

THE STUDY OF ETHNONYMS IN BALOCHISTAN

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Abstract

The present study lies in the field of Onomastic, with specific exploration of the prevalence of Ethnonyms that deals with the mention of ethnicity as a suffix to the first name through naming practices in the province of Balochistan. The study aims at explicating the reasons as to why or why not the people of Balochistan express their Baloch ethnic identity with their names and naming practices. A qualitative paradigm of research guided the methodology of this study with data collection done through semi-structured interviews and open ended questionnaires by the selected participants who belonged to different caste and clans of Baloch community. The interpretation and analysis of the data reveals that because of the tribal set up of the province a large number of its residents attach the name of their caste or tribe with their first name for multiple reasons such as considering the expression of ethnic identity as an essential element in a multilingual multi-ethnic society. This practice is taken as a matter of pride. It gives them sense of security and it is sometimes used for social and political gains. It also earns them the loyalty of their group. It unifies and binds them to a single ethnicity. The data

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revealed that there are very few people who do not use ethnic suffix and deem the practice as unimportant. The study concludes that the naming practice in Balochistan is based on ethnonyms for centuries and the practice will continue due to its association with social esteem and cultural pride.

Introduction

Ethnonyms are words that are a part of personal names, indicating ethnic affiliation of its bearer. Personal names self-define a person in all societies and cultures. Naming is a universal ritual and no human can escape this process, for one is not capable of developing the concept of self if one does not bear a name. A person is named through naming practice, which is one of the commonest social practices and is often taken for granted (Kim & Lee, 2011) but at the same time naming practices are also taken seriously in the sense that names with good meaning are given to the child. Sometimes words from the Holy Scriptures are used as names. Names are contextually situated and cannot be considered as arbitrary action but are definitely meaningful. The child is named after historical heroes, religious figures and even great grandparents who might not be alive. The name can be given to the child by any of the family members often by the parents.

Naming is a social acknowledgement of a child's birth right by the group members of the society he is born into. It is the first step in establishing a person's social identity and individualizes a person. Naming is in fact an expression and representation of multiple identities of one individual that are gender, ethnic, religious, political class and caste. Therefore, a person has no identity without a name and it is for this reason that naming is given immense importance in all societies of the world and many cultures have a separate ritual for naming ceremony, which is celebrated as an event.

Naming practices are linguistic behaviors of a minor kind but at the same time they are reflective of larger interactional forces in the social cultural milieu, which also contribute in the production of larger social

discourses of cultural and ethnic identities. Such forces work inside a particular culture and may include the ‘unique aesthetic values, taboos, protocols, cultural practices and ethnic identity of a people’ (Harrison, 2002 p.1). There are external factors too that influence the naming practices, that may include political situation, influences of other languages, the status and prestige of different languages at a place which may result in the control of production of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1994).

Like other cultural practices, naming practices are also shared practices that construct individual and group identities. So in other words, the naming practices are reflective of cultural values and belief system of the society. Jayaraman (2005) explains that in Hindu tradition, names not only bear an individual’s identity of self but at the same time, it also puts him into a specific culture, caste, sectarian and varna-adding in his identity more elaborately. He adds that personal names are of great importance in everyday life of Hindus.

Balochistan has a closed tribal society where the names of caste and clan are important attachments to the first name and signify a vital identity element. Besides, different tribes have their clan specific names. The present study has explored the link between naming practices, names and the sense of ethnic identity of people in Balochistan. The study has investigated the reasons for choosing ethnic names in the form of attaching caste with the first name and also reasons for avoiding the manifestation of ethnic identity through naming practices.

Literature Review

Strauss (1966) claims that personal nouns, among the other types of nouns, are most saturated with power. He further adds that personal nouns exhibit individualism, which stands as the last stage of classification. Goethe (as cited in Zabeeh, 1968) states that there is no distinction between a person’s name and his self. This means that name is central to understanding one’s self and identify one’s self. He further adds, “A man’s name is not like a cloak that merely hangs around him. It is a perfectly fitting garment. It grows over him like his very skin. One cannot scrape and scratch at it without injuring the man himself”. Research shows that names

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and naming practices are closely linked to culture, values and belief systems of the society (Su & Tellesa, 2007). Su & Telles (2007) conducted a research in California in the Hispanic society and found that Hispanic boys have more English names than Hispanic girls but the Hispanic names given to the boys were found translatable into English. Such naming practices manifested ethnic maintenance as Hispanic and also a desire for assimilation in the US English society, but this assimilation is less desired for the boys. Another study was conducted by Alford (1988) in Oklahoma. The study was about the reasons behind naming children. He deduced that white American mothers give their boys more names of the kin than the girls and that was because boys were considered as perpetuators and symbols of family continuation and often times are the keepers of the prestige of the family.

Ullmann (1962) states that proper nouns are marks of identity and regarded common nouns as units that contain meaning. Names are membership to a certain group. This group can be social, religious or ethnic. Name can be called as the first step of identity construction and gives one sense of who he is. Aceto (2000) in his work has addressed the dilemma of the immigrants who sometimes have to keep multiple names, which can influence the sense of self of the child.

Harviland et al (2016) cites the example of Aymara Indians in the Bolivian highland village of Laymi where naming is so important that an infant is not considered human unless he is named in a ceremony. He is not given a name until he starts speaking Aymara language around the age of 2. So when the child shows his ability to speak, which is a distinctive characteristic of humans, he is considered to be fit to be recognized as a member of the group. The naming ceremony marks the toddlers' social transaction from a state of nature to culture and consequently to full acceptance into Laymi community.

The researchers have discussed different communities in this regard. Most of the other communities are unlike Armera who name their babies

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right after birth. The naming pattern might be different for instance the Icelanders have continued their old customs and the father gives his own name to the child. If it's a male child, the suffix 'dotting' is attached to the name. Among the inuits of Arctic Canada the child is named after the deceased people of good characters with the belief that "spiritual identification will help shape their characters" (cited in Harviland at el (2016, p.134).

In the Hopi culture, a child keeps on receiving different names till his adulthood. On the 20th day, he is named by the paternal aunt; and then at the age of 6, he gets a name in a religious ceremony, and finally the last name in his life at adulthood, but interestingly he gets yet another name at the time of death which is not pronounced once it is given. In Navajo culture, the baby is named soon after birth; it is given the name of the clan when he laughs for the first time. First laugh is taken as a sign of social life as a member of Navajo ceremony.

The case of multi-ethnic and multilingual societies is a little different, especially when one group is dominated by the other group with the pressure on the dominant ones for assimilation and giving up their ethnic identity. Such assimilative practices are seen when the subjugated ones' start leaving their traditional and cultural names and start adopting the names of majority group. Russian territorial expansion into Siberia where the Xakas, the speakers of Turkic lost their names to Russian names (Butanaya, n.d cited in Harrison, 2002). During the time of expansion of Russian empire, there was forced modification of names in Russian pattern of naming practice, which required people to have a surname with a gendered suffix.

Change of names besides being an assimilative strategy can be used as a strategy of resistance by the minority group to assert their identity and show their cultural pride. Harrison (2002) reports Pomak as Bulgarian minority who kept their Turkish Arabic names to keep their ethnic identity alive. There have been instances of name reversions especially in African Americans who after generations started giving up their slave names and

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sometimes reverting to another faith like the boxing champion Cassius Clay to Muhammad Ali.

Gabre (2010) studied language practices in Aari people who started speaking Araf when they came in contact with Amharic speaking immigrants from Ethiopia. These immigrants dominated the local population economically, politically, even culturally which was manifested by the decline in personal names of Aari in favour of Gama language so the naming practices compromised the role of Aari language.

Suleiman (2006) observes that naming practices also act as marker of identity. He notes that there had been a rise in Persian names and a fall in Islamic names during Iran Iraq war in the 1980s. Iranian national identity was the need of the time, it therefore came to the fore, and religious identity went in to the background, as religion was not the differentiating identity between Iran and Iraq at that time.

Bulliet (1978) showed through his research in Turkey that during the time when Turkey was moving towards modernization and secularization, a sharp drop of Islamic names was observed and can be interpreted as a decrease in the trend among Turks to identify themselves more strictly with religion. Bulliet further observes that in the history of Turks this rise and fall of Islamic names became a common feature, which usually coincided with the political situation in Turkey. The revival of Muslim names and thereby an assertion of Islamic identity was seen with the outbreak of war with the Greeks who took over parts of Turkey, which was taken as an attack by the non-Muslims threatening the Islamic identity of Turkish people (Cited in Suleiman,2006). Now that Turkey has become a republic, since then, there is seen a rise in names taken from the Turkish language which is indicative of Turkish national identity and Turkish nationalism among its people.

The names of the countries and states also reflect the kind of identity that is being focused. For instance, Islamic Republic of Pakistan refers to

religious identity as the foundation of the country. Whereas all four provinces of Pakistan that are Punjab, Sindh, Khabar Pakhtoon Kha and Balochistan are named after the majority ethnic groups residing in those areas. In the same vein, there have been strong demands for a Saraiki and Hazara province since Saraiki and Hindko speaking population feels themselves unrepresented in Pakistan, as they do not have a province of their own. Similarly, Bangladesh refers to a land of Bangalis who speak Bangla, indicates that the basis of Bangladesh is ethnicity and Bangali nationalism and not their religion that is Islam. The shift of the name from Hindustan to India also shows the movement of emphasis of identity from Hindu religion to declaring the country as secular.

Methodology and Theoretical Framework

The methodology that informs the study is qualitative mode of inquiry. The qualitative mode of inquiry has further been accessed through semi structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires. Data collected through semi-structured interviews and questionnaires has been discussed through descriptive method, which describes the data in the form of words. The participants of the study have been selected from four different linguistic groups of Baloch people residing in Balochistan-Brahvi, Sindhi, Saraiki and Baloch. 10 participants have attempted semi structured interviews while a sum of 100 participants have filled questionnaires for the purpose of fulfilling the answers posed by this study. The theoretical framework that backs the study is that of onomastics. Onomastics is a branch of lexicology that devotes itself to the study of names and naming processes. The main focus of onomastics is to trace out the etymology of names. The current study has been based on anthroponymy. Anthroponymy is a subdivision of onomastics, which deals with the study of personal names. Fossier (2010) states that anthroponymy is study of names that belong to human beings only. Mandende (2009) acknowledges that onomasticians charge anthroponymy with great significance since it deals with a number of characteristics of life namely: religious, social, political, cultural, economic, and historical features. The study further narrows down anthroponymy to its category of ethnonyms, which deals with the mention of ethnicity as a suffix to certain names. Balochistan is a province of Pakistan where ethnonymy practice is quite a common and normal practice.

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Ethnicity is mentioned at the end of names for certain purposes such as: to relate to one's history, to be identified as distinctively, for political and social gains. It is a more socio-linguistic research; therefore, "personal names" will be used instead of "anthroponymy".

Data Analysis

Most of the semi-structured interviews were conducted in Quetta, the capital of Balochistan. To the question 'Do you mention your caste/tribe along with your name?' four interview participants mentioned their caste along with their names while six did not. When they were asked about the reason for mentioning their caste along with their names, they came up with similar answers of basically wanting an explicit identification with their ethnic group. Naming practices in a group are also a part of the linguistic dynamics for establishing and expressing loyalty to one's group (Thomas et al, 2004). Tagging of castes with the name is much too common especially in the tribal societies of Pakistan and Baloch are one of them who have sustained this practice so far. First names of some of the respondents were typically Baloch names and could be identified with it such as 'Beburg', Kiyya, Gul Naz, Shameer etc. Naming rituals are significant linguistic practices in this part of Pakistan. Its significance has increased for the members of the Baloch community in the present climate of Balochistan, where they are trying to assert and reassert their identity, in which they take pride; as one of the respondent said.

'My name is my pride my identification',

Another said that he wanted to show people that he was a Baloch by mentioning Baloch with his name. One of them replied that she did not, in fact her parents did not tag Malghani with her name but she had done so with the name of her children and wanted her children to be identified as a Baloch, perhaps because of the fast changing situation in the province and when majority is following a way of identification. She said, "I think it is good for their identity and they will feel more comfortable" The word "comfortable" may refer to the safety and security that a Baloch name or a caste may give to its owner these days.

Not everyone intends to be identified with a caste through their names. Few respondents did say that they carried the name of their caste for the simple reason that their ‘parents named them so’, and they never pondered over the reason. The ones who prefer using their surname or father’s name believe that they do not feel anything lacking in their name with the absence of identity of their tribe, along with their name. A respondent by the name of ‘Beburg’ informed that since his name was a Baloch name, so he did not further need ethnic identity through the name of the tribe. A girl replied that since girls and women mostly stayed at home in their culture, so they did not need the tag of their caste and tribe; but for men, it was of prime importance that was why her father and brothers mentioned ‘Mengal’ with their first names. She believed that it was the need of the time and can be used purposefully at work places. Ethnic identity is more important for men than women in Baloch society. As men dominate their community, they think it is more important for them to be particularly classified by their ethnic or tribal tags. It is used for some social gains, perhaps. Some people do it because it is the trend of the town as Mr. Hasni said, “It is very common in our area Barkhan”.

Another replied “I think and feel that mentioning Baloch with our name is not only important but essential as I am a Baloch since 6000 BC, and my history, culture and mother land and everything about me is Baloch, that is why my name includes the word Baloch”. Baloch is the pithy word and reflects the identity along with history and culture of the group.

A Malghani Baloch said that her ethnic identity gave her a feeling of security these days in the present circumstances of her place. A Baloch student, while commenting on explicitly expressing identity through Baloch names or attaching Baloch caste with it, said that name as a part of language is used to negotiate ethnicity, “there are occasions when I need to tell others that I am a Baloch for example to get acceptance in the group and to give the group members a promise of loyalty”. Sometimes due to political reasons, this respondent believes that, it is better to stay in the background as far as ethnic identity is concerned. Such an open expression and recognition by one’s own first name or the name of the caste or tribe can be

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unsafe. This elaborates the fact that mentioning of ethnicity is almost compulsory, which is asked for if it is not a necessary part of one's name.

Name of a person is therefore not just a name for personal identification, but it means a lot more and plays a greater role in this part of the world, by providing and acting as a loud expression of ethnicity. It has been observed that people whose names are devoid of the caste are questioned about their tribes and it is thought necessary for a person to at least know about it if he does not explicitly show through their names. One young interviewee replied interestingly that as the social and political situation in Balochistan is worsening these days, the interplay between language and ethnicity becomes complex. Sometimes expression of ethnicity through language is advantageous at times while at other times, it can be an otherwise case. The Baloch from Turbat and Makran were found to write only 'Baloch' with their names and they did not mention their specific caste.

The participants who filled in the questionnaire had the following caste/tribes:

1. Jamaldenee
2. Khosa
3. Mengal
4. Malghani
5. Dehwar
6. Shawani
7. Sumani
8. Hasni
9. Qumberani
10. Raisani
11. Mohammad Shahi
12. Rind
13. Mullahzai
14. Malik
15. Khawajakheil
16. Mandahi
17. Kanrani

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18. Rakhshani
19. Umrani
20. Jadgal
21. Bugti
22. Sajedi
23. Gadani
24. Askani
25. Rakhani
26. Keteran
27. Quereshi
28. Mastoi Baloch
29. Gangozai Baloch
30. Mosazai
31. Rahees
32. Qalandarani
33. Khalirzai Dashti
34. Siapad

After obtaining their basic ethno linguistic profile through the above-mentioned questions, the researcher moved onto the basic identity question. The first one being ‘Do you attach your caste/tribe along with your name?’ The following tables and charts represent the responses among the speakers of four languages.

Table 1a

Balochi Speakers		
Do you Attach Your Caste with Your Name?		
	By Number	By %
Yes	31	57.4

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No	23	42.5
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Table 1b

Brahui Speakers (Baloch)		
Do you Attach Your Caste with Your Name?		
	By Number	By %
Yes	11	52.3
No	10	47.6

Table 1c

Saraiki Speakers		
Do you Attach Your Caste with Your Name?		
	By Number	By %

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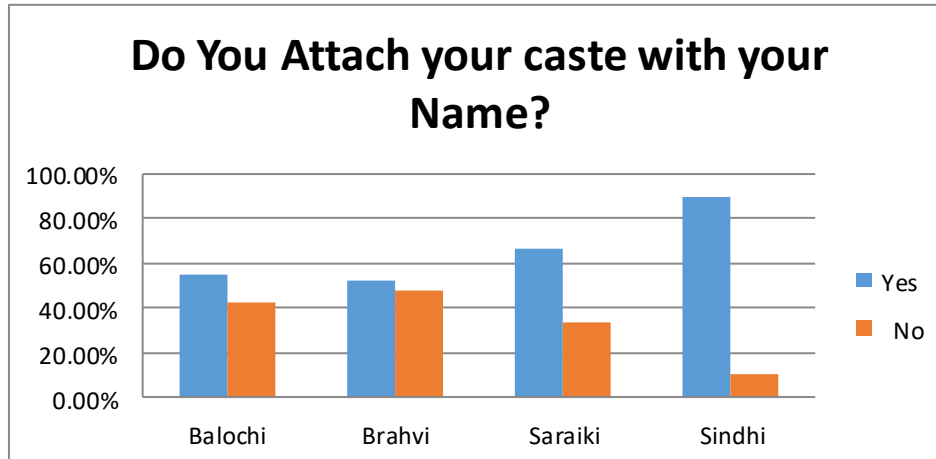
Yes	10	66.6
No	5	33.3

Table 1d

Sindhi Speakers (Baloch)		
Do you Attach Your Caste with Your Name?		
	By Number	By %
Yes	9	90
No	1	10

Graph 1e

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Mentioning of name along with caste is so much common all over Pakistan and Balochistan does not seem to be an exception. Most of the participants in this study said that they do mention their caste or the name of their tribe with their first name. The trend is observed among all the speakers of four languages of Baloch. The main reason is the prevalence and maintenance of a tribal society. People here are generally known by their tribes. The trend of mentioning of specific caste is least among the Balochi speaking Baloch as compared to the other linguistic groups of Baloch people. Baloch specifically from areas like Makran, Turbat and Gwadarš prefer using only ‘Baloch’ as suffix at the end of their names. These areas do not have a strict caste bound society and are gradually moving away from long practiced *Sardaree Nizam* or tribal system. They do have tribes and tribal leaders but not in the same way as found in north western races like Bugti, Marri, Magsi etc. These people who mention only “Baloch” also feel that the name of their caste and tribe seems like dividing the Baloch nation; on the other hand, only putting “Baloch” with the name can portray an image of people who are united by the name of a common ethnic group. The term “Baloch” at the end of their names act as a glue that keeps the whole group as one united body and that serves as the rational

reason of evading the mention of tribe or caste's names by most of the speakers of Balochi.

The desire to be identified by the name of caste/tribe can be seen highly prevalent and significant among Sindhi speaking Baloch. The mentioning of caste is carried out for the purpose of distinguish themselves from the non-Baloch Sindhi speaking people in their areas with either border like Sindh and Jāfarābād or inside Sindh like Hyderabad and Khairpur.

Mentioning of caste/tribe with one's name is also not a forgotten practice among Bráhui speaking Baloch, primarily for the reason that they belong to the ruling tribes of Baloch and form the core of Baloch confederacy (Martin, 2009), so the tribe's name is still a pride as it refers to royalty in their blood. It was observed that this group of Baloch people mention their caste and tribe because the names of their caste and tribes are saturated with power as they have been the rulers among Baloch people.

The trend of mentioning caste with one's name is evident and conspicuous among the Saraiki speaking Baloch, but they really do not give such a ritual much importance. Perhaps the lack of significance in the ritual is because of their integration with Punjab and distance from Balochistan. Moreover, rise in literacy and losing ties with tribal system has added to this behavior. But still majority of Saraiki speaking Baloch living in Balochistan do tag their caste with their names. Identification as a Baloch has gained immense significance in the area during the last few years as Goethe (1968) claims that names indicate self and stand equal to one another-portraying one's identity.

The next question was related to the above one in which the participants were inquired about the reason for mentioning or not mentioning their tribe and the result displayed variations in the respondents' answers. Most of the respondents who do write their caste give the basic reason of being identified with the Baloch, through the name of the Baloch tribe. Some of the replies were "I am proud to be a Baloch", "It's my identity and proud of it", "My name does not only indicate that I am a Baloch but my specific clan that is Khosa is my true identity". These responses exhibit that the reason of mentioning tribe and caste's names is mainly taking pride in one's tribe and gain of a distinctive identity. Few respondents also believe that it is the culture of Baloch to specify the name

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of the tribe along with the names, which is not something new that they have started doing it now, but it has been centuries since they have been doing it. Thus, the ritual has been associated to be a part of Baloch culture. It is recognition for them in a multi-ethnic society.

As already mentioned that Baloch, from Makran and Turbat only mention “Baloch” and do not specify the tribe or clan. These people call Baloch as a nation under which there is an existence of a number of tribes and clans. The reason that they gave for not mentioning their specific caste is, as this respondent wrote “I believe all Baloch people as one nation and I want to unite them”. For them being a Baloch is more important than specifying of a caste which are numerous in number. The word “Baloch” is enough for their ethnic identification. Hence, the reason of writing “Baloch” marks solidarity and unity of Baloch people who avoid mention of their tribes and castes with their names.

The few respondents who do not mention any term for their ethnic identity with their names termed it as a ‘negligence’ of their parents’. The word “negligence” shows that the practice is considered substantial and if their names do not have their tribe or caste’s names, they regard it as mistake on the part of their parents. It is so much needed now in the current circumstances and is the demand of a society that is tribal in nature. The introduction through one’s name remains incomplete without the name of caste/tribe. Few of the answers that I received were, “To show my roots/identity” and “Because caste is very important in everyday life”.

Conclusion and Discussion

Names are central to everyone and everything’s identification. There are several naming practices that have been in use since time immemorial. The current study has explored the naming system used in the Balochistan province of Pakistan. The study has been planned in order to dig out the reasons why and why not the people of Balochistan entail their ethnicity (caste/tribe) as suffixes to their names. The study has been completed using a qualitative method that has been aided by semi-structured interviews and questionnaires with a number of 10 participants attempting semi structured interviews and 100 participants filling questionnaires. The study has set

onomastics as its theoretical framework, which has been specified to a subdivision of onomastics called anthroponomy-study of human names. Anthroponomy has further been specified to ethnonym, which focus on the mention of ethnicity (caste/tribe) for identification of individuals. The data collected from the interviews answer the questions of the study that why Baloch people add their caste and tribe's names as their last names and why they do not mention.

The data opens up that a vast majority of the Baloch residents in Balochistan do add their caste or tribe's names as their last names with their names since they are proud of their history and past. They are of the view that this mention of caste or tribe assigns certain privilege to their identity and makes them sharply distinct from other tribes and castes in a multi-ethnic community. The data demonstrates that Baloch people tag their caste and tribe's names to gain security in the current worsening situations of Balochistan where people are killed on the basis of ethnicity. This practice provides them with a sense of safety and at the same time it promises them political and social gains; in addition, it also helps them earn the loyalty in their groups and provides them an explicit identity. But at the same time, some of the interviewees avoid mention of their caste or tribe names with their names either because of security reasons or because their first names already exhibit their Baloch identity; that is why, they do not need to further make it explicit with their tribe or caste's tag. The result form the questionnaires discloses that among the four tribes of Baloch, Sindhi Baloch are the ones who consider tagging their caste or tribe's names of prime importance with their own names in order to be identified and separated from the non-Baloch Sindhi speakers. This practice is also not alien to Bráhui Baloch as they belong to the governing group of Baloch. They deem mention of their caste and tribe very important in order to take pride in belonging to a supreme class of Baloch. The Saraiki Baloch have been somehow successful in leaving this practice behind due to their homogenization with Punjab and the next reason is their lack of interest in retaining tribal system, yet they follow the practice of tagging their tribal and caste's names to a small extent. Balochi speaking Baloch is the group of people who avoid mention of their caste names with their names. They mostly prefer to tag the ethnicity "Baloch" with their names and they rationalize it this way that "Baloch" at the end of their names incorporates a

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sense of unification. They portray Baloch as one united group and avoid falling into divisions of castes and tribes by mentioning it with their names. Another reason that Balochi speaking Baloch evade mention of their caste and tribe's names at the end of their names is that they are moving away from *Sardāri Nizam* or in simple words tribal system.

Some of the respondents regarded the absence of their caste and tribe's names from their names as the negligence of their parents. The study concludes that despite the presence of the people who avoid entailment of their caste and tribe's names with their names, there is a vast majority of people in Balochistan who have sustained the practice for centuries, and the data shows that they are in no mood of detaching themselves from this practice in the near or far future as they invest pride and honor in keeping this practice alive. The practice is a must with male names as they dominate the Baloch society while it stays of little significance when it comes to female names as they stay at home. Baloch, no matter which tribe or caste, feel a sense of esteem in drawing a connection between their names and their caste and tribe's names. They think doing so keeps them attached emotionally to their culture, history and motherland, and they also think one can only show how proud he is about his ethnicity when he mentions it with his name.

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