

The Princely States of Balochistan: Layout, History and Religion

Manzoor Ahmed*

ABSTRACT

Balochistan has always been a territory divided by the influential tribal chieftains. A bifurcated social fabric and emergence of princely states is a result of this divided nature of political landscape of Balochistan. The geographical terrain and the history of Baloch's constant movement and migration is partly responsible for the late arrival of any kind of political arrangement among warring tribes and spheres of influences. This paper will take a closer look into the Balochistan's princely states, their history, geography and religious profiles. It will examine some of the available historical records and other sources such as legends and traditions to trace the historical emergence of a Baloch confederacy in the name of Khanate of Kalat and its role and relation with different (semi) autonomous princely states. The paper will explore the relationship between the British colonial government in India and the princely states of Balochistan and will seek to understand causes of the demise of Kalat domination over the autonomous regions and princely states. In consequence of the waning power of Kalat, many tribes and princely states asserted their independence and went to make separate arrangement with

* Associate Professor of Economics and Dean Faculty of Management and Social Sciences, Lasbela University, Balochistan, Pakistan. Email: economist.luawms@gmail.com

the British and later with the newly independent Islamic State of Pakistan. The paper will particularly examine the situation of three major autonomous regions: Makran, Lasbela and Kharan. It will also highlight the geography and religious profiles of four princely states which later on constituted Balochistan province. The paper argues that the colonial Forward Policy and its implication helped many autonomous regions to assert their independence from Kalat. Overall, the paper will take a perilous view of the Khanate and its relation with three major princely states which in consequence define the emergence of first Baloch independency and its demise. The balancing act of these states and Kalat was the key triangular relationship to maintain the first confederacy of Baloch tribes.

Introduction

Looking at the history and religious profile of princely states of Balochistan is not only challenging but is also full of diverse opinions. However, many scholars (see for example, Spencer¹, Sahlins² and Dames³) of national and international repute argue that the history of the Baloch people can be traced back to at least two millennium BC when the various Baloch tribes migrated from the Central Asian region and the Caspian Sea to a region, which is the modern day Balochistan. These warring tribes spread around a vast wasteland ranging from Indus River to the East, modern day Afghanistan to the Northwest, Arabian Sea to the South and Persian Empire to the West, encompassing virtually all the princely states that this paper aims to discuss. Nevertheless, many scholars believe that the Baloch people are the indigenous people of present day Balochistan, and those who migrated from the Middle East and Central Asian regions assimilated with the local culture and language and,

1 C. S. Spencer, "On the Tempo and Mode of State Formation: Neoevolutionism Reconsidered," *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 9, no. 2 (1990): 1-30.

2 M. Sahlins, *Tribesmen* (Englewood Cliff: Prentice-Hall, 1968).

3 M. L. Dames, *The Baluch Race: A Historical and Ethnological Sketch* (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1904).

therefore, mixed themselves with the Baloch nation and national movement. Whether the Baloch are indigenous native people of Balochistan or migrated thousands years ago from elsewhere is not the scope of this paper. (For more discussion on the Baloch ethnic and national profile, see Ahmed and Khan⁴). The relevant aspect warrant mentioning is that many rival tribes were succeeded in forming a strong confederacy which led to the formation of first Baloch State towards the outset of 18th Century under the ruler ship of Mir Naseer Khan-I⁵. For around two centuries the Baloch State or the union of four princely states went through multiple ups and downs, and ultimately lost its sovereignty to the British domination in 1839.⁶

The statecraft and state formation in Balochistan somewhat goes back to the 15th Century when a legendry Baloch warrior and the chief of Rind tribe, Sardar Chakar Khan Rind, formed a loose confederacy of many Baloch tribes spreading around entire land of current Balochistan, a part of Iran (a major part of Sestan-Balochistan province of modern day Iran) and Helmond province of Afghanistan. Janmahmad⁷, a prominent Baloch Scholar, believes that through the end of the 15th Century the union of Rind and Lashar tribes, the most powerful tribes of their time and era, with other notable Baloch tribes heralded the development of a large and strong Baloch confederacy which stretched from Kirman, the modern day Iran, to its West and Sindh and Indus River to its East. However, the first Baloch tribal confederacy could not last long given the internal feuds and tensions of Baloch tribes, which led to the disintegration of the confederacy, putting the tribes into a state of further

4 M Khan and G. Khan, "The History of Baloch and Balochistan: A Critical Appraisal," *South Asian Studies* 32, no. 1 (2017): 39-52.

5 Muhammad Sardar Khan Baloch, *History of Baloch Race and Balochistan* (Karachi: Process Pakistan, 1958).

6 Spencer, "On the Tempo and Mode of State Formation: Neoevolutionism Reconsidered,".

7 Janmahmad, *Essays on Baloch National Struggle in Pakistan: Emergence, Dimensions, Repercussions* (Quetta: Gosha-e-Adab, 1989).

fragmentation and disarray.⁸ The infamous 30 years' war between Rind and Lashar tribes not only weakened the Baloch political and warring strength against any foreign aggression but also it broke the internal unity of the Baloch tribes which descended into further destruction of Baloch morals and ethos. Considering this, it is fair to argue that the Baloch confederation during Mr. Chakar Khan Rind reign was married with tribal feuds and sheer internal conflicts, which made it hard to qualify for a modern day definition of nation and nationalism. However, after undergoing into a period of disintegration and disarray, the Baloch tribes engaged with a new unification in the 17th Century with the establishment of a Baloch confederacy, The Kalat Confederacy, under the rule of Almedzai clan of Qambarani tribe, with its headquarter at Kalat town, in central Balochistan.⁹

The Kalat confederation extended further to incorporate the princely states of Makran, Kharan and Lasbela into the fold of Khanate of Kalat. Yet with the arrival of the British to the region the anxiety and apprehensions within Balochistan rose to a level that culminated into the collapse of Kalat State. The British manoeuvrings and political and administrative manipulations adversely affected the relationship of princely states of Makran, Lasbela and Kharan with Khanate of Kalat. This ultimately paved the way for indirect rule of the British and assumption of power of the princely states. The British Government not only assumed indirect power from the rulers of princely states, but also brought far reaching economic, political and social changes to the tribal structure of Balochistan. The British adopted and applied their classic "divide and rule" theory by dividing the tribes, strengthening the *Sardars* and *Nawabs*, making them subordinate to the British agents and acting as

8 A. W. Hughes, *The Country of Balochistan: Geography, Topography Ethnology & History*, eds., (Quetta: Book World, 2002).

9 Gulawar Khan, *Politics of Nationalism, Federalism, and Separatism: The Case of Balochistan in Pakistan*, (PhD Thesis, University of Westminster, UK, 2015).

intermediaries between princely states and Khanate of Kalat, and between Sardars and tribal chieftains and the Khan.

The introduction of political and administrative reforms by the first agent to the Governor General of Balochistan Agencies, and the architect of the colonial rule on Balochistan, Sir Robert Sandeman, entirely changed the political and social landscape of princely states of Balochistan, which enabled the British to quell any kind of resistance and aggression against the incursions of Balochistan by the British forces. For the British the princely states of Balochistan had no importance other than a front line region and a buffer zone between the British and Russia, and British and Iran, which signifies the immense geostrategic importance of Balochistan. The British viewed Balochistan purely through a geostrategic lens and did not provide any kind of public services to its people: neither they paid any attention to the infrastructure and institutional buildings in Balochistan nor did they provide any social services such as basic education and healthcare to its people. The political and social reforms introduced by the British were just to smooth and satisfy the geostrategic needs of the British themselves without any kind of impact on the social and economic lives of the people of Balochistan.

The State of Kalat

The State of Kalat or the Khanate of Kalat, as it was commonly known, was a strong and historically important Muslim State in South and Southwest Asia. Geographically located at the crossroad to the British Balochistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia to the North and Persia to the West, it bounded South by Lasbela State and Southwest by the State of Makran. While to Northwest, it connected to Central Asia and to the West was the Persian Empire or modern day Iran.

Whereas given the dearth of any reliable historical records and manuscripts, the history of State of Kalat is mostly based on hearsay, folklore epic poetry and Baloch legends.

Yet scholars like Dashti¹⁰ and Axman¹¹ are of the view that the tribal confederacy in Turan that developed into chieftdom in early 17th Century began to shape as a Khanate after Mir Ahmad Khan assumed the leadership of the confederacy in 1666. However, it is important to underline that the part of Turan confederation was under the control of the Mughal Empire of India. Through the end of 17th Century two prominent Baloch tribes, Mirwani and Dehwar, helped to oust the Mughal from Turan and consequently established the Kalat State.¹²

The Ahmedzai family of Qambarani tribe established a confederating state of many tribes with central authority of an administrative and political setup that brought tribal harmony and relative peace to erstwhile restive and volatile region. In order to strengthen the political process and state affairs, the confederating units of the tribes delegated some of the administration powers to the Khan of Kalat. Since the Kalat State extended to the northern region and to the Afghan border, it secured some very important revenue sources pertaining to trade and commerce. Owing to the peace and tranquillity in Kalat region, the economic activities increased many folds, which therefore made the confederacy rich compare to other neighbouring regions. Afterward Mir Ahmed Khan expanded his empire to incorporate two very prominent regions, Sarawan and Shal (Quetta), to embolden the Khanate with extra revenue, which enabled the State to engage with more expeditions and voyages.¹³ The settled life in Shal, Kalat, Mustang and other small towns and villages attracted many nomad families to abandon their nomadic abode and settle in the towns and

10 Naseer Dashti, *The Baloch and Balochistan: A Historical Account from the Beginning to the Fall of the Baloch State* (USA: Trafford rev Publishers, 2012).

11 Martin Axman, *Back to Future: The Khanate of Kalat and the Genesis of Baloch Nationalism* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2009), 24.

12 M. G. K. Naseer, *Tarikh e Balochistan* [Urdu: History of Balochistan] (Quetta: Kalat Publishers, 1979).

13 Nina Swidler, "The Political Economy of a Tribal Chieftdom," *Wiley on Behalf of the American Anthropological Association* 19, no. 3 (1992): 553-570.

villages. The period of 1660s, when Mir Ahmed Khan formed the Khanate of Kalat and the ascendancy of Mir Khan Abdullah Khan, as Knighted Khan in the early 18th Century, was considered the formative period for the Kalat State. Thus the Khanate of Kalat, which was economically strong and politically consolidated, emerged as an autonomous state and enjoyed its sovereignty – though succumbed under the pressure of neighbouring rulers, especially under Ahmed Shah Abdali of Afghanistan – for around three hundred years till finally annexed with newly established federation of Pakistan in April 1948.¹⁴

By the mid of 18th Century the Khanate lost its central command which resulted into the disorientation and disorganization of many tribes from the central authority of the Khan. Thus, when Mir Naseer Khan, the ruthless Khan of Kalat, took the reign of state in 1749 the State had already lost its sovereignty to the Afghan Kingdom and was a vessel of Afghan ruler Ahmed Shah Abdali (1722-1772).¹⁵ Hence the first and paramount task for Naseer Khan was to regain the state autonomy from the Afghan King, which was lost under the infamous treaty between Mir Khan Mahabat Khan and Afghan rulers.¹⁶

After controlling the power and taming down the wild and unruly tribes, Naseer Khan introduced some basic and far reaching reforms to change the economic, political and social landscape of the Kalat State. He took many measures, some of them were indeed very controversial, to force the rebels and brought them under the fold and direct power of Khanate and to a centralized authority of the state. Above all he was quite close with Afghan ruler Ahmed Shah Abdali (1722-1772) in raiding and plundering neighbouring states of India and Persia, and princely states of Makran and Lasbela. Thus, Kalat throughout the 18th Century –

14 Hughes, *The Country of Balochistan*.

15 Was the founder of the Durrani Empire regarded as the founder of the modern State of Afghanistan (*Encyclopaedia Online Version*. 2010).

16 Janmahmad, *Essays on Baloch National Struggle in Pakistan*.

particularly after subjugating the princely state of Makran through ill-conceived political and strategic incursions, killings and maiming thousands of innocent people on a wrong sectarian pretext, yet underneath politically and strategically inspired motive – was a prosperous state with an army and central authority.

Yet the glory of Kalat State came to an end by the second quarter of 19th Century when the Kalat State was disfigured and tarnished with internal political disputes and tribal hostilities. The Khan and his agents mysteriously killed many of notable *Sardars* and tribal chieftains. The Sarawan region, the northern part of the Khanate and strategically an important region, was in complete revolt against the Khan's authority.¹⁷ The deteriorating and worsening law and order situation and internal tensions within Khanate invariably increased the anxiety of British, which desired peace and stability in its boarder and tribal frontiers. Therefore, ostensibly the lack of law and order in Kalat compelled the British Government to intervene in Kalat affairs. However, the underlying reasons of British intervention in the state of Kalat were to counter the perceived incursions of Russian Empire to southwards. The fundamental concern of the British Empire during the 19th Century was to secure the frontier regions including the Kalat State from the belligerent Russian Empire. Against this strategic reason and owing to the internal stability of Kalat due to the tribal feuds, the British Colonial force paved its way to Kalat State. The Kalat State and particularly its northern region attached the British to the state, as it had proximity to Afghanistan and Russian Empire and could be an ideal buffer region between Afghanistan and British Raj in India.¹⁸ The British realized that the Kalat State was unable to counter or stop Russian expansion towards South on its own. So, the key aim of British to Kalat was seemingly geostrategic and to building a buffer to the Russians and Afghans. At the advent of British

17 Dames, *The Baluch Race*.

18 Sir Henry Pottinger, *Travels in Belochistan and Sind* (Farnborough: Gregg, 1972).

arrival to the region, the Kalat confederacy lasted with its subjugation with the British Army in 1839 when Khan Mehrab Khan, the ruler of Khanate of Kalat, was assassinated and British force defeated the army of Kalat State.¹⁹

In order to initiate negotiations and forge an agreement with Kalat State, the British Government sent a representative or envoy to discuss future relations between Kalat and British Government, and to protect the latter's interests in frontier regions. They consequently reached to an agreement to secure a safe way and passage for the forces of British Government to Afghanistan, and to permit the forces to buy supplies along the way within the territory of Kalat. Hence, the arrival of British envoy was the first contact of British to Kalat and its ruler, the Khan, which thereafter led to an agreement in 1839 between Sir Alexander Burnes (1805-1841), a British Government representative, and Mir Mehran Khan (1721-1839), the Khan of Kalat. This consistently raised the British interests in Kalat, which led to further agreements and understandings between the British and Kalat in 1841 and 1854 respectively. The paramount and underlying purpose of these agreements was surely strategic; maintaining a peaceful order and gaining the Kalat State allegiance in this regard. Hence, the Kalat ruler Mir Naseer Khan II rendered his submission and allegiance not only to the British Government but also at the same time to Afghan ruler Shah Shujahul Mulk (1785-1842).²⁰ The Afghan ruler viewed Kalat as a vessel and subordinate territory of Afghanistan.

The forward policy that was adopted by the British to the Kalat State was meant to interfere in Kalat's affairs not just to expedite their geostrategic interests but also to resolve the tribal fends between Khan and Sardars so that the law and order be maintained in the frontier regions. In order to provide legal cover and to legitimate the interference in Katat

19 Hughes, *The Country of Balochistan*.

20 Pottinger, *Travels in Belochistan and Sind*.

affairs, in 1876 the British Government entered into another treaty with Khan of Kalat Mir Khudadad Khan (1857-1893). Through this treaty agreement the British Government prohibited the Khan from forging into any treaty with other foreign powers. In response and in return to this, the British Government pledged to ensure the Kalat its internal sovereignty and protect it against any foreign aggressions.²¹

Thus, although the Kalat State was internally autonomous in its dealing with other tribes and princely states to some extent, its sovereignty was lost to the British, which reduced its role to a mere buffer state, that would expedite the British forward policy, was perceived and crafted by Sir Robert Sandman.²² The Sandmanian forward policy and cordial and friendly relationships with tribes and their *Sardars* were very effective and politically meaningful to intact and unite the erstwhile fragmented and disorganization tribes of the Kalat State.

In the light of India Act 1935, the British declared the India a federation, and the Kalat State was included in the Indian federation. However, the Khan of Kalat, prior to the passage of the India Act of 1935, attempted on many occasions to convince the British Government not to include Kalat and other princely States in Indian federation. Instead, he forced the British to honour the separate status of the princely states of Balochistan, which were at direct British dominion with separate treaty agreements.²³

The religious and mythological history of the Kalat State had remained shrouded in obscurity till the Christian era, due to the unavailability of scientifically sound evidence and chronological records. Nonetheless, the key sources, which give much evidence on history of this region, whether religious or political, are their cultural traditions preserved

21 Spencer, "On the Tempo and Mode of State Formation: Neoevolutionism Reconsidered,".

22 Axman, *Back to Future*, 24.

23 A branch of the Muslim League was established in British Balochistan in 1939 by Qazi Essa.

mainly in folk-literature. Many Baloch tribes which migrated to the area that later constituted the Kalat State must have encountered and resultantly got invariably influenced from the indigenous religions of the Middle East, Iran and India. The influences of Buddhism, Hinduism and Zoroastrian²⁴ on religious beliefs and mythologies are fairly evident among the tribes formed the Kalat State.²⁵

Writers such as Marri²⁶ and Faridi²⁷ opine that the mass conversion of the tribes of Kalat State to Islam probably began during the reign of Caliph Omer when the expansion of Islam commenced to Iran, Western and Central Asia. During the same reign a great Baloch warrior, *Siyahul Sawar*, along with hundreds companions embraced Islam, who later on played a leading role in spreading Islam in many parts of the Central Asia.²⁸ Although no authentic evidence exists but it is generally believed that in Caliph Ali (600-661 AD) era the Baloch had prominent place in Islam, which is therefore indicative of the fact that a sizable population of the Kalat State had already become Muslims in post Caliph Ali era. Whereas some historical evidence²⁹ suggest that some Baloch tribes of Kalat State embraced Islam during *khulafa e rashideen* period the spread of Islam in this region took place during first four hundred years of Islam through priesthood and Sophistic teachings of Islam. It is also plausible to argue that as many of the writers believe

24 A great Iranian religion founded by Zoroaster (660-563 B. C), who is supposed to have been born in Azerbaijan in the Northwest of Iran. He is believed to have said to start preaching first in Khurasan where he got large number of disciples.

25 Shaheen Qaisarani, M. Ashraf, *Balochistan: Tareekh aur Mazhab* [Urdu: History and Religion] (Quetta: Adara e Thadrees, Balochistan).

26 Khanda Bukhsh Marri, *Searchlights on Baloches and Balochistan* (Karachi: Royal Book Company, 1974).

27 Mulana Noor Mohammad Khan Faridi, *Baloch Qaum aur uski Tareekh* [Urdu Baloch Nation and its History] (Multan: Qasarul adab, 1968).

28 Taj Mohammad Breseeg, *Baloch Nationalism: Its Origin and Development* (Karachi: Royal book Company, 2004).

29 S. H. Hooks, *Middle Eastern Mythology* (London: Hazell Watson & Vinery Limited, 1963).

that the people who originated from Halab, present day Syria, which later travelled to Makran, Kharan and Kalat through Kirman and Sistan, present day Iran, and these were the same regions already under the control of Muslim rulers. This, therefore, alludes to the fact that the migrating tribes to Kalat State were Muslims prior to their settlement to this region.

The State of Makran

Makran, a princely State established in the 17th Century and lasted till 1948, was a Southwestern state in Balochistan, bounded on the North by the Siahan range, which separated from Kharan State while on the east it shared border with Jhalawan, the State of Kalat, and part of the Lasbela State, and the Persian on the West, while the Arabian Sea on the south. The northern boundary had never been actually defined, but it started from a point near Kuhak in Iran and ran eastward, dividing the plain of Kharan from the valley of the Rakhshan River.

One of the important Muslim States that bridged up the South Asia with Western Asia, Makran was a vibrant and relatively a self-sufficient state of Kalat confederacy. Whereas no authentic evidence exists to substantiate and support such claims, the Baloch legendary sources mention that the unison of two influential tribes of the time – the Rind and Lashar – might have formed the initial basis of Makran State. However, these tribes left the abodes in Makran to eastward given may be the hostility and perpetual feuds among the tribes and the harsh climatic conditions.

The Saffaids ruled Makran till the mid-17th Century when they were replaced by the Buleidai tribe. It is widely believed among the scholars that the Buleidai in fact established the formal Baloch confederacy in Makran with a formal administrative and fiscal structure. The Makran State under the Buleidai rule was kind of loose union of different Baloch tribes.³⁰ However, in 1740 the Buleidai rule was terminated

30 Dashti, *he Baloch and Balochistan*.

when Malik Dinar Gichki overthrew Sheh Kasim, the last Buleidai ruler. The Gichkis, who said to have migrated from the Punjab in India with Rajput ancestry, established their dynasty and ruled Makran independently till it was ended by incursions of the Kalat State. Thus, Makran was incorporated and annexed into the political subordination and administrative control of the Kalat State.

The 18th Century had been a tumultuous period for Makran where on one hand the internal feuds and conflicts among the *Sardars* weaken the hold of Malik Dinar Gichki, the ruler of Makran, while on the other hand the Khanate of Kalat's persistent desire – and therefore sporadic attacks and political manoeuvring to buy the favour of various *Sardars* of Makran – to subjugate Makran State, crippled its economy and social cohesion, and tarnished its peace and tranquillity. Around mid-1750s, Naseer Khan Ahmedzai I, the callous Khan of Kalat, invaded Panjgur, a vital part of Makran State, when Mir Ghaji Khan was the ruler of Panjgur. Realizing the military strength of Kalat State and weak defence of Panjgur, Mir Ghaji Khan fled to Kech, the headquarters of Makran State, to take refuge to Malik Dinar. Thus, Naseer Khan occupied Panjgur without fighting any battle, appointed Mir Karam Shah as ruler of Panjgur who remained under the direct command of Kalat State. Soon after the subjugation of Panjgur Nasir Khan was obliged to send a force to occupy Kech after a sanguinary battle. However, the aid of Ahmed Shah Abdali, the king of Afghanistan, was thereupon invoked by envoy of Malik Dinar, and Naseer Khan resultantly beat a hasty retreat to Kalat upon the receipt of peremptory orders from the Afghan sovereign. Yet Naseer Khan, sensing the fortunes of Makran with its immense strategic importance, falsified his political whim in sectarian pretext, deceived his Afghan masters to wage a fresh expedition against Malik Dinar, imprisoned and brought him to Kalat where he was brutally murdered.³¹

31 Balochistan, District Gazetteers, Gosh-e-Ada: Jinnah Road Quetta, Pakistan, first edited edition, 1997.

Sheh Umer, the elder son of Malik Dinar, who became a convert from the Zikri faith of Islam, was appointed tutelage ruler of Makran. Feeling the grudge of the ruthless killing of Malik Dinar and ensuing massacre inflicted upon the people of Makran by Naseer Khan, the people of Makran under the leadership of Buleidais, revolted against Sheh Umer and subsequently killed him. Nevertheless, Naseer Khan who fixed a shrewd eye on the fortunes of Makran, did not stop here; he instead exploited the assassination of Sheh Umer as an opportunity to hatch yet another military expedition to consolidate occupation of Makran. Thus, Makran remained a suzerainty of the Kalat State.³²

For the first time, the attention of British was drawn to Makran when the first Afghan war broke out. To sense the situation, Haji Abdun Nabi, a prominent Baloch Sardar, was deputed by Major Leech to visit Makran region from Kalat in 1838-39. Afterward Makran State came again into prominence when the erection of the Indo-European telegraph line was under discussion, and Major Goldsmid (1818-1908) was deputed in 1861-62 to ascertain the extent of coast in possession of each of the local chiefs. In the years that followed, the internal condition of Makran was far from satisfactory; the country being continually disturbed by the local feuds in which the Nausherwanis took a prominent part. The ensuing disputes led to a full blown expedition in Panjgur in 1882 headed by Mir Nauroz Khan, which led Sir Robert Sandeman's visit to the Makran in 1883-84 and the settlement of all unsettled disputes. Sandeman again visited the country in 1890-91, and was on his way there for the third time when he died at Bela town, District Lasbela, in January 1892. In 1895 Mir Mahmud Khan, the chief of Kalat State and Captain Le Mesurier, Political Agent in Kalat toured Makran. The main features of the tour were the establishment of *Diwan Udho Dass* in Kech as the Khan's nazim, the appointment of *kardars* in Panjgur and Kolwa,

32 Muhammad Aslam to Lancelot Griffin, Dec 26, 1946, Enclosure 1 to 49.

and the location of detachments in the Kalat State troops in Makran.³³

At the advent of partition of India in 1947, Viscount Louis Mountbatten (1900-1979), the last British Viceroy of India, declared the final and decisive plan for dividing British India into two separate countries: India and Pakistan. In order to decide the future destiny of Kalat and other subordinate princely States of Balochistan, the Khan of Kalat along with political and tribal representatives made a sequence of meetings and held deliberations and presentations with the councils and envoys of the Viceroy and official of the future representatives of Pakistan in Delhi to finalise future status of the Kalat State. Once the offer of annexing of Kalat State and its suzerainty principalities to Pakistan was declined, the Khan of Kalat stated the Independence of the State of Balochistan in a formal and official declaration on August 12, 1947. After being frustrated from Khan's response to annex the Kalat State with Pakistan, the latter established clandestine contacts with Jam of Lasbela, Nawab of Kharan and Nawab of Makran, Sardar Bai Khan (Baiyan) Gichki. Sardar Baiyan (born 1890), the son of Sheh Umer, was appointed the Sardar of Kech on 1924. The British considered him a loyal Sardar with often feared a revolt against him from his estranged uncle Mir Mehrab Khan Gichki.

Administratively, Makran at the time was divided in three parts: Kech, Panjgur and Tump, which were ruled by three Gichki families.³⁴ The British summoned Sardar Baiyan to Karachi on November 1947. Thus, in March 1948 Sardar Baiyan signed the annexation agreement between Pakistan and the State of Makran, bypassing the Khan of Kalat. In the same year Sardar Baiyan was nominated as *Wali* of Makran, though without any actual power, as to his sheer surprise

33 *Balochistan Through The Ages: A Selection from the Government Record*, Vols I and II (Quetta: Nisa Traders, 1979).

34 Hameed Baloch, *Makran: Ahdi Qadeem Sey Ahdi Jadded Tak* [Urdu: Makran from Ancient to Modern Times] (Karachi: City Book Point, 2009).

and frustration when Major H. A. Artingon Devy was made Assistant Political Agent to Makran on March 24, 1948 with administrative powers.³⁵

In religious and sociological terms, Makran State had remained under the shadow and direct rule of Iranian empires³⁶. According to the *Shahnama* of Firdousi,³⁷ during reigns of Achaemenid (559–530 B.C) and Akamunshi Makran was probably an occupied territory of Iran. During the Hkhaminshi dynasty a greater part of Balochistan had become under the direct rule of Iran. And the Sasanian dynasty (224 to 651 AD) made Makran a vibrant abode of Zoroastrian religion. After the dawn of Islam to the Middle East, it spread rapidly to the Central and Western Asian regions including Makran State, though there exists no evidence of the penetration of Islam to Makran in early days of Islam when Muslim conquests spread Islam to the width and breadth of the Middle East and part of the western Asia. Writers as such as Brahui³⁸ and Qaisarani³⁹ are of the view that since Makran was conquered during the reign of Caliph Abu Baqr Sidiqqe (573-634 AD), it may not be wrong in arguing that the exposure of this region to Islam might have happened in early days of Islam. However, it is understood with certainty that the advent of Islam to Makran region took place in the last leg of Caliph Omar (543-644 AD) when the Muslim army was engaged waging war in Iran and adjacent regions under the command of Amir Abu Mussa and Amir Usman ibn Abi Alhas. During this expedition troops under the command and leadership of Hukum Bin Abi Alhas were sent to Makran, which was a great success. This was the era

35 Baloch, *Makran: Ahdi Qadeem Sey Ahdi Jadded Tak*.

36 Mir Gul Khan Nasir, *Tarikh-i-Balochistan*, Vol. 1 & 2 (Quetta: Kalat Publisher, 2010).

37 Abdul Qasim Firdousi, a Persian Poet, completed *Shahnama* on Feb 25, 1010 A. D. It deals with the Persian history of 3874 years.

38 Abdul Rehman Brahui, *Balochistan Mei Araboon Ki Fotohath aur uun kei Hokumateen* [Urdu: The Conquests of Arabs in Balochistan and their Governments] (Quetta: Kalat Publishers, 1990).

39 Qaisarani and Ashraf, *Balochistan: Tareekh aur Mazhab*.

when Roy Chuch family was the ruler of Makuran.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, undoubtedly the Muslims conquerors made asserted attempts to extend the reach of Islam to Makuran and adjacent regions, yet the strong hold of Islam and Muslim empire did not come till the Umayyad dynasty when Arabs army entered into Khuzdar, Lasbela, Kharan, Ghandawa and Makran.⁴¹

The people of Makran State were Muslims belonging to either Sunni or Zikri sects. The *Zikri*, a religious sect of Islam, most probably with an Iranian origin, with a sophistic approach and outlook, has its followers in western and southern Balochistan since the early 16th Century. The Zikri Muslims, who are firm believers of the basic tenets of Islam, are tolerant, peaceful and compassionate in their social outlook with strong work ethics.

The State of Lasbela

The princely State of Lasbela or Las-Bela was located on the southern part of Balochistan, touching the coastal of Arabian Sea. It was bounded on the North by the State of Kalat; on the East by the Kirthar Range, which separated it from Sindh Province, on the South by the Arabian Sea; and the West by the Hala offshoot of the Pab River and the State of Makuran.

Lasbela State, whereas commanded a very long and rich history given its ancient settlements, pilgrimages, trade and commerce and geostrategic locations, came into prominence during the 18th Century when Aliani family of the Jamot tribes ascertained its position and authority. Henry Pottinger (1789-1856) who passed through Lasbela in 1810, found the State prosperous where its capital city, Bela, was populated with 250 to 300 Hindu families who enjoyed great security and protection in their mercantile occupations under the mild and equitable government of the Jam.⁴² In later years

40 Qaisarani and Ashraf, *Balochistan: Tareekh aur Mazhab*.

41 Janmahmad, *The Baloch Cultural Heritage* (Karachi: Royal Book Company, 1982).

42 Balochistan, District Gazetteers, Gosh-e-Ada : Jinnah Road Quetta, Pakistan, first edited edition, 1997.

Lasbela had become a subordinate state of Kalat, where the former was bound to transfer half of its revenues to the latter. The family feuds upon the throne of Lasbela among the successive heirs of Jam paved a way not only for Khanate of Kalat to have a direct interference to affairs of Lasbela State but it later led to bring the state to the spotlight of the British government in India. In accordance with the recommendations of the Agent to the Governor General, Tola Ram, a *Tahsildar* in Balochistan Agency, was appointed *Wazir* to deal with the political and administrative affairs of the state. However, the honour and authority of Jam family to the social and tribal matters were not jeopardized, as the British considered them the legitimate *Wali* of the state. In one of the instances, in November 1889, at a durbar, held at Quetta by His Excellency the Viceroy, Haji Jam Ali Khan was granted a salute of 9 guns, which reflected the close associations and cordial terms of Jam family with the British Government of India. Nonetheless, on May 8, 1896, at a durbar held at Hub, the Government of India having approved and duly installed Mir Kamal Khan as Jam of Lasbela State, virtually with no administrative power, as Diwapn Ganpat was appointed new *Wazir* to deal with the administration of the state. Up to October, 1903 the Lasbela State was under the control of the Political Agent, Southern Balochistan, with its headquarter at Karachi, who was also in charge of the Khan of Kalat's lands in Nasirabad. From November 1, 1903, the Southern Balochistan Agency was abolished, the charge of the state of Lasbela was transferred to the Political Agent, Kalat.

To the advent of partition of India and creation of Pakistan, Lasbela had remained a semi-autonomous state under the suzerainty of Khan of Kalat and administrative control of the British Raj. When Khan of Kalat declared the independence of Kalat State on August 15, 1947, considering Lasbela, Kharan and Makran States at its subsidiaries, probably against the actual plan of partition of India, the Pakistan Government, unwilling to accept an autonomous status of Kalat, began to contact with the Jam of Lasbela, the Nawab

of Kharan and Nawab of Makran in order to win over their loyalty and subsequently merger of their respective states to Pakistan, bypassing the Kalat State. In this regard Col. S. B. Shah, special representative to Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, secretly contacted the Jam of Lasbela, which subsequently translated to merger of Lasbela State to the newly established country of Pakistan in 1948.⁴³

Lasbela State is rich in archaeological remains. Lying on the ancient route between the East and West and situated on one of the principal ancient trade routes from Central Asia, which terminated at Sonmiani.⁴⁴ The state had preserved in its ruins a series of interesting historic monuments of the people who lived here for centuries. Among the more important remains were the shrines of Hinglaj, Shah Bilawal and Lahut-i-Lamakan; the cave of dwellings at Gondrani; the tombs at Hinidan and other places; the shrine of Sassi and Punno, Kumbh Shirin connected with the legend of Shirin and Farad; and the ruins of ancient towns, etc.; which were scattered throughout the State.⁴⁵ The State was on route to Sindh and India, was followed the Arab general, Muhammad Bin Qasim, who entered Makuran in the beginning of 8th Century, and Buddhism probably gave place to Islam about this time. On the way to Sindh, Muhammad Bin Qasim marched through Lasbela State, which he said have used as a base for the advance into the Sindh.⁴⁶ Whereas, the power of Arabs lasted till towards the end of the 10th Century, but the state has remained an important Muslim state with thriving Islamic culture and civilization.⁴⁷ Now it is a key district of Balochistan province.

43 Baloch, *Makran: Ahdi Qadeem Sey Ahdi Jadded Tak*.

44 Somianiis, a coastal town in the southeast of Lasbela State, approximately 145 kilometres northwest of Karachi.

45 Balochistan, District Gazetteers, Gosh-e-Ada: Jinnah Road Quetta, Pakistan, first edited edition, 1997.

46 The Chachnamah, an ancient history of Sind, translated by Mirza Kalichbeg.

47 Brahui, *Balochistan Mei Araboon Ki Fotohath aur uun kei Hokumateen*.

47 Brahui, *Balochistan Mei Araboon Ki Fotohath aur uun kei Hokumateen*.

The State of Kharan

Kharan was a quasi-independent state situated in Central South and Western Balochistan. It was bounded on the North by the Raskoh Range, which divided it from the Chagai Agency by the line continued from the western end of this range towards the Hamun-i-Mashkel; on the East by the Garr hills, which separated it from Gidar, Surab in the State of Kalat; on the South by the Siahan range, separating it from the Rakhshan Valley and Panjgur in Makuran State; and on the West by Persian Makuran, from which it was divided the boundary delimited by the Perso-Baloch Boundary Commission of 1896. The State of Kharan was established in about 1697 CE as a vassal state of Kalat, which remained until 1940. The state of Kharan became independent from Kalat in 1940. On March 17, 1948, Kharan acceded to Pakistan and on 3 October 1952 it joined the Balochistan States Union. Mir Habibullah Nousherwani was the Nawab of Kharan when the state was acceded to Pakistan. The state was dissolved on October 14, 1955 when most regions of the western wing of Pakistan were merged to form the province of West Pakistan.

The ancient history of Kharan is buried in obscurity while even its modern history can only be said to be the records of the fights, forays and raids in which the chiefs and the inhabitants were continually engaged. The clear status of Kharan though came into limelight with the Kaianian dynasty that was founded by Kaikubabd, which was said to have consolidated by Tahir, the famous General of the Caliph Mamun in the 9th Century.⁴⁸ Another period of obscurity followed the history of Kharan until the end of 17th Century that it ascertained.⁴⁹ From this time forward the power of the state of Kharan was centred on Nausherwanis. The Nausherwanis maintained quasi-independence of Kharan State for nearly two centuries until the state was forced to

48 Ruler of Kharan to M.A.Jinnah, Telegram, August 21, 1947.

49 O. T. Duke, *Memorandum on the History of Kharan and the Baluchistan Desert*, 1887.

yield a reluctant acquiescence in British Suzerainty. Kharan's major exposition to British took place in 1863 when Robert Sandeman (1835-1892) entered into the state as first British force. Sandeman who was leading the Panjgur Mission arrived in Kharan in December 1883 and most cordially received by Azad Khan. A darbar was held and Azad Khan impressed all present by his manifest honesty and straightforwardness. Politically, the Mission was a great success, as Azad Khan having obtained his formal release from the Suzerainty of the Amir of Afghanistan, acknowledged the British supremacy and that of Khan of Kalat by taking his place among the Sarawan Sardars. Azad Khan under the British subordination maintained peace and protect trade routes in his territories. He also paid attention to the development of the resources of the state and caused the construction by forced labour of the channel leading from *Bunband* to the *Zorabad* lands. His eldest son, Nauroz Khan, succeeded him where in 1888 the Knight Commandership of the Indian Empire dignified him in recognition of his loyalty and general good services. Thus, the state came under British control in 1884; in 1940 it was recognized as being separate from Kalat but remained, nominally, under its overlordship. After the conference of leaders and motabars [Urdu: elders] of Kharan, held at Nushki on August 19, 1947, the ruler of Kharan announced that the state recognized itself as an independent state as usual and joined Pakistan Domination as it suzerain and promised to serve Pakistan up to its extent.⁵⁰ Kalat did not recognize Kharan as an independent State and maintained that the latter was a part of its territories. For, the Chief of Kharan as one of the Sarawan Sardars of Kalat, had a seat in Kalat Darbar and enjoyed a measure of internal autonomy subject to the authority of Kalat. The repudiation of Kalat's supremacy by Kharan led to an explosive situation. Kharan had complained to Jinnah in November 1947 that Kalat was arming local elements in Kharan for an armed conflict and creating a law and order situation in the state as well as in

50 Ruler of Kharan to M. A. Jinnah, Telegram, 21 August 1947, 128.

the Pakistan-controlled areas of Balochistan.⁵¹ In support of the claim to independence the Chief of Kharan explained to Jinnah, on December 1, 1947, that Kharan had accepted the paramountcy of the British Crown with all concomitant rights and obligations right up to August 14, 1947. On the other hand, Kalat had attempted to subjugate Kharan by force, and in 1939 it had committed aggression against the state but failed in its objective. Kharan acceded to Pakistan on March 17, 1948.⁵²

Strategically, Kharan was a state of great importance since it dominated the Mula Pass route and was in focus where the roads converged from India on the one hand and Persia and Afghanistan on the other. In the event, therefore, of India being threatened from that direction, Kharan would from every point of view become a strategic point of first importance for the British Raj.

The connection of Kharan with the West rather than East has left its mark on the ethnography of the country, since there can be little doubt that a strong Persian strain ran through the veins of Kharan. Virtually, all people of Kharan State were/are Muslims of the Sunni sect.⁵³ People in the state had a strong belief in the power of saints; their shrines were held in great respect and reverence. It is widely believed that the tribes in Kharan converted to Islam, most probably from Zoroastrian⁵⁴ belief, between the 8th and 11th Centuries under the rule of the Abbasids. Later on, the people appeared to have come under Shiah influence, owing to the proximity of the Persians, yet during Azad Khan

51 Ruler of Kharan to M. A. Jinnah, 18 November 1947, 130

52 Ruler of Kharan to M. A. Jinnah, 18 November 1947, 131.

53 Dost Muhammad Dost. *The Language and Races of Afghanistan* (Kabul: Pashtu Academy, 1975).

54 A great Iranian religion founded by Zoroaster (660-563 B. C), who is supposed to have been born in Azerbaijan in the Northwest of Iran. He is believed to have said to start preaching first in Khurasan where he got large number of disciples.

established orthodoxy by inducing Afghan Mullas to settle to Kharan.⁵⁵

Conclusion

The preceding discussion has historical significance because it shows two key aspects of modern history of Balochistan. Firstly, it highlights the importance of the emergence of Khanate of Kalat and its relation with other autonomous regions of Balochistan. It was for the first time that the Baloch tribes established a formal state and most importantly a confederacy of warring tribes. This shows a level of political and social development. There were two confederacies of Baloch tribes in the western end of Balochistan and north-eastern end of Balochistan. However, the Khanate is the only Baloch confederacy, which remains in a political relation with its autonomous state under Pakistani federation. The Khanate created an atmosphere of economic and social relation between the disparate regions of today's Balochistan. This integration helped in creating the province of Balochistan by bonding the leadership of the autonomous regions in family and political relationships and alliances. In this sense the modern political history of Balochistan is the history of the Khanate of Kalat. The cities like Khuzdar, Kalat, Bela and Kech benefited from the political integration under the Khanate. It was for the first time in Baloch history that these disparate regions of modern Balochistan were more and more connected with each other in economic and political relationship than to their neighbouring countries. One can describe this integration, whether by force or through political alliances, as the first attempt towards a nation building and political and economic integration of Balochistan.

However, many of these alliances and forced integrations were not carried out in good faith, which caused further mistrust and bad blood among Baloch regions. Many misadventures and intrigues by the Khanate created an

55 Pottinger, *Travels in Belochistan and Sind*, 1817.

atmosphere of perpetual conflicts and these conflicts paved the way for the British colonial government in India to interfere and eventually invade and subjugate the Khanate and all its autonomous regions one by one.

This paper gave a historical account of three other major autonomous regions under the Khanate suzerainty. However, Makran, Lasbela and Kharan remained largely autonomous in their internal matters, these regions were integrated sometime with force and sometime through alliances with the Khanate. Economically these regions were comparatively prosperous and well connected with international trade routes. Kalat and Jahalawan in comparison were less prosperous and not connect with international trade routes. This imbalance created mistrust and strained the relationship between the Khanate and these regions particularly between the Khanate and Lasbela and Makran. Although very brief, this paper highlighted some of the issues relating to the first emergent of a confederacy in modern Balochistan and its relation with the three key regions of its suzerainty. The paper, for the first time, highlighted the all-important relationship between the three major autonomous regions and the Khanate.