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Media as mirror: A case study of Daily Qasid (From 1963 to 1964).

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ABSTRACT

The newspapers that emerged in Balochistan immediately after 1947 ushered a new era in journalistic traditions in the province. Those were regarded as the pioneers of print media in this part of the country. The daily Qasid was one of them. Delving into its archaic record for a mirror impression of the then Balochistan, offered a pertinent subject of study with regard to nature of news, of course under difficult circumstances, development process, communication and media scenarios. The paper attempts to shed light on the media coverage of a newspaper that had to carry out its mission against the backdrop of the One-Unit controversy whereby Balochistan was merged into West Pakistan through the mechanism of One-Unit in 1955 and renamed as Quetta-Kalat Division. General Ayub Khan was ruling the country with an iron fist. So, the media was practically suffocating in worst kinds of censorship. On the other hand, dismantling provinces in favor of a combined unit called West Pakistan was viewed by the respective people of the provinces as act of eroding their identity in favour of assimilation. Therefore the year selected for the study i.e 1963-1964, as mirrored by the daily Qasid, depicted not only the media but the overall imagery of a province striving for dismemberment of One-Unit and restoration of its territorial identity. The year under study also exposed how the newspapers were required to observe strict censorship code and follow the official line. However, Balochistan succeeded in restoration of its Provincial status after much sacrifices and the media thwarted the prolonged yoke of censorship in 1970 when the provinces were restored by dismembering One Unit. The study focuses on the role and survival strategies of daily Qasid Quetta.

Introduction:

Daily Qasid was one of the newspapers launched after partition, its pages serve as a mirror reflecting the society existed in the early 60's. The nature of government policies, politics, development, journalism and culture could be traced through daily Qasid. The current study aims to revisit the pages of Daily Qasid published during 1963 to 1964 to see it as a mirror reflecting the society. The common people have the right to know about the working of their government. People want to be aware of the happenings around them and it is because of media that the people are aware of what is happening around them. Media is a mirror of the society. It not only bridges the gap between the government and the general public but also provides information about what is happening in other parts of the world. (The Nation, 2010). The relationship of the press with the government primarily depends on the existing political order. In countries, which espouse liberal democracy, the press has evolved as an independent institution (the fourth estate) acting as a moderator or watchdog on behalf of the public (<http://www.iosrjournals.org>, 2014).

Balochistan an overview.

Balochistan is the largest province of Pakistan covering 44 percent of country's territory. Bordering with Iran and Afghanistan where the Baloch population also resides apart from that it has a very long sea coast with access to the Middle Eastern and Gulf states. Balochi, Pashto and Brahui are the three major languages of Balochistan (Siddiqi, 2012).

Before the Britishers, Balochistan was a dispersed society. There was no proper concept of state authority it was not visible in the tribal social life. The local tribes controlled the power and control internally.

Various forces for example Persian, Afghan, Sindhi, and Sikh invaded the region from time to time, but no one could control the tribes (Wirsing, 1981, p. 4). It was only in the eighteenth century that the sixth Khan of Kalat, Nasir Khan, established a unified Baloch army of 25,000 men and 1,000 camels and organized the major Baloch tribes under an agreed military and administrative system (Harrison, 1981).

Very soon the Britishers started dividing Balochistan into 7 parts using rival chiefs of various tribes against each other. One-fourth area was given to Persia by Goldsmid line in 1871, which divided Balochistan in the far west while Durand line divided Balochistan further by giving a huge area to Afghanistan in 1893. Another part of Balochistan was named British Balochistan to be administered centrally by British India, while the remaining part of Kalat state was divided among three puppet principalities. (Harrison, 1981).

Noori Naseer Khan appointed several administrators assigning them various tasks like management of internal affairs, foreign affairs, revenue collection from the lands, blood compensation, tributes etc. Kalat state had flaws in its structure despite the reforms made by Noori Naseer Khan. There was no proper bureaucracy to handle the tribes. The tribes were the fighting force to fight with the enemies when needed, awarded with land grants for the supply of troops and maintenance of order. There was a huge tension between the Khan and the tribal chiefs despite the efforts to create political unity. (Hewitt, 1996, p. 50) .

In 1884 after capturing Balochistan the Britishers exploited the tension between the Khanate and the local tribes which had terrible results. The Khan agreed to give a safe passage to the Britishers to move from Sindh to Afghanistan but could not control the tribes who were against them. As a

result, the British attacked Kalat with the justification that the attacks by the tribes is violation of the treaty and Khan was killed after resisting to surrender and the Kalat state was dismembered (Swidler, 1977, p. 91).

Due to the geo strategic importance of Balochistan the British administration showed keen interest in the region. It wanted to create a buffer states in the extreme north-western areas to stop any movement by the Russian's (Shah, 2013).

The power of the Khanate of Kalat declined after Nasir Khan I and the nineteenth century brought the British into Balochistan. The Great Britain's interest in reaching Balochistan was because of its rival the Russian Empire. Since Balochistan bordered Afghanistan, which bordered with Central Asia where the Russians were slowly and gradually expanding. (Scholz, 2002, p. 90). Moreover, the government of Pakistan started exploiting the Sardari system, a game which the British had played so effectively in order to keep Balochistan under control. Pakistan pressured the two states of the Kalat confederacy, Kharan and Lasbela and the district of Makran, to join Pakistan. The official document of accession with Pakistan was signed on 21 March 1948 by the rulers of Kharan, Makran and Lasbela states. (Khan, 2001, p. 58).

An agreement was signed between British Empire, The Kalat state and Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Liaqat Ali Khan representing the future government of Pakistan on August 4th 1947 in a Round Table Conference. They agreed that the Kalat State will get independence on August 5th 1947, restoring its status as it was in 1838 with good relations with its neighbors (Talbot, 1988, p. 49).

When the Khan of Kalat visualized British withdrawal, he decided to plead the case of his state independence on legal grounds. The

Khan also asserted again over the leased areas and the states of Lasbela, Kharan and Mekran. Surprisingly, it was Jinnah who supported Khan's stance before the Cabinet Mission. Top Pakistani leadership seemed ambitious to make the Kalat state as its part due to its geo-strategic and geo-economic significance. It changed its mindset and expressed the intention of unconditional accession of the Kalat state to Pakistan. In order to exert pressure and isolate the Khanate, the government of Pakistan decided the accession of the states of Kharan, Mekran and Lasbela. The Khan succumbed to the pressure tactics and finally signed an instrument of accession (Shah, 2013).

A brief introduction of initial phase of Journalism in Balochistan.

In order to understand the genesis of Journalism in Balochistan, we need to consult the history, socio-political development and the transformation of society from nomadism to tribal state and onward. The pioneering phase had started with the introduction of printing press such as Victoria press, Albert press (1888) etc. This period was also characterized with the extension of Indian Press Act, 1867, which was promulgated in 1938 (Naghmana, 2006, p. 132).

The Britishers never wanted the local people to enter into the field of journalism, while they trusted the Parsi community which was residing in Quetta. The Britishers were of the opinion that Parsi's are very limited in numbers and can be controlled easily as compared to the locals in case of any revolt. It was a mile stone as the people of Balochistan got the right of press and thereby to express. As a follow up a number of publications were brought out such as the Monthly Balochistan Advertiser (1888), Border Weekly, Balochistan Herald, Quetta Times, The Trademan etc. etc. In short, the

advent of journalism in the sub-continent started with the arrival of the Britishers, while in Balochistan regular journalism began with the departure of Britishers, during this period there were about 15 publications in English, distributed free to people and were without advertisements (Naghmana, 2006, p. 140).

Balochistan was in fact an area with no scope for journalism due to its negligible literacy and very small readership. Then the aim was to voice popular feelings of Balochistan in a literate way. Beside that it was also desired to convey Balochistan's political grievances to the colonial masters initially. The tone of the journalism was that of resistance and criticism, on one hand, and sensitization of people, on the other. The endeavor was of rudimentary nature but this period laid the foundation of a bold, vocal and aggressive press. It was not without a cost as the pioneering era was an era of sacrifices and sufferings (Baloch, 2014, pp. 97-98).

According to Baloch (2014) the era was also characterized with the introduction of Radio Pakistan, National Press Trust and introduction of infamous regulations imposing censorship and chains on the press. Through parity doctrine, "One Unit" was imposed in 1955 liquidating the provinces. Resultantly Balochistan was in a way written off through this provocative political move. The creation of "One Unit" marks the beginning of another era characterized with new crises swinging from political protests to arm struggle. It was a very difficult time for the political workers and the indigenous media of Balochistan. It is believed that the events of the "One Unit" period had engraved permanent scars to the relations of province and federation that influenced the subsequent times adversely. In the wake of political turbulence, the nascent media of Balochistan suffered along with the people.

State of Media during the era when Qasid was published.

Pakistan's history is peppered with incidents of centralized control, repression and censorship that have left their marks on the character of this emergent 21st century news media (Dawn, 2019). According to Rudin (2002, p. 18) from its beginnings, journalism was seen by the establishment as a threat to its existence, or at the very least those holding power in society were alarmed that their actions might be challenged and that this would have unforeseen consequences. Indeed, the idea of the masses having access to information and ideas terrified those at the top of society.

Controlled journalism existed during pre-partition which later shifted to post partition era where criticizing government policies was treated as a threat. From the creation of Pakistan till Ayub Khan's martial law people who came into power tried to suppress journalism where a number of newspapers had to close. As a result of martial law, Press and Publication Ordinance was implemented and National Press Trust was formed. The bureaucracy right after the creation of Pakistan started to suppress the press. (Naghmana, 2006). In 1948 Mir Muhammad Hassan Nizami's newspaper Akhbar-e-Balochistan which was published from Quetta was closed after few issues printed and its press was seized for criticizing government. Practicing journalism in such environment was very challenging. The newspaper publishers, editors, writers associated with the field were very well aware of the fact that criticizing the policies of the rulers will lend them in hot waters.

Abdul Samad Durrani was arrested under Public Safety Act in 1950 at that time he was weekly Istaqlal's editor with his arrest the publication which was started in 1938 closed forever. In 1948 Muslim Leagues propaganda secretary and Muslim Students

Federations' representative Fazal Ahmed Ghazi who was editor of Al Islam and Khursheed was arrested as a result Khursheed and Al Islam was closed forever. Nawa-e-Watan of Ghulam Muhammad Shahwani was forced to close when he disclosed the source of a letter which he published in his newspaper he was arrested and fined and the publication was closed forever (Qazalbash, 1997).

To control the communist influence an agreement was signed between America and Pakistan soon after that communist parties were banned in the country and poets, intellectuals, writers, active labor leaders were arrested who were the supporters of leftist groups and were sent to prison without trails people arrested from Balochistan included correspondent Daily Imroze Anjum Qazalbash, Zamrud Hussain, both were associated with the editorial board of Chiltan, and Kamil ul Qadiri and Chiltan was closed under Public Safety Act. (Naghmana, 2006).

The editor of weekly Ithead, Javid Malik and Hafiz ur Rehman Siddiqi were arrested in 1959 for publishing a news related to transfer of an Army officer and Ithead was closed. In 1960 weekly Meesaq ul Haq whose editor was Abdul Rehman Ghour was closed under Press and Publication Ordinance. In 1960 editor of another weekly Sarbaan Malik Muhammad Ramzan was sent to prison for publishing an article against the landlords of Quetta-Kalat division.

Maulana Abdul Baqi Durkhani the editor of monthly Maulim was asked to apply for declaration under Press and Publication Ordinance which he did but due to his weak financial position his request for deceleration was turned down and his publication in this way the publication which ran for 12 years finally closed for ever. (Ahmed, 1978). Another weekly named Jamalistan published from Ustha

Muhammad in 1959 was ordered to shout down after publishing an article lifted from a Lahore based newspaper criticizing Martial law. In 1960 Fazal Ahmed Ghazi was once again arrested under Public Safety Regulation and his Pashto weekly Gulistan which was started in 1957 was closed. (Ahmed, 1978).

On 17th July 1954 weekly Paigam-e-Jadeed and monthly Pashto were closed for a year under Public Safety Act (Shahwani, 1954). After coming to power, Yahya's first major political action was the dissolution of One Unit of West Pakistan on 1st July 1970 and ipso facto the abolition of parity between the two wings i.e East Pakistan and West Pakistan. (Kutty, 2009, p. 139).

According to Khan (2001) it was Baloch nationalists who first introduced Baloch society to print media. They used print media which was the only available medium at that time for disseminating their view point to the public to form their opinion against the Britishers.

Formation of Daily Group and Qasid.

Till 1960's Balochistan had no daily newspapers when Akhtar Hussain the then Governor of West Pakistan visited Balochistan he felt the need of daily newspapers he suggested to make a pool of those publications which were coming out on weekly basis and stressed to publish their weeklies on various days of week in order to provide news and information to the public on daily basis so weekly publications were assigned a specific day in a week to publish. Publications included Zamana, Nara-e-Haq, Meezan, Pasbaan, Qasid, and Pukaar were combined and Daily Group was formed now they used to be published on a specific day assigned to them rather publishing on a same day. Akhtar Hussain became its Chairman while Syed Fasih Iqbal became its secretary. The idea was appreciated by the American Time magazine and published a

news related to Daily Group named it Package Deal. Best thing about the Daily Group was that publications of various school of thoughts came under one umbrella with the aim to provide information to the public on daily basis rather on weekly basis (Niazai, 1992).

The scheme lasted for one and a half year later some of the publications who were part of daily group became dailies in this way the daily group lost its importance and ended.

Early Phase of Daily Qasid.

Journalism in Balochistan from its beginning in 1888 till 1947 had been through an uncomfortable journey. During British rule the initially the locals were not allowed to enter into the field of journalism they were of the opinion that if they started using this platform they would definitely use it against them. Later after the implementation of Indian Press Act of 1867 promulgated in 1937 locals were able to launch their own publications.

Qasid was one of the newspapers launched after the creation of Pakistan it was the time when journalism as a mission was losing its objectives and the commercial interests were more visible. Pre-partition newspapers were launched with the aim to aware the public about the harsh policies of Britishers, to unite them for their due rights and those making way for creation of an independent state were also using press as an important tool.

Daily Qasid was started as a Urdu weekly in 1953 by Fateh Muhammad Khan Bareach. It was launched as a representative of Jamae-e-Islami. After two years of its launch Taj Muhammad Naeem became its editor in 1955 till that time the publication was not so regular (Ahmed, 1978, p. 104).

In 1956 Ibrahim Khalil bought Qasid and made it an unbiased publication, for seven years it was weekly. He worked very hard and finally converted it to a daily on 10th

May 1963. After independence it was 4th and after one unit it was 3rd daily. (Naghmana, 2006, p. 267).

Ibrahim Khalil started his career from Daily Ethad as columnist he also worked as proof reader and news writer, for some time he worked as correspondent for Tehseem a Lahore based publication. From the day he got the ownership of Qasid till the end he was its editor. Kamal ud Din Ahmed, Maqbool Rana, Abdul Samad Durrani was also associated with Qasid as its editorial staff. As weekly Qasid was published on 20x30 4 size as daily while as weekly it was published on 20x30 8 size paper.

According to Ibrahim Khalil (1997) from day one Qasid's language was Urdu and was printed from Islimia Press. Qasid had its own printing press where treadle machines were installed which used to print government assignments. The newspaper was meant to address common man. Kamal ud Din Ahmed used to look after the office as well as headed the editing section while Abdul Samad Durrani used to write editorials and Ibrahim Khalil was there to manage financial section along with managing public relations. (Khalil I., 1997). Qasid was closed during General Zia's martial law according to Ibrahim Khalil there were few columns and an editorial in which Zia's martial law was criticized due to which the publication was closed in 1977. Later it reappeared in 1987-88 as a weekly but faced difficulties to survive hardly only twice it could be published it worked in the same manner for seven or eight months but then closed for ever. Its press was also facing crisis as government work was no more given to its press so the press was going in loss so finally it was sold (Khalil I., 1985). It was a very tough period for journalism when censorship was at its peak during 80's. Newspapers suffered while facing financial loss, press was struggling hard for its survival. It was during Ayub

Khan's era when Qasid was achieving success, his policies were highlighted by Qasid but at the same time according to Ibrahim Khalil during the last days of Ayub Khan's regime Qasid was part of the anti-government movement (Naghmana, 2006, p. 270).

Daily Qasid as mirror 1963-1964.

Media reflects the society in which it is working. Newspapers are the most important source of communicating the past through its pages which documents the everyday activities. Studying the pages of Daily Qasid one can get clear idea about the era in which it was published and the environment existed. After the introduction of One Unit the provinces lost its status and the country was administratively divided into two parts i.e. East Pakistan and West Pakistan. The administrative head of this region was called Commissioner Quetta Division who had all the powers. The era was a very difficult one in terms of freedom of press, there was a strict censorship policy for journalism.

Format of Daily Qasid.

The daily Qasid had 4 pages and 7 columns printed on newsprint its size when it became daily was 20x30 having mast head on upper right hand as one can see the mastheads of the current newspapers. Its annual price was 50 Rupees and the publication was approved by the Education Department as reflected on its masthead which reflects the authorizing authority of that time for publications.

Photographs and Pictorial Display.

The photographs were black and white while occasionally mono colors like green, blue and red were used to distinguish the edition from the routine ones. The photographs used were mostly portraits of the prominent figures mostly those representing the ruling

party i.e. Muslim League, President Ayub Khan, Federal Minister for Information and other figures. These photos were repeatedly used by Qasid on different days. While there were also photos of events like photos of visits, speeches etc. but those were not used frequently. All the prominent names of that time could be seen in daily Qasid whose photos are no more available. The photographs were sometimes placed on a full page with captions. The newspaper published during 1963 contained editorial cartoons related to social issues drawn by Iqbal as seen through name mentioned on the cartoons. Those cartoons were missing from Qasid published in 1964.

Content of News.

News published in Daily Qasid during 1963-1964 was mostly related to President where most of the lead headlines were the statements of Ayub Khan related to Kashmir issue, preparation for war incase India attacked, secondly news related to the activities or statements made by the then Commissioner Quetta Division Mr. Anwar Adil as he was the in charge of the province after the introduction of One Unit scheme. Thirdly the news of Muslim League, the ruling party representatives were published on the front page of the newspaper. While some of the headlines were related to international issues.

Editorials.

Editorials published by Qasid were written by Ibrahim Khalil himself. Most of the editorials were of two columns while sometimes it occupied single a column. The editorials were mainly supporting government policies on various issues including Kashmir issue or addressing the issue of distribution of advertisements to newspapers. The editorial policy of Qasid was pro government keeping in view

situation prevailed during that time. It also highlighted social issues of Balochistan like the labor issues, water shortage, development related editorials where suggestions were presented to the concerned authorities.

Reflection of Journalism.

The state of journalism could also be easily gauged through the pages of Daily Qasid published during 1963-64. The government's policies towards journalists and journalism reflected in daily Qasid through its editorials and statements of government officials. A statement by Federal Minister for Information Ghulam Nabi Memon published as a lead headline in daily Qasid on November 15th 1963 saying "Only those newspapers will get government advertisements who will support the government policies and do its publicity" (Daily Qasid, 1963). The statement is the true reflection of government efforts to control the newspapers on the condition to obey the government directives and publish content that favors them.

Another news related to the rates of newsprint was published mentioning that the government rates are not acceptable to the newspapers. An editorial published on 20th November 1963 in Daily Qasid addressing the Federal Minister for Information to consider the request to issue tender notices to the smaller newspapers rather providing all the tenders to the big newspapers who are already well established. The smaller newspapers will suffer if such policy continued. The editorial further mentioned that those small newspapers should be given priority those support the government. Another editorial discussed the need for practicing ethical journalism keeping aside biasedness and blackmailing.

Political activities coverage.

Muslim League the ruling party was given full coverage in the newspaper specially on its front page almost on daily basis. The lead headlines also carried news related to Muslim league. Qasid supported the ruling party by praising its policies.

Advertisements and its nature.

The Daily Qasid contained advertisements in the form of classifieds with limited text. The advertisements were mostly of coal mines, marble mines, banks, medicine stores, beverages making factories, weapon shops, cigarettes, advertisements of movies played in cinemas, hotels, radio repair shops, shifa khanas etc. These advertisements neither had proper dedicated space nor specific size. Sometimes the advertisements were smaller in size while on the other days the same advertisement was given a bigger space due to more blank space available on that particular day. The advertisements appeared in Daily Qasid helps us to know about the nature of business available at that time. Advertisements of weapons and cigarettes are completely banned by the government and one cannot find such advertisements in current newspapers. The tender notices of government also published in Qasid but were not frequent.

Special editions.

Daily Qasid also published special editions on special occasions, while going through its 1963 and 1964 publications few special editions were seen. Sibi festival which is still celebrated every year where domesticated animals of various breeds are displayed for the interest of buyers along with other activities. Qasid published full page announcement of beginning of Sibi festival to the day when festival started in

the last week of February, a glossy page was dedicated for Sibi festival on 29th February 1964 to mark its importance. It also published special editions on 23rd March and on Pakistan's Independence Day on 14th March.

Announcements.

Announcements related to upcoming events were also published in the newspaper like the Jacobabad horse show, a full page was given to the announcement. Other announcements included Pakistan Eastern Railway schedule and the announcements of middle school exams along with the result and marks of the students. The newspaper was also part of election campaign of Mian Muhammad Sumro who was contesting for Provincial Assembly from Jacobabad, Qasid's publisher personally actively participated in the campaign by publishing full page poster supporting Mian Muhammad Sumro.

Women Page.

A space was reserved for women where writeups by women were published on weekly basis, one can have a clear idea about the women writers of that time and their writing skills. Like men, women also contributed in newspapers through their columns.

Children Page.

A page was reserved for children which carried stories, articles about children and their education. It also contained jokes for kids.

Conclusion

Most of the newspapers coming out at that time were noncommercial and expenses were managed by the owners. Qasid appeared after patriation when journalism in

Balochistan switching from mission to commercial endeavor. The press which was on the forefront for getting a new state forcing Britishers to quit the region, once it achieved its goal the press started focusing on the activities and policies of newly created country's government. Some newspapers remained very active in criticizing governments for their wrong policies thinking that no reaction would come from the government but soon they faced hardships in the form of censorship and arrest of journalists. Qasid was also part of that era but soon realized that pro government policy would help Qasid to grow by avoiding any penalty or imprisonment by the government.

However, Qasid actively participated in movement against Ayub Khan's government where it openly criticized him through editorials and columns at the last phase of his government. Qasid during 1963-1964 throughout supported the government by being pro-government newspaper which could be easily judged by the news it published. There was a straight forward policy of the government regarding issuance of advertisements to the newspapers that only those newspapers would get advertisements who will support the government policies. Qasid did the same to avoid any financial loss. Majority of the news published were related to General Ayub Khan, Muslim League and the then Commissioner Quetta Division Mr. Anwar Adil. News related to them got prominent place on the first page of newspaper mostly the lead headlines.

Newspaper carried classified advertisements though the size of advertisements varied according to the available space. There was no proper concept of advertisements at that time so the content was text based with few sentences. The advertisements were of coal mines, marble mines, movies, cigarettes, hotels, weapons and banks. Government

tenders were also published from time to time subject to availability. There existed a policy of distributing government advertisements to big newspapers while the smaller ones with limited circulation could not get due share which was reflected in Qasid's editorials. The Daily Qasid serves as a mirror that reflects the society, politics, development and journalism practiced at that time. One can easily revisit the past by going through daily Qasid.

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