.D. *Kall Bulaindi*. Lahore: Pakistan Punjabi Adbi Board, 1986
- Allami ,Abual Fazal. *Ain-I-Akbari*. Calcutta : Baptist Mission Press,1891
- Arzi, Sarfraz Khan, 26 Poh 1905 Bikrami, (Lahore, Punjab Archives, Civil Secretariat)
- Arzi, Sarfraz Khan Kharal, Raees KotKamalia, (Lahore, Punjab Archives, Civil Secretariat)
- *Ashraf M.A. Tarikh-e-Sahiwal*. Sahiwal: Punjab Lok Sujag, 2014
- Basta Sarfraz Khan Kharal, Letter to John Lawrence, 23 November, 1849, (Lahore, Punjab Archives, Civil Secretariat)

- Basta Sarfraz Khan Kharal, Khat Bnam John Lawrence, Governor Punjab , June, 1848, (Lahore, Punjab Archives, Civil Secretariat)
- Basta, Sarfraz Khan Kharal, Arzi Mahkhdoom Shah Mehmood, hayat Shah, 15 January, 1849, (Lahore, Punjab Archives, Civil Secretariat)
- Govt. of India. *Imperial Gazetteer of India, Punjab V-I* . Calcutta: Superintendent of Govt. Printing, 1908
- Govt. of India. *Gazetteer of Montgomery District 1883-84*. Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publication, 1990
- Govt. of India. *Imperial Gazetteer of India, Punjab V-II*, Lahore: Aziz Publishers,
- Iqbal Asad. *Punjab de IajpaalPuttar*. Lahore: Pak Punjabi adbi board, 1986
- J. Royal Roseberry. *Imperial Rule in Punjab*. Lahore: Vanguard, 1988
- Jaffar, Muhammad Imran. "Role of the Bars in the War of Independence 1857", M.Phil thesis, Islamia University Bahawalpur, 2015
- Kay, Sir John. *The History of Indian Mutiny*. Lahore: Oriental Publishers & book sellers, 1976
- Kharal, Ahmad Khan mrasla No: 2, (Lahore, Punjab Archives, Civil Secretariat)
- Kharal ,Ahmad Khan ,Mrasla No 1, Tasalli Nama to Ahmad Khan kharral, (Lahore, Punjab Archives, Civil Secretariat)
- Kharal ,Ahmad Khan, Mrasla No 5 bnam Jamal Din, (Lahore, Punjab Archives, Civil Secretariat)
- Marx, Karl. The Revolt in India Army / New York Tribune. New York, 1857
- Marx, Karl. New York Tribune. New York, 1857
- (<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1857/10/23.htm>)
-*Mutiny Records* , Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2005
- Qureshi, Mufti Ghulam Sarwar. *TareekhMakhzan e Punjab*. Lahore: Friend Associates, 1996
- Singh, Dr. Harkeerat. *Yaadan Ganji Baar Diyan*. Lahore: Pakistan Punjabi Adbi Board, 2007
- Wattoo, Zaheer Hasan. *Athaara sou Satwanja di Jang e Azadi WichWattowan da Hissa*. Lahore: Saanjh Publications, 2005