

SARDARI SYSTEM (A case Study of Political Organization in Baloch Tribes)

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Abstract

The main theme of this study is to explore the social organization of Baloch tribes living in tribal areas of Balochistan and Punjab. This is a study to reconcile the deliberate falsification and distortion of basic historical and cultural truths by the state media about Baloch social and political organization and this study is an attempt to show a cultural picture of some historical, cultural, political and economic issues of Baloch people. Study will be focused on Baloch social institute and cultural norms of tribal life, it's past and present as well. As we know that a Baloch tribe is consisted of various clans and sub tribes. There are so many families in a clan. This federation of clans/ sub tribes forms a tribe or Tamun. The chief or Sardar was elected mostly by the elders of the clans. This study will be focused on norms and selection or removal of tribal chief/ Sardar in very past.

Introduction

Before discussing the case we must be well informed that there was a popular tribal system before Sandeman reforms about Baloch Sardari system. At the time of partition of sub-continent the province of Balochistan was divided into four types of institutional areas. 1. Khanate Balochistan, consisting of Las Bela state, Kalat, Kharan and Mukran. 2. Tribal Areas which were centrally managed. 3. Leased Areas. 4. British Balochistan. We are going to discuss the organizational position of tribal areas.

There was a very popular tribal system in Baloch tribes which was controlled by a council of tribal elders. It is unknown and covered under thick layer of time that when human being felt and realized that he cannot survive without cooperation and help of others. In which circumstances he felt that he can be help-full for others and meanwhile others will support him in all difficulties of life. Men as social animal started living in groups from early Stone Age. Hunting and gathering society was the first human union. History tells us that

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people from same families and clans were forced by the situation to live united and to save themselves from other savages groups/tribes. When these united clans got power they started to dominate other weak tribes. Meanwhile they felt the need of permanent leader/ ruler. Syed Sabat e Hussan says,

“ The concept of sovereignty was first for God , the power living on unknown heights of heavens but after some years man became the representative of God and enjoyed the power of God as ruler” (1) (*Hassan 1988*)

Baloch migration from Central Asia to Balochistan and even onward during 3500 BC is not a myth but reality of history. In their ways to east they stayed near Caspian Sea for some time. Then Baloch 40 Bolaks came in Seistan in present Iran, Helmand (Afghanistan) and Chagai Plains of Pakistan. During 12 AD Baloch travelled through Makuran and finally reached Sibi and Kachhi plains. Thus Baloch are scattered among Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Jan Muhammad Dashti says “Every culture must have living ideas, some cardinal points to sustain and inspire its people. The Baloch values have always been centered as what they consider good or evil, judging by their own social standards. A true Baloch is expected to follow in individual and collective life the tribal code of conduct, which is readily obeyed by all, ostensibly without any protestation. Baloch has been resisting the cultural assault of the victorious and pre-dominant cultures of the region throughout the history against heavy odds making comparable to Jewish people in maintaining their culture and national identity preserved. He never easily accepted alien manners. Even after accepting Islam, they usually preferred their own way of life, and its customs always proved stronger than the laws of Islam. Social behavior of Baloch is almost the same as was in the primitive days. The perception of good and evil had not been changed. The values of Lajj O Mayaar, Mehr, honesty, bravery, protection of Bahot, social concepts regarding, Hawaachk, Bijjaar, Shigaan, revenge, Medh o Maraka and adultery have been retained.” (2) (*Dashti 2007*)

The Baloch Sardari system in other wards the tribal system is hold by three pillars.

1. **Its Customs:** The cultural norms which mean the rule of tribal law or code of conduct. The values of Lajj O Mayaar, Mehr, honesty, bravery, protection of Bahot, social concepts regarding, Hawaachk, Bijjaar, Shigaan, revenge, Medh o Maraka and adultery have been retained.
2. **Sardar:** Sardar is political leader and even the C in C of tribal lashkar.
3. **Mukhadam/wadera:** The elder of each clan/sub-tribe and almost respected families.

Sardar: Sadrar is most important figure of tribal system. All his tribe's men expect bravery, generosity and honesty from his sardar. Sardar must follow the code conducts of his tribe. This is called Rasam o Rawaajj. Sardar is most respectable figure of Baloch society and even it is belief of tribal people that Sardar has spiritual power, equal to seven saints (Walee). A famous Baloch poet of 18th Century Ghulam Muhammad Chegaa buzdar says,

Aan marhad k rajjani sar ant

Logh khaanrh nish aafee wahant

Ammar pazaan pesh mer ant

Nafsaa kate ee khunjar ant

Fezaa hazaar qoomish girant. (3). (Buzdar 1968)

Meanings: Those who are chief of tribes, their home/houses are like flowing spring in mountains. They use sword for ego and die before the death under weight of responsibilities. Thousands of people do get benefit from these noble people.

Sardar has the power of PM, President, Chief Justice, and Army chief. Sardar is responsible to resolve tribal issues with consultation of Jerga.

Sardar have to lead the tribal lashkar whenever there is any clash with other tribe. In Sardary system there is an informal assembly of tribe's elders which is headed by Sardar. There will be one elder as member of this council from each clan or almost respected family. Before Sandman reforms the elders council was authorized to remove and change the Sardar of tribe, but later on the economic position and political power given by corrupt state made this position so power full that this is not possible now a day. The council of elders can also change some customs which are outdated and have no more importance in tribal people's life, with final approval of Sardar.

Jerga: Jerga consist of some most important and vice members of elders council. These members have to act like honorable judges of Supreme Court. These members of Jerga also are the Corps Commander of tribal Army.

In Baloch tribal system every men knows that this is village and home land which belong to his tribe and there is a tribal chief with council of elders supported by all tribe men to help him, if he faces some difficulties in life. He is not alone. On other hand he also knows his responsibilities toward the society. I do remember that my late mother often used to say that sons

are property of entire tribe. That is why the whole tribe celebrates the birth of a son. During the Khanate rule of Kalat ever Baloch tribe was an independent unit of Kalat state. Sardar with help and assistance of council of elders from each village and clan were responsible to resolve all problems with in the tribe according to custom and code of conducts of Baloch tribe. Sardar was bounded to obey Khan of Kalat. Only the death sentences cases were sent to Khan for approval.

British Balochistan and Sandeman system: during the 18th century the 50 years of Baloch resistance against British invade. Marri Baloch were special threat for their communication root. Sandeman was a clever ruler working as AGG, thoroughly studied the Baloch psychology and reached on point that Baloch may be treated with kind and special tact's. He knew that Baloch Sardars of Jhalawan are not easy with khan kalat. Muhammad Sardar khan Baloch says in his book the Baloch race,

“every Baloch is a permanent threat for another Baloch”

“Baloch vengeance is always in his heart, jealousy and pride in his looks, death in his hand, blood and revenge always hummer in his head. As such for a Baloch to seek help from a Baloch would mean to expect milk from a dry cow. Never the less, he is always kind benevolent, generous, hospitable, sympathetic, sincere, honest and tolerant to entire mankind. As all water in sea can never turn swan's black leg to white, so all the virtues of Baloch will not soften, surrender, or subdue his heart for the good of his own blood.” **(4) (Baloch, 1981)**

The same was known by the British ruler Sandmen. He tactfully favoured the Baloch Sardar and finally he forced Khan Kalat to sign the ever famous treaty called Mastung treaty 1879. Baloch sardar were now completely independent within their tribes. As a result of that treaty sardars got some advantage of power and also British regime put some responsibilities on their shoulder.

1. Sardar will be the supreme ruler of his own tribe.
2. All development will be made with consultancy and agreement of Sardar.
3. The levees force will be established in each tribe and all government servants will under command of Sardar, British government will pay their salaries accordingly.
4. The authority of appointment, Pay fixation and even removal of all government servants will be in hand of Sardar.

5. The Political Agent of British government will be bound for consultancy of Sardar for administrative and development means.
6. Sardar were given large agriculture land to meet their necessities.
7. The sub-tribe elders (Mukhadam) will be given stipend/ salary if sardar appoints them as assistant for administrative duties.

Responsibilities

1. All Sardar will remain faithful with British regime.
2. Every Sardar will ensure that his tribes' men will not act against British Government.
3. Every Sardar will be responsible for ensuring complete peace with in his area.
4. Whenever British regime needs the help in form of manpower, all Baloch Sardar will come forward to help the government with their tribal lashkar.
5. Whenever the agent to British government feels that sardar is no more loyal with British regime, he was replaced by other powerful wadera of the same tribe.

The Source of income

During the British rule the Baloch Sardar came more powerful and thus the sardari which was a political democratic position, changed into kingdom. The elder son if not psychologically ill will be the next Sardar of the tribe. Following are the economic sources for tribal chief.

1. The best agriculture land was reserved for Sardar.
2. The undivided land within territory of his tribal area was almost for sardar.
3. The sixth part of income of every working Baloch is reserved for Sardar.
4. As Baloch of tribal area are almost animal raiser so the 2.5% of animal (sheep and goats) were sent to sardar house.
5. Sometime the tribal men do robbery from nearby tribes. The lions share was reserved for sardar.
6. Whenever there is some immediate need and economic burden on Sardar, the ever popular custom Bejjari and phodhi is done to collect money for Sardars need.

Organization in Sardary Sytem: the social organization of tribal people in sardari Nazaam is as under. (5) **Mehmood-1979**

The Baloch Rajj

All members of Baloch tribe are called Rajj. Every member considered himself as respectable as chief/ sardar of tribe. Before sandman reform the Baloch has a totally open life and living. They have very unique values and they believed to be equal. They felt freedom and fairness in all matters. In all kind of Balochi gathering everyone was free to take part. Whenever the tribe was facing social, political and economic problems every Baloch take part in debate at elders or Sardar's home.

Jan Dashti says,

“ The Baloch is deeply proud. There are instances in history that to boost the individual or tribal ego, he took or made **Vows** quite inconsistent with general practices. Killing of its own non-combatant women folk in order to avoid their being dishonored by enemy forces or binding themselves together to ensure that

no combatants can run away from the battle in the face of advancing enemy , are glaring examples. (6) **(Dashti, 2007)**

Baloch being deeply proud consider himself equal respectable as like Sardar and *Wedera*. When there was a clash within Chakar e Azam and Beevareg, on killing of Shah Kattee, Beevarg never consider himself underneath then Chaakar.

He says,

Chaakar k Rajj e wazahen

Man dah bazen marhde neyaan. (7). **(Marri, 1982)**

Meanings: chaakar is the chief of Rind tribe it is ok, but I never think to be less the Chakar in respect and honor. A tribal Baloch has very less agriculture land. He depends on animal raising and live semi-nomadic life. Dr. Nek Buzdar gives the true picture of Baloch Rajj:

“People of tribal area are animal raiser. The tribal rangelands a traditional system of common property where affiliated institution of Sardari Sytem existed. Most of the tribesmen raised animal, mainly sheep and goats, for their subsistence needs. People have no modern mean of communication. Hall hawaal is the only mean of information among tribal people. People live in remote and difficult mountainous areas without any outside influences.

Absolutely 100% of tribal population was illiterate and could not speak any language other than a local dialect of Balochi. Generally, they could count only up to 20 (geest), and they knew that 5 twenties make a hundred (sad) and that ten sads make thousand (Hazar). **(8) Nek buzdar-2008**

2. Naqeeb or Darzadagh

These people are also part of Baloch tribal system. They are responsible of farming the land and growing grain for community. In Sindh they are called Haari. As we have discussed in above lines that Baloch are deeply proud and class conscious, so they consider this class inferior then common Baloch.

4. Domab / Lorri

Lorri is very important class of Baloch society. This class is closely concerned with chief and elder of clans. In past they were the news reporter and postman to invite people from faraway places on different tribal ceremonies. They are the musician and even singer of Baloch society. They were depended on the gift and economic help of Baloch Rajj. Baloch poet from Buzdar tribe Mr. Sead Khan says:

“Beyaa ao lorri Thathrokhen tai gon sheraanen wappaar.

Sar kane shahir Ghafoor aa meni gaal Tapao do cheyaar.” **(9). (Saed- 2014)**

Meaning: My dear lorri come on and serve me as you have along lasting dealing with poetry. Please take my few lines of latest poem/dastanagh and tell these line to poet Ghafoor.

More over lorries/ Doom are respected as people think that they moving advertises about some one character.

Lohaar: (Black Smith): This class is responsible for iron work. They make all working tool of farming and harvesting. The house hold cutlery is also made be these people. In past they used to make swords as well. Baloch consider them inferior and give them very least part of land income.

Darkaan: this class is equal to Lohaar, they make the all wooden tools of farming and also house hold items. 2.5 % of land income is given to him.

Marhetta: this class exists only in eastern Balochistan especially in Bugti, Mazaries and some where in Marri tribes. People think that they are Marhata of India and were brought here after any war as war slaves. They are also considered as lower cost of Baloch tribe.

Theeha: This class is also from the slaves families. These may be purchased by the rich people. They are considered as lower class in Baloch tribal society.

Jatt (the Camel Man) : This working class is also from lower cast. They look after the camels of Baloch Meer o Sardar. They earn their living hood by transportation of camels. The trade was made possible by these camel caravans from place to place.

Conclusion

The tribal sardari system is no more popular in modern age, but as there is no any other system of justice and rule in the country so people go through the fire to prove them self-innocent. Sardar resolves the issues among tribesmen with no time and without any court fee, thus people are tired from long process of state justice system.

Sardar has complete authorities within his tribe. People with poor economy and hopeless from state political system are not able to replace the Sardar if even he is dishonest. Somewhere like Makran and Koh e Suleman (Punjab areas) people has made personal efforts to weaken the cruel Sardari System.

The life standard of common people can never improve in Sardari sytem. Where ever the power of state has been used to replace the Sardar, it resulted into bloody clashes. It is a tested fact that tribal system is being fueled by “Clash”.

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