

*History*

## **Historiography in the modern world: An analysis of the history writing on colonial Balochistan**

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### **Abstract**

*History has been written with an ideology and style from the ancient to the modern times. During the modern period, the historiographical methods changed, and the subject matter of the history became limited, and the history became scientific and political history of the world. The history of Balochistan has written with the same pattern by the European and the western historians. This paper is an effort to explore the main themes, theories and trends which were applied for writing the history of Baloch and Balochistan. both the primary and secondary sources are put into the framework of analysis to understand the themes and historical approaches. It seems that the history of Balochistan has been constructed on the model of the modern scientific historiography.*

**Key words:** Balochistan, British, Colonialism Historiography, Historical Approach, Modern Science.

### **Introduction**

Historiographic themes have been a concern of the historians from the early modern ages when history was liberated from other fields of knowledge and became a separate department of learning and scholarship (Bailyn, 1982, pp 1-5). British historiography of India had been relevant to different present factors of which were working in Europe and in India. The British historiography or the modern interiorly has shifted its focus from the

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traditional method of writing of history. When British came to India, they considered India ahistorical. Indian history was written in traditional historical methods with following single specific historical method (Bentley, 2005, pp 50-60). The modern historiography was constructed on the two themes that Indian society was ahistorical, and the historiography itself owes the debt as the historiography is the origin of Europeans. On the first hand, the British tried to understand the laws of the Indian empire, state and laws to control them. For the writing of history of India, the administrators, jurists and the European played an important role for making history of India systematic. Most of the historian followed the modern historiographic themes and theories for modern historiography of India. Some of the post-modern historiographers believe that it was an imperial historiography to control the minds and land of the Indians. This is also connected with the historical identity which was constructed with the imperial authorities. Same is the case with the history of Baloch and Balochistan.

This article is about the historiographic themes and theories of British Balochistan, the focus is on the history the foreign and the British writers in two phases; firstly, the primary sources will be consulted to understand the features of historical writings. Verily, the second section will be of secondary sources by the foreign writers. This will not only be a review of the literature of the books and other sources but will evaluate the style and methods of the writing. The British formally came into contact with Baloch in 1839, which developed for a long period time till 1947 (Syed, 2007, pp 53-75).

### **Primary historical trends and approaches toward the history of Baloch and Balochistan**

Historical approach in most of the world changed with the emergence of the European powers in the world. The British and the European authors have written a number of books and manuscripts on the history of Baloch and Balochistan. British had a similar notion on the local historical writing, those were ahistorical. The historical approach in Balochistan is totally based on the administrative and the documented government records. Although the first primary source on the Baloch and Balochistan is unknown (Shafique, 2016 p-62). To understand this notion of historiography it is necessary to evaluate both the primary and secondary sources which were part of the mainstream historical writing. Most of the historians while writing the history

of the Balochistan adopted the modern methods of writing the history, which became a bench mark for the writing history in colonial and the post-colonial periods.

At first the modern writings on Balochistan followed a different style than the original patterns of modern historiography. The first known historical source book is a travelogue written by a British officer, who went to Balochistan for evaluation; he was a British agent to Balochistan. He was assigned the task for the exploring the land between Indus and Persia, in which Sindh and Balochistan were important. Later, he was appointed as a lieutenant and was an important figure during the Third Anglo-Maratha war. He visits from Sindh, Balochistan, parts of Persia and Afghanistan. The major aim of his expedition was to map and research the regions Balochistan and Persia. These expeditions were funded by the East India Company. This visit and expiation are considered for the British attack on Balochistan. Afterward Pottinger was appointed as the resident administrator of Sindh and in before the British- Baloch confrontation he went back to London. (Wilson, 1988, pp- 15-20). He worked on several positions in Hong Kong and British India. His journey does not end, he wrote a book with title "Travels in Balochistan and Sind: A Geographical and Historical account. Pottinger visited Balochistan and Sindh in 1810-11 and this book was published in 1816.

This geographical and historical account on Sindh is written in a systematic way, in the firstly, the author has given a brief introduction for the book and reasons for the travel and expeditions to Balochistan and Sindh. This book is divided into two parts. First part has seventeen chapters and the second part consist of twelve chapters. This book is more than a historical and geographical account because it discusses the life, culture and society of the region. This research book is constructed on the ideas and patterns of modern historiography, but it is slightly different. This book is a report of the journey performed in 1810. In the preface of the book the author has mentioned about his writing style by saying "*I disclaim all the attempts at learned research or classical precision in the composition of my pages, I trust in an equal to the indulgence of reader of this volume for any part unsatisfactory in matter or deficient in style*". He himself considered the generality of the writing style because he couldn't get all the sources and

notes. He claimed his work is based on personal observation which the first step of the modern scientific historiography. (Pottinger, 1816, pp 1-10).

The second step for which he has put a great emphasis is the authenticity and evidences of his writing which is a great petitioner of the science and scientific historiography. This book is not a mere survey or a travelogue, but a combination of the previous documentations done before on the region. This book is written in the beginning of the nineteenth century, and do not follow the foot prints of the modern scientific historiography in a proper way, as for writing the first part, along with the scientific methods the author has used a number of traditional methods for understanding writing the historical account of Balochistan and Kirman. The traditional methods were from oral history and storytelling; author has claimed that he has used some of the oral traditions from the local people. This pattern of history writing is opposite to the mainstream scientific and modern historiography. This book has some touch of the fictive and storytelling style by making it not relevant with the rational historiography. This book has several methods, which are not only modern but also medieval style is also followed. All the primary sources do not have the same themes and patterns; some of the historians have strictly followed the scientific methods of history writing (Pottinger, 1816, pp 20-25).

A book with similar theme and theory during the British rule by A.W. Hughes "*The country of Balochistan: its Geography, Topography, Ethnography and History*". This book is a combination of geography, topography and history of Balochistan, the sources which were used for this book are not merely Europeans prepared document, but the old ancient sources are also consulted to write this source. The author also claimed that the book is a combination of the unpublished materials like pamphlets, government records and the other manuscripts. This book consists of eight chapters which define the culture of each division and region of Balochistan separately. The author has used a simple method of writing mostly focusing on the geographical features of Balochistan. like other modern and European historiographers and geographers he also claims of no sources of geography and history of Balochistan, and he think people before his writings considered Balochistan as a part of central Asia. This is considered to be the technical research based on the modern historiographic themes and theories.

It is based on generalization of the facts this one of the major outfits of the modern historiography. Moreover, most of the sources which are used by the author are based on the British travelogues and other historical writings. The two main sources which author has used, the travelogue of Henry Pottinger and another book of St. John published before this book. This book is the first presentation of the modern European and scientific historiography. To understand the initials historiographic themes and theories of British in Balochistan can be evaluated through this important book. This book has been republished in several places and shapes, also a number of editions are produced, first it was published in 1888, it a primary source for the British Balochistan (Hughes, 1977, p-1)

A number of historical accounts have been written and published during the British period, which make easy to understand and find the historiographical trends and methods. Another similar renowned book is written on the Baloch and Balochistan is with the title "The Baloch Race" the book was published first in 1904. The book elaborates the history and origin of Baloch, with reference to the historical approach of the British Balochistan. British authorities, along with the new historiographic themes and theories, on the political front introduced different policies like forward policy and the divide and rule policy. This book is the presentation of the policy of divide and rule. The historiographic methods to find out the national identity of the Baloch and its origin are modern scientific method and especially the author has followed the modern sociologists and historians. The first step of the author to declare the history of Baloch and Balochistan just start from the end of the fifteenth century. As the traditional historical approaches shows that Baloch are living in this area from the ancient times (Hughes, 1977, p-10-11)

Modern historiography was working for the justification of British imperial and colonial rule in India and other part of the world. (Shafique, 2016 p-62). British developed a system to record the daily affairs of the states and the provinces not only contemporary but in a historical way from the origin of the race and nation living in that region and the document was called Gazetteer it was made for almost all the provinces of British India. The British authorities also created and managed similar records for each district and region of Balochistan separately. Some historians believe, the history

written by British administrators was only political and the history of the elite class. Similarly, the gazetteers are the contents are mostly based on political history along with the history of the elite class of Balochistan and the sardars and his family system. They also paid attention towards the geography of Balochistan and the region. Most of the gazetteers were written and published from the early twentieth century. These official records were part of the modern scientific historiography which promotes the British thought of history writing (Bailyn, 1982, pp 1-5).

Another primary source on the history of Balochistan is “Wondering in Balochistan” which is written in the British Period. This book was published in 1882 and it is a travel story if it is put in the paradigm of the modern scientific historiography not the actual history of area. So, it will not be true to present this book only a fictive approach, this book is based on the facts of the travel with very less fictive instruction. This travel was sponsored by the government in which the author has given the description of his visit from Paris to Balochistan. This type of historiography was common in the modern British time, to know about a particular area, people and the geography of Balochistan. The British government gives grant to the officials and other people to visit and travel these areas to understand the major features of region. The motive for this were both political and for trade (MacGregor, 1882, pp 1-355). These all sources are the records of the British historical approach and the official history of the British and all the primary sources have similar style and method of writing the history of Balochistan. The focus of all the historians and the traveler is the Baloch culture and the political history. Similarly, the historians have applied the modern scientific historiographical methods.

### **Secondary methods to write the history of Balochistan**

The early and the primary sources established a new approach towards writing the history of the Baloch and Balochistan. With the end of the British rule in India Balochistan was also liberated in 1947 as an independent region, which afterward makes alliance with Pakistan and a province in Pakistan. This region became a part of the historical research mainly the British rule and that time period. Both the indigenous and the foreign writers have worked on the history of the region. The focus here is on the foreign author

research on the British period and an evaluation will be done on their historiographical methods and approaches. The contemporary researchers have used several methods to write the history of Baloch and Balochistan along with modern historiographic method. Some of them have used new postmodern approaches to compile the history of British Balochistan which is a distinctive method which was discussed by the modern historiographers and historians. A new method which is mixture of several methods to reject the modern historiography is devised through this process. The political history of the world has been the major focus of the modern scientific historiography (White, 1988, pp 1193-1199.).

A number of books have been written on British Balochistan, without a masterpiece to judge the historiographic theory and the mindset. Some of the secondary sources to understand the historical writing approaches. firstly, the book written by a T.A Heathcote, on *Balochistan, the British and the Great Game: The Struggle for the Bolan Pass, Gateway to India*, this book is a political history of Baloch with the relating four nations which were part of the great game: British, Russia, Iran and Afghanistan. In the beginning of this book, the author has given a background of the political elites and their history which is the first step towards modern scientific historiography. Secondly, the author has missed many historical figures which were important in Baloch society but not part of the elite politics. This book comprises only the period from the beginning of British Baloch contact and the four treaties till the establishment of British control of Balochistan. This writing style and method is not new, writing of political history was started from Europe from the early sixteenth century, which was considered to be the history of the nations. The political history is always attached with the modern historiography. This book follows all the themes, trends, theories of the modern historiography, as it follows factual, singular, objective and political themes (Heathcote, 2015, pp 1-292)

Nina Swidler, one of the renowned researchers on the history of British Balochistan, her book *Remotely Colonial: History and Politics in Balochistan*, is very popular among the historians and students of British Balochistan. This book has also focused totally on the political history of Balochistan from the beginning of British control to the end. In this book the historiographic themes also revolved around the politics and modern scientific techniques. The main sources used by the author are from India

office records at British library and center for south Asian studies in Cambridge. These both were the center which was established with the theme of modern scientific historiography. She considered the colonial constructed knowledge as important historical knowledge, as she mentioned the Balochistan district gazetteer series is an impressive achievement, the economic data regarding land tenures, sharecropping contracts and irrigation technology is extensive and very detailed. Although in the first portion of the discussion on the colonial knowledge she has criticized the shortcomings of the historical writings but on the other hand she has used those sources for writing the history of British Balochistan not only this, her focus like the other modern historiographer is politics (Swidler, 2014, pp 1-303).

Most of the foreign researchers focus on the second half of the nineteenth century of history of Balochistan, very less has focused on the first half of the twentieth century. This period is considered as the consolidated period of the British rule in Balochistan. A book written by a western author Martin Axmann "*Back to the future: The Khanate of Kalat and the genesis of Baloch nationalism*". The concept of nationalism was originated from Europe in eighteenth century and Europeans introduced and promulgated it on the Asians. This book is an investigation of the genesis of Baloch nationalism during the first half of the twentieth century. It discusses the Baloch national movement and its construction as a nation. In this book the author has focused on the administrative, political and constitutional history Balochistan. This is a presentation of the modern historiography. Back to the Future ascertains the emergence of a Baloch national movement as the outcome of the historical and political circumstances during the British withdrawal from India, and portrays the evolution of Baloch national identity as a reaction to the territorial, political, and cultural inclusion on the side of the All India Muslim League and the Pakistan movement. This historical approach is a colonial constructed and a notion promoted by the Europeans. This contemporary Baloch national identity is a British constructed. This approach is taken by many of the author in the post-colonial period as well (Axmann, 2008, pp 1-336).

"*The Father's Bow. The Khanate of Kalat and British Indian (19th-20th Century)*" This research work is different historiographical methods; original the basic themes and theories are of the modern historiography with the combination of postmodern methods. The author has worked in the field



to find the history of the khanate to Kalat, along with the documents published by the British officials. The author has also focused on the archival sources which are produced by the British authorities. British colonial authorities during the 19th and 20th Centuries, from the rise of the British colonial interest to this marginal land near Afghanistan and Persia, till the end of the British Empire in 1947 and the subsequent forced merging of Kalat with the new state of Pakistan. This book was published was published in 1997 which is provided a new approach towards historical writing. The main sections of the book are related to the political history of the Khanate of Kalat in British period with relation to the British India. According to the modern historiography, history must be based on the facts and documented sources, the author has followed by this pattern to write this book, which he claims that is a long period of research on the field. This notion of history writing is now gradually changing towards a different style and the historians are trying to make it a combo of both the modern and post-modern historiography. with the emergence of post-modern theories still the modern historiography is in process of history writing (Redaelli, 1997, pp 1-245).

### **Analytical approach**

The historiography of British Balochistan is originated by the European historians and administrative by recording the daily affairs of the government and gives a historical narrative through those records. The British authorities (East India Company) promoted the doctrine of the ahistorical approach of the Indians and Baloch. This historiography was not merely a project to write and record the history of the Baloch and similarly the history of Indians. This project was for the justification of the British rule in India and other regions. This generate a discourse on the civilization of the South Asians, British historiography's one of the main themes was on the civilization considered the Asian uncivilized. The first aim of the British authorities to enter India and later to Balochistan was trade, than it increased significance of experience of change in the understanding of world around in the European mind and efforts to investigate the culture and society of India which intensified at the same time, this influenced both the Indians and the Europeans (White, 1988, pp 1193-1199.).

Another notion for this, the oriental and romantic approach of the European intellectuals with the help of the education. The modern historiography was further indigenized through imparting modern education and modern systems of learning. This presentation of historiography can also be seen in writing the history of Balochistan. All the patterns and themes of the modern historiography were and are being used by the British influenced historians. Not only the influenced one but the some of the western historian are following the same historiographical theories which were the offshore of the European historiography.

The British historiography of Balochistan by the foreign author is the official history written during the imperial and colonial rule of the British authorities. The patterns are very clear in both the primary and the secondary sources of the Europeans. This pattern is going towards a change life other fields of knowledge (Shafique, 2016 p 61-70).

### **Conclusion**

The historiographic themes and theories applied for the writing of the history of Baloch and particularly the history of the colonial Balochistan is purely based on the modern scientific historiographic patterns. Both the primary and the secondary sources which are written by the foreign authors are analyzed to understand the new approach towards writing the history of Baloch and Balochistan. The new approach changed the traditional Baloch method of writing and preserving the history. Before the advent of the British to Balochistan, the history was oral and very less written local writings were available. This is why British travelers and the historians like the other colonial nations considered Baloch, as ahistorical. The new pattern set a method for the writing history which was adopted the mainstream historians both the indigenous and the foreigners. The problem which is and was alarming that Baloch historical methods and history was neglected, that history was of the local people which encamps all the people and classes of the society. History become elitist history with the scientific method of historiography in which the political figures and politics has a greater importance than the other aspects of the society. Today, it is important for the Baloch to revive it historiographical method to find out the true spirit of history.

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