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Print ISSN: [3006-2497](#) Online ISSN: [3006-2500](#)Platform & Workflow by: [Open Journal Systems](#)<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17418975>**Phytophoric Anthroponyms in Baloch Culture****Iftekhar Ahmed Baloch**

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the role of phytophoric names in Balochi anthroponymy, focusing on personal names derived from plants, their cultural, linguistic, and symbolic meanings. Phytophoric names in Balochi culture are often associated with qualities such as beauty, strength, endurance, and sacredness. The research seeks to document both existing and previously undocumented plant-based names, contributing to the preservation of this aspect of Balochi linguistic heritage. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, including a thorough literature review, interviews with native speakers, and an examination of official records such as electoral rolls and school registers. A total of 52 distinct phytophoric names were identified, some of which had not been previously recorded in the literature. The results indicate that phytophoric names are more commonly used for women than for men, with wild plants being the predominant source. This research highlights the importance of documenting these names before they fade from use, especially given the shift in naming practices among younger, educated Baloch communities. The findings have implications for the preservation of Balochi cultural heritage and contribute to the broader field of anthroponymy, offering insights into the relationship between language, culture, and nature.

Keywords: *Phytophoric, anthroponyms, Baloch culture, Balochi names, Balochi language*

Introduction

Personal names, known as 'anthroponyms,' are not only identifiers but also cultural artifacts that carry historical, social, and linguistic significance (Hough, 2016). The study of anthroponyms, known as anthroponymy, reveals how names preserve and convey cultural values across generations, often marking significant periods in human history. Balochi anthroponyms, in particular, are imbued with rich cultural symbolism, frequently derived from natural elements such as days, months, winds, colors, birds, animals, and especially plants. Within this framework, names inspired by plants, known as phytophoric anthroponyms or botanical anthroponyms, offer insights into cultural perspectives on resilience, beauty, and

sacredness (Badalkhan, 2003). Derived from the Greek roots *phyto-* (plant) and *-phoric* (bearing), these names reflect attributes the Baloch people find aspirational and symbolic, such as strength, beauty, and endurance.

The use of plant names as anthroponyms is a tradition shared across cultures globally, where botanical names serve as a form of reverence for nature and embody culturally specific values (Nicolaisen, 2017). Within Baloch culture, boys are often named after hardy plants symbolizing stamina in the face of hardship, while girls are named after flowers and birds, representing beauty and grace. This practice aligns with findings in cross-cultural anthroponymy studies, which suggest that societies often draw from the local natural environment for names that signify desirable qualities (Suzman, 2022). However, as these names gradually fade from contemporary usage, there is an increasing need to document and preserve these linguistic elements, ensuring their continuity within the cultural heritage of Baloch people.

This article examines the unique usage of phytophoric names in Baloch culture, analyzing their aesthetic qualities, symbolic meanings, and roles in the linguistic landscape of Balochi anthroponymy. By exploring the historical, cultural, and linguistic dimensions of these plant-based names, the research contributes to a nuanced understanding of naming practices and their connections to nature. Furthermore, studying the relationship between plant names and personal identities within the Balochi community enriches the broader field of anthroponymy, offering insights into how language, culture, and nature intertwine in the creation of personal names (van Langendonck, 2021). Ultimately, this research not only celebrates and preserves the linguistic heritage of the Baloch people but also underscores the profound relationship between humans and the botanical world.

Methodology

This study aims to examine existing literature on phytophoric names in Balochi anthroponymy and to document previously unrecorded names. Given the study's objectives, a qualitative research design was chosen to explore the cultural and linguistic nuances of phytophoric anthroponyms. This design is well-suited for analyzing the symbolic meanings and contextual connotations of these names within Baloch society.

a) Research Design

The research design follows an ethnographic and descriptive approach, leveraging both secondary and primary data sources. The literature review, interviews, official records, and authors' linguistic expertise provide a robust foundation for comprehensively understanding the use and cultural significance of phytophoric anthroponyms in Balochi culture.

b) Universe of the Study

The study universe encompasses Balochi-speaking regions in Balochistan, Pakistan, where cultural and linguistic traditions are preserved, particularly among elder community members. This geographical focus ensures that the names collected are authentic and reflect Baloch cultural and linguistic heritage.

c) Units of Analysis

The primary units of analysis are phytophoric anthroponyms within the Balochi language, along with their associated connotations, meanings, and symbolic roles. Secondary units include

the interviewed individuals—specifically, elderly Baloch speakers—as well as literature sources and official records like electoral rolls and school registers.

d) Procedure of Data Collection

The study employs a systematic method for data collection, combining literature review, interviews, official records, and native speaker expertise to gather reliable data on phytophoric names in Baloch culture.

Literature Review

A thorough review of available literature was conducted, which revealed that only a limited number of authors have explored Balochi anthroponymy comprehensively (Badalkhan, 2003; Dashti, 2010; Raheem and Wadila, 2011; Zakir, 2014; Kareem, 2018; Shad, 2021). Although these sources contain general Balochi anthroponyms, they rarely focus exclusively on phytophoric names. However, historical texts, such as the *District Gazetteer Makran* (1906), do mention certain plant-inspired names, providing a foundation for further inquiry.

Interviews

Recognizing gaps in the literature, the study incorporated semi-structured interviews with elderly citizens from diverse Balochi-speaking areas in Balochistan. These interviews aimed to collect additional phytophoric names and to understand the cultural meanings associated with these names. Interviewees provided insights into names that embody qualities of beauty, endurance, and sacredness, enabling a deeper analysis of their social significance.

Data from Official Records

To supplement the data, official records such as electoral rolls and school registers were examined to identify and authenticate phytophoric names. This approach ensured that the names collected were not only culturally relevant but also actively used within the community, enhancing the reliability of the study.

Authors' Input

The authors' status as native Balochi speakers played a critical role in the data collection and analysis processes. Drawing from their intimate knowledge of the language, the authors assessed the pragmatic connotations of the collected names based on context, beliefs, and cultural associations, in line with Allan's (2007) approach to language pragmatics. This expertise allowed the authors to accurately interpret the cultural nuances of each name and to provide informed insights on their symbolic meanings.

e) Procedure of Data Analysis

The data analysis followed a thematic approach, organizing phytophoric names by their symbolic themes (e.g., resilience, beauty, sacredness) and examining each name's linguistic and cultural connotations. Through qualitative analysis, these themes were contextualized within Baloch society, highlighting the ways in which plant-inspired names reflect cultural values and beliefs.

The literature review, interview data, official records, and authors' input were cross-referenced to ensure consistency and validity. Each name's connotation was examined within both historical and contemporary contexts, offering a comprehensive view of its role in Balochi anthroponymy. This methodological approach enabled a rich portrayal of phytophoric

anthroponyms and underscored their significance in the cultural and linguistic heritage of Balochistan.

Results

The study successfully documented a total of fifty-two (52) phytophoric anthroponyms, sourced through a comprehensive literature review, examination of official records, direct interviews with community respondents, and the authors' own contributions. These findings underscore the richness of Balochi anthroponymy and the cultural significance attributed to plant-inspired names.

Overview of Findings

The collected names are organized into two distinct tables for clarity and comparison:

Table 1:

This table compiles the phytophoric anthroponyms identified through literature sources. The names listed here reflect prior documentation efforts and the historical roots of plant-based names in Balochi culture.

Table 2:

This table includes names gathered through interviews with elderly Balochi speakers and an analysis of official records such as electoral rolls and school registers. This approach allowed for the collection of names that may not have been previously recorded, ensuring a more comprehensive dataset.

Avoidance of Duplication

To maintain the authenticity and uniqueness of the dataset, names already recorded in the literature were carefully omitted during the interview process. This methodological step ensured that only previously undocumented or contextually rich variations of phytophoric names were included, thus enhancing the study's contribution to the existing body of research.

Documentation of Dialectical Variations

The study also highlights dialectical variations within Balochi-speaking regions. These variations are indicated in parentheses where applicable, helping readers understand regional linguistic nuances. In some cases, dialectical differences result in minor phonetic changes:

Example: The plant *Tecomella undulata* is referred to as 'Perpuk' in western dialects and 'Perpugh' in eastern dialects. Here, only minor letter substitutions occur, yet the name retains its overall phonetic resemblance across dialects.

In other cases, dialectical differences lead to entirely distinct names for the same plant, reflecting regional influences on Balochi language:

Example: *Iphiona aucherii* is known as 'Bango' in the Kech district and 'Kalmorage' in the Panjgur district within the Makran division. These distinctions indicate how local variations can significantly alter the linguistic expression of a plant's identity while preserving the cultural value associated with the plant's attributes.

Cultural Implications of Phytophoric Names

The results reveal that plant-inspired names in Balochi culture are not merely identifiers but carry symbolic meanings that vary across regions and dialects. Plants such as *Tecomella undulata* and *Iphiona aucherii*, used in names like 'Perpuk,' 'Perpugh,' 'Bango,' and 'Kalmorage,'

are associated with characteristics that are valued in Balochi society, such as resilience, beauty, and adaptability. These names reflect a shared cultural reverence for the natural environment and the symbolic qualities attributed to local flora.

Through systematic documentation and careful consideration of regional linguistic diversity, this study presents a robust dataset of fifty-two unique phytophoric anthroponyms. The inclusion of dialectical variations and the detailed examination of culturally embedded meanings enrich our understanding of Balochi anthroponymy. By preserving both well-documented and newly identified plant-inspired names, this research contributes significantly to the linguistic heritage of the Baloch people and offers insight into the interplay between language, culture, and the natural world in anthroponymy.

Table 1. Phytophoric anthroponyms documented through literature review.

S.No.	Phytophoric Name	Connotation	English Name of the Plant	Botanical Name
1	<i>Apróz</i> اپروز	Beauty	Silver leaf nightshade	<i>Solanum elaeagnifolium</i>
3	<i>Anárí</i> آناری	Redness	Pomegranate	<i>Punica granatum</i>
4	<i>Anšag</i> آنشگ	Stamina	Saltwort	<i>Salsola</i> sp
5	<i>Ásumi</i> آسُمی	Fragrance	Jasmine	<i>Jasminum grandiflorum</i>
6	<i>çandan (Sandal)</i> چندن	The fragrance of tree	East Indian sandalwood	<i>Santalum album</i>
7	<i>Çigird</i> چِگِرد	Beauty	Banwali	<i>Acacia jacquemontii</i>
8	<i>Éšark</i> ایشِرك	Vigor	Dogbane	<i>Rhazya stricta</i>
9	<i>Ezgul</i> یزگل	Beauty	Shirazi thyme	Flower of <i>Zataria multiflora</i>
10	<i>Gazzén</i> گزين	Long Lasting (like Athel tree)	Athel tree	<i>Tamarix aphylla</i>
11	<i>Gazzábék</i> گزابیک	Long Lasting/Cure	Tamarix	<i>Tamarix aphylla</i>
12	<i>Gazzí</i> گزی	Long Lasting/Cure	Tamarix	<i>Tamarix aphylla</i>
13	<i>Guláb</i> گلاب	Beauty and Delicacy	Rose	<i>Rosa indica</i>
14	<i>Hinnám</i>	Redness	Hina	<i>Lawsonia inermis</i>

	هِنَام			
15	Izbótk إِزبوتك	Cure	Psammogeton	<i>Psammogeton biternatum</i>
16	Izgind إِزگند	Cure	Shirazi thyme	<i>Zataria multiflora</i>
17	Jaurak جَوَرَك	Cure/Safeguard	Oleander	<i>Nerium oleander</i>
18	Jaurán جَوَران	Cure/Safeguard	Oleander	<i>Nerium oleander</i>
19	Kahúr كِهَور	Sacredness and long lasting	Ghaf Tree	<i>Prosopis cineraria</i>
20	Kalér/kaléri كلير كليري	Delicacy of the tree twigs and beauty of its flowers	Caper berry	<i>Capparis aphylla</i> Roth
21	Kalpórag كلپورگ	Cure	Germander	<i>Teucrium stocksianum</i>
22	Kulmír (Kulmúrag) or Bangó گلمیر، کلمورگ، بنگو	Jubilation In Balochi folklore this plant is used as a metaphor for a person who is always Jubilant (Baloch, 2015)	Aucher's Rock- Cress	<i>Iphionia aucheri</i>
23	Kunar کُنَر	Thorny, Not easy to disturb	Jojoba	<i>Zizyphus jojoba</i>
24	Putrúnk پُتروُنک	Beauty	Scorzonera	<i>Scorzonera paradoxa</i>
25	Šizzan/šinz شِزَّان/شِنز	Thorny, Not easy to disturb	Camelthorn	<i>Alhagi maurorum</i>
26	Šimší شِمشِی	Softness/Smallness	Sickle Fruited Fenugreek	<i>Trigonella esculenta</i>
27	Šinz شِنز	Deep rootedness	Camel thorn	<i>Alhagi maurorum</i>
28	Zámur زَامُر	Softness	Hanging snailseed	<i>Coculus pendulus</i>
29	Zámuran زَامُران	Softness	Hanging snailseed	<i>Coculus pendulus</i>

30	<i>Zámurí</i> زَامُرِي	Softness	Hanging snailseed	<i>Coculus pendulus</i>
Table 2. Phytophoric anthroponyms documented through Interviews and consulting official records.				
S.No.	Phytoporic name Botanical names	connotation	English names of the Plants	
31	<i>Mangulí (Mangulán)</i> مَنْگُلِي / مَنگَلَان	Paleness	Hertia	<i>Hertia intermedia</i>
32	<i>Názbó (Niyázbó)</i> نَازِبُو / نِيَازِبُو	Fragrance	Basil	<i>Oscimum basilicum</i>
33	<i>Sósin (Sósing)</i> سَوِسِين	Beauty	Mountain Lilly	<i>Ixilirion tataracum</i>
34	<i>Gwaní</i> گَوَنِي	Stamina	Wild Pistachio	<i>Pisticia khinjak</i>
35	<i>Kréç (Alwanj)</i> كِرِيچ	Maleness/Cure	Zygophyllum	<i>Zygophyllum eurypterum</i>
36	<i>Parpuk (Parpuy)</i> پَرپُک / پَرپُی	Beauty	Ghaf	<i>Tecomella undulata</i>
37	<i>Lawang</i> لَوَنگ	Fragrance	Clove	<i>Syzygium aromaticum</i>
38	<i>Gwárix</i> گَوَاَرِخ	Beauty	Tulip	<i>Tulipa stellate</i>
39	<i>Šénal/šénaluk/šénaló</i> شِينَل / شِينَلُک / شِينَلُو	Beauty	Milkvetch	<i>Astragalus stocksii</i>
40	<i>Drannah (Drannu)</i> دَرَنَه	Cure	Russian Sage	<i>Perovskia abrotanoides</i>
41	<i>Murpad</i> مُرپَد	Cure	Castor oil	<i>Ricinus communis L.</i>
42	<i>Záfirán</i> زَاْفِرَان	Fragrance/Beauty	Saffron	<i>Crocus sativus L.</i>
43	<i>Sópak</i> سَوِپَک	Redness	Apple	<i>Pyrus malus</i>
44	<i>Zaitún</i> زَيْتُون	Fruitful	Guava	<i>Psidium guajava</i>
45	<i>Guggul</i> گُگُل	Freshness	Indian bdellium-tree	<i>Commiphora wightii</i>
46	<i>Simsók</i> سِمَسُوک	Fragrance	Cat mint	<i>Nepata cateria</i>

47	<i>Simsór</i> سيمسور	Piquant	Suaeda	<i>Suaeda aegyptiaca</i>
48	<i>Gidišk (Gitičk)</i> گیدشک / گیدچک	Cure	Hopbush	<i>Dodonia viscosa</i>
49	<i>Kalampur</i> کلمپور	Fragrance	Holy basil	<i>Ocimum tenuiflorum</i>
50	<i>Karkí</i> گرکی	Vigor/Cure	Apple of Sodom	<i>Calotropis procera</i>
51	<i>Zardálú</i> زردلو	Fruitful	Apricot	<i>Prunus armenica</i>
52	<i>Jugr</i> جگر	Beauty	Maerua tree	<i>Maerua crassifolia</i>

Discussion

The results of this study underscore that phytophoric names are a prevalent and significant feature of Balochi anthroponymy, with a marked gender-based distribution. The practice of attributing plant names to individuals in Balochi culture, especially for women, aligns with global naming conventions where plant names often symbolize qualities such as beauty, grace, and delicacy (Baskakov, 1978; Dastenbaevna, 2022). Our study observed that these names are mostly used for female individuals, as plants like flowers are commonly associated with feminine beauty and fragility. In contrast, names for men often derive from hardy, resilient wild plants, emphasizing qualities like strength and endurance, which are highly valued in the harsh environmental conditions of Balochistan. This connection mirrors findings from other regions where wild plants symbolize qualities of sturdiness, particularly in arid climates (Dastenbaevna, 2022).

The predominance of wild plants in these names highlights the deep connection between the Baloch people and their environment, as well as their reliance on the flora of their region for both practical and symbolic purposes. Notably, some exceptions exist, such as the names 'Zafaran' (Saffron), 'Zardaloo' (Apricot), and 'Sopak' (Apple), which derive from cultivated plants. These exceptions suggest that names associated with cultivated plants might reflect a shift towards agricultural stability and the domestication of plants, which contrasts with the symbolism of wild flora as representing endurance in a harsher, natural environment (Baskakov, 1978). This distinction between wild and cultivated plant names is not unique to Balochi culture and has been observed in other cultures as well. For instance, Souto (2017) noted a similar trend in Southern Asia, where plant names associated with agriculture reflect economic stability, while wild plants reflect more nomadic and pastoral lifestyles.

The gendered aspect of phytophoric names is another important observation of this study. As found in other anthropological studies, plant-based names often serve to express gendered traits. In Balochi culture, names for women tend to be drawn from delicate plants or

flowers, while names for men tend to reflect more sturdy or enduring plants (Baskakov, 1978). This reflects the idea that feminine qualities in many cultures have historically been associated with fragility and beauty, whereas masculine qualities are linked with strength and resilience. In her study of Caucasian anthroponymy, Dastenbaevna (2022) discusses how plants that symbolize endurance, such as trees or herbs, are often given to males, reinforcing traditional gender roles. The gendered nature of these names underscores a shared cultural practice that transcends geographic and linguistic boundaries. Researchers like Baskakov (1978) and Dastenbaevna (2022) have noted that the use of plants to symbolize gender attributes is a universal phenomenon, where different species of plants are culturally coded to represent certain ideals. In this way, plant names in Balochi culture are not just linguistic markers, but cultural signifiers that speak to broader social constructs of gender and identity.

One of the most striking trends identified in this study is the decline in the use of phytophoric names, especially among the educated classes of Balochistan. This trend is reflective of broader global shifts where traditional naming conventions are being overshadowed by modern, names. As the population becomes more connected to global cultural and educational systems, there is a clear shift away from names tied to nature and more toward names that are seen as modern or cosmopolitan. In their study of Central Asian anthroponymy, Baskakov (1978) and Souto (2017) observed similar patterns of name attrition, where the younger generation, especially those in urban areas, increasingly favor modern or internationally recognized names. This trend is becoming more pronounced in Balochistan, where exposure to modern education and the globalization of culture through media and social networks has led to a gradual loss of traditional names. This shift is contributing to a decline in the cultural and linguistic heritage of Balochistan, as phytophoric names—once a key part of identity and cultural connection to nature—are increasingly viewed as outdated. The decline of these names among the educated classes highlights the importance of preserving them before they become extinct, as they embody not only a connection to the natural world but also to the linguistic and cultural identity of the Baloch people. Researchers such as Dastenbaevna (2022) emphasize the necessity of documenting and preserving traditional knowledge and naming conventions as part of efforts to safeguard cultural heritage.

Limitations.

The data collected in this study is primarily limited to the Balochi-speaking areas of **Balochistan**, Pakistan. While this regional focus offers in-depth insights into **Balochi anthroponymy** and its connection to the local flora, it may not fully capture the diversity of **phytophoric names** present in other parts of Baloch-speaking communities, particularly those outside Pakistan, such as in **Iran** and **Afghanistan**. This geographic limitation may restrict the generalizability of the findings to the broader **Baloch diaspora**.

Furthermore, the study relies heavily on **local knowledge** gathered through **interviews with elderly citizens** and the review of **official records**. This could introduce a potential bias, as the names collected are dependent on the participants' recollections, which may not represent a comprehensive or up-to-date collection of all phytophoric names in the region. Additionally, the **educational background** and **cultural exposure** of interviewees may influence the types of

names recalled or preferred, especially as younger generations increasingly favor modern names, as noted in the **declining trends** of traditional naming practices.

Lastly, while this study draws on existing literature, there is a scarcity of focused research on **phytophoric names** within Balochi culture, which limits the scope for comparison with previous studies. The data collected, therefore, offers a **snapshot** of the current state of phytophoric anthroponyms in Balochistan, but further research would be necessary to assess the full extent of these names across different **Baloch subcultures, dialects, and social strata**.

Conclusion

This study highlights the significance of **phytophoric names** in **Balochi anthroponymy**, revealing their deep connection to the natural environment and cultural identity of the Baloch people. The findings show that these names are predominantly derived from **wild plants** and are often gendered, with names for **women** typically reflecting beauty and delicacy, and names for **men** symbolizing strength and endurance. A few names are linked to **cultivated plants**, indicating the evolving relationship between Baloch society and the **domestication of flora**.

Furthermore, the study observes a **decline in the usage** of phytophoric names, particularly among the educated classes, highlighting the impact of **globalization** and **modernization** on traditional naming practices. This decline is concerning as it threatens to erase a rich aspect of **linguistic heritage** and the intimate connection between the Baloch people and their environment.

Despite the limitations of this research, including its regional scope and reliance on **oral traditions**, the study provides an important foundation for future work on **phytophoric names** in Balochi culture and anthroponymy in general. It underscores the need for continued **documentation and preservation** of these names to maintain a vital link to the Baloch identity and cultural landscape.

Recommendations

It is essential to continue the documentation of phytophoric names, especially given their cultural and linguistic significance. Initiatives should be established to collect these names from different Balochi-speaking regions, including **remote** areas and other countries with Baloch populations, such as **Iran** and **Afghanistan**. Collaboration with local elders, linguists, and cultural experts will be crucial in this effort.

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