CHAPTER FOUR

THE DEVELOPMENTAL POLICIES OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN TOWARDS THE BALOCH

The aim of this chapter is to describe and analyze the developmental policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Balochistan. The thrust is to investigate those developments undertaken by the Islamic Republic towards the Baloch in economic, social, cultural, and political areas. Therefore, this chapter is divided into four parts. Under the first heading focus is on the nature and pace of urbanization. The second section deals with the economic developments. In the third part, social and cultural developments are discussed. And, the final part of the chapter deals with the political aspect of development in Balochistan of Iran.

Usually, political revolution is capable of causing immediate damage to an economy, to say the least. Damage causes by a political revolution can have an overall effect on political system. Such revolution can stop a state and its mechanism from its routine functioning. Although there is no exact data on the causalities of the Iranian 1979 Revolution, according to the constitution of the Islamic Republic, after a year or more of continuous struggle more than 60,000 men, women and children were martyred by the Shah's regime. 1 The World Fact Book of U.S. State Department notes "before the Revolution Iran's economic development was rapid. Traditionally an agricultural society, by the 1970s Iran had achieved significant industrialization and economic modernization. However, the pace of growth had slowed dramatically by 1978, just before the Islamic Revolution." 2
In any case, apart from 1979 Revolution that retarded the economy of Iran, another major blow to the Iranian society right after the Revolution was the Iran-Iraq (1980-1988) war that lasted just short of eight years and resulted in virtual destruction in Iran. Thus, the economic activity severely disrupted by the Revolution, was further depressed by the war with Iraq and by the decline of oil prices beginning in late 1985. According to the writings of Dr. Eric Hooglund in Encarta Reference Library 2005, the war’s total cost, including military supplies and civilian damages, probably exceeded $500 billion for each side. Industrial plants, businesses, homes, public buildings, and infrastructure suffered cumulative damages in excess of $30 billion. The cities of Abadan and Khorramshahr, as well as, several towns and hundreds of villages, were virtually destroyed. Vital oil production and export facilities sustained heavy and repeated damage. In addition, Iran gave refuge to more than 200,000 Iraqi nationals who fled from their own government, and absorbed more than a million Afghani refugees who fled following the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Although the war did not get dragged into Balochistan, the negative effects have had tangible impacts. These catastrophes can be regarded as two major factors that have prevented the Islamic Republic of Iran from pursuing effectively its developmental policies in various provinces including Sistan & Balochistan.
NATURE & PACE OF URBANIZATION

The province of Sistan & Balochistan with an area of about 187,500 sq km, extends over 11.4% of the total area of the country and is one of the largest provinces of Iran, yet officially it has been considered the most backward society.

As far as the architectural growth and infrastructure of Balochistan is concerned, prior to the establishment of modern government (before 1928) in Iranian Balochistan, the entire composition of the Balochi towns had a plainly constructed appearance. Generally, habitation was made of mud brick, stone, wood, and mat of date palm. Currently, similar appearance more or less is noticeable in most towns and rural districts of the land. Even today one can witness such situation in cities like Saravan, a Balochi city located in the south east of Iran, which holds a joint border of 384 km with Pakistan. This city is totally hindered from constructional progress and looks like a big village rather than a city. This has caused hundreds of the educated Baloch of Saravan to migrate and find employment in other relatively developed cities of Iran such as Zahedan and Tehran. Only lately, establishment of some higher educational institutions like Azad and Payam-e Noor universities may bring a change on the physical appearance of the city.

Zahedan, the provincial center comparatively looks better. In the last two decades apart from the modern construction that recently has become common, a kind of fashionable Pakistani architectural design has become widespread in the developed areas of the city. The rich Baloch usually design their houses accordingly. But, the habitable suburb parts of Zahedan such as Babaiyaan and Shir Abad are kept in badly off conditions. In Zahedan, major governmental institutions such as Governor House and Leadership Office are located. In
addition to that the city is home to many migrants from other parts of Balochistan, as well as, from other cities of Iran such as Zabol, Kerman, Yazd, Birjand, Mashhad, etc. In this historical city, government officials much far better take constructional projects such as public buildings, financial institutions, and commercial organizations into consideration, whereas similar efforts are much less applicable to other Balochi cities such as Sarbaz and Nikshahr.

In a coastal city like Chabahar, government relatively is undertaking better assignments. The motivational cause is because of Chabahar’s strategic location. The Free Trade Zone of Chabahar is of vital importance to Iran’s economy. Had it been developed well, it could have competed commercially with Dubai. Due to its commercially advantageous situation, considerable number of the Iranians both from public and private sectors are residing and working in Chabahar. However, suburbs of Chabahar where populated by the Baloch is still unsatisfactory.

Generally, Balochi cities can be divided into primitive and modern compositions. Primitive and old parts are covered with dirt and mire, buildings are worn out and unsophisticated, and streets and allies are narrow and small. The modern areas are more sophisticated and costly. The majority of Baloch in Iran overpopulate the unpleasant and messy parts of Balochistan, whereas sophisticated parts are overwhelmed with a mixture of non-Baloch and Baloch residents. However, the overall living conditions in Balochistan changed for good after the Revolution of 1979. Till the year 1978 only 250 governmental residential houses had existed throughout the province. From 1978 to 1988, three thousand and six hundred governmental residential units and eighty governmental buildings had been erected. And, an amount of 12,192,000,000 Rials developmental credits had been absorbed for the preparation and
ratification of Chabahar Regional Plan, as well as for Comprehensive Plan of Zahedan, Zabol, Iranshahr, and Chabahar. From 1989 to 1993, government established 3200 governmental residential units plus sixteen governmental buildings. In the same period, a developmental credit of 35, 157,000,000 Rials for the preparation and ratification of a developmental plan on Sistan and Konarak was also allocated.  

According to the records of the Statistical Center of the country, from 1966 to 1975 in Balochistan of Iran 19,861 residential units have been constructed. Same record notes 91,901 residential units have been erected between 1986 and 1995 in Iranian Balochistan. The number of residential units made in Zabol (the major city of Sistan) clearly indicates that the figure is much higher than that of the Balochi cities of Saravan, Iranshahr, Chabahar, Khash, and Nikshahr. For instance, 29,964 residences have been constructed in Zabol between 1986 and 1995, whereas during the same period 21,946 residences have been constructed in Iranshahr; 10197 in Chabahar; and 10,277 in Saravan. Even the gap widened further in 1996, where 888 residences were constructed in Zabol, while 348 were constructed in Iranshahr; 106 in Chabahar; 232 in Khash; 120 in Saravan; and 114 in Nikshahr. In Zahedan, 1773 residences were constructed in 1996, which shows the figure is higher than that of Zabol.  As a matter of fact, among the cities of the province, geographically Zahedan is the largest city, which occupies 36,581 cubic km, and Zabol of Sistan with 15,197 cubic km is the smallest city after Sarbaz.  Taking into account the large geographical size of Balochistan and its scattered villages, in comparison with other provinces of Iran, most of the villages in Balochistan have inefficient and unsatisfactory access to welfare and hygienic facilities. It has been reported (in 2002) that in rural parts and villages of Sistan & Balochistan province out of 5,868 rural communities, 2220 (38%) possessed electricity and only 1874 (32%) villages have access to safe drinking water. The report says, out of 124 health centers in
the rural communities of the province, the greatest number i.e. 35 centers situated only in Zabol of Sistan, whereas the smallest number i.e. nine centers located in Zahedan, the capital of the province.\(^9\)

In general, Zaboli and Baloch people hold a growing feeling of antagonism towards each other, however direct conflicts between the two communities have not occurred so far. Such hostility was not that much eruptive in Balochistan before the Islamic Revolution, as has been conceptualized by many local people of the province. Majority of Baloch believe government does more for the Zaboli people who are mostly Shia and less for the Baloch who are mostly Sunni. While making such claims, many foreign based Baloch political activists refer to such and such governmental reports and statistics, leading them to conclude that government does not take heed of what they demand.

With respect to the economic infrastructure, state plans and policies have not been very successful. Throughout the history in Balochistan different central governments of Iran did not succeed in bringing about large-scale public systems, services, and facilities such as power, water supplies, public transportation, telecommunications, roads, and schools. Similar conditions could be observed even during the Pahlavi dynasty. After the Islamic Revolution, things improved relatively. Although because of the Revolution and war with Iraq, Iran’s economy suffered badly, the country experienced an economic recovery in 1992, as its gross national product grew slightly and President Rafsanjani’s five-year plan comparatively improved the country's infrastructure. Yet, Balochistan had its own infrastructural problems. For example, as far as the infrastructural development is concerned, there are five major dams throughout the Iranian Balochistan including, Shirguvaz dam in Chabahar, Pishin dam in Dashtiyari area of Chabahar, Bampur dam in Bampur, and two others in Saravan. It was asserted in 2004 that twenty other dams have
been under survey by the Iranian government. In this regard, one dam is already under construction in the vicinity of Iranshahr by Bahookalat, a private Construction Company. The overall budget on this dam in 2006 estimated to be around 11,000,000,000 Tomans i.e. equal to 13,750,000 $. According to the investigation carried out in 2004, reports show there are only two silos with a capacity of 79000 tons in Balochistan of Iran, which both are located in Zahedan. Another record indicates that there are just five major bridges in Balochistan, which connect its different cities together: three bridges between Iranshahr and Chabahar, one between Iranshahr and Bazman, and another one between Khash and Irandegan. However, there are four more bridges which link Zahedan with Kerman and Zabol. Concerning Power Plants, there are nine Power Houses in Balochistan including, one Steam Power Station in Iranshahr, and six Diesel Power Houses in Iranshahr, Khash, Zahedan, Saravan, Sarbaz, and Fanoj respectively, as well as, two other Gas Power Units in Zahedan and Konarak. According to a report, the electricity needed throughout the province and its 260,000 users is more than 1,400,000 kw energy per hour, which is supplied through a 13,000 km transmission line and is produced by Iranshahr Steam Power Station, Zahedan Gas Power Station, Konarak Gas Power Station, and by other Diesel Units of different towns. One of the most prominent achievements in this regard is the connection of the province electricity network to the country’s overall electricity network. With regard to the development of telecommunication, official statistics of the year 2000 indicate that 147,955 telephone numbers are in use all over Sistan & Balochistan. There are 81 telephone centers, and inter city switchboards have been seventy-six in number. 1100 telecommunication offices have also come in use in different villages. In the same year, the number of mobile telephones covering all central towns of the province has reached to 8,547 and that the province has fifty-one international codes. In regard with post, which has a long background in the province, it has had an ever-increasing growth in line with the present
developments. In regard with refineries, based on an official report of 2004, the province of Sistan & Balochistan does not possess any refinery. The same is true with Gas and Oil lines. There are no Gas and Oil lines in Balochistan, however, it has been claimed that a gas pipeline will be developed from Asalooyeh to the province, as a step towards improvement. As far as the issue of transportation is concerned, in 2002 it has been stated that constructional credits on Road and Transportation section of the province has been 82,280 million Rials, which compared with the previous year had a rise of 23%. This developmental credit has been allocated to the construction and improvement of the secondary roads, to road transportation programs, to road maintenance programs, etc. Railway is another major issue in Balochistan. It was actually established by the British in 1918 from Goatre to Zahedan mainly for military purpose. After the First World War when normalcy restored with a view to promoting trade, as well as, relations with the people of today's Pakistan the same railway line was allowed to be used by the civilians. The Railway length is 94.6 km at which connects Zahedan to Pakistan through Mirjaveh (an Iranian town nearby Pakistani border). But, this railway hitherto has failed to establish any link with the internal network of the country and that within Balochistan it has not been used for civilian purposes so far. Concerning airway facilities, from five airports in Zahedan, Iranshahr, Chabahar, Saravan, and Khash, only three are in active use. Out of this, the airports of Zahedan and Chabahar hold international flights to Saudi Arabia, United Emirate Arabs, and Pakistan. The airport of Saravan recently (2007) started its flights to Zahedan twice a week, but due to poor service and Saravan's proximity to Zahedan, which is around 350 km it is not welcomed well by Saravani people. It is quite possible that due to lack of enough passengers, government may stop Saravan-Zahedan flights.

With respect to water as one of the most important factors for development, since 1998 Iranian Balochistan has been facing a vigorous drought, leading to a
substantial decrease in water resources. In Balochistan, the only exploitable river has been Bampur River. This river too has met with water shortage problem. Thus, supplying and managing water in Balochistan has been one of the most preventing issues towards development. According to a 2002 report by the Administration & Planning Organization of Sistan & Balochistan province, several irrigational projects have been carried out in four major cities of Balochistan. In this context, transfer of water to Iranshahr came to be exploitable in 1998. In Saravan, it became exploitable in 1999. To Chabahar transfer of water runs through Shirguaz, this is related to the installations of Pishin dam. But, due to the recent drought, transfer of drinking water from this location to Chabahar has been totally stopped.\(^{23}\) Zahedan's Water Transfer Plan is among the biggest projects, which water is carried out to Zahedan from Chaah nimeh-e Sistan. The project was inaugurated in 2003 with the presence of Mohammad Khatemi, the former President of Iran. The budget spent on the first phase of this project was around 600 billion Rials.\(^{24}\) In this regard, some improvements have been taken place, however most parts of the city are yet to be covered. From 1989 till the end of 1992 out of the provincial credits, amount of 2,414,000 Rials was allocated to the province on water supply issue.\(^{25}\) In another incident the total credits of the Iranian Leadership in 2003 reported to be one billion and thirty million Tomans, but in 2004 it was ratified to be equal to eight hundred million Tomans, which were allocated to the Water & Sewage Corporation of Sistan & Balochistan on ten towns including the Balochi towns of Sarbaz, Pishin, Espaka, Bazman, Sooran, Rask, etc.\(^{26}\) In 2006 a report from the same corporation (Water & Sewage Corporation of Sistan & Balochistan) has stated that for a new distributive network of water in Zahedan, 193 billion Rials have been spent so far and that a budget of 410 billion Rials have been approved for the overall project. Besides, for the establishment of sewage installations in Zahedan, 175 billion Rials has been spent on the project and for the entire project a total budget of 596 billion Rials has been approved. For the
establishment of other sewage installations in Chabahar and Konarak, 120 billion and 68.4 billion Rials have been allocated respectively.  

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Iran is naturally a rich country, but lack of efficient economic administration has led the economy to a fatal path. The inflation in Iran can be referred as a ‘run away inflation’, which is almost uncontrollable. Within this rich country, Balochistan of Iran is the least developed economy. This is evident from government’s own official statistics. It is claimed by some unofficial local source (who preferred to remain anonymous) "in a 2002 governmental record out of the total population of Sistan & Balochistan 11.1% of the people have been unemployed. This rate of unemployment has reached to 21.9 % in 2007 however such statistics seems to be unreliable and that the actual rate of unemployment in Balochistan is much higher than the above-mentioned figures." Another unofficial estimation claims, according to the official figures of the Islamic Republic of Iran 76 percent of Baloch people live under poverty line.  

A report by Radio Farda (an Iranian foreign based Radio Broadcasting Program) has pointed out that 40% of the people in Sistan & Balochistan are unemployed.  

Balochistan has failed to keep up with the rest of the country in agricultural, industrial, and commercial developments. A detailed account of agricultural, industrial, and commercial status of Balochistan is presented in the following manner.

**Agricultural Sector**

For centuries agriculture has played a very important role in the lives of the Baloch. As a way of earning livelihood majority of Baloch even today are
dependent on this sector. However, agriculture in Balochistan has been of traditional form and not modern. Modern agriculture depends heavily on engineering and technology. Irrigation, drainage, conservation, and sanitary engineering are important in successful farming, each of which as the specialized knowledge are essential for agricultural engineers, while Balochistan does not possess these qualities. As far as employment in agriculture is concerned, this sector has failed to play its due role and create employment opportunities for the Baloch in Iran. For example, according to a 2004 report of Planning & Administration Organization of Sistan & Balochistan especially from 1986 onwards, the role and importance of agricultural sector in employment has been reduced considerably. The report says in 1996 the share of this sector in employment of the entire province has been reduced to around 33 percent. The credit-policies on agriculture have failed to develop agricultural sector efficiently. It is mainly due to the poor status of Baloch farmers on one hand, and their lack of scientific knowledge in agriculture on the other hand. One of the major policies of government in agricultural sector has been 'granting banking facilities' to the farmers. A study of bank credit-payments to other economic sections indicates between 1988 and 1996 totally 1,421,394 million Rials have been paid to different sections and that out of this amount, 111,212 million Rials and 7.8% out of the total paid-credits, has been allocated to the agricultural sector. During the last decade due to the governmental policies on fishery important changes occurred in agricultural sector. For example, the setting up of fishing-jetties at the coastal areas, refrigerating rooms, fishing-complexes, and other related activities has made fishery to be one of the main activities in the south of Balochistan that has had a positive impact on the social and economic life of many Baloch fishermen. In fact, privatization in fishery has proved to be beneficial. According to a report, privatization of fishery has caused its production a rise from 25,000 tons in 1988 to more than 53,000 tons in 1996.
Anyway, the credit-share of agricultural sector in the year of 2000 has been 45,823 Rials. This budget was out of 429,217 Rials, which was regarded as the total credits for Sistan & Balochistan. In other words, out of the province’s total credits, 10.6% was allocated to the agricultural sector. In the following year (2001) the percentage raised to 13.1 namely 73,176 Rials out of 557,760 Rials, which was allocated to the agricultural sector of the province. As far as the agricultural sector is concerned, in Sistan & Balochistan there are thirteen public service offices or organizations, which undertake agricultural programs and projects. A 2001 record from the Administration & Planning Organization of the province reports that in recent years there have been thirty-nine major agricultural projects and programs under construction by different provincial public organizations, such as: Agricultural Jihad Organization (Sazman-e Jihad-e Keshavarzi-e Ostan), Fishery Headquarter Office (Edareh Kol-e Shillat), Natural Resources Headquarter Office (Edareh-e Kol-e Manaabe Tabee-e Ostan), and Veterinary Headquarter Office (Edareh-e Kol-e Dampezeshki-e Ostan).

However, because of poor soil and lack of adequate water distribution in many areas, most of the land is not under cultivation. Agriculture in Balochistan has suffered from shortages of capital, raw materials, and equipment. The recent drought in Balochistan also severely damaged this sector. Therefore, the total agricultural production fails to meet domestic or local food requirements, making substantial imports necessary. Taking this problem into account, government on the other hand partly has failed to pay adequate attention to this sector. Government could have undertaken necessary projects to minimize the affects of drought. There are both vast and tiny fields in Balochistan such as Bampoor, Dalgan, and Bahookalat, which are capable natural resources for agricultural purposes. Besides, some unique regions in the south of Balochistan are gifted with cultivation feasibility for various tropical products. Many Baloch farmers have left their agricultural activities and instead migrated either to other
Balochi cities or to the Gulf States in search of better pay. Most of them work as laborers or gardeners. Government has failed to prevent this development. Actually, neglecting the farmers, low opinion of agriculture, lack of educational institutions, and a lack of balance between urban development and rural development, can be considered among the major reasons for the failure of agriculture in Balochistan of Iran.

**Industrial Sector**

In this context, by the industrial sector of Balochistan the study refers to the production of goods and services or to a group of enterprises including private businesses or government-operated corporations that produce goods and services within the society. The Islamic Republic of Iran like the other developing countries has tried to stimulate economic growth by simply acquiring machinery from developed economies, assuming that the technological knowledge necessary to use the physical capital could be easily transferred. However, after acquiring equipment and machinery from industrialized countries the country particularly in Balochistan did not experience a similar economic growth, as experienced by the industrialized states of the world. It is mainly because the Balochi society of Iran did not possess a skilled and educated workforce.

Whatever which is known on the industrial progress in Balochistan of Iran is the physical presence of several factories. Example can be taken of Khash Cement Factory, which is in Khash and holds more than five hundred workers or employees. The other major factory is Baft-e Baloch located in the western suburbs of Iranshahr. According to an account of 1988-1997, Baft-e Baloch has had the biggest number of employees in Balochistan that provided 2670 job opportunities for the people. This factory was put into operation in 1983 and
began its business with 19000 million Rials as its capital. Its productions are spinning and weaving and textile-completion and its nominal capacity annually is 6500 tones of spinning-thread and 28 million square meters of weaving and textile-completion. Brick Factory is another important instance in Balochistan, which is located in the southern suburbs of Iranshahr. This factory began its operation in 1986 and its rate of investment was 1560 million Rials. This factory has provided job for 240 people. Poli Etilen Factory is also another major example in this regard, which is located in the western suburbs of Iranshahr. Its activities started in 1987 and it produces garment and related materials. This factory has provided employment for five people only.\textsuperscript{34}

According to a different report, in 2003 on the basis of administration, there have been 116 industrial plants in the major Balochi cities of Iran. Out of this, government runs nine and 107 are managed by the so-called non-governmental agencies. In Zahedan there are 77 industrial plants, which five of them run by government and 72 belong to the private sector. Iranshahr has 15 industrial plants, which three are administrated by public sector and 12 are privatized. Saravan has twelve plants that all run by the private sector. Chabahar holds nine, which one is governmental and eight are non-governmental. Khash has three which all run by the private sector.\textsuperscript{35} The same record shows that the number of industrial plants in Sistan i.e. Zabol are more than that of each Balochi city, of course, except Zahedan which is considered the center of Sistan & Balochistan. In this respect, there are 16 plants in Zabol, which two of them run by public sector and 14 run by private sector. According to an official census of the industrial units in the country, in 2002 there have been 10,987 industrial units with 921,106 employed people in Iran. In the same year, 490 industrial units, equal to 4.4% of Iran’s total industrial units, have been in both Sistan & Balochistan, the biggest province of Iran. These units have had 4,796 employees in the entire province.\textsuperscript{36}
Despite the presence of such industrial plants, most of the industries in Balochistan function unsatisfactorily. Although during the first and second plans some industrial headway has been taken place, the overall industrial atmosphere remains poor. Most of the industrial products are being imported to Balochistan either from other countries or from other provinces of Iran, while the potentiality of Balochistan itself is not less than that of other provinces of the country. Balochistan’s vicinity with the Oman Sea, and its proximity with Pakistan and Afghanistan, and the presence of Chabahar Industrial and Commercial Free Zone, are all established grounds for the installation and development of various industries. It is clearly evident that in order to create employment for the local people, Balochistan is in need of effective industrial factories. Whatever investment directed towards Iranian Balochistan so far has been insufficient and formal in nature. In turn, this has caused the private sector not to be industrially innovative. The type and extent of government involvement plays a strong role in Balochistan’s industrial growth. Government may take a free market approach and let and direct the existing industries to re-organize and grow with a minimal government intervention. Unfortunately, Iran’s centralized economic policy has developed a lack of dynamism and innovation, which has resulted in less productivity in Balochistan. According to the records of the Planning & Administration Organization of Zahedan, Balochistan of Iran does not have a sound industrial base. It is because this part of Iran faces problems such as shortage of water, absence of industrial proficient experts, as well as, lack of innovational motivations, and more importantly negligence of the concerned officials. The industrial sector in Balochistan has been regarded as a failed sector.
**Commercial Sector**

Commerce cannot be developed without development in agriculture and in industry. As cited earlier, Balochistan industrially is almost undeveloped to produce a high standard of manufactured goods and services. As a result, when there is an absence of large-scale production, commerce and trade hardly can find a role to play. Hence, industry, trade, and commerce as interrelated sectors have failed to establish a useful link with each other. By and large, in Balochistan trade is dominated by illegal business of export and import with neighboring countries such as Pakistan. Most of the firms also deal in illegal export and import of goods and that government is unable to trace and reveal a true and vivid picture of such export and import of goods, which frequent Iranian Balochistan.

An account of export and import from 2000 to 2002 as the performance of foreign trade of Sistan & Balochistan during the third plan shows that in 2000 the exports of the province has valued 28.6 million $. In 2001 it valued 42 $ million and in 2002 the value was 85.7 million $. This indicates that the export growth of 2002 have been 111 % more than that of the 2001.\(^{38}\) However, trade has failed to maintain a favorable balance, for example, in regard with the year of 2001 the value of imports has been 523,923 million $,\(^{39}\) while in the same year the value of export has been 42 $ million. In another official report of 2004, the value of the total imports from different customhouses in Sistan & Balochistan has been 1,185,443 Rials, whereas the total exports valued 739,837 Rials.\(^{40}\) This example is indicative of the fact that foreign trade generally has not been kept in a balanced position. The imbalance between export and import can be resulted from various factors such as, active presence of the illegal trade, low quality of exported products, lack of marketing skills and strategies, poor
transportation facilities, poor banking facilities, lack of economic security, no sufficient attention to commercial zones such as Chabahar Free Zone or Boundary Markets, and absence of incentives or lack of encouragement for the local traditional merchants. Reports also show there are only two active customhouses, which are situated in Zahedan and Chabahar. More importantly, there are no international and regional commercial fairs or exhibitions in Balochistan, except one uncompleted exhibition. However, in 2004 it was claimed by the authorities that one commercial fair has been in progress in Zahedan, which as yet it is not being fully developed.

The **Boundary Markets** are a major source of commercial activities in Balochistan. The term 'boundary markets' refers to those markets pertaining to the political borders of Iranian Balochistan. As pointed already, Balochistan of Iran holds around 1100 km joint border with Afghanistan and Pakistan, and thus boundary markets play a vital role in the economy of Balochistan, as well as in the lives of the inhabitants of these areas. Certainly, facilities and privileges by the Iranian government to the Baloch in this boundary region can change their lives for good on one hand, and on the other hand can safeguard the security of the region for the interest of the Islamic Republic itself.

By virtue of the 11\(^{th}\) Article of Export and Import Regulations Act approved in 1993 by the Islamic Consultative Assembly, the boundary markets founded. The purpose of establishment of boundary markets is, to provide the necessaries of the borderers, to converge the borderers, to prevent the spread of goods smuggling, to build a healthy economy, to bring about a sustainable security within the borders, and to promote political and economic relations with the neighboring countries. According to Ali Karimi, the Director of Boundary Markets of Sistan & Balochistan, in Balochistan of Iran, there are three active boundary markets located in Mirjaveh, Kohak, and Pishin, which all share a
joint border with Pakistan. In addition to that four more markets currently are under consideration to be set up in Jaalgh of Saravan, in Rimdan of Chabahar, in Rootak of Khash, and in Pasabandar.\textsuperscript{41} It was predicted by the concerned officials that via Mirjaveh Boundary Market alone, trade transactions between Iran and Pakistan could reach annually to 200,000,000 $, and that this market will be able to provide around 2500 new job opportunities, \textsuperscript{42} but in subsequent years the market experienced the otherwise both in its trade and employment. For instance, according to the reports of the Mirjaveh Boundary Market, only 245 people have been employed at this market.\textsuperscript{43} According to the official statements in 1999 ninety-nine commercial stalls have been given to the Boundary Market of Mirjaveh. The rate of exports from Mirjaveh Boundary Market in 1998 was totaled to be around 5,500,000 $, and in the same year the rate of its imports amounted to be 7,500,000 $.\textsuperscript{44} However, in 2002 the market exported 18,560,032 $ to Pakistan and imported 2,326,389 $ from Pakistan.\textsuperscript{45} In Kohak, the market lacks proper administrative bureau and for disciplinary and administrative purposes two containers are utilized only. The government statistics of trade transactions in 1998 indicates that the exports from Kohak Market has amounted to 3,700,000 $ and the imports has amounted to 2,200,000 $,\textsuperscript{46} and in 2002 the Kohak Market exported 2,492,446 $ to Pakistan and imported 126,985 $ from Pakistan.\textsuperscript{47} In 1998, Pishin Boundary Market has had an approximate figure of 4,000,000 $ exports and 3,300,000 $ imports.\textsuperscript{48} The above official figures show that the value of exports from these boundary markets have been higher than the value of their imports. Leaving aside Balochistain and focusing on the entire province (Sistan & Balochistain), reports of the Administration & Planning Organization of Zahedan indicate that there is only one well-equipped boundary market, which belongs to Zabol, a city of Sistan. This Boundary Market known as Millak, located almost five km away from Afghanistan. The Millak Market is equipped with administrative building,
police bureau, bank and restaurant. In 1998, it had an export transaction of about 900,000 $ and possessed a value of 600,000 $ imports.\textsuperscript{49}

Well, according to the analytical reports of the government, these Boundary Markets in Balochistan have not been flourished. The methods of conducting business are quite traditional and merchants lack technical skills. Goods and products such as rice, petrol, washing powders, garment materials, etc., in large quantities easily and illegally frequent Iran and Pakistan as though there is no official border between the two countries. Both governments of Iran and Pakistan are virtually unable to control such illegal trade of goods. In this regard, Ali Karimi has stated, one of the major problems, which prevent boundary markets from growing, is the active presence of smuggled goods into the country. Strict restrictions from government in issuing licenses recently added more limitations. However, even if licenses are issued, there cannot be an economic justification in trading goods, because of heavy taxes.\textsuperscript{50} In other words, illegal trade simply overshadows legal trade in the region. In his interview (2004) with ‘Eghtesad-e Asia’ (Economy of Asia), an official Persian magazine, Ali Karimi further states "we expect concerned government institutions to assist us in this direction. They have recognized these markets and they should provide us with necessary facilities. Tropical fruits and rice are being smuggled in large quantities into the country, while we don’t have licenses to import such goods legally. Furthermore, the harm can go to the people because unfortunately there is no check and control over the quality of the smuggled goods."

\textbf{Chabahar Free Trade Zone} is another major commercial source for Balochistan of Iran. Chabahar has a vital strategic and sensitive situation in the political geography of the country. It is situated beside the Oman Sea and
possessed a free trade zone, which is one of the most important commercial ports in Iran that links Iranian Balochistan with the outside world.

With the suggestion of the High Council of City-Construction & Architecture, and by virtue of the 19th note of the First Plan Act of economic, social and cultural developments of the Islamic Republic of Iran (1989-1993), the board of ministers at a session in 1991 had approved of Chabahar Commercial & Industrial Free Zone. Following the presentation of government’s bill, ‘law of how to administer the Islamic Republic’s industrial and commercial free zones,’ both the Islamic Consultative Assembly and the Guardian Council ratified the bill in 1993 respectively. According to the 5th Article of the aforesaid law, Chabahar Free Zone runs by an organization of an independent legal entity. The main purpose of Chabahar Free Zone is to create a healthy employment atmosphere; to increase the export of industrial goods; to attract foreign investment; to transfer technology; to import goods and raw materials; to access international markets; and to boost the economy of the province, as well as that of the country. But, to what extent these theoretical principles have been observed and practiced, is a matter of concerned.

Evidences of various official reports show, the Free Trade Zone so far has not been succeeded in creating a healthy employment atmosphere. The governmental policies have also failed to balance the imports and exports and that the Free Zone has become a mere importer of various low-grade goods such as clothes and shoes from countries like China. Besides, the market has been unable to absorb local or regional investors. In any case, the value of the total imports of Chabahar Free Zone Organization between 1992 up to the 9th month of 1997 was amounted to be 771 billion Rials (equal to 257.7 million $). According to the sources of Chabahar Free Commercial & Industrial Zone Organization, the imports of the zone from 1992 till the end of 2002 has been
totally 804 million $ and from 1995 till the end of 2002 its exports has been 1.9 million $. According to another report of the Plan & Budget Organization of Sistan & Balochistan, the total revenue of Chabahar Free Zone Organization between 1992 and 1997 i.e. during a five-year activity was amounted to be 300 billion Rials. In the same period, the total developmental disbursements of the organization have been amounted to 211 billion Rials. The same report indicates that the total value of the accomplished investments during 1992-1997 has been amounted to be 290 billion Rials, which is not satisfactory.

Despite its geographical significance, government has not brought about remarkable progress. Industries such as mechanical industries, mine industry, fishery industry, and tourism are not developed desirably. Although government went for some developments such as establishment of several factories like, ice-factory, refrigerating-room, machine-made bread factory, which are dependent on local resources, these developments are insufficient for a city like Chabahar. As is the case with the entire country, unemployment is one of the major problems in this coastal city and no constructive solution has been carried out so far. In an interview (2004) with the members of Chabahar City Council, it was asserted that majority of the local people (Baloch) do not get fair justice in public employment. The only hospital of the city lacks sophisticated medical facilities and specialists, and so the hospital cannot meet the needs of the city’s population. In regard with drinking water of the city, a sum of 27 billion Tomans has been spent on a desalination water system nevertheless there is no sign of improvement.

So far as the commercial sector is concerned, the economic reports and investigations clearly show that the major fundamental sections of Balochistan such as industry and commerce are lagging much far behind. In some fields of the land, underground water resources so far have not been discovered fully.
There are potential mineral resources, which awaits exploitation. Based on the regional official accounts of the year 2000, the gross domestic product (GDP) of Sistan &Balochistan has been equal to 6917.9 billion Rials that has formed 1.07% of Iran’s GDP. Now, leaving aside Sistan and focusing on Balochistan alone makes one understand that the GDP of Balochistan shows even a lesser figure. This is plainly evident that Balochistan is not founded on proper economic policies.

SOCIAL & CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

The term social and cultural development is referred to those public projects undertaken by the Islamic Republic of Iran for the social welfare of the people in Balochistan. Therefore, in regard with social development, health programs and social welfare plans will be discussed. And, with reference to cultural development, cultural policies and projects are taken into consideration.

Before the Islamic Revolution of 1979, most of the Baloch worked on farms. Large Baloch families provided the labor necessary to run a farm, and most people lived in extended families, which encompassed several generations of relatives. In extended families, healthy working-age members could support their young, elderly, and infirm relatives. There were no social security plans and programs as of those exist today. Many local people in Balochistan lost their lives because of diseases such as Malaria and infections. After the Islamic Revolution, however, living conditions for the Baloch changed for good. Compared with the living conditions of Pakistani or Afghani Baloch, the Iranian Baloch generally live much far better. It is because of two major factors. First, the Islamic Republic, in this regard, paid more attention towards the Iranian Baloch than any other previous central governments. The establishment and construction of various public health organizations and hospitals though
unsatisfactory can be taken as a clear example, whereas these developments to such extent did not take place before the Revolution of 1979. Second, the Baloch of Iran have gone under the influence of Persian culture. For instance, many educated Baloch families though not the majority communicate with their children in Persian language and try to assume a Persian life style. For these families a Persian life style seems to be a more sophisticated life style and proudly they consider such practice as a sign of development. Therefore, their (the educated Baloch's) normal living style looks more like an educated Persian family (whose lifestyle apparently looks like a modern one) rather than a Baloch family (whose lifestyle looks like a traditional one), as it is different from the life style of a Pakistani Baloch or Afghani Baloch, who mostly live traditionally in extended families.

**Social Security**

As far as the social security in Iranian Balochistan is concerned, it is about public programs designed to provide income and services to individuals in the event of retirement, sickness, disability, death, or unemployment. Among the public social services in Balochistan like other parts of Iran a national health insurance program is included, which provides free or low-cost health care in governmental hospitals and rural clinics. A social security program, funded by a special tax on wages and salaries, provides pensions for retired public sector employees and semi private sector employees. It also provides survivor benefits to widows of deceased retirees and veterans killed in action, disability payments to family heads incapacitated by work-related injuries or catastrophic illnesses, and special payments for minor-aged children of deceased workers. Government also provides low-income families with subsidies for health-care services. Despite that the health-care services remain inadequate in rural areas. Many of the illiterate Baloch families suffer greatly. This may be as a result of
three major factors. At first, health care personnel and facilities are not distributed evenly among the country’s population. Balochistan, as a remote area receives less health care facilities. Secondly, compared with other relatively developed parts of the country, in Balochistan medical care is of poor quality. Thirdly, there is a lack of awareness on the part of the Baloch in general, which has been resulted from illiteracy. Other developed provinces relatively have better health care facilities and services. In this particular context, the status of the entire province can be clarified in the following way.

Officials accounts show that in 1999 the number of available hospital-beds in the province has reached to 2,083, in which all have been governmental. In 2002, the number has reached to 2,131 hospital-beds. With regard to medical experts, in 1999 the province had 273 general physicians, 183 specialists, 40 dentists, and 10 pharmacists. In 2002, the figure reached to 281 general physicians, 209 dentists, and 9 pharmacists. This statistics shows, although compared with that of 1999, the number of general physicians grew in 2002, if the population growth rate is taken into account, it can be concluded that between 1999 and 2002 there have not been any true progress or any increase in the number of the physicians. A similar calculation more or less can be applied to other medical experts of the province. In another related development, in 2002 there have been fifteen active medical institutions such as hospital, maternity hospital, and sanatorium in the province. In the same year, 251 medical centers including clinic, policlinic, and health center have been functioning, out of which 143 have been located in urban areas and 108 in rural areas. The number of province’s active laboratories has increased from seventy-five units in 1999 to ninety-six units in 2002. In 2002, twenty-nine radiographic units have been active in the province and their number increased to thirty-three in 2004. In 2002, only 110 drugstores have been in the province, and the number in 2004 reached to 122. However, in Balochi cities of Nikshahr, Khash, Sarbaz, and
Fanoj such facilities are in undesirable conditions. In this respect, based on a 2004 official report, in Zahedan there have been 29 laboratories, 58 drugstores, and 21 radiographic centers. In Iranshahr, there have been twelve laboratories, thirteen drugstores, and three radiographic centers. In other major Balochi cities like Chabahar, there have been ten laboratories, ten drugstores, and one radiographic center. Khash has possessed nine laboratories, six drugstores, and two radiographic centers. Saravan has possessed fourteen laboratories, twelve drugstores, and one radiographic center. Sarbaz has had five laboratories, two drugstores, and no radiographic center. And, in Nikshahr there have been six laboratories, five drugstores, and one radiographic center.66

As far as the credits are concerned, provincial credits on health sector in Balochistan are not satisfactory. Example can be taken from the approved developmental credits concerning Sistan & Balochistan’s health division in 2002, which has been 18,306,500 Rials. According to another official account published in 2003, the allocated figure of the credits to the province’s health programs and services has been 17,177,500 Rials.67 On the issue of whether the rate of credits can meet with the region’s poverty, Dr. Mohammad Taghi Hossaini Tabatabayee, the former Chancellor of Zahedan Medical University, in an interview (2004) has stated "unfortunately the estimation of the credits is based on traditional methods and calculation of annual inflation growth. The developmental credits have been simply overlooked without coordination from Planning Organization or Treasury." 68

In fact, growth of population rate, low literacy rate, and poverty, are among the factors that make sanitary programs difficult in Balochistan. On the other hand, medical and hygienic services cannot keep up with the population growth. For instance, though the number of medical centers has increased, with an account of population growth, the insufficiency is yet tangible. Besides, hospitals
usually do not provide patients with a wide range of good services, including proper emergency treatment, surgery, and medical and nursing care. This has forced many Baloch to find better treatment in cities like Mashhad and Tehran, or else many Baloch borderers travel to Karachi of Pakistan for better medical treatment. Indeed, an appropriate policy planning can tackle this weakness. Even with the help of private sector, government can construct semi or fully equipped medical centers in Balochistan.

Cultural Policies & Projects

As far as the cultural policies and projects are concerned, the general attitude on the part of the Baloch is that the development of cultural policies of the government towards the Baloch has not been for the interest of the Sunni Baloch. The idea 'what has been expected from the government has not been fulfilled so far' is particularly hold among the foreign based Baloch political activists and majority of the students. Many Baloch particularly cultural activists are preoccupied with the idea that why there is no any Balochi institution in Balochistan to work and publish literary works in Balochi, whereas in Pakistani Balochistan there are institutions like Balochi Academy or Balochi Studies Section of Quetta University.69

As a matter of fact, Baloch must not expect from the government to initiate and develop Balochi cultural institutions, simply because it is not the responsibility of government to pioneer cultural associations. Although there are some limitations in the constitution, elements of flexibility does exist, which allows Baloch to work on this area. For example, constitution states “… the use of local and ethnic languages in the press and mass media or the teaching of their literatures in schools, along with Farsi, shall be free…” 70 Thus, there is a possibility for Baloch to use Balochi language in the press and mass media and
teach their own literature in schools, because legally they are allowed to do so. The problem partly lies somewhere else. The Iranian Baloch in general unlike the Pakistani Baloch, have been practically too weak to get hold of government to fulfill their cultural demands, otherwise they are favored constitutionally. Nonetheless, what has been the role of government in the development of cultural institutions in Balochistan is explained briefly in the following way.

According to a 2004 report, in 1999 there have been only five cultural complexes in Balochistan located in Zahedan, Iranshahr, and Khash. All these complexes have not been developed according to the expectations. The same report has stated that cinematic towns do not exist in Balochistan at all. With regard to the theater and cinema Balochistan needs to do a lot. Theater is one of the oldest forms of entertainment and cinema is one of the most popular and ordinary forms of recreation, but surprisingly despite the physical presence of some theater salons and cinemas, neither energetic theater nor functioning cinema exist in Balochistan. The Organization of the Islamic Guidance & Culture has reported that in 2004 there have been fifteen theater salons in major cities of Balochistan. The same record shows there have been only two cinemas in Balochistan, however, around 2003 onwards both the cinemas stopped working, therefore, at present there are no cinemas in Balochistan of Iran. In fact, Honarkadeh Saba, a small institution in Zahedan has been the only cultural institution of Balochistan in the field of theater and cinema, though has not been vigorous and lively in its operation. The report also indicates, in the area of exhibitive art in Balochistan hitherto there has not been any registered association or syndicate. With regard to press in Balochistan, there have been fourteen local newspapers and sixteen magazines in 2002, but the number of Balochi periodicals run by the Baloch increased remarkably in recent years. For example, since the year 2000 onwards periodicals such as Estoon, Daaz, and Sawl, are some cultural and academic magazines, which are managed by Baloch
students in Iran. Marz-e Porgohar, a weekly newspaper in Zahedan also runs by a Baloch professor. Neday-e Islam, a Sunni religious periodical runs by Maki Religious School of Zahedan.\textsuperscript{76}

Libraries in Balochistan can be regarded as another step towards cultural development. In Iran, public libraries offer their collections and services to all members of the community regardless of age, citizenship, occupation, economic status, educational level, ethnicity, or background. In Balochistan, libraries may range in size from one-room facilities to medium size halls that serve people especially the students in urban areas. But, rural areas in Balochistan face severe shortage of library facilities. Apart from governmental libraries, libraries run by the private sector also provide service to the people, yet in proportion to the population of Balochistan the number of libraries is handful. A governmental record indicates, in 2002 there have been only thirty-five libraries in Iranian Balochistan. In Zahedan seven libraries, meaning that for each 86,456 people there is one library. In Iranshahr five libraries, showing that for every 48,908 individuals there is one library. In Chabahar five libraries, indicating that for each 40,746 individuals there is one library. In Khash five libraries, demonstrating that for every 34,096 individuals there is one library. In Nikshahr five libraries, meaning that for each 32,179 individuals there is one library. In Saravan six libraries, showing that for every 34,480 individuals there is one library. And, in Sarbaz two libraries, indicating that for each 61,413 individuals there is one library.\textsuperscript{77} With reference to government budget on cultural development; government funds are insufficient. For instance, in 2002 the ratified credits on culture and art amounted to 17,790,000 Rials. In the same year, the following credits have been amounted to 14,823,299 Rials. In other words, out of the total credits on the social developmental affairs 3.16% have been allocated only to the culture and art of the province.\textsuperscript{78}
In fact, due to lack of a proper Balochi cultural knowledge (Balochi literature and language), as well as, because of bad financial conditions, many Baloch have been reluctant to work on cultural activities and many others who have been interested remained either directionless or helpless, because of no enthusiasm on the side of the Baloch or owing to lack of enough financial or moral support. As a result of this, many talented Baloch artists who have remained unknown to the public could have been identified years ago. Example can be taken from a 2007 National Cultural Celebration on the Music of Sistan & Balochistan, where Mohammad Reza Shajarian, a renowned Iranian singer known as the Iran’s Voice Master, lectured to the thousands of the participants that "we have forgotten our talented artists such as Mullah Kamal Khan. To me this Baloch man is the greatest singer and musician in the entire country. I wish, those cultural organizations, which possessed sufficient budget look after the revival of our cultural heritage. Therefore, I warn the responsible authorities to collect Mullah Kamal Khan’s works so long as he is alive..." 79 What is amazing is that prior to Shajarian’s remarks on Mullah Kamal Khan, many officials including provincial authorities had not heard of this Baloch musician till then, and right after that they come to know about Mullah Kamal Khan. Surprisingly, based on no grounds some local and national press began to label Mullah Kamal Khan as a Sistani (from Sistan or from Zabol), and not a Baloch.

Anyway, as far as the current Balochi cultural activities are concerned, it seems compared with the past from 2003 onwards Baloch particularly the students and musicians have become more and more active in their cultural activities. Only in 2008 a number of cultural activities have been organized in Balochistan of Iran. In July 2008, the 'Second Poematic Night' (dovomin Shab-e Shear) a Balochi celebration was held in Zahedan in which around 200 people including Baloch and non-Baloch students, professors, musicians, singers, as well as, a number of provincial officials participated. The program was managed by a group of
young Baloch cultural activists such as Ali Mirkazehi and Shahram Yar Mohammadzahi. Again in July 2008, the 'First Graduation Celebration for Saravani Students' (according to Iraj Rostamzahi, the head of Sarvan City Council, only between 2007-2008 more than 155 Saravani Baloch students have received their university degree: bachelor, master, and doctorate, or about to receive such degrees) was held in Saravan in which around 650 people including officials such as Saravan's Governor have remained present. The program was totally a Balochi celebration. In the same year, a number of other Balochi cultural events have been organized in other cities of Balochistan such as Chabahar and Iranshahr. These developments clearly demonstrate, the Baloch culturally are not under pressure from the central government, as projected by the foreign based Baloch political activists. It also shows that as long as the Baloch do not initiate and develop such cultural programs, government authorities would not support them. Thus, it all depends on the ability and efficiency of the Baloch themselves.

**POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS**

As it is known, the political system of Iran cannot be considered a federal one, rather it is a highly centralized form of system. A governor general (ostandar) appointed by the Ministry of Interior heads Sistan & Balochistan, and the same is true with the other provinces of Iran. Balochistan is divided into counties, each headed by a governor (farmandar) appointed by the Ministry of Interior by the recommendation of the Governor General. Each county includes two or more districts, which are headed by district commissioners appointed by the governors. The districts are subdivided into urban municipalities and rural areas. Each municipality has an elected council; the rural areas encompass a number of villages, each run by elected village councils. The local councils have the power to regulate zoning and issuing construction permits. They also organize
the provision of, and assess fees for, various public services. Taking this into account, in general, except ordinary civilian offices (school principalship and directorship of some civil institutions or in a few cases headship of the faculties) or those involve a direct vote of the Baloch (parliamentarian elections or city council elections), the Baloch in Iran lead none of the sensitive political offices (ambassadorship, commandership, governorship) rather the key offices in the local government of Balochistan are occupied mostly by the Iranian Shia and in a very few cases by the Shia Baloch. Throughout the history of the country till the contemporary period no Baloch so far has been able to occupy the highest offices of the Army, Police, Intelligence, Ministry, etc.

At any rate, so far as the Islamic Republic of Iran is concerned, in order to maintain political contacts with the Baloch, traditional methods namely approaching the elite such as tribal chiefs and Sunni clerics, has always been on top priority. Less successful, for the purpose, have been the use of modern institutions such as city councils and the parliament. Well, compared with the policies of the previous regimes the Baloch in Iran under the Islamic Republic relatively enjoying a role in politics. Therefore, it is only under the administration of the Islamic Republic of Iran that the Baloch find a better chance of political participation who can participate and contest the elections (City Council, Islamic Consultative Assembly, Assembly of Experts), though such participation is of formal nature.

However, apart from the aforementioned developments two major religious developments but of political nature took place in Balochistan after the Revolution of 1979. First, is the establishment of the Leadership Office in Sistan & Balochistan. Second, is the gradual expansion of Shiaism within the Sunni populated Balochistan.
Office of the Leadership in Balochistan

As is the case with the rest of the country, in Balochistan too, the highest or most powerful authority is the representative of leadership or the Leadership Office, which exercises 'a political religious power', a presentation of political Islam in Balochistan. Cleric Is-haq Madani (a Sunni Baloch who is the Counsellor of the President in the Sunni Affairs & a Member of Guardian Council) in this regard remarks "this office is located in all provinces of Iran, or in other words, leader holds a representative in every province, and not only in Balochistan. The philosophy is that like other countries in the Islamic Republic of Iran there is a Legislature, an Executive, and a Judiciary. All these are independent powers and cannot command and prohibit each other. From constitutional point of view, in order to put the entire political system in order, this is for the leadership to play the due role. Leader can arrange or organize harmony among these three powers. Accordingly, in every province there is a Governor General, as the representative of central government; a Chief for Administration of Justice, as the representative of Judiciary; and so a Shia clergy, as the representative of Leadership. Thus, Balochistan is not an exception. But, Sunni Baloch do have their own matters and for sometime they used to have a separate representative from Leadership for themselves. However, today the office does not have a separate branch to deal with the Sunni religious issues alone rather the office is there to deal with the overall issues concerned with it including the issues of the Sunni Baloch. Actually, as Governor House looks after the matters related to government, and as Administration of Justice looks after the issues related to Judiciary, in a similar manner, the Leadership Office looks after those matters that are related to Leadership. Therefore, the presence of Leadership Office in Balochistan means the presence of Leadership. This representative holds a spiritual status in Balochistan and reports directly to the Leadership in Tehran and not to the government." 80
The Office of Leadership in the province generally oversees the operation of the provincial government to ensure whether policies and actions conform to the Islamic Shia principles or not. But, it is expected to refrain from involvement in the day-to-day affairs of the governance. Its authority is above that of Governor General and above any other public organization in Balochistan. The reason is that the Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran usually oversees the operation of government to ensure whether policies and actions are according to the principles of the establishment or not, and that he is the spiritual and political leader whose authority is above that of the President and above any other institution in Iran. Likewise, the representative of leadership preserves a similar status in Balochistan. As is the case with other political organizations such as Governor General Office and Ministry of Intelligence, for the purpose of formal or informal communications with the Baloch, the Office of Leadership in Balochistan is also one of these major channels of communication between the Baloch and the Leadership agents. In cases of important security matters or threat against government in Balochistan, occasional meetings take place with influential Baloch figures such as leading Sunni clerics, key tribal chiefs, the influential wealthy, outstanding parliamentarians, and sometimes with the prestigious academicians.

One of the major activities of Leadership Office in Balochistan, as is the case with Iran, is the active presence of 'Friday Religious Gatherings.' This is a weekly public prayer institutionalized in the Islamic Republic as a political event in which Shia leaders follow communal prayers often with a political speech. The Shia leaders of 'Friday Prayers' in Iran are known as the prominent government figures. In Balochistan, there are around twelve Shia clerics whom leading Friday Prayers of different cities for the Shia people. Every Friday with their stereotyped behavior they lecture to hundreds of Shia (non-Baloch) people
of Balochistan, discussing on various political and religious matters. Indeed, they have been successful enough in their mission, indoctrinating fixed stereotyped ideas in the minds of the common Shia. Since the last 29 years, these clerics have been focusing on the various Islamic issues such as the imminent appearance of Imam Mahdi, who finally will bring peace and justice in the world; a great emphasis on teachings of Mohammad the founder of Islam, and his successor Ali; on the historical movement of Imam Hussain, the grandson of Mohammad; and many other related issues. On political matters they concentrate on the following issues: the wrong policies of the United States of America and Israel, considering them as those who violate human rights and exploite the Muslims; on the Islamic Revolution and the interest of the Iranian people; on the hostility of the West particualry America towards the Iranian nation; and so on. These gatherings along with many other daily religious or socio-political activities are fully covered by the media of the province.

Recently, the representatives of leadership in Balochistan have been trying to be more close to the Baloch students or the educated Baloch. For example, a number of recent meetings took place between the two groups in Zahedan. In one meeting a few of the Baloch students freely expressed their views and ideas even to that extent where they criticized the policies of the regime in Balochistan. In this regard, on 16 April 2008 a meeting organized by the Office of Leadership with Sunni Baloch students and a few of Baloch professors. Around 4 or 5 Baloch students presented their lectures and praised the leadership. Among them, however, Hava Narooie (a young Baloch girl) and Khalid Auopaic (a young Baloch boy) dared to address a group of clerics (Shia) including Hojatoleslam Soleimani (the representative of Leadership in the province) by asking them several direct questions such as: "How we (Sunni Baloch) can find our status in the Islamic Republic of Iran? Are we a religious minority? Why our rights are not respected", etc. In the end of the meeting, several more critical
questions were asked by the Baloch students and all were answered by the clerics. In fact, the meeting was the first of its kind. It was attended by more than 100 Baloch students and finally the meeting finished warmly.

One of the major goals of such meetings is to avoid the misunderstanding which exists between Shia and Sunni over their religious differences, particularly those issues which are being stirred up by a number of Shia hardliners, who often insult the Sunni beliefs.

**Expansion of Shiaism in Balochistan**

Shia Islam is the second-largest branch of Islam and its total number exceeds 165 million in the world. It emerged out of a dispute over the succession to Mohammad, the founder of Islam. His successors, called *caliphs* (supreme leaders of the Muslim community), were both political and religious leaders of the theocracy (earthly kingdom under divine rule) that Mohammad had set up. After the assassination of Ali (the fourth caliph) in 661 AD., Ali’s supporters claimed that it had been Ali’s right to succeed Mohammad directly and that the previous *caliphs* had therefore been usurpers. They maintained only the descendants of Ali and his wife Fatima (Mohammad's daughter), were entitled to rule the Muslim community. Ali’s followers were known as the Shia (*partisans*). But, majority of the Muslim community who follow the *sunna* or 'way' (or are Sunni Muslims) rejected the Shia doctrine of succession. The Shia developed a doctrine of 'infallibility, sinlessness, and divine right to authority of the descendants of Ali, whom they called *imams*' (in general usage in Islam, the political head of the Muslim community or the person who leads prayer services can be referred as imam. In Sunni Islam it can be referred to any prominent religious leader. In Shia Islam, the term is usually used with reference to the descendents of Mohammad through his son in law Ali, the first imam. Twelver Shia such as the ruling Shia in Iran believe the 12<sup>th</sup> imam means imam Mahdi is
hidden, but he will return in the end of the time to inaguarate a government or state of justice). The main Shia body recognizes 12 imams, so it is called 'the Twelvers.' The Ismaeils, another Shia branch recognizes 7 imams and so are called 'the Seveners.' It is believed by them that the last imam disappeared in 880 AD., and since then Shia Muslims have been waiting for his return. By the return of this hidden imam (imam Mahdi) justice will be established on earth. The imam, as Shia Islam conceives him is a repository of wisdom, as well as, absolute in his political and religious authority. Under the theoretical aegis of the 12th imam, Shia religious leaders exercise immense influence. They are more likely to take an innovative approach to religious issues and to defy political authority than are Sunni leaders. Shia Muslims believe that beneath the explicit and literal meaning of the Quran is other levels of meaning, which are known only to the imam, who can reveal them to chosen followers. On the other hand, Sunni Muslims constitute the vast majority in the world of the Islamic community. The term sunna means the 'way' or the 'example', in fact, refers to the example of Mohammad. All Islamic groups and sects accept the sunna along with the Quran. Because it means the 'way', the term sunna may also be intended to distinguish the mainstream Muslims from the Shia Muslims, who follow a side path. As has been noted time and again, these two main branches of Islam (Sunni & Shia) differ primarily in their beliefs about the succession to Mohammad. Sunni Muslims believe, Mohammad intended that Muslim community choose a successor or caliph by consensus to lead the theocracy he had set up. But, Shia Muslims believe Mohammad chosed his son-in-law Ali as his successor, and that only the descendent of Ali and his wife Fatima were entitled to rule the Muslim community. There are also differences between these two Islamic branches in interpretation of the Quran. Four schools of law also developed in the Sunni tradition, which are known as Shafi'i, Hanafi, Maliki, and Hanbali. 81
Well, the Jafari Shia Islam has been the official religion of Iran since the 16th century. Because Jafaris believe there are 12 legitimate successors or imams to Mohammad, they are often called the Twelvers. Ideologically, followers of Shia Islam disagree with Sunni Muslims, who form the minority in Iran. For example as cited above, they disagree over the rightful succession to Mohammad, the founder of Islam. In fact, Iran’s Islamic constitution assigns to Jafari Athna Ashari Shia clerics important political leadership roles in the government and prevents the Sunni of Iran from such sensitive political roles. An estimated 90 percent of all Iranians follow Shia Islam and nearly all are members of the Jafari group.

One of the major goals of the Shia clerical system has been the expansion of their faith. Thus, after the Revolution of 1979 they began to work enthusiastically on expansion of the Shia ideology in the Sunni dominated regions of Iran such as Balochistan. It has been claimed according to a report belong to the Daftar-e Tabligat-e Islami-e Hozeh-e Elmieh-e Qom (Office for the Islamic Propaganda of Qom Theological Group), every year more than 9000 Shia missionaries are dispatched to other provinces of Iran particularly to the Sunni dominated regions. According to the same report the total Shia missionaries in Iran are more than 50,000 who propagate their faith freely. In this context, throughout the years since the Islamic Revolution a number of Sunni Baloch have been convinced to convert themselves to Shia faith, and hence received a fair treatment or attention from central government. There have been several educated Sunni Baloch from Zahedan, Saravan, Iranshahr, etc., who have converted themselves to the Shia faith, and then were welcomed warmly by the authorities who treated them in a special favorable manner. Examples are vivid and a few figures are known to the public in Balochistan. In some cases, however, such conversions have led to the assassination of the converted people. For example, in 2006 a Baloch man was killed in the suburbs of Saravan
by a group of unidentified armed men. The Sunni Baloch fundamentalists whose numbers are remarkable in Balochistan believe that whosoever converts himself from his Sunni faith to any other religion including Shia faith deserves death penalty. Some unofficial local sources claim, the Shia missionaries look particularly for those poor Baloch living in the remote rural areas, taking care of them by freely providing food and other basic living materials so as to attract the poor Baloch towards themselves, as an attempt to convince them to convert themselves into the Shia faith. Such practices have been matters of great concern for the Baloch elite of Iran especially for the Sunni clerics.

In February 2008 an official record shows that thousands of the Shia clerics have been sent to Balochistan for the propagandistic activities. According to the ISNA (a state sponsored press) 24,000 Shia missionaries have been dispatched to the deprived regions of the province. In an interview with ISNA, cleric Mohsen Mohammadzadeh (in charge of the Shia missionaries) has stated "since the formation of the Islamic Propagation Organization (Nehad-e Sazman-e Tablighati Islami) for the fulfillment of the Islamic Republic's objectives and the propagation of Islam (Shia Islam) among the people, our branch dispatched its representatives to complete their missions. The missions are performed in two manners --- short term plans and long term plans. For the short-term programs annually we dispatch 900 of our clerics (especially in times of our religious events such as Ramadan) from cities like Qum, Mashhad, and Isfahan to those villages or towns of Sistan & Balochistan, which are devoid of clerics (Shia clerics). As far as our long-term programs are concerned, right from the beginning of the plan, we have dispatched 70 clerics (Shia clerics) to remain permanently and perform their responsibilities in the villages. They are responsible to propagate our religious teachings."
GENERAL REVIEW

To sum up, what can be evident from the performance of central government on the overall developmental policies in Balochistan is vivid. The entire official reports maintain that Balochistan is the least developed region of Iran. It is claimed the credits are not allocated justly and properly and this is one of the key obstacles towards the development of Balochistan. The overwhelmed concept holds whatever is approved officially does not necessarily imply that the same approved credits have turned into paid-budgets over the social, cultural, and economic developments. In other words, there is a difference between the approved credits and the allocated budgets. On this account, government’s own reports can be referred to, for instance, in 2001 a budget of 342,742,488 Rials had been approved for the social affairs (general education, culture and art, health, etc) but out of this, 316,649,553 Rials finally allocated to this sector. In the same year, over the economic developments (water, natural resources, agriculture, commerce, industry, mines, telecommunication, transportation, and tourism) a budget of 204,195,100 Rials was approved, whereas out of it 190,740,391 Rials was ultimately allocated to the section. The same report notes in 2002 a budget of 20,921,388 Rials has been approved on general developments (labor force, media, etc) while 16,149,735 Rials have been eventually allocated to this portion. Some local economic experts do not rely much on these formal reports and believe the gap can be even wider. In fact, such and such factors combined together have paved a way for many Baloch to protest. Over socio-political discrimination there have been a number of demonstrations outside Iran by the exiled political activists, who react strongly against the Islamic Republic. In a 2007 interview with Reza Hossainbor (a Baloch critic and political activist based in London) he asserted "government does not have efficient economic policies. For instance, in Iran before the Islamic Revolution per capita income was 2850 $, while in subsequent years namely after three decades or so
under the Islamic Republic it reached to 3000 $. The political power is not
decentralized rather it is concentrated in the hands of few people. In a similar
way, the economy is monopolized by a number of powerful people who are not
accountable to the public at all. Any attempt to question the key authorities may
lead to untoward consequences. In this country, media and press are all
censored and from time to time students and women go on strike.”

The experiences of other developed countries imply that privatization may bring
about a finer standard to a nation or state. The overall infrastructure of
Balochistan is not privatized rather the entire investment on infrastructure is
usually conducted by public sector. As far as the socio-political issues are
concerned, majority of the Baloch though in private are not satisfied with the
policies of the central government. In any case, like the rest of the country the
socio-political and economic conditions of Baloch deteriorated right after the
Ahmadinejad’s presidency (2005) in Iran and Dahmardeh’s Governorship in
Sistan & Balochistan. This new President and his administration have had its
own influence over the nature of politics in Balochistan of Iran, as shall be
discussed in the next chapter.
REFERENCES & NOTES FOR CHAPTER FOUR

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(3) Ibid.


(5) It has been asserted and generally agreed by the Iranian official reports that Iranian Balochistan is the most back ward and deprived society of Iran. In this regard, different reports of the Administration & Planning Organization of different years since the Islamic Revolution can be referred to.

(6) Iran, Zahedan, *The Visage of Sistan & Balochistan under the protection of the Islamic Revolution* (*Simaye Ostane Sistan va Balochistan dar Partoye Engelab-e Islami*), Governor House, (Estak International Co. & Simaye Ghalam Institute, 1994). Persian; *Note: in present time (2007)* in Iran, 1 Toman is equal to 10 Rials, and 100 Tomans is equal to 1000 Rials. According to an average foreign exchange rate of 2007, 10,000 Tomans (100,000 Rials) is almost equal to 10 $ and 10,000,000 Tomans (100,000,000 Rials) is almost equal to US 10,000 Dollar.


(9) Ibid., p. 177.


(11) In July 2006 I (Ahmad Reza Taheri) visited the site of dam along with company’s director general. The dam was under construction. The proposed budget on the dam was around 11000,000,000 Tomans i.e. equal to 13,750,000 $.


(16) Ibid.


(22) Iran, Zahedan, *Data Bank of Sistan & Balochistan (Bank-e- Itelaat-e Sistan va Balochistan)*, Administration & Planning Organization of Sistan & Balochistan (Sazman -e- Modiriat va Barnamehrizi Ostan Sistan va Balochistan), winter 2004, p. 438. Persian


(24) Hamid Reza Janbaz (the then Director General of Regional Water Corporation of Sistan & Balochistan), *Economy of Asia (Eghtesade-e Asia)*, a monthly international economic news bulletin of Sistan & Balochistan, No. 458 (2004), Degaat Publication, Mashhad, Iran, p. 106. Persian

(26) Giyahi (the then Director General of Water & Sewage Corporation of Sistan & Balochistan province), *Economy of Asia (Eghtesade-e Asia)*, a monthly international economic news bulletin of Sistan & Balochistan, No. 458 (2004), Degaat Publication, Mashhad, Iran, p. 113. Persian


(28) This was claimed by Reza Hossinbor (a well-known opposition to the Islamic Republic of Iran and the former secretary general of Rastakhiz party under the administration of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi in Sistan & Balochistan) on his Balochi political blog, where he reported on "Six Baloch were hanged and seven were shot dead in the last seven days." (London, 10/03/2009).


(33) For a detailed government policies on industrial sector in the province of Sistan & Balochistan, see *Data Bank of Sistan & Balochistan (Bank-e- Itelaat-e Sistan va Balochistan)*, Administration & Planning Organization of Sistan & Balochistan, winter 2004, pp. 407-414. Persian


(37) For more on industries in Balochistan, see Data Bank of Sistan & Balochistan (Bank-e-Itelaat-e Sistan va Balochistan), Administration & Planning Organization of Sistan & Balochistan, winter 2004, pp. 403-406. Persian


(40) Iran, Zahedan, the Supervision Bureau of Custom Houses of Sistan & Balochistan (Hozehye-e Nezaarat-e Gomrokat-e Ostane-e Sistan va Balochistan), Administration & Planning Organization of Sistan & Balochistan, 2005, p. 323. Persian

(41) Ali Karimi (the Director of the Boundary Markets of Sistan & Balochistan), Economy of Asia (Eghtesade-e Asia), a monthly international economic news bulletin of Sistan & Balochistan, No. 458 (2004), Degaat Publication, Mashhad, Iran, pp.156-157. Persian

(42) Iran, Zahedan, Long-Term Scheme Development of Sistan & Balochistan (Tarhe Tossaeh-e Boland Modat-e Ostane-e Sistan va Balochistan), Plan & Budget Organization, (1997 or Aban-e 1376, No. 64), p. 83. Persian


(44) Iran, Zahedan, Data Bank of Sistan & Balochistan (Bank-e- Itelaat-e Sistan va Balochistan), Administration & Planning Organization of Sistan & Balochistan (Sazman-e-Modiriat va Barnamehrizi Ostane Sistan va Balochistan), winter 2004, p.456. Persian


(48) Iran, Zahedan, Data Bank of Sistan & Balochistan (Bank-e- Itelaat-e Sistan va Balochistan), Administration & Planning Organization of Sistan & Balochistan (Sazman -e-Modiriat va Barnamehrizi Ostang Sistan va Balochistan), winter 2004, p.457. Persian

(49) Ibid., pp.457-458.

(50) Ali Karimi (the Director of the Boundary Markets of Sistan & Balochistan), Economy of Asia (Eghtesade-e Asia), a monthly international economic news bulletin of Sistan & Balochistan, No. 458 (2004), Degaat Publication, Mashhad, Iran, pp.156-157. Persian

(51) Iran, Zahedan, Data Bank of Sistan & Balochistan (Bank-e- Itelaat-e Sistan va Balochistan), Administration & Planning Organization of Sistan & Balochistan (Sazman -e-Modiriat va Barnamehrizi Ostang Sistan va Balochistan), winter 2004, p. 455. Persian

(52) Iran, Chabahar, Published Notes of the Free Zone Organization, (Jozveh-e Montashereh-e Sazman-e Mantageh-e Azad), Commercial & Industrial Free Zone (Mantageh-e Azad-e Tejari va Saanaati-e, 1993). Persian

(53) On the status of Chabahar Free Zone, data has been collected from various Persian primary sources such as, An Investigation of the Substantial Policies & Plans in the Development of Sistan & Balochistan Province: 1988-1997 (Barrasi-e Assar-e Siaasatha va Jehatgirihaaye-e Kallan dar Tossaeh-e Ostang-e Sistan va Balochistan: 1367-1376), Plan & Budget Organization, 1998, No. 78, (1998 or Tir Mah-e 1377); and Social & Economic Report of Sistan & Balochistan 2002 (Gazaresh-e Egtesadi – Ejomayee-e Ostang-e Sistan va Balochistan, Saal-e 1381), Administration & Planning Organization of Sistan & Balochistan, (2003 or Esfand-e 1382, No. 118); as well as, from some Persian secondary sources such as, Afrahkhteh Hassan, Chabahar’s Role in the Coastal Regions of Southeastern Iran (Nagshe-e Chabahar dar Nahieh-e Saheli Jonooob-e Shargi Iran), Publication: Vagefi, Sherkat-e- Chap-e Mashhad 1996, pp. 108-114; and so on.


(57) For more on development of some industries and factories in Chabahar, see Afshar Sistani Eiraj, *Chabahar & the Pars Sea (Chabahar va Daryaye Pars)*, Publication: Sediqi, 1993 (1372) Tehran, pp. 356-361. Persian

(58) An interview with the City Council Members of Chabahar: Ghafoor Mihan Doost (head), Vaheed Bakhsh (deputy), Allah Bakhsh Jadgan, Mehrollah Sardarzahi, and Mohammad Hossain Raissi (members) on "beautiful port of Chabahar & the lost opportunities (bandar-e zibaaye Chabahar va forsathaye az dast rafteh)" by *Economy of Asia (Eghtesade-e Asia)*, a monthly international economic news bulletin of Sistan & Balochistan, No. 458 (2004), Degaat Publication, Mashhad, Iran, p. 269. Persian


(60) Ibid., p. 283.


(63) Ibid., p. 285.


(65) Ibid.

(66) Ibid., p. 542.


(68) Mohammad Taghi Hossini Tabatabayee (the former Chancellor of Zahedan Medical University & Deputy Director of the Ministry in Sistan & Balochistan), *Economy of Asia (Eghtesade-e Asia)*, a monthly international economic news bulletin of Sistan & Balochistan, No. 458 (2004), Degaat Publication, Mashhad, Iran, p.58. Persian
This is generally believed by the majority of Baloch including students, teachers, government employees, and of course, the opposition Baloch resided abroad.


Iran, Zahedan, Data Bank of Sistan & Balochistan (Bank-e- Itelaat-e Sistan va Balochistan), Administration & Planning Organization of Sistan & Balochistan (Sazman-e-Modiriat va Barnamehrizi Ostan Sistan va Balochistan), winter 2004, pp. 329-330. Persian

Cinema Farang and Cinema Mehreban have been regarded as the only cinemas of Balochistan in Zahedan. For the last five years or so these cinemas have stopped showing movies on screen. In July 2006 I (Ahmad Reza Taheri) visited both Cinemas in Zahedan.

Iran, Zahedan, Data Bank of Sistan & Balochistan (Bank-e- Itelaat-e Sistan va Balochistan), Administration & Planning Organization of Sistan & Balochistan (Sazman-e-Modiriat va Barnamehrizi Ostan Sistan va Balochistan), winter 2004, p. 330. Persian


From 2000 onwards periodicals such as Estoon, Daaz, and Sawl, are some cultural and academic magazines being manage by Baloch students in Iran. Marz-e Porgohar, a weekly newspaper in Zahedan also runs by Dr. Bagher Kurd, a Baloch university (assistant) professor. Neday-e Islam, a Sunni religious periodical runs by Maki Religious School of Zahedan.


Interview with cleric Is-Haq Madani (a prominent Baloch Sunni cleric and a Member of Guardian Council, as well as, the Counsller of the President of Iran in the Affairs of Sunni sect of Islam), on 09 August 2006. The interview was conducted by Ahmad Reza Taheri at Shahrak-e Gharb, Tehran. Balochi

Encarta References 2005, Rahman Fazlur, "Two Major Sects of Islam: Sunni & Shia."

Qom is a city in the central Iran and is the administrative center of Qom province, located about 120 km south of Tehran. Since 1920s the city of Qom has been known primarily for its Shia Islamic theological schools.

The report is given on 13 October 2007, at Ramadan Eid gathering (a Muslim religious day) by Mahmoud Berahooyenjad, a Baloch journalist. In his speech addressed to more than 100,000 Baloch in Zahedan, Mahmoud Berahooyenjad asserted that his report is based on a report belongs to the Office for the Islamic Propaganda of Qom Theological Group (Daftar-e Tabligat-e Islami-e Hozeh-e Elmieh-e Qom).

These conversions have created dissatisfaction on the side of the Sunni Baloch particularly among the clerics. Therefore, in this study these examples are kept confidential for security reasons, though a few number of these people are known to the public.

Cleric (Shia) Mohsen Mohammadzadeh (the director/head of the Shia Missionary), Iranian Student News Agency ISNA online for the region of Sistan & Balochistan, 2008 (07/11/1387). Persian


Reza Hossainbor (an exiled Baloch political activist in London), “U.S. Sanctions against Iranian Revolutionary Guards & Financial Institutions affiliated to them,” Voice of America/Persian (VOA), around the table with you (Miz-e gerdi ba shoma), 26/10/2007. Persian