

SOCIAL MOBILISATION AND ONLINE SEPARATIST MOVEMENT IN BALOCHISTAN

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Abstract

Social media has become an important tool in the communication framework of modern political history. It is being used for campaign purposes by the political parties, pressure groups and sub-nationalists etc. Same situation is being witnessed in the case of Balochistan which has undergone insurgency five times since independence of Pakistan. Resultantly, a new wave of mobilisation has been started which can be called as 'online social mobilisation'. Although, at the moment, a scanty number of individuals are part of online social mobilisation yet the optimum utilization of social media tools has potential to create upset in the political discourse of Pakistan. In this backdrop, this paper tries to unearth the pertinent motivations behind the Baloch mobilisation and impact of social media to accelerate the mobilisation process. Also, the study provides some policy measures in order to provide Baloch youth a level playing field.

Introduction

Green flags are hosted in all over the country on 14th August each year which is celebrated as Independence Day of Pakistan. National anthem and national songs are played in a louder voice and people send independence greetings to each other through cards, messages, emails, blogs, Facebook and Twitter etc. While the Facebook page was full of greetings, there was a black flag of *Voice of Baloch*¹ celebrating 14th August as black day instead of Independence Day. It is to be noted that black colour is considered as a symbol of mourn and regret in the Islamic culture of Pakistan. Millions of

Pakistani use Facebook everyday and may be a small number of users have witnessed the Baloch black flag and have neglected it considering it as less important. But it raises serious questions about the use of social media by the Baloch educated class as only an educated person can use Facebook – in order to mobilize the dissident youth against the state of Pakistan.

Baloch insurgents are using every tactic from guerrilla war to internet blogging for the sake of their autonomy. Pro-independence websites were also launched but Pakistan Telecom Authority (PTA) blocked it and thus common Pakistani was denied to know the dissident Baloch voice. After banning these websites, rebel youth turned towards social networking sites like Facebook, twitter, YouTube etc and started disseminating their political ideology. Their campaign has been so successful that their Facebook pages are not only getting more and more fans but also foreign sympathy, although a little is being attracted. It means that a new wave of mobilisation has been started which can be called as online social mobilisation. Although, at the moment, a scanty number of individuals are part of online social mobilisation yet the optimum utilization of social communication has potential to create upset in the political discourse of Pakistan. In this backdrop this paper tries to unearth the pertinent motivations behind the Baloch mobilisation and impact of social media to accelerate the mobilisation process. Also, the study provides some policy measures in order to provide Baloch youth a level playing field.

Theoretical Perspective – Mobilisation

Scholars interpret current violent protest mobilisation by applying different academic explanations. Alok Bansal considers the Baloch movement as a result of perceived Punjabi hegemony.² Adeel Khan argues that Baloch nationalism results from the “struggle for power between the Pakistani state and the Baloch people”.³ Robert G. Wirsing concludes the context of today’s Baloch insurgency in terms of energy resource developments.⁴ Frederic Grare relates the

uprising to revival of nationalistic sentiments whereas Mir Ghaus Bizenjo attributes the current violent outburst as an outcome of military operations of 1973.⁵ Feyyaz defines the insurgency as greed phenomena⁶ while Surendra discusses it in terms of opportunity based motives.⁷ Notwithstanding significance of other scholarly explanations, this paper essentially examines the existing theoretical mobilisation patterns and concludes a new theoretical framework which can be applied to Balochistan case. My hunch is that mobilisation in Balochistan is occurring because there exists “mobilisational prerequisites.” The thriving mobilisation in the province involves some precise essentials which can be called as “rudiments of mobilisation.” A number of prerequisites and ingredients are required for a successful mobilisation. These include “political opportunity, ethnic identity and its formation, leadership, organizational capacity, ideology, profile and program, financial resources, communications, and symbols”. In the remainder article, I evaluate the variables of mobilisational prerequisites – a theory given by Zoltan Barany.⁸

Theoretical Perspective – Social Media

Since the increased access of internet in 1960s, the networked population of the world has increased from the millions to the billions. This increased use of internet also brought a new revolution in the use of social media. Social media emerged as an important part of life and it involved many actors from citizens, political workers and activists to nongovernmental organizations, software houses, telecommunications firms, and governments etc. Resultantly, the communication canvas became more complex, denser and participatory owing to the involvement of many actors. Also, the networked population is now able to get more access to information, public speeches, and a better facility to undertake collective actions.⁹ Thus, social media has become an important tool for increased political freedom that can help to connect slackly coordinated publics to demand for a change.¹⁰ In consequence, all over the world, social media is being used as a forefront of political success. Social media

tools like email, text messages, Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, YouTube and Flickr etc have become basic communications tools in every aspect of life. Political parties use social media for media campaigns, funding, participation, mobilisation, and creating enthusiasm in the general public. The social networking sites are also being used to communicate a targeted political message. In the recent past, social media has also been used for to increase political dialogue. Existing literature on the subject reveals that email was widely for political purposes in 1996.¹¹ In 2006, the catchword ‘Think’ was circulated through MySpace.¹² Another study of 2007 shows that about 40% of the US’s internet users have used social networking sites for political information and 20% people discovered the political interests of their friends.¹³ It has also been suggested that social networking sites are so effective that it can be used for any political campaign.¹⁴ This empirical data shows the relationship between social networking sites and political interest.

There are two basic types of political groups; disciplined and undisciplined. Disciplined groups can easily engage in any collective action while undisciplined groups can not go for a collective action in a coordinated manner. “Shared awareness” is a key element of coordination for the success of any political movements.¹⁵ Shared awareness is a capacity of members to understand the contemporary situation.¹⁶ The social media is being used to increase the shared awareness by broadcasting specific messages. Shared awareness creates “the dictator’s dilemma” which can be more precisely explained in Briggs words as “the conservative dilemma.”¹⁷ This dilemma has been posed by the new media which not only amplifies community access to the information but also multiplies the spread of such information. In this increased access situation, state’s monopoly over media has also undermined and therefore, state finds itself in conservative dilemma. This dilemma anticipates two types of responses; propaganda and censorship but neither of these is more effective. The state censors the critics or circulates propaganda as it needs to, but both of these measures require higher costs. It is worth mentioning that shutting down internet access or banning cell

phones radicalize the pro-regime citizens and also harms the economy. Dissident websites are easy to block but it is very hard to censor the social media. Ethan Zuckerman of Harvard's Berkman Centre for Internet and Society calls this "the cute cat theory of digital activism." Explicit tools intended to overcome state censorship like proxy servers are easy to shut down but the social media tools like sharing the pictures of cute cats are harder to shut down. Due to these reasons, promoting self-governance demands more investment in social media as general, rather than specifically political.

Balochistan – A Prelude

Five times since independence of Pakistan, Balochistan has undergone insurgency, "demanding greater autonomy or even an independent state, to reunite the Baloch population of Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan under one flag".¹⁸ Violent protests in the form of bomb blasts, target killings and acts of sabotage have become routine matter. Situation in the province has reached to a level where now Pakistani flags are being taken down, schools are being threatened against singing the national anthem and non Baloch residents are scared for their lives. Grievances relate to "self rule, ownership of resources, political participation and control over the economy".¹⁹

Sparsely populated Balochistan is the largest province in Pakistan. With an area of 347190 kilometres, it covers 43.6 percent of the total area of country. Naturally, the climate of such a vast territory has extraordinary varieties.²⁰ According to 1998 census, its population was 6.51 million, but now, the estimated population is 7.914 million with 76.1 per cent rural population²¹. The amount of Baloch population living in the province has been calculated to be a total of 54.7 percent, whereas, the remaining amount compiles the non-indigenous population, settled from other various parts of the country.²² Strategically important Balochistan covers nearly the country's entire coast – 1700 kilometres of coastline.²³ Economically, the land of Balochistan is rich in mineral resources, range of lands and gas deposits. However, despite

possessing so much, it still remains to be the most backward province in Pakistan. Being relatively less industrialized and underdeveloped – it receives a very minor share from the vast revenue it generates. It is a tribal land that was ruled autocratically by its *Nawabs*. Although these tribal areas are under Pakistani rule, real power resides in the hands of local tribal leaders, who most often have their own laws, armies, and jails. Therefore, one can blame central government for marginalizing Balochistan, but equal responsibility lies with the *Sardars* who enjoy immense powers in their tribes, and in central and provincial governments. Ethnically and linguistically, it is the most diverse province of Pakistan. Baloch are the largest ethnic group in their province but do not constitute majority. Their number is closely followed by *Pakhtoons*. The third largest ethnic group is *Brahui*, followed by a substantial number of non Baloch residents. Interestingly, the majority of Baloch live outside Balochistan, mostly in Sind and Punjab.

Balochistan is blessed with abundant natural resources such as gold, natural gas, copper, coal, iron ore and marble.²⁴ There is a little farming in the province because of the dry weather and little irrigation. Hence, the social mode of province is more nomadic because of harsh weather and shortage of fertile land. Also, there are some patches of settled agriculture; around which, a tribal life was organized. The livelihood of the people has been dependent on a numerous economic activities such as growing crops on small pieces of land, tending pasture land, cattle breeding, especially sheep and goats, trade and work in mines. The social organization of the province continues to be based on tribalism until this day.²⁵

Resurgence of Current Uprising

The current wave of violence has been manifested after an interval of almost three decades. Balochistan is the largest but also the least developed province of the country. Fuelled by a long list of grievances, it has long faced acute discrimination and neglect at the hands of the central government. Among

the grievances is the perceived exploitation of gas and mineral resources by the central government, development of mega projects and military presence within the province.

The political and economic marginalization has given rise to five insurgencies in the province during 1948, 1958, 1962, 1973-77 and 2002 to date.²⁶ The current Baloch-Islamabad conflict started due to the government's efforts to develop the area by undertaking a series of mega projects, most importantly the Gwadar port. This upsurge intensified in March 2005 when the then president General Pervez Musharraf declared an all-out war on Balochistan.²⁷ In the wake of these developments, chief of Bugti tribe, Nawab Akbar Bugti along with other tribesmen led an insurgent movement against central government. Nawab Akbar, ex Chief Minister and ex Governor of Balochistan, was killed on 26 August 2006 in a military operation. Afterward, Nawabzada Balach Marri, leader of the banned Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), killed in an ambush while crossing Afghanistan to Pakistan in November 2007.

Balochistan crises took a new shape in early 2009 when UNHCR representative, John Solecki was abducted from Quetta. Soon after, three Baloch nationalist leaders were found brutally murdered in Turbat in April 2009. Afterward, a new wave of violence touched urban areas of province. The insurgents started attacking developmental activities and hatred against non Baloch residents of province took the shape of target killings. This violent situation of target killing has taken lives of more than 200 civilians in the first half of 2009.²⁸ Academicians are also being targeted and so far six academicians have become victims of target killings during the last couple of months. Besides of targeting non Baloch population, some religious extremists are also spreading sectarian violence through target killing. The former Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) of Quetta has alleged Lashkir-i-Jhangvi for sectarian target killings.²⁹ Brutal abduction and target killings have become a routine matter and former Senator Habib Jalib Baloch, secretary general of Balochistan National Party (BNP), has also lost his life in July 2010,

sparkling violent protests in different parts of the volatile province.³⁰ According to a former Baloch Senator, Sanaullah Baloch, systematic and slow motion “genocide” is taking place in the province.³¹

Use of Social Media– A New Wave of Online Separatist Mobilisation

Internet has become a major open source of information and social media has emerged an important platform to coordinate publics. In the political discourse, it has become a coordinating tool for nearly all of the world’s political movements and same enabling environment is being created in Balochistan. Dissident Balochs are on Facebook, using pseudonyms, real names, and busy friending like-minded activists and sympathizers. They are creating Facebook pages, groups and coordinating events. They’re on Twitter, disseminating information, articles, blogs and videos in support of their cause. They have their own daily updated YouTube channels and stations, their own Yahoo! mailing lists chock-full of their leaders, their own crowd both inside and outside Pakistan – and they are angry.³²

Keeping in view the view the importance of Facebook than other social media websites, this study has collected the empirical data of Facebook pages by the dissident Baloch. Following table narrates the number of likes, political ideology, activeness status and foreign fans of randomly selected thirty pages. It is evident from the table that eighteen out of thirty pages are busy in spreading online separatism while only two pages represent federal ideology. The numeric value of separatist is also larger than the federalists. Although the total number of rebels is just in thousands yet the increasing number of dissident pages signifies a radical trend in social media especially in the case of Balochistan. This alarming trend needs serious consideration.

Balochistan Facebook Pages (07 Aug 2011, 11:33 AM)

Ser	Page Name	Total Likes	Ideology	Status	Foreign Fans
1.	Balochistan	3822	Federal	Active	No
2.	Balochistan Pakistan	341	Federal	Active	No
3.	Balochistan	1561	Mix	Active	Yes
4.	Balochistan	16	Mix	Active	No
5.	Balochistan	25	Mix	Active	No
6.	Balochistan	16	Mix	Active	
7.	Balochistan	13	Mix	Active	
8.	Balochistan	03	Mix	Active	
9.	Balochistan	50	Mix	Not Active	Yes
10.	Quetta Balochistan	150	Entertainment	Active	No
11.	Balochistan Hotel	407	Entertainment	Active	No
12.	Balochistan Hotel	297	Entertainment	Active	No
13.	Balochistan	84	Separatism	Active	Yes

14.	Balochistan	38	Separatism	Active	No
15.	Balochistan	39	Separatism	Active	No
16.	Free Balochistan	2096	Separatism	Active	No
17.	Balochistan Online	1698	Separatism	Active	Yes
18.	ShAuda Balochistan	422	Separatism	Active	No
19.	Azad Balochistan	67	Separatism	Active	Yes
20.	Free Balochistan	42	Separatism	Active	Yes
21.	Balochistan Zindagbaat	49	Separatism	Active	No
22.	Azad Balochistan	37	Separatism	Active	No
23.	Voice of Baloch	252	Separatism	Active	No
24.	Baloch Liberation Movement	614	Separatism	Active	No
25.	Martyred Balochs	959	Separatism	Active	No
26.	Stop Curse	35	Separatism	Active	No

	On Balochs				
27.	Dr. Allah Nizar Baloch 'The Steel Nerved Man'	909	Separatism	Active	No
28.	Balochistan Units Baloch	51	Separatism	Active	No
29.	Baloch Liberation Army	30	Separatism	Active	No
30.	Greater Balochistn	89	Separatism	Not Active	No

Mobilisation Prerequisites

Ethnic mobilisation is a “process by which groups organize around some feature of ethnic identity (for example, skin colour, language, customs) in pursuit of collective ends.”³³ Political mobilisation, according to Charles Tilly is a “process by which a group goes from being a passive collection of individuals to an active participant in public life.”³⁴ It represents the purposeful movement of a group for political gains. It is attitudinal insofar as there is a firm commitment to action and requires “means of translating this commitment into action or observed behaviour.”³⁵ These goals include better representation; the termination of political, social, and economic discrimination; and the improvement of collective’s conditions and social standing. It also aims at producing and maximizing political resources that will amplify the group’s influence including magnetizing votes, gaining sympathy from third parties, and making coalitions. Such resources also

entail political goods like disruptions, protests, and violence, all of which may be used as bargaining chips.³⁶

Successful mobilisation needs some ingredients as it does not occur in a vacuum. Below are the prerequisites of mobilisation which has been specifically applied to Balochistan case.

Political Opportunity

Political opportunity is the important prerequisite of mobilisation: if the dominant group does not grant marginal groups the chance to pursue their political mobilisation, even the ethnic group possessing all other mobilisational criteria will fail. Doug McAdam, Herbert Kitschelt, Sidney Tarrow, and others associated with the political opportunity structure approach have called attention to the critical importance of the external environment to social movements.³⁷ The state's perception of the ethnic group's capacity to mobilize, the potential threat it poses to the state's stability, and the resources it marshals to support or oppose state policies are always important to ethnic movements. Nonetheless, as Tarrow cautions, political opportunity is not a single variable but rather is a cluster of several, such as the presence or absence of influential allies and realignments in the party system.³⁸ Kitschelt has noted that social movement organizations are much more influential in open and strong political systems than in closed and weak ones.³⁹ Tarrow writes that "political opportunities provide the major incentives for transforming mobilisation potentials into action."⁴⁰

Coming over to case of Balochistan, one comes to know that political opportunity is strongly present in the province. Ethnic Balochs are in power i.e. provincial government belongs to ethnic Baloch elite but the dissident Baloch are away from the political discourse. Some nationalist parties also go for parliamentary politics and some have opted for militant tactics. Student organizations are also working in the academic institutions of the province hence; all segments of Baloch population are enjoying the political opportunity to

mobilize the public for a certain goal. Also, this political opportunity allows the parties to recruit militants through disseminating their ideology.

Ethnic Identity and Its Formation

The second fundamental requirement of political mobilisation is a clearly formulated identity that members of the ethnic group share, accept, and uphold. Ethnicity, like all identities, is relational; it attests to an awareness of collective identity consisting of several attributes like shared history, traditions, culture, and language. Though the importance of ethnicity among the other factors that constitute identity⁴¹ is contextually determined, for most people ethnic belonging tends to be one of the most important markers of identity. In Joseph Rothschild's words, the great advantage of ethnicity over other emblems of personal identity is "its capacity to arouse and to engage the most intense, deep, and private emotional sentiments."⁴² David Laitin's recent book, basically equates "language communities" with ethnic communities, in effect reducing identity to linguistic identity.⁴³ Ethnicity is one of a cluster of identity options whose value is enhanced in some circumstances and diminished in others. Ethnic identity "is developed, displayed, manipulated, or ignored in accordance with the demands of particular situations."⁴⁴

The determination of ethnic identity is an important factor in a group's success in coping with adaptation to outside forces and circumstances. For a cohesive and homogeneous ethnic group like the Balochs, the formation and articulation of its identity is easier. Identity and collective memory are closely connected with each other.⁴⁵ The character of the Baloch identity is affected and shaped by the province's geography and geopolitics that also creates their vision about the world and their cultural traditions. The Baloch myths and memories persist over generations and centuries, forming contents and contexts for collective self-definition and affirmation of collective identities in the face of the other.⁴⁶ The purpose of identity formation is to make them appreciate their collective past. Max Weber believes that "wherever the

memory of the origin of a community . . . remains for some reason alive, there undoubtedly exists a very specific and often extremely powerful sense of ethnic identity.”⁴⁷ It is obvious from the work of Weber that the mobilisation process itself contributes to the formation of the ethnic group’s political identity and same is being witnessed in Balochistan. The nationalist leaders are proud of their history and they appraise the contribution of their ancestors. They do not accept the Pakistani identity rather their mobilisation process aims at reviving separate identity of the Baloch. Ex Senator Sanaulah Baloch – a famous nationalist leader – always traces the Baloch identity from history.⁴⁸

Leadership

Leadership is another crucial factor to make credible political claims. The leaders who enjoy authority in their community can only give organizational form to the group. Intelligentsia also provides ordinarily individuals as the future leaders. The quality of leadership determines the success and failure of the organization or movement. Those heading the social movement might be natural leaders whose academic qualifications, economic position, social standing, and political background make them obvious candidates for leadership. If the group is divided, leaders need to negotiate compromises and achieve a consensus on at least the elemental goals and tactics of the mobilisation process. Rifts within ethnic elites generally impede, while cooperation fosters, the ethnic group’s chances for mobilisation.⁴⁹ One of the key tasks of leaders is to forge links with elements of the population hitherto uninvolved in politics.⁵⁰ How successful the individual leader will be in enlisting the participation of the population depends to a large extent not only on the level of popular support he receives but also on the number of rivals who challenge him.

Nationalist leadership of Balochistan consists of tribal landlords and educated middle class. Three major tribes Bugti, Mengal and Muree provide militant groups for an armed insurgency while the rest of educated middle class

provides political facet to this mobilisation. The Baloch leadership is successful enough in forging links with elements of the population who are not involved directly in the politics. These leaders are also not only receiving popular support from the Baloch community but also strong rivals from other areas of the country – thus fulfilling the theoretical explanation of successful leadership.

Organizational Capacity

A principal condition of any ethnic organization's political effectiveness is raising the communal consciousness of its members.⁵¹ Donald Horowitz notes that in many ethnically divided societies parties tend to organize along ethnic lines.⁵² The number of institutions involved in an ethnic group's political representation is also a decisive organizational issue. It would appear logical that a single organization that acts as the sole representative of the ethnic group would increase cohesion in the community. In fact, Paul Brass has argued that it is essential "that one political organization be dominant in representing the demands of the ethnic group against its rivals."⁵³ Still Balochistan is so deeply split along ethnic, occupational, tribal and other lines that one organization could not possibly articulate all their interests. If more than one party represents an ethnic group, it makes these parties to cooperate. The establishment of an umbrella organization or electoral coalition that represents the entire ethnic community can be very effective in increasing the ethnic group's political voice. Although alliance structures are often governed by the political conditions of the moment, they can nevertheless yield increased political representation, stability, support, and strength for the ethnic party.⁵⁴

Numerous nationalist parties are working in Balochistan on ethnic lines. They do cooperate with each other on some issue but mainly they are working on parallel lines. All of these parties are pursuing one agenda for the future of Balochistan but their course of action differs from the others. Eventually, ever since the Baloch's struggle for self determination has launched, pro Islamabad parties have not faced a single strong

nationalist party in the electoral process. It means that the Baloch nationalists lack organizational capacity in their political discourse yet it is worth mentioning that the dissident Baloch who are waging armed struggle possess some kind of institutional capacity for their militant agenda. Although the militants are also divided into small groups yet their organizational capacity allows them to spread terror in the province and also allow them to flee after attacking individuals and other installations. Further, organizational advantages involve favorable terrain that physically supports rebellion and social cohesion through which mobilisation gains legitimacy.

Favourable Terrain: Organizational advantages for the insurgents also encourage contentious behaviour. Methods of communications and access to facilities are affected by the physical and the social environment of the region. Further, the favourable terrain for rebels becomes a disadvantage for government forces. This is evident in the case of Balochistan where low dense population and low urbanization encourages mobilisation of rebel groups. Balochistan is an area of widespread harsh mountains and severe desert. Nomadic life of local population gives them an advantage over the state machinery. Hence, low population density coupled with its huge size, challenging terrain, and lack of development becomes a breeding ground for contention. Insurgents use different tactics like target killings for urban areas as the city centers are not favourable for insurgents.

Social Cohesion: Another source of insurgency is social cohesion which can be reduced by ethnic and religious diversity.⁵⁵ Balochistan has a legacy of autocratically ruled by its Nawabs. Ethnically and linguistically, it is the most diverse province of Pakistan. Baloch are the largest ethnic group in their province but do not constitute majority. Their number is closely followed by Pakhtoons. The third largest ethnic group is Brahui, followed by a substantial number of non Baloch residents. Interestingly, the majority of Baloch live outside Balochistan, mostly in Sind and Punjab. It is to be noted that the present upsurge is only found in the Baloch dominated

area which shows a certain level of cohesion in the Baloch population. The structure of tribal networks within the Baloch further encourages the formation of rebel groups since their social cohesion allow clearer communication among insurgents. Moreover, tribal leaders' support for the current movement also fuels the fire as they play important role in mobilizing their people.

Ideology, Profile, and Program

Milton Esman notes that “ethnic mobilisation is facilitated by and indeed usually requires an ideology, a coherent set of articulated beliefs” about collective identity, interests, and aspirations – the reasons that justify collective action.⁵⁶ Although such group's philosophy is useful in shaping the movement and encourages cohesiveness, successful ethnic mobilisation can occur even in its absence. More important is how a mobilizing ethnic group chooses to define the *profile* of its activities. Mobilisation also requires the identification of the collectivity's shared objective. Consensus about certain goals can be expected to increase an ethnic group's ability to take united action.⁵⁷ The reasonableness of an objective is primarily determined by situational factors. In exceptional cases, however, setting unrealistic goals or exploiting the appeal of an archaic, mythic past can be essential to mobilisation and can even be more effective than the identification of a more practical goal.⁵⁸

Ideology of rebel Balochs is very much clear and all the nationalists' elements have same voice about the future of Balochistan. Their demand is for larger autonomy or self determination for the region. Although the demands seems to be unrealistic, as their problems can be solved within the federation of Pakistan, yet the slogan of betraying the federating principles of Pakistan is becoming more effective for the increased social mobilisation.

Financial Resources

Deprivation is the key element behind social mobilisation. Indeed, the reason for mobilizing is often to reverse their

economic deprivation. It takes money to publicize activities, print newspapers and campaign materials, maintain offices and lines of communication, and pay employees. Baloch militants enjoy some kind of “economic viability”⁵⁹ – which can be better understood through four variables; financial gains from the exploitation of natural resources, foreign involvement, conflict-specific capital and low cost of involvement. It is evident through the history that natural resources of the province have been exploited for the financial resources and interior minister of Pakistan has repeatedly claimed about the foreign involvement in the province⁶⁰ which in result provides conflict specific capital for this armed insurgency. Also, the bulk of population is uneducated and unemployed; hence, cost of involvement to the individual is very low.

Communications

Communication is an important factor for the mobilisation process. Effective communications require high literacy rates and a common language. Given that the dominant group usually supervises national media that is typically prejudiced toward ethnic minorities, it is particularly important that there should be minority group control media outlets exist. The state owned media and private media tries to keep itself somewhat neutral and hence it narrates the real situation of the province. But, conversely to the desires of the rebel Baloch leader, national media does not become a communication vehicle for their political ideology. In this situation, role of social media gets more importance. Dissident Balochs are free to use internet as a communication tool and therefore social media is being harnessed for social mobilisation.

Symbols

The mobilizing group is assisted by shared symbols that are widely recognized and esteemed by the community.⁶¹ The flag, monuments, and public spaces endowed with historical meaning, poems, anthems, and anniversaries of historical events can also be used to cement the group’s cohesion. When there is no such symbol or tradition readily available to the

ethnic group, it must be “invented,” that is, it has to be created afresh.⁶² Symbols are extensively used in social mobilisation process of the province. The insurgents have drafted their own flag for independent state of Balochistan. Balochi national anthem is also available at YouTube. Death anniversaries of Baloch martyrs are also celebrated to enhance the social cohesion of the Baloch community.

Conclusion

Social mobilisation in Balochistan is getting more and more support within the province because there exists mobilisation prerequisites in the said area, especially in the Baloch populated area. As already noted, social mobilisation does not occur in vacuum, there are number of historical factors involved which have gradually taken the province to the present worst situation. The volatile situation of the province provides political opportunity to the ethnic Balochs. The dissident leaders are using this political opportunity to mobilize the common people for their specific goal of self determination. The Baloch leaders are proud of their history and through appraising the contribution of their ancestors, their mobilisation campaign aims at reviving separate identity of the Baloch. Baloch leadership is a mix of tribal landlords and educated middle class and through a successful campaign, these leaders have forged links with elements of the population who are not involved directly in the politics, therefore receiving popular support from the Baloch community. Rebellious Balochs also enjoy organizational advantages including favourable terrain that physically supports rebellion and social cohesion through which mobilisation gains legitimacy. A clear ideology is the most important thing for a successful social mobilisation campaign and nationalist leadership is intelligent enough in drafting a clear and shared ideology for an independent Balochistan. Every social movement demands financial resources and the Baloch are using their natural resources for economic gains. Also, some kind of external support is also present in the province. As the national media is hostile towards rebel Baloch, the former has turned to social media for an effective

communication. Lastly, independent Balochistan struggle is assisted by the shared symbols which have been drafted and crafted time to time. All of this shows that Islamabad's ignorance about the province has created a vacuum which is being exploited by the rebel Baloch leadership. It is also worth mentioning that dissident voices have shifted to social networking sites which are used by billions of user across the world. Internet is the cheaper source of information and disseminating rebel's ideology on these sites is creating a new wave of online social mobilisation. Although, at the moment there number is relatively less yet the optimum utilization of social networking sites can create an upset in the political discourse of Pakistan.

Policy Options

Balochistan's alarming situation requires immediate measures by the federal government. Possible workable options are listed below:-

- Federation-believer political parties must be encouraged by the central government. If these parties are funded and they use the fund in a proper manner without corruption, it would increase the common people's sympathy towards Islamabad and parliamentary politics. Resultantly, common people would not be attracted by the militant leaders hence their political opportunity would be restricted.
- The Baloch identity is being used for an independent state as the Baloch think that their identity has been undermined by the centre. This sense of alienation should be removed and Baloch identity should be acknowledged. The government should accept the salient of Baloch identity i.e. struggle and braveness. Also, the government efforts should be employed to muster these positive trends instead of leaving it for separatists to exploit. There can be a number of ways to harness Baloch identity and one important way is to induct the Baloch strength into military and paramilitary forces.

- It is the dichotomy with Pakistan that the popular leaders went against the state because of Islamabad's prejudice policies towards small provinces as it happened in the case of Nawab Akbar Bugti. This episode should not be repeated and the effective leadership of Baloch should be encouraged in the political discourse of country.
- Organizational capacity of rebel Balochs is difficult to end. But the authorities can find other ways to use the social cohesion of the Balochs for their benefits. It is the fact that terrain in the province is very hard but it is also a fact that this terrain covers underneath a wealth of natural resources. Road links are necessary for the mining industry and development of roads would minimize the terrain difficulties. This process will help in two ways; one, that industrial and development sector will be encouraged and secondly, a check on militant can also be kept.
- Any government can not change the ideology of a particular group but the former's good policies can stop the people to go in support of later. This is the only key for limiting the rebel ideology.
- Blocking the internet access is not a suitable option to stop the communication line of dissident Balochs. Rather, healing the grievances of Baloch is the only way to stop disseminating anti-Pakistan literature.

Rudiments of mobilisation are providing strong support to the overall social mobilisation process in Balochistan. After critically examining the Balochistan, one comes to know that major blame goes to the Islamabad which has directly or indirectly provided the reasons for social mobilisation in the province. This alarming situation of province is further aggravated by the use of social media which is being effectively used by the Balochs and thus creating new challenges for the government of Pakistan. The study also shows that carrot and stick policy of Islamabad would not work in this time. Rather, the policy makers should change their attitude while resolving

the Balochistan issue. It is pertinent to note that merely army operations are not solution for the region.

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Notes

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