



SECTARIAN CONFLICTS IN PAKISTAN A CASE STUDY OF BALUCHISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Pakistan has from the beginning faced security issues both internally and externally. Pakistan has a long history of political and religious conflicts. According to Global Terrorism report which was issued in 2016 clearly estimated that Pakistan among the top five countries of the world which has affected by religious terrorism, extremism, and militancy. Baluchistan has the largest province of Pakistan due to its natural resources always remained the interest bank for both internal and external powers. Baluchistan has the most affected area which has badly affected by sectarian violence and terrorism. In Pakistan sectarianism has badly affected our people particularly the people of Baluchistan. The Sunni Shia conflict has remained a core issue for the provincial government as well as for the Federal government. The militant groups of these identities operated against each one another. Due to sectarian violence life in Baluchistan is damaging, in these sectarian attacks the Hazara community has targeted. The security forces have to work to maintained law and order situation in the province and particularly in Quetta, but all effort always remained useless. Hazara community has very damaging in their lives due to these attacks, the Hazara community limited to just their enclaves. Hazara community due to their ethnic, linguistic, and physical appearance easily targeted by religious militants groups like Lashkar e Jhangvi (Sepha Sahaba), TTP, etc. In this paper I will highlight the causes due to which the Hazara community in Baluchistan is targeted in Sectarian terrorist attacks.

Key Words. Sectarian Violence and terrorism in Baluchistan

1. INTRODUCTION

Baluchistan is the largest province of Pakistan; it shares its border with Iran and Afghanistan along with 760 km long sea coastal area. From historically the province of Baluchistan was very important because the Ex-superpower USSR and Great Britain used this land for both strategically and for their business purposes, actually, Baluchistan connect Central Asia, South Asia and middle east.¹

All the empire such as Alexander, Achaemenians, the Scythians, the Arabs, the Seljuqs, the Mughals and the Timurids used this route towards the Indus area which is now Pakistan.²

With the decline of Mughals empire, the British government due to its imperialist approach use Baluchistan as a mainline of connection against the Russian empire in order to protect their business interest with central Asia, for this purpose in 1854 they conclude a treaty with Khan of Kalat and Nasir Khan-II through this treaty the British empire use these Khans to contained their enemies in the region.³

Pakistan came into being in 1947. From the beginning Pakistan is facing the political as well as religious problems particularly the sectarian tolerance but in this regard Pakistan is failed to resolve the sectarian issues. The regional political developments effects Pakistan. In 1979 Iranian revolution took place along with the USSR invasion in Afghanistan and its impacts on neighboring countries particularly, Pakistan because due to this war millions of Afghan refugees were migrated to different areas of Pakistan particularly in the province KP and Baluchistan among them Hazara community which were migrated to Quetta. The Hazara community which was shifted to during Yaha Khan Period the state give them permanent residence in Pakistan and those Hazara families which were migrated during the 1979 war declare refugees. Gradually the Hazara community started to establish their camps but soon after they successfully getting land from the provincial government, approximately 600,000 and one million Hazara are living in Pakistan majority among them Shia Muslims. The Hazara community living in Quetta established their enclaves in the place of Hazara town and Mari Abad the security agencies provide full security to these areas for this purpose the forces established wall through gates and checkpoints in these areas. According to article 28 of the constitution of Pakistan any citizen

living in Pakistan is the right to live their lives according to their aspiration they have the right to promote their language, culture or script, and religion.

Hazara community due to their different physical appearance easily targeted by sectarian terrorist groups, massively these sectarian terrorist groups have targeted Hazara living places in Quetta. Although the provincial government has taken various security measures to protect the Hazara community from these sectarian terrorist groups.⁴

2. HYPOTHESIS

Religious extremist dominant role in every society of the world particularly in Pakistan because the majority of the people are illiterate, due to lack of education these religious extremists easily exploits the minds of the peoples for their agenda. But another important thing is that the support for these sectarian elements from the internal side is alarming for the nation. With full support to these sectarian groups, the bloodshed situations happen and the blood of innocent was on the roads of the Baluchistan which is raised a question that where is the rite of the state and institutions who protect its citizen because the state is considered to be a custodian of its citizens.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology has been adopted in this paper is mainly library based, which is descriptive and a qualitative in character. Since the study tried to analyze sectarian violence and terrorism in Baluchistan Secondary sources have been consulted during the course of research. Hence, the study is the outcome of the following sources.

1. Official records.
2. Journals, Magazines, and Newspaper.
3. Unpublished dissertation and reports.

The persecution of the Hazara Shia community in Baluchistan

The Hazara community migrated to Quetta at the end of the 19th century because in the Amir Abdur Rahman Khan treated the Hazara community very harshly.⁵ Hazara established small businesses until in the 1990s the appearance of the Taliban in Afghanistan, the Taliban brutally

treated the Hazara community in their provinces in Afghanistan. In Quetta in July 2003 a Shia Mosque was targeted in which fifty innocent people were killed; it was a terrible incident in the sectarian history of Baluchistan.⁶ In the same way in March 2004, 48 peoples were again attacked in the 10th Muharam. In the first week of March 2004, about four dozen Shia were murdered in Quetta during the tenth Muharram march. Similarly in September 2010 in Quetta Al Quds March was targeted through a suicide bomb attack consequently fifty five peoples which belong to Hazara community were killed.⁷ Just after one year a man with gun congested a bus and opened fired on Shia pilgrimage which was traveling to Iran, in this incident twenty-six people were murdered belong to Shia Hazara community.⁸

Another accident which was taken place in September 2012 in near Hazar Ganji the Lashkar-i-Jhangvi terrorists targeted a Bus in which two personals were shot dead which belong to Hazara Shia community.⁹ In the same way in October 2012 two Baluchistan government personals were targeted by the Lashkar-i-Jhangvi group in Kochlak these personals were belonged to finance ministry but the unfortunate thing was that these personals have belonged to Hazara community. Similarly in the same month of October 2012, in Sirki road an automobile shop was by which run by Hazara unfortunately in this attack four Hazaras was killed.

In 2013, a tedious attack was happening in Hazara town in which a snooker club was targeted in this attack ninety Hazara Shia were killed. It was on the security forces to take strong actions on the culprits along with it was demanded that the government of Baluchistan should resign and imposed governor rule.¹⁰ though, the Federal government imposed governor rule in the province, but unfortunately the same incident happened in February 2013 in which seventy Hazara Shia communities were dead. The Hazara community declares that these attacks have been made by Al Qaida and its closed sectarian and terrorist organizations.¹¹

4. ANTI-SHIA SENTIMENTS IN BALUCHISTAN

Another problem face by the Shia community in Baluchistan is anti-Shia sentiments. The religious extremist group usually used loudspeakers to create anti-Shia emotions in the people, they particularly use mosque because the people have a deep attachment with the mosque, the religious extremist leaders use this tickets to implement their agenda, and they delivered hate speeches against the Shia community, the walls of Quetta is full of religious hates, these hates

speeches further enhance the chance of sectarian violence in the province. The religious extremist leader created conflicts among the peoples and motivated against the Shia community. The terrorist groups delivered pamphlets, wall chalking, and use social media in order to infiltrate their objectives in the provinces. It is true that the religious extremist groups successfully implement their objectives because in Quetta there is a wide gap of relations between Sunni Shia communities.

5. SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF HAZARA COMMUNITY IN BALUCHISTAN

Social Problems

(i). Education

It is fact that the Hazara community faces difficulties in order to get Higher education in Baluchistan. The Hazara Shia community explained that it is difficult for them to send their children to schools and Baluchistan University or getting higher education due to religious terrorist groups. They further added that economically sound families can support their children outside the province or abroad, whereas weak families doesn't support their children's.¹²

(ii) Health

The Hazara community are deprived of the health facilities in their areas the main civil Hospital and BMC but these are located in an unsafe area and they worried about their leaves and private hospital which are located in Hazara located area are not affordable.³⁷ the Hazara community due to their weak economic conditions they are not enabled to go to Karachi for their treatment because it is risky for their leaves to go to Karachi. On the 18th July 2017, a Shia Hazara community was targeted in Mustang by Lashkar-i- Jhangvi¹³

(iii). Hazara identity

Due to worse security condition in Quetta the Hazara community always prepare for any threat e.g. when they Hazara people visiting another area they usually cover their face with a helmet if drive the bike in order to hide their identity because they are different language, different eyes, nose and cheeks through which it is easily possible for an attacker to identify them.¹⁴

(iv). Migration and challenges

It is an opinion among the people of Hazara sect that the Quetta is kind of prison for them they say that Hazara people trying to leave outside the province but it is possible for them to migrate to another place within the country because they say that Quetta is the land of their four fathers and they cannot migrate from it. Due to a long series of sectarian violence in the province there is trust deficit level is leaving among the people of Hazara community on government and they have no hope for the future.¹⁵

(v).Trade and business problems

Most of the Hazara belong to the business sector for this purpose they established their businesses in different marks like a spinzar market, the Liaqat market, Abdul Sattar Road, baldia plaza etc are Hazara business area. But with the passage of time due to the prolonged security situation in Baluchistan it is difficult for the Hazara businessmen to run their trade and business activity. It is difficult for the Hazara to go to outside their area for buying and selling goods.¹⁶

Jobs It is very difficult for the Hazara to obtained government Jobs or to join civil services due to the security situation in Baluchistan. Now these people prefer other Jobs like trade business and banking sector because they know that if they join government jobs they would be killed.¹⁷

(vi).Psychological issues

Due to security threats to Hazara people and constant fear remained back Hazaara in socio-economic filed. Which has a psychological impact on Hazara? They can not communicate with other communities freely; they cannot participate in the movements of sorrow and happiness of other non-Hazara communicates. Such sort of situation created irritation in the behavior of Hazara. Due to strict behavior of Hazara community created fretfulness in their attitude.

Conclusion

- Due to Sectarian violence and terrorism badly effect on our national unity. Unfortunately some religious leaders desiring to declare Pakistan as a Sunni state, so such sort of internal religious leaders were responsible for the establishment of militant organizations.
- Baluchistan is a very rich province due to its natural resources. Some external enemies support these religious militants/terrorist groups to create security situations in order to get their objective to destabilize political as well as economic condition of Pakistan.
- Actually the Hazara people are vibrant nations in every walk of life; the opponents of the Hazara community are Jealous of their development. The Hazaras control the main local business of Quetta city so, therefore, the non-Hazara businessmen are not tolerated by their well establishes business.
- It is a fact there is no such proper arrangements have made by the Federal as well as Provincial government for the security of the Hazara community due to negligence from the government these innocent communities are easily targeted by the terrorist groups.
- Getting of education is the fundamental right of every Pakistan but in Baluchistan the innocent Hazara children are deprived due to worse security threats to their lives. So no proper arrangements have been made by the government to provide a sound and stable environment.
- Worse and constant security threats to their lives the Hazara remained back word in the Business sector; their businesses are destroyed due to Lashkar-i-Jhangvi attacks. Unfortunately there were no compensation was made from the government for their businesses.

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