

## QUESTION

What are the main barriers to effective governance in Balochistan?

## ANSWER

### INTRODUCTION

Balochistan is the largest province of Pakistan by land. It is located in the south-western region of the country. Geographically, the province holds a strategic location. To the west, it shares a border with Iran, while to the north, it is bounded by Afghanistan. Towards the south, it stretches along the Arabian Sea, where the sea-port of Gwadar is situated. Moreover, Balochistan is rich in resources like hydrocarbon energy resources, gold, copper, lead, chromite etc. Despite all this, the province is still most under-developed as compared to other provinces. It has the nation's highest rates of maternal

mortality, lowest rates of literacy and poverty. A major contributing element to the problems with Balochistan's government is the ethnic and regional disputes.

### BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF CONTEMPORARY BALUCHISTAN

Baluchistan faces several government challenges. Baluch nationalist movements persist, because they symbolize previous grievances and desires for autonomy. Baluch nationalist movements have long desired self-sufficiency and autonomy over the province's resources. Baluchistan believes the federal government's control over its resources has hampered its progress. Federal government made capital out of Baluchistan's resources keeping the province under-developed. It violates Article 158 of 1973 constitution, which states that the province in which well-head of natural gas is situated will have precedence.

over other parts of Pakistan." But Balochistan is using just 7% out of 17% of natural gas produced in the province.

## MAJOR BARRIERS IN EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

### • POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

Balochistan is the largest province of Pakistan by land about 347,190 km<sup>2</sup>, but has least population as compared to other provinces due to lack of facilities. Due to low population count of the province, the issues and grievances of the province remain unaddressed in the National Assembly. Because, in National Assembly Balochistan has less number of seats as compared to other provinces. So their problems remain unresolved.

### • ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION

In Balochistan, resource allocation and economic management are

important governance challenges.

The NFC Awards 2010 was meant to ensure fair distribution of financial resources between the federation and provinces, considering population, poverty and backwardness.

But Balochistan often complains of violations and neglect. Despite being rich in resources the province receives less than its fair share of revenue and royalties. Gas produced in Sui has fueled several parts of Pakistan but the outlying and peripheral areas of Sui are using wood fires. This unequal treatment strengthens the perception of economic exploitation and political marginalization.

### • Lack of transparency and accountability

The Balochistan's government lack of accountability and transparency hinders the administration. It becomes more difficult to manage the equal distribution of resources and make the government answerable. Serious and multi-dimensional

consequences in Balochistan are appearing at high rates. Corruption is another factor that obviously hinders the development. Balochistan's stubbornness is not new but has deep roots in historical, economic and political factors.

### • SECURITY ISSUES AND INSURGENCY

Insurgency and Security Issues are the main cause of governance problems in Balochistan. Decades of bloodshed and unrest have been brought about by the sectarian conflict, terrorism and Baloch nationalism movements. Recently, the incident of Jaffar Express 2024 in which a large number of people were killed including civilians and security personnels. This shows a serious security concern in Balochistan and is a major barrier in governance.

### • POVERTY AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT

A country with sharp differences

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In Balochistan. This naturally wealthy area's inhabitants are among the nation's poorest. The main issues confronting Balochistan are poverty and underdevelopment which significantly negatively affect the lives of its people. Numerous demographic groups reside in rural location with restricted access to healthcare, education and basic amenities. Among the greatest rates of poverty Pakistan are found these:

### • INFRASTRUCTURE DEFICITS

Infrastructure deficiencies exist in many areas of Balochistan, including electricity, education and transportation. Trade and communication are hampered by underdeveloped or non-existent ports, railroads and highways. There is also shortage of electricity and clean water. Deficits in educational infrastructure worsen social inequality and restrict access to top-notch instruction and skill development.

An inadequate infrastructure slows down economic expansion. These problems have to be addressed by any provincial development plan.

### • Socio-Economic Disparities

A huge socio-economic disparity is emerging in Balochistan. Despite having natural resources, the province is facing rampant unemployment, the poverty rate is increasing daily and the province is witnessing a decline in human development indicators as well. Gender discrimination, political instability and infrastructural constraints impede economic growth and resource distribution along with increasing social inequality.

### • Limited Private-Sector Participation

Low participation of the private sector impedes employment generation and economic progress.

Many private companies have not been able to operate in Balochistan due to security issues. This restricts employment prospects and economic diversification that may strengthen Balochistan economy. Engagement of private sector is also discouraged by lack of development in infrastructure. This impedes economic development in province.

### WAY FORWARDS

It is high time that Balochistan should address these challenges. No doubt it is a difficult task, but it is not impossible. There is a dire need for government, civil societies and international organisations to work together for the betterment of the beautiful land. There must be some strategy for tackling the issue. The government <sup>should</sup> not only make policies but also implement them properly, especially in the education and healthcare sectors. By

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Solving educational issues, the province's population might become aware of their rights and values. The quality of life can be enhanced and the economy may flourish.

There must be some policies for enhancing security measures. It is a fact the province is under many troublesome circumstances and security issues are rubbing salt in the wounds of the region.

Moreover, resource allocation should be fair. Balochistan must get its due share in the resources. Also, the natural resources it naturally have, can use them and has the first right on them. So that they can improve their standards of living.

### CONCLUSION

In a nutshell, Political, historical and economic issues constrains Balochistan's governance. The intricacy of tribes and colonial legacies lead to ethnic bloodshed and political instability. Poverty, ill

healthcare and low literacy exacerbate development issues. It will need a varied approach to get over these obstacles. Baloch people may feel included and old problems may be resolved with political engagement. Make use of its natural resources to increase profit generation. Resources must be maximized and corruption must be eliminated through transparent and responsible governance. A settlement of these problems will stabilize Pakistan and strengthen Balochistan.

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