

Socio-Political Conditions in Afghanistan**Prachi Sinha**, Research Scholar, B. R. A. Bihar University, Muzaffarpur, Bihar, India

Abstract: The landscape of Afghanistan is situated among the dales and valleys surrounded by the Hindu Kush mountain ranges. Geographically it is beautiful place, containing many old oriental monuments and ancient archaeological sites and heritage; it is a favourite centre of attraction for the tourists from all over the world, willing to visit the place. People of Afghanistan are simple, daring, truthful, committed and accommodative. They are the followers of their tradition; majority of them are Sunni Muslim - having faith in the tenets of Islam. The major ethnic groups living in the region are the Pashtun, Hazara, Tazik, Uzbek and other smaller communities. The Pashtun consider themselves to be true Afghan - they have become synonym for the term 'Afghan'. They are the most developed and intellectual among all of the native ethnic groups there. The famous dry-fruits seller Rahmat in the famous story *Kabuliwala* by Sri Rabindranath Tagore, was an Afghan; he was one of the common trade-people from Afghanistan, who used to visit India every year for sale of dry fruits. This paper presents the socio-political conditions in Afghanistan.

Keywords: Social, Political, Afghanistan, People, Borders

The country still faces the severity of poverty and under-development; still its cities like Kabul, Kandahar, Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif and others have witnessed the light of growth and development; these are the places of foreign attraction. Geographically, it borders with China, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan in the north, Iran in the west, and the pre-independence India or today's Pakistan in the south and east. It had been a part of the famous 'Silk Route' for trade in the Central Asia.

Background

“Slay enemies whenever you find them.” Osama Bin Laden has been heard many times quoting this verse of Koran but it was never substantiated by including the following lines which say, "thus, if they let you be, and do not make war on you, and offer you peace, God does not allow you to harm them".

Fundamentalism Erupted in Every Major Religion as a Rebellion Against Modernity.

The twenty first century witnessed the two most important events in the history of the modern world. These two events are, till date, the major blot on the humanity, religion, society and intellectuality; these barbaric actions can never be neither ignored nor repaired by the human race. These in-humanistic events are the demolition of the Bamiyan Buddha in Afghanistan in the year 2001 by the Taliban; and the other one is the 9/11 attack on the Trade Tower in America - that too by the Taliban forces. By these two major events the Taliban got the recognition all over the world. Though in due course it proved to be the death-knell for its furious leader Osama-Laden by the American power.

Afghanistan, as a state it is today, was established by Ahmad Shah Durrani in the year 1747. The recorded history of the geographical area of the country can be traced back to around 500 B.C. Still, there are evidences that the urbanized culture had developed on the land even during the Indus Valley Civilization era, which had its expansions up to the large parts of Afghanistan. As such, the history of Afghanistan goes back to the period 3000 B.C. Since then, it has been the place of Alexander the Great and many others like the Greco-Bactrian's, Indo-Greek, Mauryas, Kushans, Hephthalites, Hindu Shahi, Saffarids, Samanids, Ghaznavids, Ghurids, Khaljis, Timurids, Mughals, Hotakis and Durranis. These empires flourished in Afghanistan or found their ways to prosper from this land. It has witnessed many ups-and-downs in the pages of history when these world famous empires played their roles on the land comprising of Indo-Iranian, Indus valley, Central Asia, The Hindu Kush, Arab and the bordering China.

The excavations of the pre-historic sites like Darra-e Kur and Kara Kamar have proved the early humans lived in Afghanistan since 50000 years ago. The artefacts found by the archaeologists prove the presence of human life; they were farmers and herdsmen; probably lived in tribes with their local kingdoms. With the growth of civilization, urbanization also developed and also developed the cities like Gandhara - a kingdom during the Vedic period situated between the Hindukush and the Soloman mountains.

The Urban civilization began around 3000 B. C. and the early inhabitants had been connected through culture; it appears that the early city of Mundigak (near Kandahar) was a colony of the nearby Indus Valley Civilization. Indo-Aryans and the Indo-Iranians were the first known people to arrive on the land, around 3000 B. C. to 1500 B. C. Shortughai and Mundigak in Afghanistan are the known Indus Valley sites, which establish the authenticity of the urban civilization in the country around 3000 B. C. Also the city of Balkh (Bactra) founded in between 2000 - 1500 B. C. under the BMAC (Bactria–Margiana Archaeological Complex) regime possessed the cults of the Indo-European culture.

Around 500 B. C., Darius I of Persia founded the reign of Achaemenid Empire, and the state of Afghanistan was divided into different parts which were ruled by respective Satraps. The areas were named as

Satrapies and the rulers were known as Governors or Satraps. These divided parts were Aria (Herat); Arachosia (comprising of Kandahar, Lashkar Gah, and Quetta); Bactriana (Balkh); Sattagydia (Ghazni); and Gandhara (comprising of Kabul, Jalalabad, Peshawar).

Alexander the Great defeated Darius III of Persia in 331 B. C. at the Battle of Gaugamela. He arrived in the area of Afghanistan in B.C. 330 and built many great cities under his name "Alexandria", such as: Alexandria-of-the-Arians (modern-day Herat); Alexandria-on-the-Tarnak (near Kandahar); Alexandria-ad-Caucasum (near Begram, at Bordj-i-Abdullah); and Alexandria-Eschate (near Kojend). Alexander's reign is known for Hellenic cultural influence that lasted several centuries. Later, Seleucus became the king of the combined land of Persia and Afghanistan Under the reign of Menander I during 165-130 BC, the area of Afghanistan and the Indo-Greek Kingdom expanded to its height and Pakistan came within its periphery.

The territory flourished under the Mauryan Empire, and Hinduism and Buddhism were introduced to the region. We have evidences like Buddhist stupa at Mes Aynak in Logar Province of Afghanistan as well as other stupas discovered in neighboring Ghazni Province, including in the northern Samangan Province. Archaeologists have found ancient religious and artistic remnants of Buddha's heritage in Afghaistan. Husang Tsang has reported that Buddhist doctrines reached as far as Balkh regions during the life of the Buddha. Trapusa and Bhallika - the two disciples of Lord Buddha were assigned the task of introducing Buddhism in the country.

Later the land came under the reign of Sakas or Scythians during the period 2nd. B. C. and 1st. B. C. The Sakas had a great empire that stretched from Gandhara to Mathura in India. The combined group of Iranians and the Parthia residents were called the Indo-Parthians. The Indo-Parthians established the Indo-Parthian Kingdom comprising of Pakistan and Afghanistan with its capital in Taxila, later shited to Kabul. Gondophares was the first ruler and founder of the Gondopharid dynasty of the Indo- Parthian kingdom.

The land has witnessed the growth and expansion of the great Kushan Empire. The Kushans were a branch of one of the Indo-European language speaking tribe from Central Asia. Kushan Empire, up to the 3rd. century, under its greatest king Kanishka and others, encompassed Afghanistan in Central Asia to Saket (present day Ayodhya) and Sarnath, near present day Varanasi in India. Afghanistan had also been a part of the Sasanian Empire of Persia for some time. After the 4th. century it became the land of different clans of the Hunas - a nomadic confederation in Central Asia.

The land of the modern day Afghanistan is covered by a wide area between the Hindu Kush and the Indus River, around the Sulaiman or the Soloman Mountains. It was inhabited by the Afghan tribes. The heirs of these Afghan tribal people are the present day Pashuns. According to the Brihat-Samhita also, by the Indian astronomer Varāha Mihira in the 6th century A.D. Afghanistan already existed during the 3rd. century; it was recognized as Khorasan in the Middle Ages till 1750. Area of Kandahar, Ghazni and Kabul formed the frontier region between Khorasan and Hindustan, where as Balkh and Herat are located in central Afghanistan. Huen Tsiang, was a Chinese pilgrim. He had visited Afghanistan several times during 630 -650. After the downfall of the great Kushan Empire, the area was mainly under the command of the Kabul Shahi. The Shahi Dynasty was later divided into the Buddhist Shahi and the Hindu Shahi. A Rajput king named Jayapal was a renowned ruler of the Hindu Shahi Dynasty; he ruled for a long period. The land also witnessed the struggles between the Rajput king Jayapal and the Ghaznavids during the reign of Sebuktigin and his son Mahmud. In the course of time the Ghaznavids conquered the rulers of the Hindu Shahi Dynasty.

The Arabs invaded the land in the 7th. Century and thereafter; as such Afghanistan came under the influence of Islam. Persian Yaqub-Ibn-Layth Saffari was a fanatic follower of Islam. He was the founder of the Saffarids of Seistan Dynasty. He conquered the areas of Bost, Kandahar, Ghazni, Kabul, Bamyan, Balkh and Herat, in the name of Islam. During the eighth and ninth centuries A.D. the eastern parts of modern Afghanistan were still in the hands of non-Muslim rulers. During the rule of the Ghaznavid dynasty that was from 997 to 1030 A. D., emperor Mahmud had made Ghazni, a city in East Afghanistan, his capital. He had transformed the city of Ghazni into the wealthy capital of an extensive empire. The empire of Mahmud covered today's Afghanistan, Eastern Iran, and Pakistan. During the rule of Mahmud, Ghazni was the epicentre of a great cultural. Later it as ruled by the Ghurids, Ghilzai Hotakis and Shah Muhammad II of the Khwarezmid Empire. The empire came under the rule of Genghis Khan, a Mangol ruler by 1219. Invasion by the Mangols brought disasters in the area and many cities were destroyed. Large number of inhabitants was killed in great massacre.

Later Tamerlane or Timur invaded Afghanistan in 1381 and made Herat his capital. Timur was a descendent of Genghis Khan. He reorganized the area and rebuilt the country, which had been destroyed by the previous rulers. Timur was a Turk; he brought the Turkic nomadic culture engrossed with Persian civilization; developed Herat as one of the most cultured and refined cities in the world. Central Asian culture and Persian culture fused together became a major legacy for the future Afghanistan. Later the Afghan tribes periodically invaded India and created vast Indo-Afghan empires. Kabul had been the military headquarter of Babur, a Timur descendent; Babur later moved towards India.

In the 16th - 17th century A.D. Afghanistan was divided into three major areas. The Khanate of Bukhara ruled the north, the Iranian Shia Safavids ruled the west, and the eastern section was under the Sunni Mughals of the northern India. The Mughal empire in India was established by Babur in 1526. One of Akbar's subahs - imperial provinces - was established in Kabul it included Lahore, Multan and Kashmir. The Kandahar region in the south was a buffer zone between the Mughals and the Persia's Safavids; Safavids were in tune with the native Afghans, though the native afghans often changed their sides. A Safavid ruler Shah Husayn had to face revolt among the people, which he successfully crushed. Later a coup under the leadership of Mirwais Hotak rebelled against the barbarous rule of Safavid Shah Husayn; Mirwais with his Afghan forces defeated the large Persian armies fighting for Safavid Shah Husayn. Mirwais Hotak succeeded in founding the Hotaki dynasty. About some 40 -50 years later, Durrani dynasty under the leadership of Ahmad Shah Durrani took over the reign of Afghanistan. He was succeeded by his son, Timur Shah Durrani; Timur had transferred the capital of the Afghan Empire from Kandahar to Kabul.

The rise of European power had now started expanding its tentacles in Afghanistan also. The British and the Russian Empires nursed their own expanding ambitions; there used to collision and conflicts between those empires. Russians were in advancing positions in Central Asia; they were becoming a growing influence in West Asia and Persia, which led to the two Anglo-Afghan wars, respectively in 1839-1842 and 1878-1880. Amir Abdur Rahman, also known as the "Iron Amir", ascended to the Afghan throne as the result of the conflict and the then political conditions in Afghanistan. During this period the British and Russians jointly established the official boundaries of the modern Afghanistan. Abdur Rahman made many reforms in army, legal system and government. His governance brought stability and unity in the country. In his governance he maintained strong centralisation, harsh punishments for crime and corruption, and international isolation to certain degree.

Abdur Rahman's son Habibullah Khan succeeded his father in 1901. He too, like his father, maintained the policy of international isolation and kept neutral in the First World War in 1919. But his policy of neutrality was opposed by the public and he was assassinated; his son King Amanullah Khan became the king. Amanullah fought the Third Anglo-Afghan War. By the time the British were growing weak and disinterested in Afghanistan; a treaty was signed on the 19th of August, 1919 and the British relinquished their control over Afghanistan. Afghans celebrate 19 August as their Independence Day. King Amanullah Khan introduced several reforms in order to modernize Afghanistan. He ended his country's traditional isolation and established diplomatic relations with most major countries. His government was the ardent supporter of the education of women; elementary education was made compulsory in his time. He abolished the tradition of veiling Muslim women in a burqa; he also started co-educational schools.

On the other hand the traditional Muslims were growing against King Amanullah Khan. A group led by Habibullah Khan defeated him in January 1929 and Habibullah Khan took over. It was revenged by Nadir Khan, the cousin of Amanullah Khan in November 1929, Nadir Khan became the king. He started to modernize the country in his own and people-friendly ways. But he too was assassinated in 1933 and his 19 year old son Mohammad Zahir Shah became the king; he reigned till 1973. The 40 years reign of Mohammad Zahir Shah witnessed many changes in Afghanistan. He was a liberal, open-minded king. He allowed greater political freedom to the people; he promulgated a liberal constitution with provision of a legislature. It had a three-tier election process. One third was to be appointed by the king, the other third was to be elected by the people and the last third was to be selected indirectly by the provincial assemblies. Though King Zahir Shah experimented with the democratic pattern of governance, it permitted the growth of unofficial extremist parties. The communist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) is the by-product of this democratic step in Afghanistan. The PDPA maintained the close ideological ties with Communism and the Soviet Union.

After the tenure of the King Zahir Shah, Afghanistan passed through various stages of change, transformations, upheavals, downgrading and rebellion. The land became a platform of the various political ambitions and different Islamic beliefs to appear and perform on the stage. Mohammad Daud Khan, a onetime Prime Minister in the Shah's rule and a cousin of the king, revolted against the king. While the king being away from the country for his treatment, Daud Khan dethroned him and took over the reign of the country in 1973. Later, he declared Afghanistan a democratic nation with its name as Republic of Afghanistan; himself became its President the first President of Afghanistan. During the period, though the country was on way to develop, resentment between the Pashtun and other ethnic groups had started due to the pro-Pushtun policy of the government.

Daud Khan latter adopted a policy of neutrality; it became the root cause of differences between his government and the 'Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan' (PDPA). PDPA was a political outfit founded by Noor Mohammad Taraki in 1965; it nourished the communist views and ideology; it was attached to and supported by the USSR. Daud Khan was assassinated in 1978 by the PDPA under the leadership of Noor Mohammad Taraki. Taraki became the Prime Minister; One of his closest and faithful associates Hafizullah Amin killed him and succeeded in 1979. But, neither Amin nor the Soviet sponsored Barbak Karmal could maintain peace in Afghanistan; lastly Soviet invaded the country in December 1979 and stayed there for about ten years.

The Russian regime in Afghanistan is a black page in its history; it witnessed many-a-type of suppression, subjugation, torture, devastation, damage, killing, rape, murder and other modes of victimization. Russians withdrew from the country in 1991. Mujahidin was emerging as a terror group in the sub-urban Afghanistan. It had the U. S. support. The Mujahidin, and thereafter the Taliban exercised their cruelties and brutalities on the people. They demonstrated their power and abilities to terrorise the world from this land. Many Mujahidin leaders remained operational in the area. Taliban was the Sunni Islamic group with its commitments for the hardcore Islamist practices. From 1994 to 2001 - the period under Taliban influence was the period of sufferings. They allowed the Muslim terrorist group Al-Qaeda to stay and act from this land. The unforgettable inhuman act of attacking the Twin Towers in America was performed by the renowned Al-Qaeda leader Osama-Bin -Laden from this land.

In course of time Taliban lost its grip and control; Afghanistan came under Hamid Karzai rule and later Ashraf Ghani became the President. But the influence and role of Taliban in the Afghan politics could not be over ruled as they made the major population and the influential people of Afghanistan; they were the most developed and dominating ethnic group in Afghanistan - the Pashtun. Their supremacy of Pashtun over the rest of the ethnic groups like Tazik, Hazara, Uzbek and other minorities are well-known; it has been the subject-matter of many work of Afghan Literature. An instance of the hatred of a Pashtun for the Hazaras has become a theme in Khaled Hosseini's novel *The Kite Runner*. In the recent times, a settlement accord has been signed among the Afghanistan, Taliban, Pakistan and Other Muslim countries with regard to establishment of peace and political stability. An understanding has developed to hand over the reign of Afghanistan to Taliban; the United States to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan.

Political Powers in Afghanistan: Daud Khan, PDPA, Taraki, Taliban, USSR, U. S.

The Royal Family of Daud Khan

Mohammad Daud Khan was the fifth Prime Minister and the first President of Afghanistan; served as Prime Minister from 1953 to 1963 and as President from 1973 to 1978. He has been a respectful political leader of the country; he is always remembered for his efforts regarding women emancipation and their welfare and development. His plans for the development and modernization of the country and also or the Pashtun nationalism are commendable.

Daud Khan was the eldest son of Prince Mohammad Aziz Khan, the Afghan ambassador in Germany. Aziz Khan was killed in Germany in 1933. Daud Khan was educated in France. He was a veteran administrator; he had served as Governor of the Eastern Province of Afghanistan in 1934 to 1935. He also performed as the Governor of Kandahar during 1938 to 1939 on two different occasions; He became the Commander of the Eastern Forces in 1939 and served till 1946. He became the Defence Minister, Interior Minister, the Ambassador to France as well as the Commander of the Central forces in between the period from 1946 to 1953. He served as the Prime minister of Afghanistan from 1953 to 1963, that is for ten years. He was the fifth Prime Minister of Afghanistan.

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Appointment of Daud Khan as the Prime Minister of Afghanistan can be seen as an important period for its pragmatism, developmental approach, liberalization and women emancipation. He remained the Prime Minister for ten years - from 1953 to 1963 - and performed several hazardous tasks of growth and progress like completion of the Helmand Valley project. He worked for the reunification of the Pashtuns, though he was blamed and opposed by members some of the other local ethnic groups. The founder of the Khudai Khidmatgar movement Abdul Gaffar Khan blamed him for his efforts with regards to Pashtun nationalism; he charged him with Pashtun racialism.

Pakistan became an independent nation 1947 and the British Durand Line became the dividing line between the newly create Pakistan and Afghanistan. Daud Khan's ambitious plan to reunify the Pashtuns and bring the Pashtuns in Afghanistan and those in the bordering areas in Pakistan became a subject of contention

for Pakistan. This led to border conflicts between the two countries; also feeling of distrust was created among the other ethnic groups including Hazara, Tajik and Uzbek. Daud Khan made two unsuccessful attacks on the Pakistan's Bajaur Agency area in order to emphasize his Pashtun issue; he was defeated on both the occasions. Also the Baloch in Baluchistan - a province in Pakistan - became antagonized by Khan's idea of their inclusion in Afghanistan without the consent and approval of the Baloch leaders. Afghan soldiers were subjected to defeat and humiliation. These conflicts led to closure of the borders between the two nations and ban on the trade and business between them was imposed in 1961. The trading ties between them were severed.

Under the conditions emerged, Afghanistan tilted towards U.S.S.R. with regard to military support, trade and commerce, and other services in 1961; it received defence goods, artilleries and ammunitions from the Russians. The U.S. S. R. became its main trading partner. Daud Khan's autocratic moves, his preference for the Pashtun nationalism, Afghan's increasing closeness with and dependence on Russia and economic slowing down in the country became the reasons that created resentment against his rule. Daud Khan was compelled to resign in 1963. Though the Pakistan borders were opened after Daud's resignation, Pakistan remained always suspicious to Afghanistan; also the Tajiks got disenchanted.

In 1964 the then King of Afghanistan introduced a new bill in the constitution so that no member of the royal family could hold any political post in the country. As such, Daud Khan was deprived from occupying any post in future. However, he managed to regain power from his cousin and the King Zahir Shah through a peaceful coup in 1973. This time Daud Khan declared Afghanistan a republican nation with approval of the Loya Jirga and became its President in 1973. Afghanistan needed a modern army under the condition of its strained relationship with Pakistan and Iran; military training programmes and camps were established and improved. Also the forces had started to train the agonized Baloch youths and the Pakhtun Zalmay boys in order to create guerrilla groups and create sabotage and make terrorist attacks in Pakistan. Pakistan President General Ayub Khan was getting unhappy with such activities; one of his men got killed in such an attack. Finally Ayub Khan became hostile to Daud Khan; he initiated a proxy war with Afghanistan.

By the beginning of 1978, rift between Daud Khan and the Communist oriented Peoples Democratic Party of

Afghanistan (PDPA) developed to larger extent. Daud Khan had, by now, started distancing from the USSR. He preferred to remain neutral from the NATO forces or the Soviet powers in Afghanistan. In his official meeting with the Russian President Leonid Brezhnev in April, 1977 he had clearly expressed his policy of non-alignment. With an attempt to modify and strengthen his foreign policy Daud Khan travelled to Egypt, Iran, India, Saudi Arabia etc. With Afghan's growing relations with countries like Iran and Saudi Arabia and its signing a military pact with Egypt turned the one time friend USSR to an enemy. With the intervention of the Shah of Iran, the country came to normal terms with neighbouring Pakistan to the maximum extent. All this made the Russian power against Daud Khan. He was assassinated in 1978 in a military coup led by Communist supported PDPA leader Noor Mohammad Taraki and others like Hafizullah Amin and Babrak Karmal.

The death was not announced; it was informed to the people that Daud Khan had resigned. The new government was formed under the leadership of Noor Mohammad Taraki. Taraki too was killed by Amin in the following year 1979; and Amin was later killed by the KGB. The death of Daud Khan and his family came to the knowledge of people when their bodies were recovered in two separate mass graves in Kabul - 16 corpses in one grave and 12 in the other. On the 17th of March, 2009, Daud Khan was given a State funeral.

People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA)

People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) was founded on the 1st. January, 1965 by Noor Mohammad Taraki, a journalist having affiliation with socialist ideologies. It was a group of different factions of the socialists. Taraki was its founder President and Barbak Karmal the first Deputy Secretary; other five members constituted the Politburo of the party. It helped Mohammad Daud Khan in ousting the King Mohammad Zahir Shah's regime in 1973. With the help of the PDPA and also with the Soviet assistance, Daud Khan became the First time President of Afghanistan and established the Republic of Afghanistan.

Later differences developed between Daud Khan and the Soviet power. Since the PDPA had been maintaining strong ties with the Russians, Noor Mohammad Taraki became instrumental in overthrowing Daud Khan. Taraki was assisted by the Afghan National Army and in 1978 Daud Khan and his whole family was killed and buried by the group in Kabul. This political event is recorded as Saur Revolution in Afghan history. Eventually PDPA took over the reign of the country. Taraki became the Prime Minister, Barbak Karmal his Deputy and Hafizullah Amin the Defence minister. This government renamed the country as Democratic Republic of Afghanistan.

When PDPA came to power illiteracy was at its peak in the country up to 90 percent. The government initiated steps to eradicate it. It started making land reforms; women empowerment and abolition of feudal practices were attempted. Separation of mosque and the state was initiated, Sharia law was abolished and men were allowed to shave their beard. A new breeze of liberty and modernized approach blew in the country. Modernity in life style was visible; forced marriage and trading of brides was banned; minimum age of marriage

was enhanced; there was stress on education for both men and women. A broad literacy programme was launched by the government. And above all, as a mark of its affiliation with the USSR the traditional national flag in black, red and green colour was replaced by a new soviet style flag.

But this modernization of the country was not bearable by the traditional followers of Islam; it created resentment among the people, especially in the sub-urban areas, and prompted them to rise against the ruling system. Religion used to be a unifying force in traditional Afghan population comprising of various ethnic groups. These new steps initiated by the PDPA government directly and strongly clashed with their practicing faith and their prevailing life style. Though PDPA was dominated by the intelligentsia, it was popular among the urban public only. They had little social base in the rural areas. The country was basically a strong traditionally Islamic country dominated by native and regional ethnic groups. As such the pragmatic policies introduced and implemented by the PDPA were not easily acceptable to the general public.

Later due to bifurcation of the PDPA into two separate groups namely Khalqs and the Parchams, created on the basis of differences between Taraki and Karmal; Karmal was forced to resign. PDPA, for its new policies witnessed a minor rebellion in July, 1978 in Nuristan, which was suppressed. In course of political developments under the Soviet control, Taraki, Karmal and Amin were removed and then killed or exiled, one-by-one. In course of time power shifted to Mohammad Najibullah and then to Haji Mohammad Chamkani. Withdrawal of the USSR in 1989 and with the collapse of the Soviet Republic in 1991 drastically changed the political scenario and future fate of Afghanistan. PDPA had lost its base in the country as it used to be a government of the group supported by the Soviet Union. Finally the People's Democratic Party of Afghan lost its control and rule in the country.

In course of time, its policies gave rise of guerrillas forces of Mujahidin, which caused troubles for the PDPA. These guerrillas were trained prepared to fight against the PDPA in Pakistani camps by the ISI with the support of the U.S. Lastly it made the ground for the collapse and culmination of PDPA.

Noor Mohammad Taraki

Noor Mohammad Taraki was born in a Pashtun family of Ghazni province in 1917. Belonging to a simple family, he was compelled to leave for Mumbai in India in search for a job. Here itself, he came into contacts with the members of the Communist Party of India. He got impressed by the socialistic ideologies of the party. Later in his own country, he was also impressed by the noted Pashtun nationalist leader Abdul Gaffar Khan. He started his career as a journalist and joined the Bakhtar News Agency as the Deputy Editor.

Noor Mohammad Taraki is well known and famous for his literary works. He was a writer and poet. His books, with the various problems and social issues of the Afghan farmers as their theme, became very popular. These were highly acclaimed; his book *De Bang Musafiri* were translated in the Russian language. It was his first and the best novel published in 1957. It is said to bear the influence of the eminent Russian writer Maxim Gorky. Other novel *Sarah* - deals in the life style of the feudal lords of Afghanistan. He produced still more - novels like *Sangsar*, *Spin* and *Be Tarbiyatah Zoy*; stories like *Mochi: Da Lando Kiso Tolagah*; stories like *Paharon Ka Baita* and *Ek Pakhtun ki Dastan-i-Alam* written in Urdu are the portrayals of the socio-economic conditions of the people in Balochistan.

His concerns for the people of his country, his interest in political development of nation, the sensitivity of a poet in him and the broadness of his vision that grew in him while living in Mumbai - all led him to enter into the political system of Afghanistan. With help of likeminded persons like Hafizullah Amin and Barbak Karmal, he founded a new political party the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) on the 1st day of January, 1965.

1978 became a turning point in his political career. The prominent Communist leader Mir Akbar Khyber was killed and the blame was fixed on the Daud Khan's government. The pro-soviet Afghans working for the PDPA rallied against Daud Khan. The Saur Revolution took place - Daud Khan and his family-members were killed. PDPA took over the control of Afghanistan with Noor Mohammad Taraki as its Prime Minister.

The regime of Noor Mohammad Taraki, as the Prime Minister and the President of Afghanistan, is known for its initiatives in land reforms, social reforms, religious reforms and betterment of the civil life style. He allowed people to shave their beard; Sharia Law was abolished; women were granted sanction to read and write; education became an essential component for any individual - a man or a woman; women representation in politics was initiated; forced marriage and selling of brides got banned; ceiling on the possession was introduced. He introduced the Land Reforms Bill with an intention to distribute land among the poor and landless. A maximum area for possession under a landlord was fixed; the surplus land was to be seized by the government; the same land was to be distributed among the landless people.

Taraki worked for the welfare of its people; he believed in growth and development of the masses - it was his conviction - as a writer or a journalist. But his actions as the ruler of Afghanistan did not get the approval of the other national leaders. The Afghans, by religion, are traditional followers of Islam. Actions initiated by Taraki government appeared to against Islam, attack on Islam and deviation from the Islamic

principles. Unrest among the masses grew and they revolted. Taraki signed a 20 year treaty of friendship in trade and business with Soviet Union in December, 1978. He made efforts to get military assistance and supply of arms for his country but was refused by both - Alexi Kosygin and Leonid Brezhnev. The conflicts between the Khalqs and the Parchams were growing - leaders conspiring against each-other. As Taraki supported the Khalqs and Amin favoured the Parchams, differences emerged which led to conflicts and murder conspiracies. In the beginning, Taraki and Amin were inseparable; they were united and maintained an intensely close relationship. Taraki once remarked, 'Amin and I are like nail and flesh, not separable'; Taraki addressed Amin with the title like 'The great Disciple'. In return, Amin called Taraki 'The Great leader', 'The Star of the East' or 'The Great Thinker'. But later Amin got disenchanted by the autocratic and self-confined nature of Taraki. Difference became wider; Taraki with his four supporters, planned for Amin's killing, but Amin escaped. As an act of revenge, Amin got Taraki Killed and took over the power.

Taraki's feelings of nationality gradually and by-and-large distanced him from USSR connections; at some points he differed from the soviets. In the condition of growing conflict between Taraki and Amin, Amin became able to secure Russian favour; though Russia did not support the arrest or killing of Taraki, Amin's men killed Taraki by suffocating him with pillows during sleep. Amin became the Afghan Premier. Taliban. Taliban emerged in Afghanistan as a Sunni Muslim movement against the misrule of the Mujahidin. Afghanistan witnessed the emergence of Taliban in the 1990s, after the departure of the Russian power and as the fall-out state going under the period of uncertainty and governance being in mess; there was the breakdown in the civil order; a vacuum - blank was created. And the Taliban emerged and occupied the stage. It emerged as a Jihadist group in the localities of the southern Afghanistan - Kandahar in 1994; by 1996, it had spread all over the country - taking over the charge of Kabul with the support of the Pashtuns and the assistance of the conservative followers of Islam.

The word Taliban has got its literal meaning as student. The name Taliban was adopted because it was a group or gathering of the students who were taught in the refugee camps in Pakistan - in the neighbouring area of Afghanistan. These trained youths were the boys who had no parent or had lost their father, mother, family; they had no root, no identity, no place to live, no meaning of life; no knowledge of their birth or their parents or their place. They were bewildered, rootless, homeless; their life was meaningless, purposeless and aimless. Victims of war, rape, murder, displacements, legitimacy or illegitimacy of birth, orphans - all were trained and taught that Islam is their religion and the sole purpose of their birth is to sacrifice their lives for the sake and protection of Islam, its expansion and establishment of the greatest Islamic ruled states. As a true follower of Islam it is their duty to sacrifice themselves in the service of Islam - to go after the name of religion - it is Jihad - it will lead them to 'Jannat' - the heaven - after death. They were taught to slay them all whoever came on their way to hardcore religion and religious faiths. The training camps were the madrasahs or the Islamic religious schools and the products of these madrasahs were the Jihadist. Taliban are the ultra religio-political organization.

The Taliban took over the whole of Afghanistan by 2001 excepting a small area of Northern part of Afghanistan. They captured Herat in 1995 and succeeded in overthrowing the rule of Burhanuddin Rabbani in 1996. Thus bringing an end of the rule of the Afghan Mujahidin, Taliban reign began in Afghanistan in 1996. It had to face resistance of the ethnic groups like Hazaras, Taziks and the Uzbeks because of its Pashtun dominance and their support and also because Taliban comprised of the majority of Pashtuns.

Sufferings in the hands of Mujahidins and from the infightings after the Russians withdrawal, Taliban's appearing the political arena of the country initially arose a ray of hope among the people. In the beginning of its rule, Taliban brought some changes in governance in Afghanistan. It curbed the prevailing corruption, implemented severe punishment for that; attempted to bring a rule of law and developmental steps in infrastructure and business and commerce.

On the other hand, in the name of Islam Taliban started introducing hardcore mode of administration. Women education was banned; girls above ten years of age were compelled to stay inside house and wear burka; they were not allowed to go to school and be educated; males were to compulsorily grow beard; watching TV and playing games became acts of offence; popular game like Kite-Flying got banned; the attack on a school girl Malala Yousufzai was made. Execution of convicted persons with charges of murder or adultery in public and amputation of hands for theft were implemented. They demolished the world famous old heritage 'Statutes of Lord Buddha' in Bamiyan in 2001, despite international opposition to this act.

Such intense mode of administration and governance made people against the Taliban rule. No country in the world had recognized the Taliban government in Afghanistan except Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates. The Taliban rule in Afghanistan invited the anger of the world. The World Human Rights opinion could never approve of the acts such as disqualification of women from education, employment and public life. The unlawful and disgraceful act of demolition of the non-Islamic monuments became subjects of condemn. 'Fuel to Fire' was Taliban acceptance of the Islamic militants on its land; support to the hardcore Islamic militants and granting aid to them. These Islamic militants under the leadership of Osama-Bin-laden flourished on the land of Afghanistan; they executed their criminal plans from there with Taliban concurrence.

Their operations against the Americans were being exposed. Osama-Bin-Laden was an Islamic militant exiled from Saudi Arabia; he later executed his plans of explode the twin towers of America on the 11th. September, 2001. The World Trade Centre in New York and the Pentagon House in Washington D. C. were attacked - killing thousands of people inside the towers.

America as well as the whole world community went against Taliban. The Al-Qaeda leader Osama had planned this act from the land of Afghanistan, though Taliban always denied the charge. Finally, after a U. S. military operation in Afghanistan, Taliban rule came to its end. NATO established its camps and offices in Afghanistan. Even after being ousted of power, Taliban continued its insurgency against the US forces and the NATO under the leadership of Mullah Mohammad Omar. The source of its funding was smuggling of opium. These days smuggling and trafficking went up to very high level. Omar was actively operating his anti-U.S. activities from a hideout in Pakistan. After his death in a Pakistan hospital in 2013, Mullah Akhtar Mansour the succeeding Taliban leader continued the resilience. He was killed in a U. S. air-strike in 2016. The Taliban militants now came under the Haqqani group under the leadership of Sirajuddin. The Hamid Karzai and later the Ashraf Ghani government tried their best to maintain peace in the area where as Taliban never considered the Afghanistan government suitable, proper nor allowed it to function properly. As such, in better interest of the nation and its people the Ashraf Ghani government attempted to negotiate with the rebel Taliban. The negotiation between Taliban and the U. S. people in 2018 could be possible with the help of those Muslim nations who had granted recognition to Taliban - The U. A. E., Saudi Arab and Pakistan. In July, 2019 meeting with the rebel group and the government along with the U. S. representatives was held to finalize the terms. The U. S. was ready to move away from Afghanistan and to hand over the reign to the local government of Afghanistan in collaboration with the Taliban.

In the last week of February, 2020 finally the deal got signed between the U.S. party, the central government and the Taliban. Taliban agreed to delink its connections with the Al-Qaeda and the ISIS. The United States agreed to withdraw its troops in the period of fourteen months, phase wise. Future of Afghanistan appears to be peaceful and the nation is expected to grow in a progressive manner.

United States of Soviet Republic (USSR)

Afghanistan is surrounded by the mountains bordering Soviet Union in the north, Iran in the west and Pakistan in the south. Daud Khan ascended to the throne of Afghanistan in 1973. His predecessor King Zahir Shah had maintained the policy of neutrality with both the super powers - the U. S. and the U. S. S. R. On the other hand Daud Khan ignored the U. S. s. R. and started developing relations with oil-rich nations like Egypt, Iran and the Saudis. His action was not liked by the USSR and the Russian power became instrumental in removing Daud Khan from power. They succeeded in doing so. Under the leadership of Noor Mohammad Taraki, a new government was established in Afghanistan in 1978; this government was supported by the Russians. Noor Mohammad Taraki was a Communist leader who had learnt the Leftist philosophy while in Mumbai during his teen age.

Ousting of Daud Khan in 1978 by the PDPA - a Communist ideology based political party of Afghanistan founded by Taraki in association with Hafizullah Amin and Barak Karmal on January, 1965 - with Russian support is known as Saur Revolution. Taraki in association of his associates came to power and became the President of Afghanistan in 1978. Taraki government was a liberal one, initiating many civil and administrative reforms such as women empowerment, compulsory education for all, female education and their participation in offices and society, lifting ban on burka for women, shaving of beard for men and many other pragmatic efforts for the modernization and development of Afghanistan. Unfortunately, these acts of modernization were not liked by the traditional hardcore Muslims. As an act of opposition and revolt, a rebel group of the hardcore Islamists, with its name 'Mujahidin' emerged in the country - initially it was operational in the rural areas - later it took control of the urban part of the country.

Noor Mohammad Taraki was killed by his friend turned foe Hafizullah Amin in early 1979, owing to his differences with the USSR, and with USSR support. Russians were playing great roles in the political affairs in Afghanistan. Hafizullah Amin succeeded Taraki and later he too was displaced under the Russian influence. A sense of disgust was prevailing in the country; insurgencies were growing; rebellion acts were on rise. Mujahidin Islamists had badly affected the civil life - it was full of murders, attacks and tortures. Mujahidin was a jihadist group; they knew the language of murder, killing, death or jihad only. They were committed to die on the order of their commander and considered their death as jihad - an act submitted to the reverence to and performed in the name of Allah or God.

Political condition in Afghanistan went beyond control of Amin as the insurgencies by the Mujahidin intensified; it had got the US support also; the rebellion affected and overspread all over the country. Lastly, on the 24th. of December, 1979 the Russian army attacked the country with about 30000 troops and invaded the country. This is known as the 'Afghan War'. In course of time, Afghanistan had about 100,000 Soviet troops on its land; these were the days of Soviet excesses on the people - full of torture, suppression and killings of the

citizens. Mass destructions and demolitions of houses, buildings, cities and infra-structure were the common happenings. Alongside, conflicts between the Mujahidin guerrillas and the Russian troops went on; Mujahidin were crushed mercilessly; later they started fleeing out of the county and seeking asylum elsewhere - mostly in Pakistan and Iran.

For about ten year in Afghanistan there was period of uncertainty and instability the nation bearing the evils of fights between the Russians and the Mujahidin. Almost half a million of Mujahidin members, one million Afghan civilians and 15000 Soviet soldiers were killed in insurgencies and internal fights. After 'Glasnost' and 'Perestroika' in USSR under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev and the disintegration of the Russian Union the Russians became dis-interested in retaining their position in Afghanistan. An accord among the four countries - Soviet union, United States, Pakistan and Afghanistan - was signed in 1988 with approval of the withdrawal of Soviet troops. The Soviet forces completely evacuated the Afghan land by the 15th. February, 1989. And the one of the poor country of the world was crying at its poorest condition. It was bound to witness more severities.

United States of America (U. S.)

Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 consolidated the anti-Soviet power of Pakistan, China, Saudi Arabia and the United States in order to operate against the Communist government in the country. The radical Muslims, who had been operational since long even during the days of the Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in Pakistan gained momentum with the support of the Pakistan based ISI and the U. S. agency C. I. A.. These Afghan Mujahidin dominated by the traditional Pashtun warriors under the leadership of Burhanuddin Rabbani and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and with the support of Ismail Khan of the Herat Rising continued the insurgencies in Afghanistan. After Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and collapse of PDPA's Najibullah rule in 1992, the group presided by Burhanuddin Rabbani made the government with the name the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Personal interests and ambitions clashed and Hekmatyar, Ismail Khan, Abdul Rashid Dostum disintegrated with segregated parts and provinces under their respective control.

In 1994, Taliban came into existence under the leadership of Mullah Omar. Omar was a Pashtun Mujahidin and a teacher in madrassa in Pakistan. Taliban took over Kandahar in 1994 and Kabul in 1996. The exiled Arab terrorist Osama-bin-Laden also joined the rebel group in Afghanistan. Taliban got military support from Pakistan; finance was coming from the Saudis; thousands of militants were trained in Pakistan and sent to Afghanistan as Taliban warriors. Taliban, as they were the fundamentalists and hardcore Muslims, rechristened the nation as the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. From 1996 to 2001 massacre and killings used to be common in Afghanistan. Fights between Taliban and the Northern Alliance continued; thousands of civilians were killed. Northern Alliance was a united group of Tajiks, Uzbeks, Hazaras and the anti-Taliban Pashtuns under the joint leadership of Massoud, Dostum and others. Osama's militants brigade also performed mass killing and devastations in the various provinces.

The bombardment of the U. S. Embassy in Afghanistan by the Al-Qaeda in 1998 changed the American stand in Afghanistan. They took severe stand against the Al-Qaeda and asked Taliban to hand Osama over to the Americans, which the Taliban refused. This antagonized the U. S. By the time Ahmad Shah Massoud made an alliance with the Northern Alliance inclusive of the various ethnic groups. Massoud was against the Taliban and the Al-Qaeda and its operations in Afghanistan; he was also apprehensive of Al-Qaeda's terrorist plan in America. Later the group was headed by Hamid Karzai.

Al-Qaeda had made four terror attacks in the U. S. including the Twin Towers of the World Trade Centres. This made the whole world against the Taliban and the Al-Qaeda; U. S. and the European countries including Great Britain decided to eliminate the Al-Qaeda. After the Twin Tower attack in 2001, U. S. invaded Afghanistan; there were bombardments by the U. S. militia; the Taliban and Al-Qaeda camps being eliminated. Terrorist camps in Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif and elsewhere were demolished and the Taliban as well as the Al-Qaeda were compelled to vacate the valleys one-by-one.

The U. S. Military along with the British force and full of the France, Germany, Australia and Canada, started a bombing exercises against the Taliban and the Al-Qaida in October, 2001. The Northern Alliance and the anti-Taliban Pashtun group also joined this bombarding exercise. In the month of November, 2001 the Taliban forces were driven out of the country one by one; also the Al-Qaida and Osama left Afghanistan and moved to exile. The U. S. forces under the leadership of Hamid Karzai and his allied force took control over Tarinkot, Kunduz, Kandahar. Kabul also came under the control of the Northern Alliance; in 2002 a Loya Jirga was held; it passed a resolution to form a government under the leadership of Hamid Karzai. U. S. forces were to stay in Afghanistan with their airbases and military camps; also the NATO forces were staying there.

In December 2001, the United nations convened a conference of the allied groups in Germany; the groups included the Zahir Shah supporters, the Northern Alliance and other ethnic group leaders along with the Iranian diplomats. Hamid Karzai was nominated the interim President of Afghanistan; This meeting also approved of the creation of an International Peacekeeping Force and their stay in Afghanistan;

President George Bush announced for the restructuring of Afghanistan as a free place from any evil and to be a better place to live. The U. S. Congress approved of a grant of over 38 billion dollars as a humanitarian assistance for restructuring the country for the period 2001 - 2009. Gradually the NATO took over the control of the military under their control by 2003.

A new constitution for the nation was framed with the approval of the old King Zahir Shah. It constituted a house of 502 members as Afghan delegates from various native ethnic groups. Election was held to form the assembly. This general election in Afghanistan was held for the first time after the presidential election during the reign of the King Zahir Shah in 1969. The acting President Hamid Karzai won with vast majority; his position of the President of Afghanistan was confirmed till the next election.

In 2004, Osama resurfaced and took over the responsibility of the terror attack in America; he further announced to launch more attacks in order to establish the greater Islamic nation; he declared, 'We want to restore freedom to our nation, just as you lay waste to our nation'.

This led to a greater understanding between the Afghan President Karzai and the U. S. President George W. Bush to make joint strategies and related pronouncements with regard to 'the war against international terror and the struggle against violent extremism'. They agreed 'to strengthen the U. S. Afghan ties and help ensure Afghanistan's long term security, democracy and prosperity'. The agreement also made provisions for the United States assistance 'to help organize, train, equip, and sustain Afghan security forces as Afghanistan develops the capacity to undertake their responsibility'. They also committed to rebuild Afghan economy and maintain democracy.

After 2010, differences started cropping up between Hamid Karzai and the U. S. power. Karzai opposed the large scale casualties of the Afghan civilians; U. S. forces' failures in containing the Pak infiltrators and traitors in Afghanistan also became an issue of difference. Karzai refused to sign the agreement granting permission to the U. S. forces to stay in Afghanistan after 2014. This brought change in the politics of Afghanistan; Karzai lost power to Ashraf Ghani; Ghani became the President in September, 2014.

United States, after establishment of reign of good governance as well as the rule of law in Afghanistan planned to withdraw from Afghanistan. It invested and spent much in the country for its development. But the troops always have their life style and mode of functioning; a long time stay of the U. S. troops in Afghanistan had become unbearable to all of them - the Afghan civilians as well as the U. S. forces and the Trump administration.

Disagreement between Ashraf Ghani and the opponent Abdullah Abdullah was not being taken well by the American President Donald Trump. Another impression also carries weight that if Afghanistan achieves the peace and tranquillity, Donald Trump may expect for a Nobel Prize from Norway. Most important aspect was that the agreement regarding stay of the U. S. troops was not being extended by Karzai. Though, Ghani granted extension, it was subjected to withdraw from Afghanistan by 2016.

Taliban were disinterested to share stage with the U. S. representatives. But with the Iran mediation and Saudi support, a deal between Taliban and the U. S. forces - in presence and in collaboration of the Ghani government was signed in February 2020. The U. S. troops are expected to leave Afghanistan in phased manner in 14 months. Gradually, with help of several countries and in their presence deals and agreements were signed ; U. S. will be moving out of Afghanistan. The Taliban is to take over the reign of Afghanistan. The Taliban leaders have recently, in May 2020, released a statement to expect a friendly terms and helping hand from India too.

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