

# ***THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES***

## **What Are the Causes of Insurgency in Balochistan**

**Nishi Slathia**

Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Strategic and Regional Studies, University of Jammu, Jammu & Kashmir, India

**Abstract:**

*Balochistan has been Pakistan's Achilles heel. It is the largest province in entire South Asia and it has been in turmoil for most part of its post-colonial existence. Successive Pakistan regimes, in their misplaced quest for national unity, have attempted to suppress even half-hearted attempt at decentralization perceiving them as steps towards disintegration. Of all the sub-nationalism, the biggest threat to Pakistan at present is posed by the Baloch nationalism. The feeling of alienation is more intense amongst the Baloch as compared to other ethnic group in Pakistan for historical and economic reasons. One of the causes of insurgency has been a perception that Baloch have been denied representation in the government. As a result people find it difficult to identify themselves with the government. The Baloch also fears that they are being marginalized in their own province by the rising influx of outsiders. As far as these grievances are concerned a strong sense of ethnic identity mixed with a feeling of political marginalization and economic exploitation has proved to be a strong reason for insurgency in Baluchistan. This paper attempts to analyze some of these grievances which have ultimately led to violence in Balochistan.*

**Keywords:** Economic exploitation, insurgency, grievances

### **1. Introduction**

Balochistan is the largest province of Pakistan and the least populated too. Also it is the most unstable region with full of turmoil in the country. Successive Pakistani governments have always ignored the concept of decentralization due to their perception that it may lead to disintegration. Thus, the regional aspirations of the people of Balochistan based on their ethnicity and common interest have always been suppressed. The Pakistan state always took the ethno-political assertion of the Baloch people as a threat to Pakistani state itself. The game of allegations and counter-allegations between the Pakistan state and Baloch people is going on and many a time, it has taken the violent turn.<sup>1</sup> The Baloch people are having their unique Baloch culture and language since the 12<sup>th</sup> century onwards. The adherence to their own cultural and linguistic background forms the basis of their emerging nationalism in Pakistan.<sup>2</sup> The Baloch's ethnic background, culture, history and language are proof of the existence of an old Baloch nation. The historic memory of a nation survived over a period of time and in the context of the colonial domination, it got consolidated. This consolidation of nationalist feelings among the Baloch was reflected in the formation of nationalist organizations.<sup>3</sup> The quest of Baloch people for nationhood still continues under the Pakistan regime. There are justified complaints of Baloch people against Pakistani state. The underlying causes of grievances was a strong feeling of ethnic identity along with a feeling of political marginalization and this has resulted in the mobilization of Baloch masses irrespective of their traditional tribal division. Some of the grievances of Baloch people gave rise to the violent conflicts in Balochistan.<sup>4</sup>

### **2. Colonialization and Annexation of Kalat**

The supremacy established by the British over the area in which the Baloch people resided in the 19<sup>th</sup> century created the necessary condition for the emergence of Baloch nationalism.<sup>5</sup> Balochistan formed the western border lands of the British India. What the British sought here was not direct political control but suzerainty, as the cheapest and most efficient way of controlling the area inhabited by fiercely independent tribes. This was part of the overall colonial policy of managing the borderlands or frontiers of

<sup>1</sup> Alok Bansal, Balochistan in Turmoil: Pakistan at Crossroads (New Dehli: Manas Publication, 2010), p.11.

<sup>2</sup> Taj Mohammad Breseeg, Baloch Nationalism: Its Origin and Development (Karachi: Royal Book Publishers, 2004), p.54.

<sup>3</sup> South Asian Forum For Human Rights ( SAFHR), Peace Audit Report 3 (New Dehli: SAFHR Publication, 2003), p.16.

<sup>4</sup> Bansal, Balochistan in turmoil: Pakistan at crossroads, p.220.

<sup>5</sup> Breseeg, Baloch Nationalism: Its Origin and Development, p.192.

British India. The British paramountcy and indirect control over the area in which the Baloch people lived made big changes in the politico-administrative sphere. Through a series of treaties the British managed to exert sufficient influence on the political dynamics in the Khanate of Kalat and other Baloch areas. Among these treaties, the Treaty signed between the British and the Khan of Kalat is very significant. Through this Treaty the British got the rights to station their troops permanently in Balochistan and to establish railway and telegraph lines for travel and communication purposes. The appointment of Major Robert Sandeman as the first Agent to the Governor General (AGG) by the British government in 1877 was a turning point in the relations between the British and the Baloch. Under the system devised by him (Sandeman System), the British started dealing with the *Sardars* (tribal chiefs) directly without the help and mediation of the Khan of Kalat.<sup>6</sup> The British policy towards Balochistan since then till the time of decolonization of the subcontinent was aimed at weakening the authority of the Khanate of Kalat as the prominent Baloch political establishment. In 1942, the Khan of Kalat forwarded the case of an independent Khanate of Balochistan. In the same year, the Secretary of State for India informed the Viceroy about the British policy towards the Khanate denying its status as an independent, sovereign and non-Indian state. The decision of the government of India was conveyed to the Khan in June 1942. The Khan re-opened the case in 1946 at the end of the Second World War. As the Viceroy Lord Mountbatten sought to settle the question of accession of all Princely States, the case of Kalat also came as an item for discussion. In the context of this, the Prime Minister of Kalat, Nawabzada Aslam Khan, claimed that the relationship of Kalat with the British India was defined in the Treaty of 1876 as one of an independent, sovereign state. However, the Viceroy said that he would accept this only for the purpose of negotiations. To settle the issue a number of meetings were held between the crown representatives, Mohammad Ali Jinnah and the Khan of Kalat. As a result, on 11 August 1947, Jinnah on the behalf of the Government of Pakistan agreed to recognize Kalat as an independent and a sovereign state.<sup>7</sup> On 15 August 1947, when the Khan of Kalat, Mir Ahmed Yar Khan declared independence, Jinnah had a change of heart on the recognition of Kalat and a sovereign state and put pressure on him to join with Pakistan in the context of threat from the rapidly expanding Soviet Union.<sup>8</sup> The Khan of Kalat was not ready to leave the achieved independent status but ready to compromise in the sphere of defense, foreign affairs and communications. However, he was not ready to sign either a Treaty or Instrument of Accession, until and unless, he had achieved the satisfactory agreement on the leased areas.<sup>9</sup> By February 1948, the discussion between the Khan of Kalat and the Government of Pakistan was concluded and as per the end result of the discussion, the State of Kalat was advised to join Pakistan.<sup>10</sup> When the Khan of Kalat felt pressure from the elites of Kalat, he shifted the responsibility to take the final decision in this matter to both the houses of parliament. Immediately both the houses of parliament (upper and lower houses) unanimously rejected the proposal to join Pakistan.<sup>11</sup> On 18 March 1948, office of Pakistan Foreign Affairs Ministry had given a press report that the State of Kharan, Lasbela and Makkram had applied for accession to Pakistan which was granted to them. The press report had also stated that after the merger of these states with Pakistan, only 50 percent of the previous area from the Kalat's territory had been given to it. The British High commissioner in Pakistan said that the proposal of accession was accepted by the Pakistan Cabinet, when Jam of Lasbela, the Chief of Kharan and Nawab Bai Khan of Makkram met Jinnah on 17 March 1948. Under these circumstances, there was no other option before the Khan of Kalat other than joining with Pakistan. At last, the Instrument of Accession was signed by the Khan of Kalat on 27 March 1948 and was approved by Mohammed Ali Jinnah on 31 March 1948. According to analysts, conditions were created for the merger of Kalat state with Pakistan and many Balochis thought that it amounts to blatant annexation.<sup>12</sup>

### 3. Emergence of One-Unit Plan

After the merger/annexation of Kalat, the Government of Pakistan took administrative control over the whole of Balochistan. Meanwhile in 1951, the government formed a Balochistan States Union by joining the states of Lasbela, Makkram, and Kharan with Kalat but within two years, there were series of conflicts created between Khan of Kalat and federal government. The central government had serious doubts about the pro-independence inclination of Khan of Kalat and so Baluchistan's States Union assembly was dissolved and later the Baloch areas were merged in the single unit of West Pakistan in 1955.<sup>13</sup> There was a feeling of neglect and deprivation among the Baloch people after the formation of one unit plan. This perception led to the organization of opposition movements despite a ban on political activities. Following this, all Baloch leaders formed a united front for the abolition of one - unit plan and provision of greater provincial autonomy.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p.161.

<sup>7</sup> Aditya Sinha, "Annexation or Accession of Kalat", Hindustan Times (New Delhi), 26 January 2006.

<sup>8</sup> Airavat Singh, "The Baloch National Question",  
URL: [http://www.bharat.rakshak/issue6\\_4/singh/html](http://www.bharat.rakshak/issue6_4/singh/html).

<sup>9</sup> Author (anonymous), "Balochistan a short history and new order",  
URL: [http://www.balochetawaar.com/History.English/balochistan\\_a\\_short\\_history\\_and.htm](http://www.balochetawaar.com/History.English/balochistan_a_short_history_and.htm).

<sup>10</sup> Dushka.H.Saiyad, "The Accession of Kalat: Myths and Reality",  
URL: [http://www.issi.org.pk/journal/2006\\_files/no\\_3/article/a2.html](http://www.issi.org.pk/journal/2006_files/no_3/article/a2.html).

<sup>11</sup> Airavat Singh, "The Baloch National Question."

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Bansal, Balochistan in Turmoil: Pakistan at Crossroads, pp. 38-39.

<sup>14</sup> Breseeg, Baloch Nationalism: Its and Origin and Development, p.286.

As Baloch nationalism grew in strength, it created a fear among successive Pakistani regimes which treated it as a great threat to the territorial integrity of Pakistan. The incident that strengthened this threat perception was the meeting of Baloch Sardars convened by the Khan of Kalat for abolishing the one - unit plan and regaining the original position of Kalat state.<sup>15</sup> In a panic reaction, on 6 October 1958, before the proclamation of marital law, Pakistan army attacked Balochistan because the Baloch leaders were demanding greater provincial autonomy and the abolition of one - unit plan. The experience of the military action in the words of Khan of Kalat is quoted below:

I gave myself up to the army which paraded with me on the roads and streets of Kalat. I witnessed streets several of my men falling dead on the ground by the indiscriminate firing the army, when my people saw me, they rushed with tearful eyes toward me to bid farewell, but fire was opened at them. I shut my eyes in agency and knew nothing of what happened there till found myself in the Lahore jail.<sup>16</sup>

However, the intrusion and attack of Pakistan army into Balochistan and subsequent arrest of the Khan of Kalat created an atmosphere for the Baloch rebels to carry on their struggle for Baloch nationalism.

#### 4. Ethnic Marginalization

Ethnic marginalization was one of the important factors that encourage the Baloch people to adopt the path of nationalist struggles. The Baloch people had an apprehension that they would get sidelined in their own homeland and this apprehension was not without grounds. Until 1970, the Pakhtoon people occupied the northern Balochistan and the southern part was inhabited by the Baloch people. There was conflict between the two on regular intervals.<sup>17</sup>

But, in the 1970s, due to the influx of large number of Afghan refugees (Pakhtoons), the comparative ratio between the Pakhtoons and the Baloch got disturbed. The Baloch were no longer the major ethno-linguistic group in the province as Baluchistan's population has considerably increased on account of the large scale coming of Afghan refugees.<sup>18</sup> They felt that it would lead to ethnic identity crises for the Baloch people. As a result, there started inter-community clashes between the two, thus generating ethnic violence between the Baloch and the Pakhtoons.<sup>19</sup>

The influx of Afghans refugees and pro-Taliban elements led to the strengthening of Islamic fundamentalism in Balochistan. The electoral gains made by the *Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal* (MMA) – a coalition of Islamic political parties - in Balochistan in the 2002 elections was an indicator of the growing influence of Islamic fundamentalism in the Province. The rise of fundamentalism and Islamic political parties in Balochistan temporarily eclipsed the Baloch nationalist movement which has always been associated with some sort of leftist ideology. The large scale influx of migrant laborers from other Provinces to Balochistan for the construction of Somiani port close to Karachi and coastal highways has created a sense of ethnic marginalization among the Baloch people. The emergence of many colonies of non-Baloch people (laborers) in the Baloch homeland is a standing testimony to the decreasing influence of the Baloch in their homeland.<sup>20</sup>

#### 5. Erosion of Autonomy

In spite of provincial autonomy guaranteed under the 1973 constitution and assurance of development from the Government of Pakistan, the period from 1973 to 1977 witnessed severe repression of the Baloch people. Under Prime Minister Z. A. Bhutto, Balochistan experienced the worst of political repression. Terror was unleashed by the government during this period to contain the Baloch nationalist uprising spearheaded by a coalition of political forces in Balochistan. It is an irony that the Baloch were put to state terrorism by an administration which guaranteed the politico-economic and cultural rights of ethno-national groups and the marginal groups in Pakistan through the 1973 Constitution.<sup>21</sup>

There was a general feeling among the Baloch leaders that provincial autonomy guaranteed in the constitution have degraded gradually. During the adoption of 1973 Constitution, there was an agreement that the concurrent list would be deleted within a decade.<sup>22</sup> But it was very unfortunate that the government of Bhutto, instead of safeguarding the rights of Baloch, dishonoured the agreement and tried to enslave the Province. The crisis started when Bhutto dissolved the coalition government in Balochistan in 1973 with the allegation that it was giving way to insurgency, promoting smuggling and was against modernization.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Author (anonymous), "The Baloch National Question", URL: <http://www.geocities.com/azadbalochistan/bnql.html>.

<sup>16</sup> Breeseeg, Baloch Nationalism: Its Origin and Development, pp.287-286.

<sup>17</sup> Bansal, Balochistan in Turmoil: Pakistan at Crossroads, p.220

<sup>18</sup> Stephen Philip Cohen, The Idea of Pakistan (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005), p.220.

<sup>19</sup> Alok Bansal, "Factors Leading to Insurgencies in Balochistan", Small Wars and Insurgencies (New Delhi), vol .19, no. 2, June 2008, p.188.

<sup>20</sup> Bansal, Balochistan in Turmoil: Pakistan at Crossroads, p.222

<sup>21</sup> Shaheen Sardar Ali and Javaid Rehman, Indigenous People and Ethnic Minorities of Pakistan Constitutional and Legal Perspective (London: Curzon Press, 2001), p.72.

<sup>22</sup> Bansal, "Factors Leading to Insurgencies in Balochistan", p.189.

<sup>23</sup> Ali and Rehman, Indigenous People and ethnic minorities of Pakistan constitutional and legal Perspective, p.72.

On the other hand, it is a fact that even after the period of 37 years, the concurrent list still exists and there is interference by the federal government in many fields which should be with the provincial government.<sup>24</sup> Under the current constitutional arrangement, economic resources and political power are concentrated in the hands of the federal government. According to Zahid Hussain, a columnist of *Newsline*, the master-servant relationship is starker there than in any other province.<sup>25</sup> Jamil Bugti, the son of Late Nawab Akbar Bugti was of the view,

The status of the Chief Minister of Balochistan is nothing more than of clerk as everything is remotely controlled from Islamabad. He had to run to Islamabad every month to get the salaries for his employees in the secretariat. So he is given a cheque for the month's salaries and sent home to return again the next month with palm outstretched.<sup>26</sup>

The provincial government is at the disposal of the centre and has to follow its instructions. The role of the Baloch people in political decisions is negligible because these decisions are taken in Islamabad. All this has resulted in lack of economic opportunities for them.<sup>27</sup> The Baloch nationalists feel that the military government in Islamabad has either suppressed the political forces in the province or at least tried to marginalize them.<sup>28</sup>

The Baloch leaders have been struggling hard in the parliament against the building of new military bases in the province including Sui and Kohlu. There are already four cantonments, three naval bases, four missile testing centres, two nuclear development and 59 paramilitary facilities in the province. All this shows that there are more than required security related establishment in Balochistan.<sup>29</sup>

The Baloch people perceive that these cantonments are nothing but tools for grabbing their traditional land by the army and symbols of political repression. Moreover, over 500 acres of land was forcibly occupied in Sui when citizens refused to sell their land. Similarly it is being repeated in Kohlu. Thus, there is a perception among the people that their land has become a colony of security forces. All this has created mistrust between the centre and the provincial government in Quetta.<sup>30</sup>

## 6. Lack of Representation

The representation of Baloch people in central government is very negligible. Same is the case with the military and parliament.<sup>31</sup> The lack of Baloch representation has a long historical background. During British rule, there were negligible recruit from Balochistan in the armed forces. The pattern of recruitment was such that; 77 percent from Punjab, 19.5 percent from NWFP, 2.2 percent from Sindh and 0.6 percent from Balochistan. This trend continued after the establishment of Pakistan and till date, no Baloch has occupied any top rank of the armed forces.<sup>32</sup>

The lack of representation in the Civil Service is even starker. Out of 830 higher civil services post in Balochistan only 181 were held by the Baloch in 1979. There was only one Baloch each holding the rank of secretary, director and deputy commissioner. In the sphere of police force, the strength of Baloch was only 25 percent and mostly outsiders were appointed as top rank officers. The same discrimination has been there in judiciary also.<sup>33</sup> In 1980, General Zia had promised the Baloch people to provide due share in central jobs in accordance with their proportion in the population of Pakistan. As per this, 39 percent of central jobs were categorized for the people of Balochistan. But still their representation in the central jobs is still poor and far below though the fixed quota is 39 percent. Even out of the persons who are recruited from Balochistan, Pakhtoons had a major share. Thus, there are a nominal number of native Baloch people in the Pakistan army and civil services.<sup>34</sup>

Most of the officers, who have achieved senior positions in Balochistan from Chief Secretary to Inspector General of police as well as most of the government secretaries working in Balochistan, are either Punjabis or from other provinces. Late Nawab Akbar Bugti usually told his visitors, "If you visit the Balochistan secretariat, check out the name plates outside each office. You will find virtually no locals running provincial affairs."<sup>35</sup> The Baloch people had been under-represented in all the official affairs of Pakistani state and thus they do not consider themselves as part of Pakistan. On 29 April 2009, Senator Mir Hasal Bizenjo, leader of National Party stated in the Pakistan Senate that "not even a single head of around 60 government organizations and institutions was from his province."<sup>36</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Bansal, "Factors Leading to Insurgencies in Balochistan", p.189.

<sup>25</sup> Zahid Hussain, "Gathering Storm", *Newsline* (Karachi), vol. 5, no. 13, February 2005, p.24.

<sup>26</sup> Bansal, *Balochistan in Turmoil: Pakistan at Crossroads*, p.223.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Breseeg, *Baloch Nationalism: Its and Origin and Development*, p.374.

<sup>29</sup> Bansal, *Balochistan in Turmoil: Pakistan at Crossroads*, p.223.

<sup>30</sup> Shahzada Zulfiqar, "Land-Mine", *Newsline* (Karachi), August 2004, p.58.

<sup>31</sup> Rematullah Mehsud and Zakria Nutkani, "High Time to Set Things Right in Balochistan", URL:<http://www.weeklypulse.org/pulse/article/3208.html>.

<sup>32</sup> Veena Kukreja, *Contemporary Pakistan : Political Processes, Conflict and Crises* (New Delhi: Sage Publication, 2003), pp.132-133.

<sup>33</sup> Bansal, "Factors Leading to Insurgencies in Balochistan", p.186.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Massoud Ansari, "The Battle for Balochistan", *Newsline* (Karachi), vol. 13, no. 4, September 2006, p.27.

<sup>36</sup> Bansal, *Balochistan in Turmoil: Pakistan at Crossroads* p.229-231.

## 7. Economic Exploitation

Apart from longstanding demands for increased political autonomy, economic exploitation has also fuelled the conflict in Balochistan as the local population demands more control and increased benefits from the natural resources in the province. Balochistan is the poorest province in Pakistan and its per capita income is the lowest amongst all the four provinces of Pakistan.<sup>37</sup> The province has abundant natural resources which provide benefit to the rest of Pakistan but these resources have failed to either provide livelihood or raise the living standard of the people in the province. Though there is no much vegetation in the province, it is quite rich in natural resources and besides vast deposits of natural gas has large reserves of minerals like chromium copper, iron and coal. Gas is found in commercially large quantities in Sui and Pirokh.<sup>38</sup> The region's gas reserve supply most of Pakistan with its energy and its sparse population makes it a viable location for nuclear tests. Balochistan's long coastline with its marine wealth should have been a source of prosperity for its people. But the Baloch people complain that they do not benefit from the exploitation of the province's natural resources, especially gas.<sup>39</sup>

In the area inhabited by Marri tribe, the government had the economic objectives of enhancing oil exploration activity with the development of road communications. But, the profits were to go the national government and foreign companies rather than the province. Therefore, the Baloch People Liberation Front (BPLF) delayed the construction of 57 kilometers of road, which was perceived as being built for oil exploration, for over five years and initially it could only be constructed after the Army managed to subdue the insurgents. The situation is much the same today.<sup>40</sup>

The Pakistan government often wanted to project Balochistan as a "wasteland of deserts and mountains" and "an economic liability" but nothing could be farther from truth. "Balochistan is not only self sufficient" but also supports "the Federal Government with the resources of its own soil. On and under the land; in the sea; on the mountains; and ever over and beneath the deserts", the province is flush with natural resources. This feeling has reinforced the Baloch nationalists that they are not being given a fair share of the wealth that the state acquires from their land.<sup>41</sup>

Concerns about the 'utilization of their natural resources pervades the Baloch nationalist discourse, and the Baloch political leaders have consistently pursued the issue of the distribution of resources between the centre and the provinces'. The Baloch 'interpret the disparity between the value of the gas produced in Balochistan and the poverty of the province as a consequence of their exploitation by the outsiders.'<sup>42</sup> The manner in which Sui's gas reserves were exploited by the federal government has long been a sour point among the Baloch nationalists as payment of the revenue of natural gas to Balochistan since 1953, is still pending. There is no sign of equal sharing of Sui gas field which supplies 38 percent of gas for Pakistan but only six percent for Balochistan.<sup>43</sup> Even this gas came to Balochistan only after it had been supplied to the rest of Pakistan. Natural gas was supplied to cities in the Punjab as early as 1964, but Quetta, the capital of Balochistan, had to wait until 1986 for its share of gas only because at that time the government decided to extend the gas pipeline to provide the facility to the military bases.

Against this, natural gas is supplied to almost every single village in Punjab and Sindh. In Fact, Punjab today is known as "the mother of Condensed Natural Gas (CNG) stations" as almost all cars in the province have been converted from petrol to CNG. Meanwhile there is not a single CNG station in the province of Balochistan.<sup>44</sup> As a result the Baloch nationalists felt that their natural resources are exploited by the federal government dominated by the Punjabis. This was the reason why the Baloch nationalists angered and had taken up arms in a big way to fight for their rights.<sup>45</sup>

## 8. Lack of Cultural Freedom

Although Balochistan has its vast size and small but significant population, the Baloch people hardly enjoy any cultural freedom. According to scholars "concern about cultural autonomy has dominated the Baloch nationalists discourse".<sup>46</sup> One of the earliest human settlements in the world, the people of Balochistan have a very rich and varied culture. Poetry, music and dance are the parts of their day to day life and have a rich tradition in this regard.

In the course of history, the Baloch had been continuously occupied by the British and later by the Pakistani army.<sup>47</sup> Despite the brutal oppression of various types, the Balochi literature has emerged strong and energetic. The Baloch people have a strong sense of

<sup>37</sup> Author (anonymous), "Balochistan Conflict Paper",

URL: [http://www.balochistan.wordpress.com/balochistan\\_conflict/.htm](http://www.balochistan.wordpress.com/balochistan_conflict/.htm).

<sup>38</sup> Breseeg, *Baloch Nationalism: Its and Origin and Development*, p.380.

<sup>39</sup> Bansal, *Balochistan in Turmoil: Pakistan at Crossroads*, p.231.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. p.232.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Paul Titus, "Introduction" in Sylvia Matheson (ed.), *The Tigers of Balochistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp.xix-xx.

<sup>43</sup> Ralph Peter, "Baloch National Movement is for Autonomy or Free Balochistan",

URL:<http://www.articlesbase.com/international-studies-article/baloch-national-movement-is-for-autonomy-or-free-balochistan-675847.html>.

<sup>44</sup> Ansari, "The Battle for Balochistan", p.25.

<sup>45</sup> M K Dhar, "Revolt in Pakistan's Balochistan and Gilgit areas", *Kashmir Times* (Jammu), 28 January 2005.

<sup>46</sup> Titus, "Introduction" in Matheson (ed.), *The Tigers of Balochistan*, p.xix.

<sup>47</sup> Author (anonymous), "Baloch and Baloch Culture",

URL:<http://www.forums.xale.global.yale.edu/thread.jspa/threadid=1225>.

belongingness to its culture and language. They have managed to continue and strengthen their culture and tradition despite all odds.<sup>48</sup> The Balochi language and culture is so rich and deep rooted. The Balochi language has its own grammar and it is rich in vocabulary. It is also rich in idioms, phrases, folk stories and folk songs.<sup>49</sup> The Baloch poetry is significant in terms of images and imagination and is very musical. Balochi music and traditional stories had been passed from generation to generation. The Baloch possess a rich body of traditional stories which is seen in Balochi proverbs, common sayings, puzzles, songs and stories.<sup>50</sup>

The strong national sentiment is the striking feature of Baloch folklore. Thus, with its traditional stories, songs and poetry, the Balochi literature is to be considered as one important source of inspiration for nationalist feelings and emotions. Describing the common characteristics of the Balochi literature Carina Jahani, a reputed Swedish Scholar, wrote about the following:

Much of the literature that has been produced in Balochi is explicitly nationalist in content, common themes are the glorification of the deserts and mountains of Balochistan and the bravery, pride and honour of the Baloch people, was an example of Semi-Mythic heroes such as Mir Chakarand Mir Hammal.<sup>51</sup>

Through the centuries, the Balochi oral literature has been an important vehicle of transmitting Balochi language, culture and national feeling. The Baloch people are more conscious about their common language and cultural heritage. It is considered as the significant foundation of Baloch nationalism. The Baloch cultural values i.e. set of shared social norms, value systems, traditions and folklore together with the cultural environment is the central point of nationalist appeal for broader popular support for the overall demand for autonomy.<sup>52</sup> The Baloch people cherish their cultural heritage. It gives them the sense of a distinctive identity and enables them to defend themselves from the threat of absorption and assimilation into the surrounding cultures. So they have successfully preserved their cultural traditions throughout recorded history. According to Selig Harrison wrote "It is the strength of this ancient cultural heritage that explains the continuous determination and desire of the present demand for the political recognition of Baloch identity."<sup>53</sup> The federal government has not taken a favourable stand in promoting the Baloch culture and heritage. On the contrary, the federal government always tried to suppress the cultural expressions of the Baloch people. Therefore, cultural exploitation and oppression of the Baloch was another feature of conflict between the Baloch people and the federal government.<sup>54</sup>

According to the perception of the Baloch people, the mission of the Pakistan establishment is to 'civilize' the 'uncivilized' Baloch and in that process destroy their culture. The federal government wanted to make the Baloch people 'perfect Pakistani Muslims'. This paternalistic drive of the Pakistan establishment is not acceptable to the nationalists among the Baloch people. They fear that the submergence of the Baloch culture and traditions will lead to the disappearance of the Baloch nation.<sup>55</sup>

### 9. Imposition of Urdu language

Language and culture are closely related to each other. Language is an important factor in contributing to a sense of national identity. According to Spooner, "Baloch identity in Balochistan is closely tied to the use of Balochi language in inter-tribal relations".<sup>56</sup> Languages play a powerful role in the struggle of Baloch people for their right of self-determination. The Balochi language is a symbol of the separate identity.<sup>57</sup> In Pakistan, although the ruling elite has used the power of the state to suppress Baloch nationalism, the language movement have been marginalized and ignored rather than suppressed.<sup>58</sup> In the Baloch context, language which is undoubtedly the main carrier of ideas, sentiments, traditions, customs and religious belief from one generation to another, is the main target of the Pakistan establishment. The federal government had not allowed Balochi to be the language of instruction in schools even at primary level in Balochistan. Balochi publications and instructions for academic research were never encouraged.<sup>59</sup> This is a major grievance of the Baloch nationalists who also point out that adequate time is not given for Balochi language on radio and television and Balochi publications are not given any sort of official support which other languages enjoy.<sup>60</sup> The most important cause of conflict between the Baloch people and the federal government was the imposition of Urdu language upon them. The aim of the federal government was to give popularity to Urdu language through making it as the medium of instruction in the educational institutions in

<sup>48</sup> Rajat Pandit, "Mother Language and Land Are Precious",

URL:[http://www.articlebase.com/culture\\_articles/mother\\_language\\_and\\_land\\_are\\_precious-782245.html](http://www.articlebase.com/culture_articles/mother_language_and_land_are_precious-782245.html).

<sup>49</sup> Author (anonymous), "An Over View of Balochistan",

URL:<http://www.zrombesh.org/maqalat/An%20overview%20of%20Balochistan.html>.

<sup>50</sup> Author (anonymous), "Baloch and Baloch culture."

<sup>51</sup> Breseeg, Baloch Nationalism: Its and Origin and Development, pp. 77-78.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, p.70.

<sup>53</sup> Cited in Ibid, pp.70-71.

<sup>54</sup> Naseer Dashti, "Resolving the Baloch National Question: An Aspects of a Negotiated Settlement",

URL: <http://www.thebaluch.com/050708-article.php>.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Breseeg, Baloch Nationalism: Its and Origin and Development, p.71.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Tariq Rahman, Language and Politics in Pakistan (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 170.

<sup>59</sup> Muhammad Shamsaddin Megalommatis, "The Cultural Genocide of Balochistan",

URL:[http://www.buzzle.com/article/the\\_cultural\\_genocide\\_of\\_balochistan.html](http://www.buzzle.com/article/the_cultural_genocide_of_balochistan.html).

<sup>60</sup> Rahman, Language and Politics in Pakistan, p.170.

Balochistan. The Pakistan establishment wanted to create an artificial Islamic culture on a fast track and thereby destroy the culture and integrity of the Baloch nation.<sup>61</sup>

Before 1947, the official languages of Balochistan were Persian and English. There was no use of Balochi language in administration and educational institutions.<sup>62</sup> There was no possibility of studying the Balochi language and literature within in the educational system existed at that time.<sup>63</sup> In this context, when decolonization became a reality “the Balochistan parliament in its meeting on 14 December 1947, laid stress that Balochi would be the national and official language of Balochistan”.<sup>64</sup> However, practically, in 1948, with the incorporation of Balochistan in Pakistan, Urdu instead of Balochi was given status of official language in Balochistan. For the first time in history Balochi got the status of both national and official language when the State of Kalat was independent for 227 days before it got incorporated into Pakistan. After that Urdu became official and national language and this created tremendous problems for the people of Balochistan since Urdu was practically a foreign language for them. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Persian language was used as the language of court in the Kalat state but there was a oral poetic tradition in Balochi and Brahui. Basic education was given by the *mullas* in *maktabs* in the local languages. However, due to the political developments in the area, Urdu started making its presence felt in terms of the increasing number of Urdu speaking people from north India in the administrative system.<sup>65</sup>

As the Balochistan Agency came under the Punjabi government, where Urdu was the officially recognized vernacular language, Urdu was used in schools and the lower level of administration and the judiciary. Thus, not only in British Balochistan but also in the State of Kalat Urdu was used for routine official works.<sup>66</sup> In Pakistan, the use of Balochi as a language of administration or education and media is also very limited, even if voices have been raised for introducing it as a language of education. All educated Baloch youth have received their education in English or Urdu in Pakistan and Persian in Iran and Afghanistan. Therefore, only a small number of educated groups take interest in reading books and magazines in Balochi.<sup>67</sup>

Even though the Baloch language is the primary and important language of Balochistan, it is not taught in schools due to lack of teachers, lack of parental support because parents want their children to learn Urdu, Persian or English instead of Balochi. Only the University in Quetta, the provincial capital of Balochistan, offers courses of Baloch language and literature in the master’s level.<sup>68</sup>

Today, the Baloch language remains primarily the language of the home and of local community. It is mainly spoken at homes within the family members, relatives, neighbours, friends etc. When it comes to religion, “Arabic is the language of recitation and worship whereas sermons are normally delivered in Balochi for the sake of comprehension in Balochi-speaking communities in Pakistan”.<sup>69</sup>

After 1947, the Balochi language became very important for the promotion of the Balochi culture. A large number of literary organizations and societies were established for the encouragement of Balochi language. Notably *Bolan*, *Balochistan Jadeed* and *Nawai Watan* periodicals were launched by Mir Muhammad Hussain Unka, Mir Gul Khan Naseer and Lala Ghulam Jam Shahwani respectively.<sup>70</sup> In the meantime a monthly magazine called *Ulus* in Balochi started publishing from 1961.

In the same year (1961), the weekly *Nokeen Daur* started its publication from Quetta and continued till 1971 when financial crises forced it to close down. The *Warna Wanada Gal* was established in 1971. Like other linguistic and literary publications, its aim was to promote Balochi and Brahui languages and literature. From the 1960s, the Radio started relying programmes in Balochi from Quetta. With the establishment of Brahui Academy in Quetta in 1966, Quetta city became the centre of the Baloch linguistic and literary renaissance.<sup>71</sup>

The Balochi Academy in Quetta was established in 1961 by a group of dedicated and enlightened writers. Mohammad Sardar Khan Giskhori, who was one a well known historian, was the first Chairmmen of the Academy which proved to be the milestone in the progress of Baloch literature. Its, predecessor, the Balochi Academy in Karachi, had also considerably contributed to the development of Balochi literature.<sup>72</sup> The first publication of the Balochi Academy in Quetta was “Durcheen”, a compilation of the verses of famous Balochi poet Jam Burrak by Mir Bashir Ahmed Baloch who was also the first General Secretary of the Balochi Academy. There were no other institutions in the province which had managed to match the Balochi Academy regarding literary contribution. It had published more than 50 books, so it was considered as the flag bearer of Balochi language and literature.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Dashti, “Resolving the Baloch National Question: aspects of a Negotiated Settlement”.

<sup>62</sup> Megalommatiss, “The Cultural Genocide of Balochistan”.

<sup>63</sup> Carina Jahani, “State Control and its Impact on Language in Balochistan”, p. 4, URL:[http://www.lingfil.uu.se/peronal/carinajahani/jahani/jahani\\_red.pdf](http://www.lingfil.uu.se/peronal/carinajahani/jahani/jahani_red.pdf).

<sup>64</sup> Rehman, Language and Politics in Pakistan, p.161.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, p.164.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Jahani, “State Control and Its Impact on Language in Balochistan”. p.5.

<sup>68</sup> Megalommatiss, “The Cultural Genocide of Balochistan”.

<sup>69</sup> Jahani, “State Control and Its Impact on Language in Balochistan”, p.7.

<sup>70</sup> K. M. Shariff, Pakistan: Almanac, 2002-2003 (Karachi: Royal Book Publishers, 2003), p. 424.

<sup>71</sup> Rahman, Language and Politics in Pakistan, p.163.

<sup>72</sup> Shariff, Pakistan: Almanac,2002-2003, p. 424.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

### 10. The Assassination of Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti

On December 2005, a full-fledged military operation was launched by the Pakistan army against the Baloch insurgents in Kohlu District which was dominated by Marri tribesmen. It was the third time in 2005, when security forces confronted the Baloch nationalists in an open military operation. However, the scene of previous military action was the contiguous Dera Bugti district dominated by the Bugti tribe which was the largest Baloch tribe.<sup>74</sup> Finally it was Islamabad that lit the match on August 26, when Pakistani's military carried an operation in Kohlu district that killed Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti, the 79-year-old leader of the Jamhoori Watan Party (JWP).<sup>75</sup>

The insurgency in Balochistan had a long history of violent conflicts between the military authority and Baloch rebels but the killing of Akbar Bugti gave a new direction to it. Pakistan's military ruler, Gen. Musharraf might have concluded that the best way to solve the crises was to kill the Baloch sardar, Nawab Akbar Bugti.<sup>76</sup> The Pakistani regime had pre-planned to kill Akbar Bugti because he was trying to unravel the false propaganda of central government and did not accept the proposal of forming a parliamentary committee to solve the problem in Balochistan. He did what the legendary Baloch heroes before had done: fight till the last breath on the hills of Balochistan to protect his ancestral land and resources.<sup>77</sup>

A few weeks later, the governor of Balochistan, Owais Ghani had issued a statement that Nawab Akbar Bugti was a respected person and being old. He did not deserve to be punished and the government had no intention of harming him but this statement was only to hoodwink the people. The army had serious intention of killing Bugti to end the on-going struggle for nationalism.<sup>78</sup> The killing of Nawab Akbar Bugti created unrest in Balochistan and gave Baloch nationalism a martyr to continue a struggle for self-determination and political autonomy.

The killing of Nawab Bugti became a rude shock for the people of Balochistan. It gave a momentum to the opposition parties who organized protests, rallies, strikes and shutter down and created hindrances in the working of parliament. All Baloch nationalist leaders submitted their resignations from the provincial and national legislatures. For the first time, even ruling party leaders expressed disquiet at the manner in which President Gen. Musharraf has sought to bulldoze the Baloch question through military operations.<sup>79</sup> After the killing of Nawab Bugti, the PML (Q) president Chaudary Shujaat Hussain and secretary-general Mushahid Hussain Sayyed came out with a statement that the killing of Nawab Bugti was sad and unfortunate and said that the need of the hour was political settlement to the grievances raised by the Baloch leader. They expressed their grief at Bugti's death. The manner in which he met his death had created a common platform on which various tribal heads who were reluctant to rebel against Pakistani government were now collectively organized in the nationalist movement.<sup>80</sup>

In his lifetime, Nawab Bugti had as many enemies as admirers. He was often seen as an important figure in the Baloch nationalist cause and "his metamorphosis as the most prominent face of the Baloch insurgency was a latter day development."<sup>81</sup> He led decades of political action and violent resistance against the federal government to win from the state increased royalties for the province along with Baloch demands.<sup>82</sup> Pakistan media condemned the killing of Nawab Bugti in the army operation as a 'Political Nightmare'. It added that his killing was the second gross mistake by the military since the execution of former Prime Minister Z. A. Bhutto in 1979. It was in fact a great milestone in the long history of Baloch nationalism against the Pakistani government since 1947.<sup>83</sup>

### 11. Conclusion

It is quite clear that Baloch discontentment with Pakistan has a strong historical basis. Prior to the partition of British India, the Baloch nationalists had opposed the accession of their region to Pakistan and after partition they have continued to espouse their desire to establish their own independent nation state. Their alienation with the state has often found expression in their frequent violent outbursts. Over time, their alienation has increased as the attempt by the Pakistan leadership to integrate them with the mainstream has failed miserably. As the above discussion shows both long standing issues like lack of autonomy, cultural freedom, economic exploitation and political repression and contemporary developments like the assassination of Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti also precipitated the crisis in Balochistan. This makes the issue of Baloch national question a vexed one.

<sup>74</sup> Alok Bansal, "Balochistan: Continuing Violence and Its Implications", Strategic Analysis (New Delhi), vol. 30, no. 1, January-March 2006, pp. 46-47.

<sup>75</sup> Nirupama Subramanian, "Balochistan Blaze", Frontline (Chennai), vol. 23, no. 18, September 2006, URL:<http://www.flonnet.com/fline/fl2318/storiesi20060922004411400.html>.

<sup>76</sup> Alok Bansal, "Nawab Bugti's Assassination: Future Portents", Strategic Analysis (New Delhi), vol. 30, no. 3, July-September 2006, p.646.

<sup>77</sup> Aziz Baloch, "Self-determination of Balochistan: Looking Back and Looking Forward", URL:[http://www.articlebase.com/international\\_studies\\_articles/self\\_determination\\_of\\_balochistan\\_looking\\_back-and-looking-forward-534346.html](http://www.articlebase.com/international_studies_articles/self_determination_of_balochistan_looking_back-and-looking-forward-534346.html).

<sup>78</sup> Bansal, "Nawab Bugti's Assassination: Future Portents", p. 646.

<sup>79</sup> Subramanian, "Balochistan Blaze."

<sup>80</sup> Bansal, "Nawab Bugti's Assassination: Future Portents", pp. 650-651.

<sup>81</sup> Subramanian, "Balochistan Blaze."

<sup>82</sup> Author (anonymous), "A Baluch Nationalist to Take up Arms", Hindustan Times (New Delhi), 28 August 2006.

<sup>83</sup> Author (anonymous), "Bugti's Killing: Pak Army's 2<sup>nd</sup> Biggest Blunder", URL:<http://www.expressindia.com/fullstory.php?newsid=73041>.

**12. References**

- i. Bansal, A., *Balochistan in Turmoil: Pakistan at Crossroads*, New Delhi: Manas Publication, 2010, p.11.
- ii. Breseeg, T.M., *Baloch Nationalism: Its Origin and Development*, Karachi: Royal Book Publication, 2004, p.54.
- iii. South Asian Forum For Human Rights (SAFHR), *Peace Audit Report 3*, New Delhi: SAFHR Publication, 2003, p. 16.
- iv. Sinha, A., 'Annexation or Accession of Kalat', *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 26 January 2006.
- v. Singh, A., 'The Baloch National Question', available at: URL:[http://www.bharat.rakshak/issue6\\_4/singh/html](http://www.bharat.rakshak/issue6_4/singh/html).
- vi. Author (anonymous), 'Balochistan : A Short History and New Order', available at: URL:  
[http://www.balochetawar.com/history.English/balochistan\\_a\\_short\\_history-and.\\_new\\_order.html](http://www.balochetawar.com/history.English/balochistan_a_short_history-and._new_order.html).
- vii. Saiyad, H.D., 'The Accession of Kalat: Myths and Reality', available at:  
URL:[http://www.issi.org.pk/journal/2006\\_files/no\\_3/article/a2.html](http://www.issi.org.pk/journal/2006_files/no_3/article/a2.html).
- viii. Cohen, S.P., *The Idea of Pakistan*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005, p.220.
- ix. Bansal, A., 'Factors Leading To Insurgency In Balochistan', *Small Wars And Insurgencies*, Vol. 19, No. 2, June 2008, p. 188.
- x. Ali, S. S., *Indigenous People and Ethnic Minorities of Pakistan Constitutional and Legal Perspective*, London: Curzon Press, 2001, p. 72.
- xi. Hussain, Z., 'Gathering Storm', *Newsline* Vol. 5, No. 13, February 2005, p. 24.
- xii. Zulfiqar, S., 'Land-Mine', *Newsline*, August 2004, p.58.
- xiii. Mehsud, Rematullah.and Nutkani, Zakaria, 'High Time To Set Things Right in Balochistan', available at:  
URL:<http://www.weeklypulse.org/pulse/article/3298.html>.
- xiv. Kukreza, V., *Contemporary Pakistan: Political Processes, Conflict and Crises*, New Delhi: Sage Publication, 2003, p.132-133.
- xv. Ansari, M., 'The Battle for Balochistan', *Newsline*, Vol. 13, No. 4, September 2006, p. 27.
- xvi. Author (anonymous), 'Balochistan Conflict Paper', available at:  
URL:[http://www.balochistan.wordpress.com/balochistan\\_conflict/html](http://www.balochistan.wordpress.com/balochistan_conflict/html).
- xvii. Matheson, Sylvia(ed.), *The Tiger of Balochistan*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- xxviii. Peter, Ralph, 'Baloch National Movement is for Autonomy or Free Balochistan', available at:  
URL:<http://www.articlebase.com/international-studies-article/baloch-national-movement-is-for-autonomy-or-free-balochistan-675847.html>.
- xix. Dhar, M.K., 'Revolt in Pakistan's Balochistan and Gilgit areas', *Kashmir Times*, 28 January 2005.
- xx. Author(anonymous), 'Baloch and Baloch Culture', available at:  
URL:<http://www.forum.xale.global.yale.edu/thread.jspa/threadid=1225>.
- xxi. Pandit, R., 'Mother language and Land are Precious', available at:URL:[http://www.articlebase.com/culture\\_article/mother-language-and\\_land\\_are\\_precious-782245.html](http://www.articlebase.com/culture_article/mother-language-and_land_are_precious-782245.html).
- xxii. Author(anonymous), 'an Overview of balochistan', available at:  
URL:<http://www.zrombesh.org/maqalat/An%20overview%20of%20Balochistan.html>.
- xxiii. Dashti, N., 'Resolving the Baloch National Question: an aspect of a Negotiated Settlement', available at:  
URL:<http://www.thebaloch.com/050708-article.php>.
- xxiv. Rehman, T., *Language and Politics in Pakistan*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 170.
- xxv. Megalommatis, M.S., 'The Cultural Genocide Of Balochistan', available at:  
URL:[http://www.buzzle.com/article/the\\_cultural\\_genocide\\_of\\_Balochistan.html](http://www.buzzle.com/article/the_cultural_genocide_of_Balochistan.html).
- xxvi. Jahani, J., 'State Control and Its Impact on language in Balochistan', available at:  
URL:[http://www.lingfil.uu.se/personal/carinajahani/jahani\\_red.pdf](http://www.lingfil.uu.se/personal/carinajahani/jahani_red.pdf).
- xxvii. Shariff, K.M., *Pakistan: almanac, 2002-2003*, Karachi: Royal Book Publishers, 2003, p. 163.
- xxviii. Bansal, A., "Balochistan: Continuing Violence and Its Implication" *Strategic Analysis*, Vol.30, No.1, January-February 2006, pp-46-47.
- xxix. Subramanian, N., 'Balochistan Blaze', *Frontline*, Vol. 23, No. 18, September 2006, available at:  
URL:<http://www.flonnnet.com/fline/fl2318/stories20060922004411400.html>.
- xxx. Bansal, A., 'Nawab Bugti's Assassination: Future Portents', *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. 30, No. 3, July-September 2006, p. 646.
- xxxi. Baloch, Aziz., 'Self-Determination of Balochistan: Looking Back and Looking Forward', available at:  
URL:[http://www.article.com/international\\_studies\\_articles/self\\_determination\\_of\\_Balochistan\\_looking\\_back\\_and\\_looking\\_forward-534346.html](http://www.article.com/international_studies_articles/self_determination_of_Balochistan_looking_back_and_looking_forward-534346.html).
- xxxii. Author (anonymous), 'A Baloch Nationalists to take up Arms', *Hindustan Times*, 28 August 2006.
- xxxiii. Author (anonymous), 'Bugti's Killing: Pak Army's 2nd Biggest Blunder', available at:  
URL:<http://www.expressindia.com/fullstory.php?newsid=73041>.