

**ETHNO NATIONALISM: UNDERSTANDING THE
DYNAMICS OF UNREST IN BALOCHISTAN**

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ABSTRACT

Balochistan is currently the center of attention of the decision makers in Islamabad. The province is on the top of the development agenda. Mega projects such as, under construction or near completion Gwadar deep-sea port, Mirani dam, coastal highway and oil and gas exploration activities are part of the development plan. It is envisaged that development would not only economically benefit Pakistan but neighboring and regional countries could also utilize the potential of port related services.

However, local and nationalist politicians have strong reservation vis a vis the development activities of government. It is feared that centrally executed mega project would seriously affect the locals. Unrest and terrorist activities under the umbrella of so-called Baloch Liberation Army dominate the scene.

The purpose of the study is, to find out the fears, reservations of locals, nationalist politicians and over all reasons behind the unrest in the province. Furthermore the aim of study is to help the government of Pakistan to effectively address the real issues so that whole country could reap the benefits of development.

Study is based on focus group session, interview with nationalist politicians and factual analysis.

It was found in the study that Baloch unrest and ethno-nationalism is about due share in the existing state power structure. Present NFC award or fiscal disbursement formula is unjust and unable to bring the backward provinces in the fold of progress and development. Province wise gas royalty formula contains biases. Gwadar deep-sea port could result in demographic imbalance. As per UNDP Pakistan National Human Development Report 2003, districts of Balochistan are the most backward areas of Pakistan. Over centralization of decision-making due to the constitution is creating sense of alienation and frustration in province. Establishment of army cantonment in Balochistan without consent of nationalists or locals would result in more unrest. Balochistan is the most poorly represented province in national services. Provinces are not allowed to sign petroleum and gas exploration related contracts. It is not foreign investment and development schemes that can bring peace, but it is peace and stability that can bring foreign investment and development.

Key words: *Ethnicity, Nationalism, Identity, Development, Conflict, Economic and Political Rights.*

1) INTRODUCTION

Baloch live on their traditional territory in Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan, but over the centuries have also migrated to neighboring regions in Sindh, Turkmenistan, the Arab gulf states, East Africa, India, and most recently, around the world to Europe, Canada, the USA and Australia.

"Baloch" or "Baluch"? There is no agreed international standard on what to call this people and country.

"A brief mention must also be made of the transliteration of the ethnonym "Baloch" into English. Prior to 1990 the term was spelled a myriad of ways - "Baluch", "Baloch", "Belooch", "Biloch" - the most common being "Baluch". In 1990 the provincial government of Pakistan Balochistan decreed that the official English spelling was to be "Balochi", and this has become the accepted standard in Pakistan".¹

1.1) Geography

Balochistan is the largest province of Pakistan with an area about 343,000 square km. Although it is bigger than the British Isles. Its population is about six million. This is perhaps due to its tough terrain and scarcity of water. To its south is Arabian sea, to its west-Iran, and to its north is Afghanistan. It also shares boundaries with the provinces of Punjab, Sind and NWFP. Makran- an important coastal town of Balochistan is almost entirely desert with low, dry hills rising from 300 meters to 2500 meters in the north. To its west, in the proximity of Iran, more expansive desert plains reign supreme. This is where the Chagai and Toba Kakar Mountain Ranges form the borders of Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan.²

1.2) History

One of the ancient inhabitants of central Caspian region, the Baloch trace their national identity as a tribal union for the first time in connection with their military support to forces of Iranian Monarch, Cyrus (546-529 BC) against the Medes. References by Arab and Persian chroniclers to a Koch-o-Baloch and their hold on major areas of Kerman and Seistan as far as the sea signify that these tribes had a political and administrative structure with a centralized authority which forged alliances with other tribes as well as with rulers of Persia and the Indus valley.³

From 16th to mid-19th century, much of Balochistan was under the rule of independent and autonomous Baloch tribal principalities. The first Baloch ruler in 17th century was Naseer Khan Ahmed-zai. The Baloch political standing was changed radically in later

¹ (Titus, Paul (ed.), *Marginality and Modernity: Ethnicity and Change in Post-Colonial Balochistan*, Oxford University Press, Karachi, 1996).

² <http://www.equetta.com/balochistan>

³ <http://www.geocities.com/azadbalochistan/bnq1.htm>

decades, when the British and Persian empires divided Balochistan into spheres of influences, agreeing on an artificial border in 19th century, between British Empire in India and Persian Kingdom.⁴

Balochistan went through three armed conflicts since its forcible merger with Pakistan. The first was in 1948. Later events in 1958, and 1974 were extra parliamentary reactions of an ethnic nationality perceiving the threat of subjugation.⁵

2) IMPORTANCE OF BALOCHISTAN

2.1) Economic Potential

Undoubtedly, Balochistan is currently the center of attention of the decision-makers in Islamabad. After a five decade long period of negligence and discrimination, the province is on the top of development agenda now.

Efforts are being made by the federal government to develop the huge natural resources Balochistan is endowed by nature. Its tremendous mineral potential, wider scope of agriculture development, its water resources, its strategic location of immense geopolitical importance, its sea-resources and the colossal potential in all sectors of economic development have endeared attention of important persons not only in Islamabad but also outside the country.⁶

One of the prominent Baloch nationalists, Senator Sanaullah Baloch believes “that in the age of globalization, one of the important tools for furthering regional cooperation is to increase economic ties. In this regard, he said that the countries of the region can make use of the large amount of gas available in countries like Iran. Both Pakistan and India are energy-deficient and can benefit a lot from the transport of gas from Iran through Balochistan. Pakistan can fulfill its own energy needs and also earn transit fees from countries like India who would benefit from such a pipeline. The Pipeline originates in Asaluyeh, near the south Pars fields; it then travels to Pakistan through Khuzdar to Karachi, a second section traveling to Multan and then to Delhi.”⁷

⁴ ibid

⁵ ibid

⁶ Syed Fazle e Haider, *Balochistan: Politics and development*, (www.balochcommunity.org/index.php?facts+&did=1213)

⁷ Senator Sanaullah Baloch: *Baloch Senator on economics of cooperation*, www.observerindia.com/reports/rp040407.htm (Senator Sanaullah Baloch “belongs to BNP Mengal” highlighted the geo strategic importance in a lecture on ‘Regional Developments: A Baloch National Perspective’ at ORF on April 6, 2004)

2.2) Strategic Importance

2.2.1) Chinese Interests

The Chinese have been investing in various projects in Balochistan like the Saindak Project (Chinese investment/funds to the tune of US \$ 40 million), Gas Exploration, (BGP) (US \$ 1 million), Gwadar port (US \$ 240 million), Coastal Highway linking Karachi and Gwadar (US \$ 200 million), Rail Link from Dalbandin via Panjgoor to the Gwadar deep sea port (US \$ 142 million).⁸

Nationalists believe that in the long run China may utilize Gwadar port for its economic and geo strategic interests in the region.

2.2.2) US Interests

Senator Baloch believes that the US influence in the region is aimed at using Baloch land and Sea to cement its presence in order to protect its strategic and economic interests in Central Asia, South Asia, South West Asia, China, and to have a direct access to Strait of Hormuz (Persian Gulf). The US also wants to control the geo-politics of the region particularly the regional engagements of Iran, and fight against terrorism.⁹

2.2.3) Iranian Interests

The Senator argued that the Iranians also have their interests in the region which may be explained by the fact that Iran wants to develop its economy to meet the demands of modernization by way of promoting higher Gas export, improve regional security, lessen US presence in the region, make inroads into Central Asia and Afghanistan, and curb Baloch, Kurd and Azeri movements within Iran.¹⁰

3. BALOCH ETHNO-NATIONALISM

3.1) Ethnicity and Nationalism

Historically ethno-nationalism had been a source or cause of unity, as well as intolerance in the human society. It is necessary to examine the meaning of the terms, "ethnicity" and "nationalism." Max Weber's discussion remains among the most penetrating we have.¹¹ For him, the definitions of "ethnic group" and "nation" are very close, though not quite equivalent. An ethnic group is, at bottom, a "people"¹² that holds "*a subjective belief in their common descent.*" Their identity is "presumed," which means that it is "artificially" or "accidentally" associated with a set of characteristics such as physical appearance, customs, common memories, language, religion, etc.¹³ "Almost any kind of similarity or

⁸ ibid.

⁹ ibid

¹⁰ ibid

¹¹ Weber's seminal discussion of "ethnic groups," "nationality," and "the nation" is to be found in *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology* (New York: Bedminster Press, 1968), vol. 1, pp. 385-398 and vol. 2, pp. 921-926.

¹² The Greek word, "ethnos," rather open-endedly means "people," "race," or "tribe."

¹³ *Economy and Society*, vol. 1, p. 387, 389; emphasis added.

contrast of physical type and of habits," says Weber, "can induce the belief that affinity or disaffinity exists between groups that attract or repel each other."¹⁴ This way of putting it, underscores the fact that the discourse of ethnicity at once *homogenizes* and *differentiates*.¹⁵ The very artificially selected ethnic indicators that create "affinities" among insiders simultaneously create "disaffinities" with outsiders.

3.2) Emergence of Baloch Ethnic Nationalism

The emergence of Baloch ethnic nationalism as a response to the imposition of the centralized modern state system by the British colonialists and goes on to argue that the highly centralized state of Pakistan and its unwillingness to allow regional and ethnic autonomy forced the nationalist forces to launch a guerrilla war against the state. My argument is that, too often, nationalism has been interpreted in terms of good and bad, tribal and modern, civic and ethnic, etc. which blurs the most important aspect of nationalism, i.e. that in the nation-state system of today, nationalism is always about either share in the existing state power structure, or, if that is not possible, about creating its own state.¹⁶

Baloch nationalism emerged as a response to the intervention of the state. The highly fragmented nature of Baloch society initially did not allow the emergence of an organized nationalist movement, though sporadic resistance to colonial rule continued throughout. The first successful nationalist campaign was launched in 1929 against state recruitment that turned into an armed mutiny. The following year, in 1930, several underground political groups were formed and an anti-colonial 'quit Balochistan' movement was launched. In 1935, the first nationalist party, Kalat National Party, was formed with the objective to achieve 'independent, united Balochistan' after the departure of the British. At the same time, Baloch newspapers appeared, and one of them, Al-Baluch from Karachi, published a map of independent Balochistan that included Iranian Balochistan, Kalat, Baloch principalities, British Balochistan and some parts of Punjab and Sindh.¹⁷

One day after the creation of Pakistan, on 15 August 1947, the Khan declared the independence of Kalat with an offer to Pakistan for special relations in the areas of defence, foreign affairs, and communication. Pakistan rejected the offer and, after a nine-month tug of war, Kalat was forcibly annexed, when the Pakistan army's garrison commander in Balochistan was ordered to march on Kalat and, if the Khan refused to agree to the accession, arrest him. Nationalists rejected the Khan's capitulation, and his brother launched a revolt against Pakistan that continued until his arrest in 1950.¹⁸

¹⁴ Ibid., vol. 1, p. 388.

¹⁵ Katherine Verdery, "Whither 'Nation' and 'Nationalism'?" *Daedalus* 122,3 (Summer 1993), p. 38

¹⁶ For a detailed discussion of this point of view, see Adeel Khan, *Ethnic Nationalism and the State in Pakistan* (Sage Publications, New Delhi, forthcoming). ISSN 1463-1369 print; 1469-2953 online/03/020281-13 . 2003).

¹⁷ Selig S. Harrison, *In Afghanistan's Shadow: Baluch Nationalism and Soviet Temptations* (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace), New York, 1981, pp. 22-3.

¹⁸ Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, (Blackwell, Oxford, 1983), p. 40.

What emerges from the history of Baloch nationalism is that, despite its regional and ethnic self-assertion, it has always been more concerned about its political power rather than some primordial identity. This is true about any nationalism anywhere in the world. It also proves that seeing nationalism in terms of good and bad, tribal and modern, civic and ethnic etc. is not a very useful tool for understanding the mechanism of nationalism. For a better understanding, one needs to go beyond these facile categories. One also needs to remember that nationalism is not really about identity, culture and traditions, though that is what the nationalists would like us to believe, but about political power. And the state being the most powerful container of political power, nationalism is about the state. As shown above, Baloch nationalism has always been directly linked with the state, so it is likely that its future also depends more than anything else on what turn the Pakistani state takes.¹⁹

4. UNDERSTANDING THE UNREST IN BALOCHISTAN

Unrest in Balochistan claimed 11 lives in a bomb blast on December 10, 2004 in Queeta. This is the second deadly attack after the killing of 5 soldiers in Khuzdar on August 1.

Following factors/reservations identified in the focus group and interview session with the Baloch nationalists. These are discussed in detail with factual narration;

4.1) Economic Factors

Balochistan is the most backward province of Pakistan. It's backwardness is blamed to the central government's policies. "As the poverty stricken province is suffering due to the partiality shown by the federal government".²⁰

4.1.1) NFC Award

In countries having federal structure, it is the central government, which controls the main fiscal instruments (taxation, spending and borrowing) to maintain stability in the country.²¹

Exhibit 1

Federal Government Responsible to Constitute a Divisible Pool Consisting of Gross Receipt
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(a) taxes on income, (b) wealth tax, (c) capital value tax, (d) taxes on sales and purchase, (e) export duties on cotton, (f) custom duties, (g) federal excise duties excluding excise duty on gas charged at well-head and, (h) any other tax which may be levied by the federal
--

Source: <http://dawn.com/2002/10/21/ebr13.htm>

The shares as recommended by the NFC are distributed as follows. The federal government deducts 5 per cent of such receipts mentioned in (a) to (h) (*see exhibit 1*) as

¹⁹ Baloch Ethnic Nationalism in Pakistan: From Guerrilla War to Nowhere? ADEEL KHAN: Asian Ethnicity, Volume 4, Number 2, June 2003 (School of Health, University of New England, Armidale, Australia)

²⁰ Habib Jalib Baloch, Balochistan National Party (BNP Mengal), talking to a press briefing on Balochistan, 12, November 2004, www.asiatribune.com

²¹ NFC Award: a thorny issue By Zafar-ul-Hassan Almas <http://dawn.com/2002/10/21/ebr13.htm>

collection charges. Of the balance, 62.5 per cent goes to the federal government and remaining 37.5 per cent are distributed among the four provinces according to their population, based on 1981 census under the Distribution of Revenue and Grants-in-Aid Order, 1997.

Table 1
Province-wise Share of Divisible Pool

Province	Per cent
Punjab	57.88
Sind	23.28
NWFP	13.54
Balochistan	5.3

Source: <http://dawn.com/2002/10/21/ebr13.htm>

During the focus group²², Senator Sanaullah Baloch, BNP (Mengal) and Dr Abdul Hayee Baloch (Chief of National Party), replied that as per international practice the NFC should disperse the funds not on the basis of population only but backwardness and need should also be considered.

4.1.1.1) German and US System of Fiscal Disbursement

“In industrialized countries like the United States, gradual devolution or decentralization of fiscal authority is in progress and different states have their own set of fiscal laws. In Germany, Landerfinanzauleich, is a system of horizontal transfers among the states of the federal republic designed to reduce differences in the annual per capita revenues from the main taxes of the states by granting more to the economically backward states. The United States has very complicated formula but still the focus of priority in distribution is development and less developed states get more resources.”²³

4.1.2) Gas Royalty

It has been argued that the gas prices of Sui field in Balochistan are envisaged to increase manifold as a result of dismantling of its old gas sales formula. The province's current share in gas royalty of about Rs8 billion per annum is likely to increase further if an agreement is reached between Sindh and Balochistan on the question of gas development surcharge.²⁴

Table 2
Province-wise Gas Royalty

Province	Rs per thousands cubic feet
Punjab	180
Sind	126
Balochistan	22

Source: Syed Fazle e Haider, *Balochistan: Politics and development*.

²² To get the views of nationalist politicians, a focus group was conducted.

²³ NFC Award: a thorny issue By Zafar-ul-Hassan Almas <http://dawn.com/2002/10/21/ebr13.htm>

²⁴ Syed Fazle e Haider, *Balochistan: Politics and development*, www.balochcommunity.org/index.php?facts+&did=1213

GDS is the only major source of income for Balochistan. The province received Rs.17 billion during FY 2003-04, same as in FY 2002-03, while there was an increase of 11 percent revenue of Federal and three provincial governments under this head.

Actually the federal bureaucracy is reluctant to move on to the next stage of devolution of power, particularly those relating to fiscal empowerment of the Provinces at present.

It is practicing the politics of development by opposing the substantial increase in royalty of the provinces and their power to sign petroleum agreements with private firms.²⁵

Take Sui, which was explored in 1952 against the wishes of the Baloch nation. Punjab is taking all its revenues and benefits while the locals are deprived. It took 30 years for gas to reach Dera Bugti town, and villages in the area surrounding Sui are still without gas.²⁶

4.1.3) Centrally Executed Mega Projects

4.1.3.1) Gwadar Deep Sea Port

This year Gwadar, on the Arabian Sea in southwestern Pakistan, stands to become one of the most strategic deepwater ports in the region that includes Central Asia and China.

Among other attractions, Gwadar sits about 2,000 kilometers, or 1,250 miles, to the south west of the Chinese region of Xinjiang, where a major industrialization effort is under way. "In the future, the port will give China a berth from which to ensure the security of its oil and energy traffic through the Persian Gulf," said Ashley Tellis, a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. "It has been packaged as a completely commercial development, but the strategic calculations are just as important to them.

But Gwadar's development has brought unrest, too, here in Balochistan. A car bombing, unsolved, killed three Chinese engineers working on the port in May. In August, nationalists claimed responsibility for gunning down five soldiers and a civilian, and a few days later made an unsuccessful attack on the chief provincial minister. The military responded with a "protective deployment" of troops that many Balochis characterized as an offensive.²⁷

4.1.3.2) Reservations of Nationalist Politicians

The Gwadar Port is entirely a non-Baloch project and not many forthcoming projects will distract the Baloch concern about two more army garrisons planned to be raised for the

²⁵ ibid

²⁶ http://www.balochvoice.com/Marri_files/Balach_Marri_Newsline_sep-2004.html

²⁷ Port project in Pakistan gets big lift from China Publish Date : 9/28/2004 Source : International Herald Tribune - Paris,France

province. No wonder the state of loyalty among the people is comparable to that of South Waziristan where hardly anyone feels himself a part of Pakistan.²⁸

While the Gwadar port project is being cited, and objected to, as the foremost one, it is not the only one. The federal government says the Gwadar project would bring investment, which would be good for the province. The contention of the local-tribal leadership is that the project should be handled through the Balochistan government. They fear population movement to the port town from other parts of the country, which could turn them into a minority in their own province. The obvious fear is that Punjabis will move into the area, buy land and settle down.²⁹

In a recent press conference, a nationalist leader, Habib Jalib (BNP Mengal) stressed, as the poverty stricken province is suffering due to the partiality shown by the federal government. The government should abandon the construction of the next phase of the port and the decision in this connection would also be communicated to the affected local population of the province.

“This is the only way to salvage the already lost credibility of the federal government” he said.

He further added that it would further deepen the sense of deprivation among the people. He said the provincial government could promote the fisheries industries by establishing fish harbors in Jeewani, Guns, Pishkan Ormara, Sur, Hingol and Sonmiyani and give a tax waiver for the fishing industry.

He suggested that the port could be utilized for fishing,. He also pointed out deliberate change in the demography of the area and demanded that only the local people of Gwadar should be allowed to have the local certificate, National Identity Cards (NICs) and their names in the voter list. Secretary General of BNP Mengal stressed that the outsiders should not be allowed to obtain the any kind of documents and benefits from the Gwadar district. He further said that a bill must be passed by the national as well as provincial assembly to protect the interests of the people of Gwadar for the development in this backward region.

Habib Jalib demanded the government to establish a marine university in Gwadar district besides setting up of technical training centers in all parts of the province.

He said Merani Dam project should be handed over to the Balochistan government so that the dam could be utilized for agriculture and irrigation purposes.³⁰

²⁸ Editorial: Root causes of terrorism in Balochistan, www.dailytimes.com (accessed on www.balochunity.org/index.php?facts+&did=1233)

²⁹ Dr Ayesha Siddiq: Solving the Balochistan puzzle, “She is currently a fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars in Washington DC. Source: The Friday times”, (accessed on www.balochunity.org/index.php?facts+&did=1224)

³⁰ Habib Jalib Baloch, Balochistan National Party (BNP Mengal), talking to a press briefing on Balochistan, 12, November 2004, www.asiatribune.com.

The Khan of Kalat, Mir Suleiman Dawood Khan talking about anti mega project resistance camps, he calls these camps “Baloch Camps” in an interview with *Dawn’s* Messrs Muhammad Ali Siddiqi and Shamim ur Rehman (November 7), he defiantly demanded: “Give us our rights or we will fight. For achieving those rights, the Baloch could go to any lengths and contact any power.”

The Khan of Kalat even refused to condemn the “terrorist killing” of three Chinese engineers on May 3 in a bomb blast in the coastal town of Gwadar. Instead, he claimed that Gwadar was being built to benefit China alone.

Balochs are certainly not opposed to “genuine,” self-empowering development that has long been denied to them. Their opposition to development projects such as the building of Gwadar Port is rooted in Gen. Musharraf’s attempts to colonize them and their resources. Gwadar is a town of 60,000 people. With its full-blown operation, it will need a million people to run it, who will be imported from the rest of the country. This massive human transplant will outnumber the native population by 17 to 1. A province that has a population of as little as 6 million people has every reason to scream foul at such a self-serving development agenda.

There is no doubt that the Gwadar project is aimed at enriching the economic, military, and political elite at the expense of the masses of Balochistan, regardless of their province or origin. Gen. Musharraf who owned 7 properties in 1999 did not mind helping himself to one more in Gwadar as well! So did his cronies. They have found in the Gwadar port project a giant feeding trough at which every top bull in Gen. Musharraf’s cabinet is fattening “itself.”³¹

4.1.4) Balochistan; Most Backward Province

In the three decades preceding the 1990s, while Pakistan’s GDP growth rate and per capita income bore favorable comparison with low-income countries as a whole, its social indicators did not. This suggests that both the content of GDP growth as well as of governance were lacking in human development. In the 1990s, the human condition in Pakistan deteriorated to an alarming level as the institutional structure of governance decayed rapidly.³²

³¹ Daily Dawn November 07,04, Dawn Exclusive interview with, Khan of Kalat (Mir Suleiman Dawood Khan)

³² *Pakistan National Human Development Report 2003*, Pakistan © United Nations Development Programme 2003. <http://www.un.org.pk/nhdr/nhdr-pak-2003.pdf>.

Table 3
Ranking of Districts of Pakistan by the Human Development Index

District	HDI	HDI Rank	District	HDI	HDI Rank	District	HDI	HDI Rank
Jhelum	0.703	1	Mardan	0.519	32	Khairpur	0.449	63
Ziarat	0.697	2	Lasbela	0.514	33	Thatta	0.447	64
Haripur	0.629	3	Khanewal	0.513	34	Lakki Marwat	0.444	65
Sheikhupura	0.621	4	Kech	0.512	35	Swat	0.442	66
Karachi	0.618	5	Vehari	0.508	36	Larkana	0.435	67
Abbottabad	0.598	6	Attock	0.507	37	Zhob	0.432	68
Bhakkar	0.581	7	Naushahro F	0.506	38	Dera I K	0.425	69
Kasur	0.577	8	Charsadda	0.506	39	Bune	0.423	70
Rawalpindi	0.576	9	Bahawalpur	0.501	40	Barkhan	0.420	71
Khusab	0.575	10	Pakpattan	0.498	41	Shikarpur	0.417	72
Mandi Bahauddin	0.568	11	Ghotki	0.496	42	Lower Dir	0.413	73
Lahore	0.558	12	Panjgur	0.496	43	Kalat	0.412	74
Loralai	0.556	13	Multan	0.494	44	Sibi	0.411	75
Sialkot	0.555	14	Nasirabad	0.492	45	Hangu	0.400	76
Chakwal	0.545	15	Hafizabad	0.486	46	Jacobabad	0.393	77
Gujrat	0.543	16	Sukkur	0.486	47	Gwadar	0.392	78
Sahiwal	0.541	17	Karak	0.484	48	Killa Abdullah	0.387	79
Rahim Yar Khan	0.541	18	Nawab Shah	0.481	49	Tank	0.384	80
Kohat	0.537	19	Chitral	0.479	50	Awaran	0.381	81
Mianwali	0.537	20	Lodhran	0.475	51	Upper Dir	0.369	82
Dadu	0.535	21	Narowal	0.472	52	Batgram	0.363	83
Sargodha	0.535	22	Dera G K	0.471	53	Bolan	0.360	84
Hyderabad	0.532	23	Chagai	0.468	54	Kohlu	0.348	85
Peshawar	0.531	24	Bannu	0.465	55	Kharan	0.346	86
Gujranwala	0.529	25	Sanghar	0.461	56	Jhalmagsi	0.345	87
Nowshera	0.529	26	Malakand	0.461	57	Tharparkar	0.343	88
Jhang	0.529	27	Mansehra	0.459	58	Kohistan	0.332	89
Mastung	0.528	28	Muzaffargarh	0.459	59	Shangla	0.332	90
Okara	0.528	29	Badin	0.459	60	Dera Bugti	0.285	91
Swabi	0.523	30	Killa Saifullah	0.455	61			
Mirpur Khas	0.522	31	Jafferabad	0.454	62			

Source: (i) Estimation by Umar Zafar, Wasay Majid and Akmal Hussain.³³

Most of the nationalist politicians in the focus group discussion, gave reference to the UNDP's *Pakistan National Human Development Report 2003 report* and it was found that most of the districts of Balochistan are ranked most backward." Nationalists blame the government for the colonial mindset"³⁴

Table 4
Ranking of Provinces by Urban/Rural and Overall Human Development

Province (Urban)	HDI	HDI Rank	Province (Rural)	HDI	HDI Rank
Sindh	0.659	1	Punjab	0.517	1
Punjab	0.657	2	NWFP	0.489	2
NWFP	0.627	3	Balochistan	0.486	3
Balochistan	0.591	4	Sindh	0.45	4

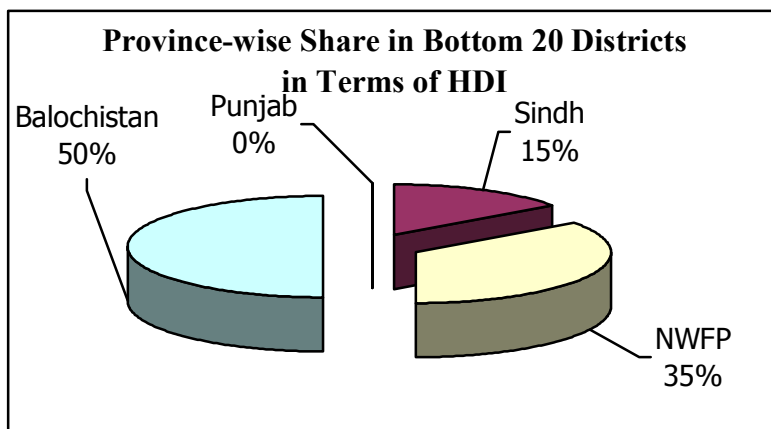
Source: (i) Estimation by Wasay Majid and Akmal Hussain.³⁵

³³ ibid

³⁴ To find out the grievances of the people of Balochistan, a focus group discussion with nationalist politicians conducted.

³⁵ *Pakistan National Human Development Report 2003*, Pakistan © United Nations Development Programme 2003. <http://www.un.org.pk/nhdr/nhdr-pak-2003.pdf>.

Figure.1



Source: **Review of the Economy**, State Bank of Pakistan, Annual Report 2003-04. P.162.

4.2 POLITICAL FACTORS

4.2.1) Over Centralization

Political instability, sectarian or communal disharmony, social chaos and confusion are the main reasons which cause destabilization in civil society and subsequently retard the process of economic development.

Security environment is also marred by the prevailing sense of deprivation, alienation and frustration among the masses of the area under process of economic development.

If the people have some reservations about the developments taking place on their soil, then these should be addressed and removed rather ignored or suppressed by force.³⁶

The centralized nature of constitution is another malaise that make small province to feel alienated from the center of power.

Recently Daily Dawn interviewed the veteran Baloch nationalist politician, chief of Balochistan National Party “Sardar Atta Ullah Mengal. Dawn Dialogue panel asked, there is a provision in the 1973 constitution that the concurrent list would be reviewed after 10 years. But this was not done and it is still continuing.

Sardar was of the opinion that “the concurrent list has become outdated now. Had it been done on the date due it might have been useful and people might have adjusted. Now it is outdated. Nobody is going to accept this concurrent list. The whole Constitution will have to be changed.

³⁶ Syed Fazle e Haider, *Balochistan: Politics and development*, www.balochcommunity.org/index.php?facts+&did=1213

Don't forget that if we want to change the Constitution with the present set up, it is literally impossible because you need a two-thirds majority of the total house for an amendment.

And in an assembly where 56 per cent members come from Punjab, how can you get a two-thirds majority to amend the Constitution and take away everything that Punjab wants to take away from you? It is impossible. That is why we are suggesting a new constituent assembly. We don't want this assembly to be dissolved; we don't want the government to be dissolved.

Let them function as they are functioning. This assembly should altogether be a separate assembly, which should be given the job of framing a constitution. Their term of reference should be the framing of a constitution.

No member from that assembly should be allowed to take any office. They should be given a time frame for a constitution in which all provinces should have equal strength in the assembly.³⁷

4.2.2) Army Cantonment in Balochistan

The government has planned to construct army cantonment in Kohlu, Sui and Gwadar. Government is of the opinion that for security reasons it is states' right to construct army cantonment in the country. ISPR chief speaking in a TV discussion on ARY, told that cantonment would ultimately be catalyst for economic activity and bring prosperity.

“The demands of the Baloch people and political parties are clear: administrative and financial control of all development projects in the province with the Balochistan Assembly and the Balochistan government and a halt to the construction of new military cantonments in the province. However, the Pakistan government and military officials have been brushing aside these demands and popular sentiments. Out of sheer frustration, the Baloch people have resorted to insurgency. Islamabad blames the Balochistan unrest on vested tribal and political interests out to create instability and draw benefits.”³⁸

Baloch nationalist believe that “one hand President Gen Pervez Musharraf has apologized for the past excesses committed in Balochistan and on the other hand he is determined to establish cantonments in the province to suppress the demands for national rights.

³⁷ Daily Dawn 05th March 2004. *The Dawn Dialogue Panel* (Habib Khan Ghori, Shamim ur Rehman and Bahzad Alam Khan) interviewed Sardar Atta Ullah Mengal,

³⁸ Muddassir Rizvi, Struggle for resources linked to Balochistan unrest, 31, October 2004 (*Inter Press Service/AntiWar.com*)

There were ulterior motives behind the establishment of cantonments in Balochistan and the rulers wanted to ensure continued exploitation of the province's resources to benefit Punjab."³⁹

4.2.3) Lack of Representation in Jobs

Exhibit 2

Ex-servicemen from Balochistan for the period from 1995-2003

Only 3,753 men from the province of Balochistan while the numbers for Punjab and NWFP for the same period were 13,35,339 and 2,29,856, respectively.
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Source: www.balochunity.org/index.php?facts+&did=1224

Converted in percentage terms, even Islamabad's representation is better than that of Balochistan. Again, one is not certain how many ex-servicemen in the data for Balochistan are ethnic Baloch. The possibility of Afghans and Pashtuns or other nationalities getting placement in the military is higher than that of the local population.

The Baloch leadership has been demanding the formation of a national army, a suggestion that appears to serve the purpose of national integration. This is not to dishonour institutional traditions; it is a call for being heard and brought into the fold. At the end of the day, ethnic disintegration, more than fundamentalism, is the gravest threat Pakistan could face in the future.⁴⁰

4.2.4) Baloch Identity and Culture in Pakistan

The nationalist politicians and baloch intellectuals believe that "state establishment and the ruling elite had been engaged in a variety of policies regarding Baloch demand of cultural and political identity.

Attempts to the eradication of Baloch culture by denying education in mother tongue and superimposition of north Indian language and culture on Baloch people and non-acknowledgement of a Baloch's existence as a separate national entity within Pakistan. The Pakistani national state has been adopting an approach of induced assimilation to the dominant nationality in the name of national integration that is the creation to a novel nation from several ethnic nationalities as part of their nation-building efforts"⁴¹

³⁹ Baloch Unity strongly opposes construction of Cantonments in Balochistan (www.balochunity.org/index.php?unity+&did=946)

⁴⁰ Dr Ayesha Siddiq: Solving the Balochistan puzzle, "The Friday times", (accessed on www.balochunity.org/index.php?facts+&did=1224)

⁴¹ Dr Naseer Dashti, *Turmoil in Balochistan: The dynamics of confrontation* (www.asaappublications.com/bns/articles/naseer.htm).

KEY FINDINGS

It was tested by the study through discussion and factual analysis that most of the demands of Baloch nationalists are just. Study found that Baloch reservation is a call for being heard and brought into the fold. Dr Ayesha Siddqa rightly pointed out that “It is true that at the end of the day, ethnic disintegration, more than fundamentalism, is the gravest threat Pakistan could face in the future”.⁴²

Here are the findings;

1. Baloch unrest and ethno nationalism is about due share in the existing state power structure.
2. Present NFC award or fiscal disbursement formula is unjust and unable to bring the backward provinces in the fold of progress and development.
3. Provinces wise gas royalty formula contains biases.
4. Gwadar deep-sea port could result in demographic imbalance.
5. As per UNDP Pakistan National Human Development Report 2003, districts of Balochistan are the most backward areas of Pakistan.
6. Over centralization of decision making due to the constitution creating sense of alienation and frustration in provinces.
7. Establishment of army cantonment in Balochistan without consent of nationalists or locals would result in more unrest.
8. Balochistan is the most poorly represented province in national services.
9. Province is not allowed to sign petroleum and gas exploration related contracts.
10. It is not foreign investment and development schemes that can bring peace, but it is peace and stability that can bring foreign investment and development.

⁴² Dr Ayesha Siddiq: Solving the Balochistan puzzle, “The Friday times”, (accessed on www.balochunity.org/index.php?facts+&did=1224)

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the reasons of unrest in Balochistan, identified in key findings through discussion and factual analysis, the following recommendations are provided;

- The government should address the Baloch reservations through meaningful dialogue. Unrest in Balochistan is a call for being heard and brought into the fold. Recent parliamentary committee headed by Senator Mushahid Hussain is a right step towards right direction. Dialogue is the best way in developing the confidences.
- Federal government should handover all the powers of port, including shipping, communication and tax collection to the province as a gesture to the decentralization.
- Right of locals in the wake of fear of demographic imbalances in Gwadar after port operation could be addressed through, only allowing local people of Gwadar to have the local certificates, NIC and their names in the voter lists. Similar practice/experience at international level adopted in Dubai, UAE, in order address the demographic imbalances and rights of locals.
- Provinces should be made part of centrally executed mega projects, as a gesture, Merani Dam and all other development projects to be handed over to the provincial government. All the master plans and future strategic development plans should be implemented after the approval/consent of provincial assembly.
- Gas royalty formula need to be re worked and province wise biases in the rate of royalty need to be eradicated. Balochistan's Rs 22 per thousand cubic feet (ptcf) vis a vis Sindh's Rs 126 (ptcf) and Punjab's Rs 180 (ptcf), need to be immediately revised and reworked. This may improve Balochistan's poor fiscal position.
- To make the people of Balochistan to reap the benefits of the port, government should establish a marine university and technical training centers in all parts of the province. This would help in developing local human capital, so that they could contribute in the development effectively and with the sense of ownership.
- To alter the fears and reservations in the minds of people regarding the army cantonment, the government must halt the establishment of army cantonment. If fear perception addressed with conciliatory gestures, there may not be any need for cantonment. Sui, Kohlu and Gwadar do not share borders with any enemy or neighboring country.
- NFC award formula needs to be re worked and it should not consider only population but backwardness and development needs must be prime consideration. This would bring the most backward districts/areas in the fold of mainstream development.
- Administrative and financial control of all the development projects should be devolved. This would create sense of belonging in the province.
- Share of the people of Balochistan in army and bureaucracy need to be increased. Under representation needs serious attentions. An immediate increase in the share of Balochistan in national service is the need of the hour.

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