

Politics of Ethnicities and Federating Issues in Pakistan: Changing Geopolitical Perspective of the Region

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Abstract *Keeping in view the multi-ethnic structure of Pakistan, the federal structure is designed in the country. Circumstantial evidence suggests that smaller ethnicities are not satisfied within the structure and therefore, crises and disturbances are continuously being witnessed. The ethnic factor becomes more visible, impacting not only the internal politics of Pakistan but also its evolving regional political interaction as well. The ethnicities located in the border region of the country, have been facing the dilemma to accept the geopolitical offers given to Pakistan by the neighboring countries. The sort of relations causes ethnic resentments if it doesn't recognize the rights of the community. Pashtun and Baluch ethnicities have been more relevant for study in this regard.*

Key words: Ethnicity, Federation, Region, Geopolitics, Pakistan, Pashtuns, Baluchs, Nationalism

Introduction and Discussion

Pakistan is a multi-ethnic Muslim country. It was created after a long struggle against Great Britain on one side while Hindus of India on another side. The pattern of the freedom movement was based on the Two Nations Theory, a religio-political ideology for the creation of Pakistan. The ideology rejected the ethnic logic of nationalism, claimed by the Indian National Congress for a united India, irrespective of religious differences. All India Muslim League remained successful in 1947 in getting a separate state-Pakistan. The introduction of a viable political system in Pakistan was a challenge and problem for the new country according to its religio-political ideology and ethnic diversities.

The official ideology of the state of Pakistan is Islamic. The ideology integrates all individuals in the name of common religion- Islam- and nullifies any other differences for whatever reasons. Keeping in view the basic assumptions of the ideology, the country has a system corresponding to its ideology. It was decided that Pakistan would be a federation where the major ethnicities got unit status as demarcated by the British government. The two wings of Pakistan; East and West, were ethnically, geographically and demographically, poles apart from each other. The fact was little sensed and unworkable formulae for federation were put into the Pakistan constitution. The sense of ethnic deprivation ruined the territorial integrity of Pakistan in 1971 as East Pakistan declared its independence.

Post-disintegration Pakistan did not introduce the required fundamental changes for the political satisfaction of other ethnicities and sub-nationalities living in it. Pakistan still remained diverse with different ethnicities, located in its specific parts. Major ethnicities are; Panjabis, Pashtuns, Sindhis and Balochis, recognized in their respective provinces of Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Sindh and Baluchistan respectively. The federation of Pakistan consists of, Islamabad as a federating center, four provinces,

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Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and administrative unit of Gilgit Baltistan. The constitution of Pakistan is designed in a specific manner.

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan is a federal state governed under two lists of powers; Federal and Concurrent. The powers are distributed in a way that makes federation strong and provinces virtually weak. The current constitution was framed in 1973, the first broad-based constitution of the country agreed by majority political parties. The constitution was suspended and amended at various points of time by military regimes after coups. The document was drastically changed in the 8th amendment by the Zia ul Haq regime and 17th amendment by the Pervez Musharraf government to serve military needs. The constitution could not address the longstanding ethnic issues of provincialism and resource distribution and got precipitated with passing time. Frustration was on the increase against the dominant center and provincial 'hegemony' of Punjab, against the smaller provinces. The frustration crossed the limits of tolerance by some communities and smaller ethnic groups and led to the uprising, crisis, violence and civil wars. Ethno-political issues in Pakistan may best be analyzed in the context of their location, size, demography, resources and national and international politics.

Pashtuns are the second largest ethnic group in Pakistan after Punjabis. They have been residing in the North West of the country though, can also be found in big cities. Their population is not limited to a province in Pakistan. Pashtun's biggest number is residing in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province, previously known as North West Frontier Province (NWFP). FATA, the seven tribal agencies, is host to the Pashtun population as well. The province of Baluchistan too hosts a large Pashtun population- 29.64 % of the province (Hasnat, 2011). Also, a big number of Pashtun's populations are living in Afghanistan, adjacent to Pashtun areas in Pakistan. The province and the ethnicity have their own history, culture, priorities and compulsions.

Pashtun's origin is from Afghanistan who spread into adjacent areas. They have lived for centuries on the land of Afghanistan and the Indian Sub-continent. Pashtuns are further distributed into various tribes, Yusufzai being the largest tribe. Their population is lying at the crossroads of Civilizations i.e. Indian, Persian, Hans, Arab and Central Asian. Their inhabiting land is virtually landlocked if taken as isolated. The region's topography is predominantly mountainous and hard terrain. The climate has been harsh and tough. Currently, they are part of two different states; Afghanistan and Pakistan. Pashtuns are in majority in Afghanistan (47 % of the country's total population) while second in number in Pakistan (Clements, 2003). The division has political and social repercussions not only for Pashtuns but for both the states as well. It is still haunting the local and state politics of the region.

The culture and society of Pashtuns are unique and different from all other cultures. It is structured upon tribal lines and the headship of a tribal leader. Pashto is the mother tongue of all Pashtuns. *Pashtunwali* is the name of the code of conduct that directs Pashtuns' daily life and interaction with each other. This is an unwritten code, covering all sides of collective life. It is a legal and governing system, being followed by the Pashtuns especially, in traditional society. Main principles of *Pashtunwali* are; *Melmastia* (hospitality), *Nanawati* (forgiveness/asylum), *Badal* (Revenge), *Tora* (Bravery), *Khengarah* (Cooperation), *Pat* (Pride/Courage), *Nang* (Honour) *Namoos* (Protecting women), *Panah* (Asylum) etc. They regard *Pashtunwali* as supreme and respectable and strictly observe it. Its deviation is regarded as a harsh taboo. Whosoever is a challenge to their code of conduct, they face strong resistance and punishment. "Pashtuns are different in their culture, history and temperament from other ethnicities. Their traditions are unique for their salient features and attributes. They value their culture and traditions which they never compromise. Willingness and consent are prior to them and resist any forceful imposition" (Akbar, Sep 9, 2016).

Pashtuns have been conscious of what has been happening to them for the last couple of centuries. There was no dividing line till 1893 when Durand Line was drawn as a boundary between British India and Afghanistan. It was brought into existence through an agreement, called the Durand Line Agreement, between the Afghanistan government and British India. Pashtuns were thus divided into two sovereign

political systems. On the British side Pashtuns were administered in a province, named North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Frontier Region. They were later on distributed into three; NWFP (now KP), FATA and Baluchistan. FATA has been controlled by a different administrative structure under Frontier Crimes Regulations (FCR). Thus they were divided further by British India for governance reasons and defense purposes.

Pashtun leadership considers the division of the Pashtun ethnic group as a conspiracy against them and as a means of exploitation. They have logically explained how Pashtuns should not be divided. They reject the Durand Line Treaty by regarding it as a dictated treaty between a weaker party and strong colonial power of the time. They give historical, geographical and cultural argument that why Pashtuns cannot be separated and disintegrated from each other. Therefore, they always have been in search for 're-unification' of Pashtuns. The effort has caused reaction from the government of Pakistan, as all Pashtuns and the inhabiting land on Pakistan's side of Durand Line is taken as constitutional and legal part of the country. Apart from, the region is strategically significant for the defence of Pakistan and regional politics.

The inhabiting land of Pashtuns has strategically and politically been important in history. It has been a gateway for Indian Sub-continent and vice versa. Pashtun's territory connects Pakistan with Central Asia, previously being the part of Russia. British government in India used the region as a buffer zone against Russia. For Pakistan the area is equally important. Lacking enough breath, Pakistan has allegedly been pursuing 'strategic depth' policy towards Afghanistan especially, for strategic weapons. Friendly or at least neutral governments in Kabul therefore, have been the strategic approach of Pakistan in recent years. The rise of Taliban with the help of Pakistan support, is one of the examples (Schrader, 2017).

The area has been under international strategic and political focus since Cold War days for its strategic location. Being adjacent to Afghanistan, Pashtun areas of Pakistan: FATA, NWFP (KP) and Baluchistan, became very relevant to resistance against the Soviet Union. *Mujahideen* against USSR's presence in Afghanistan, were raised in these area and transported to Afghanistan for fighting. The area was also used for supply to *Mujahideen*. The war imprinted long and negative impacts on the society of Pashtun's community in Pakistan thus, increasing frustration and disappointment. Poverty, illiteracy, violence, drugs, smuggling, unemployment etc. reached to the peak. Kalashnikov culture promoted. As a whole the area was taken away by uncertainty, that made the locals feel odd, exploited and deprived. The feelings are still found in the society as the war ended but Pashtuns lost everything. The saga continued.

The area once again became a 'battleground' as international forces came into Afghanistan in the name of War against Terrorism after 9/11 attacks. Pashtun's territory on Pakistan side i.e. FATA, NWFP and Baluchistan, was important to war in Afghanistan. A strong reaction came against US invasion of Afghanistan and toppling of the Taliban regime in Kabul. Peace in the whole Pashtun area especially, in FATA was disturbed to the core. Militancy got promoted dramatically that engulfed not only the Pashtun land but also most of the parts of Pakistan. FATA became the hub of militancy that became the headache for Pakistan as well as the world. Military operations were conducted against militants with various names; Operation *Rah-i-Haq* (I, II and III) in Swat, Operation *Sirat-i-Mustaqeem* in Khyber Agency, Operation *Sherdel* in Bajawar Agency, Operation Black Thunder Storm in Buner District, Operation *Rah-i-Raast* in Swat, Operation Brekhna in Mohmand Agency, *Rah-i-Nijat* in Waziristan, Operation *Koh-i-Sufaid* in Kurram Agency, Operation *Zarb-i-Azab* in South Waziristan and Operation *Radd-ul-Fasaad* against militants across the country. Apart from, US drone strikes in parts of FATA, an operation against Osama bin Laden was carried out in May 2011 in Abbottabad that killed the al-Qaeda chief (Martin, 2012).

The War against Terrorism has imprinted heavy losses on Pashtun lives, society, culture, economy, politics, psychology and demography. A greater number of Pashtuns civilians have been killed by militants and military in counter-terrorism operations. According to one study 49,000 civilians were killed till 2013 in the War on Terror in Pakistan (Physicians for Social Responsibility, 2015, March). Majority of them were Pashtuns. The same studies note,

"If we add the estimates made for the "AfPak" area, we reach a balance of between 265,000 and 330,000 war dead. The figure of 108,000 combatants killed is accompanied by the larger figure of between 157,000 and 221,000 non-combatants. The number of bystanders killed is thus 50 to 100% greater than the number of combatants killed" (Physicians for Social Responsibility, 2015).

Apart from casualties, a large number of people were displaced from their homes, the largest in world history. Almost 2 million of people were made Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from Swat, as a result of military operations against militants there. Same situations happened in Khyber Agency and Waziristan. It has been one of the biggest challenge for world and Pakistan how to rehabilitate them. The populations felt frustrated when they were blocked from entering to various parts of the country. As the atrocities of war increased, so did the disappointment amongst Pashtuns, against the state and its institutions were. The war as a whole has changed the psychology of the community and the politics. People of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa voted for Pashtun nationalist party, Awami National Party (ANP) in 2008.

The recent developments in the context of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), created uncertainty amongst the Pashtuns of Pakistan for a 'due' share in the project. Strong criticism and objections have been raised over the modalities, passage and various packages linked to the project. The provincial government of KP has protested against federal government for 'ignoring' the province in CPEC. All parties conferences in KP were held to show solidarity over the issue. A movement, called *Pukhtunkhwa Ulasi Tehreek* (Pukhtunkhwa public movement) has been very active in this regard. The federal government promised that the province rights are fully safeguarded. The province was assured that the Western route, going through KP, will be constructed first. The mistrust continued and a large number of the people of the province doubt that the federal government is not serious in addressing the reservations over the project of CPEC. Secondly, the building of the route should be shown through a map

Likewise, the province of Baluchistan is the most backward province of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. It is located in the South West of the country. It borders with Iran, Afghanistan and Arabian Sea. It is almost one half of the total territory of Pakistan and resides 3.6 % of the country's population ("How Baluchistan became a part of Pakistan- A historical Perspective", 2015, Dec 5). Before the creation of Pakistan, The province consisted of Princely States, under British Raj. On August 11, 1947, an agreement was reached between Quaid-e-Azam and Khan of Kalat for the future status of the state. The agreement was to recognize independent Kalat state with a standstill status and discussions was made with regard to its defence, communications and external affairs (Sethi, 2016, August 16).

Pakistan desired Kalat's full adherence to Pakistan. In February 1948 Quaid-e-Azam wrote to the Khan, "I advise you to join Pakistan without further delay...and let me have your final reply which you promised to do after your stay with me in Karachi when we fully discussed the whole question in all its aspects" (Singh, 2009). However Khan of Kalat was hesitant on joining with Pakistan as he wanted more concessions in a treaty. In February Quaid-e-Azam visited Baluchistan apparently, for persuading Khan of Kalat for accession to Pakistan. The Khan decided not to accede to Pakistan according to the decision of the parliament of the principality. Makran, Lasbela, Kharan, the three feudalities of Khan of Kalat acceded to Pakistan, reportedly on March 18, 1948. The Pakistani forces on March 26, 1948 went into the areas of the state of Kalat; Turba, Pasni and Jiwani. Finally, the Khan was forced to merge Kalat with Pakistan (Singh, 2008). The factor still, impacting not only the Pakistani politics but also the regional one.

Baluch nationalists have not accepted the Kalat's accession to Pakistan yet and opposition erupted against it in various periods of time. The first insurgency was headed by Prince Karim, the brother of Khan of Kalat in 1948. He fled to Afghanistan and conducted anti-Pakistan activities through a *lashkar* (private militia). His battle continued till 1950. Yar Muhammad Khan, the Khan of Kalat was allowed by Pakistan to retain his nominal title until 1955 when the area was made the part of One Unit.

The second phase of insurgency erupted in 1950s in reaction to Baluchistan's merger in One Unit, as required for the first constitution of Pakistan. The insurgency is also known as, "Jhalawan disturbance." The disturbance was confined to Kohlu, Kalat and Khuzdar districts. The insurgency continued for several years

until government declared general amnesty for the rebels in 1960 but the issue was not effectively addressed. The vicious circle continued as in 1960s a third round of insurgency emerged. The immediate cause behind the upheaval was the arrest of Baluch leaders; Ghaush Bakhsh Bizenjo, Khair Bakhsh Marri, Nawab Akbar Bugti and Atta Ullah Mengal, as they were accused for providing support to Sardar Nauroz Khan. This time the disturbances engulfed the Districts of Dera Bugti, Khuzdar, Kalat and Kohlu. The uprising quelled when the One Unit was dissolved in 1970 and Baluch nationalists formed provincial government in 1972 (Andlye, 2011, Oct 5).

Baluch nationalists entered into the fourth phase of insurgency in 1973. The insurgency started when the government of Atta Ullah Mengal was removed in the province by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in February, 1973. The districts of Kohlu, Sibi, Khuzdar, Dera Bugti and Kharan were encompassed by the insurgency and continued for next four years. The removal of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto by Gen. Zia ul Haq, and the announcement of general amnesty for the insurgents, finally normalized Baluchistan.

Relatively, the insurgency in Baluchistan remained silent till the new century. In 1990s Baluch nationalists got some respect as democracy had returned back after Zia ul Haq's death. Baluch nationalists dominated the stage of Power in Baluchistan during the decade. Though, occasional tensions developed with the federal government during the era but Baluchistan remained peaceful as a whole. The situation changed when democracy once again was rolled back by the military of General Pervez Musharraf in 1999. It was the point where the relations with the centre started deteriorating again.

The 2002 general elections' result in Pakistan were different as the polls were mainly rigged by military regime. *Mutahida Majlis-e-Amal* (MMA) formed government in Baluchistan. It was an alliance of Islamic religious parties, forming government allegedly with Musharraf support. Independent observer groups, monitoring the elections reported huge tampering of votes in the elections and the Election Commission of Pakistan was accused for controlling the election result in favor of military regime (Grare, 2013, April). Fourteen years of education (BA/BSc.) was made the eligibility criterion for contesting elections. *Madrassas'* (religious seminary) degree holders were equally eligible. Most of Baluch leaders could not fulfill the criteria and were unable to contest the elections. Thus, ground was leveled for MMA ticket holders.

Baluch nationalists parties got affected. Though Jam Muhammad Yousaf, a Baluch was made the new chief minister of the province but with a strong control from the religious parties dominated cabinet. Thus Baluch nationalists felt frustrated and rejected the military's manipulated politics. That proved the first actual point of conflict between Baluch leadership and military regime under Pervez Musharraf (International Crisis Group, 2006, Sep 14).

Military regime started arresting Baluch leadership even before the actual conflict began. The situation was heading towards further deterioration. A compromise with Akbar Bugti, Baluch leader, could not succeed. Putting a political solution, Musharraf also introduced local government system in the name of devolution of powers but actually under the control of the centre. That was perceived as negation of provincial autonomy by nationalists in smaller provinces. Pakistan's army entered Dera Bugti in 2006 for fighting against the rebels that resulted into population displacement from their homes. Army was blamed for torture, extra judicial killings, forced disappearance and illegal arrests of the locals (Grare, 2013). Finally, the stage was set for the killing of Akbar Bugti.

Akbar Bugti was an important Baluch leader who had remained the provincial governor and state minister for interior. He was well-educated person but a die-hard Baluch nationalist leader and chief of his tribe, Bugti. He was struggling for greater autonomy for Baluchistan. He was suspected for anti-state activities and armed struggle. In Kohlu, The district of Baluchistan, fighting broke out on August 24, 2006 as army claimed that military helicopter was hit by rebels but landed safely. On August 26, Pakistan army moved into the cave, where Akbar Bugti was hiding. The cave collapsed and as result he was killed along with his fighters though army claimed that his death was accidental and unintentional (Sattar, 2006, August 28). One of the federal ministers, Abdul Qayoom Jatoti resigned as he blamed army for the murder of Akbar Bugti. His family blamed and held Musharraf responsible for his killing.

The insurgency prolonged this time especially after the killing of Akbar Bugti. Musharraf regime was widely criticized for a political repression of Bugti. Musharraf policy continued till his removal in 2008 as a president. The 2008 elections were boycotted by Baluch nationalist parties in reaction to Bugti's killing. The boycott embarrassed Islamabad and once again rigging was made in the elections. Later on in 2011, it was revealed that 65 % votes were fake in Baluchistan (International Crisis Group, 2006).

Pakistan People's Party (PPP) came into power in centre as a result of 2008 elections. The party was having a positive approach towards Baluch nationalists. The government of PPP apologized to the people of Baluchistan for wrongs done during the Musharraf regime. Asif Ali Zardari, the new president of Pakistan insisted on healing the wounds of Baluch people and a Reconciliation Committee was formed to this end. In October 2009, the committee issued its roadmap, calling for strengthening provincial institutions, reconciliation of Baluch leadership and a new formula for redistributing resources amongst federal units ("Baluchistan Matters", 2012, Oct 28).

The federal government announced 'Baluchistan Package' on November 24, 2009. The package was presented in Parliament as 39 points agenda. The package tried to address the initial grievances of Baluch people. It was to deal with provincial deprivation, matters related to NFC Award, Mega Projects, judicial inquiry into Akbar Bugti assassination, army was to be replaced by FC in Sui, gas royalty, Higher Education scholarships, local government was to be dealt by provincial assembly, jobs for provincial youths, and a parliamentary committee was enacted for monitoring what was said in the package (Hasnat, 2011).

Baluch separatists rejected the *Aghaz-e-haqooq-e-Baluchistan* (initiation of Baluchistan's rights) Package on the ground that it does not address their main issues related to maximum autonomy ("Baluch nationalists reject package", 2009, Nov 25). Moderate Baluch nationalists also had their list of reservations for its ineffectiveness. By the end of December, almost all Baluch nationalists had rejected the proposals under the package and thus the document was hard to implement (Grare, 2013). Frustration and mistrust amongst Baluchs continued and the provincial government was not that much confidence. Most of its cabinet meetings were held outside the province during the tenure of Pakistan People Party (PPP) led government in Pakistan.

In 2013 elections were held in Pakistan for National Assembly and all Provincial Assemblies including Baluchistan. The Baluch nationalist parties took part in elections. National Party (NP) won eight provincial seats while Pakhtunkhwa Mili Awami Party (PkMAP) secured 10 seats in the province. No party had an absolute majority, therefore, a coalition government was set up. A formula was made for power-sharing. PkMAP got governorship of the province, NP nominee held chief minister office for half tenure while Muslim League (N), was to have it for the remaining half term. According to the formula, Mr. Abdul Malik remained Chief Minister for the first two and a half years while Mr. Sanaullah Zehri followed him.

Baluchistan's internal situation has a close connection with its geopolitical characteristics and changing regional trends. The province geography has been meaningful for Afghanistan, India, China, Iran United States and the countries, dependant on the Arabian Sea. The province is regarded as the richest one in Pakistan for its natural resources and geopolitical significance. The province coastal areas, along with the Arabian Sea (Indian Ocean) make it the center of attraction for all the trading states, focused on the region and beyond. One example of its geopolitical, geo-economic and geostrategic importance is Gwadar Port. The development of the port embodies many questions regarding regional hegemony and competition amongst the states and powers whose interests are integral to the regional and oceanic politics. The port may help broaden the trade amongst the states lying across the regions of the Persian Gulf, Central Asia, Eastern Africa, Western China, the United Arab Emirates and India. Likewise, the port is important for challenging the regional geostrategic calculus.

Huge resources of minerals and precious natural resources are explored, which have further raised the level of interest in the province of all the stakeholders. Rekodic site at Chaghi, discovered in 1993 is the world's 4th largest spot for the high quality of gold and copper reservoirs. Rekodic project produces "200,000 tons of copper and 250,000 ounces of gold annually" (Saleem, 2016). The estimated quantity of

copper and gold at the site is 509 billion tons and 0022 grams tons of copper and gold respectively. Iron ores are also found in the province. "Iron ores are rocks and minerals from which Meta 11pc iron can be economically extracted" (Saleem, 2016). If processed efficiently, the ores will produce good quality and a large quantity of much-needed iron. Therefore, it is also known as, "Hillock of Gold" (Qader, 2018, March 22). The natural gas huge field at Sui called Sui Gas is also located in Baluchistan. It contributes 6% of total gas production in Pakistan.

The geopolitics and natural resources have been a source of conflict between Baluchistan and the central government of Pakistan. Having a history of mistrust and conflict with Islamabad since its merger, Baluch nationalists perceive that Baluchistan is being exploited by Punjab. Likewise, the exploitation of natural resources i.e. petroleum commodities, energy production, gold, iron etc. has been in the federal list of power. Baluch nationalists therefore, have been expressing their dissent in this regard.

Baluchs' demand for provincial autonomy has been in line with their historical status of maximum autonomy over themselves. Baluch thinks that autonomy or independence is the real solution to their backwardness and they feel being ignored by the government of Pakistan. The gas pipelines were attacked many times for not addressing their demands. Mr. Akbar Bugti had repeatedly demanded rights over natural resources and its control for the people of Baluchistan. In an interview he said,

"Not a single penny has been given to the Bugtis in terms of royalty since the companies started exploration for gas. We have never demanded any royalty because we are the owners of this wealth. Moreover, it is not a question of royalty, but the main dispute is over rights. We say that gas is the national wealth of the Baloch, and for years it has been forcibly taken out for the use of others, without sharing anything with the Baloch people" (Zulqar, 2003, February).

Baluchs' grievances further precipitated in developing Gwadar Port and CPEC as they take consider it their exploitation. The megaprojects launched in the name of Pakistan's development, have been rejected by Baluch leaders on the logic of 'external occupation' of Baluchistan by non-Baluchs (Khan, 2009, Sep 15). They consider them outsiders especially, Punjabis as 'occupier' settlers on Baluchistan territory. Therefore, the people of Punjab are hated and targeted in the province.

Gwadar Port is the part of Baluchistan province. The historical, geographical and demographical facts ascertain that the area belongs to Baluchs. The site has been a natural port for fifteen and sixteen centuries. Realizing the geostrategic importance of the port and area, Portuguese had fought unsuccessfully for its occupation in the fifteen century. The area was granted to the Sultanate of Oman in eighteen century under a treaty by Khan of Kalat, Meer Naseer Khan. (Tyagi, 2009). During the time the port remained very busy for national, regional and international trade i.e. Middle East, India, North East Africa and Great Britain. Pakistan realized the importance of the site in the early 1950s and wished for an international standard port construction but the area was under Oman control and so Jivani was considered in this regard. Jivani was an unsafe side for its closeness with the Iranian border. Therefore, Pakistan bought the Gwadar area back from Sultanate Oman in 1958 for \$3 million for twenty years control under a treaty between Pakistan and Oman. Pakistan got absolute control of the area in 1988, according to the terms of the treaty of 1958.

A small seaport was constructed by Pakistan after getting control of the region. But the current port project was acknowledged in 2000. A deal was finalized between Pakistan and China for the construction of port and China Harbor Engineering Company was given the responsibility for construction. China invested \$248 million for the first phase of its construction. The investment reached \$2.2 billion in 2002 (Baloch, n.d).

Ideally, the port is a destiny changer not only for Pakistan, Baluchistan and the whole region but the port faces serious challenges especially from Baluch nationalists for political and ethnic reasons. Already there has been restlessness in Baluch areas against Pakistan. In October 2003, Pashtun, Baluch and Sindhi nationalists held meeting in Quetta and "vowed to resist the development projects launched unilaterally to usurp the resources of the smaller nationalities" ("Nationalists oppose Gwadar Port project", 2003, Oct, 18). The representatives from KP (the then NWFP), Sindh and Baluchistan expressed anger that the

sentiments of the three provinces were ignored for 'pleasing' Punjab. They also said that Baluchistan is colonized as it has been deprived of its 700 km coastline by Islamabad. Jamhoori Watan Party (JWP) warned that the construction of Gwadar Port along with other projects, "would jeopardize" the integrity of Pakistan. They expressed, "efforts were being made to usurp oil and gas in Kohlu and Dera Bugti, construct Gwadar port for international exploiters and separate 700km coastal belt from Gadani to Jewani from Baluchistan to establish the biggest naval base in South Asia under American control" (Government should respect provinces' will: JWP, Sep 3, 2003).

The years, 2003-2005 are known as "the years of acre boom" when the big merchants purchased half of the land of Gwadar (Baloch, n.d). It created fears in the minds of Baluch. The militants rocketed Gwadar Port when the construction began. The target killing started in 2003 against the law enforcement agencies and non-Baluch residents in Baluchistan. Brahamdagh Bugti, a Baluch separatist leader, incited people against killing the non-Baluch in the province and the resulting violence claimed 650 lives between 2005 and 2001 (Feyyaz, n.d).

The development of the project of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has precipitated Baluch grievances. After the introduction of the project, Gwadar Port and Baluch land got further importance. Gwadar looks like the footnote of the designed Corridor project. The project cannot remain successful without its heartiest acceptance by the people of the province. The project therefore, is dependent on the full cooperation of Baluch people- especially, the nationalists.

According to the project, China plans to make Gwadar the deepest part of the world for its future potential and efficient functions. Infrastructure is developed in the form of a corridor, a full package, made of energy production, economic zones, transportation, information technology etc. Therefore, it is said that the areas get automatically developed through which CPEC pass. Federal government officials reiterate that CPEC is equally important for Baluchistan. Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister of Pakistan said on the eve of the inauguration of Sorab-Hoshab highway, "A new Pakistan is in the making. A developed Baluchistan means a new Pakistan... Development of Baluchistan is not a favor; it is the right of the Baloch people" (Khan, 2016, July 24).

Baluch nationalists do not have faith in what is claimed by the federation. They are doubtful that money is being made in the name of Baluchistan. Sardar Akhtar Jan Mengal, a Baluch leader expressed, "it will only benefit the province of Punjab and its people for whom development projects have already been launched in different areas that would provide jobs and economic development" (The Newspaper's staff correspondent, 2017, Feb 27). Baluch separatist even rejects China's One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative on the basis of its exploitation of Baluchistan in the shape of CPEC. Ashraf Sherjan, a member of the Baluch Republican Army (BRA)- one of the Baluch nationalist militant group-, said in Germany, "I would request all other countries to consider the situations of Baluchistan before joining OBOR project... We the people of Baluchistan have even rejected Pakistan and China... Just to make China happy due to CPEC, Pakistan is already killing the people of Baluchistan... And for the people of Baluchistan, there is no benefit and no interest in this project" ("Worlds must consider Baluchistan conditions...", 2017, May 14).

Likewise, rejecting CPEC, another separatist leader, Brahamdagh Bugti said, "On the one hand, our people are being killed, while on the other hand, [Islamabad] is allowing China to carry out mega-projects in our homeland. Why is this happening?... I don't see this project reaching successful completion," (Kakar, 2015, Nov 12).

Pakistan thinks that anti-Pakistan actors, both national and international, are behind the worsening law and order situation in Baluchistan. Pakistan has been repeatedly blamed RAW and the National Directorate of Security (NDS) in this regard. Pakistan presents the geopolitical factor that drags India into Baluchistan for sabotaging the project. Pakistan has arrested Kalbhushan Jhadav, a high profile RAW agent in Baluchistan who was allegedly involved in subversive activities in Pakistan. Pakistan Chief of Army Staff, General Asif Bajwa said, "He used to establish a network of operatives, provide funds, arrange and smuggle people for

terrorism in the country" (News Desk, 2016, March 29). Pakistan released a video of Jhadv in which he confessed the charges.

Conclusion

To understand the internal and external policy complications of Pakistan, the ethnic factor needs to be properly analyzed. The diverse ethnicities are located on important geostrategic points and areas, influencing the foreign policy of the country. Pashtuns and Baluchs have been expressing resentments against the 'powerful' center for 'dominating' their ethnicities. These ethnicities refuge within itself and try to foment alliances with each other and their ethnic brethren across the border. On the other side, they oppose the types of international engagement, which they think to be against the interests of the community. This can best be witnessed how Pashtun nationalists respond to Pakistan's policy towards Afghanistan. Pashtun and Baluch nationalists also oppose CPEC, on the basis of 'not recognizing' their rights and concerns.

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