

Balochistan During the British Colonial Rule: An Overview of 1830 CE till 1947 CE

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ABSTRACT

The research discusses Balochistan during the British colonial era from 1830 to 1947 and traces the region's incorporation into the British Raj and also examines the political, administrative, and strategic factors that shaped the colonial policy. The interests of the British in Balochistan deepened in the early nineteenth century, mostly due to the fears of Russian expansion and the policy to secure the routes leading to Afghanistan. The First Afghan War and future treaties, especially with the Khanate of Kalat, marked the beginning of direct British influence in the region. The research explains how Balochistan was governed through a mixture of indirect rule and strategic control. Whereas, the Khan of Kalat was a nominal authority, and real power were in hands of the British Raj. The formation of cantonments, roads, and railway network reflected the region's military importance rather than a policy to uplift the social or economic condition of the people. Tribalism was accepted and allowed to ensure stability, but no efforts were done for institutional modernization. The paper also discusses Baloch resistance, and the relationship between the tribal leaders and the colonial masters. By 1947, Balochistan occupied a unique constitutional position within British India, dividing them into administered areas and princely states. This complex legacy shaped the region's political trajectory at the time of independence. To sum up, the study explains Balochistan within broader imperial strategies while acknowledging its distinct social and political landscape.

Keywords: British Empire, Balochistan, Baloch, State of Khanate of Kalat, Princely States, Tribalism

INTRODUCTION

The province of Balochistan has a unique role in South Asia history. The region is geographically large at the intersection of South Asia, Central Asia, and Persian Gulf and has traditionally been of interest to regional and international powers. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Balochistan was strongly embroiled into the growing interests of the British Empire in India. Throughout the period between 1830 to 1947 when the region was under the colonial regime, political, administrative, as well as strategic changes occurred which created a permanent mark in the institutional and social set ups of the region. A study of this time is essential not only to the experience of colonialism in Balochistan but also to its complicated role during the independence era. British concern about Balochistan was not necessarily influenced by economic factors but rather by the geopolitical concerns. An increase in the competition between the British and Russian Empires, which is often referred to as the Great Game, increased British anxieties about the safety of India in the north western frontier. Its position, on the border of Afghanistan and Iran as well as with access to Kandahar and further, turned Balochistan into a buffer zone with a vast strategic significance. The First Afghan War (1839-1842) was a turning point because the British troops penetrated the Baloch lands, and started to establish the political presence in the area. Accords with the Khan of Kalat were slowly

altering the equilibrium of power, which was the foundation of the new political order under the indirect colonial control.

This was in contrast to many other regions of British India which were annexed directly, the region of Balochistan grew under a mixed system. Some places, specifically the Quetta and the nearby districts, were directly governed by the British rule, and others were governed indirectly by the nominal rule of the Khanate of Kalat and the tribal chiefs allied with them. This was a British pragmatism system. The colonial government was after stability and military superiority and not overall social change. Political agents were also put in charge of dealing with tribal chiefs and the British tended to strengthen the hierarchies to gain loyalty. By so doing they maintained tribal autonomy in form and transformed sovereignty in substance.

Other indications of the military logic that directed British policy were the creation of cantonments, particularly in Quetta, and the growth of railways and telegraph lines. The development of infrastructure was mainly aimed at providing defence needs by the imperial government and also to provide speedy flow of troops in case of an external attack. Investment in education, industry and civil institutions was still low compared to other provinces of British India. Consequently, colonialism in Baluchistan was by contrast quite different to administrative and legal assimilation experienced in other provinces like Punjab or Bengal. The governing of the region was marked by regulation as opposed to codification and negotiation as opposed to direct legislative control.

Simultaneously, the colonial era did not lack any resistance or political bargaining. Rebellions of tribes, alliances and conflicts between local leaders and the representatives of British authorities became a continuous characteristic of the political situation. Although formally independent in some aspects, the Khanate of Kalat saw its power being narrowed down by treaties and advisory procedures further compromising the interests of the British. The interaction of the local agency and imperial power resulted in a political order that was neither absolutely sovereign nor absolutely incorporated in British India.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Balochistan was in a separate constitutional status. It was partitioned between British Balochistan, directly governed by the colonial government, and princely states, including Kalat, Kharan, Las Bela and Makran, with different levels of internal autonomy. This disjointed state of affairs influenced political trends during the last years of colonialism. The political position of Baluchistan at the time of constitutional reform, representation, and self-governance debates was not clear as controversy was generated across India. Its small presence in colonial legislatures and its strategic designation as a frontier area indicated the perception of the area as a military backstop and not as a full-fledged province by the British.

These historical complexities were brought into limelight at the time of the end of the British rule in 1947. Past experiences of indirect administration, commitments to treaties and splintered leadership affected the accession and integration negotiation. Colonial experience had transformed the traditional sources of power leaving many social and economic questions without answers. The analysis of the time between 1830 and 1947 is thus essential to put into perspective the political events that have followed.

This paper aims to give a summary of Balochistan under the British colonial rule by exploring the strategic reasons that led to the imperial involvement, the mode of administration that was formed and the social and political impacts of the indirect rule. The analysis seeks to provide a balanced narrative of one region, the history of which was equally influenced by the world power struggle as by the domestic factors.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature on the political and administrative change of Balochistan during the British rule is increasing. Inayatullah Baloch (1987) gives one of the most elaborate historical descriptions, where he follows the development of the state system of Baloch and its experience of the British imperial expansion. His writings are meticulously recorded treaties, political discussions and the slow loss of the sovereignty of the Khanate of Kalat. The analysis by Baloch is especially useful in the interpretation of the way in which the colonial intervention changed the traditional structures of authority without completely destroying them.

Martin Axmann (2008) presents a narrow examination of the Khanate of Kalat and its change at the time of the colonial era. In contrast to such general histories of the region, Axmann focuses on the inner processes of the political system in Kalat and emphasizes the work practices of indirect rule. The simplicity of his work in question is that it confronts simplified accounts of domination by demonstrating the complexity of local agency in the colonial system.

Robert G. Wirsing (1991) places Balochistan in the context of South Asia which is a bigger geopolitical zone. Although his work covers past years beyond 1947, it helps in giving a very good background on the influence of colonial frontier policies on subsequent political conflicts. Wirsing stresses the importance of the strategic calculation, rather than the economic one, which proves the fact that the colonial experience of Balochistan was rather securitized.

Selig S. Harrison (1981) takes a political approach to the topic, investigating ethnic identity and tension of the center and periphery. Although much of Harrison discussion of post-colonial developments is relevant, the legacies of British administration can be used to explain the causes of political fragmentation in Balochistan.

R. I. Bruce (1900) presents a more localized view, his initial colonial narrative being a manifestation of British administrative mentality. Although outdated and influenced by imperialistic preconceptions, the works of Bruce are still valuable as the primary source of information on how the colonial authorities viewed the tribal society and the frontier policy.

Lastly, A. B. Awan (1985) looks at the history and politics of Balochistan especially the constitutional reforms of the late colonial rule. His examination fills the gap between the imperial frontier policy and political transition at independence.

These works as a whole prove that British rule in Balochistan was influenced by strategic interests, indirect rule and bargained power. They all highlight the unique colonial path of the region as a part of the greater British India.

METHODOLOGY

The current paper uses qualitative and historical approach to research Balochistan under the British colonial rule 1830-1947. It is based mostly on secondary sources, such as scholarly books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and historical analysis, and includes when possible such primary sources as colonial reports, treaties, administrative records, and contemporary accounts. The study has taken a descriptive and analytical method, wherein the chronological history of the involvement of British in Balochistan has been firstly reconstituted and secondly analysis of the political, administrative, and strategic aspects of colonial rule has been critically discussed. Specific emphasis is placed on treaty agreements with the Khanate of Kalat, direct rule system and the frontier policy system. There are also comparative lessons of the larger

research on British India to establish Balochistan in the context of the greater imperial picture, as well as to emphasize that it was not inexperienced. The approach insists on proper interpretation of the sources, cross-reading of the historical texts, and critical assessment of the colonial texts to award balance and academic quality.

Origins and Historical Identity of Balochistan

Balochistan is named after Baloch people, who are a group of people, which has traditionally occupied the border of the Indian subcontinent, Iran, Afghanistan, and the coastal belt of the Arabian Sea (Bakht, 2008). Even the naming itself has been controversial. The name was actually declared to be used in the reign of Nadir Shah of Persia following his triumph over the Afghanistan troops as he declared himself the ruler of the area and called it Balochistan in order to denote the country of the Baloch (Bakht, 2008). This opinion is however disputed. Other researchers indicate that the rulers who had reigned before Nadir Shah, like Zaheer Uddin Babur, had already mentioned the region Balochistan. It is also upheld by Gul Khan Naseer and other Baloch writers that the name was in existence even before the time of the Persian ruler (Bakht, 2008).

The Baloch people today are scattered in three independent nations Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan. In the past, the Balochistan appeared as a comparatively independent political unit in the eighteenth century following the weakening of the Safavid Empire in Iran and the Mughal Empire in South Asia (Dashti, 2012). Local tribes systematized their authority as the imperial authority declined. The tribe of the Merwads formed the Khanate of Kalat that conquered the regions of Kharan, Makran and Las Bela, making Kalat its capital (Dashti, 2012).

Tribal Structure and Internal Conflicts Before British Intervention

The politics of Balochistan was well entrenched in tribal traditions and competition. Internal arguments continued even after the merger of the Khanate of Kalat. The political situation was undermined in the region due to the conflicts between the Khan of Kalat and Mir Mehmud Khan II and Mir Mehrab Khan II, and the tribes of Sarawan and Jhalawan (Dashti, 2012). It was these internal divisions that provided an environment that enabled the British forces to intervene.

The history of Modern Baloch is commonly segmented into two periods, the years of the British colonial rule and the years of the Pakistani accession. The colonial period commenced in the year 1839 when British troops had occupied Kalat partially and had killed Mir Mehrab Khan II (Dashti, 2012; Breseeg, 2001). This was a turning point, and Balochistan internal and external affairs were becoming increasingly influenced by the foreigners.

The Great Game and Strategic Importance of Balochistan

British intervention in Balochistan went a long way to do with geopolitical issues. The opening of Central Asia by the Tsarist Russia caused a suspicion that Russia wanted to have access to the warm Indian ocean waters. This game as it is commonly referred to as the Great Game put Balochistan as the focus of imperial strategy (Dashti, 2012). Its strategic position rendered it essential in the acquisition of routes between Afghanistan and Iran and British India.

The British wanted to gain access to strategic ports and land routes so as to gain access to its interests. They entered into a pact with the Khan of Kalat in March 1839 by which they could use the Jiwani port on condition of receiving support and protection (Dashti, 2012). But after the death of Mir Mehrab Khan II,

the deal failed (Dashti, 2012; Breseeg, 2001). This was followed by tribal rebellions and military intervention by the British which resulted in the siege of Kalat and British supremacy.

Despite his temporary rule restoring control to Kalat, the British military dominance and internal conflicting faction compelled the Mir Naseer Khan II to sign a treaty that acknowledged British dominance in Kalat (Dashti, 2012; Breseeg, 2001).

Consolidation of British Suzerainty and the Sandeman System

In 1876, the British codified its authority over Balochistan, signing a treaty with the Khan of Kalat named Mir Khudadad Khan, which effectively made the British have suzerainty over the state (Aslam & Kazmi, 2015; Sayeed, 1980; Dashti, 2012). This compromise not just accepted the British dominance over foreign matters, but also transferred the semi-autonomous areas of Kharan, Las Bela and Makran into the indirect control of Britain. Although these regions formally fell under the jurisdiction of local leaders, British control was exercising greater influence on administrative and political judgments. Meanwhile, the city of Quetta and the neighboring lands became a part of British Balochistan, the region which was directly managed by the British. Such areas were mainly inhabited by Pashtun tribes, and the colonial government aimed to control them by both direct rule and political cooperation with the local tribal chiefs (Aslam & Kazmi, 2015).

To bring control under one person, the British sent Sir Robert Sandeman as the Agent to the Governor General who was charged with the responsibility of instituting a system of indirect rule that would be able to preserve order with minimum administrative costs (Breseeg, 2001). The policies developed by Sandeman and later to be referred to as the Sandeman System were established on the basis of being pragmatic: Sandeman did not destroy the traditional tribal systems but instead co-opted them. The sardars received financial allowances and military assistance as the tribal chiefs, and thus were strengthened in their loyalty to the British, as opposed to the Khan of Kalat. This plan formalized the Sardari system, already in existence, though in an informal form before the British intervention, and effectively institutionalized tribal hierarchies as a system of government. The colonial government avoided sending large numbers of soldiers by empowering local leaders to enforce their policies in their territories and thus controlled huge areas of territory which were usually difficult to reach (Breseeg, 2001; Dashti, 2012).

In spite of all these, the relations between the British and the state of Kalat remained. Mir Khudadad Khan was opposed to some elements of British intervention especially where the independence of his rule was at stake. His power attempts were futile especially to the extent that he was removed and replaced with his son, Mir Mehmud Khan, with the consent of the British (Axmann, 2008; Dashti, 2012). This line of succession strengthened the British approach of molding local leadership to suit colonial interests without seeming to interrupt the continuity in the traditional systems of governance. These policies had lasting effects on the administration of Baluchistan because the succession of tribal intermediaries helped to stabilize and fragment the area: they provided a quick administrative control but also created tensions among the local populations, which was to continue through the next several decades, culminating in the establishment of Pakistan (Sayeed, 1980; Axmann, 2008).

By the treaty of 1876 and by the adhesion to the Sandeman System, the British were enabled to fulfill two purposes: they got strategic possession of the northwestern frontier of India without incurring excessive administrative liabilities. Meanwhile, the strengthening of tribal structures developed a form of government in Balochistan that was distinctively conditioned by the colonial interests, striking the right balance between official domination and local self-governance in a manner that guaranteed the ability to maintain the British presence. The cautious combination of direct and indirect control between Quetta and the broader territories

of Kalat is a representative example of the British method of frontier management, a blend of coercion, negotiation and co-option of the existing social arrangements (Breseeg, 2001; Aslam and Kazmi, 2015; Dashti, 2012).

Boundary Commissions and Territorial Fragmentation

The colonial policy of Britain in Balochistan did not only aim at securing the political domination but had a profound impact on the redefinition of the territorial borders in the region. The work of boundary commissions that were created by the British was one of the most important tools of this change, including the Goldsmith Boundary Commission in 1873 and the Durand Boundary Commission in 1896 (Axmann, 2008). These committees also had the responsibility of establishing the boundaries that existed between the British India and its neighbors; especially Iran and Afghanistan. Although all of these exercises were provided as administrative and strategic imperatives, their social, cultural, and political effects on the Baloch people were immense. The British drew borders whose territories were not historically, tribal or ethnically based and this disrupted highly established links to communities and weakened traditional land ownerships (Axmann, 2008; Dashti, 2012).

The Goldsmith Boundary Commission was mainly concerned with the demarcation of the frontier between the Khanate of Kalat and Persia to ensure that the British interests with regard to the region were secured in terms of trade and strategic control of the area (Sayeed, 1980). The Durand Boundary Commission however, addressed the northwestern boundary and especially the border between British India and Afghanistan. Geopolitical factors played a major role in these decisions as opposed to local facts, which was indicative of the larger British policy of frontier management. The British created fixed boundaries between regions that have always been characterized by the fluid tribal boundaries, disrupting centuries of patterns of movement, sharing of resources, and tribal relationships. This led to the Baloch people being split into various political territories with parts of same ethnicity and cultural group falling under different colonial and later national governments (Axmann, 2008).

These artificial borders were created with long-term consequences of the geopolitical and cultural environment of Balochistan. The Khanate had traditionally enjoyed sovereignty over a large contiguous territory, including those that would become Iran and Afghanistan and British India. International boundary, however, disintegrated Baloch people and weakened the territorial capacity of the Khanate and its power. Such divisions did not only weaken the political unity of the region but also complicated the process of preserving social and economic relations between tribes that had been divided by newly drawn borders. New administrative arrangements, colonial or national powers and alternative legal frameworks imposed new strata of bureaucracy and social stratification on communities that previously had been able to interact freely (Breseeg, 2001; Dashti, 2012).

Besides the political implications, which were felt immediately, these demarcations had symbolic connotations. The act of cutting the heart of Baluchistan by the British was a clear indication that the unity of the lands over the timeline of the country was secondary to imperial policy. Territorial fragmentation created a sense of displacement among the Baloch quelling grievances of marginality and the loss of traditional power. These territorial boundaries defined by the Goldsmith and Durand commissions formed the basis of future sovereignty, resource and ethnic disputes because they were inherited and strengthened by the future governments based on their colonial-era boundaries (Sayeed, 1980; Axmann, 2008).

On the whole, the British boundary policies turned Balochistan into a self-contained zone, which would be disintegrated into fragments along what could be called the lines with little regard to local conditions. These transformations demonstrate the larger trend of British imperial rule in which strategic and administrative

needs were placed above local organization and historical integrity. These policies still influence the politics of modern Balochistan, where the territorial fragmentation and ethnicity-based cross-border issues can still be the determinants of political processes, social unity, and relations among countries (Dashti, 2012; Breseeg, 2001). The artificial demarcation of the borders of Balochistan by the British changed not only the physical map of the country but the social structure of the country and its political future, leaving an indelible mark in the history and development of the region.

Political Awakening and Nationalist Mobilization

Towards the beginning of the twentieth century a new generation of Baloch youth who was politically aware started to oppose British rule and even domestic tribal hierarchy. Political meetings and sensitizations were held by activists like Mohammad Hussain Unqa, Abdul Aziz Kurd and Mir Yusuf Aziz Mugsi (Dashti, 2012; Axmann, 2008). A significant number of them were detained or put under surveillance.

The concepts of nationalism started picking up after World War I. A structured political movement was anchored on the formation of Anjuman-e-Ithihad-e-Baloch wa Balochistan in 1920s, later to be restructured into the Kalat State National Party (KSNP) in 1937 (Breseeg, 2001; Dashti, 2012). Leaders including Ghaus Baksh Bizenjo, Gul Khan Naseer, and Abdul Aziz Kurd were influenced by anti-imperialist and reformist ideas and did not approve of non-interference with the internal affairs of a state of Kalat and the Sardari system (Yaqubi and Ahmed, 2020).

The End of British Rule and the Question of Independence

The Balochistan political future was getting more unpredictable as the British were preparing to leave India after the Second World War ended. The looming colonial independence offered the region its opportunities as well as challenges that had always been having a semi-autonomous status under the British suzerainty. The Khan of Kalat believed in shifting political condition and tried to establish his sovereignty and gain the status of an independent state. In this endeavor, he tasked Mohammad Ali Jinnah who would come on to establish Pakistan to be his legal counselor so that he could move the case of Kalat to the British government (Kutty, 2009). The concept of the Khan was based on the historical precedent and the legal argument: the Khan focused on the treaties and agreements according to which the autonomy of Kalat had been previously recognized, and the state ought to decide on its political future in the context of the British withdrawal (Dashti, 2012).

Although these were done, the British government was very careful and did not want to totally support the claims of the Khan. Although they did concede to the memoranda presented by Kalat, they did not go any further as to formally recognizing independence or making a promise on the future of the Khanate. The British became more concerned with the overall process of decolonization, a smooth overhaul of power, and the assistance of the emerging states that would be able to preserve the situation in the region. This ambivalence was an expression of legal arguments by Kalat and strategic interests of the outgoing colonial government (Kutty, 2009).

The political confusion was also compounded by the deliberations of the Cabinet Mission of 1946 and the latter plan of partition that was announced on June 3, 1947. Both instruments also gave the princely states the autonomy to take more decisions on whether they would join India or Pakistan or technically, they would remain independent. The Khan of Kalat who was bent on preserving sovereignty engaged both in negotiations with the British officials and Pakistan movement leaders. Those debates were not only thorough but also characterized by legal reasoning, political bargaining, and maneuvering. The success of

these negotiations was not only vital to Kalat but to the political shape that South Asia was acquiring in a few weeks to come (Dashti, 2012; Kutty, 2009).

This was climactically reached on August 4, 1947 when a formal memorandum was signed between the Khan of Kalat and the British authorities and the leaders of the Pakistan movement. This memorandum made it that Kalat would gain its statehood on August 5, 1947 when the British suzerainty over the subcontinent would officially come to an end. This was an important claim of political agency on the part of the Khanate, a sign of its efforts to move through the colonial era into the era of self-determination in a swiftly changing regional environment. The independence declaration, however did not last long as further political events, such as a negotiation process, pressures by Pakistan would later on question the independence of Kalat and they would be absorbed as part of the newly formed state (Axmann, 2008; Dashti, 2012).

The years of the British withdrawal depict the complications of the decolonization process of smaller princely states in South Asia. The legal, historical and strategic factors that influenced Kalat to declare sovereignty were based on the aspirations of the local leadership as well as the geopolitical realities that were instilled by the termination of colonialism. Although the August 4, 1947, memorandum was the official effort to gain independence, it also highlighted the weak state of the princely states that were to keep their independence in the challenges of the newly formed national states and the wider regional forces (Kutty, 2009; Dashti, 2012). Here, the role of the Khan of Kalat in his relationships with British officials and Pakistani leaders in the examples of legal advocacy, diplomacy, and the demonstration of local power can be viewed as the example of the influence of legal advocacy and diplomacy, as well as the projection of the local power in a crucial situation in South Asian history.

CONCLUSION

The British colonial rule (1830-1947) of Balochistan reflects the trend of strategic intervention, indirect rule and gradual development of Balochistan politics that was rather characterized by the interests of the imperial power than the national development. As opposed to most other territories in British India which were annexed and administratively merged, Baluchistan had a unique colonial solution. The British were not interested in becoming absorbed in the region by being absorbed into a centralized provincial system. Rather, they sought a measured policy of domination in terms of treaties, military presence and political malt with the traditional structures being left intact and imperial domination being guaranteed.

The initial period of British action was strictly connected with the world geopolitics competition. The British grew more concerned about the stability of the north-western frontier of India because of the spread of the Tsarist Russia in Central Asia. Balochistan was considered as a buffer zone in this wider imperial struggle. It was not important because of the economic resources that it possessed but because of its geography. The possession of strategic routes, the use of ports like Jiwhani and the formation of military cantonments especially in Quetta was an indication of a policy of frontier that was aimed at safeguarding the British India against external aggressions. Colonial experiences in Balochistan therefore were not socio-economic but mostly military and diplomatic in nature.

The existence of internal divisions within the Khanate of Kalat also made it easier to be penetrated by British. Organizational conflicts such as tribal tensions, power transitions, and opposition to unity at the leadership level undermined the political unity in the territory. The British exploited these divisions and first by using military force and later by institutionalized indirect rule. This relationship was formalised in the Treaty of 1876, which accepted the jurisdiction of the Khan in domestic affairs but made foreign policy

and overall strategy subject to British control. This system enabled the colonial government to exert itself without having the encumbrances of direct rule.

The Sandeman system was introduced, and it produced a major change in the political arena. The British reconstructed internal power by empowering tribal chiefs, at the cost of the Khan. Sardars had their loyalty ensured through financial incentives, administrative recognition and military support. Although this strategy provided some stability according to the colonial outlook, it instilled division among the tribes, and it hindered the establishment of political institutions that would be centralized. The apparatus strengthened local powers and decreased the potential of the Khanate to be a unified state. Its long-term effects were not limited to the colonial period, as it impacted the politics culture of the region in the following decades.

Geopolitical positioning of Balochistan was also changed by territorial demarcations. The Durand and Goldsmith boundary commissions partitioned Baloch lands between Britain India, Iran and Afghanistan. These artificially created boundaries divided the Baloch community and destroyed the historical patterns of movement and interaction. The split did not just occur on a cartographic level but it reshaped economic connections, tribal affiliations, and political identities. It was by establishing artificial frontiers in the quest to gain imperial interests that the British established the spatial reality of Balochistan in a manner that has up to now dictated the regional politics.

Throughout these structural limitations, the beginning of the twentieth century saw the rise of political awareness among the educated Baloch youth. Other groups like the Anjuman-e-Ithihad-e-Baloch wa Balochistan and subsequently the Kalat State National Party were indications of the change in tribal politics towards political action. These movements were determined by the presence of larger-scale anti-colonial trends within British India and resisted both the British government and the internal feudal organization. Their autonomy and constitutional changes as well as opposition to the Sardari system marked the onset of the contemporary political mobilization in the region. Despite the fact that these attempts were usually repressed, they signified a great shift in the Baloch political thinking.

With the decline of the British power during and after the Second World War, the issue of the future of Balochistan has become a major one. These constitutional peculiarities of Kalat and other princely states made transfer of power complicated. The uncertainty of the status of Balochistan could be seen in negotiations between the Khan and British officials and leaders of newly formed states of India and Pakistan. The short proclamation of independence in August 1947 was a symbol of an effort to obtain sovereignty after decades of indirect colonial rule. However, this situation was predetermined by the same formations developed during the British rule: separated lands, disunited government, and restricted institutionalization.

Reflectively, the British colonialism in Balochistan was rather a transformation oriented strategy management. British needed stability and frontier security and not social reform and economic modernization. Of their policies were the maintenance of tribal hierarchies, the reestablishment of frontiers, and the constitutionalization of indirect rule. These actions served the short run interests of the empire, but failed to resolve tensions that existed in the political system of the region.

This era is critical to the interpretation of the subsequent history of Balochistan. The colonial past did not just cease in 1947 but it remained in play in the political relations, the administrative structures, and concerns of autonomy. This indirect rule, division of boundaries and strategic marginalization experience defined the goals and the obstacles in the aftermath of independence.

Overall, the Balochistan colonial period was an eventful yet complicated period. It was the era of extrinsic competition, bargained power, and internal adaptation. Although British authority transformed British politics in the area, it did that by way of mechanisms that were able to retain some of the traditional forms despite new sovereignty. The outcome was a hybrid system of politics that had far-reaching implications beyond the period when the empire came to an end and still has a significant impact on the Balochistan history and politics.

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