

Why is Hubco a “No-Baloch” Zone?

Sunday 9 January 2011, by [QAZI Najeeb](#) (Date first published: 8 January 2011).

The national mainstream press, both print and electronic, unjustifiably make all out attempts to declare Sardars and the so-called Sardari System as the root cause of the grave problems facing the resource-rich Baloch province. Astonishingly, both forms of the media by no means take Islamabad and its step-motherly policies towards strife-torn Balochistan into consideration.

Balochs are backward, underdeveloped and always discriminated against wherever they are and wherever they go not as such as a result of Sardari System, but solely because of the inept and anti-Baloch policies of the Center as a whole.

For instance, Hub Power Company (Hubco), an Independent Power Producer (IPP) of about 1292 Mega Watts, is located near Gaddni Coast in Balochistan and currently operated and maintained by a UK-based multinational power company (International Power). The irony of fate is that it has utterly been made a no go area for the skilled native Baloch youths.

I personally spent two full-fledged years (2007-2009) as an apprentice appointed on an Apprenticeship Scheme granted by the company exclusively for the local Baloch youths. Ironically, I, including the rest of my batch mates, was categorically denied extension in my contract soon after the completion of my stint as apprentice by Human Resource Department (HR) dominated by non-Balochs saying that there were no such vacant positions. However, that was not the case indeed. In other words, they were implicitly implying that the one and only criterion for confirmation was being a non-Baloch.

Later on, skilled workers of our level were imported from Karachi and Punjab, but we, as the real sons of the soil, who deserved the positions, were kicked out as soon as our tenure expired. Sardonicly, I could not see any Sardar snooping as far as our confirmation as permanent employees was concerned.

Furthermore, ours was the 9th intake batch and the previous eight batches had been denied outright permanent employment. Worse still, out of about 350 payroll employees of the company, one could hardly come across less than a dozen local Balochs. Even the tea boys are appointed from outside Balochistan.

It is also disgusting to note that the applications of the Baloch engineers from Khuzdar Engineering University for jobs are not even entertained at the company. The company only prefers Engineers from NED University Karachi where Balochistan has merely two reserved seats as per its quota.

In the very recent past, a Baloch doctor, an administration coordinator, a technician and another nursing assistant have been terminated by the company on baseless grounds. Seemingly, the doors for the Balochs to get jobs in the multinational company have almost been completely shut with these terminations. One cannot see light at the end of the tunnel of late.

It is surprising to know that the nearby villages even do not have the most basic necessity of modern day life such as the electricity. Whereas, the whole production of Hub Power Station is directly transmitted to Punjab en route Jamshoro. On the other hand, the shortfall of electricity in

Balochistan is at its peak and during summers, the Quetta Electric Supply Company (QESCO) gets left with no other option but to resort to around sixteen to eighteen hours of acute load-shedding in a day. Isn't it the extreme of exploitation?

Meanwhile, the coastal city of Hub is the only industrial city of Balochistan, but, like in Hub Power, manpower for the industries in the city and its outskirts from top to bottom is imported from Karachi in general and Punjab in particular.

Anyhow, the tale of Hub Power Station is just the tip of the iceberg of the ground realities in the gas rich yet most backward province of the federation.

Again, the onus lies on the mainstream media to help highlight the woes and worries of the people of Balochistan in an honest and objective manner rather than making the longstanding problems of the most underdeveloped and conflict-ravaged province more complex by misleading the general public and raising fingers at Sardars and the Sardari system. The present reproach of mainstream media can be considered an effort to entirely absolve Islamabad of its responsibilities.

In a nutshell, it is high time Islamabad realized the gravity of the volatile situation in Balochistan on priority basis. When the doors to opportunities get shutting, then people start thinking out of the box. Why not start now? Otherwise, it will be too late to cry over spilt milk.

Najeeb Qazi
