ABSTRACT

The main objective of the study is to explore the social and cultural values assessed in the typical abstract way as guiding principles in Baloch people life to achieve development. The present study is an attempt to investigate the process of social change among the Baloch. These values are about in religion, roles of men and women, the educational systems, family forms, technology, community development and the environment. It is assumed that they have effects on social and economic development of Baloch society and how the Balochi customs and traditions become an identity lead to its symbolization.

Keywords: Social change, Modernity, Development, Baloch, Globalization.

INTRODUCTION AND CONCEPT

Change is such an evident feature of social reality that any social-scientific theory, whatever its conceptual starting point, must sooner or later address it. At the same time it is essential to note that the ways social change has been identified have varied greatly in the history of thought. Furthermore, conceptions of change appear to have mirrored the historical realities of different epochs in large degree.

Contemporary theories of social change have become more generalized in order to explain far-reaching processes of change in past and present. In a review of contemporary theories of change, Hermann
Stressor and Susan C. Randall have identified the following attributes for these changes: "magnitude of change, time span, direction, rate of change, amount of violence involved".

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Sociological research methods which include visual methods, narrative of Baloch people, socio-economic survey, participant observation, key informant and in-depth interviews, ethnography social network, other qualitative inputs and secondary data., were used to collect empirical data.

Socio-Cultural Status of Baloch People

The Balochs inhabit the area historically known as Baluchistan, located between the Iranian plateau and the Indian lowland, north of the Gulf of Oman, south of River Helmand. This area is today divided between Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran, but until recently, the Baluch regularly moved unhindered across the borders. There are also Baloch communities in Oman, UAE and other countries. It has been historically contested by the global forces of geo-politics. Baluchistan occupies a great strategic importance for the whole region.

Iran, with an estimated 75 million people, is ethnically, linguistically, and religiously diverse. Sistan and Balochistan Province is an ethnicity-residing province that has a specific geographic situation. Neighbourhood with Afghanistan and Pakistan and the location of its south border on the coasts of Oman Sea has extremely affected its cultural and social structures. With regard to culture Sistan and Balochistan is a part of two united cultural areas including i.e. Sistan cultural area and Balochistan cultural area, since a long time ago. Political divisions and interventions of foreign countries in this division in the past has resulted in the division of the cultural areas of the said unit in the land and administrative-geographic borders into two parts and each one is located in the area of another country.

Although these divisions and political separations have been performed in the past it didn’t avoid the ethnic-cultural bonds across the borders and sometimes depending on the unstable economic and political conditions of the neighbouring countries. So, today we may not ignore this fact that Baloch and Balochi culture has been expanded in two sides of Iranian-Afghanistan border, and Iran-Pakistani border. This cultural expansion has created socioeconomic bonds in the recent decades, and it may be one of the most essential elements affecting the current social-cultural status of the province.

Such bonds as the exchanging and trading interactions to abroad may be assumed as the strong points and advantageous and in the event of the expansion of illegal and informal traffic networks, they may be deemed as the weak points and threats for the province. Therefore, the historical, ethnic and cultural characteristics of the province are a double-edged blade which should be applied in the economic, social and cultural development process delicately and carefully and any disregard to this fact may be risky.
The Baloch perceive their separateness from other groups as founded on practices and values grouped under the expression *rasm-e-Baloch* (Baloch custom), which includes the idea of honor, individual autonomy, hospitality, and the protection of the women in one’s family.

The Baloch perceive of themselves as hardy survivors, able to walk great distances without regard to heat or cold; fearless warriors, ready to put themselves at risk to fight for their property and their honor, for the lineages and their tribes, for booty and for profit; and as loyal lineage mates, providing solidarity and support to members of their lineage.

Tribal and patriarchic-oriented structure and caste classification has expressed positive and negative reactions to the modernist wave, development of infrastructures as well as relative welfare within 4 recent decades.

The positive reflections of this encounter may include the relative upraise of social indices than the past, benefitting from education and health and in general entry of symbols and modern life tools in the province community, nevertheless still most of the population lives in villages, in spite of the expansion of cities and increase of urban population, rural population forms 51% of the province’s population.

**Identity and Modernity; Continuity and Change**

Contemporary societies are being reconfigured by new technologies, cultural forms and experiences that go hand in hand with economic, social and political transformations. Iranian Balochistan has undergone significant socio-economic change in recent decades. Perhaps the most pronounced development has been the emergence of new urban regions, and the demographic, social and linguistic transformations associated with them.

It is notable that an important cultural-social opportunity has been created currently in the province particularly in Zahedan. Social and cultural systems of two major province areas (Sistan and Balochistan) have been combined in Zahedan. Generally the challengeable coexistence of tradition and modernity generally and particularly cultural system based on “community” and “society”, and the permanent interrelations and challenges of both mentalities have provided the opportunity for learning, interacting or what is known as “social learning” in the social psychology, besides the conflicts created in this mixed cultural context. For instance there is a conflict or competition between sensational and rational actions in Zahedan that if it is administrated through enforcing the required cultural policies appropriately, the requirements may be provided for getting beyond this situation.

As a result, if the social-cultural characteristics of the province particularly in Balochistan are utilized correctly and in an effective interaction, then it will advance the province’s development and so the social-cultural health is achieved and the stresses and ethnic-cultural differences will be adjusted. A proof for this subject is the implicit influence of Baloch on the trade and business through this way. By means of proper management and policy-making, the abnormal consequences arising out of this mentality may be adjusted.
and utilized towards the growth of safe commercial and investing activities for development of Balochistan.

The global flow of culture is certainly not a one-way street, but may be interpreted rightly as ‘a global intercultural interplay’. As in the case of Balochi culture for instance, their music, their literature, their spirituality, or healing methods.

The myth of the Motherland is an important symbol around which one’s identity is defined in opposition to the “other”. The right of peoples to the place where their ancestors had been settled for generations is connected with the right to self-determination. Aligning themselves with powerful races and cultures, a common descent from such people is proposed to boast a higher connection or exalted socio-cultural status.

Formation of modern Balochi identity causes a substantial change in meaning implications of Balochi customs and traditions. By formation of this identity, gradually the Balochi customs and traditions are no longer expressing Balochi lifestyle, but they transform to signs of Balochi identity that the Balochies were observing to realize their Balochi identity and by word of Pierre Bourdieu their “differentiation”. When Balochi customs and traditions were a part of Balochi life, people had no specific identity awareness toward them, they were wearing Balochi clothes to protect their body from heat, coldness and other’s look or they participated in music ceremonies to enrich their spirit and to forget life difficulties for a while and even the name of this music for them was not “Balochi music”, but the whole music was that, because they had access to no other kind of music to name it Balochi music for distinguishing that among other types. The Balochi customs and traditions becoming an identity lead to its symbolization.

In new situation, Balochi customs and traditions find a symbolic function specifying the boundary between (we) and (they); we, the Balochies and they, non-Balochies, that is how speaking in Balochi language, listening to Balochi music, selecting a unique ringtone for cell-phone, eating Balochi dishes in urban modern life, using Balochi appliances for interior decoration become signs, the signs indicating loyalty to political-social identity style which is Balochi identity. Therefore, symbolized customs and traditions provides this possibility for Balochies that by observing them they can express their belongingness to a community or being different to other communities.

Whereas social identities are changeable, dynamic and subject to modification over time, in the process of Balochi modern identity formation not all customs at a time but those which, according to historical-social conditions, bear potential for changing, getting up-to-date and keeping boundaries to insiders and outsiders, get a symbolic form and develop to the level of identity code. Once clothing becomes the main sign of identity and another time to speak the native language.

Development of central governments of Iran in Balochistan which becomes serious from Qajar era led to an end for seclusion and egoism of Balochistan. From this time, the Balochies gradually confront others and outsides who are wearing different clothes and speak to a different language and sometimes they act
violently and are seeking to capture their land, the land that for several centuries a special political-social discipline has dominated.

In-sympathized presence of Iranian central governments in Balochistan led to formation and institutionalization of Balochi modern identity. This new identity is a newborn issue which has its specific characters and formations while having correlations with Balochi traditional identity. In order to integrate, the Balochi modern identity passes nomadic and local boundaries and provides a unity by the axis of land, clothing, language and common culture between Balochies.

In order to symbolize itself and to specify its boundary from other identities, the Balochi modern identity symbolizes Balochi customs and traditions, the customs and traditions which were a part of old Balochi lifestyle lacking identity reasons and now they become symbolized area of Balochi identity that everyone can display by observing them. However, this doesn’t mean reducing Balochi modern identity to customs and traditions, but its special role of Balochi customs and traditions in their specific potential that they can transform to symbolic aspect of their identity and since the symbols evoke a sense of common belongingness, each time they are observed, they express belongingness to a “community”. Thus, symbolized customs and traditions provide Balochies with this possibility to join Balochi modern identity and display their indifference to that.

CONCLUSION

Formation of modern Balochi identity causes a substantial change in meaning implications of Balochi customs and traditions. Customs and traditions symbolized area of Balochi identity. In the era of modern globalising technology, knowledge economy, economic power and competitive advantages of any modern organization lie in its intellectual capabilities instead of its fixed assets. Since recent years, electronic media and especially social network has been a continually changing forum for communicating, which has been taken up by the Baloch communities to maintain connections with their brethren all over the world. In that capacity, the technology has been an easy and innovative avenue for cultural expression

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