



## MIR HAMMAL-I-JIAND REFERENCES FROM BALOCHI HEROIC EPIC

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### **Abstract**

*Oral historiography has been a great source of reconstructing the histories of those people and regions where their written traditions are seldom practiced. Balochistan is one such region where folk literature is the source of history keeping by its natives. The precolonial era of the region is full of such epics and heroic stories of persons, events and tragedies where human achievements and disasters are remembered in common folk tales, poetries and stories. The present paper is an attempt for reconstructing one of the episodes of Baloch history, where common people have resisted one of the colonial powers (Portuguese). The story of resistance is reconstructed by the help of Balochi poetry and it has been endeavored that the story could be told from a native perspective. The content analysis method is applied and logical interpretations are made in the paper.*

**Key words:** Colonialism, Resistance, Great Game, Orality, Folk literature.

### **Introduction:**

Historically the land and people of Balochistan have or tried to counter invading forces (i.e., Greeks, Persians, Afghans, Arabs, Portuguese, Ottomans, and British). Resistance and its forms could be traced back to counter attacks, strategies, movements, and literature. Resistance through literature considered as the most vital forms expression while countering intruders. Such resistance promotes political consciousness of larger mass and organized them to throw-out the oppressors. Balochi poetry and epic writings throughout ages has proven as source of resistance by writing and glorifying down their heroes who over the centuries have protected the Baloch frontiers on the one end and on the



other end it demonstrated anger and resentment against the intruders and ridicule against traitors (Jahanzeb Khan & Syeda Meher Taban, 2012).

History of Makran goes back to ancient Persian and Greeks. Once part of the Persian empire according to Shah Nama of Firdausi, the passage of Alexander the great and later with the advent of Balochs it slowly became hub for the Hot/Kalmati Balochs. Looking at the geographical location of Makran it always played its role as a communication line between India and the middle east. When the Portuguese started their invasion of India, they have captured some ports of Makran division during fifteenth and sixteenth century (Baluchistan District Gazetteer Series (Makaran & Kharan), 1907).

Baloch poets and poetry has always condemned the overbearingness of the Portuguese and acclaimed the bravery of their leaders. Among the classic leaders in Makran was Mir Hamal-I-Jiand who guarded Makran during the sixteenth century and later was arrested by the Portuguese and was taken to an identified place according to oral history in the form of ballad sung after him. It does not mean that Baloch were only critical of Europeans but, other invaders too (Syed, 2007). The famous politician and poet Gul Khan Naseer divided Balochi resistance poetry into four different times and spaces. The first one is addressing the classical period of Mir Chakar Rind and Mir Gawahram Lashari. The next phase comprises of Mir Chakar Rind and Mir Gawahram Lashari movement from Balochistan to arrival of British, third period covers poetry from British till 1930 and the fourth one, from 1930 to current which he called as 'National Poetry' (Naseer, Balochi Razmiyyah Shā'iri, 1979). The scope of this study is concerned with classical epic Ballad about Mir Hammal Kalmati-I-Jiand who fought against the invasion of Portuguese in the sixteenth century. The burning of Pasni and Gawadar during 1581 set the stage for most of Hammal Kalmati struggle and organized his tribe and other Baloch's in the vicinity to fight against the European colonizers (Khan B., 2000). This study will try to build the historical account of Mir Hammal-I-Jiand on the bases of Ballad recorded by (M. A. R. Barker & A. K. Mengal, 1969) in their book "*A course in Baluchi.*" Published in 1969 from McGill University.

The Balochi oral tradition recounts many occasions of Portuguese plundering and looting but, the event of 1581 has left visible mark on the memory people of Makran and Balochistan. This action was so vicious and brutal that the Portuguese burned the coasts of Pasni and Gawadar to punish people of Makran for providing help to the Ottomans in 1581 a news reached the Governor of Hormuz Dom Gonzales Menzes about the presence of Turks at Makran and he immediately sent Commander in Chief Luiz d'Almeida with squadron of a Gallons, galley and six smaller vessels (Badal, 2000; p.154-56). Almeida on his arrival to Gawadar and Pasni, first looted it and then burned it down.

According to Sabir Badal Khan (2000) that writing with authenticity on Makran is too difficult because the only historian Correia Afonso writing on Portuguese colonialism in India say that serious and satisfactory history of Portuguese colonial expansion cannot be written until more original sources are not being published by the archives department at *Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo* in Lisbon (Badal, 2000; p. 156). In the same way study on Makran and presence of Portuguese is



difficult as there is no authentic study carried out because the Portuguese archives are so dense and ill organized at *Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo* that it needs some manpower to extract the rich information.

The only open source to consult then left is the living oral tradition that remained in Baloch's society since ages. Ballad were recorded by most notables in the form of their own personal collection which was called as (daftar). Among these famous ballad writers, the most famous ones are from Hottman Kalmati who elaborated the fight between Hammal-I-Jiand and the Portuguese in Makran during Sixteenth century. These epic folklores were original translated by Elfenbein 1983) (Khan S. B., 1992).

Baker & Mengal (1969) referred to the work of R. Hughes Buller who gives a summary of Portuguese activities along the Makran coast during the sixteenth century, culminating in the burning of Gawadar and Pasni in 1581 (Baluchistan District Gazetteer Series (Makaran & Kharan), 1907). It is probably to this period that the following selection belongs and according to them the following poem is a scribed to Hotman Kalmati and appears to be only a part of the extended composition. It may well be the one which Hughes Buller reported seeing in manuscript form in 1906 (Barker & Mengal, 1969: p.306).

The following Ballad gives a detailed story of Hammal Kalmati struggle and how he fought against Portuguese, and later own how they captured him taken him an unidentified land. The historical orally sung Ballad refers to that land or place as Europe, but historians are arguing that according to the sketch presented in the Folklores hinted at Calcutta or any other port of India. This poem and its translation are taken from (M. A. R. Barker & A. K. Mengal, 1969). Along with some verses would be recollected from Gul Khan Naseer's book "*Baluchi Ki Razmia Shairi (1979)*"

ہونمان کلمتی گشیت . حملے جہند و پزنگانی جنگء گشیت  
او زری نوداں ، حملے پیگاماں برت !  
پہ کہیبیء بمبوتیں دوستائے سر کنت !  
حملے بیسوتیں پزنگ دستگیر کرتگنت ،  
کمیریں ریز چو لہہیں مارے وارگنت -



حملء شومیں گواتسری تراناں گپتگنت -  
آئی ہمراہی بیدلیں میداں بیتگنت ،  
لکتنت پیمانانء شہ ، پاکء رپتگنت -  
” دوست ، منی شامء میلہیں گندیماں مہ درش  
پہ منی چاشتء کیرگیں گٹورانء مکش !  
او منی ماہل ، پمتن فی زہیروکاں مجن !  
آہ و پریاتاں پمتی بالادء مکن ! “  
جن پرنگانی حملء بچ دوست نینت -  
دیم نشودنت و نئے حدائی نامء گرت  
ماہی و چنگاشک گوں مکسکانء ایر برنت -  
پشکے گونڈ آنت و ناپگانی کندش در آنت -  
حملء ملکء کاڈ ہمارچہیں دوست بنت -  
پشکے ذراج آنت و گوں سری و سرچادر آنت  
حملء پارء مات و پت وا و ویل گتہ -  
حملء مرکء سے و چار چیاں گل گتہ -  
آسکاں من گزدان ، گڈاں من جاہو شمراں ،  
شوندریں گٹانی بڑ گوں کوہی پاچناں -  
” ماتکوہاں بلت ، بیا رواں گوربنداں چراں !  
حملے جیہند مرتگ و کے جنت و کشیت ؟



شَمبےءِ روجءِ سر مشویدِ مات و گہار !  
شَمبےءِ پہ ہراساں شتر نہ انت ، شانزدہ پہ پتاں  
شَمبےءِ روجءِ حملءِ بندی کرتگاں -  
شَمبےءِ روجءِ حملءِ شاگءِ نال کتہ ،  
حمل ماں شاگ ، و شاگ پما نیلیوئیں زرعہ -

Source: M. A. R. Barker & A. K. Mengal. (1969). *A Course In Baluchi* (Vol. 2). Montreal,: McGill University.

Hammal was considered as the bravest Baloch leader of all time comparing him with the great Mir Chakar Khan Rind. We will discuss the above poem in detail but first I want to connect the dots of his capture by quoting Gul Khan Naseer account of the event and how it started.

*There are four ships coming forward with their bird-like moving wing.  
They surrounded Hammal's boat from sides, and  
They shouted at Hammal: "we will capture you" (Naseer, 1979: p.256)*

According to poet when Hammal-I-Jiand and the fisher man were deep down in the Sea, they saw four boats approaching them. They have surrounded Hammal boat from all sides and shouted at Hammal that they are here to capture him. The Ballad continues and say:

*Hammal called the companions od his boat.  
But Hammal's companions were coward Dashtis.  
Whose bodies were impotent like the embers of tamarisk.  
Other meds (fishermen) manage to escape.  
Dark complexioned and black meds fell in the bottom of the sea.  
They were caught up by the waves of the sea up to the beard and mouth. (Naseer, 1979: p.143).*

When Hammal saw the situation that he is now surrounded by the Portuguese he ordered his companions to attack but his partners were coward fishermen (Dashtis). They were coward and their souls and bodies were dark black. Black here symbolizes cowardness. In Baloch tradition showing back to your friend in war is equivalent to death and one's soul dies than. They have dived into the deep sea and were successful in escape.



Translation (M. A. R. Barker & A. K. Mengal, 1969):

Now the later situation is described fabulously by Hotman of the Kalmati tribe. He tells of the battle between Hammal, the son of Jihand, and the Europeans (Portuguese) in the following verses as this.

*O ocean clouds, Carry the messages of Hammal,  
Deliver [them] gloriously unto his dearest beloved!  
The worthless Europeans have captured Hammal.  
The greyish-brown ropes have bitten [lit. eaten] [him] like the sleek serpent.  
[His own] ill-omened, arrogant words have caught Hammal.  
[in] his company were [lit. have become] [only] fainthearted Meds.  
[They] fled from [their] promises; openly have [they] gone. (Barker & Mengal, 1969:  
p.306)*

The poet in these lines is calling the cloud of ocean to spread the news of Hammal arrest by Portuguese. He calls Portuguese as worthless and coward who arrested him in the sea and his hands are being tied up with greyish rope. Poet here is also showing either anger or regret that due Hammal's arrogance of fighting alone with Portuguese has lead him arrested and his own companions have betrayed him.

*"[O] beloved, grind not the fragrant wheat for my supper!  
Do not kill the whitish- grey lambs for my mid - morning meal!  
O my beloved, sing no [more] laments for me now!  
Grieve no [more] for my figure! " . (Barker & Mengal, 1969: p.306)*

The epic recounts message of Hammal from the prison in which Hammal is saying to his family that make any bread for his breakfast and they should not slaughter lambs for his lunch anymore because he will not return. The poet further goes and says that do not weep after me nor sing song for me. These lines from living oral tradition vividly explains the horrifying nature of Portuguese capture and jails that once one is being arrested do not return home or to their loved ones.

*Hammal does not like the women of the Europeans.  
[They] do not wash [their] faces, nor do [they] take the name of God.  
[They] swallow fish and crabs together with flies.  
Their blouses are short, and their navels [lit. the sides of their navel] are exposed.  
Hammal likes the languorous - eyed maidens of [his own] country,  
Their tunics are long, and [they] wear [lit. are with] the head - cloth and the shawl.  
(Barker & Mengal, 1969: p.306)*

The ballad continues that Hammal was taken to the land of "Parang", where every European woman wanted to marry him. According to some sources due to Hammal bravery Portuguese did not want to kill and wanted Hammal-I-Jiand to marry a Portuguese woman, because courage and bravery was the





talk of the town. The epic explains that Hammal rejected European as they were short skirts and they do not wash their faces, nor they worship Allah. Hammal prefers the long shirts and shawls of his Baloch woman and would never betray his woman or culture. Due the depiction given in these lines most Historian assume that Hammal was taken to Calcutta because their woman wears short blouse with saris because of hot climate.

*[His] mother and father have grieved bitterly for Hammal.  
[But] a few [lit. three and four] things have rejoiced at Hammal's death.  
The deer in Gazdan, the wild sheep in the crags [of] Jahu,  
The ewes [i.e., female goats] of the ledged cliffs, together with the mountain rams [i.e., male goats]:  
[Saying:] "Leave the high peaks! Come [let us] go and graze in the fields [lit. dams: the terraced fields on the lower mountain slopes]!  
Hammal, the son of Jihand, is dead, and who [now] will shoot and kill [us]? ". (Barker & Mengal, 1969: p.306)*

In spite that many in Makran were mourning with death of Hammal but according to poet some celebrated his death. Among them were wild deer of Gazdan, wild sheep of Jahu, markhors of cliffs and rams of mountains. They talk to each other we shall we graze in the mountains or cliffs lets go the lush green fields because now Hammal the son of Jiand is dead now. These lines elaborate bravery and courage of Hammal-I-Jiand in his area that even wild animals were afraid of him.

*[O] mother and Sister, wash not [your] heads on Saturday!  
Saturday is [also] not good for the brothers [i.e., for Hammal' s fellow tribesmen],  
[nor] the sixteenth [of the month] for the fathers, [for]  
[They] have captured Hammal on a Saturday.  
On Saturday did Hammal shoe [his horse] Shag,  
Hammal upon Shag, and Shag [turned] towards the blue sea. (Barker & Mengal, 1969: p.306)*

According to poet Hammal falls credit does not go to Portuguese rather it was because of the bad omen and superstitions. The epic hints to people that do not violate omen and Hammal violated them and was arrested. The superstitions toward which he is hinting is the day of Saturday. He is addressing the women to not wash their hair and it is even not good for the brother and fathers or for Hammal tribe. On this day Hammal was arrested. He sat on his horse (Shag) and went toward blue sea but never returned. Authenticity of these pros or Ballads could be challenged but these Ballad, folklores remained as living sources of areas which were brutally colonized. Their history is being forged, their culture and norms have been violated. People of Makran have been exploited on the names of big power games. Their homes were burned down, and identity was tarnished of being savage and unruly. These living oral folklores give detailed insight of the autocracies committed by the colonizers to the people of Balochistan.



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