The Establishment of Azad School Utmanzai and Anjuman-i-Islahul Afaghina: A Successful Methodology of Organizational Excellence (1921-1946)

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Abstract
This historical paper explores the role of one of the indigenous educational movement of the British Indian North West Frontier Province, now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Pakistan. The movement ‘Anjuman-i-islahul Afaghina’ established in 1921 by Abdul Ghaffar Khan also known as Bacha Khan (1890-1988) and his companions to educate the unprivileged Pakhtuns in the early decades of the 20th century. The Anjuman established 104 Azad schools in the settled as well as tribal territory to educate the nation in formal way, besides education and training was imparted through non formal mode, as well. The strength of the Anjuman was its organizational excellence in the shape of its components like propagation, fund raising, management committees, faculty of intellectuals, co-curricular activities, annual jamborees, conflict resolution committees, literary activities and social reformation. No doubt, the movement contributed to educate the unprivileged Pakhtun nation in ensuring the quantity as well quality of education.

Key Words:
Anjuman-i-Islahul Afaghina, Azad School Utmanzai, North West Frontier Province, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Organizational Excellence

Introduction

The Anjuman-i-Islahul Afaghina (1921-1946) and Azad School Utmanzai is discussed under following themes, Genesis of first Azad School Utmanzai. The Anjuman committees and their duties, fundraising, propagation, school matters, Building and location of Azad high school, Donations and donators, Bacha Khan Vision for schools, Problems and issues in school, Management of school and management committee, Inauguration ceremony, Prominent visitors of school, From Azad high school Utmanzai to other Azad high schools, Appointment and selection of teachers, Boarding house, The Headmasters of Azad schools, Maqsood Jan Khan, Amir Mumtaz khan, Master Karim, Teachers of Azad schools, Other activities in schools i-e sports, etc. Poetry completion in school, Awards and prizes, etc.

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Promotion of Pashtu language and literature in Azad school, Medium of instruction, Awakening of Pakhtuns for social reformation, Annual meetings, Bacha Khan addresses to students, Curriculum, Administration and Examination system.

The Formation of First Azad School Utmanzai and Anjuman-i-Islahul Afaghina

The failure of Hijrat movement to Afghanistan, not only awakened the Pakhtun intellectuals, but force them to struggle for the social uplift of the community. Before the formation of the Anjuman-i-Islahul Afaghina, Bacha Khan successfully founded the Azad School in Utmanzai on first April 1921. According to Akbar (1977), Bacha Khan sent a delegation of nobles to Lakaro - a tribal area in Mohmand Agency where he was staying with Haji Sahib of Turangzai. He just returned after Hijrat movement and was planning to do something in education in the tribal belt. The delegation told him that Bacha Khan had opened a Madrassa in Utmanzai, and that he was invited to work with him to serve the nation, instead of visiting abroad. It was March, 1921.

However, Shah (2007) is of the opinion that Anjuman-i-Islahul Afaghina was established before the formation of the first Azad School in Utmanzai. He narrated that:

*To pursue some of these goals and objectives, on 1st April 1921, the Anjuman-I-Islahul Afaghina (the Society for the Reformation of Afghans) was formed with Ghaffar Khan as its President and Mian Ahmad Shah as Secretary. On 10 April, 1921, nine days after the formation of the Anjuman, the first branch of Azad Islamia Madrassa was opened at Utmanzai, followed by many more branches in different areas of the Peshawar Valley.*

Abdul Rauf (2006) is of the opinion that Azad School Utmanzai was established before the Anjuman-I-Islahul Afaghina. He explained that after the establishment of the first Azad School, it was needed to form an association to take care of the school. He elaborates that the founders felt the intense need for an association which could undertake the responsibility for its supervision.

Bacha Khan in his own autobiography ‘My life and struggle’ did not show any date of the formation of school and Anjuman, however the title of one of the chapters is arranged as ‘Intellectual revolution, educational and reformative struggle, Azad high school of Utmanzai and Anjuman-i-Islahul Afaghina, the presidency of Khilafat Committee’. Likewise, while explaining the subtitle in the heading as ‘Azad school of Utmanzai and Anjuman’, it is concluded that while mentioning Azad school before the Anjuman showing that Azad school was
launched some days before the formation of the Anjuman. Bacha Khan in his own words depicts the situation as,

*We founded the Azad School Utmanzai in 1921, with the help of Qazi Attaullah, Mian Ahmed Shah, Haji Abdul Ghaffar, Mohammad Abbas Khan, Abdul Akbar Khan Akbar, Taj Mohammad Khan, Abdullah Shah and Khadim Mohammad Akbar. In conjunction with, we also established an Anjuman to create love, nonviolence, nationalism and to promote unity amongst Pakhtuns with eradication of social evils.*

Having gone through the archive records, some primary sources and authenticity and genuineness of the secondary sources, it is proved that the *Azad School Utmanzai* was established on first April 1921, however at the same time the struggle for the creation of an *Anjuman* was initiated. The development of a constitution for the *Anjuman*, took some time to launch it, after the school was founded. The *Anjuman* was made in the second week of the April, 1921.

The school was set up in the house of Akram Khan and boarding in his guest house (Hujra). It was situated near’ Dhab Bridge’ called ‘Dhab Pul’ in the local accent, just in front of the shrine of the Syed Shikhh Jalal Bukhari in the entrance of village Utmanzai coming from Charsadda. There were five classrooms initially, besides the three boarding rooms and an office for *Anjuman* in the building, according to, Abdul Majid and Dost Mohammad Khan.

The inaugural ceremony was attended by more than 200 people, including persons from all walks of life. The honor of being the host was given to Akram Khan, who whole heartedly sponsored in cash and kind. The treat in lunch was offered by the Abbas Khan. Mohammad Khan, a cousin of Bacha Khan was the organizer of the whole program. Haji Abdul Ghaffar presided over the meeting. Khadim Mohammad Akbar inspired the participants with an emotional speech inclining them towards education. At last, Bacha Khan thanked all, particularly, Haji Mohammad Akram Khan for his generous contribution. (Abdul Majid, Mohammad Alam, Shahnawaz Khan)

After the initiative of the Azad School, a meeting was called in the Hujra of Mohammad Abbas Khan. It was attended by Khadim Mohammad Akbar (Charsadda), Maulana Mohammad Israel (Utmanzai), Mian Abdullah Shah (Qazi Khel Charsadda), Akbar Khan (Utmanzai), Fazli Akram Mian (Utmanzai), Abdul Akbar Khan Akbar, Haji Abdu Ghaffar (Utmanzai) and Bacha Khan.

The discussion was aimed at, social, political and educational situation of the region. All the mentors expressed their views. It was decided that *Azad School Utmanzai* will be considered as central institution, and other likewise schools be established in other villages.

It was also suggested that an association for the social uplift be formed to stop un-Islamic traditions in the society. Furthermore, the unity amongst Pakhtuns,
eradicating social evils, discouraging disharmony, and creation of real love for Islam and brethren, were selected as areas of the target.

A three-member committee comprising of Abdul Akbar Khan, Khadim Mohammad Akbar, and Barrister Mian Ahmed Shah, was asked to prepare the constitution for the purpose. The proposed constitution was prepared in twelve days, with following clauses.

1. The agreed name was selected as *Anjuman -I-Islahul Afaghina* - the association for the reformation of Afghans.
2. All the decisions shall be made by consensus.
3. The association will comprise of regular office bearers.
4. The matters of accounts be kept on and be presented annually in its meeting.
5. The office of the *Anjuman* is to be decided by the members.
6. The advisory council will comprise of fifty members.
7. The advisory council will necessarily meet twice in a month.
8. The advisory council will take the responsibility to bear the expenses of the *Anjuman* as well as the school.
9. No subscriptions be allowed from common people whatsoever, like other organizations.
10. All the members of the advisory council will donate a minimum sum of Rs. 50 annually.
11. The sub *Anjuman* be established in other villages, abiding the constitution be mandatory on all such associations. The members were asked to refrain themselves from all kinds of enmity with the people. The members will also avoid any kind of unethical disputes in the court of law. The members will not work for the Britishers. All the members will love their native language and will work for its promotion.
12. The *Anjuman* will organize a Pashtu poetic competition annually in *Utmanzai*. The poets will be given an invitation to attend annual meeting of the school, too.
13. The *Anjuman* will encourage the patriotic poets, and will help the poor’s one.
14. The *Anjuman* will publish a newspaper, if permission was given to it.
15. The association nomenclature was decided as; one president, two vice presidents, one general secretary, one assistant secretary and one treasurer.
16. An inspector is to be appointed for the examination of the schools.

The proposed constitution of the *Anjuman-i- Islahul Afaghina* was presented to its members at a meeting held in front of the school. After thorough discussion, a clause was included, on the eve of Maulana Mohammad Israel. It was to open a new section in the school for the instruction of religious learning that is Quran, Hadith, Fiqqa and Arabic language. The suggestion was approved. The office
bearers were also finalized at the meeting. They were; Mohammad Abbas Khan as president, Mian Abdullah Shah as secretary, Khadim Mohammad Akbar as vice president. Mian Abdul Maroof Shah was selected as the in charge examinations and vocational education in the schools.

The following members of the advisory council levy the subscriptions.

1. Abdul Akbar Khan Rs. 500
2. Bacha Khan Rs. 500
3. Mian Abdullah Shah Rs. 500
4. Mohammad Abbas Khan Rs. 500
5. Kunda chachi Rs. 500
6. Haji Abdul Ghaffar Khan Rs. 500
7. Taj Mohammad Khan Rs. 500
8. Faiz Mohammad Khan Rs. 250
9. Ghandal Khan Rs. 250
10. Haji Shanawaz Khan Rs. 50
11. Ghulam Mohyddin Rs. 200
12. Inayatullah Khan Rs. 100
13. Adil Shah Rs. 50
14. Zareen Khan Rs. 50
15. Mohammad Akbar Khan Rs. 50
16. Mian zyarat shah kaka saib Rs. 50
17. Mian Ahmed Shah Rs. 250
18. Madad Khan Rs. 50
19. Abdullah Khan of zareenabad Rs. 50
20. Hakim saib of Garhi Hamid Gul Rs. 50
21. Mian Fazli Latif tangi Rs. 250
22. Inayatullah kahn umerzai Rs. 50
23. Abdul Rauf of katozai Rs. 50
24. Pyar bhabi wife of Sadullah khan Rs. 50
25. Mohammad Shah Rs. 50

The *Anjuman* was then divided into three separate bodies. One committee was deputed the authority to increase membership, the other to make propagation and the third one to generate funds. However, Bacha khan, while deputizing the duties to the right persons, selected educationists to care about school matters. In one of the annual meeting, while emphasizing the division of work amongst right persons, he stated his famous saying which proved a proverb in the Pashtu language in latter days. He used to say *kar la khalak ogoray, khalko la kar ma goray*; find right persons for the job demanded, and don’t spoil the job by incorrect selection.

The propagation task was of enormous challenge. This assignment was beautifully and skillfully undertaken by Maulana Mohammad Israel, Mian Ahmed Shah, Abdul Akbar Khan, Master Karim, Ahmed and to a great extent the success
was delivered by the students of Azad School Utmanzai. Ahmed, while describing the situation, he too was inspired by a student’s speech on the occasion of Eid Prayers in Eildgah, Charsadda. The oratory of the students and other members of the Anjuman, no doubt, played an important role in mobilizing people. The group of students and Anjuman members visited the villages, delivered speeches in the Mosques and community centers (Hujra). The patriotic songs, multiplied the inspirational feelings, by the students.

Table 1. Student’s Enrolment in Azad School Utmanzai

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opening Date</th>
<th>1/04/1921</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No of students in June 1921</td>
<td></td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23/07/1921</td>
<td></td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23/07/1921</td>
<td></td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27/04/1922</td>
<td></td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up gradation to Middle in</td>
<td>1922</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18/10/1935</td>
<td></td>
<td>252 Middle 72 Prim 180 girls 06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04/8/1933</td>
<td></td>
<td>246 boys 27 girls total 267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/ 4/ 1936</td>
<td></td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21/10/1939</td>
<td></td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/4/1940</td>
<td></td>
<td>290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/4/1944</td>
<td></td>
<td>378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19/4/1946</td>
<td></td>
<td>411</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Archive records Bundle 85, 43, 1, 84, 84 A, personal diaries, Interviews

The Azad School Utmanzai was merged in the District Board School in Utmanzai in 1946, after an executive order of the then chief minister NWFP, Dr. Khan Sahib. Similarly majority of the Azad schools was merged in the respective DB schools in the respective villages. The exceptional cases where the Azad School Pabbi, Yar Hussain, Swabi, and Tarnab which continued even after the independence of Pakistan.

There was a DB school in Utmanzai, which was opened as a missionary school before in 1907. However, after complete failure as missionary, it was discontinued. In 1907, the same school was given to District Board authorities. The land for both the schools was donated by the Bahram Khan- father of Bacha Khan and Mohammad Abbas Khan- a landlord of the village. After taken by District Board, the school could not attract the common masses, except few land owners and families of some upper class, in 1907. In later years, the DB school attracted the Hindu, Sikhs families, as shown by the record of admissions. But comparing both the DB and Azad School Utmanzai, it is concluded that the previous one had 849 students since its birth to 1947, the latter was an example of quantity and quality for the uplifting of the society to sublime norms, traditions and contributions. The
DB school created servants, while the Azad School produced the mentors and pioneers of the society.

The land for DB school was donated by Behram Khan- the father of Bacha Khan. The preliminary land was 3 Canals. Mohammad Akram Khan donated his home and guest house for the Azad School Utmanzai. There was a land of 16 jirib (80 kanals) in front of the Azad School Utmanzai, which was used for annual meetings and all the dramas were staged in the same area. The land was used for khilafat and other meetings, too. The land was donated to the DB school after merging of Azad School in it. The land was given away by Mohammad Abbas Khan for Azad School in 1921, when he was elected as the first president of the AIA. Both the lands are now part of the Government Higher Secondary school in Utmanzai.

After the removal of Dr. Khan Sahib from the ministry in 1947, Qayum Khan became the new chief minister. He was a follower of Khudai Khidmatgar movement, but latter detached with the movement and found the ministry in connection with the strong opposition with Bacha Khan and his movement. Qayum Khan ordered to demolish the Centre of the Khudai Khidmatgars in Sardaryab. He also issued the orders to build a government school on the combine land of Mohammad Abbas Khan and Bacha Khan. Sher Afzal Khan, the son in law, of Mr. Abbas Khan was told by the Tehsildar that the CM issued an order to establish a school in the land, far to remove the heritage value of the place used by the AIA for the freedom movement and school meetings. All the residents of mohalla Parich Khel gathered and hurriedly established homes in the land, which belonged to Mohammad Abbas Khan. However after checking the revenue record it was found that the remaining land was purchased by Bacha Khan. It was about 3 Jaribs. The government school was established in that very land by Qayum Khan in 1949. However, the present land of the school is more than 3 Jaribs, showing that the land from Mohammad Abbas Khan was also taken away for the purpose.

**Teachers of the Azad School Utmanzai**

1. Mohammad Jan of Utmanzai first ever teacher
2. Abdul Rauf of Rajjar first ever Headmaster
3. Amir Mumtaz Khan of Bannue Headmaster
4. Maqsood Jan Khan of Bannue Headmaster
5. Master Abdul Karim of Utmanzai Headmaster
6. Abdul Qayum Headmaster
7. Mian Abdul Sattar Headmaster
8. Maulana Mohammad Israil in charge Religious Education
9. Maulana Shakirullah
10. Mohammad Ismail of Utmanzai Teacher
11. Husnuddin Durrani of Utmanzai Teacher
All these teachers were not paid attractive salaries, rather they served the nation on a very meager pay. The salary of the Headmaster was only Rs. 30 per month while, teachers designated as second master and third master were given Rs. 25 and 20 respectively. All the teachers were earning more in their previous jobs. Fazli Memood Makhfi was working as publicity officer in the Government, was on high pay roll as Rs. 55. Similarly Khadim Mohammad Akbar, patwari by profession,
was taking much salary, scarified only to serve the nation without taking a single penny in AIA.

Hussnuddin one of the teachers of the Azad School was the father of a famous poet Shamsuddin Muflis Durrani and Saddudin alias Jan khan. He was born in 1890 and died in 1944. He was naib tehsildar in Malaknd. On the eve of Bacha Khan, he resigned from the service and joined the Azad School as a teacher. He was also imprisoned by the British raj during his teaching.

Maulana Mohammad Israel was, in this regard, another exceptional case. He was in charge of religious education in the AIA. He worked in a school as a teacher and used to visit villages with the Anjuman members to incline the people towards trade, commerce and to remove false and un-Islamic beliefs.

Most of the teachers were qualified from Deoband Madrassa, Aligarh College, Islamia College Peshawar and missionary school Peshawar. However, the Deoband school of thought dominated over the Azad school system. Some of the students of Azad School later joined the institution as teachers after completion of their study. Master Karim was amongst them, who took a scholarship for higher studies by the Anjuman, and later, after graduation, both from university of the Punjab and Aligarh, joined the Azad School Utmanzai as a teacher. He was promoted to Head Master afterwards his deep involvement and services in Azad School Utmanzai.

Management of the School

The most significant feature of the all the Azad schools was the strong management committees. The fiction of the Anjuman that was deputed to look after the schools, were influential in the masses that inspired people to admit their children in the schools.

The composition and configuration of the management committee of the Azad School Utmanzai proved as sublime inspirational, worth, however, the traditional feudal system sometime discouraged the environment towards educational dapple of the area.

The learned religious scholars played a pivotal role in promoting mobilization and strength of trust. For the purpose of collective trust, Bacha Khan appointed Haji Sahib of Turangzai, as patron in chief of Azad schools.

Curriculum

The school curriculum was initially taken from the Islamia Colligate School Peshawar. English, Mathematics, History, Geography, Urdu, Islamiyat and vocational subjects were compulsory. In the coming years, it was refined and some more subjects were included in the course. In 1922, in its annual meeting, the Anjuman decided to introduce technical and vocational education in the course
contents. Teachers and skillful persons were appointed to demonstrate the technical skills of tailoring, hosiery, carpentry, cap making, weaving etc. The section of religious education took the plan to enhance the conceptual learning of the holy Quran and Hadith. In this way the traditional religious figures of Mosques who were totally dependent on villagers, were made independent to teach and earn by making their own stuff and to sell it in the village. Normally this stuff was set in a show in the mosques, and was sold out to the villagers.

**Medium of Instruction**

The medium of instruction was Pashtu, being mother tongue; it received gigantic recognition from the masses. English language was considered as medium of civilization and Urdu as a sophisticated communication language in those days. Initiating Pashtu as medium of instruction was the first ever example, in any kind of institution in the history of the province. Education in the maternal language not only enhances the conceptual learning, but to create, develop and invent new things and theories. The medium of instruction in the Azad School worked in developing creative thinking, logical display of expressions and happen to make new ideas and thinking. This artistic inculcation given birth too many new things in the history of Pashtu language and literature. The first ever drama in the history of Pashtu literature was written, staged, and directed in the *Azad School Utmanzai* in 1924. It was a sublime work in each and every department.

The themes were superb, the selection of students as actors, the stage preparation, the arrangements, display and the directions was a rich historical enterprise of all times. After the dramatic display, the students of DB school rushed to the Azad School for admissions. The DB schools were involved to produce servants, and the Azad School to nurture the artists, thinkers, patriots and conscientious nation.

**Co-Curricular Activities in the School**

The school curriculum was not merely intellectual, it was focused on social behavior a lot. Co-curricular activities were accepted as part of the curriculum. The weekly Bazmi Adab – literary sessions were arranged in a meaningful way, and it transformed the youth the self-realization and the aesthetic sense. Beside it sports and games were a regular part of the school scheme of work. Abdoolah Bakhtnai narrated that when Bacha Khan was arrested under FCR in 1921, he was busy to prepare Foot Ball ground in the Azad School.

On October 28, 1934 Abdul Wali Khan took the volleyball and the Football team to Haripur and Peshawar for a competition and the team won the title. The team was accompanied by Abdul Wali Khan, Amir Nawaz Khan Jalya secretary *Azad School Utmanzai*, Abdul Karim- Headmaster and Ihsanullah second master.
Similarly the Lady Cunningham on March 13, 1937, in a visit to school, given away a golden ring, trophy and cash prize to Abdul Wali Khan for participating and winning in a sports competition under his captaincy by the Azad school teams in different games. The prize was received by the Mr. Abdul Ghafoor- a student of the school in the absence of Abdul Wali Khan.

When Bacha Khan was imprisoned in the Haripur jail in 1943, he requested the superintendent jail to provide Badminton stuff. He himself prepared the ground in the jail premises and regularly played Badminton along with his colleagues. The school sports, society was responsible to arrange school sports activities within the premises and outside the campus. Abdul Wali Khan was appointed as first secretary of the society followed by Amir Nawaz Khan Jalya, Abdul Ghafoor, and Fazli Rahim.

There was another society named as a literary society, established for promoting literature, art, and poetry. Abdul Ghani Khan was its founder secretary amongst students, however the annual Pashtu poetry competition and annual meeting of the school was beyond students’ capacity and was taken by the Anjuman.

The school teachers Mohammad Jan of utmanzai and Mohammad Anwar of Prang worked as stage secretaries. To motivate the students towards study some prizes were distributed amongst the students. Abbas Khan’s mother and widow of Shahbaz Khan donated Rs. 500 in school funds. The prizes included copies, books, pencils and other learning material.

A monthly, hand written magazine ‘Nargis’ had also been published from the Azad high school Utmanzai in 1933. It contained articles written by the students of the school. The magazine not only cultivated the students taste towards journalism, but to creativity. The magazine was also inculcating the art of running a newspaper.

**Conclusion**

The Anjuman-i- Islahul Afaghina was a comprehensive movement which served and struggled not only for the educational uplift of the society, but for the social, moral, intellectual, physical, anthropological, literal, cultural and political awareness of the Pakhtun nation. The Pakhtun society was full of social evils, which was keenly observed by strong senses, a prescription was suggested,
through the formation of the *Anjuman-i- Islahul Afaghina*. The Azad high school Utmanzai, as a centralized institution worked as a sublime educational light house for the whole province. The school worked as diverging and *Anjuman* as converging, in the sphere of lightening. The history of Pashtuns reveals that integrating the diversified nation, left the public figure in creating antiquity. The *Anjuman* strived for the integration, reformation, refinement and civilization of the society through its systematic educational movement.

The sole way of success to a desired destination was declared as collective efforts, for which the *Anjuman*, was launched. The initial success was the indulgence of the Landlords of the area of Hashtnagar, whose psyche of feudalism, if contemplated, is very intricate.

Winning the sympathies and contribution of the Islamic scholars of the time, was another step forward towards gaining the trust, particularly at the gross root level. The fulfillment of organizational excellence, administrative transparency and close supervision were the other characteristics of the movement of the *Anjuman-i- Islahul Afaghina*. Above all, it was the charismatic leadership, which, contrary to the other paradigms, focused on ‘training’ as one of the innovative style of leadership.

Reformation of the society through educational growth of quality and quantity in formal mode plus working in the society directly using informal and non-formal means, both continued side by side. Education, as the only trajectory, will not yield fruit, if society was not reformed, the *Anjuman* analyzed. The introduction of stage Dramas, poetic competition and huge annual meetings were steps of direct involvement of the society towards educating it, in a non-formal way. It made a massive awakening, which latter, played a formidable role in the freedom movement. In latter days, after 1930, it was assumed that freedom of the nation from the foreign rule, is more superior to education and reformation. *Anjuman-i- Islahul Afaghina* and Khudai Khidmatgar movement, the two sides of a coin, one the contemplatorary the other as pragmatic, culturally introduced the Pakhtun nation to the rest of the globe as a civilized nation.
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Saduddin Durrani, son of Husnuddin Durrani, his father was a teacher of the Azad School Utmanzai in 1936-46

