

Chapter 65

Current Trends of Education and Social Change in Balochistan: A Sociological Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This article focuses on the current trends of education and social change in Balochistan. This article aims to point out the issues related to globalization and geopolitical changes around the region. Balochistan is the most backward area in terms of social development in Pakistan, as it has tribal societies. The political turmoil and war in Afghanistan has been present since 1979, and has brought refugees and donor agencies into the province. This article highlights the importance of understanding the impact of social change in Balochistan. The modes of employment and economic activities have witnessed major changes. Education has played a crucial role in bringing about social change in Balochistan, as it is evident in many ways in the context of employment patterns. A large number of people are now in jobs which required a certain level of education, when compared to three decades ago. It is vital to understand the very dynamics of social change at this crucial juncture, when rapid social changes are taking place.

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INTRODUCTION

A sociological analysis of current trends of education and social change in Balochistan demands consideration of different aspects. The province of Balochistan presents an interesting scenario in the context of geography, population, urbanization, and social structure, as these factors influence the process of social change. The present study covers the salient sociocultural features of Balochistan and the current trends of education as well as social change in Balochistan.

GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES OF BALOCHISTAN

Balochistan is the largest province of Pakistan in terms of geographical area, and the smallest in terms of population. It is spread over an area of 347,190 km², i.e., almost 44% of Pakistan's total area. The population of the province is approximately 33.16 million, while Pakistan's population exceeds 200 million (World Factbook - CIA, 2017).

The four geographical characteristics of the province are:

1. Upper highlands
2. Lower highlands
3. Plains
4. Deserts

The upper highlands are in the central and east-central part of the province. The lower highlands include the Sulaiman range in the east, Kirthar and Pab ranges in the south, and Chagai, Kharan, and Makran ranges in the west (Hughes, 2002).

The geographical pattern of the province has direct bearing on the communication system of the respective province as well as social change. About 35% of an entire network of national highways of Pakistan pass through Balochistan (Dehwar, 1994).

The total black topped roads in the province are 2148 kilometers, and single roads are 17098 kilometers. The province has huge potential for development of fisheries, tourism and seaports (Hussain, 2007). The location of Balochistan serves as a hub in the communication system, as it provides ample opportunities and potential for the social change and educational development. Balochistan is the most thinly populated province (Khalid, 2005).

SOCIO-CULTURAL, ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY IN BALOCHISTAN

The three major ethnic groups of people live in different regions of the province. These groups are, Baloch (46%), Pashtun (42%), Brahui (21%), the remaining 12% comprises of Brahui, Hazara, Punjabi, Sindhi, and other settlers like Turkmens and Uzbeks. In Balochistan, the Hindu portion of the population is small. They are found only in larger towns and seaports. Their numbers are said to be greater in Qalat (Hughes, 2002).

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