

# ***The Political and Administrative Dynamics of Khanate of Kalat***

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Colonial studies have a range of themes, starting from cultural and ethnographic studies to literary and power structural discourses. The present paper is an endeavour to highlight the British frontier governmentality in Balochistan. The primary aim of the study is to give narrative of the changing colonial frontier governmentality polices and its effects on the political, social and economic realities of the people who were supposed to be governed. The study focuses on the Khanate of Kalat which became one of the Princely States among many in British India. The paper does not deal with the British Balochistan, which was directly administered by the Raj officials. The paper also gives a brief description of the pre-colonial history and cultural reality of the Baloch tribes and their tribal state of Kalat so that the effects of the Raj administration and restructuring of tribal society and its power relations could be elaborated in more proper way. The present paper deals with Khanate of Kalat and the primary focus is on its political structure and*

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*administrative mechanisms. The paper is an attempt to discuss and analyse that how Khanate administration went through a drastic change under the British influence? The paper covers the history of colonial period in Balochistan from First Anglo-Afghan War to partition of India. A combination of primary and secondary sources is used in the study so that the basic question of power relations among the tribes and colonial state could be addressed.*

### **Introduction**

In the last years of 1757 and 1758, there occurred historical events on two opposite extremes of Indian subcontinent i.e. War of Plassey where Nawab Siraj-ul- Daula lost his state to the British Raj in eastern India, while Mir Nassir Khan I of Kalat State signed a treaty to declare its territorial sovereignty with Ahmad Shah Abdali.<sup>1</sup> These two anecdotes are historical coincidences but these events set a system of rule for the two states. British Raj embarked upon the journey of ruling India since then and Khanate of Kalat was also supposed to renounce all kinds of foreign influences whether nominal or real. But the dream of sovereign state diminished with the demise of Nasir Khan I and his successors lacked the statesmanship spirit giving way to tribal factionalism and external influences. Meanwhile, the British Raj with the elapse of time, was becoming the unchallenged authority in South Asia as it was conquering native powers and it was obvious that soon Raj would be knocking the doors of Khanate of Kalat. Raj took interest in the barren lands of Balochistan and Afghanistan at the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century due strategic reasons as British India was threatened by the Russian expansion in Central Asian regions and officials started to collect information of the region and its people. The process of information gathering was launched extensively and it reached to maximum in

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<sup>1</sup> Inayatullah Baloch, *The Problem of Greater Baluchistan: A Study of Baloch Nationalism* (Germany: Stuttgart, 1987), 97.

1830s.<sup>2</sup> The information was necessary because it gave Raj officials an understanding of the socio-cultural and political strengths and weaknesses of the state of Kalat and Afghanistan. Most of the historical studies on the frontier region of India and Afghanistan are explained from a monolithic perspective i.e. these studies suggest that British Indian frontier zone was Afghan polity centric and most of the people who were residing the region were similar cultural as these indigenous people were following a tribal culture. But recent studies have questioned such a monolithic and non-historical approach towards Afghan border and it suggested on the ground reality that Afghan frontier with the British India was multicultural and multi-polities were exiting that was why Raj employed multiple policies for controlling these regions.<sup>3</sup> The present study is focused on such a frontier zone (Balochistan) of the British India which brought Raj administration not only to encounter Afghanistan rather Persia as well. The Raj official had to deal with Khanate of Kalat with more strategic oriented questions as Kalat State had a complex cultural and administrative structure at work. The native cultural and topographical diversities along with geo-strategic location of Khanate of Kalat compelled British officials to devise diverse policies to control tribes of the region. The culturally diverse landscape of Balochistan was one of the main reasons along with Great Game Theory (which is mostly missing from the studies conducted on colonial Balochistan) which forced Raj headquarters to change its frontier policies as the time elapsed. The relation between the Kalat State and the British Raj were influenced by a number of factors and there were several ups and downs in their relationship. Slowly and gradually Khanate gave away its sovereignty and became a vessel state of British Raj. This process was slow with rules of the game in

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- 2 Hameed Baloch, ed. *Balochistan Papers: Select Documents on Kalat State and its Territories from 1925 to 1948* (Karachi: Sayad Hashmi Reference Library, 2007), 6.
  - 3 For a detail discussion of the frontier management and policies of the Raj see; Magnus Marsden & Benjamin D. Hopkins, *Fragments of the Afghan Frontier* (Karachi: Oxford University Press: 2013).

the hands of British. To understand as how the dynamics of relationship developed and worked during this period, it is necessary to elucidate the history of Kalat State's administrative and political set up and British policies of frontier governmentality and control should also be highlighted. Therefore, this study discusses the literature related to both parts of Khanate history but before that it seems imperative to peep into the tribal structure of Khanate as it was the backbone of its social, cultural and political reality since inception.

### **Structure and Functioning of Baloch Tribalism**

Balochistan's geography has played a vital role in the development of socio-economic and political set up of the people living there. The land is barren with mountain ranges and scarcity of water resources which account for the failure of establishing the large cities. In this perspective, Balochistan resembles the geography of Central Asian steppes and hence developed a similar tribal social set up. The institution of tribalism in Balochistan is based on the multiple factors which range from kinship to common pastoral lands<sup>4</sup>. The dynamics of tribalism in Baloch society could be understood if we make an analysis of the tribal set up. There are basically two tiers of Baloch tribal set up i.e. the core/inner tribes and the outer/peripheral tribes. The core tribes are based on blood or common ancestral relationships and peripheral tribes are based upon the common economic and social ties. The core tribes are considered as main tribes and they are given the first citizenship or *tribesmenship*, whereas the peripheral tribes are secondary tribesmen at the early formation of tribal set up. As the core tribes possess land and water resources, the newcomers have to prove their loyalty in order to get share in the pastoral land and the purpose of proving loyalty could be ensured by participating in *Shadi-o-Gham* [Urdu: occasions of sorrow and

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4 Mir Khuda Bakhsh Marri, *Searchlights on Baloches and Balochistan* (Lahore: Ferozsons, Pvt. Ltd., 1997), 3-7.

happiness].<sup>5</sup> The newcomers once assimilated, will get equal share in the pastoral lands. The mechanism of tribal structure in a Baloch society is a key concept to understand the political dynamics of Baloch history and formation and breakup of tribal confederation in general and Khanate of Kalat in particular. Tribal structure in Baloch social set up is based on the principle of first among equals (people). Historically, the tribal leader was not superior by birth but he would acquire this position by physical strength or achievement. The leader would always depend on the support of his co-tribesmen. The code of political, social and economic affairs was subject to consensus rather than the leaders using or changing them arbitrarily. These codes were called *Rasm o Rawaj*<sup>6</sup> [Urdu: Customs and Traditions]. The recruitment of forces required for wars or defences were again based on the tribal code. The main or core tribes would lead the troops and peripheral tribes constituted the majority of soldiers. The land acquired on the basis of conquest would be distributed among all tribes based on the provision of arms supplied by the individual tribe<sup>7</sup>. The tribal hierarchy is also much important even to understand as how the dynamics of tribal socio-political mechanism works? In this hierarchy the tribal chief is at the top followed by *Naib* or *Mukhadim/Motabar* then comes *Takkri* and culminates into *Sufaid Reesh* [Urdu: white beard person]. *Sufaid Reesh* is mostly family head and such family heads chose among themselves a *Takkri*, who is clan's head and several clan heads elect a *Naib* or *Mukhadim/Motabar* who in turn elect tribal heads or Sardars. The process is culturally practiced and elections take place in a social gathering and by turning knots of turban, tribal chief by a *Takkri* or *Mukhadim* is

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5 Gul Khan Naseer, *Tarikh-i-Balochistan* [Urdu: History of Balochistan] (Quetta: Kalat Publishers, 2007), 03.

6 Syed Abdul Quddus, *The Tribal Balochistan* (Lahore: Ferozsons Pvt. Ltd., 1990), 24; A. W. Hugghes, *The Country of Balochistan* (Quetta: Gosha-e-Adab, 1977), 1.

7 Gul Khan Naseer, *Balochistan: Qadeem Aur Jadeed Tarique Ki Roshni Main* [Urdu: Balochistan: In the Light of Ancient and Modern History] (Quetta: Gosha-E-Adab, 1982), 13.

considered as accepting formal power of tribal head or Sardar.<sup>8</sup>

### **Emergence and Evolutionary Stages of Kalat State**

The emergence of a tribal confederation is associated mostly with Mir Jalal Khan and Mir Chakar Khan Rind. They were the first in the known Baloch history who organized Baloch tribes on the bases of equality in a confederation. The chronology of the founding fathers of Baloch tribal confederation is not exactly known but the rough chronology suggests that they were contemporary of Sultanate Period and early Mughal Period respectively (Mir Jalal Khan was in A.D the 12<sup>th</sup> Century and Mir Chakar Khan in A.D the 15<sup>th</sup> Century). The confederation of Mir Chakar Khan Rind came to an end after 30 years' wars fought between Rind-o-Lashar. This war is one of the epic themes of Baloch folk poetry till today. The time is not mentioned about this epic war but it seems to be the same time in the early 16<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>9</sup>

The second phase of Baloch confederacy came in 17<sup>th</sup> Century and this time Ahmadzai of Kalat were the rulers. The founding father "Ahmad Khan" was a native of Kalat in 1666 and his set up was pure tribal in nature. He organized bands of tribes and his initial motive was to acquire land for pastoral purposes. This band of tribe under the leadership of Ahmad Khan took control of Kalat city and established their dynastic rule which became Khanate of Kalat.<sup>10</sup> The historical development of the Kalat State is divided into three distinct periods i.e. from A.D 1666-1740, Kalat State developed into a tribal confederation, from A.D 1740-1800,

8 Naseer Dashti, *The Baloch and Balochistan: A Historical Account From the Beginning to the Fall of the Baloch State* (Bloomington: Trafford, 2012), 15; Taj Mohammad Bresig, *Baloch Nationalism: Its Origin and Development* (Karachi: Royal Book Company, 2004), 138.

9 Baloch, *The Problem of Greater Baluchistan*, 110.

10 Martin Axmann, *Back to the Future: The Khanate of Kalat and the Genesis of Baloch nationalism, 1915-1955* (USA: Oxford University Press, 2008), 21-28; Fred Scholz, *Nomadism & Colonialism: A Hundred Years of Baluchistan, 1872-1972* (USA: Oxford University Press, 2002), 90.

Khanate went into period of consolidation and from 1800s onward Kalat State started to decline. The first phase of Khanate started with an obscure origin and scholars have suggested the hypothesis that tribal confederation was result of an assimilation of nomadic bands for common pastoral sources. It culminated when Ahmad Khan, a Kambrani tribal leader with the help of others tribes (mainly Dehwars) started to dominate the Kalat city<sup>11</sup>. The Ahmadzai confederation emerged in a time when Mughal and Safavid powers started declining and this power vacuum gave way to the emergence of new powers in the Indo-Iranian borderlands i.e. Khanate of Kalat in Balochistan and Afghan rule in Afghanistan under the Mirwais Hotak.<sup>12</sup>

The emergence of Kalat State can be studied into three phases:

- The emergence of confederation from 1666 to 1740 AD
- The consolidation of Khanate of Kalat under Mir Nasir Khan I. (1749-1795)
- The decline of Khanate of Kalat from 1800s onwards.

The first phase started by the emergence of Ahmad Khan as the Khan. He and his descendants gradually started to expand their territorial influence to all sorts of covert and overt measures ranging from direct wars to the diplomatic alliances. The culmination of Khanate of Kalat came with the final alliance of Kalat State with King of Persia Nadir shah Afshar. The latter gave Kechi (cultivable land) to former as war bounty in 1740.<sup>13</sup> During the second phase of Khanate, Mir Nasir Khan I (1749 to 1795) consolidates the Khanate. It established system of administration based on tribal

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11 Fred Scholz, *Nomadism & Colonialism: A Hundred Years of Baluchistan, 1872-1972* (USA: Oxford University Press, 2002), 90.

12 M. Bayly, *Taming the Imperial Imagination: Colonial Knowledge, International Relations, and the Anglo-Afghan Encounter, 1808-1878* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 232.

13 N.B. Swilder, *The Political Structure of a Tribal Chiefdom: The Brahui of Balochistan (Unpublished Thesis)*, (New York: Columbia University, 1969), 45.

confederation (Rawaj). Moreover, he also consolidated formal treaties and matrimonial relation with external powers especially King of Afghanistan Ahmad Shah Durrani. He established a system of army, justice, administration and revenue collection. The demise of Nasir Khan I brought the third phase of Khanate. As common in tribal based states, the personal qualities of a leader are the central reason of keeping state strong or making it weak, and this was true especially in case of Khanate. The successors of Nasir Khan did not possess personal capabilities which resulted in slow and gradual decline of central authority in Khanate and the tribes started to become more and more independent in their local affairs. The zenith of this decline coincided with the appearance of British Raj on the doorsteps of Khanate.

### **Political and Administrative Structure of Khanate**

In order to understand the inherent strengths and weaknesses of Khanate one needs to understand the initial mechanism of political and administrative structure was at work in the first place. The Khanate was a tribal confederacy with a central government at work under the Khan himself and tribal lands called "*Nabatad*". These *Nabatad* were in the control of tribal leaders. There was a conventional set up of laws or unwritten social contract between the Khan and tribal Chiefs, that defined powers and its administration between Khan and chiefs. These conventions were called "*Rawaj*". Any violation from either side would result in rebellion and punishments in terms of cost and kind or even both. It is important to mention that the Khan was not an absolute ruler and the property of state was not his personal property with the exception of "Crown Lands". The *Nabatad* or tribal lands were under Khan but his control was nominal and for all practical purposes tribal chiefs were the masters of the land. Even the tribal leaders were not the absolute rulers in their *Nabatad* either. The tribal chief was accountable to the Khan and he would provide men in times of war along with a nominal but annual tax. Besides, tribal chiefs used authority in the name of Khan. In case of any turf between the chief and his tribesmen or among the tribal chiefs, the matter was

brought to the Khan and he commanded the authority to decide it. At the time of accession of power by new Khan all tribal chiefs were required to submit their allegiance to Khan and take oath to be loyal to him.<sup>14</sup>

### **General Administration of Khanate**

The general administration was established in its true sense by Nasir Khan I. His established conventions are remembered as *Dastur-e-Nasiri*.<sup>15</sup> Mir Nasir Khan developed an administration which remained intact throughout Khanate history in spite of rise and fall of powers of its administrative set up depending upon the personal capacities of Khans. A general overview of administrative set up is discussed as under;

### **Central and Provincial Administrations**

The Khanate was divided into two categories on the basis of administration. The central government had an upper hand in administrative affairs and Khan would appoint a *Wazir* or Prime Minister who would look after all the administrative affairs, external affairs, law and order situations and intelligence.<sup>16</sup> For management purposes, departments were divided into different ministries i.e. *Mustafi* (finance ministry) was responsible for collecting taxes from both *Shahi Lands* and *Khalisa* (domain of Khanate), managements of stores, treasury and expenditures of Khanate and monitoring of public works. *Shahgh* (ministry of court) was responsible for sitting arrangements of Sardars (according to their grades) in the Shahi court, monitoring of rashan and management of army in the emergency situations. The judicial system was based on the *Qazi* system. Khan would appoint Grand Qazi while provincial Qazis were appointed by Khan on the recommendation of Chief Qazi or Grand Qazi and Sardars.

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14 H. Pottinger, *Travels in Beloochistan and Sind* (London: Longman Hurst, 1816), 85; Inayatullah Baloch, *The Problem of Greater Baluchistan: A Study of Baloch Nationalism*, (Germany: Stuttgart, 1987), 142.

15 H. Pottinger, *Travels in Beloochistan and Sind*, 115.

16 Swilder, *The Political Structure of a Tribal Chiefdom*, 45-58; Baloch, *The Problem of Greater Baluchistan*, 145.

The highest court of appeal was Khan himself. The issues were dealt under the principles of *Islamic Sharia* and *Balochi Rawaj*. The most aggrieved issues would be brought in Shahi Jirga which would work both as a parliament and court.<sup>17</sup>

The provincial set up of Khanate can be categorized into three types; first were the lands conquered by Khanate, here Khanate would directly rule. While in the second category there was an indirect rule of Khan with limited powers as the real power would rest in the hands of tribal leaders. The last type in the provincial series of administration was vassal provinces with semi-independent areas and here only the nominal allegiance was made with Khanate and these lands were far away from the central administration; that was why here the tribal head would work independently.<sup>18</sup>

### **Military Organization**

Nasir Khan I on the basis of tribal affiliations developed the military organization. The commanders were selected from all tribes so that every tribe was organized under his own tribal head as their commanding officer during war. The royal army had three basic branches which would further divide into units and components. The main branches were *Dasta-e-Khas*, *Dasta-e-Sarawan* and *Dasta-e-Jhalawan*. *Dasta-e-Khas* was under supervision of Khan himself while the other two *Dastas* were commanded by chief of Sarawan and Chief of Jhalawan. Both chiefs had further divisions of ranks in their army on the hierarchical basis of tribal set up starting from basic unit of family headed by a Suffaid Reesh then *Motabar* followed by Takkar and Sardar and culminating into Chiefs. Every chief would command several Sardars representing different tribes. So in this way the basic unit of army was headed by a Suffaid Reesh, an old man of

17 Baloch, *The Problem of Greater Baluchistan*, 170.

18 Nina Swilder, *Remotely Colonial: History and Politics in Balochistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2014), 124.

the family and on the top was a tribal Sardar who was next in command to chief of every Dastas.<sup>19</sup>

### **British and Khanate of Kalat**

The emergence of British in Balochistan is associated with Afghan Wars. Every Afghan war signalled the importance of Balochistan in the eyes of British policy-makers. As the East India Company was a chartered corporation and it was more interested in trade rather than colonization, therefore, it did not see any profit in colonizing Balochistan, which was a barren land track with scattered and thinly populated area. Nevertheless, as the Russian influence increased in Central Asia, the company felt threatened. Since the Company wanted to have friendly and cordial relations with the countries which were geographically proximate to the central Asia; hence the importance of Afghanistan came into limelight. During the First Anglo-Afghan War (1839) Balochistan became much important for British and her allied forces as Bolan Pass was used for invasion and supply purposes. Since Bolan Pass was part of the Khanate, the British wanted to use it, therefore, the British came into direct contact with Khanate. British during this war suffered not only in Afghanistan but also on their route back to India especially in Bolan Pass where there were raids and ambushes on retreating forces by the tribes. Although there was a treaty between Khan and British officials which would bound Khan to provide safe and peaceful exit to the forces. The reason of not honouring the treaty was buried in the fact that Khan did not have control over the Sardars and tribes. British considered it trespassing the treaty and decided to punish Khan and their battle ensued resulting in the murder of Mir Mehrab Khan. Although the later evidences proved that the Khan was innocent and a conspiracy was hatched by his courtiers against him.<sup>20</sup>

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19 Axmann, *Back to the Future*, 34.

20 R.I. Bruce, *The Forward Policy and its Result*, (Quetta: M/S Nisa Traders, 1979 [1900], 89.

### **Closed Border Verses Forward Policy**

The relationship between Khanate of Kalat and British were influenced more by strategic and geo-political factors than economic concerns as the British policies were decided elsewhere in India. After the First Afghan War there emerged a new policy called "Closed Border Policy". This policy started in 1854 and remained till 1876. The basic principle of policy laid in the treaty of 1854 which obliged Nasir Khan II to "protect trade routes, British management of Khanate relations with foreign powers (controlling of foreign policy and limited powers in the internal affairs) and allowing British forces stationing in Kalat and in return the Khan would receive an annual subsidy of Rs. 50,000.<sup>21</sup> The basic theme of Close Border Policy was to limit British state boundaries up to Sindh and with Balochistan have good relations as allied neighbour who would honour the treaties and they eschewed direct interference in internal affairs of Khanate. This policy meant that Khan was the sovereign ruler in internal affairs and in any kind of internal crises or disturbance arising between Khan and his polity; the British would support Khan rather than tribes or Sardars. This policy worked almost for two decades, and during this time period Khan of Kalat started to consolidate his powers specially Khudadad Khan who became Khan in 1857. He raised an army and tried to install his son on the seat of chieftain of Jhalawan. This rose suspicions among the regional Sardars who did not want Khan's overs strengthening of power. During this entire period, the British supported Khan as ally and considered Sardars as rebels resulting in frequent internal disturbances in the Khanate thus deteriorating the law and order situations not only in Khanate but on the borders with the British territories.<sup>22</sup>

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21 C. U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads Relating to Indian and Neighbouring Countries*, Vol. X1 (Calcutta: Office of the Superintendent of Government Printing, 1909),145; Swilder, *Remotely Colonial*, 122.

22 Gul Khan Naseer, *Tarikh-i-Balochistan* (Quetta: Kalat Publishers, 2007), 362.

During this period another development occurred. As before the British arrival there was not strict demarcation of border and most of the borderlands were free from the royal control. This was equally true in Khanate state which was not much centrally controlled administrative entity. The Sardars and tribes were more influential in local areas (as mentioned the Bolan raids) and as Khan weakened, the power vacuum would be filled by local elite. This inherent problem became alarming as British administrators in Punjab and Sindh were following the Closed Border Policy and raids by local tribes in British territories were going unchecked. When Lord Sandeman the then Deputy Commissioner, became the administrator of Punjab border areas, he disagreed with Commissioner Sindh Lord Merewether on British policies towards raiding tribes. Sandeman wanted "Forward Policy" and he would advocate that British should enter in direct negotiations with the Sardars and tribes rather than supporting Khan.<sup>23</sup> Sandeman started negotiations with Marri tribes in 1867 and the major results of these negotiations were that Sandeman would provide financial support to the tribal heads and allow them to keep specific number of armed forces; in return the tribes would stop raiding the British territories.<sup>24</sup> There was a tussle between the Sindh and Punjab administrators regarding the policies of British towards tribes and at the end of the day the Punjab administrator's policies prevailed resulting in an end to the Closed Border Policy and emergence of Forward Policies. The new policy would create British Balochistan by making treaties and purchasing areas on lease from Khan of Kalat on one hand and marking the 'Durand Line' with Shah of Afghanistan on the other hand.

### **Sandeman Policies and Decline of Khanate**

Lord Robert Sandeman was one of the key figures whose policies converted Balochistan into colonial land and he was

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23 R.I. Bruce, *The Forward Policy and its Result* (Quetta: M/S Nisa Traders, 1979 [1900], 89-91.

24 Bruce, *The Forward Policy and its Result*, 110.

able to play the cards of politics and conquer the entire region without war, hence achieving a name of Sandeman the Peaceful Conqueror.<sup>25</sup> His achievements for the British Raj were at the expense of Khanate of Kalat since beginning he was the advocate of Forward Policy and would criticize the old Closed Border Policy. Sandeman understood the inherent problem in tribal confederation and he knew that tribes needed a central authority only for the sake of collective defense against external threats. Sandeman also knew that the political structure of Khanate was not centralized in true sense, moreover Khan and his hierarchical nobles were not based on a true monarchical principle where a king would be final authority. Rather, here a loose confederation was in practice where Khan was first among the equal. This cultural and tribal based governance had institutional gaps and Sandeman was shrewd enough to grasp these gaps. He followed a system which would strengthen Sardars instead of Khan and he would also not let Khan's office to demolish.<sup>26</sup> His policy of strengthening the Sardars in an institutional manner is called "Sandeman System". The salient features of Sandeman System are discussed as under:

### **Lavies System**

The tribal system was based on the collective participation on the eve of sorrows, happiness, wars and defence. So every family or clan was supposed to send men in case of any crises or war and even for raids. The war or raid bounties were then distributed on the bases of losses endured by every clan or armed men supplied for the said purpose. It was this principle at work when Khanate annexed Kechi (fertile land) from Kalhoras and Khan distributed land among the tribes on the principle of supply of armed men and bearing of losses by the tribe. The well irrigated lands were given to those who had suffered or those tribes who

25 Tucker, *Sir Robert Sandeman: Peaceful Conqueror of Baluchistan* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921), 16.

26 Swilder, *Remotely Colonial*, 125.

provided maximum number of armed men supplying tribe. When British adopted Forward Policy, they converted this principle of armed men by Lavies system. In this system every Sardar was given a quota of appointing personnel and British would pay these personnel along with provision of arms, in return these forces would be used for controlling law and order situation in their respective areas.<sup>27</sup> This policy would work in two folds i.e. it would raise the status of Sardars as they would nominate constable for the Lavies force on one hand, on the other hand British would control the huge areas by these forces with a nominal financial burden. This policy changes the epicentre of power politics, as now Sardars would shift their loyalties to the Assistant Governor General (AGG) of British Raj rather than being subject to Khan of Kalat.<sup>28</sup>

### **Jirga System**

The British policy in India was very intriguing in terms of administration. They did not change the previous infrastructure but reformed it to achieve maximum hold with few administrators. This principle was applied on the Akbar's *Mansabdari System* by reforming and renaming it as the District Management Group (DMG). British changed the recruitment criteria, training schemes and providing security of jobs to these administrators.<sup>29</sup> Thus, the key purpose was to create a well-organized system of civil bureaucracy which would enable direct or indirect rule of British Raj almost over entire subcontinent. To resolve political disputes British introduced different councils. In Balochistan, the British used age old Jirga System for resolving the disputes ranging from civil to criminal issues on one hand, and intra-tribal issues on the other. The purpose of institutionalizing the Jirga System

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27 Axmann, *Back to the Future*, 125; M. S Baloch, *A Literary History of the Balochis* (Quetta: Balochi Academy, 1987), 122.

28 Dr. Javed Haider Syed, "Political Development in Balochistan in the Last Decade of British Raj" (Islamabad: PhD diss., Quaid-i-Azam University, NIPS, 2006), 78.

29 Mahmood Ali Shah, *Sardari, Jirga and Local Government System in Balochistan* (Lahore: Edara-e-Tadrees, 1994), 112.

was to make deliberations and resolve problems within tribes, between tribes and Khanate and even issues relating British Raj. Khanate had its own Jirga System which would mostly resolve issues in a joint sitting where both parties would present their grievances and decisions would be made according to *Balochi Rawaj*.<sup>30</sup>

The Lord Sandeman and the British administrators used same Jirga System for resolving the issues. In such Jirga where there were problems between Khan and Sardars the British perceived the differences between both parties and hence devised a policy through which they would be able to utilize the fragility of Khanate power in their own interests. Sandeman used Jirga for making himself the real power broker not only between Khan and Sardars but also make a system of British judicial system at social and tribal level. He and his officers would call for Jirga on different issues and decisions taken at such Jirga were final, unalterable and mandatory. Any breach of the decision would be punished and tribe was held collectively responsible for dishonouring the decisions.<sup>31</sup> Slowly and gradually, Khan's power as being the *de facto* authority was replaced by British administrators and after the demise of Khudadad Khan from Crown and his house arrest at Loralai proved fatal for Khanate as a center of power. From then onwards, a British appointee/representative would permanently not only reside in Kalat rather he would be part of all Jirgas and report to the AGG. The British control became much open after 1900s that even Khan was asked to present his crown budget which was actually drafted by a British official at Khanate Court. This shows that Khan of Kalat became the titular head of the state and real power was residing in the hands of British nominee in Kalat.

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30 Dashti, *The Baloch and Balochistan*, 254.

31 Swilder, *Remotely Colonial*, 122.

### **The Creation of British Balochistan and Khanate of Kalat**

British Raj had created a dual system of governance in India i.e. direct British rule (British India) and indirectly controlled territories (Princely States). The indirectly controlled system was called "Paramountcy". Here the governance would be established by making treaties, providing honors (entitling numbers of salutes) and provision of subsidies or pensions to Native State Rulers and in return the Native State Rulers or Princely States would allow British officials to stay in their capitals and the foreign relations of these states would be regulated by the British Raj.<sup>32</sup> Under this common principle of Raj *vis-a-vis* Princely States in India, the Khanate also became part of it. Khanate was a 'salute state' with nineteen guns status in the British paramountcy<sup>33</sup> and it had huge territory but as the 19<sup>th</sup> Century progressed in time, the territorial width of Khanate shrunk. Through different treaties, Raj was able to first limit Khan's powers and then got lands by lease for direct British administration. British Raj was able to create British agency/Balochistan by treaties with Khanate of Kalat and Shah of Afghanistan i.e. Treaty of *Mastung* and *Gandamak*<sup>34</sup> respectively and the purpose of this direct British administrative entity in Balochistan was strategic rather than economic. The late 19<sup>th</sup> Century was a period of colonial competition and it was a matter of European power politics that the maximum number of colonies would add into the prestige of a European state as regional and international power. There were perceived threats of Russian colonial expansion throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and this threat in Indian context was called "The Great Game".<sup>35</sup> There were two Anglo-Afghan Wars during the course of century and the basic purpose of these wars was to check

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32 B. N. Ramusck, *The New Cambridge History of India: The Indian Princes and Their States Vol. III.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 155.

33 Swilder, *Remotely Colonial*, 130.

34 Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads Relating*, 182.

35 Axmann, *Back to the Future*, 45.

Russian expansionism by installing friendly rulers at Kabul. The threat would not have been removed only by having buffer state in Afghanistan rather there was a need of garrisoning British troops at a station from where they could be mobilized at times of any crisis. It was a need of international and colonial politics that the British Balochistan was created and Quetta was made the capital of Balochistan agency in 1887.<sup>36</sup> This creation of new capital at Quetta made Khanate further marginal as centre of power in Balochistan's perspectives. As all tribal heads found new power centre at Quetta, they would have only a nominal allegiance with Khan whatsoever. From then onwards, the system of Jirga was also controlled by British officials especially the Shahi Jirgas where even Khan would send his nominees rather than presiding these Jirgas. All administrative head offices were established at Quetta along with a military cantonment and these were supplemented by establishing hospitals, primary schools, railways and other communication systems throughout in British Balochistan.<sup>37</sup> Quetta had replaced Kalat as the epicentre of all affairs ranging from political power base to the economic hub. Quetta became a metropolitan city for merchants, craftsmen and job hunters on one hand and source of attraction for masses from both interior territories of Khanate and British Balochistan on the other. This new capital of power distorted the remaining prestige of Khanate as people would go to Quetta for all kind of problems and get them resolved which proved the inability of the Khan. So the creation of British Balochistan proved to be the last nail in the coffin of Khanate as independent and sovereign entity.

### **Conclusion**

The tribal confederation of Kalat had gone through several stages. It was established by indigenous tribes with a social

36 Hameed Baloch, ed., *Balochistan Papers: Select Documents on Kalat State and its Territories from 1925 to 1948* (Karachi: Sayad Hashmi Reference Library, 2007), 8.

37 Swilder, *Remotely Colonial*, 125.

contract which was based on the mutual interests and interdependency of tribal requirements posed on them by internal and external factors. The internal factors required these tribes to have such a confederacy where all would live together for mutual defence and sharing of scarce natural resources for men and their beasts. The external factors were environmental and political in nature. The environmental factors would limit the availability of natural resources as Balochistan resembles Central Asian Steppes where mountainous lands with limited rainfalls would restrict the viability of agriculture. The tribal clans would control water resources with limited populations and such tribes were scattered over large geographic area. These tribes had developed mutual interaction over long period of time which culminated into tribal alliances for common pastoralism. Since these lands were on the margins of Empires (either Persian or Mughal) with limited economic benefits, so these were not part of major empires in true sense. As in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Centuries emerged a power vacuum by declining Mughal rule, which resulted into mushrooming of lots of principalities, Khanate of Kalat also became a ruling entity. Since the nature of Khanate was tribal rather than monarchical so the powers of Khan were not absolute. This tribal confederacy needed strong and capable leader at top who could control all the tribal factions and manipulate the powers. The Khans of Kalat State were not much strong administrators (with few exceptions and Mir Nasir Khan I being greatest among them) who could control all tribes in such a way that there would not emerge differences among Sardars or between Khan and Chiefs or Sardars.

When British arrived, they adopted different polices in different times when dealing with Khanate. The British did not want to expand their colony beyond Sind or River Indus in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century but policies changed in the latter half of the century and the new borderland of British Raj was at Chaman with Quetta being their major cantonment in the region. This policy change was dual in nature as British wanted to check Russian expansion and

made Afghanistan a buffer state and created the British Balochistan for administering borderlands directly. The British interaction with Khanate and its subjects exposed inherent institutional and factional gaps of tribal confederacy of Kalat State. After the British adoption of Forward Policy and Sandeman System, the intuitional gaps of Khanate became main causes of its weakening. The power centre shifted from the house of Khan to the office of the British AGG. One example of this administrative power shift would be suffice to explain this mechanism i.e. when there was a problem between tribesman and Sardar, the court of appeal was the office of Khan and if there was a problem between Sardar and Khan then the issue would not be settled by traditional Jirga rather issue would be brought to the British Commissioner and his decision would have been final. Even Khan could not deny such decision and in such a case Khan Khudadad Khan was dethroned and put into house arrest in 1893 on the orders of British Commissioner. In a nutshell, we can conclude that the British arrival and their administrative systems had weakened Khanate's traditional system of tribal confederation. The British used internal weakness of Khanate for their own strengthening and hence brought the complete deterioration of Khanate as Native State. Thus at the time of decolonization Kalat State acceded to Pakistan.