



RESEARCH PAPER

A Critical Appraisal of the Balochistan Conundrum

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ABSTRACT

This research paper is a Comprehensive analysis of Baluchistan's Complex political conundrum. It explores the various elements that contribute to the distinctive nature of the province of Baluchistan. This analysis examines the intricate interaction of several variables that have collectively influenced the development of the region's complicated historical narrative. The primary objective of this study is to conduct a comprehensive critical analysis of the characteristics mentioned above while also exploring the challenges Baluchistan encounters in its pursuit of stability, growth, and the establishment of a distinct identity. In addition, it is crucial to furnish a thorough and all-encompassing array of facts about potential opportunities. This scholarly study adopts an interdisciplinary perspective to illuminate the intricate interrelationships among the historical heritage of the Baloch community, their present-day challenges, and their aspirations for the forthcoming times.

KEYWORDS Balochistan, Conundrum, Conflict, Complexities, Development, Inequality, Ethnic, Governance, Resources

Introduction

Baluchistan, situated at the intersection of Asia, exhibits a confluence of varied circumstances and a significant cultural legacy, wherein echoes of the past merge with the intricacies of the contemporary day. Entitled "Baluchistan Conundrum" the research examines the multifaceted components of the province's historical account, scrutinizing the intricate dynamics among economic assets, armed conflict, ethnic tensions, and autocratic governance. The province of Baluchistan possesses abundant natural resources, mineral reserves, electricity reserves, and a strategically favorable coastline, which bestows upon it the potential to become a significant economic powerhouse. However, underutilizing these assets and insufficient governance have led to a paradoxical situation in which riches exist alongside underdevelopment, inequality, and dissatisfaction. The present study delves into the intricate dynamics surrounding resource extraction, focusing on the dualistic character of economic exploitation. It seeks to analyze how such exploitation is a driving force for progress and a cause of resentment. This underscores the need to investigate and implement efficient resolutions to address these issues thoroughly. The historical account of the region is marked by recurrent instances of conflict, encompassing both internal and exterior elements.

This research examines the fundamental factors that contribute to these wars, surrounding many dynamics, such as the goal of autonomy and self-determination, alongside geopolitical rivalry. The persisting problems that impact the development of Baluchistan are shown by the complex and challenging relationship it maintains with the central governments of the nations to which it belongs, as well as the formation of insurgent movements. The coexistence of several ethnic groups in Baluchistan enhances the region's cultural diversity while concurrently giving rise to notable intergroup disputes. This

research also investigates the intricate relationships among several ethnic groups, including the Baloch people, and their varied allegiances to different political entities. This research explores the historical and sociopolitical elements that have influenced the interaction between ethnicity and the quest for sovereignty, forming a unique identity that surpasses national borders. The historical account of the region is characterized by instances of authoritarian governance, as central powers frequently employed severe means to establish and preserve their dominance. The present study investigates the influence of strict control on the occurrence of dissent and the severity of pre-existing disputes. This paper explores the implications of restricted civil freedoms, abuses of human rights, and the suppression of dissident perspectives on the socio-political landscape of the region.

Balochistan, Pakistan's largest and most ethnically and linguistically varied province, has the lowest population overall. The most prominent ethnic groups in the area are Baloch (including Brahvis) and Pashtuns, who comprise roughly 90% of the total population. Baluchistan, which borders Iran and Afghanistan, is strategically located in the middle of three major world regions: South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East. The province has abundant gas, gold, copper, and other natural resources. Baluchistan has frequently been the focus of interest from national, regional, and international organizations because of its crucial strategic position and great resources. Baluchistan's economic and geopolitical significance has increased over the past ten years with the creation of a vital port at Gwadar and the beginning of many trans-state pipeline construction projects to supply Islamabad's energy demands. Baluchistan is now at the epicenter of regional geo-economics and geopolitics thanks to the development of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) (Ebrahim and T 2015).

Despite possessing a vast coastline and a wealth of natural resources, the province's economic growth has lagged behind neighbouring provinces', and nearly all of THAT has underperformed on social and human development metrics. Baluchistan has the most significant percentage of multifaceted poverty in Pakistan's areas, with roughly three out of every four people living in severe poverty (Muzaffar, et. al 2018; Shehbaz 2016). Similarly, it has the lowest literacy rates, enrollment, gender disparity, access, and learning outcomes (Kakar & Khan, 2018). More than 1 million (39) kids are still not attending school. According to Dr. Bugti "that a total of 785 mothers lose their lives during pregnancy in Baluchistan out of 1 lakh as compared to 272 in the rest of the country (Shah, 2014)."

Literature Review

Hashmi (2015) pointed out that Balochistan, in South Asia, has been plagued by conflict for decades. This research examines the multifaceted causes of these tensions, focusing on Baloch nationalism's role in escalating the Pakistani-Baloch conflict. The study explores Balochistan's ethnic identity, including language, culture, and land history, and its impact on current disputes. The Baloch community's strong cultural and linguistic heritage shapes its own identity, often clashing with Pakistani cultural standards. This study stresses a key point: violence is often linked to the state's failure to represent ethnic groups like the Baloch politically and administratively. Simmering tensions in Balochistan reflect the continuous struggle for political power and respect in Pakistan. Balochistan's simmering tensions stem from a complex combination of factors, including Baloch ethnicity and historical grievances. The ongoing violence emphasizes the need for a comprehensive and politically inclusive plan to resolve Baloch concerns and achieve a durable state of peace and reconciliation. Baloch culture and concerns must be recognized and addressed for a stable and peaceful future in Balochistan and Pakistan as a unified state.

Theoretical Framework

This research adopted the theoretical framework provided by Hans Morgenthau. It will examine the internal dynamics of power politics and apply it to Pakistan's internal power politics model. The essential features of the model are based upon the following assumption.

- 1: Internal struggle for power.
- 2: Internal provincial rivalry.
- 3: Role of institutions in the internal dynamics of power politics.

Understanding the dynamics of Baluchistan Conflict

Since the establishment of Pakistan, the region of Baluchistan has always seen a significant level of ethnic strife. The province has had four instances of insurgencies, namely in 1948, 1962-1969, 1973-1977, and 2006 to the present day. Among them, the most extended prolonged period of violence is observed in the current wave. The commencement of the present insurgency can be attributed to the demise of Nawab Akbar Bugti, a prominent Baloch leader, due to a security operation in 2006. Unlike his successors, Bugti has shown a willingness to engage in discussion with the federal government, which primarily consists of educated young individuals from middle-class backgrounds who reject the idea of co-existing within the federation of Pakistan.

In the preceding decade, the conflict terrain inside the region experiencing unrest has exhibited a heightened level of intricacy due to the emergence of sectarian and religious disputes. The origins of religious militants in the region may be mainly attributed to the northern area, which is predominantly inhabited by the Pashtun community. These roots can be traced to the period following the US takeover of Afghanistan, during which many Taliban fighters and commanders sought sanctuary in this province. These sanctuaries facilitated the Taliban's ability to regroup and engage in armed conflict against the coalition troops commanded by the United States and the Afghan government. The region of Northern Baluchistan came to be recognized as the group's residence, commonly referred to as the Quetta Shura (Siddique, 2014). The American authorities have levied accusations against this particular group, asserting its status as the most active adversary inside the southern region of Afghanistan. In addition to hosting the Taliban, an armed group engaged in conflict in Afghanistan, "Baluchistan has experienced a growing presence of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). A bulk of these casualties in Baluchistan (133 dead; 282 injured) resulted from 27 terrorist attacks carried out by Islamist militants including the TTP, Jamaatul Ahrar, ISIS-affiliates as well as Lashkar-e-Jhangvi Al-Alami. Different Baloch insurgent groups perpetrated 131 attacks claiming 138 lives and wounding 239 other people. Seven sectarian-related attacks, mainly targeting Hazara Shias, caused death to 17 people and injuries to another 11 persons" (PIPS, 2018). These organizations mentioned above have focused their attacks on security personnel, security forces agencies, shrines, legal professionals, and higher education institutions.

In addition to the factors above, Baluchistan has experienced a notable increase in sectarian violence during the previous decade. The Hazara population residing in Baluchistan, estimated to be around half a million individuals, has been subjected to persistent attacks since 2001. These attacks have notably escalated since 2008. Official statistics indicate that the Hazara community's fatalities have exceeded 3,000 since 2011, prompting over 70,000 individuals to flee their homes. Many displaced individuals have embarked on dangerous journeys searching for asylum, with Australia being a common destination (Muzaffar, et. al. 2021; Zahoor & Rumi 2020).

Fundamental Factors Contributing to the Balochistan Conflict

Although the Baloch ethnic conflict can be traced back to the colonial era and the subsequent forcible annexation of the Kalat State and its principalities to Pakistan, since Pakistan's inception, it has been fueled and maintained by several complex and interconnected political and economic factors. The roots of the conflict can be found in the forced incorporation of the Kalat State and its principalities into Pakistan. The following represent some of the most critical factors that are driving systemic competition:

Authoritarian Governance

Over half of Pakistan's history has been spent under direct military rule. Military governments barred Baloch people from political involvement and employed force and complicated means such as forced disappearances and extra-judicial killings to address the Baloch ethnic issue. Even during brief moments when democracy was restored, the military wielded significant political power, particularly in Balochistan (Report, 2014).

The main issue with the military's approach to Balochistan is the paranoid attitude that underpins it. Balochistan has generally been viewed through a relatively narrow security lens. They consider comparatively aggressive and autonomous voices from the province to be "traitors" or "foreign agents" and the Baloch insurgency to be a "conspiracy" undertaken by hostile regional and extra-regional actors to destabilize and dissolve Pakistan. This mindset has led the armed forces to employ various interventionist tactics, such as coercion, political exclusion, and co-optation (Baloch S. M., 2018) . " As previously stated, four military actions have been conducted in Balochistan since 1947, all of which have exacerbated the situation (Baloch, 2017) .

The armed forces' use of force is well-known. Still, its part in manipulating and engineering the province's political system has gone chiefly unnoticed, even though it tried to silence and shut down honest and strong opinions (Arqam, 2018) . Over time, the armed forces are replacing them with more agreeable people and easy to work with. A whole group of fake leaders has been put together. This group of leaders led through tribal sardars, doesn't have to answer to the voters. Instead, they rely on well-established networks of patrons and clients and ways that go beyond the law to get re-elected.

They often change their political views but stay in almost every government (Zahoor and Raza Rumi 2020, 185). Over the years, this group of leaders has stayed in so-called nationwide parties like the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N), Pakistan Muslim League Quaid-e-Azam (PML-Q), and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP). In short, both direct and indirect military rule, political isolation, brutality, and political engineering have left the people of Balochistan feeling very alone and frustrated. It has stopped political groups from growing and getting stronger. It has also led to significant problems with legitimacy and government.

Center of Control

The Baloch ethnic conflict is fueled by Pakistan's governing elites' over-centralization and repression of regional identity (Mumtaz, 1999). The Federalism in Pakistan has struggled with the demographic predominance of one province, first East Pakistan, as well as, subsequently, after 1971, Punjab. The 1956 and 1962 constitutions established a centralized federal structure with representation equal in Parliament for the two-state wings. Baloch and Pashtuns formed National Awami Party (NAP) to fight centralization¹⁹ (Baxter, 1974).

The 1973 Constitution established a proper federal structure by creating a bicameral legislature, recognizing provincial languages, instituting the system of quotas for

provinces in central bureaucracy, establishing the Council of Common Interests (CCI) to resolve disputes between the centre and the federating units and protect their political rights. The 1973 Constitution's federal form was better than previous ones, but it built a powerful centre and gave regions minimal authority. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto promised to review the ambiguous concurrent list after a decade, so Baloch and Pashtun leaders reluctantly accepted it (Zahoor and Raza Rumi 2020).

However, the breakup of the NAP administration in Balochistan, armed revolt, and counter-insurgency military campaign destroyed any achievements. Bhutto's hostile tactics radicalized the Baloch national movements and alienated those who supported the nonviolent parliamentary fight for federal rights. Baloch and Pashtuns couldn't combine again as they did in the 1960s because they disagreed on parliamentary politics' usefulness (Ahmed 1998). The Baloch national cause split into reasonable and hard-line groups, which remains today. Later inter-ethnic political partnerships failed. Baloch, Pashtun, and Sindh nationalists have used the 1940 resolutions to demand maximal province autonomy in a confederation since the 1980s.

Majoritarian federal planning

The concentration of power only served to "Punjabize" Pakistan, with Punjab making up 56% of the nation's overall population. Following independence in 1947, it was this very fact that was at least partially responsible for the dominance of landed politicians in the West Pakistani government; the military-bureaucratic establishment was overwhelmingly Punjabi and remained sympathetic to the very same Punjabi landlords that it had worked with so closely under the British (Roger, 2018).

In the National Assembly, the Punjab, for instance, had more seats than the other three provinces combined. Punjab's dominant influence could have been countered by the Senate, which had equal members from all provinces. Still, the Senate's limited authority prevented this compared to the National Assembly, which was the lower chamber. The Senate did not control money bills and had little say in federation-wide decisions like the nomination of top officials. The indirect voting process for the upper house has made Senate elections vulnerable to vote-buying schemes, particularly in Balochistan. In short, the Senate hasn't done an excellent job restraining the National Assembly's excessive power, which the Punjab dominates.

A Council of Common Interests may have helped lesser provinces challenge Punjab's political dominance, but it was weak until the 18th Amendment. The Senate and Council's ineffectiveness and Balochistan's underrepresentation in federal executive bodies like the bureaucracy and military have severely limited its ability to safeguard and promote its goals at the federal level. Balochistan's small population and the senate's limited jurisdiction over the national assembly made it the least appealing political constituency for federal parties.

Pakistan's federal system doesn't motivate political parties to care about Balochistan. Political parties get the lowest electoral return in Balochistan. This is why successive Islamabad governments, regardless of party, have ignored Balochistan. Nearly all Islamabad governments' discriminating Balochistan economic and developmental policies reflect this attitude. Balochistan's absence of state-wide political parties put it at the edges of Islamabad's economic and political calculus and decreased political competition, which is fundamental to a vibrant democracy.

Grievances over Economic, and Natural Resources

Islamabad and Baluchistan have historically disagreed over resource distribution and natural resource exploitation. The Baloch accuse Islamabad of exploiting the province's minerals and strategic location.

In 1952, Sui, Dera Bugti, discovered natural gas. Balochistan has supplied most of the nation's natural gas since 1955, increasing from 1535 million MCF to 387,368 million MCF in 2001 (Bengali 2018) . Due to discoveries in neighboring provinces, Balochistan's average proportion of national output has declined from 91% in 1955-69 to 17% in 2015. Balochistan didn't have gas until 1982, despite being the nation's most outstanding gas supplier. Balochistan's domestic gas consumption remains around 4% after over 70 years.

Consumption, natural gas pricing, and excise duty hurt the province. Gas subsidies have favored consuming provinces over generating provinces. Gas subsidies totalled Rs. 21.7 trillion (2014 prices) between 1955 and 2014. Balochistan has carried 35% of this debt with Rs. 7.69 trillion. The federal government's fixed-rate excise levy has cost gas-producing provinces revenue. Balochistan lost to gas-consuming provinces like Pakhtunkhwa.

The multibillion-dollar Saindak copper-gold project melts copper from local ore. In October 2002, the state-owned Metallurgy Corporation of China (MCC) leased the project operation for ten years. The lease arrangement gave 50% to the MCC, 48% to Pakistan, and 2% to Balochistan (Muhammad 2013). The Aghaz-e-Haqooq-e-Balochistan package called for the project's transfer to Balochistan once its lease term expired in 2012. The federal government refused to give project ownership to Balochistan, claiming Rs. 27 billion in unpaid project investments. The federal government demanded this despite receiving \$220 million in profits, taxes, and rent from the project between 2002 and 2012. During the same period, Balochistan got only 39 million dollars in royalties (Report 2013).

Despite appeals from Balochistan, the federal government renewed the project's lease repeatedly for five years; in 2012 and 2017 (T. N. Report 2017) . MCC received 50% of project revenues, the federal government 20%, and Balochistan 30% (Shahid 2017) . The south ore deposit, which had a 19-year lifespan, was depleted in 15 years due to excessive mining. Saindak manufacturing is also unmonitored. Pakistan lacks a Chinese refinery for copper and gold ores. Baloch people oppose Gwadar port construction because they value their coastline and marine resources. In 2001, the federal government planned the development of Gwadar Port. The Baloch nationalist elite rejected the proposal and aired their concerns, leading to the 2006 murder of Baloch leader Nawab Akbar Bugti. Gwadar port development under the multibillion-dollar China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has revived these issues (Hussain 2018).

The federal government hopes CPEC's economic activities will benefit localities and diminish separatism, but residents disagree. Balochistan receives little CPEC investment, according to recent media reports. CPEC's small Balochistan investments haven't materialized either. As of December 2018, Balochistan's 2020 road projects haven't progressed (Zahoor and Raza Rumi 2020). Politicians from all parties are concerned about the state's low CPEC investment share (Shah, Balochistan Assembly adopts resolution against meagre provincial share in CPEC 2018)

Baloch seeks Gwadar port money and management. Baloch people worry about CPEC's political and geopolitical dimensions and its economic ones. Baloch nationalists say such development initiatives have "increased oppression and solitude of the Baloch instead of providing them the social and economic growth and integration" (Baloch 2016) . People worry skilled labor may change Balochistan's demographics. Population-based resource distribution has hurt Balochistan the most.

The 2009 7th National Finance Commission (NFC) Award helped Balochistan and other provinces. Poverty, revenue creation, revenue collection, and area were weighted in the new formula instead of population. Balochistan gained 9.09% of the provincial pool from the 7th NFC Award (D. Report 2009). The 7th NFC Award also amended the gas developmental surcharge (GDS) methodology and retroactively paid Balochistan GDS arrears. Finally, the Award recognised provincial GST revenue rights on services (Sabir, 2014).

The political landscape of Balochistan exhibits a notable level of fragmentation and polarization, which has detrimental effects on social cohesion, governance, and the provision of public services. The primary factors contributing to this state of fragmentation are the presence of several ethnic groups and the prevalence of tribalistic tendencies. Since the province's establishment in 1970, the political landscape has been characterized by a divisive Pashtun-Baloch dynamic (Zahoor and Raza Rumi 2020). During the final days of the Ayub dictatorship, a significant political discourse emerged regarding the structure of the federation and the underlying principles for establishing new provinces.

The lesson in Balochistan mostly revolved around whether the Pashtun regions should be established as an independent province or integrated with the former North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) or the previous Baloch princely ties (Kupecz and Contributor 2023). The demarcation of Balochistan's boundaries exhibited a lack of consideration for the preferences expressed by a substantial portion of the province's Pashtun and Baloch populations. The Pashtun community demonstrated cultural connection and shared a contiguous geographical region with the then-North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) inhabitants. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that they continued to constitute a majority inside the administrative division of British Balochistan during the colonial era (Zaib and dali 2021).

Consequently, the amalgamation of the Quetta division, formerly known as British Balochistan, with the Kalat division, encompassing the old Kalat State and its princes, in 1970, led to a sense of discontent among the Pashtun population, as they suddenly found themselves marginalized and reduced to minority status. Pashtun nationalists, as exemplified by the Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP), have consistently advocated for the establishment of a distinct province derived from the erstwhile British Balochistan or for an equitable distribution of power within the current territorial framework (Zahoor and Raza Rumi 2020).

More than four decades after the current geographical arrangement was established, political divisions between the two tribes have only grown more pronounced. The entry of many Afghan migrants into Balochistan has aggravated the situation, shifting the demographic equilibrium favouring Pashtuns. While Baloch nationalists are vehemently anti- the presence of Afghan refugees in the province, Pashtun nationalists argue that the Afghan Pashtuns have shifted location within their homeland and are thus welcome to stay in the area until Afghanistan's peace is restored.

In addition to ethnic composition, most portions of the province's tribal system of social organization have led to political division and polarization. Balochistan features a sophisticated tribal design that is distinguished by a distinct structure of leadership and lineage structures, strong affiliation relationships, and well-defined conflict resolution systems (Ghazdar 2007). Tribal networks facilitate political mobilization and collective action. However, tribal, and ethnic fragmentation has reduced the delivery of public services through patronage systems while preventing the formation of inclusive political parties and durable alliances among ethnic elites.

Regional parties are primarily divided along ethnic lines, while state-wide parties have no significant organizational presence in the province. As an outcome, coalition politics

and the restrictions that come with it have become a structural reality in Balochistan, causing the emergence of weak governments. Furthermore, the provincial bureaucracy is riddled with ethnic divisions. Public workers frequently enjoy protection from their ethnic elites and hence have not much incentive to fulfil their tasks impartially and objectively. The cumulative consequence of this difference is that choices about development goals, resource allocation, and administration postings are frequently influenced by ethnic concerns, resulting in severe problems of inefficiency and resource mismanagement.

The April 2010 Eighteenth Amendment is considered the most significant constitutional reform since the 1973 constitution. The Amendment sought to correct military leaders' distortions of the 1973 constitution.

The 18th Amendment, among others as well, addressed smaller provinces' longstanding needs. The Amendment's abolition of the concurrent list, reinvigoration of the Council of Common Interests, and constitutional protection of the 7th NFC Award were likely its most significant effects on the federation and centre-province relations. These developments affected Balochistan:

1. The 18th Amendment eliminated the concurrent list. The provinces took over social sectors for most of these issues.
2. The CCI was revitalized, and its membership favoured provinces.
3. The revision made the vertical allocation of resources mechanism in the 7th NFC Award irrevocable.
4. The change allowed provinces 50% control of oil and gas inside their borders. However, disagreements over the constitution's interpretation have prevented Balochistan's government from claiming its riches.

Baloch hardliners and separatists condemned the 18th Amendment as "too little too late," but progressive Baloch and Pashtun nationalists embraced it due to years of struggle and sacrifice. The 18th Amendment has changed Balochistan's politics in several ways.

First, the devolution of powers has bolstered centrifugal forces in the provinces and inhibited the development of separatist tendencies and extreme nationalist sentiments. The post-18th amendment, political participation in Balochistan increased, as all main Baloch and Pashtun ethnic-nationalist groups that had ignored the 2008 general elections participated in the 2013 general elections. Multiple factors influenced this decision, but the transfer of powers and the relative consolidation of democracy in the country were significant draw factors (Zahoor and Raza Rumi 2020). Compared to the previous three general elections, voter turnout was most excellent in 2013 in Balochistan (Zahoor and Raza Rumi 2020). Consequently, the active involvement of ethno-nationalists in provincial parliamentary politics provided the government with much-needed legitimacy and diminished gravity forces in the province.

Second, the 18th Amendment boosted political rivalry at the regional level, especially in the provinces, by making the centres of power and political competition in the areas more attractive and profitable. There was a lot more political competition in Balochistan. Transferring power made ethno-regional parties more essential and allowed new regional parties to run for power. Due to their strong organizational structure, presence at the grassroots level, and support from the educated middle class, ethno-regional parties were partly successful in bringing the government closer to the people, making it more legitimate, and giving more power to groups that had been left out in the

past. Also, because there was more political competition, these groups had to take service delivery politics more seriously.

Even though ethno-regional parties had these benefits, they also had significant capacity problems. They didn't have the technical knowledge or experience with running a government or people and financial means that state-wide parties did. Because of this, they were severely limited in their ability to make significant changes in how government works and how services are provided. There are others who believe devolution has eroded national unity by encouraging a greater regionalization of politics (Warraich 2018).so Evidence suggests that devolution has intensified centripetal pressures in Balochistan, as discussed above. While this has bolstered ethno-regional parties, it hasn't necessarily led to the federation's demise. The emergence of protests organized along ethno-regional lines, on the other hand, points to the readiness of less powerful ethnic groups to assimilate into the federation and pursue their aims through peaceful, representative channels. However, it is undeniable that this democratization has encouraged state-wide coalitions of politicians like the PML-N and the PPP to conceive in terms of limited regional aims, which has the effect of destabilizing the country.

One may counter that these parties were never truly "federal" or "national" to begin with. By time the 18th amendment, which was ratified, PPP's ideological allure and popularity outside of rural Sindh had already dwindled. PPP has always catered to the needs of smaller provinces. PML-N failed to build any significant following in regions outside of Punjab. Their claims to be "federal," as or "national" parties were revealed by devolution of power. Between 1970 and 2017, the Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N), the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), and the Pakistan Muslim League (Q) controlled Balochistan for a combined total of 17 years (Rafiullah 2018) . These region-wide parties have the worst organizational support and courage base in the province, despite having controlled the state several times. They have few members and practically no support from the general people, leading many to conclude that they serve the best interests of the military-dominated the state's machinery rather than those of the public as a whole.

It appears that the 18th Amendment has helped to reduce violence in Balochistan. Unfortunately, this was not enough to end the fighting in Balochistan. The change merely addressed one of the systemic factors of the Balochistan violence described at the outset of this article, namely, a centralized federation. Every other problem is still there. Political reconciliation must occur beforehand to implement development efforts and economic changes effectively. The coexistence of repression with growth is incompatible. It is imperative for the state to promptly engage in constructive discourse with Baloch rebels, intending to effectively address the pressing concerns about enforced disappearances and instances of abuse occurring at check posts.

The essential resolution of the Balochistan dilemma is the uninterrupted and solidification of democracy and the creation of civilian authority. It is imperative to subject security services within the province to civilian oversight. The process of democratic consolidation holds significant potential for reinstating the government's credibility and legitimacy while concurrently bolstering the principles of federalism (Basta, 2016).

There is a need to modify the federal structure to empower smaller provinces such as Balochistan to effectively impede legislation that might potentially have detrimental effects on their interests. Additionally, it is imperative to establish incentives for national-level political parties to demonstrate genuine and substantial concern for the affairs of Balochistan. One of the most productive approaches to attaining this objective entails implementing reforms inside the Senate. It is imperative to grant the Senate commensurate authority as the National Assembly in finance and non-finance matters, including money legislation, high-level executive appointments, ratification of treaties, and other issues that impact the federation (N. A. Report 2010) . Furthermore, it is recommended that the existing

method of indirect senate elections be substituted with a system of direct elections, wherein senators are elected by the populace of each province using a proportional representation framework.

Establishing new provinces necessitates attention, and there is a need to streamline the intricate procedures of establishing new areas. The academic community maintains divergent perspectives about the virtues of ethnic federalism. However, it is generally considered a preferable option to alternative approaches in countries characterized by ethnic divisions. Furthermore, it is proposed that ethnonational considerations revise the territorial boundaries of the current Balochistan region. Specifically, it is suggested that Pashtun-inhabited areas be delineated to establish an independent province. Acknowledging and resolving the apprehensions expressed by the Baloch community about the management and control of their indigenous natural resources is imperative.

It is essential to allocate employment opportunities to the indigenous people while also formulating laws that effectively give a fair portion of the generated income from projects towards advancing infrastructure and social development in Balochistan. Efforts should be undertaken to enhance and develop the capabilities of provinces. Balochistan's civil bureaucracy and party systems exhibit a deficiency in their ability to adequately and proficiently perform the authorities delegated to them under the 18th Amendment. As a result, the province's ability to provide essential services is constrained. The involvement of the federal government and foreign donor agencies is crucial in enhancing the capacity development of the area. Furthermore, political parties must improve their technological capabilities by recruiting experts and individuals with technical expertise into their ranks.

The optimal allocation and utilization of monies designated for government development programs are crucial for the advancement and growth of the province. Presently, the share of development funding is mainly driven by political expediency rather than prioritizing the requirements of the populace (Zahoor and Raza Rumi 2020) . Significant financial resources are allocated towards small-scale initiatives such as tube wells, solar panels, and water ponds, notwithstanding their limited contribution to the province's overall development.

To mitigate the influence of Members of Provincial Assemblies (MPAs) on development spending, it is recommended to establish a provincial planning and development board consisting of specialized professionals in fields such as health, education, agriculture, and rural development.

Despite obstacles, there are chances for communication and collaboration amongst important parties, including projects for regional progress and reconciliation. According to the study, 42% of Balochistan inhabitants still need to finish basic school, which highlights the need for considerable reforms in the educational system.

An urgent economic difficulty may be seen in the fact that Balochistan's unemployment rate is (24%) greater than the national average. Such historical injustices and grievances have repeatedly been emphasized as being at the heart of the Balochistan conundrum in historical narratives in sources from the media and interviews.

The report revealed considerable barriers to settlement, including issues like low educational achievement, unemployment, and a need for more confidence between Balochistan citizens and the federal administration. The findings demonstrate the urgent requirement for policies to resolve historical issues.

Conclusion

What conclusion can we draw from our analysis of the Baluchistan conundrum? It is now popularly believed and recognized that Baluchistan as a geographical space has become a pivotal area in Pakistan's political space. According to Syed Abdul Mali, it is a geographical space rich with a massive number of natural resources which has remained so far untapped. It is also the least developed area of Pakistan and remained in the periphery of Pakistan during the development policy of 1960s and 70s. Politically, it has a tribal setup with its internal political dynamics. In the writing of Abdul Mali's now famous book entitled *The Twin Era of Pakistan: Baluchistan* has acquired a significant space in Pakistan's political discourse. The development program has slowly but surely picked up considerable momentum but remains under the severe grip of the power to be. This can lead to serious political turmoil if democracy does not find proper space in our political culture. Here, it will not be out of place to point out that long military intervention in Pakistan politics has seriously undermined the growth of democratic culture. As a result, Baluchistan has suffered the most in terms of economic development. Hence, if we want Pakistan to prosper as a nation, we must recognize the significance of ethnic identity and give it proper space in our political culture. Ethnic identity should not be constructed as a threat. It is not incompatible with our mega identity narrative. Once this is recognized in our political culture, it will help our policymakers to re-examine the issue of resource distribution; each province should be given the full autonomy to make the best use of its resources for the ordinary person according to the needs of the people. It will reduce the trust deficit between the federal and provincial governments and lead Pakistan to strengthen its provincial and federal structure.

Recommendations

It is important to recognize that our local identity is not in contradiction which our mega national Pakistani identity.

We have to recognize and provide right space to the local ethnic identity In our national framework.

Distribution of national resources should not be un-even specially for a province like Baluchistan.

Development in all its form should be accelerated in Baluchistan in consultation with its legitimate popularly elected leadership.

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