



## Role of Media in Minimizing Religious Extremism and Ethnic Instability in Balochistan, Pakistan

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Abstract

*This paper attempts to search out different conflicting issues that caused unrest in Balochistan from almost two decades. The incident of twin towers 9/11 has changed global order, and its impact and repercussion were felt in the barren mountains of Balochistan. This is the fifth insurgency in Balochistan, and from over 50 years the issue remained unresolved, beside nationalists movement in Balochistan extremist religious factor also played a pivotal role in the escalation of unrest. This paper shed light on to the historical perspective of both the Religious and ethnic conflicting issue, and it will also look into the media status that how it can play its role in minimizing both these conflicting issues. The study is descriptive in nature, and this study will find out some possible solution in the form of suggestions and commendations.*

**Key Words:** Media, Ethnicity, Extremism, Instability.

### Introduction

Balochistan has turned into an exceptionally dangerous zone because of the clashing issues like military operations, Baloch uprising, target killing and the brutal sectarian conflicts in the Balochistan. Indeed before, when these issues were not going to the fore so obviously, a report assembled on working conditions of journalists in rural areas of Pakistan in 1996, referred to four sources of pressure on rural journalists, police with local administration, feudal lords and more importantly fanatic elements in the political parties, religious, sectarian and linguistic groups that route the corporeal aggression ([Report, 2006](#)). Similar observations are made in the Human Rights' Commissions' report published in 2011 that says.

The media is enjoying much freedom as compared to previous regimes, but free media exercises/ employs its own self-censorship and does not allow the open discussion on armed forces, military operations, human right violations during the operation. . . . . torture cells in all installations of armed forces, disappearances by the forces ([Tan, 2011](#)). The strategic position of Balochistan has made its media more exposed to the threats. The different pressure and terrorist groups use media tools to gain support within the masses by molding public opinion ([Shah, 2007](#)).

In the existence of various threats, the job of a reporter in Balochistan is very challenging. The unrest in Balochistan turned the province into an undeclared war zone. It is very difficult for a journalist to write a piece of opinion in ongoing underground militant movement, which has built the situation of fear. This sort of situation makes it very difficult for the journalists even to report the issues of confronting prevailing in the region. Those journalists who had attempted such stories have been killed, pressurized, abducted or received threats of lives. Such a situation turned journalists to leave the profession.

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## Objectives

- To examine how conflicting issues erupted historically.
- To know the current status of conflicting issues in Balochistan.
- To evaluate Media role in curbing the conflicting issue

## Conflicts in Balochistan

The province of Balochistan is the largest province of the country when it comes to land, and at the same time, it is the less populated province as well. It has common borders with all of the provinces, and it has borders with Afghanistan and Iran. Balochistan comprises 5% of the population of the country, and it has a land area of almost 44% of the total country land area ([Arfeen, 2009](#)). The Balochistan's 80% area is surrounded by mountains. Different ethnic groups live together from decades in Balochistan. The colorful and attractive cultural living can be observed in Balochistan. The main ethnic groups are Baloch, Brauhvi, Pahtoons and Hazzara, while Punjabi and Urdu speaking ethnic groups are in the minority ([Ali, 2005](#)). Different ethnic groups in Balochistan comprises of different population. About 5 million Punjabis are living in Balochistan, and they have played a significant role in bringing social mobilization. The education sector in Balochistan is very poor in terms of its efficiency, and overall education ratio is very low. The state suggests that literacy ratio is 26.6% in Balochistan and where man education ratio is 36%, and female education ratio is 15% only ([Iqbal, 2009](#)). Pakistan Labor Force Survey says that Balochistan is behind from other provinces in the education sector. Balochistan is not an industrial zone, and there are very fewer opportunities for earnings. Balochistan lacks private sector, but projects like CPEC will open new venues of opportunities. Balochistan is not urbanized as other provinces are. Only 23.3% people prefer to live in urban cities and the unemployment in Balochistan. 6 million in comparison with 3.05 million of the nation ([Brown, Dawood, Iranlatab, & Naqi, 2012](#)).

## Overview of the Conflicts in Balochistan

The federal government prefer force option to establish the writ of the government in Balochistan. Officially Kalat started accession to Pakistan in 1948, and a member of Khan Kalat's family named Shahzada Abdul Karim and his followers started riots for the first time in Balochistan. The reason for the riots was the accession to Pakistan and nothing else. In 1958 when Martial law was declared in the country Khan of Kalat was arrested and he was kept imprisonment for three years, and he was asked for forgiveness appeal. His appeal was accepted by President Ayub ([Javaid, 2010](#)).

The Balochistan governor was dismissed by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Attaullah Mengal who was Chief Minister of the province; his government was also thrown. The tribal groups mainly Marri and Mengals and other tribal groups joined together and started their struggle in the form of fighting from mountains. Army action was launched against Baloch nationalists to restore the state writ and normalize the province situation. The Balochistan is still under the fifth insurgency, and the current insurgency escalated after the assassination of Baloch nationalists Nawab Muhammad Akbar Khan Bugti. He remained governor of Balochistan, and he was considered to be as pro-Pakistani, but Pervaiz Musharraf policies towards Balochistan was discriminatory. Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti and Mir Balaach Marri presented their demands to the federal government for greater provincial autonomy. But the government fails to meet their demands, and it resulted in the brutal insurgency in the history of Balochistan ([Kaushik, 2017](#)).

The province is rich in natural resources, and most of the resources are not explored as yet. It provides natural gas to all over the country, and the country needs of coals are also fulfilled through 200 coal mines. It is estimated that Pakistan's industrial needs are met through natural gas from Balochistan ([Solangi et al., 2011](#)). Balochistan is significant because of its strategic location, and it catches the eyes of global powers. "The current instability was predicted by the US President during the Russian invasion in Afghanistan. American President, while dealing with Afghanistan during the Russian invasion, had called Balochistan Zone of Instability" ([Bird & Marshall, 2011](#)). During wars in Afghanistan, the province was proved to be the best way for the supply line. It was British who sensed the significance of this route when the Red Army faced defeat in Afghanistan. The first government in Balochistan was formed in 1972 and the provincial government was bound to be responsible in

front of elected legislature. In other words, it was not given full status of province as yet, declared in 1970 Balochistan as province. "It was a Chief Commissioner's province and its Chief Executive, the agent to the Governor-General (AGG), acted on behalf of the Central government in Karachi, and Shahi Jirga was a nominated body of elders whose usefulness as an institution was diminishing with urbanization. ([Gazdar, Kaker, & Khan, 2010](#))" In the Ayub era, he tried to develop Balochistan and bring it to the standard of the other provinces at least, but their efforts remain efforts. The political instability in the province also played its part in province development. The one unit idea was given by President Ayub Khan, and Baloch nationalists reject his idea, and they were seeking communist bloc help ([Titus & Swidler, 2000](#)). Analysts believe that the merger of Balochistan in Pakistan has led the crisis in the province. The grievances of Baloch people were not addressed by any leader historically. The ongoing insurgency in the province is on the basis of ethnic and political rights for the people of Balochistan. In short, the insurgency in Balochistan is for control over the resources of Balochistan and provincial autonomy. Not only Baloch elders but its youth also have a viewpoint that they don't want state involvement over the control of natural resources, and the share of Balochistan resources is not the job of the federal government ([Samad & Politics, 2014](#)). The current insurgency in Balochistan caused thousands of deaths of innocent civilians and paramilitary forces. It's a big challenge for the state to resolve the conflict of Balochistan because Pakistan's stability is linked with the stability of Balochistan ([Muhammad, 2014](#)).

The Pakistan People's Party government led by Yousaf Raza Gillani elected in 2008 taken few steps to address the issue of Balochistan and to bring Baloch nationalists and other stakeholders on a table to resolve the Balochistan conflict. But government efforts for Balochistan fails to meet the expectation of Baloch Nationalists. The special projects like Aghaze Haqooq Balochistan were started to give jobs to the people of Balochistan, but the political leader's incompetency in Balochistan make these projects controversial. Baloch nationalists reject the efforts made by Gillani administration, and they argued that such projects could not narrow the space between establishment and people of Balochistan ([Rais & Social Sciences, 2012](#)). The conflict in Balochistan has a different basis. The Balch Sardars and Nawabs were not in favor of state interference in the province, and they resisted their interference, they believe that the right of natural resources should be with people of Balochistan. The current unrest in the province is due to the state-province stressful relations since independence. The state did not take strong measures to address the grievances of the people of Balochistan ([Report, 2006](#)).

## The Religious Ethnicity

Pakistan, from its inception, faced religious disharmony among different sects. After the demise of father of the Nation and assassination of Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan, the leadership was transferred to those who were incapable of structuring a balanced system in the country. They failed to develop a system based on equal representation of the cultural identity of federating units. The religion was used as a tool by different leaders to expand their reign in the country. Even religious leaders fail to establish a consistent policy for the welfare of the people.

The Shia organization Tehreek-e- Nafaz-e- Fiqa-he-Jafria was structured against the anti-Shia laws enforced by Zia Ul Haq. As a reaction, Anjuman-e-e Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan was formed by Deobandi religious scholars in 1985, but later it was named as Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan. The Iranian government was blamed for the support of TNFJ who was allegedly involved in the violent activities in central Punjab. Zia reign is chiefly responsible for the rise in sectarianism in the country. On the other hand, the Iranian revolution was another cause of Sectarianism boost in the country. The other actors, such as Saudi Arabia and Gulf states also contributed to this connection and financed the militant's group in the country to tackle the Iranian influence. Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states provided funds to build and run Madrassas in rural populated areas. These Madrassa students were later sent to Afghanistan in the name of Holy war. Iran and Saudi Arabia remained chief financiers for the various Sunni and Shia organization in Pakistan. The curriculum taught at the Madrassa is also of great concern, and it has fueled hatred between two Sects. The Madrassa played its role in giving education to the rural areas, where government functionaries were not able to provide education through the school system. But at the same time, the mind of the Madrassa students was very negatively trained and taught. The stats suggest that more than thousands of Madrassas were established during the reign of Zia ul Haq ([Abbas, 2010](#)).

The other factor which gives rise to the sectarianism was Afghan factor. Pakistan remained nursery and training ground for Mujahidin, who were in a war against the Red Army in Afghanistan. Thousands of militants from around the world took part in the Afghan war, and all of them were trained to fight the Red Army. The financial support was provided the USA and militants were supported by CIA and Pakistan security agencies (Hilali, 2017).

Historians believe that more than 80 thousand Mujahidin's were trained for war in Afghanistan, and they were left all alone by the United States of America when Russian force is withdrawn from Afghanistan. The religious-political party Jamiat-e- Ulemai- Islam was linked in providing manpower for Afghan jihad, they could be linked with the rise of Sectarianism in the country. During Zia reign, JUI promoted the Madrasa culture in the country. They belong to Deobandi School of thoughts which are considered to be as anti-Shia ideology. JUI has strong links with Saudi Arabia. After the Afghan war Jihadis were welcomed by the JUI and it was JUI who played a vital role in the creation of the Taliban. Since the interest of USA was related to the defeat of Russian force, once they were beaten in Afghanistan, the USA was not interested in funding and supporting Mujahidin's, and they were left all alone. The Mujahidin's after Jihad in Afghanistan came back to Pakistan, and many of them started their struggle for Kashmir independence. Their struggle was so active until Pakistan and India reached to the point of reconciliation and confidence-building measures. The government of India recommended Pakistan to stop cross border infiltration. When their activities stopped in Kashmir, they execute their mission in Pakistan in the form of sectarian clashes. The Pakistan alliance with the USA in Afghan war pay heavily. The Mujahidin who came back from Afghanistan created internal unrest and disharmony in the country. Balochistan has a long border with Afghanistan, and the political unrest or militancy in Afghanistan has direct impacts on Balochistan. The nature of attacks of violent activities changed from violent to brutal since USA invasion in Afghanistan. The different Sectarian groups, along with ethnic groups, started their activities in the whole country. The northern areas, especially Waziristan district turned to violence after the conflict between local tribesman and religious extremist elements. Pakistan stopped its support to the Taliban after the USA attacked Afghanistan. The USA and its allied forces started drone attacks on the tribal belt of Pakistan. The religious extremist group Tehrik Nafaz Shariate Muhammadi, who wanted to enforce Sharia (Islamic Teachings) in the country started attacks on the Pakistani government. TNSM was active in Swat valley, and it was the focus of their insurgencies. The leaders of TNSM abandoned their activities and formed another group by the name of Tehrike Taliban Pakistan. The TTP was also with the ideology to enforce Shariat in the country, and they name many schools as Sharia-based institutions. However, the conflict between TTP and Pakistan Army escalated in the Peoples Party government in 2009. The military operation against the Taliban caused the heavy displacement of local civilians. The official's states suggest that around 3 million people were internally displaced.

## **Sectarian Conflict in Balochistan**

Balochistan is considered to be the land of conflicts. The separatist movement in Balochistan makes it difficult for people to live peacefully in the province. It is not alone the separatist movement the other major conflicting issue in Balochistan is a sectarian rift. The sectarian conflict in Balochistan remains very barbaric and brutal in nature. The ethnic group Hazara remains victims of sectarian violence. The extremist militant groups are believed to be vigorous in southern areas of Pakistan. The Sectarian activities in Balochistan were escalated after the war on terror started against terrorists in Afghanistan. The Taliban started to escape from the battle zone, and they chose Quetta city for their activities. They entered in Pakistan through roots of Qandahar and Spin Buldak.

The sectarian rift has a strong basis in Pakistani, and the activities of sectarian violence's were very regular in Punjab. In the war against terrorism, many extremist elements escaped from the battle zone and started their activities in Balochistan with internal fanatics. However, Quetta city and Mastung were two cities that suffered the most from religious extremism.

The history of religious extremism in Balochistan is linked with the 1980s when some Baloch youth were converted into Shia sect. The conversion was very rare even before the revolution in Iran, but later the Shia scholars were sent to Iran for schooling and direction for the propagation of Shia ideology. The Sunni militant organization started to tackle Iran propaganda against the Sunni school of thought. The major reason for sectarian rift that emerged in Balochistan was a conversion from one sect to another. Naseerabad district of Balochistan

was the main area of influence for conversion into Shia sect; the conversion rate was very high in this district. Pakistan has a long border with Afghanistan, and fanatic elements cross the border without much of hindrance. The youth from Balochistan were recruited for terrorist activities. They are trained in Afghanistan and then send back to Balochistan for brutal activities.

Activities against Hazara ethnic group is associated with the Taliban factor because historically they have been anti-Shia and anti-Hazara. The Sectarian ban organization in Pakistan have boosted the sectarian-based activities in Balochistan. Munir Ahmad Marri says that "the decreasing natural resources and their increasing demand throughout the world, and the presence of vast deposits of these resources in Balochistan had always invited external aggression towards Balochistan ([Yusuf, 2012](#))."

The external factors are involved in the creation and financing of the religious militant's outfits in Pakistan. Saudi Arabia supports and finances Sunni militant organizations, and Iran supports and finances Shia militant organization in Pakistan, and these militant organizations focused their activities in Balochistan, especially in Quetta city. The Sadi Arab and other Arab countries were under the shadows of fear due to the revolution in Iran. They fear that such a revolution can be observed in neighboring countries of Iran. Two main Arab countries Saudi Arabia and Iraq were more curious than any other Arab country, and their curiosity brought them to a confrontation with Tehran. This confrontation between Iran and Saudi Arabia connected both countries for substitute war for political and religious gains. And the proxy war of these political and religious elements was influenced in Pakistan and Afghanistan ([Tankel, 2013](#)).

The Ban organization activities in Balochistan escalated dramatically after 2002. In the year 2003, the terrorists attacked Imam Bargah in Quetta city during Friday's prayers. The year 2009 was the very brutal year when it comes to sectarian violence's in Quetta city, 256 incidents of target killing were reported this year. The year 2010 was not different in anyways from 2009, 231 incidents of sectarian violence's were reported in this year, 255 people were killed in those incidents, and more than 400 people were reported injured ([Grare, 2013](#)).

Many political representatives of the Hazara community were also targeted in these violence's, Hussain Ali Yousafi who was president of Hazara Democratic Party was targeted in 2009. More than 1000 Hazara community people are killed from 1998, including Man, Women and children's ([Mousavi](#)).

Most of the sectarian incidents in Balochistan are claimed by ban organization Lashkar-e- Jhangvi. The incidents such as dragged off Hazara's from the bus and then target them were brutal in nature. On September 23rd 2011, Hazara workers who were working in coal mine outside Quetta were targeted, and on September 20, Shia pilgrims were targeted in Mastung city, and 26 people were dragged off the bus and killed all of them on the spot. The killing incidents continued in 2012, and 46 people were killed this year, and most of the people were killed in the month of April and May ([Kiran & Chawla, 2020](#)).

The escalation in Lashkar-e- Jhangvi activities in Balochistan is due to the presence of Afghan and Pakistani Taliban in the province. The Hazara community has a unique feature, and they can be easily recognized that is one of the reasons that they can target easily. But it is evident that every home of the Hazara community has been suffered from Sectarian violence. The sectarian in Balochistan has an ethnic aspect as well. The Hazara community lives in East and West of Quetta city, and they are the majority of Shias in Balochistan. However, the Hazara community in Balochistan can be divided into two lines, one who lives Balochistan from generations and the other line of the Hazara community are those who migrated from Afghanistan in different eras.

### **Provincial Autonomy Prime Concern of Baloch Nationalists**

As stated earlier that Baloch accusations are multiple and the reaction of the government of different eras added more fuel to the insurgencies. The provincial autonomy is the prime concern of Baloch nationalists, and it was promised in the 1973 constitution of Pakistan. The nationalists argue that the provincial autonomy is never practised in the province and the Balochistan's recognition is still a question mark for the establishment. The demand that the power should be decentralized and provinces have the capacity to tackle the matters of their own. The common Baloch in Balochistan shows their reservation over combing operations in Baloch areas, and they see it as state imperialism against Baloch nationalists ([Tariq, 2013](#)). The Baloch nationalist responds to a question asked by Crisis International group on Provincial autonomy, it is unfortunate that the people of Balochistan are kept deprived of their own resources, and provincial autonomy was promised on the constitution,

but it never makes practical. The researchers and analyses believe that the demands presented by Baloch nationalists are genuine in nature and their demands should be addressed and not to aggravate the conflict further.

### **USA Interest in Balochistan**

Pakistan remained a frontline ally in the war against terrorism in Afghanistan and against USSR in 1989. So Pakistan position politically and strategically is very important for the USA. Balochistan has along the border with Iran and Iran is not a friendly country to the USA. The USA is sensing the danger that Iran can attack Israel, that is the reason that the USA has long terms policies for the region. It is a wish and need of USA to have influence in Pakistan in general and in Balochistan to take any aggression from Iran. The USA is not happy with China's activities in Balochistan, and they consider China as the main factor for them economically. The experts believe that in 30 years, there are chances that the natural resources of China and the Arab world will come to an end. In this situation, USA dependency will increase on Central Asia, Iran and of course, Afghanistan; then the USA will need to cross Balochistan and its coast ([Mazhar, Javaid, & Goraya, 2012](#)). There is no doubt that America is an economic giant of the world, but its status will be a question mark in the next three decades. China is growing rapidly economically, and in a few years, it will be a state of competition with global economic powers. Therefore, Balochistan coastal line and Gwadar port will play a great role for international giants. That's why USA is not happy with Gwadar port and projects like CPEC. The USA influence in Balochistan is debated in Pakistani media, and they are alleged to be involved in the unrest of the province. The Black Water has hired hundreds of houses in the posh areas of the capital city, and it is believed that the American embassy was directly involved in the killings. In this setting, they may inspire preparing to obliterate Madrassas through automatons. The trick of Great Balochistan was effectively influenced by the International actors. Truth be told Greater Balochistan Map was accessible on the web.

### **Current Status of Balochistan**

Balochistan is now more known for the land of conflicts and government officials declared it as conflict zone due to ongoing insurgency in Balochistan and sectarian militancy. The Baloch perspective depicts that Balochistan merger to Pakistan was not legitimate and separatists struggle is for independence. The other side is depicting another perspective, that Balochistan is a land of different ethnic groups and beside Baloch ethnic group, Pashtoon ethnic group is also concentrated in Balochistan. The Pashtoons or any other ethnic group never demanded independence or started any movement for their independence. In fact, these groups showed their concerns over the concept of Greater Balochistan. Historically the Baloch politician government was sabotage by different rulers. Attaullah Mengal government was thrown by Bhutto, and his Javaid Mengal was killed. It is so unfortunate that their family has still no idea where Javaid Mengal was buried. Musharraf reign proved very violent for the people of Balochistan; Nawab Bugti was killed during his reign. The newly elected government in 2013 has not progressed much in Balochistan and government formed at the provincial level coalition. The nationalist's government represents both Baloch and Pashtoon sentiments in the provincial assembly. But these nationalists' parties so far did not meet the expectation of the people. No mega projects are started on behalf of Provincial government and infrastructure of the province is not maintained. The analysts consider that the army makes decisions through elected government in Balochistan.

### **Media Role in Resolving Conflict**

Media can be used to resolve the conflicts by engaging parties in the constructive dialogue process. On the other hand, it can be used for escalating the conflict the intensity. It is up to media and media person to detach themselves from conflict or take a stand and attached themselves with a cause. But there is a problem while attaching media or media person in conflict, that unintentionally taking sides in a conflict might engage. The conflict elucidation demands to dig out and to deal with the factors that actually caused the problem. But it is evident that by attachment to conflict it could risk journalist job in such a situation. The journalists will be more exposed to threats when they attached to the conflict with the effort to resolve it. Through media platforms information is disseminated, opinion formation takes place, and news stories are on air to the listeners and

viewers. It is, however, responsibility and professional ethics of journalists to depict a real version of the stories with facts and figures. The journalists invite analysts and discussed conflicts and then disseminate views on the issues. Sometimes while covering the issues of conflict the journalists intentionally or unintentionally give their own opinion about the conflict, such attitudes lead them into a state of danger because conflicting groups consider journalists as part of conflict than. However, discussions and debate on the public sphere can play a role by engaging different segments of society to know how media can improve its efficiency in resolving conflict without involving themselves in danger. This is possible, and it can be practically done by allowing people to access information and let the world or audience know about the views of common people. As said by Jurgen Habermas, "it is a discursive arena that is home to citizen debate deliberation agreement and action" (Kuusik, 2010).

The media owners and policymakers are curious about how it could be shaped and execute to a public sphere, especially in the conflicting area. It was tried, and policy was devised, but the intensity of conflicts makes an impact on the media strategies as well, and it changes with the change in conflict intensity. Till eighteenth-century newspapers were the only source of information, but mass societies came into existence with the advent of mass media in the twentieth century. The media world is revolutionized by broadcast medium; the access to information and dissemination of information is available by just one click. But such a situation needs more precautions and rapid policy response to meet the need. The global organizations are in process to streamline a position that media has to adapt during and after the conflict. In this way, media can play its role in minimizing the loss in conflict. International Media Support arranged discussion platforms to discuss and scrutinize the conflict reporting. Media experts were invited in 2003 to establish certain parameters for journalists to report conflict reporting. The experts give their views and recommendations that could help in reducing the impact of war. However, the experts consider it as important to evaluate the proficient dependability of a journalist in the conflict zone. There is no doubt that the media is facing difficulties and challenges in covering the conflict. The race of ratings and competition along with commercial aspect the journalists and their profession focus on immediate events of violence at the cost of the fact that they bypass the background of the issue. It is necessary for media to work in an independent environment to cover every aspect of the conflict. The state responsibility emerges in such a situation where they are supposed to provide an environment to media where they can operate easily. The media organizations and policymakers should arrange a journalist's safety training for journalists working in a challenging environment.

The administrations of local journalists are contracted to cover the indigenous clashes without giving a similar wellbeing measure as it is given to universal writers by worldwide media associations. One more misfortune that sources incredible unease is shy of polished skill among inexpert neighborhood writers, prevalently in a circumstance where flexibility is suddenly given following quite a while of restraint. The local media needs to build up a moral set of accepted rules; the substance of moral code ought to cover a part of how to cover the contention.

## Discussion

Balochistan is in the conflict zone since the British invaded Balochistan and imposed its colonial rule over undivided Balochistan. The British used massive troops and firepower in annexing the total territory of Balochistan. During the 100 years of colonial rule, Balochs fought more than 200 small and big battles against the British colonial Army. The Balochs also faced more than 15 major military expeditions of the British colonial Army, the lone superpower of the time or in the unipolar world.

Journalism in Balochistan is different from other parts of the country, especially when it comes to credibility, sensitivity and security to the lives of journalists. Some of the areas of Balochistan are like no go areas for journalists and even sometimes for security forces. The intensity of the conflicts fluctuates, and it created a state of uncertainty among people. With the rise of militancy, the job of journalists becomes more difficult in Balochistan by facing the pressure from militant organizations and from state apparatus. Traditionally, journalism in Balochistan remained under the influence of the tribal system, and the journalists never practised to write anything against the tribal lords. The dominant medium for journalism in Balochistan was press, and most of the periodicals were used as a source of earning. Genuine journalism is not under the practice of local newspapers, and most of the contents of those newspapers were literature-based. There is no question of the credibility of

news items as they are fed to them by others in news conferences or in private talks by some officials and politicians. In a way, there is a Press Release journalism, and some journalists have their vested interests to promote it.

Balochistan is a conflict zone, and separatist movement and a sectarian rift in the province makes it difficult for journalists to report news stories with freedom of expression. The Pressure Groups are mounting their pressure on the media, posing a serious threat to the journalists not coming to the expectations of the religious fanatics and extremists. Editors and Bureau chiefs of the TV channels are working under extreme pressure. According to Balochistan Union of Journalists president Hammad Siapad, the Resident Editor of Jang Quetta newspaper Mr. Akhtar Mirza was under extreme pressure from militant organizations, and he was threatened much time. As a result, he died of cardiac arrest. He said that we had included his name in the list of those journalists who were killed because he was murdered by the threats of militant organizations. Journalism in Balochistan is challenging, and journalists face new challenges every day.

## Findings

- The international powers have kept the land of Balochistan disturbed for their personnel gains. The USA is not happy with ongoing China's project in Balochistan. The conflict issues in Balochistan are influenced by international actors, and the control of these issues are with international actors.
- The Balochistan issue cannot be resolved by addressing the socio-economic grievances of people of Balochistan. The political forces of Balochistan in particular and political forces of other provinces, in general, wants to discuss hard liner inside the framework devised by Pakistani federation have been diminished that results in harden position of hardliners.
- State institution is sometimes the source of interference in a journalist's job. The Balochistan High Courts orders news organizations not to publish news of ban organizations. The journalists are sandwiched between the state institution and from ban organizations.
- Balochistan is a traditional society and strictly stick to the norms, and the influence of Sardars and Nawabs is still influential in the tribal landscape of Balochistan. The journalists believe that the tribal system is a barrier in the free flow of information.

## Recommendations

- The international community needs to understand that Balochistan is under brutal insurgency from the last ten years. The China Pakistan Economic Corridor will open new venues and opportunities for the deprived people of Balochistan in particular and for people of Pakistan in particular. The international power corridor wants stable Pakistan; if this is the case, then they need to understand projects like CPEC can make a difference. They should support ongoing development projects in Balochistan, and they must step back from the negative role they are playing in Balochistan.
- The mainstream media needs to give proper coverage to Balochistan. By enhancing the coverage, the issue of Balochistan should be discussed with perspective. In this way, the issue Balochistan will become a national debate, and it will minimize the risk for local media and journalists.
- The journalism landscape in Balochistan is different from the rest of the country. The journalists need to investigate the story before disseminating it. Most of the journalists lost their lives while reporting a story without investigation. Journalists needs capacity building and conflict-sensitive reporting training.
- The media organizations need to support journalists when they are under threat or when they lost their lives. The organizations should insure their employees and fixed a good amount of compensation for those who sacrifice their lives in the line of duty. The organizations must set a security protocol or policy for journalists for covering events of bomb blast and violence's.



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