

# **Sectarian Clashes and Public Opinion in Balochistan: A Comparative Study of Selected Urdu Newspapers**

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## **Abstract**

This paper attempts to examine the role of selected newspapers in taking sectarian clashes in Balochistan to the public agenda.

Along with the content analysis of the selected newspapers the authors have also conducted a survey on peoples' perception on related issues. The correlation between the content of the selected newspapers and popular beliefs raises new questions and yields a unique insight into the complex issue of Balochistan.

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## **Introduction**

The capacity and strength of mass media in addressing the issues confronting the societies, needs no extra emphasis. Technological developments in the field of information distribution have increased the pace and scope of mass media's impact many folds. It has been a popular belief for quite sometimes that media provides information and knowledge crucial for social development and help solve social, political and economic problems in the course of modernization.<sup>1</sup> The process of globalization has opened up new venues to accelerate the process of transformation of societies. The emerging global markets are distributing all kinds of products including cultural artifacts but it is also a way of engaging with certain assumptions about the role of ideas, images and

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<sup>1</sup> Zhen Wang Guang & Vijay K. Pillai, 'Communication and Social Development', in K. Mahadevan, Kiran Prasad *etal* (eds.), *Communication Modernization and Social Development*, India, BR Publishing Corporation, 2002, p.26.

believes and how they are created to unite or divide societies.<sup>2</sup> On the one hand every regional, local and internal issue is being internationalized within seconds; on the other most of the nation states of the world are faced with the dilemmas of internal conflicts which hinders the peace and prosperity of the nations as a whole. The editorial control of media houses is shifting from professionals to market department which is raising new questions about the relevance of content to society's specific issues. Many media scholars of today support the retention of public service programming in order to provide those ingredients which the nation might think imperative for it but which the market will not provide.<sup>3</sup> In such an era when television contents are produced to address much larger audience than ever before, print and radio sounds more appropriate forums to address issues confronting the local audience. This research study is based on the content analysis of local Urdu newspapers to evaluate the way these selected newspapers have reported news and written opinion pieces on sectarian clashes which took place in Balochistan during 2003-2006 vis-à-vis public perception obtained through survey method of data collection. The other questions regarding choosing print media, selection of sample for survey and rationale of study and detailed methodology may not be explained without having an insight of the press of this region.

### **Distinct features of mass media in Balochistan**

The genesis of mass media in Balochistan is linked with the reading and writing traditions of the province. During its early period it was adopted as a borrowed tradition introduced by the elite of Balochistan for purposes like projection of identity, culture, language, image building and putting Balochistan on the media map of the country.<sup>4</sup> Balochistan was in fact an area with no scope for journalism due to its negligible literacy ratio and little readership. The literacy rate in Balochistan is lowest in Pakistan which according to Census Report of 1998 was estimated at 25% but later in 2004 estimation by Government of

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<sup>2</sup> Richard Michael & French David, 'Globalization, Television and Asia', in Richard Michael and French David (eds.), *Television in Asia* (New Delhi: Sage Publications), 2000, pp.16-7.

<sup>3</sup> D.H. Brown, 'The Academics' response to the call for a new marketplace approach to broadcasting regulations', *Critical Studies Mass Communication*, 1994, p.262.

<sup>4</sup> Fahim Baloch, 'Mass Media, Cultural Diversity and Provincial Harmony in Balochistan', unpublished M.Phil dissertation, Department of Media & Journalism (Quetta: University of Balochistan, 2010).

Balochistan reflects some progress and assessed the overall literacy rate in the province at 28%.<sup>5</sup> Due to this, circulation of newspapers is also limited and according to one estimate the total circulation of print media is merely 35000 copies altogether. Today Balochistan has 124 years' history of press commencing from 1888. Radio and television remained a state monopoly in the country till the year 2002 when Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority Ordinance was promulgated, paving the way for establishment of radio and television in private sector.<sup>6</sup> Although FM radio and satellite television in private sector made inroads very quickly in major cities of Pakistan but it took Balochistan many years to have first private FM radio station in 2006.<sup>7</sup> During the period 2003-2006 print media was the only independent source of information and opinion formation which had a direct focus on the issues confronting the local population. Ethnic diversity is another important feature of the area which has a direct linkage with the media as well as with the selection of newspapers for this study. Balochistan houses more cultures and ethnic groups than any other region in the country. The province is multi-lingual: Balochi, Pashto and Brahui are the main area languages but due to very thin population (6.5 million) no single area language is capable of dominating the mass media scenario as a whole. Instead of that the national language Urdu dominates both the print and electronic media in Balochistan.<sup>8</sup> Language wise break up of daily newspapers in Balochistan also verifies the significance of Urdu press in the region. According to media list of Directorate of Public Relations Government of Balochistan, in 2009, the number of Balochi daily newspapers was 11, English 12, Pashto 3, Brahui none, multi-lingual 7 and number of Urdu daily newspapers coming out from Balochistan was 88.<sup>9</sup> Quetta city is the main centre of press in Balochistan. All newspapers and magazines from the province are clustered in the capital city of Quetta due to various reasons. Concentration of most of the higher education

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<sup>5</sup> Government of Balochistan, Balochistan MICS 2004, p.29.

<sup>6</sup> Seemi Naghmana Tahir, *History and Development of Mass Media in Balochistan* (Balochistan Mein Ablagh-e-Amma Agha-wa-Irtiqā), (Islamabad: National Language Authority, 2006), p.465.

<sup>7</sup> Sadaf Naqvi, 'Role of FM Radio in Bringing Social Change in Balochistan' unpublished M.Phil dissertation, Department of Media & Journalism, University of Balochistan, 2010.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p.101.

<sup>9</sup> Seemi Naghmana Tahir, 'Ethnic Diversity and Multi-lingual Press in Balochistan 1938-2009', *Historicus*, the quarterly Journal of Pakistan Historical Society, LVIII:2 (April-June 2010), pp.68-71.

institutions in Quetta is one of them which provide readership for newspapers.

The globalization, the I.T revolution, satellite system and internet-connectivity have virtually broadened the awareness of people in Balochistan now and have promoted a sense of identity and diversity. On the one hand, the new phenomenon has brought new opportunities; on the other, it has increased the sense of deprivation among the people of the province, suffering from prolonged disparity. Awareness through media has re-enforced the demand for cultural as well as political autonomy of the province. Besides political strives going on in the province, increased violence on sectarian grounds has virtually challenged the wisdom of social and political scientists to find the causes and suggest remedies for bringing peace and harmony in the region.

### **Sectarian clashes and coverage in newspapers: An analysis of public opinion**

The aim of this research is to study the issue of sectarian violence in Balochistan, keeping in mind various geographical, historical and political factors and with major focus on the role of print media in Balochistan. The research work would be focused on measuring perceived public opinion on the sectarian unease in Balochistan and the role of daily newspapers highlighting the issue. The mass media as an agent of social change enjoys the capacity and strength to change or modify the existing attitude and behaviors in the society they operate.

All communication has to take place through a medium of some kind, and that medium will limit the communication in some ways, and permit various features to exist at the same time.<sup>10</sup>

Thus main objectives of this study include:

1. To analyze the coverage of sectarian issue in local print media
2. To study public opinion in Balochistan on sectarian clashes and the way print media constructs and presents this issue in news and opinion pieces.

### **Methodology**

The research method proceeded through descriptive and analytical approaches, survey and content analysis methods were used for collection of data. A closed ended questionnaire was developed to conduct the survey, a format that limits respondents with a list of choices

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<sup>10</sup> Williams Noel, *How to get a 2:1 in Media, Communication and Cultural Studies* (London: SAGE Publications, 2004), p.118.

to answer the question.<sup>11</sup> The choices were ‘Yes’, ‘No’ and ‘Don’t Know’.

### **Population and sampling**

The population of the study was inhabitants of Balochistan province of Pakistan. A research population is generally a large collection of individuals or objects that is the main focus of a scientific inquiry. Due to the large sizes of populations, researchers often cannot test every individual in the population because it is too expensive and time-consuming. This is the reason why researchers rely on sampling techniques.<sup>12</sup> For this survey, probability and stratified methods of sampling were used to ensure maximum representation of the population.

A probability sampling method is any method of sampling that utilizes some form of random selection. In order to have a random selection method, you must set up some process or procedure that assures that the different units in your population have equal probabilities of being chosen.<sup>13</sup>

The act of dividing a larger population into subgroups using systematic sampling is called stratified sampling, whereas, random sampling can frequently minimize the sampling error in the population. This in turn increases the precision of any estimation methods used, but one should ensure selection of relevant variables for the grouping process. This method of sampling with any given population could vary significantly depending on the grouping and uniformity of the grouping.<sup>14</sup>

There may be factors which divide the population into sub-populations (groups / strata) and we may expect the measurements of variables to vary among the different sub-populations. For this study this objective was achieved by stratified sampling. A stratified sample is obtained by taking samples from each stratum or sub-group of a population.<sup>15</sup> The respondents were categorized as intellectuals, religious scholars, university teachers, lawyers, doctors, politicians, journalists and university level students, so that cross section of society and maximum stakeholder’s opinion may be attained.

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<sup>11</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Closed-ended\\_question](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Closed-ended_question).

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.experiment-resources.com/research-population.html#ixzz1x1XSiQIo>.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.sixsigmaspc.com/dictionary/stratified-sampling.html>

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.encyclo.co.uk/define/Stratified%20sampling>

The sample of the study was collected from Quetta city because (i) concentration of readers here, (ii) due to the reason that most of the incidents of sectarian violence have taken place in Quetta; and (iii) because of clustered Shia population in the city. Moreover being the commercial, administrative and educational centre of the province students, government officials including doctors and teachers from all over the province live in Quetta and a sample drawn from this city ensures the representation from the whole province.

### **Procedure of data collection & data analysis**

Data was collected through questionnaire which was physically handed over to all the respondents. Total 301 copies of questionnaires were distributed and received. The researchers used following statistical method to analyze the data:

- I. Total score of each item of questionnaire was calculated.
- II. Mean score of each item of questionnaire was calculated.
- III. Percentage of the every response was also calculated.

The data was tabulated in the form of frequency distribution. Total frequencies and percentage of each response was interpreted and tabulated accordingly.

### **Content analysis**

Content analysis is any systematic procedure devised to examine the content of recorded information. Krippendorff calls it a research technique for making replicable and valid references from data to their context. Kerlinger describes content analysis a method of studying and analyzing communication in a systematic, objective and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables.<sup>16</sup> The same method was used to draw comparison of newspapers. Content of front and editorial pages of selected newspapers were selected as sample for analysis to manage the study in a given time period and also because all accidents or carnage news are generally reported on front pages. Quetta has limited capacity of generating news stories that could hit the headlines due to lesser business and social activities as compared to other major cities of the country, however, accidents and terrorists activities always hit front page headlines. For analyzing opinion pieces editorial pages were selected as sample of study. Editorial page contains editorials, columns and articles, where writer can give his/her viewpoint and opinion about any issue.

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<sup>16</sup> Wimmer D. Roger, 'Dominick R. Joseph, 'Mass Media Research: An Introduction' in Thomas Wadsworth, 9<sup>th</sup> Edition, p.140.

Following three newspapers were selected for analysis:

- Daily *Jang* Quetta
- Daily *Mashriq* Quetta
- Daily *Bakhabar* Quetta

Four factors were kept in view before selecting the above mentioned newspapers for the study:

- Distribution or circulation
- Influence on decision makers
- Quality of news content

Since the topic of study focuses on a local issue, therefore, newspapers largely circulated among the local readers were selected. All three newspapers originate from Quetta and are expected to address issues that directly influence the lives and property of their readers.

The daily *Jang* was selected due to its popularity and highest circulation in Quetta. The daily *Mashriq* is the second largest circulating newspaper, but is not a part of a large newspaper conglomerate like daily *Jang* and thus expected to be more liberal and focused on local issues. Both these newspapers are pioneer of modern journalism in Balochistan. The other common feature of these two newspapers is that their ownership lies with the non-locals; the people who belong to other places than Balochistan are often blamed of being less concerned about the local sensitivities and more about their business interests. The daily *Bakhabar*, on the other hand, is the largest circulating daily among the newspapers that are owned and controlled by locals of Balochistan. The diverse features of all these papers will help in drawing comparative conclusions.

### **Coding entity**

Headline of all news items on front page were taken as coding unit for identifying the topics in this particular study. Similarly, on the editorial pages the whole appearance of the item was also measured as coding entity and each item was studied and coded as sympathetic, harsh or unbiased. If the content of the whole item reflected positive angle, it was coded as sympathetic while the negative reflection was coded as harsh and the items neither having sympathetic angle nor harsh were coded as unbiased.

The contents analyses of the selected newspapers were done from year 2003 to year 2006. The reason of selecting year 2003 to 2006 was intensity in the reoccurrences of sectarian clashes during this period. The comparison was drawn on the basis of news items published in each newspaper after the incidents took place and overall coverage of news

items related to sectarian nature. Beside coverage of news item, the size of news item was also compared on the basis of newspapers columns inches. Editorials, columns and articles published during 2003 and 2006 in these newspapers were also compared. The comparison of the editorials, articles, columns, pictures and news item were also made on the basis of its nature i.e whether it had sympathetic, harsh or unbiased impact on the readers. The analysis of the data is in the form of tables and each table is also interpreted.

### **Emergence of sectarian divide in Muslim community**

The history of mankind has seen the rise and decline of vast empires and civilizations, the growth of Islamic civilization, both for the speed and breadth of its geographic expansion as well as for the development of its unique cultural heritage is today an important part of history of mankind.

Islam produced one of the greatest civilizations the world has ever known. While Europe wallowed in the mire of the Dark Ages, Islam produced advances in science, mathematics, literature, medicine, architecture, religion as well as many other fields of discipline. Islamic cities such as Baghdad were the premier centers of learning and folks flocked there from all over the world to study.<sup>17</sup>

Similarly after the death of Prophet Mohammad in 632 AD, the Islamic empire began new expansions from the Arabian Peninsula, conquered Iran in 641 and Egypt in 642. By the eighth century all of northern Africa and Iberian Peninsula, India and Indonesia had become Islamic land.<sup>18</sup> This geographical expansion gave birth to Islamic civilization, which in a very short span of time turned into first true global civilization.<sup>19</sup>

There is no doubt that Islam worldwide has given a way of life to Muslims with a complete package of directions to cover every aspect of human society. However, in modern period (late ninetieth and twentieth century), the Islamic tradition has encountered great political and ideological challenges. Seventh century Arabia saw the advent of a movement that spread across the Middle East, Europe, Asia and Africa and which today includes over 750 million adherents. The central fact and inspiration of this cohesion is the one, true God (Allah) and his

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<sup>17</sup> Peter N. Stearns, *Islam From The Beginning to 1300*, International World History Project, A collection of World History Related Essays, 1992, p.1.

<sup>18</sup> Matt Rosenberg, *Islamic Geography in the Middle East*, About.com, updated August 6, 2007.

<sup>19</sup> S.B Schwartz, Michael Adas, Jason M. Gilbert and Peter N. Stearns, *World Civilizations*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition Pearson, 1995, p.117.



revelations to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), which were recorded in the Quran, the final complete revelation of God's will for whole humanity. The death of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) after a brief illness confronted the emerging Islamic community (*Ummah*) with the crisis of succession. It marks the beginning of what eventually developed into permanent Sunni-Shia divide in the Islamic community.<sup>20</sup>

Sunnis are the largest group of Muslim community in the world. According to one estimate, the group comprises 80 to 85% of all Muslims. The word *Sunni* came from the term *Sunnah*, which refers to the words and actions of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH).<sup>21</sup> Those who did not support the political succession of Ali, the first cousin and son-in-law of Prophet Mohammad after his death, opposed succession based on bloodline to the Prophet and recognized the authority of all four caliphs were later called Sunnis.<sup>22</sup> Shia Muslims believe that the descendents from Muhammad through his daughter Fatima Zahra and his son in law Ali (the Imam) were the best source of knowledge about the Quran and Islam. According to Shia Islam Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) designated his succession to 'Ali, who later became the fourth Caliph of Islam.<sup>23</sup> The problem of political succession may be said to be the element that crystallized the Shiites into a distinct group, and political suppression in later periods, especially the martyrdom of Imam Hussain accentuated the tendency of the Shiites to see themselves as a separate community within Islamic world.<sup>24</sup>

The intra-Muslim divide between Shiaism and Sunnism is one of the most important divide in the modern day Islam. It has also encouraged further division of Muslims into many other smaller but equally important groups. The critical areas within the religion and ethnic groups have been politically exploited by different actors and states in various geographical locations in history resulting in intra Muslim conflicts and wars. The Islamic revolution of Iran greatly contributed to strengthen Shia political thought in the contemporary period. Ayatullah Khomeini reportedly attempted to export his Islamic revolution worldwide.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Farhad Daftary, *The Ismailis-Their history and doctrines*, Cambridge University Press, 1990, p.34.

<sup>21</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/sunni>.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Laurence Louer, *Transnational Shia Politics: Religious and Political Networks in Gulf*, Columbia University Press, 2008, p.5.

<sup>24</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shiaism>.

<sup>25</sup> Laurence Louer, *op.cit.*

### **Balochistan and sectarian conflicts**

The province of Balochistan enjoys a significant strategic position on world map. For centuries it was used as a cross road from west to east and east to west. Aryans, Scythians, Aphthalities and Kushan crossed this region when they moved to Sindh, Punjab and Northern India. Muslims were interested in Balochistan because of its trade and military gates towards the subcontinent such as Bolan Pass, Moola Pass and so on. The province shares borders with Iran and Afghanistan.<sup>26</sup> From early history up to the emergence of Pakistan, Balochistan has seen many ups and downs.

The main objectives of this study are to pin point the causes of outbreak of sectarian clashes in Pakistan with special focus on Balochistan, particularly during last fifteen years, and also to attain public opinion on the coverage, construction and presentation of sectarian issues on print media as well as public perception on prevailing sectarian violence in the province.

To scientifically analyze increasing incidents of sectarian violence and pin point various factors and actors responsible for accelerating these incidences is one of the important objectives of this study. Apart from commonly believed religious reasons, there are geographical, historical and economic dimensions which are needed to be focused upon to develop a true perspective of this sensitive and yet important issue. Determining the role of mass media will be the major focus of this research study but to crystallize the problem, first a brief look at the back ground of sectarian clashes in Pakistan.

### **Outbreak of sectarian violence in Pakistan**

The first reported incident of sectarian violence occurred in Pakistan in the year 1950 during Moharram in Hyderabad Sindh, in which nine Mahajirs were killed in police firing. The eruption of violence was caused by a rumours that a Sindhi Shia had kidnapped a Sunni Mahajir child during the Ashura procession.<sup>27</sup> However, the first major sectarian clash took place in Lahore in 1953 during the movement against the Ahmadis which was engineered by different religious political parties and Majlis-e-Khatme Nabuwat. Leaders of the groups wanted Ahmadi's to be declared as non-Muslims, removal of Foreign Minister,

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<sup>26</sup> Sayed Abdul Quddus, *The Tribal Balochistan* (Lahore: Feroz Sons Pvt. Ltd., 1990), p.1.

<sup>27</sup> Saroosh Irfani, 'Pakistan's' Sectarian Violence: Between the Arabist Shift and Indo-Persian Culture, *Religious Radicalism and Security in South Asia* (Honolulu, Hawaii: Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, 2004), p.153.

Zafarullah Khan, who was Ahmadi by faith and imposition of ban on employment of Ahmadi's in government services. The unrest resulted in martial law in Punjab.<sup>28</sup> Sectarian clashes remained controlled during Ayub era, and only one such incident was reported during his regime that took place near Khairpur in Sindh. In subsequent eras in Pakistan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had to face many challenges in mid 1970s' which includes rise of Punjabi and Sindhi nationalism in the country and a military operation against Baloch nationalist forces. The right wing political and religious parties forced Bhutto government to pronounce Ahmadis as non-Muslims. In the subsequent years, as a result of alliance between right wing religious political parties and military, Bhuttos' government was toppled down on 5 July 1977 by the then army chief, General Ziaul Haq.<sup>29</sup>

Zia had strong inclination towards the teaching and political thoughts of Maulana Maudoodi, the founder of Jammat-e- Islami. During his tenure he developed very cordial relations with the Ameer-e-Jammat-e-Islami, Maulana Tufail Mohammad, and also with the followers of Tehreek-e-Khatam-e-Nabuwat. In the year 1978 Tehreek-e-Khatam-e-Nabuwat demanded Zia to declare Zikris of Makran as non- Muslims. Keeping in view strict opposition from somewhat secular Baloch leadership, Ziaul Haq restrained himself from taking any action on this demand. The promulgation of *Zakat* and *Ushr* Ordinance by Ziaul Haq further deepened the already existing Sunni-Shia divide in the country, *Zakat* (poor tax) and *Ushr* (tax on agriculture produce) were introduced on 21 June 1980 to help the needy people.<sup>30</sup> The basic aim of this law was the introduction of Islamic economic system in the country. As these laws were in line with the Sunni sect only, therefore a strong reaction was demonstrated from the people who belonged to the Shia sect. Thousands of Shias turned to Islamabad against these laws which were in conflict with their faith. Another major contributing factors was Iranian revolution which took place in 1979.

### **Sectarianism and role of regional forces**

The military government of General Zia faced a wave of Shia activism more openly than ever before which was said to be supported by Islamic

<sup>28</sup> Mehtab Shah Ali, *Sectarianism—A Threat to Human Security: A Case Study of Pakistan*, Roudledge Publications, 2005, p.614.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p.615.

<sup>30</sup> [www.awamipolitics.com/zakat-usshr-ordinance-in-pakistan-4196.html](http://www.awamipolitics.com/zakat-usshr-ordinance-in-pakistan-4196.html)  
*Zakat & Ushr Ordinance In Pakistan*. Posted by Arshad Hameed on April 2, 2012.

Republic of Iran. After the enforcement of *Zakat* and *Ushr* regulation in Pakistan by General Zia a controversy erupted and TNFJ and Imamia Students Organization (ISO) started resisting the decision made by Zia government. Federal Secretariat was occupied by members of TNFJ and ISO. Ultimately their demands were accepted by Zia. Khomeni's role cannot be denied in resolving the issue though. Later TNFJ was recognized as the sole representative of Shia community in Pakistan. The formation of TNFJ consequently led to the formation of Anjuman-e-Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (ASSP) in 1985 by Deobandi Ulema which was later renamed as Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP).<sup>31</sup> To comprehend roots of sectarian violence in Balochistan, it is significant to sketch the effects of international and national forces at the local level.

Some of the sectarian incidents in rural Punjab were said to be engineered by TNFJ with the active support of the Iranian government. It is said that

Iran's' radicals were keen on promoting Islamic militancy; revolution gave a new sense of identity to Pakistan's Shia community ....Iran provided funds to Pakistani Shias... paid for many young clerics, mostly from Pashtun tribal areas of Gilgit and Baltistan'.<sup>32</sup>

After Iran there were other regional players having their share in accelerating sectarianism in the country. Saudi Arab and some Gulf states supported and funded Sunni organizations to contain the Iranian influence. These countries provided enormous funds for building and running of *madarsas* in rural Pakistan. Later the students of these *madarsas* took part in war against Russian occupation of Afghanistan. These *madarsas* were eventually converted into breeding grounds for US sponsored war against USSR in Afghanistan. Both Saudi Arab and Iran remained the main financiers of various Sunni and Shia organizations and the *madarsas* run by them. The curriculum of these madarsa are also believed to be one of the main causes of sectarianism in the country.<sup>33</sup> The role of *madarsas* in providing education to underprivileged in the country can never be undermined especially in far flung rural areas, but the way these institutions proliferated during Zia period is no less critical. According to one source some 1151 new *madarsas* were

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<sup>31</sup> Saroosh Irfani, *op.cit.*, p.158.

<sup>32</sup> Fre'de' Grare ric, 'The Evolution of Sectarian Conflicts in Pakistan and the Ever-Changing Face of Islamic Violence', *South Asia*, Journal of South Asian Studies, April 2007, XXX, p.130,

<sup>33</sup> Suba Chandran, 'Sectarian Violence in Pakistan', *ACDIS*, Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies Journal, New Delhi, 2007.

established and registered during 1979-88 in the country.<sup>34</sup> These *madarasa* also served many purposes for the then regime. They played role in domestic politics by creating different outfits of different sects in the country. Further to achieve their objectives they mobilized public opinion and produced literature based on philosophy of hatred and intolerance for those who differ or were different.

Various *Madrassas*, especially in Punjab and Karachi, accentuated existing sectarian cleavage. Each Sunni schism (Deobandi, Brelvi, and Wahabi) and Shias ran their own *Madrassas* for providing basic education. The curriculum was decided by the *Madaris*. As a result, when sectarian fault lines got pronounced, a hate campaign was introduced vis-à-vis the other sect.<sup>35</sup>

According to the findings of an empirical study, sectarian activities in areas of greater *madarsas* density per population was found to be higher including incidents of violence on sectarian basis.<sup>36</sup>

The other major cause or contributing factor for rise of sectarianism in Pakistan was Afghan War of 1980s against the Russian occupation. Pakistan no doubt was made nursery or breeding ground for Afghan *mujahideen* who were fighting with Russian forces at the behest of United States. It is believed that thousands of Afghan *mujahideen* and militants from all over the world were trained to fight with Russian forces in Afghanistan. All these militants were sponsored, financed and supervised by American CIA in coordination with Pakistani agencies.<sup>37</sup>

The exploitation of Islamic fundamentalists by the United States to halt Russian aggression in Afghanistan had far reaching impact not only for regional security but for the security of the entire globe. Process of training and sending the *mujahid* continued till the Russian retreat from Afghanistan. As per one estimate at least 85000 Afghan *mujahideen* were trained to take part in guerilla war against Russian forces and this big number of highly trained and motivated people was left without any assignment after the withdrawal of Russian forces from the region when the financial support from CIA was also withdrawn.<sup>38</sup> Most of them returned to Pakistan and continued their mission to fight in

<sup>34</sup> Fre´de´ Grare ric, *op.cit.*, p.133.

<sup>35</sup> Suba Chandran, *op.cit.*

<sup>36</sup> H. Saleem Ali, 'Pakistani Madarsas and Rural Underdevelopment', in Malik Jamal's (ed) *Madarsas in South Asia Teaching Terror*, Routledge, 2008, p.98.

<sup>37</sup> Amir Mir, *The true face of Jihadis* (Lahore: Mashal publishers), 2004, p.19.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

Kashmir. The active fighting between them and Indian Army continued till India and Pakistan reached a point of reconciliation through confidence building measures. Indian government urged Islamabad to stop cross border infiltration. Since then these forces adopted another role; to execute missions within the country in the form of sectarian clashes.

Pakistan had to pay a heavy price for siding with US sponsored Afghan *mujahideen* that eventually resulted in internal unrest, disharmony and lawlessness. Increasing incidents of sectarian violence is another reflection of the presence of this militant element in the country. Balochistan due to its geographical proximity had to suffer more because of political turmoil in neighboring Afghanistan which ultimately took many forms and shapes.

### **Sectarian clashes in Balochistan: from past to present**

Balochistan has seen sectarian clashes since long. The violence of sectarian nature in Balochistan started in early 1980's. The rate of sectarian violence in Balochistan has increased tremendously in recent years. The suicide blast on Ashura procession killed number of Shia Muslims in the year 2003. The attack on Imam Bargah in Quetta during Friday prayer killed many Shia Muslims; the attack on recruits van on Sariab road Quetta killed many young Shia boys, these are just few examples to mention. Since 2003 the nature of sectarian violence turns down to targeting influential personalities of the particular sect. Many scholars, doctors, teachers and political personalities have been killed since 2003.

As part of the ongoing target killings in the troubled province which though said to be associated with political motives have acquired an ethnic and sectarian expression at the same time. According to Balochistan police records, there were 256 incidents of target killings in Balochistan in 2009 that killed 200 people and injured 387. In 2010, 231 incidents were reported that killed 255 and injured 498. In the first three months of 2011, at least 39 incidents have occurred, which killed 38 and injured sixty six people.<sup>39</sup>

Balochistan which was still striving to attain its political rights provided in the constitution of the country was made the battle ground of another war. The first major outbreak of Shia-Sunni clash was witnessed in July 1985 which eventually turned into Hazara-police clash, claimed many lives and curfew had to be imposed in Quetta. As compared to Pashtun society, Baloch society has always been moderate and liberal in respect of religion. However, radicalism had made inroads, particularly

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<sup>39</sup> Daily Express Tribune, 24 April 2011.

in ethnic groups. Before the revolution in Iran, there were very rare cases of inter-sect conversion. Even open preaching for the respective sect was not observed. After the revolution in Iran, many scholars and members of TNFJ and ISO were sent to Iran where they were given training and guidance for propagation of Shiaism. There were reports of Sunni Balochs becoming Shias. The conversion rate (from Sunni to Shias) was found to be higher in District Naseerabad as compared to any other cities of Balochistan. To counter this, platform of Sipah Sahaba was used by religious scholars of Sunni sect.<sup>40</sup>

Apart from Quetta, few other cities of Balochistan are also significant in terms of *jihadi* activities. Youth were trained under the supervision of Taliban and many dead bodies were brought into Balochistan from Afghanistan during war against terror in Afghanistan. The connections between *jihadi* outfits are very obvious; they support each others' cause in one or the other way. The violence of sectarian nature in Balochistan has increased after year 2002, which is notable because of commencement of war on terror in Afghanistan. After the pressure from US and Allied forces mounted on Taliban they started fleeing to Quetta via Qandhar and Spin Buldok. The ideal choice for them was Quetta, Chaman and other small towns close to border areas. A major sectarian attack was on Ashura procession in 2003, in which a suicide bomber blew him in the middle of a procession. The nature of attack was very similar to attacks on US forces in Afghanistan. The unrest in Balochistan can easily be linked with the changes taking place in the region. Many scholars from Balochistan believe that the geographical and strategic location of this province is one of the potential cause of most of its problems. Munir Ahmad Marri is very clear in his view that the decreasing natural resources and their increasing demand throughout the world, and the presence of vast deposits of these resources in Balochistan had always invited external aggression towards Balochistan.<sup>41</sup> The province which occupies more than 43% of total land mass of the country is bestowed with boundless natural resources including, natural gas, numerous minerals, precious stones, iron, copper, uranium, chromites, barites, marble, oil and coal.<sup>42</sup>

### **Genocide of Hazara community: Is history being repeated?**

A large number of targeted Shias belonged to Hazara Shia community

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<sup>40</sup> Undelying causes of sectarian violence's CDP report.

<sup>41</sup> Munir Ahmad Marri, *Balochistan Siyasi Kashmakash, Muzmeraati aur Rujhanat* (Quetta: Gosh-e-Adab 1989), p.79.

<sup>42</sup> Syed Abdul Quddus, *op.cit.*, p.161.

living in the province peacefully since decades. Majority of Hazaras live in east and west of Quetta city. The community can be bifurcated into two visible lines: those who have been living in Quetta city for generations while another group of Hazaras migrated from Afghanistan after Russian intervention in Afghanistan. Leaders from Hazara community often blame Iranian and Saudi Arabia's involvement in fueling sectarianism in Pakistan. These leaders complain that members of their community now faced serious discrimination in access to jobs and even in the amount of bribe Hazara traders were asked to pay at the Pak-Afghan border.<sup>43</sup>

According to new report since September 2010, 395 people have been killed in 40 incidents of sectarian violence. Over a 100 people have been killed in Quetta alone, and 216 have been injured in the provincial capital and Khuzdar. Four days after the massacre of 26 Hazaras in Mastung, three Hazara Shias were shot dead while en route to Sibi. The community was targeted again barely two weeks later on October 4, when a bus carrying 20 passengers was targeted by gunmen near Quetta. Twelve Hazara Shias were killed in the incident.<sup>44</sup>

Although the recent wave of target killings of people of Shia community include all ethnic groups. But numerically speaking the biggest sufferer is Hazara Shia community of Balochistan. Most of the Hazara families have shifted their male members and businesses to other parts of the country in search of safe heavens while a large number of them are leaving Pakistan legally or otherwise as they want to secure their lives. This is the third genocide of the same community with in a short span of 120 years.

In an era when most of the world's long standing issues have been resolved through political and diplomatic means, like the end of apartheid in South Africa, the reunification of East and West Germany and many more, the poor communities of Hazaras have become the victim of literal genocide for the third time. At first they were made target during the reign of Amir Abdul Rahman in Afghanistan and started migrating to (then) India in around 1880s. Vartan Gregorian in *Emergence of Modern Afghanistan* mentions their plight during the period of Amir Abdul Rahman and says that due to political turmoil, social discrimination and economic deprivation they were facing, Hazaras had to quit their traditional homeland in central Afghanistan and

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<sup>43</sup> *Balochistan Blinkered Slide into Chaos*, Report of the HRCP fact-finding mission.

<sup>44</sup> Imtiaz Saba, *Poisoned Minds; Fueling the Massacre of Shias in Pakistan*, Research conducted at Jinnah Institute.



some of them moved to Quetta in Balochistan. Former Governor Balochistan General Musa, who also belonged to the Hazara community, explained in his autobiography *From Jawan to General* how his father migrated to India in 1890 due to tyrannical policies of Amir Abdul Rahman towards Hazara tribes.<sup>45</sup> The Pashtun king killed 62% of the Hazara population and forced the rest to quit Afghanistan. The second time the same community became the target of discrimination and genocide in Afghanistan was under the rule of Taliban who considered Hazaras as their worst enemies because Hazaras always opposed their political domination in the country.<sup>46</sup> During this period they had to face the worst kind of economic and social discrimination at the hands of ruling Taliban. The political tilt of Hazaras towards Northern Alliance is due to sectarian reasons and affinity.

### **Mashroom growth of religious/ militant/ jihadi organizations in Pakistan**

During and after the Zia regime the militant outfits of religious fanatics organized offices in every nook and corner of the country. They used to collect money from different sources from within and outside the country. Religious outfits like Jaishe Muhammad, Lashkare Jhangvi, Sipah Sahaba and many more had been held responsible, and many times they themselves have accepted responsibility for sectarian unease within Pakistan. Followig tables reflect the expansion of various religious/ militant/ jihadi organizations in Pakistan till 2006.

**Table 1: Network of jihadi organizations at provincial level**

<i>Provincial Office of Jihadi Organizations</i>							
S.No.	Name of Organization	Punjab	KPK	Sindh	Balochistan	Islamabad	Total
1	Hizbul Mujahideen	1	1	1	1	1	5
2	Jaishe Mohammad	1	1	1	1	1	5
3	Al Badar Mujahideen	1	1	1	1	1	5
4	Jama'atul Dawa (Lashkare Taiba)	1	1	1	1	-	4
5	Harkatul Mujahideen	1	1	1	1	1	5
6	Tehreekul Mujahideen	1	1	1	1	1	5
7	Harkatul Jihad-e-Islami (Harkatul Ansar)	1	1	1	1	1	5
8	Sunni Jihad Council	1	-	1	-	-	2
9	Tehreek Jihad	1	-	1	-	-	2

<sup>45</sup> Seemi Naghmana Tahir, *Balochistan Mein Iblagh-e-Amma*, (Islamabad: National language Authority 2006), p.93.

<sup>46</sup> Clements Frank, *Conflict in Afghanistan: a historical encyclopedia*, ABC-CLIO. Santa Barbra 2003, p.106.

	<b>Total</b>	09	07	09	07	06	38
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Source: Mohammad Amir Rana, *A to Z of Jehadi Organization in Pakistan*, Mashal Books, 2006, p.579.

**Table 2: Organization created on the basis of sect**

S.No.	Organization	Punjab	KPK	Sindh	Balochistan	Islamabad	Total
1	Markazi Jamiat Ahle Hadess	1	1	1	-	1	4
2	Jamiat-e-Ghurba-e-Ahle Hadees	1	-	1	-	-	2
3	Tehreek-e-Jafferia (Defunct)	1	1	1	1	-	4
4	Sipah Sahaba (Defunct)	1	1	1	1	-	4
5	Jama'at Ahle Sunnat	1	1	1	1	1	5
6	Ahle Hadess Youth Force	1	1	1	1	-	4
	<b>Total</b>	6	5	6	4	2	23

Source: Mohammad Amir Rana, p.582.

**Table 3: Parties, organizations and groups involved in sectarian strife in Pakistan**

S.No.	Deobandi	Shia	Barelvi	Ahle Hadees
1	Sipah-e- Sahaba	Tehreek-e-Jafferia	Sunni Tehreek	Ahl-e- Hadees Youth Force
2	Lashkare Jhangvi (R)	Fiqah Jafferia (Mauswi)	Saiful Mujahideen	Shaban-e-Ahle Hadees
3	Lashkare Jhangvi (Qari Group)	Sipah Mohammad	Lashkar-e-Ahle Sunnat	-
4	Jhangvi Tigers	Imamia Student Organization	Hizb-e-Azeemat	-
5	Al Haq Tigers	Hizbullah Tigers	Sunni Yakjehti Forum	-
6	Al Badr Federation	Pasban-e-Islam	-	-
7	Al Farooq	Mukhtar Force	-	-
8	Allah-O- Akbar	Anjuman-e-Lashkar Hanafia	-	-
9	Sipah-e- Sahaba Stduents	Janisar Ahle Bait	-	-
10	Tanzeemul Haq	Al-Askari League	-	-
11	Tehreek Difai Sahaba	Sipah Abbas	-	-
12	Naujawan-e-Tauheed Ahle Sunnat	Zarb-e-Hyder	-	-
13	Jamiat Muhiban-e- Sahaba	Lashkar-e- Ali	-	-
14	Idara Tahafuz-e-Namoos-e-Sahaba	Tanzeem Imamia	-	-
15	-	Hussaini Tigers	-	-
16	-	Al-Abbas Force	-	-
17	-	Al- Mujahid	-	-
	<b>Total</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Total</b>
	14	17	05	02

Source: Mohammad Amir Rana, p.584.

**Tabel 4: Sectarian violences in Pakistan from year 1990 to 2002.**

Year	Punjab	Sindh	NWFP	Balochistan	Islamabad
1990	159	39	23	3	1
1991	110	35	12	1	
1992	39	42	19		
1993	34	21	19	4	1
1994	88	39	17		
1995	34	18	5	2	
1996	23	12	7	1	
1997	23	14		2	5
1998	47	10	18		
1999	21	16	8		
2000	11	10	3		
2001	18	10	5	3	
2002	3		7		

*Source:* Rana Amir Mohammad, p.587.

The table states that 16 people were killed between 1990 and 2002 in sectarian clashes in Balochistan. But when it comes to 2003 and onwards the statistics varies by a large number. Important and notable point is the occurrences of these attacks in Quetta city.

The data collected through questionnaire is tabulated in the form of frequency distribution. Total frequencies and percentage of each response was interpreted. The survey results are presented in following table:

**Table 5: Survey results**

Intellectuals (43)	Religious Scholars (43)	University Teachers (43)	Lawyers (43)	Doctors (43)	Journalists (43)	University Level Students (43)
1. Sectarian clash is a religious phenomenon						
YES = 105 = 35%		NO = 126 = 42%		DON'T KNOW = 70 = 23%		TOTAL = 301 = 100%

2. Sectarian clash is a political phenomenon			
YES = 118 = 39%	NO = 112 = 37 %	DON'T KNOW = 71 = 24%	TOTAL = 301 = 100%
3. Ethnicity is the principle cause of sectarian rift			
YES = 92 = 30%	NO = 174 = 58%	DON'T KNOW = 35 = 12%	TOTAL = 301 = 100%
4. The range of religious sensitivity exists in large scale in Pakistan			
YES = 115 = 38%	NO = 117 = 39%	DON'T KNOW = 69 = 23%	TOTAL = 301 = 100%
5. The incident of sectarian clash in Balochistan overwhelming reflects as indigenous issue			
YES = 57 = 19%	NO = 226 = 76%	DON'T KNOW = 18 = 05%	TOTAL = 301 = 100%
6. The political factors from Sunni and Shia sects are chiefly responsible for the incidents of clash in Balochistan for last 15 years			
YES = 168 = 56%	NO = 96 = 32%	DON'T KNOW = 37 = 12%	TOTAL = 301 = 100%
7. Zia's Islamization regime further aggravated the sectarian fault lines in Pakistan			
YES = 167 = 55%	NO = 99 = 33%	DON'T KNOW = 35 = 12%	TOTAL = 301 = 100%
8. Have you ever been affected by the sectarian prejudices			
YES = 131 = 43%	NO = 144 = 48%	DON'T KNOW = 26 = 9%	TOTAL = 301 = 100%
9. Are you content with the media coverage of sectarian clashes?			
YES = 193 = 64%	NO = 77 = 26%	DON'T KNOW = 31 = 10%	TOTAL = 301 = 100%
10. Do you hold media responsible for augmenting sectarian rift in Balochistan			
YES = 109 = 36%	NO = 150 = 50%	DON'T KNOW = 42 = 14%	TOTAL = 301 = 100%
11. To your part of wisdom is it possible for media to bridge the sects?			
YES = 192 = 64%	NO = 78 = 26%	DON'T KNOW = 31 = 10%	TOTAL = 301 = 100%
12. Do you believe on any foreign engagement on behest of sectarian clash in Pakistan			
YES = 255 = 85%	NO = 29 = 09%	DON'T KNOW = 17 = 06%	TOTAL = 301 = 100%
13. Is liberalism is the panacea for the religious conflict			
YES = 150 = 50%	NO = 124 = 41%	DON'T KNOW = 27 = 09 %	TOTAL = 301 = 100%
14. Do you presume that some sections of the clash happen due to religious media?			
YES = 123 = 41%	NO = 159 = 53%	DON'T KNOW = 19 = 06%	TOTAL = 301 = 100%
15. Do you anticipate religious harmony in near future			
YES = 216 = 72%	NO = 71 = 23 %	DON'T KNOW = 14 = 05 %	TOTAL = 301 = 100%

### Sectarian clashes and public perception

An important angle to understand the different dimensions of the issue of sectarianism in Balochistan is to access cross section of society and seek the opinion of people on it. For this purpose a survey was conducted to collect opinion of different sections of society against fifteen basic but related questions. The result of the survey indicates that

- At least less than half 42% people believe that sectarianism is not a religious phenomena, where as 35% consider its a religious phenomena, while 23% have no idea whether it is religious or not.

- A thin majority of 39% respondents believe that sectarianism is a political phenomena, while 37% believe that it is not a political phenomena, further 24% have no clear idea whether it is political or not.
- Answering the question whether ethnicity is the principal cause of sectarianism only 30% responded in affirmative while a clear majority of respondents 52% say ethnicity is not the principal cause of sectarianism and only 12% say they do not know.
- To a question whether range of religious sensitivity exists in large scale in Pakistan 38% say yes it exists a close 39% believe it does not, while 23% say they do not know.
- Whether the incidents of sectarian clash in Balochistan reflect is an indigenous issue, only 19% agreed to this statement while a vast majority 76% denied it as an indigenous issue only 5% says they do not know.
- Whether political factors from both the sects are chiefly responsible for these clashes in Balochistan, 56% believe that yes these are while 32% disagree with this statement and 12% had no idea.
- Whether Zia's Islamization further aggravated the sectarian faultline in the country a majority of 55% people agreed 33% disagreed and 12% had no idea.
- On a question whether the respondent has ever been affected by sectarian prejudices 43% responded in affirmative 48% in negative and 26% did not express anything.
- On a question about the media coverage of sectarian issues, 64% expressed that they are content with coverage of sectarian issues on media, 26% are not content while 14% did not express any opinion.
- On a question on, whether media be hold responsible for augmenting the sectarian rift in Balochistan, only 36% agreed to this perception while 50% responded disagreed with this perception and 14% did not give any opinion.
- On a question whether media can bridge the two sects, a majority of 64% respondents showed their optimism on role of media while 26% think media can not bridge the gap between the two sects, 10% did not know.
- On a very critical question whether there any foreign hand involved or engaged in sectarian clashes in Pakistan a vast majority i.e. 85% believe that it is, only a thin 9% did not agree while a mere 9% say they do not know.

- In the last question whether they anticipate religious harmony in near future, a 72% respondents reflected their optimism while 23% said they do not see it in near future only 05% said they do not know.

### Content analysis

A method of content analysis was used for the comparison of three Urdu daily newspapers.

Daily *Jang*, Quetta, the largest circulating newspaper of the province that is likely to have the greatest potential to influence public opinion but at the same time being part of the biggest newspaper group of the country is often blamed for ignoring local issues.

Daily *Mashriq* Quetta, remained the second largest circulating daily of the province for about 24 years under the government ownership and control, but since 1996 is privately owned and coming out as a local newspaper and thus is more likely to voice local concerns strongly.

Daily *Bakhabar* Quetta, Urdu daily under local ownership and thus is believed to give more coverage to the local issues than the above two news papers.<sup>47</sup>

**Table 6: Content analysis of selected newspapers**

Samples and Operational Definitions of Units of Analysis

Topic	Universe	Sample	Unit of Analysis
News items of sectarian clash and related news, editorials and columns on editorial page of selected newspapers.	All news of sectarian clash and related to sectarian issue on front page of selected newspapers (Daily <i>Jang</i> Quetta, Daily <i>Mashriq</i> Quetta and Daily <i>Bakhabar</i> Quetta) and editorial page of selected newspapers.	All news on front page of selected newspapers from 2003 to 2006 and editorials and columns on editorial page of selected newspapers from 2003 to 2006.	Every news related to sectarian clashes, editorials and columns on editorial page of selected newspapers.

**Table 7: Categorization of news item**

News related to sectarian clash is further categorized into following categories

Carnage News	Arrest News	Injured News	News Related to Government stance on Sectarian Clash	News Given by Shia Representatives	News Given By Sunni Representatives	Other

*Daily Jang News Coverage on Sectarian Clashes 2003 to 2006*

<sup>47</sup>

According to data provided by The Directorate of Public Relations Government of Balochistan, 15 June 2003.

**Tabel 8: Front page and editorial page**

S/No	No of News Items	Photographs	Editorials	Columns
2003	63	21	01	01
2004	44	23	01	03
2005	05	05	-	-
2006	05	-	-	-
Total	117	49	02	04

**Tabel 9: Categorization of sectarian clash news item published in Daily Jang Quetta2003-06**

	Carnage News	Arrest News	Injured News	News Related to Government stance on Sectarian Clash	News Given by Shia Representatives	News Given By Sunni Representatives	Other
2003	7	14	12	14	5	8	3
2004	5	9	8	9	8	3	2
2005	2	-	-	1	2	-	-
2006	3	-	-	-	2	-	-
Total	17	23	20	24	17	11	5

Daily *Mashriq* News Coverage on Sectarian Clashes 2003 to 2006.

**Tabel 10: Front page and editorial page**

S/No	No of News Items	Photographs	Editorials	Columns
2003	142	29	13	11
2004	19	24	02	04
2005	37	07	-	02
2006	06	03	-	01
Total	204	63	15	

**Tabel 11: Categorization of sectarian clash news item published in Daily Mashriq Quetta203-06**

Year	Carnage News	Arrest News	Injured News	News Related to Government stance on Sectarian Clash	News Given by Shia Representatives	News Given By Sunni Representatives	Others
2003	16	42	20	28	23	7	6
2004	5	4	3	3	4	-	-
2005	5	9	2	5	9	4	3
2006	4	-	-	-	2	-	-
Total	30	55	25	36	38	11	9

Daily *Bakhabar* News Coverage on Sectarian Clashes 2003 to 2006.

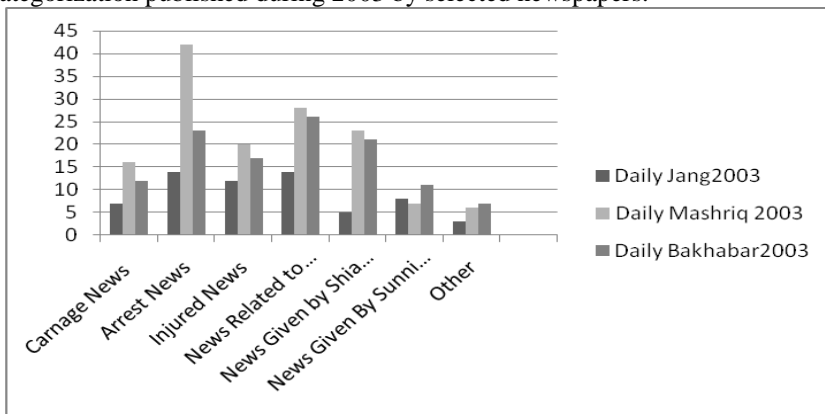
**Tabel 12: Front page and editorial page**

S/No	No of News Items	Photographs	Editorials	Columns
2003	117	97	11	6
2004	24	21	05	-
2005	02	-	-	-
2006	12	03	-	-
Total	155	121	16	6

**Categorization of sectarian clash news item published in Daily Bakhbar Quetta2003-2006**

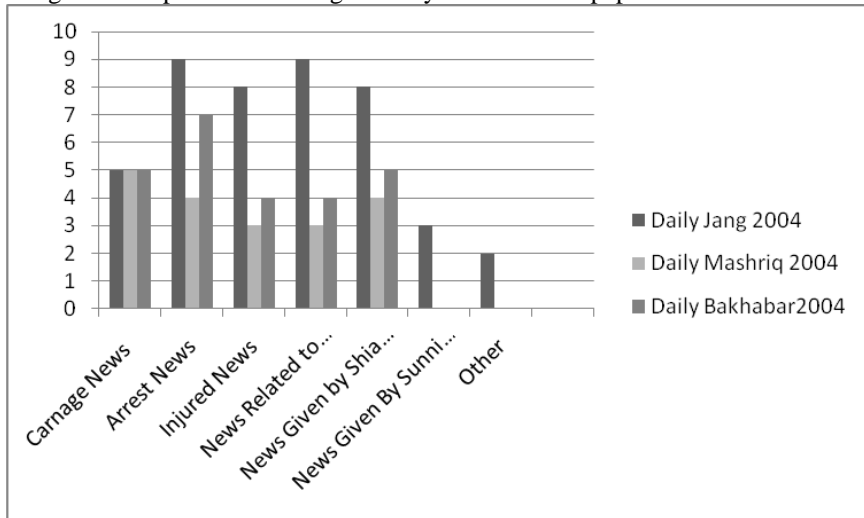
Year	Carnage News	Arrest News	Injured News	News Related to Government stance on Sectarian Clash	News Given by Shia Representatives	News Given by Sunni Representatives	Other
2003	12	23	17	26	21	11	7
2004	5	7	4	4	5	-	-
2005	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
2006	4	1	2	1	3	-	-
Total	23	31	23	31	29	11	7

The following chart is a graphical representation of sectarian clash news items categorization published during 2003 by selected newspapers.

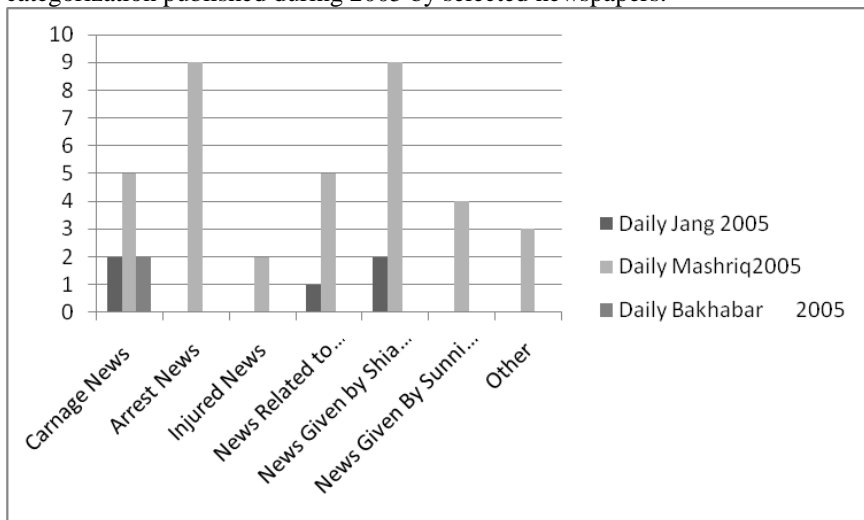




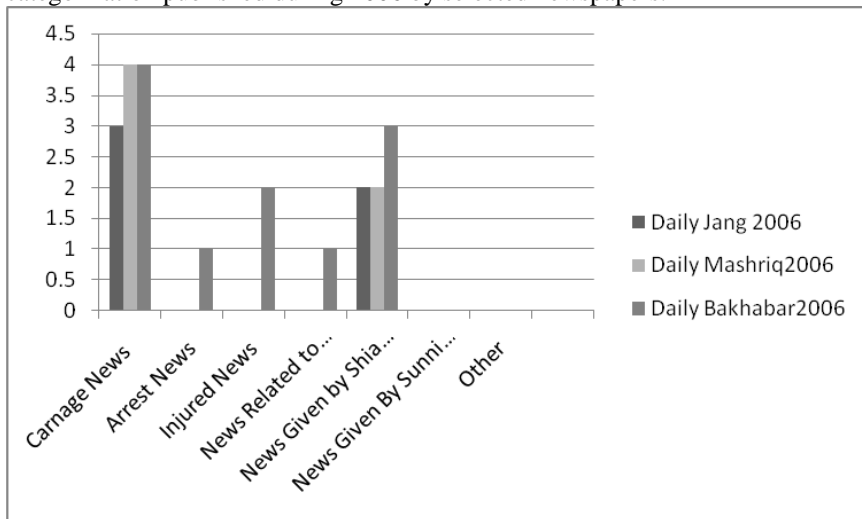
The following chart is a graphical representation of sectarian clash news items categorization published during 2004 by selected newspapers.



The following chart is a graphical representation of sectarian clash news items categorization published during 2005 by selected newspapers.



The following chart is a graphical representation of Sectarian Clash news items categorization published during 2006 by selected newspapers.



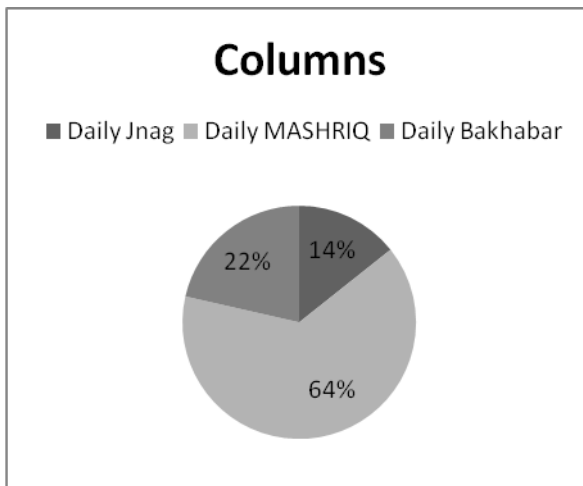
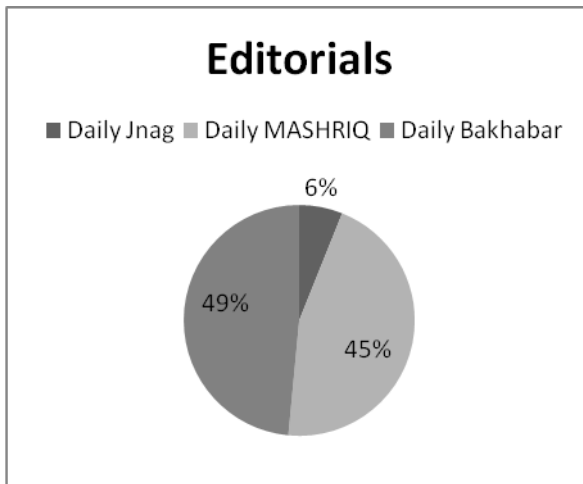
### Content analysis of news reporting

The statistics indicates that the Daily *Mashriq* Quetta gave more coverage to sectarian clashes news than other two newspapers which were selected for content analysis.

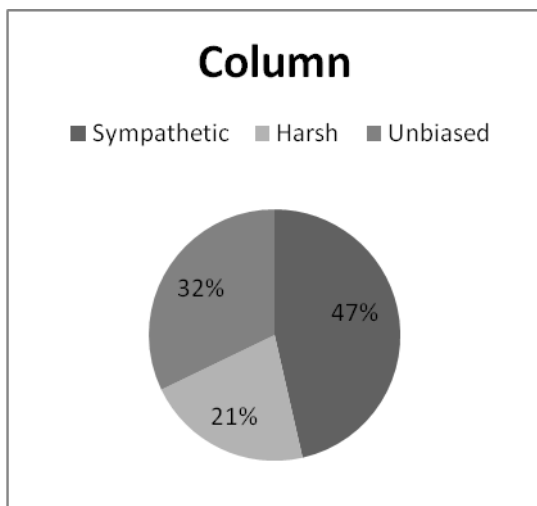
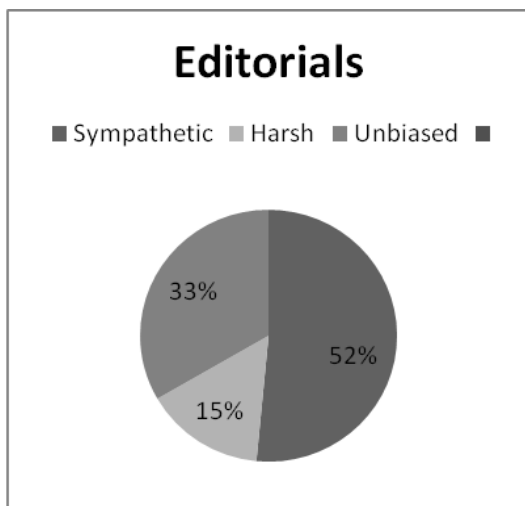
From incident to statements every aspect was covered carefully keeping in view importance of selection of words to selection of photos. Daily *Bakhbar* Quetta is also a local newspaper, but when it comes to the coverage of sectarian clashes daily *Bakhbar* gave less coverage than daily *Mashriq* but more coverage than daily *Jang*. Daily *Jang* though more popular and established newspaper than the other two but it gave less coverage to the news of sectarian violence, which verifies the general opinion that being part of Karachi based largest newspaper conglomerate, the paper is less sensitive about local issues and sets priorities according to its business interest.

### Content analysis of editorial pages

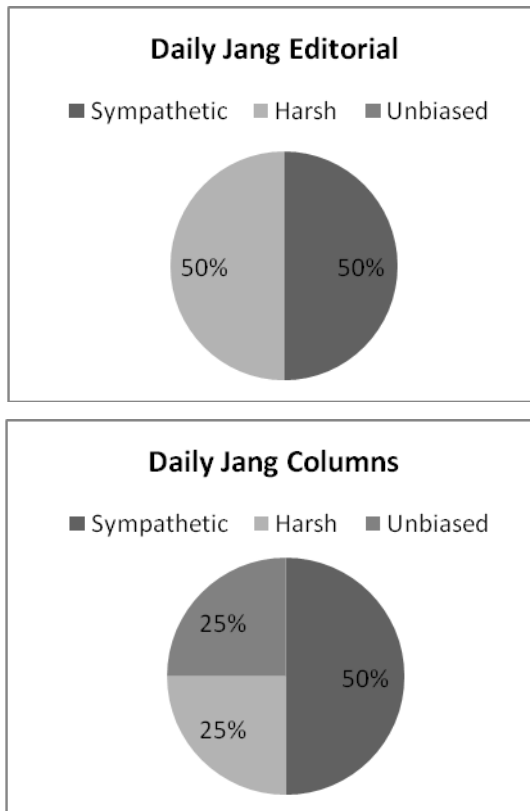
The results of content analysis of editorial pages of all three selected newspapers indicate that Daily *Jang*, Daily *Mashriq* and Daily *Bakhbar* tried to remain unbiased and avoid siding with any of the religious sect especially when sectarian issues were on the peak. They tried to calm down the issue and presented opinion with caution. The tone of the editorials remained sympathetic rather than critical. All three newspapers avoid sensationalized presentation of views.



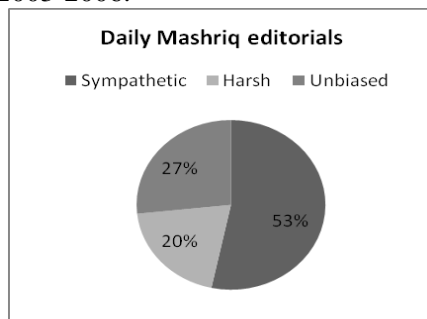
Total of 33 editorials were published during 2003-2006 by selected newspapers out of which 17 (52%) editorials were sympathetic, 5(15%) harsh and 11(33%) were published as unbiased. When it comes to columns on editorial page, 28 columns were published during 2003-2006, columns published as sympathetic were 17(47%), while harsh columns were 6(21%) and columns published as unbiased on editorial page were 9(32%).

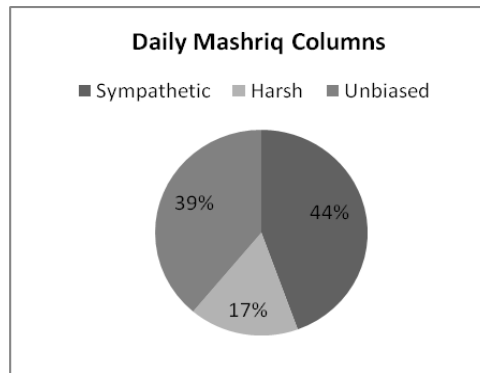


Editorials published by Daily *Jang* Quetta during 2003-2006 regarding sectarian clashes in Balochistan were 50% sympathetic, while 50% were harsh. Daily *Jang* Quetta has published 50% sympathetic columns, 25% columns were harsh, while 25% columns were unbiased.

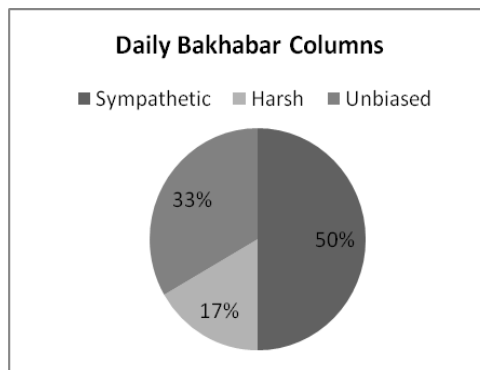
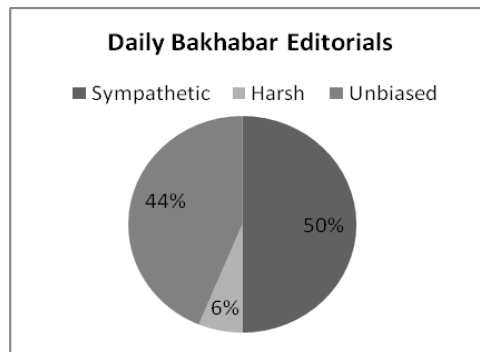


Editorials published by Daily *Mashriq* Quetta during 2003-2006 regarding sectarian clash in Balochistan were 53% sympathetic, 20% were harsh and 27% editorials published by Daily *Mashriq* were unbiased. Daily *Mashriq* Quetta has published 44% sympathetic columns, 17% columns were harsh, while 39% columns were unbiased published during 2003-2006.





Editorials published by Daily *Bakhabar* Quetta during 2003-2006 regarding sectarian clash in Balochistan were 50% sympathetic, 6% were harsh and 44% editorials published by Daily *Bakhabar* were unbiased. Daily *Bakhabar* Quetta has published 50% sympathetic columns; 17% columns were harsh, while 33% columns were unbiased during 2003-2006.



### **Findings & conclusion**

The purpose of the study was to study the issues related to increasing sectarian clashes in Balochistan with special reference to role and capacity of print media in addressing this issue. For this purpose the content analysis of three leading Urdu dailies for four consecutive years 2003-2006 was completed. Further to obtain the public perception regarding these clashes a survey was also conducted. Since both the techniques of data collection were employed having different objectives in mind, therefore, it is difficult to analyze the convergence and divergence effects of both the results. There are some points where the result of both complement each other and at certain points results of both sources contradict each other. For example 64% people are found contend with the coverage of sectarian issues on print media but the result of content analysis reflect that this issue occupied print media space only when any act of violence took place otherwise print media remains silent and indifferent. Similarly a vast majority of respondents believe that media can bridge the gap between the two sects and 50% of them believe that some clashes took place due to presence of religious media. The content analysis of the newspapers does not indicate any effort to bridge the differences on part of the newspapers. The other findings of the study on the basis of data analysis and interpretation suggest that sectarian clash is more a political phenomenon than religious. Data showed that 39% of the respondents believe that sectarian clash is political issue while 35% think that it is a religious issue and ethnicity is not a major cause of sectarian clash. The data also reveals that sectarian sensitivity exists throughout Pakistan. A great number of respondents (76%) believe that sectarian issue is not an indigenous issue, while 19% people think that it is a local issue. It has also been found that majority of people (56%) believe that sectarian clashes happen due to the political forces which support either of the sects. Most of the respondents hold Zia regime responsible for increase in sectarian violence in Pakistan. The data showed that 43% people were affected by sectarian prejudices in one or in other way.

Regarding coverage of these clashes on print media, 64% people are satisfied with media coverage on sectarian clashes. However 36% people think that media is not responsibly augmenting sectarian issue. People believe that media can play a vital role by bridging the communication gap between the people of both sects however a large number of respondents (85%) think that foreign hand is involved in sectarian rift in Pakistan. The study reveals that 72% people anticipate religious harmony in future.

The intensity of conflict is also proportional to lawlessness and absence of dialogue among the people of different sects. Reducing lawlessness can help in reducing conflict but to root out the problem there is a need to address the prevalent hatred among both sects for each other. Dialogue can play the foremost role in minimizing the sectarian conflict in any country including Pakistan. Unlike most of the Muslim countries Pakistan has a vibrant, and dynamic and most free media within the Muslim world it can harmony, between the different seats which is a dire need of the time. It appears that the sectarian split in Pakistan cannot be detached without practicing a policy of practical pragmatism. A policy of passive coexistence and settlement is vital so as to manage, if not resolve, sectarian conflicts in Pakistan. The repeated violence on sectarian grounds in Balochistan is closely linked with its geography, ethnicity, polity and most of all its tribal background vis-à-vis level of socio-economic development. In a region with only 28% literacy, print media has a limited role to play in conflict management and resolution. Similarly the two leading daily newspapers daily *Jang* and *Mashriq* had also faced a lot of pressure and violence from various political and religious forces for better coverage, in the past also. During Baloch and Pashtun conflicts for political and numerical domination in mid seventies both the newspapers adopted a policy of equal coverage.<sup>48</sup> This careful option was later confronted by both the ethnic forces on the pretext that newspapers by giving equal coverage to them are trying to give their own verdict on the issue. The role of print media will remain limited unless the overall socio-economic level is improved. Commencement of FM Radio, however, can be seen as an alternative source if it is allowed to operate as community radio which also requires political will and a shift in policies to resolve the various issues Balochistan is confronting today including religious extremism, political discontentment and sectarian violence.

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<sup>48</sup> Seemi Naghmana Tahir, *op.cit.*, p.359.