

BALUCHISTAN INSURGENCY AND STATE RESPONSE IN POST-MUSHARRAF PAKISTAN: DYNAMICS, CHALLENGES, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR NATIONAL SECURITY

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Abstract

This research analyzes the Balochistan insurgency and the state response in the post-Musharraf era. The main objective of this research is to explore the major aspects behind the creation and continuity of the Balochistan insurgency in Pakistan. They focus on the internal issues, governance challenges, corruption, weaken institution capacity, lack of accountability, and ineffective policy implementation. It also examines the grassroots challenges and the state's response to the Balochistan insurgency. The impact of development projects like the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor on the advancement. The study chooses a qualitative method and uses secondary data such as scholarly literature, articles, journals, and official reports. By using theoretical and analytical structures to demonstrate the evolving aspects of the Balochistan insurgency and its interconnection of internal and external causes. According to the theoretical framework informed by the fragile political system, perceived injustice and historical grievances provide a better understanding of the reasons for the insurgency in a rich resource region. General Pervaiz Musharraf's era shows that the ruling period created a hurdle for the Balochistan insurgency and a highly influential military presence in the Baloch regions. Many military operations were held in Balochistan to counter the Balochistan insurgency. The findings of this research explore governance weakness, unfair resource distribution, and poverty, which are not the only major reasons. The CPEC plays an important role in the development of Balochistan. The CPEC gives fewer opportunities to local people and limited participation in their policies. The role of India and Afghanistan is significant for the development of the Baloch Insurgents. The Gwadar port is also crucial for the development of Balochistan. In conclusion, the Balochistan insurgency in the post-Musharraf era has multifaceted and many aspects of governance issues, political instability, and unequal development, creating political marginalization and changing the local perception of Baloch nationalists. The state should adopt effective administrative policies, equal representation in decision-making, and fair distribution for the sustainable development of Balochistan and the security of Pakistan.

INTRODUCTION

Balochistan is Pakistan's southern province, situated at a key location, and its boundaries are shared with Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iran. Balochistan is also connected to its four provinces, and its region covers 347190 km; it contains 43% of the country's total area. Balochistan is a less populous province, with many ethnic groups, including Punjabis, Balochi, Sindhi, and Pashtun, living there (Rizwan, Waqar & Arshad, 2014).

Balochistan is crucial and is located near the most important waterways in the world, the Persian Gulf. This Gulf is important to the transportation of a maximum of 18.2 million barrels of oil per day through its routes. Balochistan is significant for trade at national, regional, and international levels, and it attracts the superpowers and is linked with the Middle East and South Asia. Balochistan is enriched with natural resources and minerals, which have created a profit for China and the Pakistan Economic Corridor, which connects Gwadar to Kashgar through an economic corridor in western China, and there is a way for foreign involvement in Balochistan. The major Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline passes through Balochistan and gives vitality to Pakistan (Qureshi, 2021).

On 5th August 1947, after the independence of Pakistan, the Khan of Kalat apprised the group of Muslims and emphasized his ambivalent position. However, the Pakistan army wandered near Kalat and secured control of this area on 1 April 1948. In any case, the family of Abdul Karim presumes a resistance dispersed to the autonomy of Kalat and conveys the presentation to the National Liberation Group of Baloch, issuing the expansion statement recognition by the Karim. Karim started to gain protection from Afghanistan when Afghanistan was assessing the Baloch and Pashtu tidal zones in Pakistan and even imposing limitations on Pakistan's recognition by the United Nations. But Karim gained massive support from Afghanistan in Pakistan's territory. Baloch adherence gained independence or strengthened the Baloch, and Afghanistan refused because they want to consolidate Afghan Balochistan (Gajare, 2016).

Balochistan Insurgency started in 1948; the Khan of Kalat agreed to the merger of Balochistan with

Pakistan. His brother, Prince Abdul Karim, was against the merger and reduced the power of the tribal leader. These problems created a Guerrilla war, which was directed by Nawab Naureoz Khan. The conflict began in 1960, and a separatist movement emerged. The conflicts between the government and the people arose and caused the dismissal of the Bhutto government in 1973. Tribes started combat with the government; the situation was more intense than a fight with the army, and resulted in the death of Nawab Bugti due to Akbar's death in 2006. Now, the present condition of Balochistan has increased insurgency (Khan, 2014).

In 1999, Army Chief General Pervaiz Musharraf dissolved the government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif through a military coup. The Supreme Court endorsed the government of Musharraf as constitutionally subordinate to the doctrine of necessity of justice, Justice Munir's infamous doctrine. The main feature of Musharraf's government was the repression of the Baloch nationalist movement. In the disguise of preserving law and order, political activists and representatives were commonly targeted, resulting in involuntary disappearances, arbitrary killings, and culminating in arrests (Siddique, 2012).

Musharraf introduced economic development plans for Balochistan. His main focus was to build major infrastructure initiatives like the Gwadar port and the Saindak. He desired to make Balochistan a part of Pakistan's economic development structure. Nevertheless, these programs were ignored by stakeholders, fostering the impression that the development fortified the federal authority to meet the local needs. These policies pose a direct threat to the Baloch identity and their self-rule, and they lead to the creation of an extreme nationalist movement (GWU IAR, 2020).

Balochistan is notable for its proximity to Iran and Afghanistan. The clash between the army and Balochistan was marked by radicalism and foreign involvement. The attitude toward alienation and marginalization was heightened due to the Indian Secret Intelligence (RAW) contribution; they supply weapons and give training to the Baloch People. The enduring fight has been more

complicated by the assertions of foreign support, especially from Afghanistan and India, to the insurgent groups. The region continues to face economic oppression, limited political participation, and a lack of development projects, all of which can marginalize local communities (Ahmed, 2020).

The current insurrection in Balochistan is a result of the ongoing conflict with the government of Pakistan that began with independence in 1948. The 2004 insurgency is not only shocking; the ones faced in 1948-52, 1958-60, 1962-69, and 1973-77 were years of rigidity, a wide range of propagation and disobedience (Khan, 2011).

CPEC was a major turning point for Pakistan. They claim that the exclusion of Baloch from key economic sectors has strengthened, and call for maximum self-governance or complete freedom. However, insurgent organizations have commonly targeted projects related to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). They have asserted that they have exploited these ventures and focused on the central government and foreign shareholders over the demands and needs of local communities (Hashmi, 2015).

In 2007, Nawab Zada Balach Marri was killed during a shift from Afghanistan to Pakistan. He was a leader of the banned political party, Balochistan Liberation Party (BLP). The Balochistan insurgency took a new turn in 2009 when a UNHCR associate, David Solecki, was snatched from Quetta. Subsequently, three leaders were also murdered in April 2009 in Turbit. They created hate and conflict towards non-Baloch people, and the result was that 100 citizens were killed in the first half of 2009 (Haq, 2006).

The main aim of this study is to examine the causes of the Balochistan Insurgency and the Pakistani state's response, including economic initiatives, military operations, and political reforms. Following the end of the Pervaiz Musharraf government, the insurgency in Balochistan continues. It has a great impact on governance challenges and national security in the area. To understand the reasons for the conflict, an effective governance response is crucial for recognizing the conflict and current practices. This research provides useful insights for policymakers,

scholars, and information security analysts to inform the adoption of better policies and peace-maintaining strategies to control insurgency in Balochistan, as well as to guide the implementation of sustainable development projects.

Literature Review:

Balochistan is the largest province of Pakistan in terms of area. Although it is underdeveloped and lacks basic infrastructure. The issue of marginalization is a primary factor in creating hyper-tension among the Baloch people. Marginalization and detachment of Balochistan from the wide-ranging modernization measures have enhanced a sentiment of alienation, raising nationalist ideologies inherent in ethnic identity. The successive periods of authoritarian control have had a deep impact on language and strengthened ethnic fragmentation. The worst conditions are observed during the Musharraf era, and a clash between Baloch nationalists and the state develops, with the state regarded as a party to the civil war (Raza, Shah, 2025).

In 1985, the Baloch nationalist leader participated in elections, which were labeled non-political. After the death of General Zia ul Haq, the power was transferred and vested in the hands of Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan People's Party from 1989 to 1999. In the interim, the government focused on improving conditions in Balochistan and reducing the level of insurgency to its lowest point. General Musharraf administered a military coup that had a destructive impact on Balochistan in October 1999. He commenced a wide range of military operations in the turbulent zones; in 2005, the outcome was the death of Nawab Akbar Bugti, who was the leader of the Bugti tribe (Bugti, 2020). In the time of British rule, Balochistan was an unrepresented and underdeveloped region, and there was no stability or change after the partition of Pakistan. They link Baloch nationalism to underrepresentation and isolation. In Balochistan, Sardars ruled in the areas under the control of the British (Hashmi, 2015).

The main reason behind the clash between the Baloch nationalists and the country, according to

him, is the conquest of Kalat by Pakistan in 1948, which is a crisis point. Pakistan was not granted provincial status until 1973; it was a native state during the British era. Sardars of Baloch demanded autonomy and their representation in the assembly. Although the requirements were not fulfilled, they took militant action. The consolidation into Pakistan, along with the dismissal of tribal authority, promoted rallies and protests, and the government was systematically repressed. The refusal of Balochistan's autonomy encourages the seed of aggression and feelings towards the central powers (Wirsing, 2008).

In the Mushraff era, military occupation was imposed in Balochistan, and the regime was considered suspicious. It hindered the command on civilian supremacy and controlled the public order in Balochistan. A maximum of 8000 troops were deployed across the conflict with the tribal insurgency in the region, and the citizens are fewer than 6.5 million. Gradually, the demands of the Baloch were raised; they want the government to give regional autonomy, compensation for dependent natural resources, terminate the Punjabis' harnessing of natural resources, initiate revenue, and utilize in Baloch people (Harrison, 2006).

The current insurgency is the result of the distrust between the Baloch nationalist or government. The major cause is the exploitation of their resources and the building of marginalization. The contradiction in the political process of a country worsens the situation. Particularly, the changes in government led to the replacement with military rule. The circumstances of Balochistan are intensifying day by day. No action is shown by government policies in Balochistan province. The situation and conflict intensify, and the main target is to harm the capital, Quetta, and many conditions include target killing, creating violence, or exploitation, hijacking people, involuntary disappearances, and starting attacks on government institutions or installations. The affairs between the state and provinces shifted towards anarchy (Rizwan, Waqar & Arshad, 2014). Economic inequality is one of the major causes in Balochistan, which leads to unemployment, poverty, inferior job opportunities, and insurgency

because youth have fewer job opportunities, and creates mistrust of the government, and the enemy uses them against the country. In Balochistan, there is no industrial zone where people work for themselves and fulfill their basic needs. All industrial zones were held in different provinces, like Sindh, and they hire their local people. Balochistan has been enriched with gas and copper resources, and they have nothing; all revenue was given to the federal government and a Chinese company, and only 2% was given to Balochistan (Kakar, 2024).

Overview of the Study

Contemporary Literature shows different aspects of the current Balochistan insurgency, which has been driven by the enduring resentment of the Baloch people and has created marginalization or resistance to the security forces. According to Khan and Ullah, they examine the political system of Balochistan and assert that the political system has led to an intensification of violence, and that is the reason the public does not trust the government. Baloch nationalists have always wanted to be given provincial autonomy and have compromised on their provincial autonomy due to the lack of development or the failure of the Pakistani government (Khan & Ullah, 2017).

The Balochistan communities faced a problem of security issues both historically and currently. The problems were rooted in the past grievances and present hardships. The insurgency is not a rare security issue; it is a political and economic resentment (Grare, 2006). This aspect was also similarly highlighted by Harrison, and he studied the internal and external factors of Balochistan. He described that the strategic location also influences the insurgency in this region (Harrison, 1981).

Governance and the Impact of the Colonial Regime:

The colonial era made a profound impact on the governance of Balochistan. In the period of the 19th century, the region was part of the British Raj. Balochistan consisted of the princely states, and each have their own regional autonomy. An agreement was held between Afghanistan and the

British to divide Balochistan and leave persistent problems. The separation of Balochistan defines the borders between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The colonial administration integrated the tribal and sardari system, which allowed indirect rule over the Baloch people. The sardars can maintain order. The colonial system can impact the governance system and the chain of command in the province (Ali, 2019).

Pakistan gained independence in 1947 from colonial rule. Balochistan faced many problems. The sardari system can highly influence Balochistan governance, and the central government is resistant. The movements of the Baloch nationalist movement started and sought provincial autonomy. They want control over their internal affairs. The governance issues mainly stemmed from the exploration of mineral and natural gas in this region. Challenges are faced in the allocation of resources, revenue distribution, and environmental concerns.

Problems of Contemporary Governance in Balochistan:

Balochistan has faced continuous governance issues since its independence, and Baloch nationalist movements started to gain their autonomy and provincial rights. The central government can address these movements through military forces, which can result in perpetual war. The exploitation of natural resources is the main problem of Balochistan, but many regions can face issues of poverty, unequal economic development, and a lack of health and education facilities. These issues have the central problem of governance. Balochistan faced colonial influence, governance issues, and a tribal ruling system. The contemporary governance issues can reduce the unique significance of Balochistan governance. The historical aspect is more important to understand the root causes of Balochistan and the exploitation of its resources and governance dynamics (Bashir, Khan, et al., 2023).

The literature review for this study identifies gaps and primarily focuses on the historical and current problems of Balochistan. There is limited research conducted on the post-Musharraf era to counter

the reasons for the Balochistan insurgency. Many researchers focus on the military operations behind the insurgency and how they control the violence. Some research shows that governance challenges, but they do not mention the linkage of insurgency and the current dynamic. The research focused on governance failure, but did not clearly emphasize the failure of policy implementation, accountability, and transparency issues. CPEC is a widely discussed topic in previous research; these studies have focused on development initiatives and their political impact on Balochistan. The main problem regarding the CPEC is marginalization. Foreign involvement is frequently discussed, but it does not specifically mention internal and security concerns.

Research Objectives:

- To examine the basic economic, social, and political causes that led to the Balochistan Insurgency and the risks of foreign involvement.
- To identify the delays in governance that continue the insurgency in Balochistan.
- To evaluate the impact of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) on Balochistan's development.

Research Questions:

- What are the causes of foreign involvement in Balochistan?
- Why have governance issues faced Balochistan after Musharraf's era?
- How has the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) affected local perceptions of Balochistan and the issue of marginalization?

Research Methodology

The qualitative method is used in this research to analyze the Balochistan insurgency and state response after Musharraf. A case study method was adopted to address the issues of insurgency in Balochistan and examine in depth causes such as foreign involvement, governance issues, and CPEC development initiatives. Data collection relied on secondary sources, including books, research articles, newspapers, and official public documents. The study is based on a descriptive method and an analytical nature to understand

not only causes but also to focus on plans or policies implemented after 2008. This study is important for both government officials and policymakers to adopt new policies to reduce the risk of insurgency in Balochistan.

Causes of External Involvement in Balochistan Importance of Geostrategic Position of Balochistan

Balochistan is the biggest province of Pakistan in terms of its area, which maintains its essential strategic significance due to its natural resources, geographical region, and its position in local and world politics. It is situated in the Middle East, South Asia, and Central Asia. Balochistan is a concentration of area for foreign trade and energy channels. Balochistan's borders are connected to India, Iran, and Afghanistan, and it has a massive coastline along the Arabian Sea that strengthens its Geo-strategical importance, mainly as the entrance for trade and energy passage. However, the major aspect of Balochistan's strategic importance has been enhanced by the development of the Gwadar port, which facilitates the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Gwadar port provides unrestricted access to global shipping lanes, fostering trade between China, the Middle East, and Central Asia. In the section of the BRI program, the main focus of the CPEC is to link the Gwadar port to the China Xinjiang zone, shifting the port into the core of trade and finance. The development of this project is beneficial for Pakistan, also strengthening their interest in economic conditions and boosting their influence on global powers and international powers, showing their interest in investing in Balochistan (Ahmed, 2022).

Balochistan contains significant potential due to its abundance of natural resources such as minerals, oil, and natural gas. The Sui gas field was discovered in Balochistan, they supply energy reserves to Pakistan. Balochistan plays a role in the transportation path to gas pipelines from Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India (TAPI), and from Pakistan to Iran, highlighting its importance in transferring worldwide energy security. For Pakistan's economic security concerns, regional energy stability is essential for

complete control over these natural resources. Furthermore, Balochistan faces security and military challenges due to its geographical position. Balochistan is pivotal for its defense area due to its border connecting with Afghanistan and Iran, especially in view of the ongoing security issues from transboundary insecurity, terrorism, and insurgency. In Balochistan, the military presence is essential for the protection of its geographical zones and to ensure the security of development projects, such as Gwadar Port, and to maintain stability. Foreign powers like India and Iran can influence the security of Balochistan and pose security challenges or landscape difficulties. Economic problems and ethnic disparity create difficulties for the development of Balochistan and the complication of its strategic location in Balochistan (Ali, Anwar & Ali, 2025). Balochistan's domestic issues played a vital role in enhancing international attention. The Baloch nationalist group wants provincial autonomy and complete control over natural resources. They are opposed to the federal or central government. Balochistan separatist groups accused Afghanistan and India of being part of geopolitical tensions. The provincial instability shows that foreign factors have played an essential role in creating insurgency and affecting Balochistan's political and economic autonomy (Umbreen Dr., 2020).

Role of CPEC and Deep Gwadar Port:

In Balochistan, the Development of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor enhanced its strategic position in the global world. Gwadar port growth is an important hub of the CPEC and provides a route for international trade to the Middle East and Africa. This provides another route for China to avoid the Strait of Malacca and fortify its importance within BRI projects. The CPEC route connected the Xinjiang area to Gwadar Port. China has increased the position of Balochistan in international trade and capitalization thought to protect the international influence of these development projects. Balochistan is rich in natural resources like coal, gas, minerals, and gas to strengthen its position in the global world (Ali, Anwar & Ali, 2025).

Many Insurgents group include the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), exploit the economic growth or use a strategy to validate the strikes on security forces. The Chinese employ allegations that foreign policy can benefit from Baloch resources at their expense. Gwadar port or CPEC is not only an economic development project but also a game-changer and has reduced its strategic position. Global powers have started involvement in Balochistan and are assisting Baloch nationalists, creating an international competition (Reuters, 2026).

India and Iran are geographical competitors of Gwadar Port or the CPEC route. India is contributing to Iran's Chabahar Port, which gives access to Central Asia and Afghanistan. They invested in Iran's port to equal their power for counter-access to the Gwadar port to give major value for their investment in Iran's port. These conflicts create a way for the assistance of insurgent groups to disrupt the economic development project, China-Pakistan-Economic-Corridor, and secure their local interest (Rafiq, 2021).

Support of Diaspora:

Nine million Baloch Population lived in Balochistan, with almost six million people living there. Baloch people move freely between Afghanistan and Iran due to its closely bordered nature. Approximately half a million people live in Iran, and in Turkmenistan, around thirty-six thousand people live there (Joshua Project, n.d). In 1948, the Sough refugees of Oman lived in Gwadar with the consent of the Khan of Kalat, and they are also the reason the Baloch people lived in Oman. Gwadar is a remnant part of Oman till when Pakistan purchased it in 1958. 20 percent of the Baloch Population resided in Oman. The Omanis helped the Baloch people to move from Makran to get work facilities. Oman also ruled Makran. Particularly, some Baloch were settled in Oman and focused on the Al Batina coast, which extends along the Gulf of Oman from Muscat to the UAE. Baloch camps are both in Muttrah and Muscat (Peterson, 2004).

Baloch are serving their powers in Gulf Armies. During the period of the Dhofar insurgency from

1965 to 1971, the first modern Oman Army was based on the Baloch Army, and the Baloch raised their voice for the insurgency. These Baloch were associated with Pakistan. Baloch have served as part of the army and some as their ministers (Samad, 2014). Major General Sharafuddin was a part of ethnic Balochistan (Mustikhan, 2011). Diaspora is one of the major roots that assist or provide financial support to insurgents and rebels. According to the model of Collier-Hoeffler (2002), the largest diasporas were easily able to fund the rebellion. According to this research, the biggest diaspora crested smallest group size to become the largest in size and creates more chances of civil conflict (Collier & Sambanis, 2005).

The Baloch Diaspora is clearly defined; they gained information from the miseries of local Baloch people about what is happening in Balochistan (Mustikhan, 2011). Due to some obligations for Baloch people in the Gulf Countries. Baloch nationalists have gained favour from the US, UK, Europe, Germany, and Sweden, as shown clearly. The Diaspora in these countries is lobbying Baloch Nationalists and pressuring the Pakistani government. The more lobbying facilities in Europe and Geneva to mobilize views with the UN representative. They use many websites and the internet to express their viewpoints. The leaders or members of the Baloch Separatist are lived in these countries and provide information to attack or pressurize Pakistan government to give their independent provincial autonomy, and also create international community pressure on the government. The diaspora is a way for the creation or existence of Insurgency in Balochistan.

Tribal and Sardari System:

The Sardari system existed in Balochistan for many centuries. It was followed by the time when Baloch migrated Arab to Balochistan (Hatooram, 2001). The system of Sardari rule was the creation of tribal correspondence. The head of the confederation, the Khan of Kalat, played the role of Sardar and every group's Chief of Devotion toward the tribes (Mir, 2006).

Kinship is one of the most essential elements in the Balochistan Insurgency. Throughout the tribal

system, every individual has a close affiliation with their tribal and ethnic group. For many centuries, the sardar system was highly dominant; they performed a function in the state as leaders of small and large areas, or preserving their tribal interest from political, social, and economic growth. With the help of modern understanding, the system of tribal and Sardari was gradually reduced. The political system of Balochistan was closely linked to the sardari system, and their leader were aligned with it (Dune, 2006).

The tribal system enhanced the development of tribesmen and their role and brought their welfare system in the area, ignoring the development of the area. She argued that the role of Sardars is not essential for development, but they governed thousands of square kilometers of land; they did not provide better education, and they facilitated their own grandsons' education in foreign countries. She described that they see a similar condition in the formulation of government policies, especially in the Musharraf era, due to the absence of democracy. There is a lack of people's awareness about the Sardari or tribal system; they decreased economic growth, or they strengthened the Sardari system in their regions. The Central government is also responsible for the poor facilitation system and the backwardness in the education system, like schools and the health system, and these leaders have not introduced or developed roads in Balochistan (Mir, 2006).

The tribal system played a vital role in creating the risks of Balochistan Insurgency and providing the risk of foreign involvement. They provide a way for foreign involvement in Balochistan for building infrastructure and governance facilities to exploit the region. The tribal leaders have the authority to govern the many weak or rural areas and restrict the administrative system to influence the tribal groups (Khan, 2012).

Deficient Government Arrangements in Balochistan:

Unaccountability and Lack of Transparency

In Balochistan, the main reason for governance issues is a lack of Transparency. Lack of transparency in the decision-making process creates challenges like corruption, instability,

political favors, and patronage, which weaken the integrity of political organizations, leading to distrust among local people. Development capital was given to the province, and the leaders misused the funds, and no one was accountable for the usage of this capital (Transparency International, 2022).

The government of Balochistan is unaccountable for the usage and allocation of natural resources, lack of education and healthcare institutions. The unaccountable government provides a way for insurgency and foreign involvement, and people use their grievances through an alternative method. The Lack of transparency and accountability is deeply rooted in the political, historical, and economic bases. To address these challenges, build an Environment of trust, balance, and sustainable development for this province. The need to address these problems is to make sure that the central government and provincial government engage the local people to ensure effective and accountable governance for Balochistan (Jamal, 2012).

The governance issue of Balochistan was determined after General Pervaiz Musharraf. The transition to civilian rule was marked by a lack of accountability, corruption, and resources given to elite leaders. The governance issue was criticized in the development of CPEC. The deficiency of accountability and transparency in the government not only weakens the institution but also creates instability and human rights concerns (Ahmed, 2019).

Centralized Decision-Making:

In Balochistan, decision-making is completely centralized at the federal or provincial level. Government institutions are underfunded and politically polarized at the local government level. Restricting the capacity to recognize the basic needs of Baloch local societies. This centralized control intensified the feeling of alienation and their concern about their neglect of Baloch societies, creating political turmoil and discontent (Ahmed & Javed, 2021).

The central government has command over the natural assets of the province, including gas and minerals, which has led to persistent resentment.

Balochistan plays a vital role in the wealth of Pakistan and enhances the state's economy. Pakistan provides its natural gas resources to other states and creates wealth for the Pakistani economy. Still, excessively low returns will contribute to oppression and social isolation (Khan, 2021).

One of the main aspects of the General Pervaiz Musharraf government was that all decisions regarding Balochistan province were taken by the federal government in Islamabad. All the decisions were made under military administration. Moreover, all important decisions regarding the distribution of natural resources and development plans are made without effective discussion with the Balochistan communities. The centralized decision-making not only created insurgency in Balochistan but also created instability and threatened democracy. In the Musharraf era, the military was more dominant over Baloch decisions. They limited the political representation of people (Butt & Ashraf, 2021).

Corruption in Administration and Bureaucratic Setup:

In Balochistan, corruption is exhibited in different forms, such as political, bureaucratic, and civil service corruption. Political corruption includes the mismanagement of political funds and the misuse of power in electing representatives for their own benefit. It is often developed by nepotism over merit, weakening sound administration (Transparency International, 2022).

In Bureaucratic Corruption, extensive involvement of government officials in fraud and delays in administrative decisions is constrained by black money. Corruption in the public sector may include bias in the judicial system easily access to water and electricity systems (Ahmed & Javed, 2021).

Mostly, corruption was unrestrained in the education and health sectors. Corruption was seen in the form of an established fictitious school that hired unqualified teachers based on a political spoils system. Embezzlement of the usage of funds in education was misused and has a problem with students acquiring proper or quality education

(World Bank, 2020). Corruption in a healthcare institutions, payoffs, or nepotism appropriated funds given for the development or services of hospitals were often dispersed without implementation. Infrastructure development was not completed due to unreasonable prices, defective materials, under construction, and sustaining development (Khan, 2021).

The detachment and high expense of land in Balochistan worsened due to corruption and limited supervision. Mostly in rural areas, decisions are often made by the sardar, and most families' lineage is involved in all matters other than merit. This regional inequality shows how corruption affects internal and local levels of the province and neglects the needs and demands of the Baloch communities (Yusuf, 2018).

Causes of Governance Failure in Balochistan

Political Instability

Political instability is a major aspect of the Balochistan insurgency after the Musharraf era. There is a transition to civilian rule, and many aspects hinder the insurgency, including coalition governments. Fragile institutions, limited political participation, and rapid government changes. The dominance created a sense of alienation and insurgency. The federal government has control over the province and its resources. Political instability established a way for foreign involvement and a security threat. The Balochistan instability plays an important role in creating governance issues, but also regional conflict among Baloch Nationalists and the central government (Shah, 2014).

Balochistan's history reveals that there are deep-rooted issues in this province, including political instability. The province has faced different active problems, such as rebellion, violence, and political struggle. The Baloch nationalist always demanded to be given provincial autonomy and the protection of their basic rights. Political marginalization is one of the main reasons for the Balochistan insurgency and political instability. The central government is taking steps to address the conflict and give representation (Shah & Baloch, 2020).

The lack of political awareness creates instability and prevents addressing the source of grievances, leading to conflict and political turmoil. Political instability harms not only the state's political security and peace, but also foreign investment and the country's economic growth.

Poverty

Balochistan is the biggest province of Pakistan, but it has the lowest population and is marked by a sharp distinction. Balochistan contains an abundance of natural resources, but the people of this province are among the poorest in the country. Balochistan faces many problems, including poverty and underdevelopment. These problems have had a significant influence on the lives of the Baloch people. Balochistan is the largest province and has faced a lack of development and poverty. The challenges include political and social issues. Most people live in rural areas and face difficulties accessing education and health facilities. The poverty rate is highest in Balochistan compared to other provinces of Pakistan (Baloch & Malik, 2018).

Institutional Capacity Deficit

The Balochistan government has faced a problem of institutional capacity. This can complicate the execution of an economic development project and control resources efficiently. The fragile institutional system has a notable impact on the governance and development of Balochistan. The challenges faced by the people are multi-dimensional, such as administrative issues, education, and poor healthcare facilities. Weak institutional capability resonates in different areas of the province, limiting progress and intensifying socio-economic inequality. In the administrative setup, the provincial government confronted the problems of ineffective and untrained faculty, a lack of unskilled worker in the government institutions, and ineffective public service delivery. These problems create ineffectiveness in policies and their implementation. Furthermore, they have impacted the lifestyle of the Baloch people (Ahmed, 2018).

The Education Division of Balochistan is also impacted by the fragile institutional system.

Shortage of well-educated and trained teachers, deficient infrastructure, and lower education may affect academic excellence. These limited educational opportunities may hinder the development of Baloch nationalists. The Balochistan Healthcare system also faces equivalent problems, including insufficient medical care, a healthcare workforce shortage, and a lack of basic healthcare services. These challenges may affect the population's healthcare system, leaving crises to be handled in an emergency. Infrastructure development plays an important role in the development of economic growth. They are essential for the development of planning and execution of better policies. Inadequate cooperation and technical incompetence may affect the execution of the policy, and development projects may hinder the province's development (Zehri, 2017).

Lack of Education Facility and Health System:

The province has faced a problem of ineffective infrastructure, a lack of schools, and lower healthcare accessibility, which is confined mostly to isolated locations. The main aim of the development is to improve the infrastructure for regional development. Balochistan is a more Backward region, especially in providing the facility of education to women. According to the Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Surveys of 2019-2019, the surveys contain data on low literacy levels (43.6%), and the female literacy rate is approximately 24.6%, showing that there is a gender discrimination gap in this region. In Balochistan, the educational standards are low due to a lack of institutional capacity, untrained teachers, and a backward syllabus and books, which have impacted the province. These challenges have hindered the students to compete the others students with national level due to poor educational facilities. Many schools faced problems with clean water, electricity, and inadequate sanitation. These problems were mostly faced in the rural areas of Balochistan and led to limited classroom and learning facilities (Shafqat & Tariq, 2015).

Healthcare facilities were inadequate in the rural areas. Patients may face problems with easy access

to hospitals. Patients can travel long distances to access hospitals, and people are away from timely medication. There is a lack of qualified doctors, nurses, and staff. The loss of expertise may raise a problem of obstetric morality and infant death rate. The high rate of diseases is found in Balochistan, malnutrition, and a high rate of frequent health diseases. The healthcare and education facilities in Balochistan are deeply rooted in social, political, and economic factors. To solve these problems, international organizations, regional, and local organizations provide a framework to tackle these problems. To resolve these issues, Balochistan improves not only the quality of life but also the betterment and sustainability of Pakistan (Naqvi & Ashraf).

Governance and development issues in Balochistan are interlinked and rooted in historical security concerns and social and economic differences. To pursue the solidity in the province to address the necessities and governance issues, strategic objectives include poverty, illiteracy, and health care facilities.

Local Perception of Baloch Communities about CPEC

In Balochistan, the rural societies are satisfied and feel pleasure in their own customs, traditions, and native environment. They are fully aware of the natural assets, agriculture, grassland, river basin, biological diversity, forest region, and mineral accumulation in the province. Moreover, people face impoverished living standards such as dryness, groundwater overexploitation, lack of rain, waste lands, derelict land, extensive livestock, and uneven terrain, which are big challenges for their development or growth. The federal Government can work on stability, and they are unable to solve these problems (Farooqui & Aftab, 2018).

The major threat to CPEC was after the fifth insurgency in Balochistan. The fifth insurgency is more destructive than the previous ones. All the waves demanded autonomy, and these waves demanded a separate region, and they highly influenced the youth and the educated middle class. Previously, the waves were shaped by the Baloch tribal leaders. The current insurgency was

highlighted in the whole province, and the local communities were highly concerned about social and economic marginalization, legitimate justice, political exclusion, degradation, discrimination, and security issues. Women are also involved in the current insurgencies and are part of the suicide bomb attacks, using new strategies to disrupt the CPEC (Khan, 2023).

The major reason for the disruption of CPEC is the conflict between the Federal and provincial governments. The insufficient trust of the government will damage the growth of CPEC. Akhtar Jan Mengal, the Baloch nationalist leader, clarified that he studied the CPEC project many times and noticed that there were noticed that there was nothing for Balochistan and the economic debt was given to the Punjab province. He believed that the CPEC is the same as the East India Company and there is no difference between them. The Chinese population was too big, and they saw Pakistan as a small part of China (Devasher, 2019). The Minister of Planning, Ihsan Iqbal, said that the CPEC and Gwadar will be shared with the public without the consent of the Chinese government and giving control to the Baloch government (Baloch, 2016).

The poor road infrastructure in Balochistan will damage the future progress of CPEC. In the view of the National Highway Authority, the death ratio of accidents is higher than that of terrorist attacks. In Balochistan, more than six thousand persons are killed in road accidents every year, and more than ten thousand persons are injured in traffic incidents. Moreover, there is no motorway facility in Balochistan. According to the annual report, the death losses are high due to the CPEC territorial connectivity and abundance (Barrech, 2020). Only 25 percent of the population has access to electricity compared to 75 percent of the rest of the population. The connectivity of electricity to the region is not given and is not attached to the national grid; they do not provide any benefit to the Baloch. Furthermore, the Balochistan people do not have access to Sui gas, including in Gwadar. The poor system and the inadequate distribution of the resources have led people to feel distrust for the CPEC development (Devasher, 2019).

Balochistan faced a problem of illiteracy. In the period of Globalization, the education of science and technology is less than 43.58 percent, and the province is backward in the race of development. Climate change has also affected the progress of CPEC. In 2022, a high flood destroyed homes, buildings, highways, and the flyover, restoring the connection. The capital of Balochistan, Quetta, is also damaged due to climate and hazardous issues, and is cut off from the other regional areas (The Nation, 2022).

Balochistan is enriched with natural resources and is important for its geostrategic location. Balochistan is based on many cultures, traditions, and civilizations. Balochistan remains resistant in the major power competition between the USA and China. Both countries are engrossed with Balochistan. India and the USA are against the development of CPEC in Pakistan, and they are planning to harm the CPEC project. Washington provides support for the insurgent groups to create hurdles in the way of CPEC and their growth

Challenges of Governance in Balochistan Weak Democratic Governance

In Balochistan, weak democratic governance plays a vital role in the Balochistan insurgency due to less political participation, corruption in government institutions, poor education and healthcare facilities, a lack of accountability, and transparency. Many other challenges face Baloch nationalist, including democratic issues such as a fragile political, social, and economic structure. The most important impact of a weak democratic system is less participation in the governance system and political marginalization. Baloch local people often feel neglected in the decision-making process, which has led to frustration and mistrust among Baloch citizens and the state. The state gives fewer opportunities to this region and creates a conflict dynamic. This ignorance has increased the democratic authority and lessened public assurance in government institutions (Baloch et al, 2024).

Political Marginalization:

One of the major challenges in Balochistan is the unstable political system due to the coalition

government and its clashes with other parties to secure the province's stability. The Baloch nationalists are being taken away from power; they are boycotting the elections in 2008 and are concerned about their political future. The Role of social media plays a vital role in increasing the disappointment and oppression among Baloch leaders and communities. The Baloch nationalists create a campaign for an anti-Baloch system to gain public favor (Muzaffar, Karamat & Saeed, 2018). In Parliament, the Baloch nationalists have never gained proper representation and have participated less in state policies, and state official organizations include the military. The Balochistan government was not able to complete its tenure in provincial government due to the intervention of the federal government. The intensified issue of cultural and provincial autonomy may raise freedom problems. In 1999, General Pervaiz Musharraf introduced Martial Law and increased power, creating a feeling of limitation among Baloch nationalists.

The underrepresentation of Baloch people in the military creates discrimination in most of the military representation in Punjab, which is a main cultural region of Pakistan. After the Musharraf government, the government of the Pakistan People's Party can try to decrease the problems in Balochistan. The 2008 and 2009 protests intensified the aggression. The Pakistan government is accountable for the Balochistan insurgency and its issues. Presently, there is constant military action in the Waziristan sector, which is also known as anti-terrorist operations, and they are also directed at the millions of forcibly displaced populations (Kundi, 2007).

Inefficient Bureaucracy:

Inefficient bureaucracy is a major challenge for Balochistan's development. Less infrastructure capacity, political manipulation, and poor resource management. These challenges create instability and underdevelopment. Furthermore, there is ineffective collaboration between the federal and regional organizations. The issues created in an effective administrative system. The lack of infrastructure and unskilled personnel play an important role in the policy execution and

services of administration. Constantly changing officials and their transfers led to the weakening of institutions and increased administrative delays. The inefficiency in the administrative and bureaucratic setup is due to poor performance appraisal and lower merit-based selection, and insufficient training (Hussain, 2019).

The main reason for the ineffective bureaucracy is due to the state's intervention in the administrative system. In Balochistan, administrative or bureaucratic institutions are often affected by the tribal rulers and political elites, which compromises impartiality and competence. The people are selected for official position in favor of leaders rather than on merit. Many studies have decried that ineffective administration can lead to poor governance and affect public trust (International Crisis Group, 2013).

Security Centric Approach:

The major governance challenge in Balochistan is the continuing insurgency and military operations. Many Baloch nationalists mentioned resource extraction, historical injustices, and lower public participation in politics, and all these reasons led the trained Baloch armed to conflict with the central government. These problems created mistrust and instability and affected development initiatives. Security concerns and insurgency are creating considerable difficulty for Balochistan. The region faced problems of violence and a fragile system that creates instability. For many years, the Baloch nationalist movement has been demanding independence for Balochistan after the independence of Pakistan in 1947. These armed forces have conducted attacks several times against the central government, security forces, and local people (Khan, 2017).

Limited Private Participation in Mega Projects:

In Balochistan, the role of the private sector is limited due to some reasons, including political instability and inadequate infrastructure. The low public participation creates a problem for the economy and difficulties in employment creation. The security challenge is creating the most difficulties for the Balochistan people. They

discourage many investors from investing in this zone. Continuous security threats, such as incidents of conflicts and insecurity. These limitations intensify the employment and economic opportunities that furnish the prosperity of Balochistan (Bashir, Khan et al, 2023).

Furthermore, the insufficient infrastructure and core services demoralize the private sector investment. Poor transport services, intermittent power, and modern systemic shortages may impede the development and smoothness of business activities. The lack of a beneficial business environment prevents investors from expanding the assortment and scale of free enterprise in this province. Additionally, bureaucratic and administrative weakens the private sector participation in this region. Awkward and ambiguous regulations controlled administrative works and established a surrounding of not growing a smooth business. The ineffective policies also intensified the investors to invest and change their minds. In Balochistan, the basic natural mine of gas resources creates a big issue concerning resource and revenue distribution. They contribute to the development of Pakistan's economy. The basic problems facing Balochistan include unequal resource distribution, revenue sharing, and transportation management apprehension due to established governance issues (Rehman, 2006).

Conclusion:

The Balochistan insurgency in the post-Musharraf era symbolizes that the country faced an internal security problem. Many internal factors help to shape the insurgency movements in Balochistan, such as inadequate distribution of natural resources, weak governance, historical grievances, political marginalization, and the threat of external interference. This study focuses on the fact that no single factor contributes to insurgency, but all factors are interlinked with each other. After the downfall of General Pervaiz Musharraf, there is a transition of military to civilian government, and the military rule created many problems for the Baloch people. In the Musharraf era, many attacks and military operations were

held on the local Baloch communities. Balochistan is the most enriched with natural resources and has a significant geo-strategic location in the global world. The main aim of the study is to focus on the governance challenges that create unrest in Balochistan. Corruption, unaccountability, and low political participation create governance issues. In Balochistan, the tribal and sardari system had a major influence on their growth and development. Sardars want control over the resources, and they rule over the local people. The important element of this research is the reasons for the Balochistan insurgency and the role of foreign involvement behind this. The foreign powers can push for the Baloch insurgents to take conflict with other provinces and make hurdle in the CPEC. Especially India and Afghanistan played an important role in shaping and trained insurgents' groups. The foreign actors may be involved in the province due to the internal governance issues. Many development projects were introduced in Balochistan, one of the most important of which is CPEC, which is a game-changer for Balochistan and the growth of Pakistan's economy. CPEC faces several issues in Balochistan. Local communities of Balochistan believe that the CPEC can control their natural resources, and no benefits are given to the residents. All revenue was paid by the federal government and China. Political marginalization is a major factor in the interruption of CPEC. Many other factors, such as limited political participation, lack of infrastructure, less education, and health facilities. People claim that the Federal government has more control over the provincial government, and they lead to a conflict with the Federal government. CPEC's success depends on addressing these local and structural challenges and providing stable policies, inclusive governance, and engaging with local Baloch communities. The response of the state in the post-Musharraf period has a mixture of military action, political plans, and strategic frameworks. The security forces can address the dispute of the conflict, but not fully control the major reason for the clash. Local people worry about their natural rights, and the state discriminates against their rights. They create a problem for the conflict and

mistrust between them. The political rapprochement efforts are marginalized due to the lack of political engagement and poor execution. In the present situation, the insurgency in Balochistan is moderate, but a long-standing dispute has evolved through offensive attacks on the security personnel, and the infrastructure development in CPEC. The Gwadar port is continuously a source of conflict, and its development benefits are still a point of contention between the Baloch local communities and the state. The security system is more abolished in many areas of Balochistan, but the security concerns still exist. This study concludes that the Balochistan insurgency in the post-Musharraf era is inherently a governance issue, including inclusive growth and political illegality. The persistent dependence on dealing with the underlying problems and ineffective policies. In Balochistan, sustainable policy implementation, equal distribution of resources, and engaging with local people, or providing human rights and development opportunities, are essential factors for their sustainable development.

Recommendations

• Expanding institutional and administrative reforms

The study suggests strengthening the administrative or institutional structure in Balochistan. The state must adopt measures to enhance governance proficiency and the capability of local and regional organizations. The transparency and accountability of government in the decision-making process are vital for the development of Balochistan. The governance should be accountable for the resource sharing and introducing new development projects. The state should ensure an anti-corruption system and an effective bureaucratic setup. Development in the infrastructure, health, and education sectors. The government should prioritize or strengthen the local government in Balochistan and allow the local public to participate in decision-making processes in the political setup.

- **Comprehensive and Fair Growth under CPEC**

Development of economic projects like CPEC in Balochistan provides equal opportunity to the local people and resources, and uses the benefits given to Balochistan. The success of CPEC relies on various factors, such as giving a fixed quota for the Baloch people to give job opportunities, setting the proper coaching and training centers, developing a polytechnical institute, and enhancing Baloch participation in strategizing, checking, and execution of the plans. In the Gwadar port, people also provide benefits of housing, education, medical, clean water, and support their traditional culture, such as fishing. The State must ensure these aspects for the CPEC development and reduce the risk of exploitation.

- **Youth Mobilization and Media Empowerment**

The study suggests increasing the participation of youth in the development of plans and political decisions. Youth will enter the insurgency movements and targeted attacks. Increasing the ratio of youth involvement in the insurgency of the government will ensure that there is easy access to education, technical development skills, and scholarships. Provide the Facility of a job in the private and government sectors. The media should play a positive role in mobilizing the political views of youth in political and civic activities. The media should be dependent on providing authentic news related to social historical grievances and strengthening democracy.

- **Long-Term plans and policy implementation**

Lastly, the study recommended the creation of long-term development plans and a coherent national policy in Balochistan. Policies should be made on comprehensive state policies. Frequent government changes may affect the policies. The state should ensure the policies and development plans remain the same with the change in governance. The policies should be based on the amalgamation of political, economic, security, and enhanced or effective measures for checking and balancing on policy execution.

- **Confronting external influence by Internal consistency and Diplomacy**

The State should deal with internal conflicts effectively and adopt an oriented diplomacy to manage the provincial conflicts of Balochistan. Afghanistan has created a security threat for a cross-border crisis. Moreover, Pakistan should address the conflict with India in many ways through international channels and in a diplomatic way. The government should resolve internal issues to overcome the external influence in Balochistan.

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