

The Centenary of *Anjuman-E-Islahul Afghana*

Muhammad Salman*

* M.Phil. scholar, Department of Pakistan studies, Islamia college university Peshawar, Pakistan

KEYWORDS

Anjuman-e-Islahul-Afghana
Azad Isalmia Schools
Bacha Khan
Pakhtun Journal
Khudai khidmatgar.

ABSTRACT

This research paper is a tribute to the centenary of Anjuman-e-Ishlahul Afghana. This research article focuses on key aspects such as the establishment of Azad Islamia schools, the influential Pakhtun journal, the Khudai Khidmatgar movements, and the organization's status and impact in contemporary times. Through an exploration of these topics, this article pays acknowledgment to the permanent legacy of Anjuman-e-Ishlahul Afghana and its profound influence on Pashtun society. In celebrating the centenary of Anjuman-e-Ishlahul Afghana, this research article highlights the organization's enduring relevance and impact. This article offers a comprehensive examination of its role in fostering education, intellectual discourse, grassroots activism, and cultural preservation within the Pashtun community. Through an in-depth exploration of the Azad Islamia schools, Pakhtun journal, Khudai Khidmatgar movements, and its status post-centenary, the article underscores the organization's commitment to social justice, education, and community development. Ultimately, it serves as a testament to the resilience and dedication of Anjuman-e-Ishlahul Afghana in shaping Pashtun identity and aspirations across generations.

1. Introduction

Anjuman-e-Ishlahul Afghana founded in 1921.(Shah,2007). It is more than just an organization—it's a beacon of hope and progress for the Pashtun community. From its humble beginnings, it has been dedicated to uplifting Pashtuns through education, activism, and social reform. With a deep-rooted commitment to service and empowerment, Anjuman-e-Ishlahul Afghana has played a pivotal role in shaping the collective identity and aspirations of Pashtuns for nearly a century. Through its tireless efforts, it has become a symbol of resilience and unity, inspiring generations to strive for a better future. The centenary of Anjuman-e-Ishlahul Afghana is a significant moment in the annals of Pashtun history, marking a century of intellectual and social progress. (Sohail,2015). Established a century ago, Anjuman-e-Ishlahul Afghana is a Pashtun cultural support, educational advancement, and social service foundation. Its long history reflects the organization's important role in promoting a progressive Pashtun identity

based on the principles of justice and leadership. One of the most important initiatives launched by the Anjuman is the creation of free schools, ushering in a new era where Pashtun children, especially those without a background, can receive a good education. These institutions are supported to promote and combat educational inequality and create a generation of Pashtun leaders and thinkers. Even today, the legacy of independent madrassas and schools continues to influence and shape the educational landscape and help Pashtun youth realize their potential. (Mashriq, 2022).

Pashtun journal has become an important platform for intellectual discourse by presenting Pashtun's voice on various issues such as political, cultural, religious, and social change. Through its pages, the newspaper not only provides a forum for Pashtun writers and intellectuals but also promotes discussion of local concerns and international perspectives. Despite the changing media landscape, the legacy of Pashtun newspapers continues and testifies to the powerful power of Pashtun intellectuals and

Title: *The Centenary of Anjuman-E-Islahul Afghana....*

Author: Muhammad Salman

discourse. The Khudai Khidmatgar movement emerged from the principles of self-service and non-violence. The violence promoted by Anjuman-e-Ishlahul Afghana elevated the Pashtun community to social and political power. Led by prominent figures such as Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan (Bacha Khan), these movements promoted Pashtun unity, promotion of prosperity, and freedom from authoritarian rule through non-violence. (Rahim,2015).

Today, the spirit of Khudai Khidmatgar's movement lives on and inspires a new generation of Pashtun activists and leaders who work to improve the well-being of their communities. As we commemorate the 100th anniversary of Anjuman-e-Ishlahul Afghana, it is important to understand its significance and impact on modern Pashtun life. From its founding a century ago to its continuous contribution to education, labor, and cultural preservation, Anjuman-e-Ishlahul Afghana has been a beacon of success and recovery for the Pashtun community. Through this research paper, we aim to delve deeper into the rich history, achievements, and challenges of Afghana and reveal its profound impact on the formation of Pashtun identity and the way of thinking of the generation.h.

2. Research Anjuman-e-Ishlahul Afghana

The establishment of the Anjuman marked an important period in Bacha Khan's efforts towards social reform and educational development of the Pashtun society. Initially, Bacha Khan's efforts were personal, but with the creation of Anjuman, a collaborative platform designed to solve social problems and promote education. Through district-level efforts, Bacha Khan and his colleagues reached nearly 500 villages to support education and social change. Anjuman-i-islamul Afghana was established in April 1921 under the supervision of Abdul Ghaffar Khan (bacha Khan) and sponsored many initiatives aimed at the development of the Pashtun community. (Khan,2021). He organized and supervised the establishment of the Azad school, the publication

of the Pukhtoon magazine, and the advocacy of social justice through movements such as Zalmo Jirga and Khudai Khidmatgar. Bacha Khan's autobiography shows the main mission of Anjuman; To promote unity among Pashtuns, to fight evil, to promote Pashtun language and literature, and to promote true love for Islam. (Khan,2021). These goals refer to the expansion of social change, including culture, education, and religion.

3. Azad Islamia School System

Azad School was founded in 1921 and is the center of Anjuman education. Bacha Khan established these schools with the help of his friends and allies such as Qazi Attaullah and Haji Abdul Ghafar Khan, which aims to provide free education to all, regardless of religion or race. (Khatak,2018). The rapid growth and popularity of Azad schools reflect the urgent need for accessible and inclusive education in the Pashtun society. The curriculum of Azad School has been carefully designed to balance religious education with modern education. Subjects such as Quran Studies, Pashto, Mathematics, English, and Vocational Skills are integrated to provide an educational experience. (Sohail,2015). This unique approach aims to bridge the gap between religious schools and modern education to meet the diverse needs of students.

In Azad schools, Pashto is the main language of teaching, although students also learn Urdu and English, especially for subjects where Pashto materials are scarce. This focus on promoting Pashtun language and literature is a way of honoring the cultural richness of the region and nurturing the interest and understanding of Pashtun youth. The structure and operation of Anjuman are outlined in its constitution,

which emphasizes independent decision-making and transparency in financial matters. (Islam,2018). A committee oversees all aspects of Anjuman's work, from education to finances and community engagement, ensuring good governance and accountability. The success of Azad Schools goes beyond providing quality education; it also involves offering extracurricular activities and involving the community. Sports competitions, literary debates, and cultural events not only enhance students' learning experiences but also help them build friendships and take pride in their heritage. (Rauf,2015).

Despite the remarkable achievements of the Anjuman and Azad schools, their autonomy was curtailed after the partition of British India in 1947. (Nabeel,2023). The NWFP government took control of the buildings and made changes to the education system, management, and values. The centenary celebration of Anjuman-e-Islahul Afghana offers a chance to look back on its lasting impact and the importance of its mission today. The values of unity, education, and social justice championed by Bacha Khan and his colleagues are just as relevant now as they were a hundred years ago. They serve as guiding lights for present and future generations striving for progress and enlightenment. Anjuman-e-Islahul Afghana, with its Azad school system and advocacy for social change, has left a significant legacy in Pashtun society. As we mark its centenary, we pay tribute to the vision and commitment of its founders, reiterating our dedication to the principles of education, unity, and justice.

4. Pukhtun Journal

The creation of the Pukhtun Journal in 1928 marked a big step forward in awakening the cultural and intellectual life of the Pashtun people. (Hussain,1982). Bacha Khan, a respected Pashtun leader, understood how important language was in shaping who we are and moving us forward. He believed deeply that our native languages are crucial for our development as a nation and for reviving our culture. Despite facing challenges and resistance at first, Bacha Khan kept going, knowing how much talking and thinking together can shape who we are as Pashtuns. The Pukhtun Journal became a hub for discussing all sorts of things – politics, culture, money, religion, and social stuff. Its articles aimed to get people thinking, inspire love for our country, and push for changes in society. (Anwar,2016). By talking about both local issues and what was happening in the wider world, the Pukhtun journal connected Pashtuns to bigger ideas and made us feel like part of a global community. Bacha Khan, also known as Abdul Ghafar Khan, played a crucial role in steering the Pukhtun journal as its chief editor. (Khan,2021). Under his leadership, the journal became a platform where Pashtun writers and thinkers could share their thoughts and contribute to the cultural scene. Bacha Khan's constant push for fairness and political empowerment aimed to make Pashtuns proud of who they are and to promote acceptance and understanding within our community.

The goals of the Pukhtun journal were big and covered a lot of ground, showing a complete approach to building our community and nation. Whether it was bringing Pashtuns together, standing up for our language, or tackling social problems, the journal aimed to cover all aspects of Pashtun life and culture. By featuring quotes from

Title: *The Centenary of Anjuman-E-Islahul Afghana....*

Author: Muhammad Salman

well-known Pashtun voices, the journal showed its dedication to these goals and its impact on Pashtun society. (Shah,2007). Despite facing government censorship and bans, the Pukhtun journal kept going through many ups and downs, showing the strength and determination of the Pashtun people. Each phase of its publication was like a new chapter, with challenges, setbacks, and moments of resilience. The fact that it kept going despite obstacles shows how important it was as a voice for Pashtun's rights and dreams. The government didn't like the Pukhtun Journal because it represented a challenge to their authority, especially during colonial times. Bacha Khan even got thrown in jail, and they kept banning the journal on and off because they were worried about Pashtuns coming together and standing up for themselves. (Marwat,2012). But despite all that, the Pukhtun journal stayed strong, showing how Pashtuns wouldn't back down and were determined to protect their culture and way of life. In the end, the Pukhtun Journal's story shows how tough and persistent Pashtuns are in defending their language, culture, and history. Despite all the problems it faced, the journal still shines as a source of inspiration and empowerment for Pashtuns. And now, it keeps going strong from the Bacha Khan Research Center in Peshawar, making sure that its mission of celebrating Pashtun language, culture, and values keeps inspiring new generations.

5. Khudai Khidmatgar Movement

Bacha Khan started the Khudai Khidmatgar Movement in November 1929, and it quickly became popular among Pashtuns. (Khan,2021). The movement focused on fighting social problems, promoting the

Pashto language, and spreading awareness about Islam and nationalism. It was a big effort covering many areas like economics, society, education, religion, and politics, all aimed at helping Pashtuns and making things better for them. (Marwat,2012). The idea behind the Khudai Khidmatgar Movement came from Bacha Khan's belief in serving others and putting aside personal interests for the community. They chose the name "Khudai Khidmatgar" to encourage Pashtuns to serve selflessly, with a focus on serving God and helping others. (Islam,2022). This idea was clear in the movement's oath, which talked about non-violence, sacrifice, and working for the freedom of the nation. Bacha Khan's vision was all about making Pashtuns think beyond themselves and work together for the good of everyone. The Khudai Khidmatgar Movement became a symbol of unity and service, spreading a message of peace and dedication to the community. Anyone could join the Khudai Khidmatgar group, no matter their religion, caste, or beliefs. But Bacha Khan made it clear that being a real member meant believing in Pashtun unity and committing to peaceful ways to make society better. They focused on getting volunteers who were ready to work at the local level to put the group's ideas into action. The Khudai Khidmatgar movement had big goals. They wanted to bring Pashtuns together, encourage friendship between Hindus and Muslims, get freedom from British rule without violence, and help people in general. They aimed to deal with social problems, push for education, get rid of customs that didn't fit with Islam, solve disagreements using Islamic teachings, and make people love freedom and serving others. (Khan,2021).

Title: *The Centenary of Anjuman-E-Islahul Afghana....*

Author: Muhammad Salman

The way the Khudai Khidmatgar movement was organized was a big part of why it worked so well. They had a structure that went from local councils up to bigger assemblies, making sure everyone could be involved in making decisions. They put a lot of emphasis on following the rules and sticking to the movement's principles, which you could see in how they gave members ranks like in the military and had everyone dress the same, showing they were all in it together. The main idea behind the Khudai Khidmatgar movement was not using violence. (Rahim,2015). Bacha Khan and the other leaders thought that not hurting anyone was not just the right thing to do, but also the smartest way to make things better without causing any more harm. They believed strongly in Islam's teachings of peace, kindness, and understanding, which was a big change from the usual tribal fighting and revenge that was common at the time. The Khudai Khidmatgar movement faced a lot of trouble from the colonial government, and it got really bad with tragic events like the Qissa Khwani Bazaar massacre. (Marwat,2012).

The authorities were scared of Pashtuns standing up against them, so they cracked down hard, arresting important leaders and sometimes even using violence. But the movement didn't give up, sticking to their belief in not fighting back and staying strong together. The movement worked with the Indian National Congress and joined protests against the British government, showing they were part of the bigger fight for India's freedom. They followed the ideas of Mahatma Gandhi, who believed in peaceful ways to make change, and this made a lot of people across India support them. Even after Pakistan gained independence, the Khudai

Khidmatgar movement kept going, pushing for democracy, human rights, and giving power to regular people. Even though things changed a lot over time, the movement's memory stayed alive, showing how strong and forward-thinking they were. Today, the Khudai Khidmatgar group is still active, keeping the founders' ideas alive by helping their community, speaking up for fairness, and making sure everyone's rights are respected.

5. Conclusion

As we look back on the hundred years since Anjuman-e-Ishlahul Afghana was founded, we see how important it has been and continues to be for the Pashtun community. It has played a big part in bringing our culture back to life, helping people get educated, and getting regular folks involved in making things better. The organization's story shows how strong and determined Pashtuns are, even when things get tough, inspiring us to keep pushing for a better future with fairness for all. It's great to see that Anjuman-e-Ishlahul Afghana is still going strong, keeping up the spirit of helping others that it's always had. They're still working hard to make life better for Pashtun communities, especially those who might be struggling, and they're still big on making sure education and understanding are valued.

In a world that's always changing, knowing that Anjuman-e-Ishlahul Afghana is still around gives Pashtuns everywhere hope and confidence for the future. Looking ahead, we need to understand how important Anjuman-e-Ishlahul Afghana is for shaping what it means to be Pashtun and what we hope for in the future. They're still really focused on making things fairer, helping

Title: *The Centenary of Anjuman-E-Islahul Afgahana....*

Author: Muhammad Salman

people get educated, and making our communities stronger. The organization is a big inspiration for young Pashtuns who want to make a difference, showing them how they can keep pushing for a better world. The hundred years since Anjuman-e-Ishlahul Afghana was founded show us just how much they've done and why they still matter today. We should celebrate all they've achieved and

make sure we keep supporting them so they can keep doing good work for Pashtuns everywhere. Their legacy of helping others and making sure everyone has a chance to succeed is something we need to keep alive for many more years to come.

References

- Sohail, M. (2015). *The Educational Movements in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with special reference to Anjuman I Islahul Afghana: (1901-1947)* (Doctoral dissertation, Institute of Education and Research, University of Peshawar).
- Khan, B. (2021). *My Life and Struggle*. Bacha Khan Research Centre Markez.
- Rauf, A. (2016). Socio-Educational Reform Movements in N.W.F.P.- A case study of Anjuman I Islahul Afghana. *Pakistan Journal of Social Science*, 36, 37.
- Hussain, M., & Hussain, R. (2018). The Establishment of Azad school Utmanzi and Anjuman I Islahul Afghana: A Successful Methodology of Organizational Excellence (1921-1946). *Global Social Sciences Review*, 3, 194.
- Fakhr-Ul-Islam. (2012). *The Genesis and Evolution of Khudai Khedmatgar (1929-1947)*. Islamabad.
- Shah, S. W. A. (2007). *North-West Frontier Province: History and Politics*. National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research Centre of Excellence, Quaid I Azam University.
- Khan, P., & Rahim, F. U. (2015). *Celebrities of NWFP*. Pakistan Study Centre, University of Peshawar.
- Hussain, A., & Khattak, S. S. G. (2018). Azad School System: An Appraisal. *FWU Journal of Social Sciences*, 12(1), 280.
- Marwat, F. U. R. (2012). Origins, Growth and consolidation of Khudai Khedmatgar Movement. *Pakistan Perspective*, 17(1), 141-142.

Title: *The Centenary of Anjuman-E-Islahul Afgahana....*

Author: Muhammad Salman

Hussain, S. I. (1982). *The journal Pukhtun- An Appraisal* (Master's thesis, Area Study Centre, University of Peshawar).

Khan, P., & Rahim, F. U. (2015). *Celebrities of NWFP*. Pakistan Study Centre, University of Peshawar.

Saleem, S., & Khalil, H. (2014). Khan Abdul Ghafar Khan's efforts for the Pashto Language Movement. *TAKATOO*, 6, 47-48.

Wikipedia contributors. (2022, January). Khudai Khidmatgar. In Wikipedia. Retrieved January 26, 2022, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khudai_Khidmatgar

Khan, B. (2021). *My Life and Struggle*. Bacha Khan Research Centre Markez.

Marwat, F. U. R. (2012). Origins, Growth and consolidation of Khudai Khedmatgar Movement. *Pakistan Perspective*, 17(1), 148.

Bacha Khan Research Centre. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo/khudai.html?sortBy=relevant>

Rahman, F. (2012). Origins, Growth and consolidation of Khudai Khedmatgar Movement. *Pakistan Perspective*, 17(1), 145.

Hussain, A., & Anwar, M. (2016). Politics of social Reformation in NWFP (KPK)- An Estimate of Khan Abdul Ghafar Khan (1890-1988)'s Educational philosophy. *International Journal of Social Sciences Studies*, 4, 42-43.