

Women education and its socio-political effects in Balochistan: A case study

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Abstract

Balochistan being fertile land of feuds and tribes chieftains could not allowed women in outdoor due to their strict social norms. But with the change of time women had taken numerous steps to educate themselves. The gated society and strict social norms of Balochistan had hindered women on acquiring education. In contrary, women in Balochistan negated the concepts of male chauvinism In the region. Gradually they came out from homes and participated in various aspects of life. Their keen purpose was to gain education for more empowerment. Thus, from 2005 and onward they become more active in educational arena. Soon, the women of Balochistan achieved much popularity educationally. Education had paved the way of more liberty and freedom for them politically and socially. From 2007 and onward they are working hand to hand with men in each aspects of life. In fact, the year 2005 aptly called the year of women education in Balochistan and meanwhile girls got more opportunities in the field of education. Socially women become an active member of the society and all rights of male and females become equal. Later on they got numerous other rights such as co-education, works with men shoulder by shoulder and a financier of her family. Politically they have got more rights to work as a political leader or to participate in election locally and nationally. From 2008 to 2015 women becomes very important to serve the society as equally as that of men.

They got equal opportunities politically, socially and economically. In all the governmental and nongovernmental departments of Balochistan, they have given opportunity to develop Balochistan socially and politically. Thus women performed imminent role for social reconstruction and political rebuilding of Balochistan for a peaceful and a land of tolerance.

Key terms: Tribalism, women empowerment, social norms, gated society

Introduction and background of study

Women in any society are a key pillar for social construction. Without participation in social concerns a society cannot develop as accordingly. Balochistan being a land of tribal lords where even a person to breath with permission of chiefs (Sardars). Women in Balochistan remained the most depressed class of this society. They had suffered socially and politically with no gain. But gradually they find multiple ways to cop such confrontations before them. Anyhow they are presently active participator in each walk of life. Men and women are contributing equally on changing Balochistan gated societal structure into liberal and more open society¹.

Since the trace history of Pakistan women in Balochistan could not rendered equal opportunities. It due to imbalance educational system in Balochistan is suffering numerous social restrictions. The major issues faced by women education were patriarchal society, lack of modern education and women were always understood as a domestic animal. Other problem which were faced by women while acquiring education; they were never allowed to step out side door of their house. Indeed the immediate agent of change for women fate was introduction of modern and scientific education in Balochistan.²

The widen gender discrimination had paved the way for women social mature development. They are still not recognized as true part of our society. Due to gender discrimination and lack of facilities in rural areas people don't prefer girls to get aneducation. Education has remained a neglected field. This is the reason that male and female literacy rate is very low. Also, there is the low acceptance of the changes, which make the lives

¹Geeta, Kingdon Ghandi. "Education of women and socio-economic development." *Kalimat Press*, 2002: 13.

²institute, Islamabad policy research. "Education system of Pakistan; issues, problems and solutions." *Policy research center*, 2012: 9.

of these people static and vulnerable, especially the women. The poor concentration of women education in Balochistan is a far cry and it is letting the situation in the hands of evils.³(Akbar 2015)

Female education in Balochistan from 2006 to 2008 brought obvious change in tribal society. Women were encouraged to come out from homes to educate themselves. In this period around 60 percent of girls aged six to nine enrolled in different public and private institutions. It was a notable improvement in women education. The enrollment percentage increased during 2009 to 2011 into 70% in primary level in various schools of Balochistan. From 2012 to 2015 women literacy rate reached up to 83% percent than that of male is 87% comparatively.

Women education from 2009 to 2014 had changed Balochistan tribal setup to a liberal society. Tolerance among different section of society becomes the order of day. Women were given free hand for acquiring education anywhere they want for bright future. Simultaneously women got more political powers for obtaining more freedoms from the gate and conservative society. But some faction of society is against women such empowerment. Some religious parties are active, the majority of the people are followers of such religious party so, the Opponent parties decided mutually that they will not ask and allow us to vote. Since then even we donot have female polling stations. According to these religious party women political interference is unethical and unreligious, because any women who want to join politics, they have to come out from their homes which is against Islamic laws.⁴

Theoretical framework

Liberal feminism guided us on the gap between male-female educations. The core concept of this theory is the men never want women to be educated. Men are naturally biased on women education and they always try to hinder and restrain women from acquiring education.

Women and social development

Historically Balochistan remained the land of various tribes and feudal lords. Women were limited to the four corner of house and treated as

³Akbar, Notezai Muhammad. "Shocking condition for Balchistan women." *Daily Times*, 2015: 05.

⁴Samina, Naz. "The status of female education in rural Balochistan ." *The Agha khan university*, 2015: 12-16.

domestic slave. But modern social and educational development had changed the fate of women in Balochistan. On observing the situation UNICEF keenly traced the situation of Balochistan Social and political participation of Women in the province from 2000 to 2010. It finally reported that from 2000 to 2004 women had poor participation in social and political concerns. But the ratio increased from 2005 to 2009 rapidly to 35% on different walks of life respectively. Thus Balochistan women become an active agent on social and political changes of Balochistan.⁵

With rapid change of educational activities, the society of Baluchistan becomes more open and tolerant for women survival. Women initiated various activities for girls for more exposure in different walk of life. They actively participated in educating women for better society. Due to enormous struggle of women for greater role in the society rendered them as equal member of the society. It was obviously education which changed the destiny of women in Balochistan politically and socially. The violent Balochistan turned into a peaceful Balochistan on concern of women development.⁶

The women participation in social walk of life enormously increased jobs opportunities for women in Balohistan. Now a days they working with male on equal putting and contributed a lot for departmental and institutional development. In the veracity of fact is that women contain 30 to 40 percent in each department of Balochistan on arena of jobs. In fact, women are promoting the concept of gender equality and justice. Hence they changed an extreme tribal society to modern tolerant land.⁷

Women obtained more social rights

The foremost right which the women in Balochistan gained is right to gain education on their own choice. It encouraged them to come forward for greater rights. They have acquired equal opportunities in school, colleges and universities. Gradually the strength of male and female in different educational institutions become parallel. The ratio of women education notably increased from 2008-2012 from 23-29 percent to 35-43 percent

⁵UNICEF. *Balochistan Province of Pakistan*. Annual, Newyork: United nations publisher, 2011.

⁶Ahmed, Masood. "How social media effects us?" *The Balochistan point* , 2015: 05.

⁷Report, Asia. "The worsening conflict in Balochistan ." *Crisis group* , 2016: 10.

comparatively. It was a great achievement for women for obtaining more and more social rights.⁸

Moreover Balochistan social changes from tribalism to liberal and from fanatic to a more open society due relentless struggle of women. Military had contributed a lot to liberate women from the sway of tribal lords. Additionally military provided them environment to come out from houses for better exposure. Women got the equal rights of affair of society equally and openly allowed to take part on different social activities. Furthermore, women from retrospective were not allowed to participate on social concerns but after 2005 and onward they openly come out from houses to become an active part of society.⁹

Somehow women become an active member of the society in Balochistan, but they were allowed with certain limitation and restriction. The limited right of liberty and freedom of expression hinder their ways of social equality and freedom. When they came out from door of their houses they face enormous social barriers likewise they face abuses and treated as ill moral character.

The hushed voice of Balochistan has depressed and shut down by different forces in different phase of history. In this time women were mainly targeted on concern of their social liberty and freedom. Provincial and federal governments were calm to take immediate action for women equal participation in social development and construction. The worst era for the women in history of Balochistan was the 20 century and early years of 21 century on their tribal living and survival. But presently women are facing numerous drawbacks on this modern developed society. Women social freedom still is a far cry and cannot be resolved rapidly.¹⁰

From extreme tribal community to a liberal tribal community

Tribalism is the blood and flesh part of Balochistani society without which survival is not possible. Anyhow the trend of downing the powers of tribal feuds enormously decreased from 2006 and onward. As comparatively the Mari tribe is considered is the largest in Balochistan. In prior of 2005 the

⁸Frederic, Grare. *Balochistan states versus the nation* . Dehli: Darnegie Endowment for international peace, 2013.

⁹PILDAT. *The Balochistan civil military* . Annual, Islamabad: PILDAT, 2016.

¹⁰Sanauallah, Baloch. "Remembering the women of Balochistan." *The express tribne* , 2012: 06.

women education in the same tribe was below 10 percent but after 2007 the same tribal female education touched the sky and reached to 35 percent.

Mengal tribal female before 2006 it was just 12 percent but after 2008 it increased notably into 41 percent. The other tribes like Zehri, Bughti, Mohammad husani and Sasoli wholeheartedly endorsed women education.¹¹

Balochistan become more tolerant society from 2007 and onward. But some of the social disparities still exists which are obvious gap freedom of women and men different aspects of life and women are considered as the second class of members of the society. Such demarcation put Balochistan in the fold of multiple repercussions. Instead of such acts Baloch society is thriving on concerns of women various social and economic rights.

Additionally the social demarcation on line of gender and caste is yet exists. In some part of Balochistan still the women are counted as domestic animal and not allowed to go outdoors. The situation of women needs for more legislation for more rights on social concerns. The disparities like men are given more job opportunities than that of women and men have better social access on different social walks of life. But it is the good luck of female that they are given open chance for acquiring education and every institution in Balochistan encouraged them for enrolment. The persistent change of tribalism into liberalism is widely welcome by the rest of community living in Balochistan.¹²

Thus Balochistan is developing day by day from tribalism to liberalism. The pace of change is very slow but thriving notably. In some time Balochistan is considered is the most gated community and women were even not allowed to visits their kin homes. But presently they are free to visits to their neighbors and relations home freely. Hence tribalism is ending with considerable means.

Women remained as an agent of social change in Balochistan

One cannot avoid the pivotal role women in Balochistan on changing social fabric. Barbarism against women was the most common practice used by men throughout Balochistan. Gradually women initiated different social works to change the social strict norms. They initiated their education from

¹¹Syed, Shah Ali. "Female literacy hits new low in Balochistan." *Daily Dawn*, 2014: 08.

¹²Syed Nawaz ul-Huda , Farkanda Burke, Mohammad Azam. "Socio-economic disparities in Balochistan Pakistan. A multivariate analysis." *Social science studies center Islamabad*, 2013: 10-15.

Madrassa to take their initial step outside of the door. This step led them for gaining education from different institution. Thus the death of tribalism begins from 2003 and onward in Balochistan. The first and foremost change of women was to get access on educational blessings.¹³

The women in Balochistan participated on different health activities where women were facing durably. They came forward and started debate openly on women various health problems. In the first time of the history women in 2007 openly demanded more facilities for women healthcare. It encouraged women to talk openly for better change on concerns of women related health problems. The government and other social networks on related of started different health schemes and hospitals. The ratio of improvement on different women related diseases decreased enormously from 2008 to 2011. It was a great achievement for women in Balochistan for social changes.¹⁴

Women actively works on other various social changes likewise, women access to community, family members and other rituals and socials norms. They finally proved that women are equal status with men. They demanded more rights on domestic affairs in 2013 to be not used like an animal. Another demand raised by the women of Balochistan on access of more social activities and development. Hence they have got various rights in the society likewise playing cricket and football etc. Thus these things empowered women in Balochistan socially.

Political liberty of women in Balochistan

Women in Balochistan were the most depressed and degraded gender on political concerns. From 1947 to 2004 women were not allowed on political activities. They have very poor participation of the country political concerns. But women education awakened them for obtaining more political rights. When it was time the women were not permitted for the right to vote and come as candidate. The situation turned very differently and women initiated to take parts on various political activities. They demand more representation in local, provincial and central legislation for women

¹³Dr., Mohyuddin Anwar. "Economic empowerment of women in the rural areas of Balochistan ." *Research gate*, 2012: 12.

¹⁴USAID. "Pakistan demographic survey health and education 2012 to 2013." *US publication* , 2013: 11.

empowerment. The immediate demand begins from 2007 for “women political empowerment”.¹⁵

Another notable achievement in Balochistan women was the active participation in bureaucracy. From 1970s to 2004 it was only 2 percent space for women in the state bureaucracy but it was increased into 5 percent in 2005 and become as an active participator on bureaucratic affairs. They got such a great number in different prestigious institutions due to their political struggle. It is the veracity of fact that women condition changed in Balochistan due to education and political struggle. Hence now-a-days women of Balochistan are the most active participators on political activities and struggling hard to formulate a gender balance society.¹⁶

With the passage of time women got different political liberty. Right to free vote become the absolute rights of women. Secondly, they got right to freedom of speech and expression. In the first time of Balochistan history women were given various political powers. The most glorious period for women political development is from 2006 to 2013. In this period, women were the center of politics and each party struggle hard to gain more women memberships. Even tribal oriented party like BNP Mengal had openly welcome women in their party. So, such changes in part of Balochistan widely created a tolerant and peaceful society.¹⁷

Democratic role of women on political development

Balochistan women participation from 1956 to 1970s was below 2 percent which is the worst era of democratic development in the province. But the increased rapidly from 1973 to 1990s into 25 percent. In this period women had taken active role on democratic development to boost women equality. But the ration further increased into 35 to 47 percent from 1991 to 1998. Such increase of women on democratic development had changed women fate in Balochistan on concerns of democratic improvement. Hence

¹⁵Aftab, Hussain. "Education system of Pakistan, issues and problems and solutions ." *Islamabad policy research* , 2015: 8.

¹⁶Bank, The World. *Community participation spurs Education in Balochistan*. Random, Newyork: World Bank, 2014.

¹⁷Nouman, Altaf. "Political development in Balochistan 2006 to 2013." *Hazara universty Manshera publication*, 2014: 19-23.

women had got more political rights to become active member of the society.¹⁸

Such democratic improvement of women in Balochistan had simultaneously increased economic condition of women. They become active supporter of their family on economically from 2005 to 2007. The political sphere of Balochistan had provided them enough opportunities for acquiring more jobs for their independent living. They become more independent politically and economically. The economic condition of women had increased from bottom to high. Additionally, women had created more economic opportunities for the country survival and for women social development.¹⁹

Balochistan is in limelight of national politics due to women deprivation and starvation. But point of discussion is completely different and women on their own struggling hard to acquire more democratic rights in local and national politics. The thriving democracy in the province is the participation of women. Since 2010 to 2014 women had contributed their due part for democratic trump. Presently they are vital for national and local politics. Indeed, they wheel runner of politics in crisis ridden province.²⁰

Women struggle for fundamental rights and achievement in Balochistan

The women of Balochistan began their struggle for gaining more fundamental rights from 2006. It was very tough task for women in the region like Balochistan to demand political rights and liberty. They have faced enormous problems on their struggle for their basic rights. The foremost hurdle was the tribal restraints and faced opposition from them.

Secondly, their strength was too low and could not gained popularity initially. Thirdly, the rest of society could not want them to demand such unethical rights and regional and national leaderships did not support them on their scared cause.²¹

¹⁸Ruth, Paterson. *Women's empowerment in the challenging world: A case study from Balochistan*. Islamabad: IDSP, 1999.

¹⁹Bank, World. *Balochistan economic repport*. Annual, Islamabad: World Bank publication, 2007.

²⁰Sheikh, Rehman Asad. "A case study on the democracy and socio-economic development of Balochistan." *Sungi foundation development*, 2016: 28-39.

²¹Momonah, Ambareen. "Economic empowerment of women in the rural area of Balochistan." *Daily Dawn*, 2010: 08.

Women actively involved in various movements for gaining more rights. From 2007 and onward they got right to vote independently and also can be stand as candidate in national level of election. This thing had led women for more struggles on democratic and political concerns. Finally, women in 2013 election had taken active part for gaining more seats in provincial and central levels. Moreover they have obtained outstanding victory against their limited vacancy. Their step in the parliament has paved the way for demanding of more rights and powers local and national affairs. Hence, they are demanding more seats for women in provincial and national assemblies.²²

Women education in Balochistan is improving notably in the rural and urban areas of the province. From 2012 to 2013 the ratio of women education increased to 5.3 percent which is boosted democratic trend in Balochistan. This improvement changes the women fate in Balochistan and got more national rights. But literacy ratio in the urban part of Balochistan increased with rapid pace of improvement from 2013-2015.

It was a best phase of the region of boosting democratic development and acquiring more fundamental rights for women. The era from 2012 to 2015 women in Balochistan become equal gender in part of the society. It was a great hedge for women to participate on local, regional and national affairs.²³

Some notable repercussion on the way of women education and socio-political development

Balochistan land of multiple ethno and tribal province of Pakistan faces enormous problems on women education. In this century even women of this region are being refused for acquiring education completely and freely. Even presently some parts of Baluchistan are plagued with the traditional concept of women to be limited in the four corner of the house. The four main reasons can be behind on the hindrance of women education. Very firstly, the tribal and gated community does not allowed them to acquire education. Secondly, the provincial government does not taken a single step on legislation of women education. Thirdly, federal government

²²Muhammad Shafa, Asma Azar, Nosheen Rafia. "Role of women participation in Balochistan Pakistan small ruminants development potentials prospect and constraints." *International journal of scientific and engineering research* , 2014: 6.

²³Riazulhaq. "Education woes is Pakistan misses UN target Areas of Balochistan." *The express tribune*, 2015: 7.

is mute on the depriving condition of women education in Balochistan. Lastly, human rights activist have poor participation on the issue of women education in the region.²⁴

Terrorism and insurgency is thriving side by side and restraining women social development. In different parts of Balochistan they are being threatened by various banned organization on different social concerns. The most notable of them is usual attack on polio workers and killing them without any reasons. Another worth mentioning social hinder of women in the society is they are not allowed to walk freely and independently. From this women education is badly effected and not improving as comparatively of Sindh, KP, and of the Punjab. Hence democratic development is becoming a far cry.²⁵

Political participation of women in different part of Balochistan is very poor and does not thriving by formidable mean. The immediate reason behind women poor role in political affairs is they did not given due rights in political front. Historically women in Balochistan were the most deprived gender comparatively than other part of Pakistan. Somehow many improvements came after 2005 but still needs more participation of women in political arena.²⁶

Some way and out for women critical situation in Balochistan

Nationwide legislation is the imperative for the time to empower women throughout Pakistan. Women empowerment is not the sole problem of Balochistan but it is the problem which is the entire nation is facing. Hence, the woman of Balochistan is the most degraded and depressed part of Pakistani society. Thus national legislation is the need of hour to change the fate of women in the province.

Tribalism is the part and parcel of Balochistani society but it should be overpowered to control women physically, socially and politically. They should be respected with certain limitation and exceptions. Tribal chiefs and

²⁴Report, UN. *The world in 2016 (trend and statistics)*. annual, Newyork: United Ntaiions publisher, 2017.

²⁵Nadeem, Zaman un. "The nature, resources and the socio-economic effects of terrorism in Balochistan." *Research gate*, 2012: 4.

²⁶Nizam, Baloch Rahim. "Socio-political culture in Balochistan Balochistan." *Balochistan voice* , 2016: 33.

feudal should not override the basic human rights of women. Thus measures should be taken for them restrains using unethical means of use of powers. Thirdly, political parties should take durable steps for changing women situation. They should ensure to render women political rights accordingly. It's should be mandatory for each political parties put in their manifesto for women equal empowerment to that of men. Each political party should provide social rights of women with due care and social protections.

Lastly, women education should be promoted through the province. Additionally, co-education with mean of tolerance and fraternity should be developed between the both genders. It is the need of time that they should be equally treated in educational concerns. Thus, education can develop Balochistan politically, socially and democratically which are the need of modern time.

Conclusion

Women in every corner of the world are the agent of change in all fronts of life. Without women a society cannot develop accordingly. Today's the entire west is developed it is due gender equal treatment on social, political, economic and national and international concerns. But women in Pakistan and more particularly Balochistan are being exploited educationally, socially and politically. Women in Balochistan are trying hard to acquire more educational, economic and political rights. Hence, it is possible when the whole women of Balochistan participate equally to change their fate on these concerns.

Thus, women of Balochistan should be united on the changing situation of the world on gender equality. It the sad part of Balochistan politics that they have no political party and none of woman either heading a political party. They need independent status on changing their destiny on acquiring more rights in national and international lines. Thus, women should support each other on educating themselves, and works to gain more social and political rights for a brighter future.