

# **The Rise of Political Awareness and Institutional Development in Balochistan in British Era**

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## **Abstract**

The awakening of political consciousness in Balochistan came much later as compared to other parts of the subcontinent. This study is primarily focused on the growth of political institutions on account of the rise of political consciousness among natives of Baluchistan. The research method employed is of descriptive and historic. Furthermore, the secondary data has been enumerated to build an argument. The British Indian government was not interested in empowering Balochistan politically due to its vast barren land with a scarcity of population, and security concerns from Russia. Lack of government interest kept this area under developed. Therefore, at the time of partition, Balochistan was the least developed area on all ranks of the development index. This study highlights the causes of political development in Balochistan and its implications at the time of partition.

**Keywords:** Jirga System, Reforms, Baloch Sardars, Levies

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## **Introduction**

Balochistan has been governed under the rule of several invaders in collaboration with local sardars. However, due to internal rifts local sardars eventually lost control over their territory. Balochistan's fragile internal law and order practices alarmed external security concerns for the British government hence they stepped in and gradually took control of local administration. The British government managed Balochistan's local affairs through tribal sardars instead of exercising direct control. Sir Robert Sandeman was the first Agent of Governor General (AGG) of India in Balochistan. His job was to ensure peace in the area, to guarantee cooperation of Baloch sardars for the British government.<sup>1</sup> Decision-making powers were practically exercised by the British

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<sup>1</sup> Syed Javed Haider, 'The British Advent in Balochistan', *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture*, XXVIII:2 (2007), National Institute of Historical & Cultural Research, Islamabad. Available at [http://nihcr.edu.pk/LatestEnglishJournal/The\\_British\\_Advent.pdf](http://nihcr.edu.pk/LatestEnglishJournal/The_British_Advent.pdf).

government through AGG who was responsible for political matters and developmental projects. Realizing the ground realities, Sandeman did not disturb the tribal culture and administrative settings of Balochistan; he rather decentralized power among sub-tribes. They were allowed to raise their own armies labeled as 'Levies'. The salaries and arms for them were provided by the British. During this period, the rulers of Balochistan allowed to keep the titles of, Sardars, Mir's and Jams. They were paid stipends in return for their loyalty to the British government. British run the sparse areas of Balochistan through local sardars. Hence, they never tried to introduce any political reforms in this area which they introduced in the Central Indian States throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century as well as in the first half of the twentieth century. By the end of 1876, British were the de-facto rulers of Balochistan.<sup>2</sup>

### **Origin of *jirga* and *sardari* system as an executive, legislative and, judicial body**

Tribal Jirga system, considered as an institution to impart fair and speedy justice, was replaced by the British with 'Shahi Jirga'. The annual meetings of Shahi Jirga were held in Sibi and Quetta. Difference between traditional Jirga and the Shahi Jirga was that the members of the former were elected by Baloch sardars, elders and notables of the community who reflected the will of the public. Whereas, for the latter, members were nominated who ratified policies of the British government and were authorized to impose tax on labor and property.

The Institution of Jirga performed dual functions for the tribal society, i.e., executive and judicial. However, at times, *jirga* system failed to reconcile two strong rival tribes or make decisions about succession issues among tribes. Moreover, some tribes also preferred settling their disputes within their own tribal boundaries. While deciding cases Jirga considered tribal customary practices, whether they fit in with European rule of law or not. The Jirga institution never admitted a case for trial in which one party was a British citizen; these cases were tried in British courts only.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Azhar Aslam and Shaista Kazmi, 'Balochistan Problems and Solutions', *Vision 21*, 22 December 2015. Available at: <https://thevision21.wordpress.com/2015/12/22/balochistan-problems-solutions/>; Imtiaz Ali, 'The Balochistan Problem', *Pakistan Horizon*, 58:2 (2005), 41-62. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41394092>; Syed Abdul Quddus, *The Tribal Baluchistan* (Lahore: Ferozsons, 1990).

<sup>3</sup> Nina Swidler, *Remotely Colonial: History and Politics in Balochistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2014).

Mir Ahmad Yar Khan Qambrani Baloch was elected by jirga in the year 1666 since then Khan's were elected by the jirga and this tradition continued till Nasir Khan I who ruled from 1755 to 1795. His version of the sardari system was democratic, as sardars were elected, they were independent in their internal matters like revenue generation and managing the affairs of their areas. Sardars were bound to submit a small amount of revenue in favor of Kalat state, and were also expected to provide workforce in case of war, to Khan of Kalat. Tribes enjoyed internal sovereignty but external sovereignty belonged to Khan of Kalat. The latter was assisted by the council of tribal heads in collective matters. Sandeman system changed this traditional, limited democratic sardari system into a nominated one to protect British government's interest in the area.

British demanded loyalty from sardars and assurance of a friendly environment in their respective areas for the government in Calcutta. Sardars were allowed to run their tribal affairs till there was no potential threat to the British interest. Sardars could continue to rule and nominate their heirs if British government had no objection unlike the previous practice which lasted from 1876 to 1893 under which sardars were elected.

The real goal of the British government was not to look after public interest or well-being rather they were interested in their policy which demanded strong control over this area. Under the treaty of 1876 British government looked after the affairs of defense, foreign affairs and communication of this area. British accepted the authority of Khans in internal matters as long as British interests were secured. Their government concluded treaties of 1854 and 1876 with Khan-e-Kalat to award subsidies of Rs 50,000.00 later Rs100, 000.00 annually as per his assistance. The British government ensured its physical presence in the court of Khan by establishing British Agency in court. Khan under terms of treaty permitted the British government to lay down rail roads, telegraphic houses, and carry out trade through Khan's territory.<sup>4</sup>

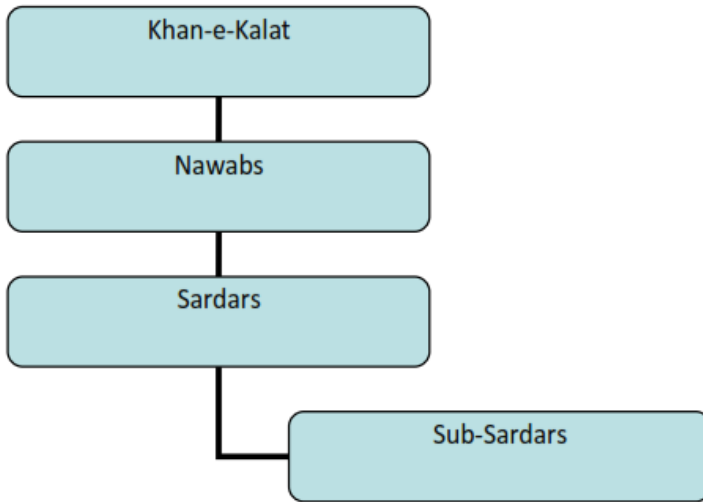
Another treaty was signed in 1883 under which the government of Britain had to award allowances, benefits, and privileges in return for loyalty of sardars. Other than that, the British government also allotted seats in different administrative departments to sardar's nominated men, like railways and district administration post. Sardars of Balochistan

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<sup>4</sup> Deedar Hussain Shah Rizvi, 'Socio-Economic Conditions of Balochistan during British Period (1840-1947 A.D)', *Balochistan through History*, edited by Riaz Ahmad (Islamabad: National Institute of Pakistan Studies, Quaid-i-Azam University, 2008), 31-51.

started looking at Quetta (Sandeman Office) for guidance rather than Kalat, the seat of Khan of Kalat.<sup>5</sup>

**Figure: Khans Tribal Hierarchy in Balochistan**



Source: Mansoor Akbar Kundi, 'Sardari System in Balochistan', *Balochistan through History*, edited by Riaz Ahmad (Islamabad: National Institute of Pakistan Studies, Quaid-I-Azam University, 2008), 22-30.

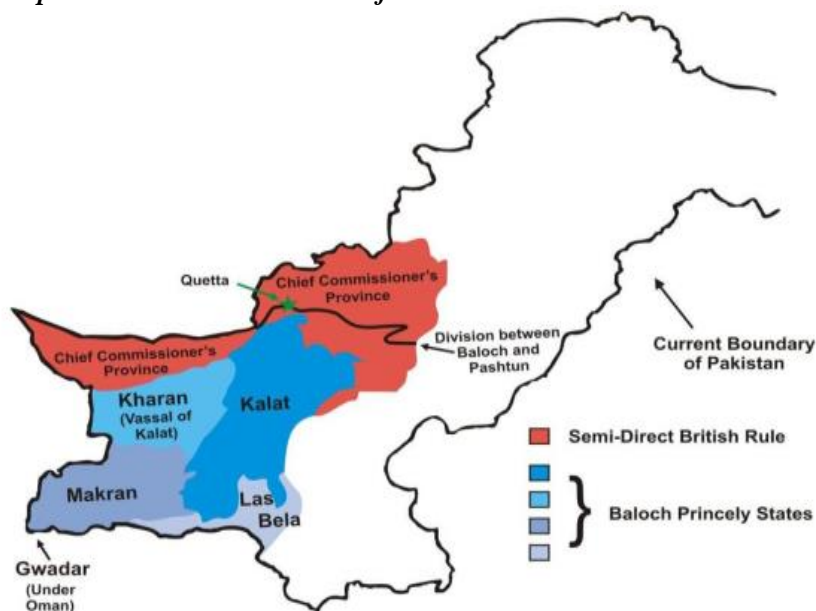
### **British control and division of Balochistan's territory**

British were in war with Afghan Amir since 1878-80, in the year 1887 few areas of Balochistan was declared a British territory.<sup>6</sup> From the above description it was clear that British were legally in Balochistan since 1872, as time passed, they made their presence legal, either by winning territory from Afghan Amir (Sibi, Pishin, Quetta, Harni and Thal Chotila, 1879) or by leasing areas from Khan of Kalat (Bolan Pass, 1883). To run the affairs of Baloch areas more efficiently, the British government divided them into five administrative units.

<sup>5</sup> Mansoor Akbar Kundi, 'Sardari System in Balochistan', *Balochistan through History*, edited by Riaz Ahmad (Islamabad: National Institute of Pakistan Studies, Quaid-I-Azam University, 2008), 22-30.

<sup>6</sup> Azhar Aslam and Shaista Kazmi, *op.cit.*

***Map: Administrative Division of Balochistan under British Rule***



Source: Zoon Ahmed Khan, 'Balochistan: Oscillating in a Chasm', October 2012. <http://spearheadresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Balochistan-Oscillating-in-a-Chasm.pdf>.

By 1905 borders were drawn to demarcate Iranian and Afghan territories from British Indian territory. In addition to this, it reduced powers of Khan of Kalat, British government encouraged Makran and state of Lasbela to emerge as an independent state. Khan's authority was diminished within the boundaries of Kalat state and he lost Kalat's allied territories. Since 1871, till now Baloch have not been able to gain their strength in Balochistan.<sup>7</sup>

- As per Persian-Indian boundary division which was concerned with areas of Sarhad, Western Balochistan and Sestain were given to Iran from Balochistan territory.
- Area of outer Sestain and Rajasthan were awarded to Afghanistan.
- Derajat, Sibi and Jacobabad were added in the territory of British India.
- Lastly the Khanate of Balochistan was recognized as an independent state. Khudadad Khan introduced the practice of auditing of the

<sup>7</sup> Foreign Policy Center, *Balochis of Pakistan: On the Margins of History*, November 2006. Available at <https://fpc.org.uk/publications/balochis-of-pakistan-on-the-margins-of-history/>.

finance department and also classified between civil and criminal cases. Due to differences with British government, he was arrested in 1893 and died after seventeen years of captivity in 1909.<sup>8</sup> British government was however, able to manage Kalat state and British Balochistan due to the extended cooperation of Raisani and Zehri sardars.<sup>9</sup>

### **Mir Mahmood II (1893-1931)**

British appointed Mahmood II Khan of Kalat, as a reward for his services in removing Khudadad Khan. While he did not dare to stand against the British authorities he supported anti-British activities either conducted by an individual or groups in his areas. Kalat affairs were handled through the AGG of India, Khan died in 1931. During his period the British government fought two wars with Afghan rulers, by the end of these wars the famous Durand line agreement was concluded in 1893 between Sir Mortimer Durand (a British representative) and Amir of Afghanistan. The Durand line divided areas of Chitral and Balochistan between Afghans and the British, it also divided Pashtun and Baloch ethnic group into three states and this division continues even today.<sup>10</sup>

### **First Political Party in Balochistan**

Political awareness enabled the creation of the first secular political party with Baloch and Pashtun membership, in 1920 by Mir Yusuf Ali Magsi and Abdul Aziz with the title of Anjuman-e-Ittehad-e-Balochistan. The main aims of the party were to end colonization in Balochistan, reunification of Balochistan areas, end of sardari system and a united free Balochistan.<sup>11</sup>

### **Mir Muhammad Azam Jan (1931-33)**

His rule lasted for a brief period and his official coronation ceremony was held in 1932. He died in 1933, however, as a weak ruler who contributed nothing significant to the state of Kalat. Balochistan state lost half of its territory in favor of Iran and less than half to Afghanistan. This

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<sup>8</sup> Rahmat Ibad Khan, 'Impact of Political Culture on Political Development Balochistan', Thesis, 1996, University of Karachi. <http://pr.hec.gov.pk/jspui/handle/123456789/3539>

<sup>9</sup> Nina Swidler, *op.cit.* 164.

<sup>10</sup> Azhar Aslam and Shaista Kazmi, *op.cit.*

<sup>11</sup> Manzoor Ahmed and Akhtar Baloch, 'Political Economy of Balochistan, Pakistan: A Critical Review', *European Scientific Journal*, 11:14 (May 2015), 274-93. Available at <https://ejournal.org/index.php/esj/article/view/5688>

division was part of British forward policy but not acceptable for the leaders from Balochistan. The Baloch National Conference was held in Jacobabad in 1932 where leaders from Balochistan voiced their protest against awarding of Balochistan's land to Iran. Abdul Aziz Khurd a nationalist published the map of greater Balochistan in 1933 and it was based on pre 1871 Baloch areas. In 1934 another Baloch leader Yousaf Aziz Magsi supported an armed struggle against the division and reunification of Balochistan areas.<sup>12</sup>

A situation of rift developed within Anjuman-e-Ittehad-e-Balochistan, the radical faction took side of Khan, wanted independence, whereas the other faction was in favor of joining the political process initiated under the 1935 Indian Council Act. In year 1937 Kalat State National Party (KSNP) a reactionary secular party was formed to pursue the goal of an independent Balochistan. KSNP in its early days got the support of Khan of Kalat, but later KSPN found it hard to work with Khan, hence it was banned in Kalat state by Khan of Kalat just after two years in 1939 of its formation, and leaders of KSPN later joined Congress and received financial assistance from Congress against their support.<sup>13</sup> Nehru wrote a letter to Khan of Kalat and condemned his action of banning KSNP, as it was a violation of the principle of liberty, Nehru also asked Khan to uplift the ban.<sup>14</sup>

### **Anjuman-e-Watan party**

To protect Pashtun interest Anjuman-e-Watan party was formed by Abdus Samad Achakzai in 1937, it also worked on constitutional and political reforms in Balochistan. Formation of political parties in Balochistan provided a platform to showcase the political struggle of Baloch people. Anjuman-e-Ittehad-e-Balochistan was able to re-annex area of Azam Jan in 1931 with Balochistan. Later in the year 1932 Anjuman-e-Ittehad-e- Balochistan convened All India Baloch and Balochistan conference. Appointment of Mir Ahmed Yar Khan as a rightful heir of Balochistan was also among its achievements.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> A.B. Awan, *Balochistan: Historical and Political Processes* (London: New Century, 1985).

<sup>13</sup> Syed Iqbal Ahmad (Lt.), *Balochistan: Its Strategic Importance* (Karachi: Royal Book Co. 1992), 106-7; Mansoor Akbar Kundi, 'A Hard Nut to Crack, a Conventional Force in Action', *Balochistan a Socio-Cultural and Political Analysis* (Quetta: Qasim Printers, 1994a), 22-26.

<sup>14</sup> Hameed Baloch, 'Select Documents on Kalat State and Its Territories from 1925 to 1948', *Balochistan Papers* (Karachi: Sayad Hashmi Reference Library 2007), 494-95.

<sup>15</sup> 'Birth of Political Consciousness in Sindh', *Humshehri*, 7 December 2013.

There was another version of this story which claimed that as per Indian Act of 1935, Kalat state was given the status of an Indian Princely State which allowed it to be a part of the federal legislative body of India. Civil British laws were observed in Quetta city as it was under British Balochistan while Frontier Crime Regulation (FCR) was the law under which the rest of Balochistan was administered. Although Kalat was given representation in federal legislation as a princely state, Balochistan as a special administrative area, never experienced the election process. Quetta city served as the capital for British government's activities, as they installed their elected body named Quetta Municipality. To deal with the Russian threat, British military garrison was established in the year 1935 in Quetta after the earthquake, resultantly this city's political and social outlook is ahead of the rest of Balochistan's areas.<sup>16</sup>

### **Mir Ahmed Yar Khan (1933-48)**

Mir Ahmed Yar Khan was well-oriented with the art of modern governance, he had received western education and successfully performed civil-military tasks, assigned to him by the British government. His liberal attitude towards governance led him to introduce different reforms in Sharia laws of Kalat state. For Sharia law he established separate institutions as well as he raised the education budget of Kalat state. Ahmed Yar Khan took notice of the unnecessary taxes imposed by the sardars on their subjects i.e., Bijar (tax on celebrations), Pursi (tax on death) and Mali (annual tax). He introduced a number of reforms within his administered areas.

### **Legislative reforms**

Mir Ahmed reformed the legislative branch of Kalat state. He established a parliamentary system in Kalat which consisted of two houses; Dewan-i-Khas which comprised of tribal sardars and Dewan-i-Am whose members were elected on limited franchise through a provincial jirga. The criteria for voters were of tax payers and Hindu or Muslim traders. It consisted of 52 members from states of Sarawan, Jhalawan, Kachhi and Makran. Under the parliamentary system ministers were nominated by Khan and they were accountable to both him and the parliament. Budget preparations were the responsibility of Dewan-i-Am as a truly parliamentary practice. The first elections under the new constitution were held in September 1947 and KSNP won the majority in Dewan-i-

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<sup>16</sup> Report on *Balochistan*. Available at: <https://pildat.org/inter-institutional-relations/balochistan>.



Am.<sup>17</sup> This political setup had no supportive documentation as it reflected the will of Khan himself. Critics were of the opinion that such speedy political development on Khan's part was to ensure the British government that Kalat was a separate state with its own political system. The Khan of Kalat fought back for the control of Kalat state against the British government. Learning from past experiences of internal conflict among local sardars which led British government to intervene in the affairs of Kalat, he at first and foremost tried to win the confidence of local sardars and then went to the British government and asked them to hand over the affairs of Kalat state to their representatives. This strategy helped him succeed in his efforts. Ahmed Khan successfully negotiated the renewal treaty of 1876 with the British government. As per the new treaty Khan resumed the charge over sardars in consultation with Jirga and political agent (PA) which Mahmud Khan lost in favor of AGG, under a new agreement between Khan and British government he resumed the authority of hearing all cases involving sardars or tribal men. He regained the responsibility of distribution of subsidies to local sardars. He also demanded from the British Indian government to end the lease of Nushki and Nasirabad, and allow Khan the imposition of a new tax by Kalat state on its inhabitants. After achieving control of Kalat state Ahmed concluded a contract with Burmah Oil Company for oil exploration in 1945 and established a mineral research institute in Kalat state.<sup>18</sup>

***Table: Political Parties a Step towards Political Institutionalization of Balochistan***

<b>Political Parties</b>	<b>Basis of Creation</b>	<b>Year of Creation</b>	<b>Founders</b>
Baloch Union Party	Ethnic (Baloch)	1928	Mir Aziz Kurd Faiz Muhammad Shawani
Kalat National Party later Ustaman Gal	Nationalist (Balochi)	1937	Malik Saeed Dehwar
Ustaman Gal later merged into NAP (1957)	Baloch Areas	1955	Shazada Karim/ Ghaus Bux Bizenjo
Wror Pushtoon	Pathan Belt	1954	Samand Khan Ajakzai

<sup>17</sup> Malik Muhammad Saeed Dehwar, *Contemporary History of Balochistan*, 439:1 (Quetta: Third World Publications 1994), 309-310.

<sup>18</sup> Rahmat Ibad Khan, *op.cit.*; Nina Swidler, *op.cit.*

National Awami Party (NAP)	Progressive party, Progressive party, National level, East & West Pakistan	1955	Abdual Wali Khan
Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam	Pathan Belt/ Islam	1945	Maulana Shabbir Ahmed Usmani
Pakistan National Party	Ethnic (Baloch), Nationalist	1979	Ghaus Bux Bizenjo
Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party	Pashtuns Areas/ Pashtun Nationalism, Democratic Centralism	1960	Samand Khan Ajakzai

Source: Kundi, Mansoor, Akbar. 1994. 'Political Parties: Past and Present.' In *Balochistan a Socio- Cultural and Political Analysis*, 15–21. Quetta: Qasim Printers.

Baloch union party was the first ethnic based political party set on modern lines to protect the Baloch people and was established in 1928.

### Political Status of Balochistan under the British Rule

Demand for political reforms in Balochistan was repeatedly raised by provincial and national level leadership of the Muslim League. It was a deliberate effort on part of the British government to make sure that there would be no Muslim majority province; Punjab, the Muslim majority area remained a Lieutenant-Governor province for long, NWFP was titled a Chief Commissioner Province in 1901, but the actual status of a Governor province was given in 1932. Sindh was part of Bombay till 1<sup>st</sup> of April 1936 and Bengal was given the status of a province in 1905 purely on administrative grounds but annulled after seven years (1912) due to extreme pressure from the Hindu community.<sup>19</sup> Montague-Chelmsford reforms of 1919 completely neglected the demand for reforms in Balochistan, despite the fact that these reforms encouraged the democratization process in provinces and in princely states. The reforms announced a new institution of the 'Council of Prince' for the representation of princely states, but Kalat state never sent its representative to the council. Simon Commission (1927) proposed

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<sup>19</sup> Syed Javed Haider, 'Balochistan, the Introduction of Reforms and Accession to Pakistan', *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture*, XXIX: 2 (2008), 29-52.

reconstitution of states on a lingual, ethnic, religious, or geographical basis but no positive development took place. A Diarchy<sup>20</sup> system was introduced in 1935 under the Indian Act, but Balochistan failed to benefit from this system.<sup>21</sup>

Quaid-e-Azam repeatedly demanded a provincial status for Balochistan, he made this demand as part of his fourteen points (1929). The British were reluctant because this area was strategically important for the British government and they did not wish to spend money on infrastructure development in a scarcely populated area.

### **Local Government system in Balochistan during the British rule**

British government divided Balochistan into two administrative units. British Balochistan, leased areas, and native Balochistan. British Balochistan areas were Sibi, Chaman, Pishin, and Loralai acquired through the 'Gandamak treaty' of 1879, which was later declared a part of India in 1887. Leased areas were those that the British acquired through an agreement with the Khan of Kalat, such as Quetta, Nushki, Bolan Pass, and Nasirabad. Native areas were Kalat, Makran, Kharan, Lasbela Marri, and Bugti areas. To deal with local administrative matters the British devised two acts, one was the Bazar Regulation Act and the other was called the Quetta Municipal Law. The municipal system started operating in Balochistan in 1910. The structure and functions of local government installed in Balochistan were the same as that of other states, but the very nature of this system was that it was non-elected and was nominated which means there was no real representation of locals under this system. Functions performed by local government in their areas were cleanliness, health, building bridges and streets, maintenance of buildings and public places, and holding a census of the area at regular intervals.

Officials from bureaucracy were responsible for local government functions. Chief Commissioner, deputy, and revenue commissioner were the authority of the district. Chief Commissioner was the person with complete authority, right from the imposition of tax to enacting rules for the local body. The revenue commissioner acted as a bridge between the chief and deputy commissioner. All tax-related matters were referred to him. Deputy Commissioner on the other hand

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<sup>20</sup> United Kingdom parliament passed government of India act 1919 aimed to increase representation in politics at local level so that British India could have responsible government.

<sup>21</sup> Syed Javed Haider, 'Balochistan: The Land and the People', *South Asian Studies*, 23:1 (2008), 17-35.

managed the Bazar affairs of their respective district. All local body functions were run by him. Other arrangements in the local context by the British government were the establishment of the Quetta Municipality in its closing years in 1946. Members were both elected and non-elected in the municipality. The conditions laid down did not encourage adult franchises but encouraged limited franchises the matter of fact was that in the following year's British back home experienced a limited franchise system.

### *Criteria for representatives*

- Military and civil servants were exempted from participation as representatives, these conditions made sense as one person holding two public offices cannot perform fully on either post which is acceptable in the present time as well
- They had to be residents of a ward and have their name on the electoral list, as one who is the resident of the area knows the people of the area and their issues.
- Property owners in the municipal area, taxpayers, and reading and writing of English language were also the criteria for the members. These criteria put limits on public representation at large as only few can fulfill these conditions.
- Age must be 21 years old. Should not have been in prison for more than two years, these conditions are valid even today.
- The tenure of representatives was three years but they could be re-elected. Time frame was neither too short nor too lengthy, fresh representation in an apt time was possible.

*Chairman and Vice Chairman:* The Quetta Municipal Committee was chaired by the nominated chairman for one year with the provision of a re-nomination for the next term among its members. The chairman had the authority to convene meetings and adjourn the committee sessions. Unlike the chairman, the vice chairman was elected among the members of the committee. The Vice chairman headed the meetings in the absence of the chairman. The committee held its meetings once a month and decisions were reached through a majority vote. The committee consisted of three officials, i.e., medical, executive, and municipal engineers. It was assigned to maintain the day-to-day business and had its own budget approved by the revenue commissioner; the committee also established an annual report of its functions. For the conduct of their functions, committee was authorized to appoint a sub or joint committee for the period of one year. This committee was allotted the additional

function of street maintenance and initiating development schemes in the favor of the public.

*Taxation System:* To run the affairs of local bodies committees were authorized to impose taxes on streets, trade items, animals, and buildings with the prior permission of the crown.

*Duties:* Municipality was responsible for maintenance of buildings, public places, water supply to city and market places, etc. It was authorized to allot grants to school and hospitals.

*Bureaucratic Control:* Quetta Municipal Committee worked under bureaucratic control. The Deputy Commissioner, Revenue Commissioner, and Quetta Resident Officer were the main authorities. Quetta municipal law put Municipal members under the control of the commissioner through the resident officer. A political agent or commissioner could altogether reject the reports of the committee. These bureaucratic officers were responsible for ensuring that committee practices comply with the municipal act lines. The resident commissioner was at the top rank in terms of use of power over committees, as he nominated the chairman of the committee, and allowed tax impositions and rule formation for committees. He could also extend the term of the committee for another year. Committee continued up-till 29<sup>th</sup> June 1947.<sup>22</sup>

### **Rise of political awareness in Baloch tribes**

It was the era of the 1920s when political as well as social consciousness was rising among the Balochis of Balochistan. An organization named Young Baloch was established by Abdual Aziz Kurd in 1920. This organization was inspired by nationalist ideas. Kurd being the son of a civil servant was exposed to political ideas of nationalism. Keeping the nationalist spirit alive in 1928, the son of Magsi tribal leader Yousaf Ali Magsi wrote an article under the revolutionary wave of the subcontinent with the title 'Balochistan Ki Faryad' in a newspaper named 'Masawat' (1929). This article highlighted the socio-economic and political vulnerability of Balochistan and it demanded from the Baloch people to unite for their rights. The tone of the article was well received among the masses but the local sardars and British representative were apprehensive

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<sup>22</sup> Mahmood Ali Shah, 'Local Government System during British Raj', *Local Government in Balochistan from Raj to Musharraf* (Lahore: Classic Publishers, 2008), 15-26.

about it. This was the cause of tension between Baloch tribal leaders and the Prime Minister of Kalat state Shamas Shah. Britishers took it as a threat to their authority in Balochistan. To counter the upcoming threat Magsi was arrested in July 1930. He was fined and jailed for four months. In his absence, Mir Abdul Aziz Kurd established another organization named Anjuman-e-Ittehad-e-Balochistan which worked under the guidance of Yousaf Magsi. Magsi was released in 1931 along with his supporters. After his release,<sup>23</sup> his party focused on following goals.

- Firstly, reform program was demanded for the Kalat state.
- Second demand was related to the reunification of Kalat state with its original territory.
- Lastly a free, united, and independent Balochistan. The party's demand was to introduce a real parliamentary system in Kalat state.

These demands challenged the Shams government, as well as the government of British India. Once again to nip the revolutionary voice Shams ordered the arrest of Magsi but he already flew to Jacobabad. In response to Shams's action Magsi with Kurd jointly published a lengthy document 'Shamasgardi' related to the action of Shah Shams.

Shams was appointed as the Prime Minister of Kalat state with the consent of the British government, so he enjoyed the British support. Once again, an arrest warrant was issued for Magsi and Kurd, Magsi escaped to Jacobabad, but Kurd was arrested and sentenced for three years by Shahi Jirga. Magsi from Jacobabad started the 'Magsi Agitation' movement, he was joined by Magsi tribal men who migrated to Jacobabad. The goal of the agitation was to inform the British government regarding the despotic rule of Shams and to pressurize them to introduce parliamentary reforms in Kalat state.<sup>24</sup>

No ruler of Kalat state or sardar of Balochistan was ever ready to give up their right to unquestionable rule in Balochistan and Azam Jan was no exception. British government reassured him and other sardars that they would support them and in return, sardars support the British government. Abdul Aziz Kurd, in December 1923, was very vocal in demanding independent Balochistan, free from British and Hindu rule.

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<sup>23</sup> Gulawar Khan, *Politics of Nationalism, Federalism, and Separatism: The Case of Balochistan in Pakistan* (2 September 2014), PhD Thesis. Available at <https://westminsterresearch.westminster.ac.uk/item/967w9/politics-of-nationalism-federalism-and-separatism-the-case-of-balochistan-in-pakistan>

<sup>24</sup> Ibid; Martin Axmann, *Back to the Future: The Khanate of Kalat and the Genesis of Baloch Nationalism, 1915-1955* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2009), 146.

He was also in favour of representative system. Kurd demands were earlier published in a magazine 'Hamdard' in 1922.

In this connection the All India Baloch Conference was called upon on 22 October 1932 which met in December (1932) at Jacobabad. At the All India Baloch conference, a joint communique was issued which addressed the ideas of Baloch unity, compulsory education for Balochis, and legal, educational, and religious reform for the people of Balochistan.<sup>25</sup> Hospitals were demanded to provide health facilities to local people. They asked to establish woolen mills which would support industrial development in the area. Women's education and recruitment of Baloch youth in the army and political reforms for Balochistan were also on the conference agenda.<sup>26</sup>

This conference was a huge success as Balochis from neighboring states of Iran and Afghanistan also attended the event. It was important that Baloch nation across borders could relate with each other over issues of identity and rights.

On November 1933, nine months after the first conference, the All India Baloch and Balochistan Conference convened once again in the city of Hyderabad (Sindh). The conference revised the demands presented in the first conference held in 1932. The overall political awareness among the Baloch nation enabled them to stand against the authoritative rule of the British government and the absolute control of local sardars. To contain these activities, once again Kurd was arrested in 1934 and sentenced for three years, Baloch educated youth was also expelled from their jobs in Kalat state. Magsi was in England at that time so practically Anjuman became inactive in the absence of leadership. Magsi returned from England in May 1935 but was caught in the Quetta earthquake in the same year. With his demise a bright chapter of the movement for Balochistan's rights ended.<sup>27</sup>

### **Kalat state national party**

To gain independence from British, Kalat State National Party was established in 1937. KSNP followed the cause earlier set by Kurd and Magsi and kept claiming freedom for Balochistan and Kalat state, in addition to it they demanded the revival of the original powers of the ruler of Kalat state.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Gulawar Khan, *op.cit.*

<sup>26</sup> Inamul Haq Kausar, *Pakistan Movement and Balochistan* (Quetta: Maktabah-E-Shal, 1999); Martin Axmann, *op.cit.*, 150.

<sup>27</sup> Gulawar Khan, *op.cit.* 199-201.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

### **Anjuman-e-Watan**

Split of Anjuman-e-Ittehad-e-Balochistan in 1937, created another political party named Anjuman-e-Watan of Abdual Samad Khan Achakzai. Anjuman Watan was more into reform programs under the British government than independence for Balochistan. After 1880 Pashtun areas came under British Balochistan, and it was never in the Pashtuns' favor to support the idea of greater Balochistan. In November 1939 Anjuman endorsed congress's stance and blamed the British government for Balochistan's backwardness. Nawab Muhammad Khan Jomezai represented British Balochistan in the constitution-making assembly back in Calcutta.<sup>29</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Baloch and Pashtun tribes introduced a Jirga system, which performs the executive, judicial, and, legislative functions. Later, the central government replaced the local elected tribal jirga with the shahi jirga, the nominated body, to check and control tribal affairs. The British government was not interested in developing Balochistan due to its vast barren lands and most minuscule population. However Russian expansionism was a constant threat to the British government which became a major reason not to uplift the province under their forward policy as if ever Russia decided to expand from the eastern front the route would be through Balochistan. Local sardars from Balochistan were also not interested in the political empowerment of the people to keep them under control. Thus, limited educational and political reforms frustrated the local youth and resultantly they began asking for their rights. The first political party Anjuman-e-Ittehad-e-Balochistan was established in 1920 to voice the demand of common people in front of local and central authorities. In the last years of the British government in India, Khan of Kalat introduced a parliamentary system in Kalat state to win independent status for the Kalat state. The main objective of reforms was not to grant local people a chance of representation but to present Kalat as an independent political entity to avoid annexation with either state of Pakistan or India. Local tribal leaders and the British government did introduce a few reforms in Balochistan but for their own interests and not for the political orientation and participation for the masses, hence political culture in Balochistan took much longer time to cultivate as compared to other parts of the subcontinent.

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<sup>29</sup> Martin Axmann, *op.cit.* 160-163.