

**Broken Promises and Burning Borders: The Struggle for Mohmand's Soul  
(2001-2018)**

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**Abstract**

This article explores the complex social and political transformation of Mohmand Agency during a period marked by war, reforms, and unrest. Once governed by traditional tribal systems rooted in the Jirga and Pakhtunwali code, Mohmand faced dramatic changes after 2001 when the U.S-led War on Terror spilled into the region. As militants fled from Afghanistan, the agency became a stronghold for Taliban activity, with many locals especially youth drawn into militancy due to ideological, social, and economic pressures. Military operations by the Pakistani state disrupted the local power structure, resulting in widespread displacement, violence, and the collapse of long-standing tribal order. In response, the government introduced administrative and political reforms, including the formation of the FATA Secretariat, partial amendments to the Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR), and the extension of political party rights to the region. While these steps signaled a shift toward integration, their limited implementation and continued reliance on outdated systems like the Political Agent model left much of the region's population politically marginalized. The study highlights how decades of isolation, poverty, and religious influence shaped the region's response to external pressures and underscores the need for more inclusive and ground-level governance in tribal areas like Mohmand.

**Introduction**

The presence of the Pakhtun nation<sup>1</sup> in eastern Afghanistan and western Pakistan, despite the migrations of the Pakhtun nation, the "Pakhtun Wali" or the "Pakhtun code of life" remained their rule of law for centuries. They relied on the Jirga system for the management of the affairs within their tribe. The Jirga system is through which the Pakhtuns resolve their disputes and make decisions for the tribes. The members of the Jirga are usually known to the people who make the decisions. This system evolved through centuries and was shaped according to its social structure and the effect of the Pakhtun society. Therefore, the Pakhtun society depended on the conventional Jirga system to solve the affairs among the tribes. Furthermore, the Jirga system was maintained throughout the history of Pakhtuns, helping them in making their identity a distinct one. The absence of a single state of Pakhtun nation kept them in tribalism<sup>2</sup> rather than a single nation-state.

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<sup>1</sup>The indigenous people residing in the Eastern Afghanistan and Western Pakistan, Pakhtu as their native language, practicing the jirga system evolved from their tribal system are considered as a single nation and hence called Pakhtun nation.

<sup>2</sup>Pakhtun tribalism, often referred to as "Pakhtunwali" or "Pakhtun code," is a traditional and deeply ingrained system of social organization and values among the Pashtun people, who primarily inhabit the region of Afghanistan and parts of Pakistan. Pakhtun tribalism plays a significant role in the lives of Pashtuns and influences their social, political, and cultural dynamics. Key aspects are: Tribal structure (organization of clans and sub-

Moreover, the Pakhtun nation did not remain under a single central authority. The reason was that the Pakhtun tribes mostly remained autonomous, exercising their own Jirga within its boundaries, and hence, they did not unite under one flag. However, the Pakhtun code of conduct was mainly the same and understandable to every Pakhtun tribe. Therefore, the practice of Jirga and the code of conduct of Pakhtuns remained the same for every tribe. However, the social structure of the tribes has changed from time to time, mostly influenced by migrations and foreign invasions. The social transformations throughout history are the consequence of those migrations and foreign invasions that happened in the past. Therefore, the resistance against the foreign powers also contributed to the social fabric of the Pakhtun society.

All these years, the Pakhtun territory did not organize under a single flag or a single authority. Although, many efforts were made, and some areas were brought under a central authority; for instance, in modern times, Afghanistan has a central authority of Kabul. Nonetheless, the border area of Afghanistan and Pakistan, known as “Azad Qabail”, also called “Federally Administered Tribal Areas” (FATA), never remained under any other rule, overtly or covertly, except their tribalism. The arrival of the British has changed the course of history and could manage to sway some areas. Having a distinctive and autonomous nature of the tribes, every tribe tried to control accordingly. Therefore, the British had succeeded to a greater extent in bringing the tribes under their control. British tried to subdue the tribes by establishing an administrative system in the tribal areas. Consequently, the tribes were brought under the semi-autonomous status during the British Raj, affecting the area's future policies and social structure.

To control FATA, the British created small regional administrative units known as agencies. These agencies were controlled by a Political Agent, a representative answerable directly to the Viceroy of India. These small administrative units were made to maintain the area, whose governing nature differed from other Pakhtun areas because of tribalism. The area's unique nature was tribalism, which was practiced for centuries by these small tribes in their respective regions. At first the Khyber Agency was created in 1879. It was strategically an important area due to the Khyber Pass. Subsequently, in 1892, the Kurram agency was formed by the British. After that the North Waziristan agency was created in 1910 by the British. Mohmand Agency was administered through Khyber's Political Agent, but in 1951, it was created as a separate agency by the Pakistani government. The Bajaur agency and Orakzai agency were created in December 1973.

Mohmand Agency, being a part of the tribal autonomous area, had also gone through all those events responsible for the social and political changes. Mohmand Agency has had the effects of incidents on its politics and society through the years. The area has experienced many developments due to some significant events. Moreover, the Mohmand tribal area first remained autonomous and was governed by its indigenous Khans or leaders. After that, it remained under a semi-autonomous structure during the British rule. Subsequently, after the creation of Pakistan, the tribal area of Mohmand remained under the old British setup, which continued until the creation of Pakistan, like other tribal areas. Afterwards, the social and political structures were changed due to the changing environment of Pakistan and Afghanistan. Furthermore, Afghanistan has a boundary with the Mohmand Agency which also

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clans), Pakhtun code (Pakhtun code of life, main principles are hospitality, protection of the person seeking justice and revenge), Jirga (traditional assembly of members who made decision), Pakhtu language (every tribe of Pakhtun has a distinct accent of language), conflict resolution (when something is done wrong the affected person seeks retribution), Gender roles (women often has minimum role in decision making), Identity and Loyalty (tribal's identity and loyalty even priorities over state's identity). It's important to note that the application and significance of Pashtun tribalism can vary among different Pashtun communities and individuals. The dynamics and practices may change over time, and not all Pashtuns adhere to every aspect of this traditional code in the same way.

affected it. All these changes in the social and political setup of the Mohmand Agency were the consequence of the history of the Mohmand tribal area.

The study aims to shed light on the reasons behind the backwardness of the social structure and political atmosphere of Mohmand Agency. Moreover, it discusses and elaborates on the reasons behind the social and political changes that occurred in the Mohmand Agency. The policies and developments in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas influenced the whole of the tribal region, including the Mohmand Agency. Moreover, it discusses the social texture that deterred the political changes and the political culture that affected the social changes in the Mohmand Agency. The study aims to point out those policies made in the past generally for the tribal areas and specifically for Mohmand Agency and their impact on the tribal regions of Mohmand. Therefore, the social and political changes that occurred in Mohmand Agency affected the policies and events in the country. The study also aims to address the country's situation with a brief description of its surroundings at the time of the socio-political changes in the Mohmand Agency.

### Literature Review

The author Akhbar S Ahmad, in his article “Colonial Encounter on the North-West Frontier Province: The Myths and Mystification”, explains the condition of the tribal areas in terms of the pre and post-partition time development. He considered the North -West Frontier encounters with colonial masters to be one of the most barren encounters. As for the tribal people, the definition of colonization was the destruction of their villages, water tanks and their food stores. It also meant electrified wires, unending raids on the houses and blocks of houses of tribal people. Even this nightmare did not end for the tribal people even after the colonial master left the divided India. The legacy they left did not consist of anything good for the tribal people as it did not consist of anything that could contribute to the development of tribal people. These people were left with institutions repressive towards their social and political growth. However, this article does not address the developments, specifically in the Mohmand Agency. Therefore, the researcher explains the post-partition social and political changes in the Mohmand Agency.

In addition to this, FATA is one of the most volatile regions in the world. Pakistan inherited FATA “special status” from the British-era Frontier Crime Regulations (FCR) which is different from the legal system that is applied to the rest of the country. This differentiation in administrative operation created a sense of marginalization among the tribal people in Pakistan.

Moreover, in the article “Socio-Political Issues of FATA”, a historical and contemporary perspective, Abid Latif describes the cultural changes of FATA during the Taliban period. It explains that tribal areas became the hotbed of insurgency against the state. All the actors responsible for the conflict resolution, the Pakhtunwali, the Political Agent, the Jirga and the Malik, quickly became unhelpful in the context of Talibanization. However, the article does not explain the impacts of the Taliban on the society of Mohmand Agency. That’s why the study elaborates on the effects on Mohmand Agency’s society, especially on its youth.

In a book, Pakhtun Economy and Society, Akbar S.Ahmed compared the ideal type of Pakhtun code of life (Pakhtun Wali) with the present one. He selected a Mohmand group to study the book. For the comparison, he takes two types of Mohmands, the tribal areas Mohmands and the settled areas Mohmand, usually migrated from the tribal areas. He closely examines the social and economic situation in the Mohmand tribe. He further scrutinized the changing internal and external relations to the political and economic situation. He argued that social organization is affected by geographical situation and economic constraints. However, the social and political changes occurred in the Mohmand Agency is not discussed in his book. Therefore, the study will examine social and political changes.

Moreover, the article “FATA Reforms in Institutional Inertia”, written by Fida Muhammad and Muhammad Shafique Khan, explains how the tribal people are impacted by the FCR and how it made the local leaders (Maliks) powerful and authoritative. Moreover, they

emphasize the role of Maliks in the tribal societies. Maliks, being local leaders of the tribal people, are considered essential and valuable to the tribal people and the administrative office. Moreover, it is argued that the Maliks of the tribes control the FCR. After the war on terror, the Taliban took over. The power of the Maliks was shifted to the Taliban-backed Mullahs. They knew that the local tribal people could only control their elders or replace them. However, they considered the FCR to be the main actor in administratively controlling the tribal areas. The role of local leaders in bringing the local people to mainstream politics is not discussed. This study also discusses the importance of Malik and how the local people can get to the political activities through them.

In the article “FATA: No Man’s Land to Political Mainstream”, Hamid Iqbal and Saeed Khan describe the worsened situation of FATA and say that the area is a no zone for political activities and freedom of thought and expression. Due to the seclusion of the FATA from the rest of the state and mainstream politics, its different issues surged, and the situation of the FATA deteriorated. Moreover, these issues were not addressed accordingly, and the people of tribal areas lived under one of the most deprived places on earth, where no fundamental rights were given. FCR, a British law, enacted to serve their own colonial interest, was sustained by the government of Pakistan. They further argue that the developmental projects can uplift the socio-economic conditions of the tribal areas of Pakistan. The political uplift is not discussed in the article, but it can bring social changes.

The author, Dr Altaf Ullah, in his article, “State and Society in Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan-A Historical Review”, discusses the discourse of the state and society in FATA. On the one hand, he examines FATA's geographic and demographic conditions. On the other hand, he critically analyzed the historic FCR. He says that the FCR favours the British, as it helps them to handle the remote areas of the Indian colony. Moreover, he explains that the FCR is a barrier to development and progress in politics and people’s fundamental rights. It was the FCR that blurred the vision of the tribal people from their fundamental human rights. In the case of the Mohmand Agency, several factors, like wars against the British, then against the Soviets and later on the War on Terror, have deterred the political changes discussed in the study.

In the article “FATA: Voice of Unheard-Path-Dependency and Why History Matters”, written by Amina Khan argues that the people of FATA are deprived of fundamental human rights, basic democratic rights and economic opportunities. Due to the isolation from the state, its poverty rate and literacy rate are very low. Moreover, she argues that the state is responsible for the alarming situation of the FATA. The state has ignored the area since its inception, and therefore, it did not acquire basic human and political rights. The social structure of Mohmand Agency is not discussed in the article.

The FCR and the political situation in the tribal areas deter social and political change. Moreover, the economic uplift of the society is essential to bring the FATA in general and Mohmand Agency in particular to mainstream politics and the state. However, the order of the local body elections order, one of the most important orders of the Mohmand Agency and FATA, is still waiting for its turn to be implemented. Moreover, the role of the local representative cannot be ignored. The local leader or Malik of the tribal society can be the most beneficial actor to control a tribe. Therefore, the British utilized the local leaders. However, for their interests, but they can be proved helpful through politicizing the local leadership and giving the local people a chance to elect their local representative.

In contemporary times, the Pakistani government has stepped towards merging the FATA with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Province. In this context, public acceptance of this reform in tribal areas is crucial as it will directly impact their lives in all aspects. But Pakistani state followed the opposite path as they were no representative of the tribal regions on the committee deciding on the reform in FATA. The recommendations of the tribal people for their reforms were not even considered. They raised their grievances that this merger was taken in haste without the representation of the tribal people in the reform formulations.

## POLITICAL AND SOCIAL DYNAMICS 2001-2018

The time period from 2001 to 2018 was a turbulent one. During this period, political changes took place, like the extension of Political Parties Order and forming the local councils in the agencies. Furthermore, the 2013 elections was the first of its nature, where the common masses cast their votes, under the adult franchise introduced in 1996. Moreover, this section also discusses the impacts of War on Terror on the Mohmand agency. Youth participation in the militancy was no doubt an alarming situation for the FATA. The factors which promoted the militancy in youth are also discussed. The local government system in FATA and the challenges that restrained the system are briefly elaborated. Moreover, the military intervention, harming the social fabric of the society to a large extent is also discussed. During these years the administrative changes took place like altering of FCR.

The Mohmand Agency had gone through several changes and dynamics throughout the history, especially after the British reign. The time period, 2001-2018, had seen some drastic and consequent changes in political framework. During this period political and administrative changes taken place in the tribal area of the Mohmand Agency. However, once again the tribal areas and the Mohmand Agency were on the top list of the super power, the United States. Therefore, once again the tribal areas were given special attention by the Pakistani government at that time. Moreover, the conduct of the military operations in the Mohmand Agency had brought significant changes for both, the state and the people. Furthermore, during this period some political change and administrative changes were done by the Musharraf government to change the political and administrative atmosphere of the Mohmand Agency and FATA.<sup>3</sup> This includes the expansion of the “Local Government Ordinance 2002”, and later 2012 to the tribal areas. Moreover, the political parties who were not allowed to practice in the tribal areas were then allowed to practice in FATA after 2012.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the time period since 2000-2018 was the period of change in the politics and administration of the Mohmand Agency.

### Strategic Evolution: Mohmand Agency amidst the war on terror

The War on Terror initiated by the US caused drastic changes in the tribal areas of Pakistan including Mohmand Agency.<sup>5</sup> The Mohmand Agency being a border area with Afghanistan had a direct effect of war on terror. Moreover, the Mohmand Agency and the local people are emotionally attached to the ideology of jihad. Therefore, Mohmand Agency was also a safe place for those fighters who conducted war activities in Afghanistan. However, since 2001 when the war was about to start against the mujahideen in Afghanistan, the military did not intervene in FATA. When the war on terror started the military intervention was also a strategic step by the government of that time.<sup>6</sup> The Mohmand Agency was a significant territory for the mujahideen and that's why they continued their activities in the area, even before War on Terror common people crossed borders without any restrictions. However, after the military intervention in the tribal areas, the military intended to counter the mujahideen in the area. Therefore, the situation in the Mohmand Agency for the local people worsened and they were being trapped between the mujahideen and the state of Pakistan. Therefore, the war on terror, commenced by the US, had the direct impact on the Mohmand Agency.<sup>7</sup>

Although Pakistan was not the place for the US to conduct direct operation but due to the border areas with Afghanistan the tribal areas were in the direct influence of Taliban.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, in the Mohmand Agency, Taliban's activities were increased due to the deteriorating situations in the country.<sup>9</sup> Due to the US attack on Afghanistan to counter Al-Qaeda and other

<sup>3</sup> Rahman, “Local Government System in FATA”, 81.

<sup>4</sup> Iqbal and Khan, “Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA)”, 71-72.

<sup>5</sup> Khan, “Special Status of Tribal Areas FATA”, 72.

<sup>6</sup> Abbasi, Khatwani, Panhwar, “Social costs of war against terrorism in Pakistan (2002–2012)”, 128.

<sup>7</sup> Ullah, “Why Youth Joins Militancy? The Case of Mohmand Agency (FATA)”, 1-99.

<sup>8</sup> Sayed Wiqar Ali Shah, “Political Reforms in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan (FATA): Will it End the Current Militancy?”, Heidelberg Papers in South Asian and Comparative Politics, (2012), 9.

<sup>9</sup> Khan, “Special Status of Tribal Areas FATA”, 73.



militants groups, the situation in Afghanistan aggravated. After that the burden on the tribal areas, including Mohmand Agency, were increased and the area became a safe haven for the mujahideen.<sup>10</sup> The Taliban continued their activities with gaining the support of the local people of the tribal areas. The local people who were already under the influence of the ideology of the jihad supported the mujahideen whole heartedly. That was the reason for the people of the Mohmand Agency that they became the actors of war in Afghanistan. The social structure which was already altered according to the ideas of jihad supported the militants in Mohmand Agency leading them to flourish. Therefore, it was the local people who supported the mujahideen, later Taliban, which eventually resulted in military operation and disasters for the Mohmand Agency.<sup>11</sup>

Until 1996, the Taliban in Afghanistan mostly occupied the regions and brought it under their control. But the possession of Kabul later on consolidated their rule and enabled them to take control over Afghanistan. Soon after the start of war on terror in Afghanistan, the Taliban boosted up their activities in the tribal regions to get assistance.<sup>12</sup> Mohmand Agency, also a border area, was in the list of the Taliban for cross border activities.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, they started gaining aid from the border regions including Mohmand Agency. Therefore, in 2005 some boys in Safi tehsil set up camp and started training. Interestingly, their number increased swiftly with the delivery of the weapons to the camp.<sup>14</sup> After that, they started threatening people, forcing them to follow the shariah and do not make a hurdle in their activities. The barbers were threatened and were told that no one should shave the beard. Moreover, they forbid the women to go outside in the markets and busy places. Due to all these activities, the Taliban in the Mohmand Agency became powerful which was not possible without the help of the local people.

In the aftermath, in Mohmand Agency the Taliban openly challenged the state writ and did not allow the government to conduct any activities.<sup>15</sup> With the deteriorating situation in the Afghanistan the tribal areas were also became a war zone. In the Mohmand Agency there were many factors and actors who were opposing the Taliban. However, those people who were against the rising militancy in the region were killed by the Taliban. Those including elders and tribal leaders of the Mohmand Agency opposed the presence or the activities within the agency.<sup>16</sup> Hundreds of the Malik and the government employees were killed and the Mohmand Agency was left on the mercy of the Taliban. The agency became a hub for the activities of the Taliban and the border areas were in their full control. However, there were also some people who were supporting the Taliban and their activities, as they remained under the influence of the Taliban since long.<sup>17</sup> The emergence of the Taliban post 9/11 in Mohmand Agency was not a new event but their activities in the area were. Before war on terror, the Taliban's activities were only confined to Afghanistan but after that the tribal areas also fell under the brutal activities of the Taliban.<sup>18</sup>

United States met with bitter hands after the collapsed of Taliban's regime. Subsequently, the Taliban took refuge in tribal areas due to mutual ethnic, historical and religious connections.<sup>19</sup> Consequently, when some 20 to 25 boys settled a training camp in Mohmand Agency then the local people came to know that the situation is getting worse.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, the Taliban in the area started their activities, threatening the common people,

<sup>10</sup>Ullah, "Why Youth Joins Militancy? The Case of Mohmand Agency (FATA)",9.

<sup>11</sup>Sultana and Zahir Shah, "Afghan Factor in the Rise of Militancy in FATA", 72-81.

<sup>12</sup>Rakisit, "Pakistan's Tribal Areas", 7.

<sup>13</sup>Abbasi,Khatwani,,Panhwar, "Social costs of war against terrorism in Pakistan(2002–2012)", 131.

<sup>14</sup>*Mohmand, Mohmand Qabail*,1-196.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Ullah, "Why Youth Joins Militancy? The Case of Mohmand Agency (FATA)",44.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid,1-99.

<sup>19</sup> Shah and Sultana, "Afghan Factor in Rise of Militancy in FATA", 3.

<sup>20</sup> Mohmand, *Mohmand Qabail*,127-128.

landlords and other government employees. The government employees were threatened and killed by talibans. Moreover, the girls were forbid to go outside hence the people of the agency faced a harsh resistance from the Taliban in many aspects.<sup>21</sup> The activities initiated by the Taliban were also encouraged by people sometimes. They terminated and threatened those people who were already not liked by the local people. Those include gamblers, the people who gave loans on interest and others who harmed the social fabric to some extent. Moreover, the Taliban also pursued their inhumane activities for spreading terror among the tribal people. Therefore, in 2007, on the occasion of Eid, Taliban slaughtered six persons in front of the local people, in the area of Dawezae, which was definitely a barbaric act by the Taliban.<sup>22</sup>

Therefore, the war on terror for the Mohmand Agency and their people, resulted in a catastrophe. However, the local people were aware of the ideology of jihad and had the influence of their past religious leaders. But after the inception of Pakistan, the war on terror was the first time that the war was brought to them which was beyond the border to their home. The Mohmand Agency was a safe place for the mujahideen since the start of the Afghan war.<sup>23</sup> However, this time the war was not only in Afghanistan but also reached to the tribal areas of Mohmand Agency. Consequently, the social fabric which was changed drastically by the Afghan war was destroyed directly by the direct intervention of the state and the US. Moreover, due to strict policy of the US towards the Taliban included the state of Pakistan to directly intervene in the security matters of the tribal areas.<sup>24</sup> That's why the war on terror also resulted in the direct involvement of the military in the tribal areas. Therefore, the social fabric which altered and changed by the previous Afghan war and further perturbed by the war on terror. Henceforth, due to a long troubled period of the Mohmand Agency the central government did not pay any heed to the political reforms of the Mohmand Agency.<sup>25</sup>

### Military Intervention

Since the inception of Pakistan, the Mohmand Agency had experienced some drastic changes, affecting them from both spheres, internal and external.<sup>26</sup> To the Mohmand Agency war, on terror was one of the facts that left a deep mark on the political and social fabric of the society. Moreover, during the war on terror the area has come up with some maiden experiences. One of those was the intervention of the army to the Mohmand Agency and taking over of the security affairs of the area.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, since the inception of Pakistan, the state has promised the tribal areas that their internal security will not be compromised. Furthermore, Muhmmad Jinnah also promised the tribal elders during a Jirga in 1948 at Peshawar. In that Jirga he promised to the tribal leaders that the army will not intervene in the tribal areas.<sup>28</sup> Since then the people of Mohmand Agency and other tribal agencies controlled their security matters. The intervention of the army to the tribal areas had affected the social fabric of the society as it violated the promise made by the father of the nation. The tribal people were used to handling their security matters due to their tribal structure but the military intervention shook their history-long tribal system.<sup>29</sup>

The war on terror of the 21<sup>st</sup> century was a turning point for the politics of Pakistan and the FATA region of the country.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, the country was going through its third military regime of Parvez Musharraf. The war on terror initiated by the US was looking forward to its strategic ally, Pakistan, for the termination of the Al Qaeda from the tribal areas of Pakistan.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Ullah, "Why Youth Joins Militancy? The Case of Mohmand Agency (FATA)", 71.

<sup>22</sup>Mohmand, *Mohmand Qabail*, 127-128.

<sup>23</sup>Shah, "Political Reforms in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan (FATA)", 10.

<sup>24</sup>Khan, "FATA:Voice of Unheard", 56.

<sup>25</sup>Edwards, *Before Taliban*.

<sup>26</sup>Azhar and Goraya, "Border Issue between Pakistan & Afghanistan", 207.

<sup>27</sup>Khan, "FATA:Voice of Unheard", 56.

<sup>28</sup>Iqbal and Khan, "Federally Administered Tribal Areas", 67-68.

<sup>29</sup>Shuja Nawaz, "The Pakistan Army and Its Role in FATA," *Combating Terrorism Center* 2, no. 1 (2009), 1-3.

<sup>30</sup>Abbasi, Khatwani, Panhwar, "Social costs of war against terrorism in Pakistan(2002-2012)", 129.

<sup>31</sup>Khan, "Special Status of Tribal Areas (FATA), 72.

Therefore, the government of the United States was demanding for the Pakistani government do more against the Al Qaeda group and other militant groups to stop them from taking sanctuary in the tribal areas.<sup>32</sup> The arrival of the army in the tribal areas started soon after 2002 during the Musharraf regime. Moreover, they conducted military operation in some of the areas where the Al-Qaeda group or other militant group took sanctuaries.<sup>33</sup> Hence the military operations in some of the areas of FATA had affected the Mohmand Agency. Henceforth, not only driven the Taliban to the Mohmand Agency but also resulted in the military operation in the area. Therefore, the operations in Waziristan, Kurram and Bajaur drove the Taliban to the adjacent areas and hence in 2005 the Taliban appeared as a distinctive force in the Mohmand Agency.<sup>34</sup>

Furthermore, the Taliban appeared firstly in the Waziristan, Kurram and Bajaur agency where military operations were conducted during 2003-2004. After that the Taliban appeared in the Mohmand Agency in 2005 when some young boys established a training camp for the young fighters in Safi tehsil.<sup>35</sup> Soon after that the Taliban started their activities and tried to suppress the local people and to show their power to threaten them and the government.<sup>36</sup> However, the tribal militia was doing its best to resist them but lack of military skills and resources they could not be able to control the Taliban.<sup>37</sup> After that the Taliban continued their activities in the agency restoring more men power. Therefore, the open punishments like lashing, beating and even slaughtering and killing had spread fear in the local people and they did not dare to stop them. Thenceforth, a day came when the Taliban in the Mohmand Agency had set the outposts in the agency's head quarter and sub head quarter. Moreover, they also demanded remittance from the local people in form of money which must be given otherwise they will be caught and punished. However, the local administration was unable to control the Taliban and to stop them from all these activities.<sup>38</sup>

Therefore, till 2007 the local life of the people of the Mohmand Agency had been ruined to a large extent. They were not able to travel freely in their own areas due to deteriorated security situation of the Mohmand Agency day by day.<sup>39</sup> The schools and the hospitals were blasted by the Taliban which resulted in killing and wounding the people. The government employees were given threats and sometimes demanded a huge sum of money to spare their heads. Furthermore, the local tribal leaders and the Malikan who were not in favor of the Taliban were killed and slaughtered by them. Hence until 2007 the social and personal life of the people of Mohmand Agency was severely damaged by the presence of the Taliban. Therefore, in 2007 the military operation was conducted in Michni and Kandahari areas resulting in displacing the local people of Mohmand.<sup>40</sup> The military operation was continued for two and a half year in the Mohmand Agency and eventually the security was taken in the control of the affected areas. However, some of other areas still had the influence and the sanctuaries of the Taliban. Therefore, in March 2011 once again a military operation was conducted in the Khwaezai and Baezai areas of the Mohmand Agency.<sup>41</sup>

When Pakistan came into being, the state had always interfered in the political affairs of the Mohmand Agency. Moreover, until 2005 there was no direct interference in the security affairs of the Mohmand Agency, however, the military regimes interfered with their political affairs.<sup>42</sup> Therefore, the war on terror was the first phenomena which paved the way for the

<sup>32</sup>Abbasi, Khatwani, Panhwar, "Social costs of war against terrorism in Pakistan", 128.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 130.

<sup>34</sup>Mohmand, *Mohmand Qabail*, 1-196.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Ullah, "Why Youth Joins Militancy? The Case of Mohmand Agency (FATA)", 1-99

<sup>37</sup>Shuja Nawaz, "The Pakistan Army and its Role in FATA", *CTC Sentinel*, vol 2, 1(2009), 1.

<sup>38</sup>Ullah, "Why Youth Joins Militancy? The Case of Mohmand Agency (FATA)", 70.

<sup>39</sup>Abbasi, Khatwani, Panhwar, "Social costs of war against terrorism in Pakistan(2002-2012)", 131.

<sup>40</sup>Mohmand, *Mohmand Qabail*, 129-130.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid, 129-130.

<sup>42</sup> Khan, "FATA:Voice of Unheard", 56.



military to enter in the tribal areas. Moreover, the areas were captured and made a safe haven by the Taliban for themselves with an easy approach to the Afghanistan. Therefore, the military intervention in the Mohmand Agency was the result of the presence of the Taliban. Prior to the war on terror, the presence of the mujahideen, later Taliban, and other militant groups in the tribal areas was not countered by the military but the war on terror has changed the discourse of the mujahideen.<sup>43</sup> In addition to that, due to the pressure from the US to encounter the militants was also a reason for the army to intervene in the tribal areas.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, this security dynamics resulted in the displacement of the local people from their areas. Therefore, two military operations and the displacement of the natives was a consequence of the presence of the Taliban in Mohmand Agency.<sup>45</sup>

### Youth Participation in Militancy

It is obvious that youth is the backbone of every society and the future of the society depends on youth. In case of the Mohmand Agency, the youth which were affected by the long internal and external wars, are unaware of their basic human rights.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, when the Taliban started trainings in the time of Afghan war, it was the youth who participated in the war activities. Furthermore, the Taliban also exploited the youth for their energy in order to achieve their ulterior motives, as young people in every society are an active and energetic segment of the society. However, three generations of the Muhammad Agency has suffered from the war since the British time. Their mentalities were like the warriors and they found their fate in waging wars against the foreigners or any threats being posed to their areas. Therefore, the local people and youth especially are far beyond the basic education and basic rights. Therefore, they remained unaware of their basic political and social rights which they lacked from the beginning. Moreover, the unemployment and the poverty in the tribal areas are also responsible for the militancy in youth.<sup>47</sup> Hence, it was the multiplicity of the factors like illiteracy; unemployment; poverty and unawareness that lured the youth into join the armed militant groups.<sup>48</sup>

When Haji Sahib Turangzai had started the jihad against the British government, he conducted his activities against British from Mohmand tribal areas. The people of Mohmand who were uneducated and sentimental towards the religion had joined the army of Haji Sahib Turangzai. From that time the Mohmand Agency had the impact of jihad on them even after the formation of Pakistan. Since then, the three generations had the direct or indirect involvement in the Holy wars fought against the infidels. When the Haji Sahib Turangzai had started the Jihad movement in the Mohmand Agency it attracted the local tribal people, youth mostly.<sup>49</sup> Since then the local people had the impact of the ideology of the jihad over them, through which they can be easily lured to the path of the jihad. After that the Afghan mujahideen, post 1979, used the same card and preached the ideology of jihad throughout the Mohmand Agency. The youth who got grew up listening to the stories of wars from their elders had the impact of their forefathers on them. Therefore, the youth in the Mohmand Agency had joined the militancy and played its crucial roles in the forthcoming conflicts.

Moreover, the youth in a tribal society is responsible for maintaining the economy of their families from a young age. However, the illiteracy and poverty in the tribal areas had mostly effected the economy of these areas. Moreover, when the people are involved in wars they usually cannot maintain the economy. During the time of Afghan jihad, the local people were involved in illegal activities for economy. Moreover, the concept and ideology of the

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<sup>43</sup>Abbasi, Khatwani, Panhwar, "Social costs of war against terrorism in Pakistan", 128.

<sup>44</sup> Khan, "FATA:Voice of Unheard", 53.

<sup>45</sup>Nawaz, "The Pakistan Army and Its Role in FATA", 1-3.

<sup>46</sup> Ullah, "Why Youth Joins Militancy? The Case of Mohmand Agency (FATA)", 1.

<sup>47</sup>Rakisit, "Pakistan's Tribals Areas", 7.

<sup>48</sup>Larry P. Goodson, *Afghanistan's Endless War: State Failure, Regional Politics, and the Rise of the Taliban*, (Washington: University of Washington Press, 2001),133-166.

<sup>49</sup>Qadir, *Reforming the Pukhtuns and Resisting the British*, 50.

jihad once again consolidated its grip over the tribal areas.<sup>50</sup> Therefore, the participation in jihad for the Mohmand Agency was an obligation as mentioned in their religious literature. Furthermore, when the war on terror started, the local people of Mohmand Agency regarded the Taliban as the Holy warriors and termed them mujahideen. Moreover, when a society is busy in activities like wars, the economic activities lag behind and the economy deteriorates. Therefore, before and during the war on terror, there was no concept of economic developments in the Mohmand Agency because the war activities deviated the local people to get a smart economy for themselves. Hence the youth was involved in the militancy which kept them away from economic developments and gaining economic stability.<sup>51</sup>

For decades the tribal people of the Mohmand Agency faced consequent involvement in conflicts and wars.<sup>52</sup> In the time of British-India, they were in a conflict with the colonial masters and after that they had played a significant role in the Afghan war. However, the war on terror brought a shift about the concept of Jihad of people. Prior to that, the local people supported whole-heartedly the idea of jihad and fighting.<sup>53</sup> Therefore, the young population of the Mohmand Agency had attracted to the religious war, who were mostly inspired by the warriors of Haji Sahib Turangzai. The youth in the Mohmand Agency romanticized the ideas of jihad preached by the local Mullahs. Later, the economic conditions of the local young people became worse and the youth was left with no choices, either to join the militants or to involve in illegal trades which were also an outcome of the Afghan war. Therefore, until recently the tribal people of the Mohmand had little knowledge about the political and economic struggle. That's why the economy of the local people remained not too good. The inclination of young people towards the idea of the jihad and participation in it, kept them away from achieving their basic goals of life.<sup>54</sup>

#### Administrative and Political Changes

The regime of Musharraf had brought the politics of Pakistan to a new era with a change in national and foreign policy, as well as the politics of FATA.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, the Musharraf regime was more concerned about the tribal areas including Mohmand Agency of Pakistan than the previous governments.<sup>56</sup> The Mohmand tribal areas which were a shelter for the militant groups of Pakistan and Afghanistan has now under the strict encounter policies of the government of the country. The military had intervened in the Mohmand tribal area since 2006 and the militant groups, since then, were on the target of the army. However, some positive changes were also made during the Musharraf regime that included the "Local Government Ordinance" and "Local Government Regulations". The local council and the agency councils were made in each agency including Mohmand Agency. Furthermore, on the basis of these regulations and policies which were passed by Musharraf, the local bodies were made and the Mohmand Agency hence saw another positive change in its politics. Moreover, the formation of the "FATA Secretariat" is another blow to the administrative set up of the Mohmand Agency.<sup>57</sup>

In 2001 the Mohmand Agency and whole of the tribal areas fell under the great interest of Pakistani government and the US. Moreover, Baezai an area of the Mohmand Agency, because of the presence of Taliban, was in the top priority list of the US.<sup>58</sup> The administrative setup was attempted to change and improve with the formation of a separate secretariat for

<sup>50</sup> Khan, "Special Status of Tribal Areas (FATA)", 72.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Shah, "Political Reforms in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan (FATA)", 5.

<sup>53</sup> Ahmad, "Pakhtun Resistance Against British Rule: An Assessment of the Frontier Uprising of 1897", 28-205.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Khan "Local Government System in FATA", 136.

<sup>56</sup> Ali Shah, "Political Reforms in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan (FATA): Will It End the Current Militancy?", 1-21

<sup>57</sup> Khan, "Special Status of FATA", 7-38

<sup>58</sup> Mohmand, *Mohmand Qabail*, 70-75.

FATA in 2002 by the Musharraf regime.<sup>59</sup> Prior to 2002 the, former NWFP, provincial secretariat was used to control and administer the setup of the tribal areas. In the aftermath, the burden was divided and the tribal areas were administered more effectively through a separate secretariat formed in Peshawar. Furthermore, the separate secretariat made for the administrative setup of FATA was named as FATA secretariat. The formation of the separate administrative body for FATA was a positive and could be beneficial step for the future of the Mohmand Agency. However, the ground realities were not same as the policies were made and the situation in the agency deteriorated. Therefore, even the formation of a separate secretariat did not solve the fallacies of the administrative setup in Mohmand Agency. It was because of the draconian law FCR which still prevailed in the agency and the local population still remained under the rule of Political Agent.<sup>60</sup>

In 2001, the Musharraf regime announced the “Local Government Ordinance”, under the ordinance the local bodies were to be elected for the local agency councils.<sup>61</sup> However, in FATA and Mohmand Agency the ordinance was not introduced. The main hurdle in implementing the ordinance was the governor of the province at that time, who was the administrative agent of FATA to the president. Therefore, the “Local Government Ordinance” was not introduced in FATA till 2002.<sup>62</sup> Later on, the governor of NWFP had announced the formation of the agency council in every agency including Mohmand Agency. However, when the governor permitted the ordinance in FATA, it was implemented with the limitation and alteration of the powers of the local councils in each agency. Under the edited version of the “Local Government Ordinance” the elected persons to the agency council was given limited powers, unlike rest of the NWFP. However, the situation in the Mohmand Agency was not changed to a large extent. The local people were just introduced to the local body government, although they were not benefitted. Moreover, the local government ordinance did not bring a positive change to the Mohmand Agency because still the administrative structure lies within the hands of Political Agent and the Maliks.<sup>63</sup>

Although the demand for the self rule of the tribal people and Mohmand Agency was a basic need for a better administration of the Mohmand Agency. However, the Mohmand Agency was sidelined like other tribal areas in the political aspect. The local government ordinance was delayed in FATA by the then governor of NWFP.<sup>64</sup> In addition to that the local body elections were also delayed in the tribal areas. Therefore, till 2004, there was no local body election in the tribal areas of NWFP. Moreover, it was the first time that the local councils were established and the local tribesmen were selected for the agency council.<sup>65</sup> Although, it was a beneficial development in the politics of the Mohmand Agency but still the local people were not empowered. Nonetheless, on ground realities the situation was changed and the agency Nazims and other local body members’ authority lie under the Political Agent’s authority. Therefore, the superiority and the authority of the Political Agent prevail in the Mohmand Agency. Because of the fact the local government of the Mohmand Agency was not that much effective for the area. Therefore, the local government ordinance did not prove to be advantageous for the tribal areas and Mohmand Agency.<sup>66</sup>

### Administrative and Political Reforms

It is obvious to democratic governments that a subsequent development in any democratic setup brings prosperity to the nations. Similarly, the democratic government of Pakistan People’s

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<sup>59</sup> Iqbal and Khan, “Federally Administered Tribal Areas”, 70.

<sup>60</sup> Akins, “FATA and the Frontier Crimes Regulation in Pakistan: The Enduring Legacy of British Colonialism.”, 1-14.

<sup>61</sup> Rahman, “Local Government System in FATA”, 80.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Khan and Amin, “Demistifying Tribal Autonomous Governance: A Critical Appraisal of Maliki System in Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA)”, 1-19.

<sup>64</sup> Rahman, “Local Government System in FATA”, 80.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Khan, “Local Governments in FATA”, 131-145.

Party (2008-2013), came after almost nine years of military rule, eventually they brought some positive changes in the political and administrative setup of Mohmand Agency and FATA.<sup>67</sup> In these years, for the first time the Frontier crimes regulation was altered and some clemency had shown this time.<sup>68</sup> Moreover, the local people of Mohmand Agency had faced so much suffering because of the frontiers law. Therefore, it was like a blessing and, somehow, a sigh of relief for them. Furthermore, the political party order (PPO) was extended to the Mohmand Agency and FATA.<sup>69</sup> Since the granting of right to vote, to the Maliks and common mass of Mohmand Agency, it was the first time that political party got chance to agitate politics in the tribal areas. Moreover, the government of PPP also issued “FATA Local Government Regulation 2012” with a slight difference from that of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Therefore, the government of Pakistan People’s Party policies resulted in positive changes and the streamlining of Federally Administrative Areas, politically.<sup>70</sup>

The Frontier Crimes Regulation, since its implementation from the British time, led to humility and disdain for the tribal people.<sup>71</sup> Especially, the “collective responsibility” section of FCR disregarded the basic human rights. Therefore, the law was also called as “Black Law” because of its cruel nature where it did not abandon even children and women. That’s why because of nature of the law, the government of Pakistan People’s Party amended the regulation. Consequently, the responsibility over the women, elders and children under the age of 16 were exempted of the collective responsibility, where whole of the tribe will be punished for single person’s crime. Therefore, the amendment of the Frontier crimes Regulation was a sigh of releif for the tribal people of Mohmand Agency. Moreover, the administrative setup being in the hands of a solely powerful, Political Agent even made it further strict for the local people.<sup>72</sup> However, the FCR was abolished firstly by the PPP’s government but because of the interference of army, it was only upgraded. Even though the abolishment of the FCR was one of the prior demands of the tribal people, however its up gradation was no less than a blessing.<sup>73</sup>

The politics were allowed in the tribal areas of FATA and Mohmand Agency but the party politics were not allowed. Moreover, the state of Pakistan had the fear of strengthening of the nationalist perspective in the tribal areas.<sup>74</sup> Meanwhile, ban on practicing politics through party in the tribal areas and the Mohmand Agency, Afghanistan was also seeking a chance of its influence in the tribal areas. Subsequently, till 2012 no government in Pakistan did allow the political parties to practice in the tribal areas. Aftermath, to initiate the political activities in the tribal areas, the political parties order was significant to implement in the tribal areas. Therefore, in 2012, the PPP government extended the “Political Parties Order” (PPO).<sup>75</sup> Consequently, on the basis of the order the political parties were allowed to practice their politics in Mohmand Agency and FATA. The permission to the political parties to practice in the tribal areas was a drastic change in the political atmosphere of Mohmand Agency. However, the parties were not allowed in the Mohmand Agency, but the religious segment prevailed in the area along with some independent candidates.<sup>76</sup>

Along with allowing the political parties in the tribal areas, a consolidated local body council is also important for the betterment of the local politics. In 2002, the Musharraf regime took an initiative to bring the local body election to the tribal areas by implementing the “Local Government Regulation”. However, the governor of NWFP province at that time was

<sup>67</sup> Iqbal and Khan, “Federally Administered Tribal Areas”, 69.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid:71.

<sup>70</sup> Muhmmad and Shafique, “FATA Reforms in Institutional Inertia”, 47-57.

<sup>71</sup> Rahman, “Local Government System in FATA”, 69.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 86.

<sup>73</sup> Akins, “FATA and the Frontier Crimes Regulation in Pakistan: The Enduring Legacy of British Colonialism”, 47-57.

<sup>74</sup> Iqbal and Khan, “Federally Administered Tribal Areas”, 68.

<sup>75</sup> Shah, “Political Reforms in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan (FATA)”, 14.

<sup>76</sup> Khan, “Special Status of Tribal Areas (FATA)”, 7.

committed to delay the order in the tribal areas of the province. Therefore, in rest of the country, the order was implemented in 2001, while in the tribal areas and Mohmand Agency it came into effect from 2002. Moreover, the local councils were formed but with the limited franchise of vote, where only Maliks can vote. Subsequently, the local body election was abolished in 2007 and after that there were no local body elections since then.<sup>77</sup> However, in 2012 the Zardari government had announced to implement “Local Government Regulation” in the tribal areas and Mohmand Agency. Nonetheless, the regulation was not implemented in the areas in a true spirit and the tribal areas remained as they were before. The local body councils for Mohmand Agency can be beneficial than any political system in the area. Moreover, through the local councils not only the political process got developed but could bring positive change in administrative setup.<sup>78</sup>

In conclusion, during 2001 to 2018, it was a time of political changes in the FATA in general and Mohmand Agency in particular. Moreover, the Musharraf’s regime dealt tribal areas differently than that of the previous governments. The most awaited was the extension of the Political Parties Order PPO, to the tribal areas. The allowance of the political parties in FATA has changed the politics of the area. Moreover, the PPO has encouraged the political parties of Pakistan to conduct their activities in the tribal areas of Pakistan. However, the nature and mindset of the tribal areas is different from that of the settled areas. The tribal people lives in tribalism, hence they should be dealt separately from rest of the country, in terms of politics. The tribal people were bound to their own culture and customs. Moreover, for a long time they practiced Jirga in their indigenous areas. Furthermore, they have their indigenous leaders, Maliks, who possessed a specific position in the tribal societies. Therefore, looking at all these factors, the local elected candidate for the local body councils can be best choice for the tribal people. The tribal people were unaware of political activities and thenceforth, it is obvious that the grass root level politics are the only way to familiarize them with the political activities and their political rights. Therefore, the local bodies councils should be established in the tribal areas and the local people should be elected through local body elections.

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<sup>77</sup>Khan, “Local Governments in FATA”, 131-145.

<sup>78</sup>Iqbal and Khan, “Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA): From No-Man’s Land to Political Mainstreaming”, 7-38.