

Abstract

The British imperialism in India started its formal expansion to the north and northwest of India right after the occupation of Sind and Punjab in 1843 and 1849 respectively. However, the British contact with the tribes of Baluchistan and North West Frontier can be traced before the First Anglo-Afghan War. These tribes had the control over the significant passes of the frontier such as the Khyber Pass and Bolan Pass. For the British, it was necessary to get control over these passes mainly for two purposes; to deal with the fear of the Russian expansion and later to establish trade with Central Asia. Besides, the British also had some other motivations for the occupation of Baluchistan such as the so-called 'mission of civilizing' the frontier tribes and extracting the wealth of Baluchistan for the benefit of British Raj. Prior to 1866, the British were carrying the Closed Border Policy in the frontier. The Closed Border Policy was a policy of non-interference in which the British troops were not allowed to enter the tribal territory. Contrary to that a junior British officer, Richard Issaq Bruce opines that the Policy was not that of non-interference. He further says that the tribes most often raided the British controlled territories and inflicted many injuries to their subjects. Just like Bruce, many officials of the British India criticized the Closed Border Policy and advocated for the alternate Forward Policy because it could not bring in material changes for the British Raj and for the tribes. Beside many other supporters of the Forward Policy in Punjab administration, Robert Sandeman was one the great advocate of the Forward Policy. The Forward Policy was a policy of peaceful pacification which formally started with the famous Jaccobabad Treaty in 1876. This treaty allowed the British troops to station in Baluchistan and it also a permanent place for the British agent in the court of Khanate of Kalat. The Forward Policy was carried with the help of many treaties, wars and expeditions; however, the main driving force of the policy was Robert Sandeman who influenced the policy of the British Raj in many ways. In 1866, Sandeman with his subordinate, Richard Issaq Bruce, entered the country of Baluchistan without the Knowledge of the British Indian Government. Furthermore, it was on the request of Robert Sandeman that the British Indian Government of Bombay adopted the policy of peaceful pacification of Baluchistan and Sandeman was assigned the task of resolving the tensions between the Khan and his sardars. The nature of the Forward (Sandeman System) was not the same in throughout Baluchistan. As compared to Southern Baluchistan (Baloch populated parts of Baluchistan), the Northern Baluchistan (Pashtun populated areas of Baluchistan) experienced many military expeditions of Robert Sandeman. The Former was rule indirectly while the later

was forcefully subjugated and directly ruled. Likewise, the implications of the Sandeman System were not the same in both parts of Baluchistan.