

The Accession of Kalat State to Pakistan: An Analysis

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Abstract

The effectiveness of the state as a social institution cannot be neglected in modern age. The social and political organization in developed and post-colonial societies is built around the state and its institutions. It plays an important role in managing nationalist struggles. This role is backed by the strength of institutions, organization and resources at its command including capacity for legitimate violence. The policies and actions of the state are crucial to the rise and decline of ethnic movements in Pakistan. Both repression and accommodation have been employed by the state to contain ethnic conflicts. The role of the state has been significant in managing the ethnic conflicts in post-colonial developing societies. The historical negligence of the Balochistan has always given a momentum to the Baloch conflicts in the wake of state suppression. Consequently, Islamabad's unilateral policies have driven the nationalist forces to choose undemocratic ways. The Baloch have fought four times against Pakistan and the state has been blamed for the causes and consequences of the conflicts.

Keywords: *Balochistan, Pakistan, State, Conflict, Kalat, British, India , Reluctance.*

Introduction

Pakistan came into being as a multi-ethnonational state in the wake of Indo-sub-continent partition. The newly independent Muslim State comprised of distinctive and exclusive ethno-national groupings of people. One of those groups, the Baloch lived with a distinct culture and geographical territory in the sub-continent. The roots of Pakistani nationalism were not strong enough a newly state could have been consolidated without the emergence of ethnic nationalist movements (Ziring,1980,p.216). The political and social milieu of

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Balochistan changed with its incorporation into the modernizing state. The interaction of Baloch populace has often been violent with the centralised state.

The search for an independent political identity and distinct culture created a new dimension in the development of Baloch ethno-nationalism. The historical high degree of autonomy of the Baloch state has become compromised when it was incorporated into Pakistan. The collaboration with the centralised state increased a sense of marginality among the people of Balochistan since they were destined to become a minority in Pakistan. In a sense, the Baloch were now confronting similar conditions as other peoples have been confronting in the post-colonial states of Asia and Africa.

A Conceptual Framework

The expanding role of the state has been one of the most salient features of developing societies in the contemporary world. The state has played a role of independent variable in shaping the balance of societal forces, including managing competing socioeconomic and political claims of ethnic groups. David Brown has argued that in developing multiethnic societies a state that had very limited control over the outside regions. But it has sought increasingly systematic control over the peripheral regions with help of its administrative bureaucracies, military and educational systems. At the same time, the governmental interference has increased to raise revenues and maintain order (Brown, 1989,p.8).

The pervasive role of the state has allowed it to develop into an institution that is autonomous from all other actors in the society and has a monopoly of coercive force that enables it to shape, inter alia, class formations and ethnic relations (Sckocpol, 1985, p.3-37;Caporaso, 1989; Greeberg, 1990). The relative independence of the state vis-à-vis other social forces has allowed the state a leeway to shape and alter ethnic identities in multiethnic societies. In developing countries, the state has been instrumental in fostering and altering ethnic identities to suit its own policy objectives, legitimize its authority, promote national unity or even generate inter-ethnic rivalries. It has often ventured to try “divide-and-rule” methods just to ensure its hegemonic position over individuals and groups in the society (Entessar, 1992,p.2).

David Held explains that the state is an ‘apparatus of government’. Referring to Weber he notes that “the very nature of the state crystallizes at the intersection of international and national conditions and pressures” (Held et al, 1983). Commenting on the role of the state in the society, Weber is inclined to regard that “...a state is a human community that claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory (Gerth and C. Wright, 1991, p. 78).” The right to use physical force is permitted by the state to institutions and its functionaries. The state is considered as the sole legitimate repository of violence (Gerth and C. Wright, 1991, p. 78). Defending the state authority and power Weber has argued that “If no social institutions existed which knew the use of violence, then the concept of ‘state’ would be eliminated, and a condition would emerge that could be designated as ‘anarchy’ in the specific sense of this word (Gerth and C. Wright, 1991, p. 78).” The state’s machinery can be utilised both internally and externally to meet challenges to its sovereignty and writ. In their seminal work *The State* Hall and Ikenberry has observed that the state is set of institutions manned by its own personnel. The state’s most important institution is that of the means of violence and coercion (Hall and G John, 1989,p. 1-2).

Giddens views the nature of modern nation-state from the perspective of sociological analysis. He divides the emergence of the state in three stages: the traditional or class-divided state; the absolutist, from the Renaissance to the industrial revolution; and the nation-state. His major emphasis is on the importance of surveillance in the state. The modern state governments have to collect knowledge about citizens and check the activities in the territory. For the role of the state Giddens terms the nation-state as a “bordered power-container...the pre-eminent power-container of the modern world (Giddens, 1985).” He differentiates the modern nation-states from traditional states. According to him the modern nation-states are repositories of massive power and authority and traditional states lacked this feature (Giddens, 1985). The post-colonial states have indulged in violence to stem the tide of the ethnic movements. The state’s use of violence as has been commonplace in the post-war history of nations, and Pakistan is no exception to this rule (Siddiqi, 2012).

It is significant to highlight that Giddens’s concern is that the modern state’s power is threatened by armed groups and ethnic movements that are

poorly armed and organized as compared to the state that has an immense power and authority. These weak armed groups he infers seek to challenge the state authorities due to the state's manifestation of power and authority rather than its weaknesses (Giddens, p. 121). The power of the state Giddens calls 'allocative and authoritative resources' that it has under its command to use in the society. Allocative resources "refer to dominion over material facilities, including material good and natural forces that may be harnessed in their production, while authoritative resources refer to the means of dominion over the activities of human beings themselves"(Giddens, p. 121). The allocative and authoritative resources of state are important to understand its role and functions in the society.

Michael Mann in "The autonomous power of the state" discusses two types of state power, 'despotic and infrastructural power'. These forms of power show unique ability of the state as autonomous form of unit. He follows a similar point of view as that of Anthony Giddens, explaining that modern nation-states command much wider power than did traditional states and that this power has much to do with the territorial centralization of the modern state.

Mann underscores the power of the state as "despotic power of the state elite, the range of actions which the elite is empowered to undertake without routine, institutionalized negotiations with civil society groups" (Mann, 1986, p.113). The despotic powers of many historical states and empires as well as modern states have been unlimited. In Third World states of South Asia may be included in the Mann's category of despotic states (p. 113). In South Asia, Pakistan is a vivid example to this category. The state of Pakistan has inclined to use force to quell ethnic groups and insurgent movements, who demand political and economic rights

Joel Migdal (Migdal, 1994) criticizes the statist theorists such as Weber, Hall and Mann because these writers consider the term state a character of all –powerful entity which exists to sustain its domination over society. The statist theorists concentrating on one dimension of the state that is bureaucratic (or rule-enforcing character). The state, on the other hand, should be understood as a disaggregated and differentiated unit which does not function according to a unity logic; rather, the state and its institutions are dispersed entities; these are different responses with regard to a particular issue from within the state. This means that "we cannot simply assume that as

a whole it acts in a rational and coherent fashion, or strategically follows a defined set of interest” (Migdal, 1994,p.9). Migdal writes that by state a number of scholars mean the state in terms of “it’s recourse to coercive” attitude. The focus of these theorists is domination of the state in its claimed territory. By the ‘power’ of modern state, authors mean the infrastructural power of Michael Mann (Migdal, 1994, p.9).

Migdal highlights the relationship between the state and society in terms of ‘dynamics of struggles for dominations in societies’ the relationship between the state and society is not static, but dynamic and in flux, involving in the main a struggle for each unit to preserve its authority vis-a-vis the other. Moreover, the relationship between state and society involves both conflict and cooperation.

This is where the vitality of the state-in-society perspective establishes itself. Struggles between states and societies (ethnic groups) not only engender conflict but also possible alliances. These alliances are utilised by the state in order to transform the nature of ethnic conflict in ways which are beneficial to the domination and hegemony of the state.

It is important to understand ethnic conflict and the role of the state. In other words, the state is the main player in the rise and decline of the ethno-national movements in the developing world. The post-colonial states are repositories of despotic power and privileges in the society.

Furthermore, besides the role of the state, it is also significant to assess the environment of the state relative to power sharing with ethnic groups. In many cases, if the post-colonial ethnic groups practiced power sharing and accommodation with the non-dominant groups, there would be a gradual end of ethnic tensions. The power sharing exercises would weaken the ethnic groups’ ability to potentially challenge the status quo.

The Reluctant Accession of Khanate of Kalat to Pakistan

The Khanate of Kalat had enjoyed a sovereign status in the treaty agreements with the British government. The Khan was alarmed when the British changed the constitutional position of the Khanate unilaterally without consulting the state. Government of India Act 1935 treated the Kalat as an Indian state and provided future representation in the federal legislature (Baluch, p.267;Axman, p.177). The Khan strongly opposed the decision of the British Government and maintained that the Kalat State had been

independent and sovereign in the Indo-subcontinent whose relations with the British India Government were governed by the treaty of 1876. It would be free to follow its own course in future in case of withdrawal of the British from India (Baluch, p.267).

Blocking the future designs of the Khan of Kalat at the earliest stage and leaving no room to maneuver, the Government of India countered the Khan's claim to complete independence and Kalat being excluded from Indian Union (Baluch,1975, p.267;Axman,2008, p.177). The British administration argued that Article 3 of the treaty of 1876 binds the British to respect the independence of the state subject to its subordinate position (Baloch, 1987, p.174-175). Undoubtedly the British regarded the Khanate as an independent state deprived of complete sovereignty. In theory, it claimed to be independent but practically it had become an ordinary state of the British India (Bangash, 2011).

To advance his claim of sovereign and independent position, the Khan formally submitted a memorandum to the Cabinet Mission Plan in March 1946 to argue for the future position of the Khanate. The memorandum stated that "...Indian States have every right to remain independent; if they wished to do so and neither the British Govt....nor any other power or party force them to act against their free will(MSS EUR D971/2,p, 4)." The Khan also claimed Kalat's supremacy and authority over Las Bela, Kharan and Marri-Bugti-tribes in the memorandum. He reiterated that "the Marri and Bugti Tribes have been, and still are, the subjects of the Khan of Kalat, and the territories occupied by them still form part of the Kalat State...should revert the to the Khan of Kalat (Memorandum)."

On August 4, 1947 in a Round Table Conference, an agreement was reached between the British Empire, Kalat and the future government of Pakistan represented by Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan at Delhi. In order to judge the demands and the position of the Kalat, a meeting took place and presided by the Lord Mountbatten on the same day at Delhi. As a result another agreement between Khan of Kalat and Jinnah was signed. The Article 4 of the agreement reads that a 'Standstill Agreement' will be made by which Pakistan shall be legal heir to the British with respect to Kalat(MSS EUR D971/2,p, 4).

The Khan's political moves aimed at achieving complete independence of Kalat state before withdrawal of the British. The Khan

realised the increasing interest of the successor states of Pakistan and India about the geo-strategic and economic importance for the Indian subcontinent (Axman,2008, p.183). The Khan could not oversee the political penetration of Muslim League in British Balochistan and Khanate of Kalat. The regional and national leadership of the League had gained enough popularity in the British Balochistan and the Kalat State. There was some difficulty in settling the procedure for ascertaining the wishes of the people of Balochistan. Initially, Nehru suggested a commission to meet the tribal Jirga and hold a referendum in Quetta town. The chief commission of British Baluchistan did not agree to such course of action (Menon, 1957,p.388). Consequently, the Viceroy appointed Shahi Jirga and Quetta municipal council as an electoral college to decide the future of the province (Menon, 1957,p.388). Eventually, in late June 1947, The Shahi Jirga formally gave its verdict in favour of Pakistan

The validity of the verdict has been a matter of controversy between Pakistani authors and Baloch nationalist historians. The Baloch (1989) argued in their writings that a conspiracy was hatched between the British and the Leaguers against the Baloch nation. They contested that decision of the *Shahi Jirga* held a day earlier the fixed date announced publicly. They further said that jurisdiction of the *Shahi Jirga* did not extend to legal parts of the Khanate (Axman,2008, p. 223). Contrary to their perception, the authors who support the view point of the state of Pakistan have recorded that in the month of June 1947 referendum was held and people of Balochistan expressed their wish to join Pakistan (Awan,1985; Kausar, 1990). The authors hold responsible the British and the All India Congress for manipulation of events in Balochistan against Pakistan Movement (Awan,1985; Kausar, 1990).

According to the standstill agreement further negotiations will take place between Pakistan and Kalat on the future relations but the agreement was not materialized as Pakistan demanded unconditional merger and Khan delayed the matter to seek constitutional guarantees for the future of the Kalat state the new arrangements. On the other hand, Ahmad Yar Khan had tried to strengthen his position conducted elections in the state (Naseer, 2000, p.544-545; Kutty, 2009). KSNP won majority of seats under the leadership of Ghaus Bakhsh Bizenjo for the lower house. Khan in reply to, Pakistan's demand of accession referred the matter to the parliament to seek the opinion

and decide the issue of accession. Both the houses of the parliament voted against merger and expressed their determination to maintain the independent status of the state (Axman, 2008, p.232-232). Gohouse Baksh Benzinjo, in a fiery speech highlighted the strategic significance and natural resources of the region and questioned the existence of Pakistan without Balochistan (Baluch, 1975). Meanwhile, the British High Commission warned the Government of Pakistan of the dangers and guided it away from making agreements to recognizing the Khanate as a separate international entity.

The Government of Pakistan, in spite of its earlier commitments in the standstill agreement followed 'coercive and aggressive steps to confuse the issues and bring pressure on the Government of Kalat'(IOR: MSS EUR D971/2). Thus, Pakistan accepted the accession of the two feudatory States of Kharan and Lasbella. The accession of the vassal states was done to intimidate the Khan of Kalat to an accession. State employed tactical methods and policies to pressurize the Khan. The old divide and rule policy was used to exploit the long drawn hostility between the Khan and the states of Las Bela, Makran and Kharan. The Khan, through official channels, urged the government of Pakistan for formal negotiations and resisted the inclusion of feudatory areas of Labella and Kharan(IOR: MSS EUR D971/2). Thus, Kalat state was isolated from the strategic territories and deprived of authority over vassal states.

The announcement from All India Radio broadcast a news bulletin on 27th March 1948 stated that Kalat Government desires accession with India made Khan's position more susceptible to Pakistani reaction (Baluch,1975, p.159). Although the Indian Prime Minister apologized for the false broadcast in the Indian parliament Pakistan considered it a threat for its integrity and sovereignty. The pretext led the Pakistani government to decide the fate of Baloch homeland by military force. The heavy-handedness forced the Khan to merge the Baloch State on 30th March 1948. The merger of the Kalat State into Pakistan was considered by local leadership of Kalat as the "violation of agreements and it show of threat and force" to the people of (IOR: MSS EUR D 971/2), States of Kalat).

On the other hand the act of the Khan has been described a great disservice to the Baloch people which has 'no parallel in the three and a half thousand years of Baloch history'(Janmahmmad, 1989). The Khan did not bother to take the Baloch legislature into confidence, when signed the

instruments of accession, which he regarded an ultimate authority to decide the fate of Baloch nation (Baloch, 1987). The failure of negotiations for future relationship with Pakistan bewildered the Khan of Kalat and made the accession of the state a controversial issue between Pakistan and Balochistan. Accordingly, the Baloch nationalists considered the unilateral accession of the Kalat State as an illegal and unconstitutional act on the part of the Khan and Pakistan. In April 1948, several political leaders from Balochistan were arrested for their agitation against the annexation. The Kalat State National Party was declared an outlawed party throughout Pakistan (Wilcox, 1963). It is claimed by Baloch nationalists that unwillingly the Khan of Kalat signed the accession instrument to bring an end to the Baloch state. Explaining his helplessness to the situation and response of the Pakistani state in an autobiography back in 1975, he remarked:

“Thus, my legal authority as the Khan-e-Azam came to an end on 15 April, 1948, and my connections with the affairs of Kalat were cut off; and within 20 hours of the orders executed upon me, several ministers of the Kalat Government were exiled or arrested” (Baluch, p. 164).

The Khan remembering his services for ‘the establishment of the Muslim homeland of Pakistan’ lamented the treatment meted out by the Pakistani state without caring for the moral and material sacrifices of the Khan for the Muslim homeland ((Baluch,1975, p. 164). Whatever, the sacrifices of the Khan were, the issues after the partition needed careful management. The ‘inherent incompetency, personal weakness, and the dismal politico-social milieu among the Baloch’ created indescribable misunderstandings between the Pakistan and people of Balochistan (Dashti,2012, p.321) . Thus, the Khan remarked on the uncooperative actions of the Pakistani state as such: “all the socio-economic and administrative reforms were suddenly reversed into back-gear. The Baluch representative Parliament and Baluch Confederation were broken by one stroke of pen.” Consequently, the new developments were favourable to Prince Abdul Karim Jan to resist the accession (Baluch, 1975, 190).

Conclusion

The state of Pakistan faced a major problem of unifying the nation following the partition of India. The unification of Balochistan remained a greater

challenge than any other region. The British governing system discouraged unity among the Baloch to unite against the empire. Pakistan followed the same policy and viewed the same tribal system as an impediment to the cohesion of the state of Pakistan. Pakistan retained the British practices of providing subsidies to the Khan of Kalat, the sardars and other privileged persons and using military to maintain law and order. Consequently, the colonial policies and practices contributed to separatist movements in Balochistan. There had been much bitterness and hatred reserved for the British, this was later aimed at Pakistan.

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