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A Need for Strategic Communication: Towards an Unrealized Potential and the Grievances of Baluchistan

Abstract

This research study aims to draw attention to the most strategically significant province of Pakistan that has been neglected for decades by different governments of different eras in Pakistan. The nature of this study is qualitative, and the data have been collected by secondary sources such as research papers, newspapers, and websites. The tribes' chives and the Baluch are abided by their old traditions and customs, but Pakistan's attitude towards Baluchistan is the same as that of Baluchistan being subjugated by Pakistan. Baluchis merely want Pakistan to use the natural resources of Baluchistan not as a subjugated property, but the resources should be used considering Baluchistan as a federal unit. In the exchange of utilization of these resources, Pakistan has to work for the betterment and prosperity of Baluchistan, respect for the people of Baluchistan, and the Baluch leadership. Pakistan needs to correct its past mistakes and exert all efforts to win the confidence of the people of Baluchistan.

Keywords: Baluchistan, Pakistan, Anger Baluch Natives, Federal Govt, Grievances, Pakistan, Strategic Importance, Trust Building, Trade Route

Authors:

Juliyana Usman Wachani:(Corresponding Author)
Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Raunaq-e-Islam Govt College for Women, Kharadar, Karachi, Sindh, Pakistan.
(Email: juliyanausman13@gmail.com)

Noureen Bibi: Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Women's University, Mardan, KP, Pakistan.

Usman Wachani: Political Analyst, Pakistan.

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Authors:

Juliyana Usman Wachani: (Corresponding Author)

Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science,
Raunaq-e-Islam Govt College for Women, Kharadar,
Karachi, Sindh, Pakistan.

(Email: juliyanausman13@gmail.com)

Noureen Bibi: Assistant Professor, Department of Political
Science, Women's University, Mardan, KP,
Pakistan.

Usman Wachani: Political Analyst, Pakistan.

Abstract

This research study aims to draw attention to the most strategically significant province of Pakistan that has been neglected for decades by different governments of different eras in Pakistan. The nature of this study is qualitative, and the data have been collected by secondary sources such as research papers, newspapers, and websites. The tribes' chives and the Baluch are abided by their old traditions and customs, but Pakistan's attitude towards Baluchistan is the same as that of Baluchistan being subjugated by Pakistan. Baluchis merely want Pakistan to use the natural resources of Baluchistan not as a subjugated property, but the resources should be used considering Baluchistan as a federal unit. In the exchange of utilization of these resources, Pakistan has to work for the betterment and prosperity of Baluchistan, respect for the people of Baluchistan, and the Baluch leadership. Pakistan needs to correct its past mistakes and exert all efforts to win the confidence of the people of Baluchistan.

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Areas of Research Study

1. What is the strategic importance of Baluchistan for the international community?
2. What are the grievances of the people of Baluchistan?
3. What is the way out for resolving the issues of Baluchistan?

Introduction

In the region, a significant strategic position has been enjoyed by Baluchistan. There is a possibility

of being an industrial hub, being the gateway to the Strait of Hormuz. A random estimate suggests that almost 21 million barrels of crude oil pass through the Strait of Hormuz. The geographical proximity of Baluchistan to central Asia, enriched with gas and oil deposits, the Middle East, and South Asia, enhances its strategic importance. By sharing a 900 and 1200 km border with Iran and Afghanistan mineral-enriched enriched respectively, elevates the economic potential of this neglected province. (Ahmed & Akhtar, 2017)



But consider the irony of the fate, the province that is enriched with natural resources and its proximity to the regions enriched with deposits of gas, oil, and other mineral resources, the ratio of progress is very low in Quetta compared to the capitals of other provinces. The visit to Quetta clearly indicated that heed is paid towards extension of only major roads, telecommunication services, scheme of housing, and the quantity of schools, but keeping the quality of education at bay. Whereas, the collection of waste, access to clear water, and absence of water reservoirs, health framework, and setup of new markets display dissatisfactory progress. Quetta, titled with the name of the "fruit garden of Pakistan" this unlucky city produces between 50 to 60% cold-seasoned fresh fruits. And almost 35 to 40% various kinds of vegetables are products of Quetta. Vast deposits of valuable minerals such as gold, copper, marble, sulphur, limestone, ores of iron, and coal are found in Harnai, Bolan, Sibi, and Quetta. High Prospects in transit routes and coastal development are found in Baluchistan.

After observing all this, a question will definitely arise in the mind of the reader of this research paper that, despite of abundance of natural resources, why this province is lagging behind in the race with other provinces of Pakistan (Siddique & Achakzai, [2022](#)).

Dominant Ideologies About the Decades-Long Crisis in Baluchistan

Two ideologies seem to prevail over the decades-long crisis in Baluchistan. The Islamabad theory asserts that state agencies and separatist movements are behind the backwardness of the people of Baluchistan. This is the reason that the destructive activities of miscreants are increasing and causing great damage to the province. Whereas in contrast to the Islamabad theory, the Baluch theory argues that exploitative policies of Baluch chives (Sardars) and external powers are the main elements of the troubles of Baluchistan.

George Pipe of the USA is the exponent of these two theories and used empirical data. According to Pipes, Gregory 2010, the cases of insurgency in Baluchistan have a direct connection with the carrot and stick policies of the state. He collected data that from 2003 to 2009, the land of Baluchistan faced around 1277 insurgent attacks.

He placed some examples for proving his hypothesis that 216% insurgent attacks increased at the time of the deployment of the army near Sui in January 2005, whereas the ratio of insurgent attacks became low up to -73.68% when the federal government expressed its consent to oust the army from Dera Bugti and Sui. A further decrease up to -70% was noticed when the government decided to establish a parliamentary committee in the month of May of the same year for resolving the issues of Baluchistan.

In contrast to this increase in insurgent attacks was observed up to 855% in the wake of launching a military attack on a large scale in Baluchistan. Similarly, on the killing of Sardar Akbar Bugti and arrest of Mengal, president of Baluchistan National Party, and on the killing of Marri, chief of Baluch Liberation Army, the ratios of 160.00%, 92.31% and 26.51% were seen in insurgent attacks, respectively..

May 2008 proved omen for Baluchistan when the government announced to cease operations, release Mengal, and the military showed its consent to evacuate. The insurgent attacks reduced to a great extent and reached the level of -14.39%. Again decrease in rebellion attacks was seen up to -47.90 on the resignation of Musharraf in August 2008. Similarly, in October 2008 and March 2009 Zardari government announced two relief packages for Baluchistan that won the confidence of the people of Baluchistan, and a noticeable decrease of up to -59.84% and -33.68% was observed in insurgent attacks (Haider, [2011](#)).

Strategic Interest of the World in Baluchistan

In the wake of the Great Game, Baluchistan enjoys a leading position in the Gulf region. There are great prospects to emerge Baluchistan as a regional Hub and the best channel of transitions of goods from the route of sea route in the future. China is reluctant to the activities of India in the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Aden. The existence of the Chinese naval at the bottleneck of the Gulf region benefited dual. On the one hand, the dream of China to be a naval power may take practical shape, while on the other hand, China may keep an eagle eye on Indo-US domination on the Indian Ocean.

Through port China may spread the network of her vast trade to Central Asia, the Middle East, and Africa by reducing the distance from 10000 km to

2500 km. Employing the Gwadar channel, China is getting a strategic place in the Caspian region. Acquisition of an alternative trade route by the Gwadar sea route for the province of Xinjiang, the economy of China is being consolidated and the economy of China is increasing at a rate of 9% per annum. As a result, 1.76 trillion US dollars is the trade volume of China, whereas the ratio of GNP is up to 7.3%. Likewise, China possesses foreign exchange reserves of US\$600 billion of dollars. The Malacca Strait is the trade route of China to gain access to Asia, Africa, and Europe. In case of denial, the Gwadar Sea port will act as a substitute route of the Malacca Strait. It is expected that the economy of China up to 2025 will enjoy the status of a potent economy across the world. In this scenario, China is exerting all its energies for the development of Gwadar port.

Interest in Cars

The Central Asian Republics (CARS) are heartlessly dependent on Russia. For approaching warm water, CARS has two trade routes for exporting its energy resources. One is passing across Iran (Chahbahar bordering Baluchistan, while the other is moving through Gwadar (Baluchistan). The route of Chahbahar is included in the disfavoured policy of the West. Thus, the route through Gwadar is the shortest route for exporting dry and liquid cargo of CARs. Through the Caspian Sea, the route to the Mediterranean Sea is 1800 km, which is a longer route as compared to 1400km. The Unrealized Potential, long from Gwadar.

According to the report of the Geological Survey, Baluchistan is rich in mineral resources. There are around deposits of eighty mineral resources. Among them, some are explored, whereas many resources are yet to be explored.

Interest of Afghanistan

Afghanistan is rich in natural resources. Though Afghanistan is rich in natural resources, its natural resources have never been properly utilized, and no significant effort has been made to explore its natural resources. In this arena, Afghanistan is a newly independent state governed by the Taliban, is facing multiple challenges. The export of Afghanistan is confined to a few products, such as steel, agriculture, and textiles. It needs aid and imports from foreign countries. Thus, Gwadar is a

safe transit route, will benefit both Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Gwadar trade route is the shortest possible route for Afghanistan to get access to warm waters and the most effective way to the Indian Ocean. Similarly, the homogenous religious socio-economic culture of the local Pashtuns of Pakistan will provide brotherhood cooperation to Afghanistan. Preferences of the Gwadar route instead of using the Chahbahar route will not become the eyesore of the United States.

Afghanistan had faith that the end of World War II would incline the US to take progressive measures in social and economic fields and for policy offset. Energy transporting activities of China to the Indian Ocean further complicate the situation. Thus, China's domination has become eye thorn for the US. The "Pearl strategy" of China compelled the US to rely solely on India. The exclusive reliance of the US on India led India to disturb peace in Baluchistan with the assistance of the Hamid Karzai government. Under a malicious objective, for reducing the significance of Gwadar port, Chahbahar Port is being constructed by India for Iran (Malik & Hassan, 2013).

Blauch's Perspective Towards the Pakistani Government

The second segment of this research study revolves around the grievances and complaints of the natives of Baluchistan. The research study aims to highlight those factors that are creating barriers in the progress of Baluchistan, and also wants to draw attention towards the bitter need for strategic communication for the sake of resolving these issues. There are various obstacles on the way to the development of this unfortunate province.

Pakistan is a federal state, but it failed to maintain the status quo among the provinces. The issue of the utilization of the resources of Baluchistan and their royalty by the central government is the bone of contention between the provincial government and the central government. In the second and third five-year development plans from (1960-65) and (1965-70), due attention was paid to, but later on, Baluchistan was always neglected. Military attacks under the Musharraf and Bhutto regimes further alienated the Baluch from the government of Pakistan.

Baluch people complain that Baluchistan is enriched in natural resources. The valuable reserves

of the world are found here. Being the largest province, it has valuable stones, natural gas, gold, chromite, oil, copper, and the most significant oceanic coastline that stretches along with one of the world's most important shipping routes, the Straits of Hormuz.

Different groups in Baluchistan have waged war against the government of Pakistan. They accuse that Baluchistan is important for Pakistan just for its natural resources. Pakistan has failed to grant rights to the people of Baluchistan. The natives are bereft of standardized education, clean water, and health facilities. The major part of the Baluch youth is unemployed. The Baluch leader has no important say in the administrative affairs of Pakistan. The budget share and the value of the resources of Baluchistan are reciprocal to each other. The Baluch people name their fight as the fight for the acquisition of rights. But many segments of Pakistani society call them rebellious and extremist. According to Baluch, to wage war for their right, if it is extremism, then they are extremists. They complain that Pakistan discusses the Kashmir issue and supports the right to self-determination of Kashmiris on international forums. But in their own country, Baluchistan's provincial autonomy is being neglected. According to them, if extremism is the name of protecting socio-cultural and lingual identity, then we are admitting to being traitors and extremists.

It has often been observed that the exclusion of the central political tendency led to the incomplete tenure of Baluch in the provincial council. The central government failed to provide proper representation to Baluch in national politics 1999 coup of Musharraf added fuel to the fire in Baluchistan bereft. However transition of power from Musharraf to Zardari decreased the intensity of the anger of the Baloch natives in Baluchistan. In such kind of circumstances in Baluchistan accusation is levelled against the Pakistani government by the international community.

As discussed above that Baluchistan is blessed with numerous natural resources. Valuable minerals, including gas, are the signification productions of the politically bereft but naturally rich province. Strategically, the importance of Baluchistan is not ignorable. The government of Pakistan professed to bring economic development in Baluchistan in the form of CPEC and Aghaz e

Huqooq e Baluchistan Package. But unfortunately, both schemes couldn't be proved fruitful for Baluchistan itself. In the construction of the CPEC project Baloch are entirely ousted. From lower to higher, all Baluch are kept at bay. Resultantly, the militia of Baluch targeted many times Iran Paksitan- India gas pipeline many times. The attacks of Baluch's militia demonstrate the displeasure of Baluch leaders with this international agreement. The province that is the door to the progress of the country, but the politicians of that important region have no say in such of significant project. Similarly, the government of Pakistan created a pretence of developing the Baluch in the name of Aghaz e Huqooq e Baluchistan. But the government didn't seem serious about implementation, so this package has stalled.

The crisis of Baluchistan started in 1958 with the arrest of the Khan of Qalat on charges of sedition. This matter was further intensified when large-scale military operations by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto were carried out in Baluchistan from 1973 to 1977. In fact, the extraction of resources from Baluchistan and distribution had always been the contentious issue between the centre and Baluch leadership. The matter was further escalated on account of the murder of Nawab Akbar Bugti. When he objected to the control and distribution of Baluchistan's resources. He professed that Pakistan claims the resources of Baluchistan and deems them national, but the fact is in contrast. These resources purely belong to Baluch. If Pakistan is willing to utilize them, then it has to do so with the consent of the Baluch people instead of getting direct possession (International Crisis Group, 2006).

Another bitter grievance of the Baluch people is the missing persons. In missing persons, Baluch political activists, students, and prudent are included. Agencies of Pakistan, such as the Frontier Corps, ISI, allegedly abduct them and keep them in detention for a long time. From 2003 to 2008, many cases of missing persons were reported. Often, the tortured dead bodies of Baluch people were found with burn marks, broken limbs, and with drilled heads. They are arrested, but they are not presented in court. CPEC further increased the misery of the Baluch people. For providing security to the Chinese in Baluchistan, military operations

against the Baluch have been intensified. Thus, the security situation in Baluchistan was further aggravated (Baloch, [2007](#)).

A report depicts Baluchistan's deprivation by Senator Sana Ullah Baluch.

Islamabad's offensives to suppress the Baluch struggle for greater autonomy and control over natural resources resulted in killings, displacements, disappearances, and unprecedented intimidation (Baloch, [2007](#))" (Bukhari & Yasmeen, [2015](#)).

The government of Pakistan levels accusations that India, the United States, Iran, and Iraq are helping Baluch insurgents and destabilizing the country. However, these countries denied this accusation. Once, Baluch leader Bugti admitted that they would accept foreign aid for the liberation of Baluchistan. Leader of Jundullah, on the occasion of his arrest, asserted that the United States promised to give them a base in Afghanistan and defensive armaments.

The third main grievance of Baluchistan is low-quality education. Education is the backbone of the progress of any nation. The leaders of Baluchistan are angry with the government of Pakistan that she is not playing an efficient role in educational development. Resultantly, Baluch youth are lagging behind in the race of progress compared to other nations living in Pakistan. Though the government of Pakistan is playing its due role. The number of scholarships has been doubled for Baluch students. The current budget is the best example of this series. The main cause of the illiteracy rate in Baluchistan is indeed the cheating mafia. Youth in Baluchistan do not study, and they pass exams through cheating. Cheating material is provided to them by the staff of the concerned exam centre. Teachers are not appointed on merit. Thus, the education system of Baluchistan is prey to destruction.

Need for Strategic Communication towards Way Forward of Baluchistan's Problems

Strategically, Baluchistan is a significant region for the economic solidarity of the international community, which is professing the importance of Pakistan before the international community.

It has become the dire need of Pakistan to communicate Baluch leadership and maintain their

confidence in the government of Pakistan. The government of Pakistan should set a dialogue table for negotiating angry Baluch leadership for resolving the problems of Baluchistan. On many occasions, Baluch nationalists seem ready to negotiate their issues. As such, Baramdagh Bugti expressed his consent once in a BBC interview to explore a way out of the issues of Baluchistan, and in exchange, Baluch were ready to withdraw the movement of separation of Baluchistan. (Business Standard, [2019](#)).

Mega development projects have been launched in Baluchistan. On account of these projects, Baluch must be given their due share, being the main stakeholder of these resources.

The Government of Pakistan must take necessary action to cope with religious, sectarian, and ethnic issues.

The Baluch nation is dissident with the military operation. For building peaceful relations between the central and Baluch leaderships, these military operations should be immediately stopped.

IDPs (Internally displaced persons) are scattered here and there. They are not settled yet to their areas yet. They should be sent back to their areas with job opportunities.

The media should be given freedom and protection to get coverage of the circumstances of Baluchistan.

Progressive actions such as the Promise of implementation of NFC ward, Aghaz e Huqooq e Baluchistan package, and 18th amendment cover Baluchistan issue should be brought to work in letter and spirit.

Onboarding Baluch natives in the armed forces and intelligence agencies of Pakistan will elevate their confidence in the government and security agencies of Pakistan, along with mitigating the atmosphere of trust deficit.

The prevalence of the rule of law must be ensured. Illegitimate detention, arbitrary killing, and the act of a person going missing, the person should be stopped.

The issue of missing persons is drilling the heads of Baluch natives with anti-state feelings. This issue must be resolved on an immediate basis. All Baluch, whether detained or missing, must be brought before the courts under the principle of Habeas Corpus.

For wiping out of trust deficit, a deep probe into the slaying of Nawab Akbar Bugti should be initiated by security agencies. Thus government may realize Baluch people that the blood of Baluch leaders is valuable for Pakistan, like the leaders of other regions of the country. Business Standard (2019).

To meet the economic needs of citizens is the essential duty of any state. In this scenario, it is the prime duty of Pakistan to open opportunities for the citizens of Baluchistan not only in the public sector but in the private sector too. Having this purpose, the government of Pakistan must take initiatives to attract investors so that they can establish industries and make the province an industrial hub. This measure will not only prosper Baluchistan but also elevate the economy of Pakistan will also elevated.

Conclusion

Baluchistan is the province of Pakistan, vast in size but least in population. This unlucky province is

the least developed compared to other provinces of Pakistan. Baluchistan, however a neglected province but rich with precious mineral resources. Gwadar port, being the shortest trade route, has further illuminated the position of Baluchistan in the eyes of the international community. The people of Baluchistan are loyal to Pakistan, but they are unhappy because of their deprivations and military operations in Baluchistan. Pakistan's civil and military administrations must work together to find a practical solution to this problem. Ignoring Baluchistan in today's age of narcissism would be considered Pakistan's ridicule and the biggest mistake. It is the dire need of the time to give a bird's eye to the issues of Baluchistan. The success of mega projects in Pakistan is linked with the prosperity of Baluchistan. The Baluch leadership will create barriers in the way of the completion of these projects. In short, the research study derives the result that the stability of Baluchistan is the stability of Pakistan, and the prosperity of Baluchistan is the prosperity of Pakistan.

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