

**RELATIONS BETWEEN BALOCHISTAN (PAKISTAN) AND
CENTRAL ASIA: SOCIO CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC
PERSPECTIVE**

Culture

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ABSTRACT

The major aim of this paper is to discuss the linguistic and cultural similarities between Balochistan (Pak) and Central Asian states. The languages spoken in Balochistan and cultures in vogue in the region mainly Balochi, Pashto and Brahui have some influence of the languages spoken in Central Asia. A separate paper or books can be written on similarities between Pashto language and Pashtoon culture separately. In this paper a brief about the historical, pre-historical relations between Balochistan has been discussed. Linguistic and lexical similarities among languages spoken in Balochistan mainly Balochi Brahui and Pashto and languages spoken in Central Asia i.e Tajiki, Turkmen, Uzbeki and other languages have also been discussed in the paper. The paper provides information about the ancient trade routs between Central Asia and subcontinent passing through Balochistan.

HISTORICAL RELATIONS

Historically, Balochistan has been an important strategic area throughout recorded history. "It had provided a channel of communication between Persia and the Sub-continent and served as a trade link between the Middle East and the Central Asian countries. The passage that connected India with the Middle East and Central Asia, passed through Afghanistan and Balochistan, which has from time immemorial served as a famous Tehran-Mashad route through Yazd, Kirman and Mukkuran (Makran), linking Mersopotamia, Iran and Bactria was also in operation. There are literary and archaeological evidences of trade between the Indus civilization and Mesopotamia even before the Aryan invasion" (Janmahmad: 1982: 31-32)

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Between the end of the 5th and the beginning of the 2nd millennium BC, there seems to be a particular intensity in relations binding southern Turkmenistan, this is based on the strong similarities (between) all these material cultures. In order to have an overview of this convergence as a cultural whole the term "TURAN" was proposed which takes in a continuing area from north eastern Iran, northern Turkmenia and the Helmand to northern Balochistan" (Tosi: 1987: 23)

During Pre-historic era, there were limited important routes which joined the Central Asia plateau with Indus valley. The most important was the one, which passed through the Bolan Pass. Regarding similarities of the archaeological sites of both sides of the Bolan Pass, Prof. Tosi says that "A most interesting point of comparison was the similarity between the Arachosian (Modern South East of Afghanistan) pottery from Mondighak and the old Qandhar and examples from Pirak at the eastern entrance to the Bolan Pass. At both sites, the introduction of iron also marked the introduction of wheel-made, grey/black pottery, and once again the open bowl is a prominent shape. Apart from the open bowl, the composition goblets are also comparable. The relevant Pirak levels have been dated to a period between 1100 and 800 B.C., in its turn, the Pirak pottery has been compared to ceramics from other areas in the Indian sub-continent, e.g. in the Ganges Valley" (W.Vogelsang: 1987: 54)

ANCIENT TRADE ROUTS

The ancient district of Arachosia (Modern south east Afghanistan) constitutes an important corridor for the overland traffic between the Indian Sub-continent and the near East: in fact, it dominates a one of the three main routes between the Indus valley and Western Iran. To the north of Arachosia lies the difficult track across the Hindu Kush between modern Peshawar and Kabul to the south and Northern Arachosia and the Registan and Helmand deserts runs another east-west route, which crosses the inhospitable wastes of southern Balochistan. The central overland route, via Kandahar in ancient Arachosia, is relatively easy when going west from Kandahar. The valley of Arghandab / Dori river, and after Qala-Bist that of the Helmand, offers a good track to Sistan and the Iranian districts further to the west and north. Going in another direction from Arachosia eastwards to India, one either has to cross the mountainous areas of Balochistan, or follow a more northern

route, to Ghazni or Kabul, and then turn east towards the Indus Valley via the North West Frontier" (W.Vogelsang: 1987: 54)

Besides above routes, the Makran coast must have been used as the nucleus of trade and communication between India and the Middle East and between Middle East and Central Asia. "Balochistan had also its trade relations with its immediate neighbors: - Afghanistan, Sindh and Persia. Such trade probably was not regulated by any formal inter government agreements. Goods were sent through camel caravan routes from various points in Balochistan to Kandhar, Ghazni, Kabul and also to Kasarkand and Chahbar. The route via Noshki to Seistan and Khurasan was in use. Another track existed through Kirman, Seistan and Helmand"⁴ (Janmahmad: 1982: 32) there was another trade track to join the coast of Makran to the Central Asia via Pasni, Kohlwa, Kalat, Munghacher, Kandahar and Kabul. The above trade tracks improved the socio economic, cultural and linguistic relations between the people of Balochistan and Central Asia.

LINGUISTIC SIMILARITIES

Three major languages Balochi, Pashto and Brahui which are spoken in Balochistan belong to different language families. No doubt Balochi and Pashto are from Indo Aryan languages family, but Brahui is completely different. Brahui, being the oldest language of the region, has been classified as a Northern Dravidian language by most of the foreign linguists, including Kristien Lason, Sir Denys Bray, T.J.L.Mayer, M.B. Emenue, and G. K. Panikar. Some of the local linguists such as S.Kamil-ul-Qadri and Dr. Abdul Rehman Brahui agree with above mentioned linguists*. The second theory about Brahui is based on a book written by Akhund Mohammad Saleh Zangana Kurd in 1070 A.H 1695 A.D in Kalat, in which he classified the Brahui language as a Turkic or Turanian language. Turanian is an alternate name for the Ural-Altai family of languages, consisting of the Uralic and Altaic or Turkic sub family which comprises Turkish, Azerbaijani, Anatolian, Balkar, Kumik and Turkoman Languages. (Sabir: 1996: 29)

As regard relations of the Brahui language to the Turkic group, Akhund Muhammad Saleh describes that "When Birakhui[†] (Brahui) Kurds Adarghani, Kirmani and Mamali Kurds came in to the countries of Turan and

* The principal author of this paper is also of the opinion that Brahui is a Proto Dravidian Language is the only language of the Northern Dravidian group.

[†] The name given to the Brahui by Akhund Saleh Muhammad.

Makran, they used to speak Kurdish after the submission of the rule of Brakhui Kurds, these Truanian (Turkic) tribes assimilated themselves in the social conditions and merged into the new comers and mixed up with them and strengthened the brotherhood relations. The mixing up and assimilation of these people resulted in the creation of a new language, Brahui” (Akhund: 1991: 66). Akhund Saleh considers Brahuīs as Kurd and their language as a Turkic language.

Brahui may or may not be language related to the Turkic sub family of Ural Altaic language group. The author of this paper has found some common similarities between the Turkish and Brahui language as follows.

1. The indo Aryan languages have a sign of negative e.g. not, na nai, ma etc in front of the verb, while Brahui has the same construction like Turkish language between root and case suffix.

English	to come	not to come
Urdu	<i>aanaa</i>	<i>nai aanaa</i>
Balochi	<i>aaiag</i>	<i>na aaiag</i>
Pashto	<i>raataang</i>	<i>ma raatang</i>

2. In Brahui the same construction is quite different but similar to the Turkish language. Both the languages have same construction of sign of negative in the mid of the word instead of a prefix for example:

<i>khwava</i>	I need
<i>khwapara</i>	I do not need

In Turkish the construction is same like.

<i>Istiuram</i>	I need
<i>Istimiuram</i>	I do not need

3. The conjunction and interjections, e.g. O + (that) ve (and) ya (or) of Turkish Language are common with Brahui, Balochi and Pashto languages.

In Turkish language “bir” means one and in Brahui “Birring” means to separate the animals or to identify someone etc.

4. The infinitive case suffix in Turkish and Balochistani languages has some similarity. The infinitive case suffix in Balochi is /ag/: in Brahui is /ing/: n Pashto is /ang/: or /wal/ but in Turkish it is also /ek/.

5. The Adjective suffixes /un/ and /ak/ are also common between Brahui and Turkish for example:-

Long *uzun* in Turkish and *murghun* in Brahui
 Small *ufak* in Trukish and *chunak* in Brahui

Like Balochi and Brahui languages the Turkish language also has eight vowels. The Balochi and Brahui have five long and three short vowels while in Turkish language there are four long and four short vowels. (Sabir: 1996: 33)

LIXICAL SMILARITIES

Not only Brahui, the Balochi language also has many Morphological and lexical similarities with Turkish languages. About these similarities, M. Sardar Khan Baloch says, "The last mighty Turkish dynasty that held away over Persia was that of the Timurids. During these centuries of Turkish domination over Persia, the Turkish flooded Persia and the Balochies lived side by side, tent by tent with them in the province of Kirman, Khurasan, Siestan and Heart. During their social contact with Turkish tribes, the Balochies from the former the names of their beast of burden etc in Balochi are Turkish, like.

<u>Balochi</u>	<u>Turkish</u>
<i>Bolak</i>	Bolak (clan)
<i>Lagh</i>	Lagh (male donkey)
<i>Olakh</i>	Olakh (any beast of burden)
<i>Tuman</i>	Tuman (tribe exceeding ten thousand)
<i>Tumandar</i>	Tumandar (Chief of the tribe)
<i>Urd</i>	Urdu (army)
<i>Ulus</i>	Ulus (race or nation) (Baloch: 1977: 19)

Besides these few examples there is a reasonable number of common words between Central Asian languages and Balochi and Brahui.

CULTURAL SIMILARITIES

To determine the racial kinship, a close into the Baloch culture is imperative. Their customs and traditions have close links with the Central Asian culture, to which the Baloch originally belonged. Take the example of

dresses; Baloch and Pashtoon both wear Shalwar, trousers and turban for head. Both pertain to the people of Central Asia. From Balochistan (Pak) to Afghanistan and up to Kurdish region in major parts of Central Asia people wear trousers (Shalwar). Shifting towards Sindh and the Punjab or areas which are the part of the sub-continent, the difference is quite clear. Throughout India, Burma and most of Himalayan regions "teband" is used. Shalwar is the symbol of the Baloch culture and distinguish the Baloch from most other people. Similarity, the musical instruments belonging to the particular nations are also indicative of their relation with certain other races. The Baloch possess tambura (Dambura) which basically belonged to them, other like the Pathans (Pashtoons), Panjabis, and Sindhis do not use it, while Kruds of Hazara Mangols in Central Asia also use tambura, in contrast to the sarangi which is shared by all others (**Janmahmad: 1982: xix**)

The Nomads in Balochi and Brahui are called Pehwal while Pavinda in Pashto. The Pehwals consider themselves superior to the settled people. In this connection Ayub Baloch, a local anthropologist says "In some way pehwals consider themselves superior the settled Baloches. The Pehwal, who have retained most traditional patterns of Baloch Culture, no doubt, consider themselves a part of wider Balochi social entity, and yet they consider themselves superior to settled Baloch. They think that settled Baloches have changed and hence have given up the "good ways" taught to the by their forefathers. In connection with nomadism they usually remark, "in the beginning we were all pure we were nomads." (**M.A Baloch: 1988: 29**)

Central Asian nomads including Baloch/Brahui "Pehwal" and Pashtoon "Pawendas" have a common nomadic culture. All of these nomads live in tents made of goat hair. The flock breeding is one of their most favorite jobs. Among other Central Asian nomads, Baloch and Pashtoon nomads also like dry food instead of fresh food. During migration from one place to another, in search of pleasures, these nomads keep dry food them. They dry milk and transform it onto *Khurud* (dry milk) *Khurod*, Baloch *Hurood/Shilanch* and in Pashto *Korut*. They also dry meat and transform it into Kadit or Khadit in Balochi and Brahui and Landhi in Pashto. This nomadic migration between Balochistan and Central Asia is still being continued by the Baloch and Pashtoon nomads. In winter some Pashtoon Pawenda including Sulemankhel, Kakar and Trakais, along with their flocks come to Sarawan and Chagi areas in the month of November and stay there till February. They Baloch nomads also use to go to Trukmenistan through the Helmand and Nimorz provinces of Afghanistan. Many Baloch tribes

including Mamasani, Rakhshani, Mengal and Rodeni are still residing in Mari Turkmenistan. (Sabir: 1996: 32)

In course of history the people who came from Central Asia to Balochistan from time to time, brought some new changes in the traditional Agriculture styles of Balochistan. Some Tajik tribes of Central Asia, who have the name of Dehwar in Balochistan, introduced the irrigation system of the underground water channels, locally called "Karez" or *Kehn rez*" in various parts of Balochistan. It is interesting to say that all language constructions and lexicons pertaining to agriculture in local languages are borrowed words from Persian and other Central Asian languages. (Sabir: 1996: 33)

CONCLUSION

Besides the Cultural and linguistic similarities Balochistan can play an important role in future in terms of socio-economic and strategic development. An eminent scholar A.H. Dhani says that "It is in and through Balochistan that all these neighboring countries can come together and having a common interest in the Arabian Sea, can work out a common strategy of cooperation has been in the past to build up civilization and it could be restarted for the establishment of peaceful solidarity in the region. The Baloch tribes are wide spread on all these countries and hence they can play an active role in creating an atmosphere of peace and harmony. They can they can also be a harbinger of new opportunities for cooperation and reconciliation. The neighboring people of Afghanistan have had traditional links with Balochistan and they also had friendly connection with Iran. Thus Balochistan could go forward in bringing together Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan and all the states of Central Asia and evolve a policy of cooperation and establishing a strategic link for the common use of Arabian Sea in this common endeavor that mutual rivalries can turn out, can be transformed into common ground for peace and harmony in the region. This natural out-let and common factor of Balochistan is the greatest advantage of the land and that advantage should be fully utilized for the good of humanity. It is in this role of Balochistan that the prosperity of these countries be and in friendly cooperation of the people that peace and harmony would grow and lead all of them towards external amity" (Dhani: 1996)

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