Enigmas of Baluchistan from non-provincial to provincial status reaction and response of Baloch nationalists 1947-1970

Introduction

Baluchistan under British was divided into three parts, British Baluchistan, Baluchistan state and tribal area. The colonial period did not pay any attention to uplift the political and economic status of Balochistan. All India Muslim League constantly demanded political reforms in Balochistan but the British government had its own interests in the administrative system introduced by Sir Sandaman. Many educated Baloch were anxious about this state of affairs so in 1921 a movement started in the name of AnjumanIthad-i-Baluchistan to establish greater Balochistan. Pakistan inherited the legacy of socio politically and economically backwardness of Balochistan. Ahmad Yar Khan, The Khan of Kalat was also ambitious for independent state of Baluchistan like Nepal. He wanted to unite this area under his leadership. Later on he was forced to accede to Pakistan. Disturbance started under the leadership of his brother prince karim in 1948 which ended after a short period. Quid I Azam was anxious about the political status of Balochistan but he could not convert it into full-fledged province because the constitution of Pakistan was not yet to make. Liqat Ali Khan found only interim solution of the problem of Balochistan and in 1955 all the provinces and administrative areas of West Pakistan formed one unit. It was the Baluchistan who put up stiff resistance against one unit. The serious disturbance started in 1958 after the arrest of Khan of Kalat. Throughout Ayub era there was unrest in the area of Baluchistan. When one unit dissolved, for the first time Baluchistan province came into being in July, 1970. This paper tries to represent the facts that why Balochistan not to get provincial status for a long time in spite of the fact that Baluchistan has full of natural resources and situated strategically in very important location. The paper also tries to through light on the political follies of central and provincial political elite which create political crisis in Balochistan. This political crisis in the scenario of the tribal, Sardari system created such situation that Balochis took up arms to get their rights. The grievances of the people of Baluchistan from 1947-1970 are mainly due to two factors first weak democracy in Pakistan and economic disparity in the country.

Problem of Accession of Kalat State

For Quaid-i-Azam Balochistan was of great importance to the future of Pakistan, Quaid-i-Azam was very eager to make Balochistan a part and parcel of Pakistan. In 3rd June plane it was decided to hold a referendum in British Balochistan on June 30, 1947. The shahi Jirga and member of Quetta Municipality gave verdict in the favour of Pakistan. The 3rd June plan explained the position of states that they must join India or Pakistan who wanted to retain independence could do so. In this regard Quaid-i-Azam clarified the Muslim League position of non-interference in the internal affairs of states and declared that the states had
their right to determine their own future. Khan of Kalat was very anxious about the future of Kalat state, he send NawabZada Mohammad Aslam Khan (Chief Minister) to Delhi to put the case of Kalat about Leased areas and the state of Kharan and Lasbela. A meeting was conducted between Viceroy, Chief Minister of Kalat and AbdurRabNishter minister of state and tribes. In this conference Viceroy admitted that the states of Kalat had special status but there was still confusion about this point why Kalat opposed transfer of leased area’s to successor Government. SardarAbdurRabNishter, the minister of state and tribes opposed the claim of Khan on the ground that Pakistan Government inherited those areas in the same way as it was Afghanistan under the treaty of 1921. On 4th August 1947 a round table conference was conducted among, Quaid-i-AzamLiaqat Ali Khan, Viceroy, Khan of Kalat, Prime Minister of Kalat and legal advisor of Kalat Sir Sultan. After discussion parties reached on an agreement in which Pakistan recognized the special status of Kalat and standstill agreement was signed by head of Kalat and Pakistan Government so standstill agreement finally announced on 11 August 1947. But on the issue of accession Khan’s intentions were not in line with the larger national interest of Pakistan. Quaid-i-Azam was shocked when on 15th of August 1947; The Khan issued a Farman declaring the state independent. Constitutionally this Forman had no legal authority and was treated as such by the Government of Pakistan. Khan made the 15th August a day of celebration. He also addressed the congregation. He also announced the establishment of upper and lower house. The election was conducted in which Kalat state National party won 39 seats in lower house. In September Prime Minister of Kalat and foreign minister Mr. Douglas F. Fell approached Pakistan foreign secretary Mr. Ikramullah for initiation of treaty on leased area. They were told that Pakistan inherited these areas as successor state and were advised to seek accession of Kalat with Pakistan. Quaid-i-Azam also gave the same advice to the Khan of Kalat. Following the Quid’s proposal of Kalat accession Khan summoned the Kalat state Diwan. During this session the speeches were made against Pakistan. During this situation Pakistan government timely made a political move enable the three peripheral Baloch states – KharanMakran and Las Bela to gain separate accession to Pakistan and Kalat was left in isolation. On 27th march on the 9.00 P.M. in news bulletin all Indian Radio announced that the Khan had, two months earlier approached the government of India for accession but that request had been turned down. On hearing the news Khan wrote a letter to Quaid-i-Azam and announcing his desire to accede to Pakistan. Finally the Khan acceded unconditionally and instrument of accession was signed on 27th march 1948. All this happened before any troops had moved out to the destination embarked for them. The author of contemporary history of Balochistan also accepts that no force was used against the Khan regarding the accession of his state by Pakistan.

On the accession of Kalat to Pakistan, Prince Karim younger brother of Khan with his 700 followers revolted against Pakistan. The government of Pakistan took action and at last prince was arrested on June 16, 1948 in Harboi hill. The prince and his followers were given various sentences and fines. The peace was restored and the important thing is that the nationalist leadership of Balochistan showed nonviolent behavior.
Reform package by Quaid-i-Azam

The Quaid-i-Azam as Governor General was known the aspiration of Balochis and he wanted that there should be some participation of Balochi in administration of the Province. His address at sibidarbar indicated his notions. He said” And so I wanted something to be done without delay for the period between now and the time when the new constitution would finally emerge and be inaugurated; something that would be enable the people to share the responsibilities of their government and give them a voice in its administration”.

On this occasion he announced the reform package for Balochistan. A Governor General’s advisory council (nominated membership) was established. The function of this council was to examine all plans and other administrative schemes, before the chief commissioner submitted them to Governor General. The announcement was a big step forward for the province. This was materialized on 11 June, 1949 and it was consisted of two members with nominal powers. It could only refer matters only for consideration and decision on matters resided with AGG. It is to be noted that when authorities pointed about the weak financial position and under population of the Balochistan, Quid I Azam made it clear that Centre would share the financial difficulties of the province for the sake of progress and welfare of people.

Liaqat Ali Khan’s interim solution

After Quaid-i-Azam, Liaqat Ali Khan also tried to find interim solution to the constitutional problems of Balouchistan unit such time as the constitution of Pakistan was ready. At the Sibi durbar of 1949 Liaqat Ali Kahn declared that central Government intended to bring Baluchistan and the four states to the same level of administration as the rest of Pakistan. He appointed a reform committee in 4th October 1950 on Balochistan with the mandate to recommend the constitutional and administrative changes in the existing set up of the Province with regard to political economic and social conditions prevailing there in. It was composed of five members. It visited each and every corner of the Balochistan. The committee presented its report before constitute assembly on Nov. 12, 1951. Report recommended the formation of Governor Province in Balochistan without disturbing the institution of Sardari system. The princely states of Balochistain were also given due protection. It proposed provincial autonomy for the province and also suggested the introduction of adult franchise to enlarge the powers to the provinces. It also recommended the creation of local bodies’ institutions in Balochistan. Unfortunately the central government rejected these proposals on the ground of weak financial position of the Balochistan.

FORMATION OF BALOCHISTAN STATES UNION (BSU)

To settle down the constitution problems of Balochistain the central Government made other move contrary to the recommendation of the report and decided to merge the four states of Kalat, Mekran, Kharan and Lesbila into the Balochistain state union. The Balochistan states union had common executive, judiciary and legislative under the common constitution of Pakistan. An agreement was made between the four states and the government of Pakistan which guaranteed its provisions. A council of rulers was formed with one of the
rulers elected as its president and a Prime Minister appointed by the Government of Pakistan. The government of Pakistan had powers to remove or nominate the Prime Minister of BSU. However, Council of Rulers had also powers to appoint or remove him. The Council of Rulers, comprised of four rulers of the states, headed by a President was to be selected among the rulers in rotation. Efforts were made to produce a constitution for B.S.U. An interim constitution was provided. There was also legislature of 28 elected and 12 nominated members. Aga Abdul Hameed was it first Prime Minister and Khan of Kalat was its president. The life of the BSU was short. The council of ministers hardly held a meeting its treasury was empty. On 16 Feb. 1954 a number of Sardar of the state union submitted a petition to the AGG (Agent to Governor General) for the merger of the union with the former Balochistan Province. Consequently in early June Pakistan state ministry dismissed the BSU Assembly. It was decided through the council of Rulers of the BSU to merge the four states with the centrally administrated Balochistan. The Balochistan Muslim League and basic principal committee also gave recommendation for Governor Province. But when one unit scheme was implemented Balochistan merged with West Pakistan. So Balochistan did not get the status of Governor’s Province till the dissolution of one unit in 1970.

**Popular leadership in Demand for Provincial Autonomy**

After accession and revolt of Prince Karim the popular leaders in Balochistan were in Jail Kalat state National Party was banned. This situation continued until 1950, where a small group of Marxist Leninist formed the Balochistan Peace Committee under the leadership of Abdul KarimShorish. It demanded right of self-determination for Balochistan and abolition of the tribal feudal system. In 1953, the Baloch intelligentsias come forward with the demand for autonomy. Many political social organizations such as All Pakistan Baloch League, Balochistan Student Federation and other made demands for social and economic reforms directed towards raising the national level of the people.

Prince Karim and Mir Unqa released from jail on 18th June 1955. They called a meeting of ex-Kalat state party’s workers in Karachi on 14th July 1955. They formed a political organization Ustman Gal. Prince Karim became its president and Q.B. Nizamani its general secretary. It mentioned its goal of creating a separate province for the Baloch people on the basis of race, geography, culture and language. It also aimed at establishing a republican federal political system in the country with equal rights and complete provincial autonomy for the constituent units; all the Baloch areas of the Balochistan were to be merged in a separate province where Balochi should be the official language.

**Formation of One Unit & Reaction in Balochistan**

In 1955 one unit was created against the popular will of the people of the smaller provinces. Many political workers and leaders were sent to jail due to the opposition of one unit. In 1956 the following six leftist parties realized the necessity of a common front and formed a new political party, ‘National Party’.
These were ustman gal, Sindh Hari Committee, Sindh Mahaz, Khudai Khidmatgars, Wore Pastan and Azad Pakistan Party. The main objective of the new party was to oppose one unit of West Pakistan. It demanded dissolution of one unit and provincial autonomy. In 1957 Maulana Bhashani of the East Pakistan Awami League joined this party and party was renamed “National Awami Party.” In 1958, country came under martial law and all political activities were banned. So regional started to work underground. In short period party gained popularity, 1968 it divided into two parts Bhashani group and Wali group. As the years passed the NAP came to represent the forces of regionalism and separation in Pakistan.

The creation of one unit was considered a most significant political development for Balochistan politics since the accession. The resistance to one unit was more violent in Balochistan than in other parts of Pakistan. The Khan of Kalat initially agreed to the plan but the nationalist rejected it on the ground that curtailed the Baloch autonomy. Later the Khan opposed it. Much organization in Balochistan demanded the formation of a unified Balochistan. The Khan of Kalat supported the concept of a unified Baloch State but wanted it to under his leadership. Reviving his 1947, demand for independence and for the restoration to Kalat of other Baloch areas taken away by British, the Khan mobilized widespread demonstrations against the one unit idea through the tribal chiefs in his former domain.

In a reception for the workers of the Baloch Academy at Quetta on 26 August, he strongly pleaded for the disintegration of one unit and demarcation of new province on linguistic lines. He held another meeting at Mastung and repeated what he had already said. The Khan also chaired the historic meeting of Baloch Sardars held at the Palace Hotel in Karachi in 1957. It was attended by Nawab Khair Bakhsh Marri, Nawab Ghous Bakhsh Raisani, Mir Jamal Khan Jamali and Nawab Akbar Bugti. The demand of the meeting was the dismantling of one unit and creation of Balochistan province on the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and historical basis. According to Mazari’s account when participants were known about the Khan’ intention to restore Khnate of Kalat, most of sardars walked out in protest. Due to his anti-state activities he was invited to come and see the president at Karachi but he refused to do so. The Pakistani flag on mini fort in Kalat was removed and was replaced by the Kalat State flag. Due to his activities Khan was arrested on 6 Oct. 1958. The Khan was sent to Lahore and detained in a Bungalow at Gilberg. According to official sources during Khan’s arrest, a mob gathered around his palace and refused to disperse. Army opened fire in which 3 killed and 2 injured. About 50 of Khan’s retainer and some 300 other activists were arrested in Kalat and other towns. Central government charged that Abdul Karim and an uncle of the Khan had been secretly negotiating with Afghanistan for support of a full scale Baloch rebellion and had assembled 80,000 tribes’ men. It was also stated that Khan had stored large quantity of weapons, food to provide for a large private army. According to Jan Muhammad and Selig Harrison the only evidence to substantiate these charges was the fact that Khan’s wife had gone to Kabul for holiday.

According to Khan these allegations were deliberately planted to provide a pretext for national wide imposition of martial law. On the day following the...
arrest of Mir Ahmad Yar Khan martial law was imposed not only in Balochistan but in the entire country. The arrest of Khan deeply resented throughout Balochistan. A protest march took place in Quetta.57 The first hostile act against the government was the firing on a moving train on 13th October but there were no casualties.58 Martial law authorities issued an order calling upon the people to surrender their unlicensed firearms. This created different kinds of rumors about the future intentions of government and caused anxiety among the people of Balochistan. So they refused to comply with this order and this was the beginning of Jhalawan Disturbances. Mengal tribe’s men raided the sub-treasury at wadh and removed the fire arms which had been deposited under martial law regulations.59

This outraged the authorities and Army posted in key places to show of force and authority. The army blocked some mountains and passes to check recalcitrant elements in Jhalawan and neighboring Sarawan. Some skirmishes were reported between the troops and the tribe’s men.60

In the meantime, Nauroz Khan a chief of Zehri tribe emerged as the leader of guerrilla force numbering 250 to 1000. He went and sat on the top of hill called Mirgat. He demanded:61

1. Unconditional release of Khan of Kalat.
2. Return of the confiscated arms and
3. Annulment of one unit.

The first serious combat took place at wad 40 miles south of Khazdar in which heavy losses took place. Colonel Tikka ordered the bombardment of the house of Nauroz Khan and all his property was confiscated.62 Nevertheless the powers of the rebels could not be broken. Syed Iqbal remarks that, “the spirit of insurgency grew and a number of guerrilla bands joined Naoroz Khan in the hills. Soon it spread all over Jhalawan district and the army deeply involved in counter insurgency measures. On some occasion air too, had to be under taken. This insurgency lasted for about a year”.63

In 1960 the government launched a full-fledged military operation inflicting heavy causalities on the guerrillas. Even then no end to the hostilities was insight. Later the representatives of both sides met in order to discuss the terms of cessation of hostilities. During or after the meeting on the night between the 19th and 20th May 1959 Naoroz Khan, his son and some of follower surrendered but they were arrested. It was claimed that they had been promised safety and amnesty On the Holy Quran, and their arrest was a case of breach of trust and truce.64 Subsequently, 163 persons were tried by a special military court set up in Mach Jail near Quetta. Nauroz Khan, son Batay Khan five other members of his family awarded capital punishment.65 In July 1960, the rebels were executed in Sukkur Jail but Naoroz Khan Death sentence change into life imprisonment due to his old age. He died four years later in the Kohlu prison. Many Balochs called martyred for the Baloch cause.
The Baloch Resistance in 60’s

The issues which dominated the Baloch politics in 60’s were the rough treatment meted out to Baloch leaders, the constitution of one unit system, the distribution of lands among services and non-local. In 1962, elections were held in which AttaullahMengal, KhairBuxMarri and Ahmad Nawaz Bugti were elected as MNA’s. They started making critical speeches. As a reaction government removed their Sardari titles. Mengal and Marri were arrested. AttaullahMengal was charged with murder, tried by Jirga under FCR (Frontier Crimes Regulations) and imprisoned. These developments provoked a hostile reaction in Balochistan. On the other hand Sher Muhammad Marri who had link with Soviet Union started guerrilla movement. The name of the movement was ‘Parari’. By 1963, the Parari had established 22 base camps which were spread over 45000 sq miles from Mengal tribal area of Jahalawan in the South. Ali Muhammad Mengal was in command to the Marri Bugti area. According to S. Harrison there were 400 fulltime volunteers at every camp which they called them “Command Force” and hundreds of loosely organized part time reservists.

The guerrilla forces divided in groups headed by commandos. They avoided pitched battles and created harassment in the classical guerrilla fashion. They ambushed army convoys and army engineers engaged in roads construction and army signal deputed on telephone maintenance. The army hit back with force but could not pursue them in the difficult terrain of the area. Sometime forces resorted to high handedness, including bombing on Eid congregation in a village. On the other hand regime after a brief silence, continued to suppress the opponent of one unit by severe punishment. For example Mir GhausBuxBizenjo was tried and awarded 14 years imprisonment and fine of 5000 rupees by a jirga under FCR (Frontier Crimes Regulation)on charges of circulating currency notes inscribed with slogans against the one unit. In Balochistan army faced a stiff resistance from guerrilla forces. A few hotly contested battles were fought between forces and guerillas during 1964-65. In December 1963, some five hundred Marri’s attacked an army camp in the area, which resulted in heavy casualties on both side. Another battle was fought in the Gharur area in December 1965 where the army suffered heavy casualties. In another battle in Bambore that year army used napalm bombs in its air raid and many more battles were fought in 1966. The situation was more deteriorated by another new factor which was the distribution of land in pat feeder areas to member of services and their family. Resistance started in Marri area. The troops of pishn scouts and Zhob militia moved into Marri land from Kohlu and Kahan met with stiff resistance and reinforcements were sent to relieve the beleaguered soldiers into Marri area. There was bitter fighting and both side suffered heavy casualties. According to author of contemporary History of Balochistan, “The military operation and air strike made them die hard or rather formidable. The Baloch seemed to be more united now.”

Sher Muhammad Marri’s movement gained momentum and youth from urban centers started joining the rebels in the hills. The Balochistan people liberation Front became active and published an underground newspaper called “Spark” in Balochi and Urdu and English languages. On 28th January 1967 government announced general amnesty and decided to release Baloch leaders and about 1300, “Ferraries”. Government also reinstated former chief to
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chieftainship. In 1968 KhairBuxMarri had come out with some fresh demands such as compensation for the losses, right of property of Sardar on all minerals in any particular area, withdrawal of police and revenue staff, and no construction of roads in this area. As a result government again arrested all leaders so fighting once again stated in Eastern Balochistan.

Establishment of Balochistan as province

On 26 March, 1969 Ayub was gone and General Agha Muhammad Yahya Khan imposed martial law. The power and authority of presidency was also passed to Yahya Khan. On 22 November 1969 in a broad cost he announced the dissolution of one unit and also decided to hold election on the basis of one man one vote. He said, “The West Pakistan province is to be divided into different provinces and these will shortly start functioning. The executive authorities of the every province vest in the governor who is appointed by president and perform his functions subject to the direction of the president”. It is important to point out that Ayub Khan at the last stage of his regime ready to accept most of the demands of political leaders except dissolution of one unit but Yahya Khan decided to dissolve West Pakistan in the vain hope of satisfying political demands in both parts of the country. He restored autonomy of the old provinces of Sindh, the Punjab and NWFP and created the new province of Balochistan. On 1 July 1970 Balochistan was finally being accorded the status of a full-fledged province. This decision was well come with pump and show thought out Balochistan for three days. People celebrated this occasion, with great fervour. In the evening of 1st July a torchlight procession was conducted throughout the streets, of Quetta commemorating the end of the one unit. The author of saysiat-i-Balochistan remarks that, ‘at last Balochistan was gained the status of full-fledged province after long and untiring efforts’.

One thing is notable here that Sheikh Mujib also attends these ceremonies in Balochistan. He assured the Baloch leaders that in the upcoming national assembly he would support all demands for giving the people of Balochistan their due rights. In response Baloch politicians expressed their open empathy with the plight of the Bengalis. Gen. RiazHussain was appointed as first governor of the province.

Formation of Balochistan as an independent province became the cause of many upheavals in Balochistan politics. Balochistan Muslim League was badly exposed that it had no clear cut policy or stance on any matter. People realized this fact when they came to know that Muslim League prepared two kinds of posters one in the favour of the decision of dissolution of one unit and other in the favour of retention of one unit. This fact was disclosed when two or three posters were pasted wrongfully in the favour of retention of one unit along with the posters of greating on the dissolution of one unit. This created bad faith among public about ML. On 13th January rulers of ex-BSU (Balochistan State Union) passed a resolution in which they demanded the re-emergence of BSU. Their demands did not get proper support from public, on the other hand govt. also not pay any head to this demand. In all these circumstances National Awami Party emerged as a powerful political force in Balochistan but difference aroused among the
pukhtoons and Balochies elements on the issue of demarcation of province on linguistic line. Pushtoon leader Abdul Samad Achikzai demanded that province was divided into pushtoon Baloch territory. The main leadership in NAP did not agree with Achikzai on this issue. This became the cause of disassociation of Achikzai from NAP. Achikzai formed its own party in the name of “Pakhtun Khan National Awami Party”. The aim, objective and manifesto of this party was to include all pushtoon territory into NWFP to form a Greater pushtoon province. Yahya Khan had made a good beginning to dissolve the one unit. So the nationalist ceased their hostilities because their major demand was fulfilled. But they could not certain about the future. They did not dismantle their command headquarters with a view to wait and see nor did they disband their gorilla formation. They worked harder to expand their command structure, mustered large forces and became at least defacto authority in Marri Bugi area and even elsewhere in Jhalawan.

Conclusion

Balochistan is a backward area of Pakistan. Before, independence British did not make any social, political, and economic change in Balochistan because their major interests were geographical rather than economic. Their policies insulated Balochistan from the forces of modernization. The old tribal system carried on with some slight changes which fulfilled their political interest. The irony of fate is that after the birth of Pakistan the successive governments maintained status-quo. They did not act properly to change the situation. The Baloch nationalist sentiments started during colonial era but these were strengthened due to uneven development. The most aggressive resentment comes from Balochistan against one unit. Government used coercive measures to make silence such as arrest of nationalist leaders in Balochistan. As a reaction people started resistance with fire arms. In response government used army and take military operation against trouble creators. Throughout Ayub period there was unrest in Balochistan due to insurgencies. Military operation materialized the nationalist sentiments. Military operation was the ad-hoc solution of the problem. Government did not try to solve the problem on concrete basis. The one important thing during these resistance movements was that these were not in real terms separatist movements because their charter of demands based on greater provincial autonomy.

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