

**Awami National Party: Implementing Bacha Khan's Philosophy of Education During its  
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government Regime from 2008-2013**

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**Abstract**

*This paper attempts to investigate the role of the Awami National Party (ANP) in contributing to various sectors, particularly education, after gaining prominence in the 2008 general elections. It, most importantly, sheds light on the adoption of the educational philosophy by ANP delivered by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, famously known as Bacha Khan, for stability, peace, awareness, and maintenance of Pashtun society which was suffering under the colonial era. The ANP government's initiatives, including a substantial increase in the development budget, reconstruction of schools, and the establishment of colleges and universities are detailed. The paper highlights the ANP-led government's commitment to revising textbooks and integrating local context into the curriculum. The literature review focuses on Bacha Khan's educational philosophy, emphasizing the transformative power of education in civilizing Pashtuns. The methodology employs qualitative analysis, capturing the perspectives of key figures associated with ANP, and elucidating their views on education. The data analysis and discussion section explore Bacha Khan's educational philosophy, the strategies employed for modern and professional education, and its impacts on Pashtun society. The study concludes by emphasizing ANP's effective implementation of Bacha Khan's educational philosophy and its role in fostering social and religious harmony, and educational development in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.*

**Keywords:** Bacha Khan, Pashtun, Awami National Party (ANP), Education.

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**1. Introduction**

Throughout history, there have been many leaders who have dedicated their services to the cause of educating the Pashtun community. Among them was Haji Abdul Wahid, also known as Haji

Sahib Turangzai, who worked tirelessly to establish madrasa offering both modern and religious education. However, his efforts were met with opposition by the British imperial authorities, who viewed his educational pursuits as a threat. Despite his efforts, he was unable to gain their support and was eventually suppressed by the British authorities. Another prominent leader who shared Haji Sahib's vision for education was Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum Khan. Unlike Haji Sahib, Sahibzada had close ties with the British authorities, which allowed him to gain their support for his educational initiatives. Similarly, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, popularly known as Bacha Khan, devoted his life to promoting non-violence and eradicating the label of violence from Pashtuns. To instill his anti-violence philosophy, he traveled extensively throughout the region, but his efforts were hindered by the lack of education among the Pashtun population. To overcome this obstacle, he established his own educational philosophy, which balanced modern and religious education. However, the British authorities saw Bacha Khan's educational philosophy as a threat to their colonial rule and resorted to brutal tactics to suppress his efforts. Despite facing immense opposition, Bacha Khan remained steadfast in his commitment to educating the Pashtun community and promoting his philosophy of non-violence. His unwavering courage and determination continue to inspire generations of Pashtuns to this day. (Qadir, 2015). On the other side, the Awami National Party (ANP) emerged as the majority party in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the 2008 general elections. Considering all the circumstances, peace, and stability situation, the party managed to contribute in various important spheres. In that alarming situation where the whole state in general, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in specific were badly disturbed, the party played a vital role as it managed to come up with various strategies in the health, tourism, economy, and education sectors (Hussain, 2022). Persuasion of leader impacts differently on people (Ramzan et al., 2023).

The ANP government increased the development budget by six hundred percent which was spent on the construction and reconstruction of educational institutions. Due to lack of basic facilities and absence of teachers at primary and middle levels, as many as six hundred schools remained closed. The government opened around 1500 schools. As many as 2958 schools had been previously demolished as a result of the earthquake of 2005, but 1558 were renovated and almost 754 were in progress. Due to terrorist insurgencies, about 750 schools had been destroyed across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Before 2008, there were 11 universities in the entire province their government encompassed by coming up with the construction of nine other universities across the province. Colleges established for boys and girls across the province were twenty-nine in number of which fifteen were for girls and fourteen for boys. The credit for introducing BA (Hons) at colleges goes to their government. Under "Stoori Da Pakhtunkhwa Program," about ninety-three students were offered Rs 15000 per month for two years. A laptop scheme "Naway Sahar" was initiated by the provincial government in 2012-13 in which free laptops and computers were distributed among talented students (Mazhar and Muhammad, 2016).

The Awami National Party (ANP)-led provincial government from 2008 to 2013 was quick to seize the opportunity presented by devolution and actively continued to revise textbooks with the new curriculum and incorporate the local/Pashtun context into the textbooks. In addition, huge

investments, time, and input have been made to create the best teacher guides to help teachers implement the revised curriculum (Naureen, 2020).

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

The primary aim of this research is to carry out a comparative examination of educational provisions, procedures, and possibilities during the time of Bacha Khan, and the tenure of Awami National Party (ANP) administration between 2008 and 2013. The study seeks to shed light on the historical and current efforts for educational reform led by Bacha Khan and ANP. Bacha Khan, an eminent reformer, launched educational services in 1910, dedicating a significant portion of his life to promoting educational reform, notably through the formation of Anjuman-e-Islahul-Afaghina in 1921. In comparison to it, the ANP, after winning the general election in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2008, remained actively involved in providing educational services, implementing various policies and initiatives to improve the educational system of the province. Therefore, this study aims to carry out a comparative analysis of the educational policies and measures introduced by Bacha Khan and its implementation by the government of ANP, evaluating their effectiveness in promoting education and societal reforms.

## **3. Research Objective**

The objective of this research is to shed light on Bacha Khan's significant contributions to the education sector, particularly to the marginalized Pashtun community. Also, it aims to conduct a comparative analysis of the Awami National Party's role in implementing its educational philosophy from 2008 to 2013. The study explores specific questions, such as the initiatives taken by Bacha Khan in the education sector and the practical application of his philosophy by the Awami National Party during its tenure. Ultimately, this investigation seeks to provide valuable insights into the educational progress of Pashtun society.

## **4. Literature Review**

The researchers have conducted a comprehensive review of the existing literature on Bacha Khan's educational initiatives. Their analysis covers his philosophy, the challenges he faced, and the multifaceted impact of his educational programs on Pashtun society. This section provides valuable insights into the significant contributions made by Bacha Khan towards education and social progress in the region.

Hussain, Khattak, and Ahmad (2016) suggest that Bacha Khan realized the importance of education in promoting his philosophy during his struggles. To introduce this philosophy to the nation, he initiated an educational program aimed at civilizing the Pashtuns. Bacha Khan recognized that the Pashtuns valued education but lacked access to it, which motivated him to provide them with the means to obtain it. Mindfulness of dealing people matters for better recruitment and education policy (Javaid et al., 2023; Khan & Javaid, 2023). Academic motivation and fostering supportive attitudes with collaboration fills the gap of education (Ramzan et al., 2023). Expressive writing improves the experience (Javaid & Mahmood, 2023).

Khalil and Anwar (2017) state that to normalize the violent nature of Pashtuns, Bacha Khan introduced non-violent philosophy. To inject non-violence philosophy into Pashtuns was not an easy work. Though he faced lots of hurdles but continued his struggle. During his struggle, he

concluded that education was a prerequisite for injecting this philosophy into Pashtuns. For this purpose, he started an educational program to educate and civilize the nation.

Sohail, Ahmad, and Inam (2014) highlighted the educational services and philosophy of Bacha Khan. They argue that other Pashtun leaders worked for the freedom and collective recognition of the Pashtun nation. However, Bacha Khan not merely worked for the freedom and recognition of the nation but he wanted reforms and development in the educational, social, ethical, economic, and political spheres of the nation.

Rauf (2006) argues that Haji Sahib Turangzai attached utmost importance to the opening of schools in Peshawar valley at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As a result, seventy schools were opened by Turangzai while the other put the number at thirty-four. Turangzai supported the Turkish Khalifa in World War I against the British and thus provided enough reasons for the British government to take stern action against him.

Similarly, according to Sohail (2015), after the formation of Anjuman-i-Islahul Afaghina, the literacy ratio of the province increased by 0.9 % between 1921 and 1931. The Anjuman established more than 104 Azad schools in the entire province with some of them in tribal territories too. The number of students instructed from the schools was more than 9200, educated by more than 546 teachers.

Akash, (2021) says that in April 1921, one of the first branches of Azad Islamia Madrassa was opened in Utmanzai and was followed later with branches in other parts of Peshawar. These proved to be popular institutions with increasing numbers of students. Bacha Khan volunteered his services to spread knowledge and educate people along with the intelligentsia of the time. Moreover, they emphasized creating awareness about modern education and the revival of the Pashto language among Pashtuns. Poetic contests were regularly arranged at the Anjuman's annual meetings.

Ali and Ahmad, (2019) in their research described the relevance and values of Gandhi and Bacha Khan's moral education in addressing situated disparities in South Asia. They are of the view that Bacha Khan embraced moral education as a tool to unite Pashtuns to address their prevailing sufferings and forge ways to advance society. He struggled to raise the moral standard of Pashtuns at both the individual and collective levels regardless of gender, age, occupation, and religion. His stance on moral education was rooted in his ideology of non-violence extracted from the teachings of Islam, indigenous religions, and philosophies. His visions were also shaped by local spiritual personalities such as Khushal Baba and Rahman Baba.

Sohail (2018) says that the movement 'Anjuman-i-Islahul Afaghina' was established in 1921 by Bacha Khan and his companions to educate the unprivileged, oppressed, and suppressed Pashtuns in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Anjuman established about 104 Azad schools in the settled as well as tribal territory to educate the nation. The strength of the Anjuman was its organizational excellence in the shape of its components like propagation, fundraising, management committees, faculty of intellectuals, cocurricular activities, annual jamborees, conflict resolution committees, literary activities, and social reforms.

Saleem and Khalil (2019) have narrated the role of Bacha Khan as an educational reformer, he says that Abdul Ghaffar Khan joined a social reformer, Hajji Fazal Wahid, known as Hajji of Turangzai and their efforts opened the educational institutions known as Dar-ul-Uloom at Utmanzai and Mardan in 1910. On one side, religious education was offered and, on the other, students were also permeated with the concepts of nationalism in these institutions. Education was free for all without any discrimination. In these Madrassahs the curriculum consisted of teaching Holy Quran and Hadith, Fiqh, Islamic history, Pashto, Mathematics, English, and Arabic.

However, the British government was reluctant to let him promote education and political awareness among his people. Cognizant of the imperialistic British policy resulted in to forced him to think about the protection of basic socio-cultural values and political rights of the Pashtun community. He found the solution to this issue by laying the foundation of a formal organization to mobilize, unite, and protect the interests of his community under the umbrella of the “Movement of Servants of God” popularly known as “Khudai Khidmatgar Tehreek.” Before this, Bacha Khan laid down the foundation of “Azad Islamia Madrassa” (Independent Islamic Seminary) under the umbrella of “Anjuman-i-Islahul-Afaghina,” Association for Reformation of Afghan in Utmanzai, Charsadda.

### **5. Literature Gap**

The literature review on Bacha Khan's educational initiatives provide insights into his philosophy, the challenges faced, and the impact of his programs on Pashtun society. It emphasizes the strategic role of education in normalizing Pashtun behavior, civilizing the nation, and fostering holistic development. However, a notable gap exists in exploring the long-term sustainability and contemporary relevance of Bacha Khan's educational legacy, suggesting a need for further research.

### **6. Methodology**

In this study, we utilized a qualitative analysis approach that involved delving into the perspectives of key figures associated with the Awami National Party, such as politicians, intellectuals, and stakeholders. Rather than relying on statistical data, we aimed to conduct a thorough exploration of participants' perceptions, interpretations, and ideas. Our objective was to gain a comprehensive understanding of their viewpoints, providing valuable insights into their unique perspectives.

The researcher conducted a study involving five participants, four of whom were political representatives from the Awami National Party, holding different designations within the party. The fifth participant was an educationist and intellectual who had completed a Ph.D. thesis on Bacha Khan's education. The research involved eight open-ended questions, and the interviews were recorded through mobile phone. The participants were selected using non-probability and purposive sampling techniques to ensure a diverse range of perspectives and insights.

During the analysis stage, we utilized the thematic procedure of analysis to interpret the data. Our focus was on gathering opinion-base information regarding the educational services offered by Bacha Khan and Awami National Party. We conducted interviews with respondents and sorted out the services based on the research questions. Using the gathered data, we categorized the themes

in the respondents' views, critically analyzed them, and discussed them in the context of our research questions and objectives.

## **7. Data Analysis and Discussion**

### **7.1. Bacha Khan's Educational Philosophy, his Struggle and ANP**

Bacha Khan believed in the importance of education not only for the leaders and scholars but for the common masses too. Therefore, education was conceived as one of the inevitable cures for almost all the evils in the nation. To educate them, Bacha Khan took the initiative of Azad Schools (Khan, 1983).

Masood Jan from Bannu was the first headmaster of Azad School at Utmanzai. However, the lack of teaching staff compelled Bacha Khan to teach himself in the school. His two sons Khan Abdul Ghani Khan and Khan Abdul Wali Khan were among the first students of that school (Aziz, 2007). After collecting primary data, the researcher analyzed the same adopting the technique of thematic analysis. Thus, the responses of the participants are enlisted below.

In response to the questions posed by the researcher during the interview, a respondent recorded his response as;

*“He [Bacha Khan] in 1921, formed his system of Azad Schools and established an institute for it. It was the first scientific, democratic, and public organization of Pashtun or in this area i.e. Anjuman-e-Islahul-Afaghina. Under this, the first Azad Madrassah was formed in Utmanzai in 1921 and spread across Pakhtunkhwa. Moreover, ANP is a political party in the framework of Pakistan. Now here ANP has a manifesto, online too, look at that and Bacha Khan's philosophy and compare both of them, and you will see whether ANP follows it or not. There is the first statement there that ANP is a secular, leftist, and liberal political party. It is one sentence but is the philosophy of Bacha Khan. This means, ANP does not keep Bacha Khan's philosophy but is based on it” (Khan, 2022).*

Another response extracted from the collected data was that when Bacha Khan was going to incept his educational program, there was no governmental or state help with him but he was educating Pashtuns voluntarily. Its practical nature was that people gave their guest houses and homes. There was a lack of education but those who had acquired a little gave their services for teaching to Bacha Khan. Then, Bacha Khan opened Azad Madrassahs in the whole Pashtun region. Now Bacha Khan Trust runs Bacha Khan schools, thousands of students are there, curriculum is of conceptual bases and is result-oriented. There are schools in different districts and then Anjumans and individual donors are there, who are based on no-profit and no-loss. Audit, supervision, and monitoring, and up to a huge extent, management involvement is its community that we call Anjuman. There are thirty members of Anjuman for each school and donations are also given and they are responsible for all the management” (Babak, 2022).

Similarly, Bacha Khan was intensely observing that there is a lack of education in Pashtuns and has been surrounded by the shadows of ignorance. To remove this, he decided to spread his message of education to all Pashtuns and will open, according to his capacity, educational institutions with his companions. When the first Madrassah was started, he [Bacha Khan] admitted

Ghani Khan, Wali Khan, and his other family members to respond to others by his own precedent. This process continued based on anti-imperialism, nonviolence as well as struggle for education. He faced many issues as he was sent to prison many times where he was kept in C-class and the Britishers destroyed the schools.

### **7.2.Strategies for Modern and Professional Education by Bacha Khan and ANP**

Bacha Khan adopted various strategies to educate Pashtuns with modern skills and education. In this connection, he included indigenous knowledge, awareness, language, skills, and folklore. Similarly, for modern knowledge, Science, Geography, History, language, and other modern techniques were also included. The curriculum formed in these schools by ANP was in modern shape. The modern shape of the curriculum is that experts when given content, bring it into the curriculum. As you see social studies, science, and Pushto books made in ANP were part of it.

In 1922, in its annual meeting, the Anjuman decided to introduce technical and vocational education in the course contents. Teachers and skillful persons were appointed to demonstrate the technical skills of tailoring, hosiery, carpentry, cap making, weaving, etc. The Anjuman decided to open a vocational branch, besides formal learning, in the school. It was initiated at a modest scale. Teachers were appointed for tailoring, carpentry, coat, and cap making and hosiery. As far as technical and vocational training is concerned, the dependency cannot be curtailed. ANP also followed that by forming about eight technical colleges, and technical centers, and skills were given.

At the beginning of his movement, Bacha Khan was talking about both religious and worldly education. Pashtuns were not even aware of modern education at that time, neither subjects nor dealings. Bacha Khan struggled in his Madrassahs so that kids have exposure to it.

### **7.3.Impacts of the Educational Scheme of Bacha Khan and ANP**

Bacha Khan observed that people of his community were passing through much deteriorated conditions because of their ignorance. Neither government was eager to educate people or to spread knowledge. There was no arrangement of education. Bacha Khan tried his best to change the destroyed conditions and wanted to introduce reforms (Khan & Narang, 1969).

Bacha Khan's philosophy had empirical impacts. Before starting Azad schools, there was one or two percent ratio of education, and after Azad schools it reached three, four, and five, and a stage came that few years later, it reached twenty percent and eventually reached fifty percent. Secondly, it had a large social impact, and stamina of learning skills enhanced. Thus, people by their own, started businesses or trade, small industries (slipper industries and handcraft centers) increased a lot. For instance, if you see the economic situation of Pakhtunkhwa in 1921 and then in 1930, it has a huge difference, businesses were started at various places, crops were started, products were made of raw materials, khadi increased, Charsadda chappal (slipper) is the monument of Bacha Khan's contribution. The business mind was developed due to that education. It had economic, social, and cultural impacts.

*Pashtun basically is a martial race, hot-tempered, stubborn, and sometimes use force. Now in this condition, first of all, Bacha Khan's struggle resulted in making that forceful Pashtun go on the way of anti-violence, and violence diminished in*

*society which was the biggest achievement as a result of education. Then in our tenure, after 9/11 changes occurred in this region, America came to Afghanistan and our regional situation changed largely and worsened. Terrorism and extremism increased, no awareness was there, and were encompassed by darkness. These educational efforts played a vital role in creating that awareness” (Hoti, 2022).*

*The facts of Bacha Khan's philosophy were that Pashtuns were, from the start, not interested in education and book reading. You see, there are many world scientists and intellectuals on the world level who have facilitated from books and then wrote their books that have facilitated others. But both these educational philosophies brought a lot of changes in the nation (Yousafzai, 2022).*

#### **7.4. Establishment and Maintenance of Social and Religious Harmony via Educational Scheme of Bacha Khan and ANP**

Bacha Khan was a strong advocate of nonviolence, self-discrimination, dialogue, sacrifice, diversity, and ethical reforms, which greatly inspired the South Asian populations and their identity. Identity can be conceptualized as people’s situated sense of self that emerges from knowledge, values, and aspirations, as well as emotional attachment and relationships with cultural groups and/or society (at large). Cultural identities not only are shaped by sociocultural, political, religious, contextual, and historical elements, but they are also dynamic, complex, and multifaceted, and often transmitted from one generation to the next (Dutta, 2019).

Bacha Khan in himself was a very Muslim but needed secularism for the nation. Indeed, there was religious and social harmony in the educational philosophy of Bacha Khan. The nature of harmony can be guessed that people belonging to different religions used to agree on Bacha Khan. All the religious parties used to advocate their faiths, but it was Bacha Khan who was acceptable to all due to his equal veneration for all religions. On the other side, a large proportion of the minority residing in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa belong to ANP. All the minorities in Pakistan would consider the manifesto while deciding to affiliate with any political party, and ANP has mentioned in its manifesto that it’s a secular party and offers due respect to all religions (Khan, 2022).

*Thus, religious harmony on Pashtun soil was the result of Bacha Khan and Khudai-Khitmatgar’s practical political action that still prevails here. Today, if you see, what is ANP famous for? That they are the allies of Hindus. We do not mind it because our politics and education are based on humanity and religion is everyone’s personal choice. We ensure religious freedom (Babak, 2022).*

*Awami National Party has always struggled to say that religion is of all and we all are Muslims. A classic example of social and religious linkages is when a person named Fazlullah rose in Swat was preaching religion and people believed in him and helped him. But resultantly Swat faced catastrophes that still sometimes arise. Therefore, Bacha Khan's thoughts of anti-violence of helping people for the sake of God. And the thoughts were the same we do not like any sort of extremism in society*



*in every shape and color. It is poisonous both for society, religion, and Muslims”*  
(Hoti, 2022).

## 8. Conclusion

As a result, it was Awami National Party (ANP) that came up with an organized and comprehensive plan for educating the nation. During that time, the clouds of terrorism and instability had immensely encompassed the province specifically, and the state generally. The masses had badly been disturbed by violent attacks. However, ANP managed to work in diverse aspects of the society. It started from, dealing with terrorists to managing refugees, stabilizing the economy controlling inflation, building infrastructure forming more educational institutes, and much more. In the initial stages, it had to face many difficulties in the form of having a comprehensive plan for the restoration of education in the province, but it was managed by following the philosophy and thoughts of Bacha Khan. With the help of his philosophy, he managed to bring a large number of reforms to the education system. Both Bacha Khan and ANP were strongly in favor of modern-cum-religious education.

A committee was formed to contemplate the current curriculum and develop necessary reforms. The reforms made in the curriculum of various fields of knowledge provided an opportunity for the students to have an understanding of the current trends of knowledge. On the side of professional education, about eight technical colleges were formed across the province with a technical board too, that is providing various technical skills and knowledge to the students. Similarly, in the tenure of ANP, about thirty-five colleges were built for students. In the far-flung areas of the province, female students were encouraged for their uplift of education. With the implementation of Bacha Khan's philosophy, about seven percent increase was seen in the literacy ratio in the province. The educational scheme ensured social and religious tolerance in society through changes in curriculum and awareness. Therefore, we can rightly observe from the analysis that it was ANP that truly adopted and implemented the educational philosophy of Bacha Khan.

## 9. Recommendations

To further enhance the scope of research, it is highly recommended to explore the long-term impact of ANP's educational initiatives beyond the years 2008-2013. It would also be beneficial to conduct comparative studies to examine the current state of education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and to explore the role of technology in aligning with Bacha Khan's educational philosophy. Such research would help identify the key factors that can help drive meaningful change in the region's education system.

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