

**The geographical Position of Sindh**

**T**he Sindh as it exists today is bound in the North by Bhawalpur in the south by Arabian Sea, to east by Hallar range of Hills and mountains and in the west by sandy desert. On the map this land mass occupies the position between 23 degrees and 29 degrees latitude and in the eastern hemisphere it lies between 67 and 70 degrees longitudes. Thus in width is spread across 120 miles and length is 700 miles.

**Birth of Sindh**

Geologists have divided the age of the earth into Eras and eras in turn have been further divided into Epochs. Three eras in time line are described as (1) Cenozoic, which stretches to 65.5 million years. (2) Mesozoic Era which stretches from beyond 65.5 million years to 22 crore 55 lakh years and (3) Paleozoic era which is between 57 crore 5 lakh years. All this is in the realm of cosmic timeline.

In the opinion of the Geologists in the tertiary age the entire north India including Sindh northern part of India emerged as a land mass

and in place of raving sea now we find ice clad peaks of Himalayan range and the present day Sindh emerged during that upheaval. As per today's map Sindh occupies the territory of 47,569 square miles.

One astonishing fact brought to light by the geologists is that the River Indus existed even before this great upheaval and emergence of the land mass of Sindh. Renowned Historian of Sindh Mr. Behrumal Meharchand while quoting Prof Pithawala ,remarks," as nature provides the milk for the child in the breast of the mother before the birth of the child, the river Sindhu was already in existence before the emergence of Sindh!."

"It (the Indus) is an example of antecedent drainage, having existed even before the great Himalayan upheavals."(Prof Pithawala- Marvels of Earth- p-p-56-57.)

From the very early times the shape of the Sindh has remained the same. The only difference that is noticed is that in the early period the level of the land along the coastline was slightly lower therefore the sea water used to cover the coastal area. Due to dense forests and rains the width of the river Sindhu was considerably more and it was not possible to see from one river bank to the opposite side of the bank.

### **Geographical Sub Divisions of Sindh**

From Physical point of view Sindh is divided into 5 parts.

1 Siro (North). 2. Vicholo (Central), 3. Laar (South- Coastal), 4. Kohistan (Mountainous) and 5 . Thar. (Desert).

The river Sindhu flows through Siro, Vicholo and Laar. This is the region which saw the emergence of various kingdoms and civilizations- this is the region where the mighty battles were fought, won and lost. Kohistan is mountainous region so is Thar a sandy region part of the great desert stretching to Rajasthan and Kutch. In

the mountainous regions there are lakes and ponds and sandy region is totally dependent on the scanty rainfall. It is said if there is rain all the flora fauna blooms in the desert and people get mouthful otherwise there is starvation! (Vase ta Thar, Na ta bar). Even in this desert there are important places like Chachro,.Mithi, Diplo, Nangar Parkar, Umerkot and Khapro.

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### **The original inhabitants of Sindh 7000 BC-3600BC**

**A**s stated earlier the Sindh emerged as a land mass from the sea in the TERTIARY age. The oldest fossils have been found near Sehwan by the archeologists. The experts consider Sehwan to be the oldest cradle of civilization. The fossils were found in 1922 on a hillock near Sehwan. The lake Manchar is in the vicinity and it is presumed that the water of the lake in the distant past used to touch Sehwan. The present day Santhals, Bhils and Maands owe their origins to those early aborigines of Sindh.

Though the name Sehwan is quite old but in historical perspective it is of recent origin as the age that we are referring to is known in the History of mankind as Paleolithic and Neolithic ages. That is the time when man learnt to fashion tools out of stone, firstly of crude shape for usage and subsequently refined and more useful and complicated tools. All the same the existence of the man was not much better than that of others in the animal kingdom. Much of the land was still covered by the snow. To seek safety from ferocious animals, man had to take shelter in the caves and crevices. Man used

to subsist by hunting and gathering food.

In Sindh the traces of settlements of that time are found by archeologists in the caves of Laki Mountains and old stone implements are found near Rohiri, along coastal areas and near hills in the south. In the north west Sindh some peculiar stone implements are found and it is presumed that they were used to kill Birds and fish.

Mr. Behrumal Meharchand cites some examples of remnants of those times on certain practices and in Sindhi language which are even today found among the Kols and Santhals of Sindh.

1. The present day Bhils are descendants of ancient Kols . The Bhils of today might have migrated from Rajasthan desert but they owe their ancestry to original inhabitants of Sindh. Today also most of them subsist by hunting. They are called 'Paradi" (Hunters) and in Datki language they are referred to as "Tori".
  2. The language of Kols is not spoken in the present day Sindh but the traces of their language are found. They could count only up to 20 , that is called 'Kori' and even now instead of 50 they would say two and half Koris and Sixty is counted as three Koris.
  3. Sindhi language has many words made of various sounds e.g. Bau bau, Miyaoon Miyaoon, Thack Thack Tha Tha. etc.
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# 3

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## **Civilization of the Indus Valley 3000 BC – 1000 BC**

**F**or about 50 thousand years man wandered about on this earth as a hunter and food gatherer. For his security he had only caves and crevices to live in. It is only about 5000 years that he stumbled upon the knowledge of growing the food along the banks of the river. He had learnt to ignite fire through rubbing the flint stone against each other and the wheel was invented. Thus all the old civilizations sprung along the river banks.

In early 20<sup>th</sup> century the Historians reckoned the Egyptian civilization along river Nile and Mesopotamian civilization along river Euphrates and Tigris and Chinese civilization along the rivers Hwangho and Yangtze as oldest civilizations. Excavations in Sindh near Larkana revealed very ancient civilization and pushed back the beginnings of the History of India as the contemporary of the ancient civilizations of the world cited above. This Civilization site was named Mohen- Jo- Daro., i.e. The Mound of the Dead. Some scholars are of the opinion that locally it was named after the ancient ruler Mohan.

### **Civilization of Mohen-jo-Daro:**

At this site the excavation was undertaken in the years during 1922-23. Seven cities one upon another were found. It is presumed that the city was subject to frequent floods and the people persistently built another city at the same site when the previous one was destroyed. This proves the strategic location of the city from the point of commerce or/and cultivation and the inhabitants preferred to build the new city at the same location instead of migrating to alternative site.

The city is just like any most modern planned city. It has burnt brick houses, roads cutting at 90 degrees being horizontal and perpendicular in straight line and adequate drainage and water system. It is difficult to believe that this city was built 5000 years ago.

Roofs of the houses have since decayed but the houses are spacious and well ventilated. In some houses staircases have been found which indicates that even in that period multi storied houses existed. The drainage lines are covered. Gypsum and lime mixture has been used to plaster the walls. Temples and shops have also been found. There are all indications of a prosperous settlement.

One significant find is that of a water pool whose walls are about 10 ft wide. It is 39 ft long, 23 ft wide and 8 ft deep. In one of the surrounding rooms a well has been found therefore there is every reason to believe that it must be a public bathing place and a recreational place. Some sort of governing body like municipal must have existed to administer to the maintenance and needs of such a city.

### **Appearance, clothing and Jewellery of the People inhabiting Mohen Jo Daro :**

According to experts, the inhabitants of the Mohen-Jo-daro were

of Dravidian stock. They were short, stout with thick lips and narrow eyes and heavy neck. They had straight cheek bones and males used to grow beard but some used to shave upper lip while some preferred to sport a moustache. They used to cover fore head with their head hair and secure the same at the back with a sort of a comb. They used to be very fond of ornaments. All types of ornaments have been found. On finding the ornaments Sir John Marshall had this to say, "The Gold ornaments are so well finished and so highly polished that they might have come out of Bond Street Jeweller rather than from a pre-historic house of 5000 years ago." Feb. 27, 1926.

Along with Jewellery, precious stones have also been found. Though mirror has not been found a sort of a mixture has been found which might have substituted the mirror.

Agriculture appears to have flourished, they were growing many types of food grains and they used to grow cotton and weave cloth which latter on aquired world wide reputation as Sidon.

Most striking find is that of seals. Some images of animals and some sort of pictographical script is engraved on the seals. The script has not yet been deciphered. When it is deciphered it will yield wealth of information. It is presumed that apart from the decorative purpose that the seals served, they could also have been used as coins for exchange. Such seals have been found from the sites of other ancient civilizations also. The Pottery had assumed nearly the status of art. Apart from the fine specimens of bricks many fragments of pottery are found with artistic motifs and figures.

#### **The religion of Inhabitants of Mohen Jo Daro:**

It is presumed that the inhabitants used to worship mother Goddess. Even today in Hindu religion the mother worship cult

occupies an important place. They used to worship Shiva Linga (Phallus) which also is considered to be oldest worship. They used to worship water also and the river was considered holy, thus the reverence and worship of Jhoolelal and Zinda Pir could be traced to those ancient times. They used to worship trees and some animals. It appears that the ancient people of Sindh even in those time were quite alive to the importance of trees and affinity with nature – a fact which now belatedly and grudgingly people have started to acknowledge and we have become aware of the ecological importance. A movement to save ecology of the earth and concerns for the restoration of the natural balance has been started.

As has been already stated that the ancient civilizations sprung up on the banks of the rivers and many things of one civilization have been found at the place of other civilization and this movement would not have been possible without the means of communication. This goes to prove the antiquity of the mercantile tradition across the seas in the Sindh since ancient times.

#### **A peaceful civilization:**

One strange fact which has emerged from the excavations which has surprised the historians is the total absence of weapons of war. This points to peaceful nature of the civilization.

The river Sindhu provided food in abundance for the inhabitants and they had not to work very hard for their sustenance so there was no reason to fight with any one because it is insecurity and empty stomach which leads to warfare. The free time gave rise to pursuit of fine arts.

In such atmosphere the arts flourished and mind continued its quest in speculative sphere. With the result when along with the ravages

of the floods the enemy with better weapons and more brawn than brains attacked the inhabitants, they could not withstand the attack. But the culture is like a tide; due to political defeat it may recede for a while but it comes back with redoubled vigour.

**Vestiges of Mohen-jo-Daro in present day Sindh:**

The peasants of Sindh while working in the fields wear only a lion cloth or cover lower part to minimum that is remnant of aborigines practice.

The manner in which the fisher folk of Manchar lake catch live birds is also an ancient practice. When Fishermen go to catch bird they swim on the wooden planks. They attach fruit of the lake (Paabora) and leaves in front portion of the plank and birds mistake it as part of the lake and come to rest. Some fishermen stun the birds by directing blunt arrows at them and catch them alive.

To catch the fish in the lake fishermen spread the net and make noise with metal plates (Thalis) thus fish is scared and trapped.

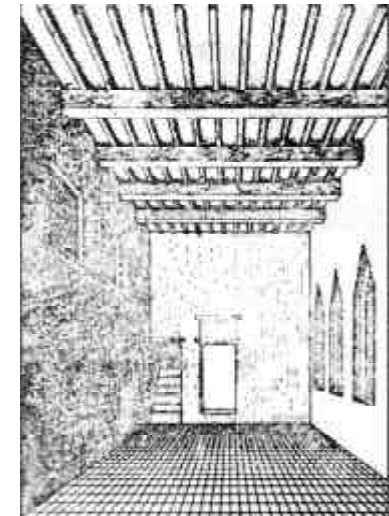
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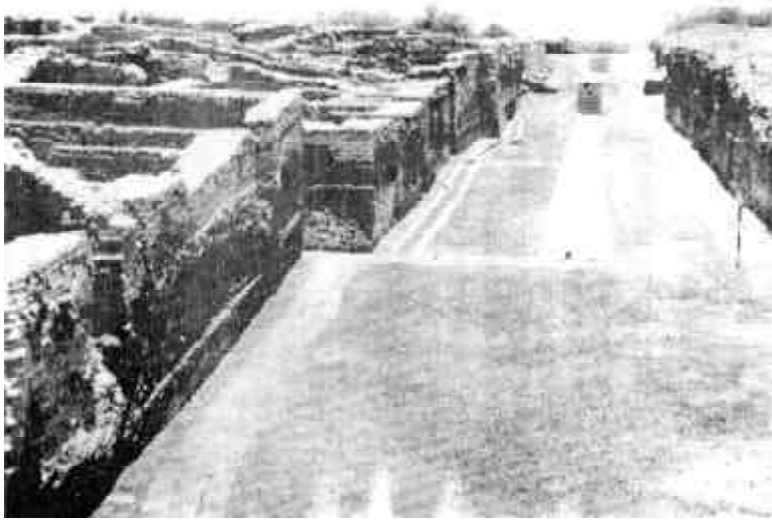
*2300-1700 B.C. General view of excavations of Mohenjo Daro*



*2300-1700 B.C. A low street at Mohenjo Daro*



*2300-1700 B.C. Interior of a typical house at Mohenjo Daro.*



*30 feet wide main street Mohenjo Daro*



*2200-21 B.C. The great bath at Mohenjo Daro*

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### **Advent of Aryans 1050BC- 850 BC**

**W**ith strong bodies, wielding flashing swords in hand, mounted on horses, the Aryans moved to conquer strange lands, with a passion of conquests, leaving trail of bloodshed in the aftermath, when they reached on the banks of river Sindhu its flow tamed them and filled their heart with serenity from which sprang like fountains the accumulated wisdom of thousands of years in the form of Vedas- the earliest literature ever produced in the world! They were enchanted by mighty Sindhu, the flora and fauna of the land, the abundance it yielded for sustenance. Their fascination and adoration of Sindhu has been described thus in Rig Veda:-

“Unstoppable, Irreversible, with strong flow, mighty Sindhu!  
From mountain and plains,  
You bring great expanse of water,  
lightning with a roar,  
Like unchained horse,  
Bewitching and beautiful Sindhu.  
Sindhu is rich in strong horses,

In chariots and cloth of many designs,  
 Rich in golden ornaments,  
 Of unmeasured wealth,  
 The meadows of this land are feast to the eyes,  
 Wool is unmatched,  
 And sweet syrup to drink,  
 The ultimate in taste.”

(Sindhu kasht- A poet Rishi's composition In Rig Veda)

After all who were Ayans and from where did they come?

The answer to these questions is embroiled in various controversial views. This is not a place to go into all the controversies. Etymologically 'Arya' means a refined or cultured one. The fact that one tribe or group of people is strong enough to subjugate the other, the victor appropriates superiority to himself in all other respects also and that acts as a valid reason to enslave the conquered people. Therefore the self invoked appaletion Arya. In fact from cultural point of view quite opposite was the situation. The Original inhabitants of Indus valley were highly cultured society whereas the invaders excelled only in brawn.

In the opinion of the linguists the similarity between European, Persian and Sanskrit cannot be accidental. It is more possible that these languages have shared the common ancestry. After a lot of research by the experts it has been proved to be a fact indeed! This leads us to a logical conclusion that the inhabitants of so diverse a place must have lived in one region at some time in the distant past. From this point over the centuries the groups must have migrated to various places in search of food. The time frame is so vast that the fact of cross migration criss-crossing across the vast landmass cannot be ruled out. This migration must have left the traces in the cultural practices and

beliefs rooted in the antiquity, now forming the unconscious of the mind. Taking above facts in consideration it would be erroneous to conclude that the Aryan race was a monolith, on the contrary a lot of intermingling of the blood must have taken place therefore the racial purity is only a myth. The thing that could be said with some certainty is that they were warlike roaming clans-who colonized the vast parts of land.

### **The original home of Aryans**

The question of the original home of the Aryans is beset with controversies. The experts have not been able to arrive at any definite conclusion. There is often mention of Mount Meru whose peaks are always covered in snow, in ancient Sanskrit, Greek and Persian texts. But no one has been able to identify its exact location. For a long time Historians believed that the original home of the Aryans was central Asia. Great Sanskrit Scholar and one of the earliest Indian nationalist leader Bal Gangadhar Tilak, on the basis of calculations carried out in relation to the position of stars described in Rig Veda arrived at the conclusion that the ancient Aryans inhabited Arctic region and that was their original homeland. Some people believe Aryans to be original inhabitants of India from where they spread out to Persia and other places. In support of this no concrete evidence is produced. It is beyond any doubt there has remained a process of migration and cross migration spread across the vast spaces of Asia and Europe spanning hundred of centuries to the antiquity in the past. It is certain that all the Aryans did not come to India by land route. Some of them landed by sea route also. "Tarsu" Aryans are reported to have arrived by sea route.

Undoubtedly the Vedas are earliest books which shed light on the life during that period. In brief the conditions of the time can be



described thus:

Due to abundance of water and consequent fertile lands on the banks Aryans colonized those areas. Rig Veda has a frequent allusions to Sapta Sindhu i.e. Seven rivers. This points to the land of present Punjab and Sindh. One river Saraswati which used to flow in this area is said to have disappeared since then. In fact the name Hindustan or Hind is derived from Sindh, the land from which river Sindhu flows. Persians could not pronounce 'S' instead it was pronounced as 'H' consequently the people inhabiting the land of Sindh were referred to as Hindu.

Two prominent clans of Aryans are mentioned. Suryavanshi and Chandra Vanshi. Descendents of Sun and Moon. Both these clans inhabited in ancient Sindh. Suryavanshi clan traces its ancestry to original man Akshyavaku. King Dasrath (Literally meaning the King possessing ten chariots) and his son Ram, the main character of the ancient Epic Ramayana belonged to Suryavanshi clan. There is mention of Port 'Pataal' in the ancient texts which is said to have existed near present Karachi Port. Incidentally the lower part of the Indus with its estuaries is now also known as 'Laar'. Major General Haig in his Book 'Indus delta country' on page 20 refers to a Tibetan manuscript which in its folk tale mentions the fact that most of people belonging to 'Wakko kul' i.e descendents of Moon used to live at the Pataal Port.

Chandra vanshi clan was further subdivided into five main branches. The important being Yaadoo, others being Tursu, Puru, Inoo and Duryhoo. These five tribes are referred to as 'PanchJanya'. Rig Veda mentions the names of about 40 clans or sub tribes. Many experts believe that Yadoo and Tursu branches of Aryans had migrated from Mesopotamia and Babylon via seas route and settled in Sindh,

Kutch and Kathiawar. Krishna the legendary Hero of another ancient epic Mahabharata was Yadooanshi and Samma rulers of Sindh Kathiawar and Kutch are believed to be of the descendents of the same clan.

### **The way of life of the ancient Aryans**

Aryans had left behind the matriarchal institution of family and patriarchal system of the family was followed by them. The patriarch of the family wielded all the power. The status of the woman had not yet fallen. The extended joint families were into existences. The status of the person depended on the domestic animals he had. In order to protect themselves and their animals walls were created and that wall was called Gotra. 'Go' stands for cow and 'tra' stands for protection. In times to come Gotra came to symbolize blood relationship. Thus boys and girls belonging to same Gotra and by implication sharing the same blood line could not marry each other. Clans with small population would merge together to make a common Gotra which was known as Sagotra. They all used to live as common family members and could not inter marry inspite of not sharing the common blood line. The present day "Goth" the word meaning Village survives even now in Sindhi language appears to be continuation of the same word "Gotra". With passage of time as population increased Gotras gave place to Pinda which was elementary form of the city, the example is Rawalpindi. (Now a city in Pakistan). Panchyats (City councils) came into existence for the administration of common needs. The need for Panchyats to come together was felt and thus the head of 100 Panchyats was known as 'Shatapati'. A fort is called Pur. For protection and seat of administrations many forts - 'Purs' came into existence and local assemblies came into existence and the vast areas came to be administered by them - thus a rudimentary form of democracy emerged.

In Vedas there is allusion to one tribe called “Panni”. They are said to be settlers of Sindh in those times. They were businessmen of the ancient world and had contacts all over. With the passage of time, with their money power, they became all powerful and their language Phoenician became lingua Franca of the ancient world. Perhaps they form the first link in the chain of present day “Sindh warki” global network. It is a recorded fact that ancient Greeks used to call fine muslin ‘Sindon’.

With the passage of time as the population grew and new tribes continued their journey in these vast countries the interior parts in the country were also colonized.

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## 5

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### **Life during Epic Ages of Ramayana and Mahabharata**

**I**nitially when Aryans settled in the region of Sapta Sindhu though they were strong, brave and warrior tribes they lived a very simple life and their society was organized as a pastoral one. They were victors and rulers but in the long run the culture of the original inhabitants made significant inroads into their life and beliefs. Initially they came as worshipers of natural objects as Sun, Moon, Rain, Water, Fire etc... but latter on accepted the worship of Shiva and mother Goddess also. Intermingling by marriage produced a sort of a composite culture.

With the increase in the population, Aryans occupied the Indo Gangetic plains of river Jamuna and Ganges. Big states came into existence with numerous Rulers, Kings big and small and even big empires emerged in the course of time. During the period of Ramayana and Mahabharata epics, many kingdoms and empires are mentioned which were under the sway of various tribes always ready to fight with each other to assert their strength and superiority.

Life had become complicated. Now it was not possible for the same person to till the field, meet religious obligations and fight on the battle field. Thus in society arose division of labour. The original

inhabitants were of dark skin compared to new entrants therefore the initial class distinction rested on colour of the skin hence the word 'Varana' was used and the same word continued to be used for the system evolved among the Aryans themselves. The need of the time was superior brain as well as brawn. Nature seldom endows the same person with both the qualities in equal measure. Therefore it becomes necessary that there should be co-operation and both the faculties should work in unison for the working and progress of the society. An element of conflict and co-operation is in built in this relationship, thus two primary classes emerged in the Aryan society. One class wielded the sword and another carried the book-thus Khstriyas (Rulers) and Priests Brahmin Classes came into existence and also cultivator or a business class Vaishya to look after and increase the wealth. The last class of servants to serve above classes was retained those of Dasa (Slaves). In the beginning these classes were not hereditary but soon they became hereditary and society lost its flexibility and was divided into rigid compartments. Many practices of the time were codified in memoirs of Manu (Manu Smirti) which shed considerable light on the life of those times.

Sindh possesses an astonishing quality. Many a murderous tribe came, many blood thirsty clans trampled it under their cruel feet but Sindh ultimately absorbed them all and rendered them all of sweet and peaceful disposition as its waters. Sindh has always remained free from orthodox rigidity and has remained an inclusive society rather than exclusive one. In fact Sindh has rich and fertile land and it is endowed with richness by nature. It is easy to find sustenance and people could lead a peaceful life without a constant struggle. Poverty was nearly non-existent which removed the feeling of insecurity and in turn the need to be aggressive. In such a situation the high peaks vast, dense forests, sprawling spaces of desert lend one to contemplation

of the relationship between self and nature. This quality of the relationship between an individual and nature till this day forms the core of Sindhi Culture. Sindhis have never in the entire history emulated the rigidity and fundamentalism of people inhabiting Indo Gangetic plains. This led to Sindhis being considered as impure by the inhabitants of Indo Gangetic plains.

Behrupal Meherchand in his Book 'History of Sindhi Hindus' avers, "The people of central India would consider Sindhis as 'Malecha', Impure. They laid down the rule that whosoever visited Sindh would have to undergo the ritual of purification, (See Mahabharata). This way the links of Sindh and Punjab were snapped with the rest of India. This could be said to be first mischief of Kalyuga."(Page47.)

It is mentioned in the 'Hinglaj Puran' that during 14 years of exile Rama is said to have visited Hinglaj as a holy place. It is possible that the present Rambaug of Karachi and Ramsar are remnants of that era. Near Kiamari in Karachi Ram Jharokho also exists. While traveling from Hub River to Sone Miani we come across some old wells which are the wells of Sita Mata and near by is Chandrakooop which is attributed to Rama. All this points to the fact that Rama must have visited Sindh and it must have remained an important place even in those times.

There is allusion in the Ramayana that during the reign of King Dashratha in the area called sapta Sindhu there was a Kingdom of Kekaya and queen Kekaiyee of Dashrath was princess from that Kingdom.

After the death of King Dashrath Rama is said to have inherited the kingdom of his father. Two sons of Bharat named Taksha and Pushkar extended the boundaries of Kingdom of Sindh upto present

day Kandhar. Taksha established the city of Taxshshila which latter on was to become a great seat of learning in ancient times. The well known Sanskrit Grammarian Panini was born there and since the boundaries of Sindh stretched to that realm he could be legitimately considered as being Sindhi.

During the period of Mahabharata Sindh and Suwair became synonymous. Present day Multan was referred to as Suwair. King Jaidrath ruled over the present day Sindh. There is reference to Sindh in Bhishma Parva of Mahabharata.

“Interestingly enough,” observes N. R. Malkani, in his book ‘The Sindh Story’ “the Bhagvad Gita is based on earlier sermon Involving Sindh.” Page 3.

The only sister of Kauravas ‘Dahshila’ was married to the king of Sindh. As mentioned earlier even at that time Sindh was free from the Brahmanic orthodoxy. Thirty thousand Brahmins were inducted into Sindh at the time of marriage of Dahshila. During the Mahabharata war King Jaidrath of Sindh was natural ally of Kauravas. After the Mahabharata war the Kingdom of Sindh also went to Pandawas who again handed over the reigns of power to late King's wife and their cousin queen Dahshila. She restored the country to Meds and Jat tribes. There is mention of King Hall during that period who is said to have ushered in peace and prosperity in the country and during his rule the arts and crafts made significant advancement. One branch of descendents of these Kings subsequently ruled over AROR and thus this branch came to be known as Arorwanshi.

During this time the philosophy of various schools of thought made significant advances and many significant systems were codified and transcribed. To cite only a few important contributions during the period are Sankhya shastra, Patanjali's Yoga Shastra, Purva Mimansa

and Uttar Mimansa Sutra, Manu Shastra and Puranas etc. The Cities of Sindh that figure in the above epics are;-

AROR- The capital of Aror wanshi Aryans.

PATALA- was built by Surya Vanshi Aryans.

SEWISTAN- was established by Sewi Aryans.

MINANAGAR- was established by ancient tribe of Sindh Minas.

BAMBHOR- the commercial city on the delta of Mahiran.

HINGLAJ- Pilgrimage place in Las Bela where the idol of Mahakali Goddess is installed.

After the war of Mahabharata the entire country was ruined and it was necessary to rebuild the country. The commercial activity played an important role in that effort. Thus merchants were encouraged to go out and export the goods and bring in the riches from the foreign shores. In this process many Sindhis even in that period established commercial relations with their counterparts in the distant countries across the seas.

Sri Krishna issued a charter to the Sindhi business community which is translated as under.

“Sri Krishna was happy to see the merchants of other countries. He said that it would be profitable to deal with them as they would have goods from various countries. He purchased their merchandise and in return filled their boats with Indian Goods.”

(Mookerji. R History of Shipping Maritime Activity from the Earliest Times. Page 6-8. Calcutta. Quoted by Mr. Rahim Daad Khan Molai Shidai p.85.)

This was accepted by Sindhi business community as an order issued by Sri Krishna- they accepted this challenge and did their best to bring riches to the country. This resulted in an indirect spread of Indian Literature and culture to the far flung places.

# 6

## **Invasions of Persians and others on Sindh 519 BC**

**S**indh and Persians have shared ancient ties. It is presumed that the Persians and Sindhis share the common ancestry of various clans of Aryans. In the south East of Iran are situated Afghanistan, Sindh and land referred to as Sapta Sindhu during those times. Whenever Iranian rulers thought themselves able and desired to expand their empire in the process of muscle flexing their hand automatically reached upto Sindh. Around 6<sup>th</sup> century BC Iran was ruled by a King named Cyrus. He expanded his boundaries upto Greece in Europe and in 526 BC they occupied Egypt. The commercial route from Sindh to Babylonia traversed through Iran. In 323 BC Alexander the great defeated Darius and put an end to Iranian empire. For the intervening period of about two centuries the Sindh remained under the influence of Iranian Kingdom. According to ancient Historians the coastal area of Sindh constituted 10<sup>th</sup> province of Iran. Many ancient ruins of that period are found in Sindh. One of it being the ruins of the city of Bahmanabad in Sanjhor Taluka about 8 miles to the east of Shadadpur. This city is said to have been built by Bahman

Bin Asfand Yar in the year 470 BC on the one of branches of river Sindhu. Now it lies in total ruins.

During Dara's reign i.e. from 562 BC to 486 BC Sindh enjoyed quite high measure of prosperity. Sindh was famous for its gold mines. One third of the income of the Iranian Empire came only from Sindh! In those times the revenue of Iran used to be more than a million pounds. Herodotus has made the mention of those ants in Sindh which in height are as big as fox and are engaged in the Gold mines of Sindh. In Makran around Istoa island there were Gold mines. Iranian used to extract the taxes of 260 Tonnes of Gold from Sindh every year. The banks of Sindhu were very fertile.

For the purpose of convenience Iranian forged Gold Coins which weighed 130 grains. It had bow and arrow engraved on one side and face of the ruler on the other. It was called Drek. These mostly consisted of Gold obtained from Gold mines of Sindh. Dara introduced square and pentagonal silver coins which are found in various parts of the ancient world. It was common sight to see ships laden with Spice ivory and fine cloth for the distant shores of Iraq and Egypt besides the caravans of merchants headed to foreign lands via land route.

Sindhis were not only known for their mercantile acumen but many Sindhi Soldiers were inducted into Iranian army also. According to account given by Herodotus Iranian Army comprised many Sindhi soldiers in among its foot soldiers and Horsemen. They wore cotton uniform and their weapons were Bow and arrow. Arrows were made of reeds and had iron tips. They used to bring with them speedy chariots and Elephants in the battle fields. Sindhi warriors were very much valued and respected for their bravery in those times.

# 7

## **Sindh during Jain and Buddhist Period**

**A**fter early Vedic period as the caste system evolved over the years it became not only rigid but the source of exploitation and assumed a class character of the most cruel oppressor which was most inhuman toward the lower castes. It was common punishment to cut off the tongue of a person of lower caste who would dare to raise his voice in any argument with the person of the upper caste. The punishment of indulgence in sex by lower caste was death. The power axis of Brahmin and Khstriya were immune to any law. In this situation the resentment against the rule of unjust and oppressive society found expression in the emergence of Jainism and Buddhism. In fact this all started as a movement of protest.

### **Jain Religion**

The initiator of Jain religion was Vardhaman Mahavira. He laid emphasis on Non Violence and called for the ban on the ritualistic sacrifices. He preached simplicity and renunciation of the worldly pleasures. It mentioned that 23 'Tirthankras'(Incarnations of Mahaviras) preceded him. From this it could be presumed that even

before Mahavira came on the scene the occasional outbursts of protest against the unjust practice must have taken place earlier and the during Mahaviras time the protest could not be quashed and silenced.

Gautam Buddha not only posed the challenge to the Brahmin Khashtriya axis of power but succeeded in breaching it effectively to free the oppressed people from their clutches. He skirted the question of existence or non existence of god or any divine authority on which the Brahmins and khashtriyas based their claims to the superiority over other castes. He laid emphasis on the right values instead. The Path of right values preached by him was known as path of eight cardinal virtues. (Ashta Marga) i.e. eight fold path. His philosophy sought to invest the action with result and thus he propounded a theory of causation. In place of the theory of preordained fate-and everything being predetermined, as illusion, he laid the stress on the theory "as you sow so shall you reap". This was significant departure from the Brahmanical philosophy of the existence being only an illusion. By propounding the theory of causation and saying that the time is like flowing river and each movement the water flows thus you can not bath in the same river twice, even in the conceptual level he rejected the traditional philosophy of time being a static entity.

He preached that the good action alone will lead to ultimate freedom "Nirvana"and that should be the aim of an individual's life. Jain and Buddhists preachers adopted the prevalent language 'Prakrit' of the masses as against the ancient Sanskrit which only a few would know and claimed exclusive monopoly over the religious matters. In the time to come instead of Brahmin Kshatriya axis the Vaishya (Business community) and Kshatriya axis emerged and in the process some benefits percolated to lower castes also.

It is a fact that Sindh was free from the caste system orthodoxy of the Gangetic plains and therefore the cruelty that characterized the society there, was absent in Sindh the Jain and Buddhist religion did not enter Sindh as a force of protest or revolt but as has been stated earlier Sindh has always remained an inclusive society and has continued to welcome and absorb new tribes and thought, in the same vein, these religions also found ready acceptance in Sindh. During the reigns of Asoka and Kanishka these religions were at their peak in Sindh.

There were very few Jains in Sindh. Near Nagar Parkar Babras and osvars are followers of Jain faith. Some Yogis known as Sewra also professed Jain faith. It is stated in Jain scriptures that in the Year 566 BC King Udayan who ruled over Multan, Kutch and Kathiawar and who controlled 16 small Kingdoms had accepted Jainism as his religion. His son Keho also accepted the same. Strangely when his nephew Keshukumar ascended the throne he proved to be a very oppressive and cruel ruler. He ruled for ten years. As a consequence in a devastating earthquake a curse descended on Sindh and Sindh was completely destroyed.

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## **Invasion of Alexzender on Sindh 329-324 BC**

**F**or years the Iranian armies attacked Athens and Sparta and considerably weakened them. Though Athens possessed considerable naval power but it could not be put to effective use. A king of Macedonia named Philip defeated Greeks and waged the war with Iranians to avenge the successive defeats. He was killed during one of the battles and his young son who was educated by masters like Plato and Aristotle ascended the throne, He had dream to be Emperor of the world. He set out to achieve his ambition. He not only defeated Iranians but subjugated the lands of Egypt and Syria. With the defeat of King Dara the world of untold riches was open to him and he spared no amount and energy to built up the mighty and invincible fighting machine of the time. He married daughter of Emperor Dara and distributed among other court nobles the girls of royal harem and wealth of gold and gems as a reward and war booty with lavish abandon. The news of his generosity spread far and wide which induced many 'nobles' of far fetched kingdom to become his willing vassals. Most of the nobles who were attracted to him assumed

that like previous occasion Alexzender would only be interested in plunder and loot and will ultimately return to his country leaving them free to rule their courtiers ever after. It was considered to be a wise strategic move.

In India the kings of Taxshshila, Kambuja, Kathi, Mali and Shewi surrendered without any fight but King Porus of Sapta Sindhu stood his ground and was defeated. The confrontation between porous and Alexzender is staple diet of many folk legends. The Sambas of Sindh did not allow Alexzender to pass through the territory held by him without fighting for every inch of the land and was martyred in the war. It is irony indeed that such a valours feat of courage does not find its rightful place in the common popular memory and his name is found only in the some yellowing pages of History Books.

It may be mentioned that during the period of Mahabharata the Sindh was being ruled by Chandravanshi clans. When King Jara Sind defeated Krishna he established Kingdom of Yadavs in Dwarka. The seventh queen named Jamboti produced a son named Samba who renamed the city of Minanagar as Samanagar and converted it into his capital. His era is known as that of Sindhu-samba. King Sambas was descendent of this line. The kings of Patala, Debal and Sewestan all were his vassals and were his tributaries. ( In latter History of Sindh these Kings were called Jambas as they trace their maternal ancestry to Jamboti the Queen of Krishna.)

Alexzendera wanted to return through sea route and he had to pass through Sindh for that purpose. He had to pay a heavy price for that decision. In the battle that ensued, according to some historians King Sambas was captured and killed in captivity and his head was publicly displayed Some say he was killed on the battle field. In another battle while facing King Asdakara, Alexzender was seriously wounded

which resulted in 40000 prisoners of war held by Alexzender to be immediately killed. Pushkalavati fort held out bravely the siege of Alexzender armies for more than a month. Inspite of all the bravery it could not be denied that some Sindhis due to their avarice joined Alexzender and facilitated his passage. Normally wherever the forces of Alexzender went they found deserted villages and cities and often the elephants were left to run amock among them. The invaders had not seen such a huge animal before and to bring them under control invading forces had to take help of the local people which naturally came at a cost. It can be said with certainty that Alexzender did not have a cake walk in Sindh as he expected. In the battle of Sangali seventy thousand people died at the hands of invaders. After crossing Patal, Alexzender marched towards Makran Hills. The Med tribe which inhabited it waged guerilla warfare to block his passage. The governors appointed by Alexzender very soon became target of popular wrath and ridicule. Some of the tail ender of Alexzender's army preferred to stay in Sindh itself. Some turncoat nobles assumed independence after his death.

The effects of Alexzender's invasion are still lingering on the history of India. Historians who accompanied the Greek armies have written the record of India of those times which shed considerable light on the conditions prevailing during that period. Alexzender was first European who set his own eyes on India. Prior to this all the knowledge about Europeans had about India was mere hearsay from the traders and other travelers, which with the passage of time brinked on the incredulous. To study the situation in Sindh Alexzender had constituted a committee. Aeoncreteous observes at the distance of 10 miles from the city, in the extreme heat, hermits were found sitting in meditation (Samadhi).



They were completely naked . I told them to meet the King , they replied, “a king who is proud of his destructive weapons will not be able to understand their subtle philosophy.” I thought they were referring to language and told them that interpreters would be engaged. To which they replied, “interpreters will not be able to understand our world. Speaking to people like them would be futile exercise as pouring pure and clear water on the dust.” Thereafter they enquired from about Pythagorous, Socrates and Daogenez and some others.

Greeks have praised Sindhis in no uncertain terms. They have observed that Sindhis are lean, tall but bear strong bodies. In south of Sindh and Makran they are of dark complexion and in the north they bear fair complexion as those of Egyptians. Sindhis live to ripe old age, some live upto 130 years of age. Their food is simple, normally they abstain from intoxicants but on special occasions they consume liquor which is made from rice. The entire family used to eat together in the same plate made of gold. Sindhis were educated but their education system consisted of memorizing of old texts rather than reading from the books. They were mainly agriculturists. All members of the family would often work on the land. They used to sow more than one crop a year. and used to store the grain for more than years consumption. The institution of polygamy was commonly practiced. Wrestling and other sports were their pastimes.

Alexzender made jetties on the river Indus significantly at Patala, Bhambore and Sonmiani for the convenience of his armies movement which subsequently proved to be beneficial for the mercantile activity along the water course.

Alexzender’s advent resulted in cultural exchange in both the countries which proved to be of permanent nature.

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## **Mourya Dynasty and Sindh 324 BC – 187 BC**

**A**fter the death of Alexzender the empire was divided among his army generals. Thus the provinces of Sindh and Punjab were claimed by Selucus Nikotor. The Official appointed by Alexzender to administer these provinces refused to yield to Selucus Nikotor and Selucus had to attack Indian provinces once again to assert his supremacy. Actually Selucus had designs over the Kingdom of Magadha and wanted to extend his dominion upto bay of Bengal, but his ambitions were thwarted by Chandragupta Mourya who at that time ruled over Magadha Kingdom. As a consequence of his defeat at the hands of Chandragupta Mourya, Selucus had to seal a peace deal with him by giving the hand of his daughter in marriage to Chandragupta and appointment of Magasthenese as ambassador in the court of Chandragupta.

There is a lot of controversy among the historians about the early childhood-parentage and whereabouts of Chandragupta. Buddhists have accepted him as Kshatriya whereas the Brahmins considered him as Shudra (Lowest Caste). Most of the historians are agreed on the

fact that Chandragupta was born at the Place which at time was considered as part of Sindh. Which is now called Saraiki speaking area. At that time the boundaries of Sindh stretched upto Kashmir. In this case it could be said without any exaggeration that first Emperor in the Sub continent was of Sindhi origin. Historians have produced many an evidence in support of their contention.

Father of Chandragupta was King of Pipal vana which was situated on the eastern side of Indus. He died while fighting a war. At that time mother of Chandragupta was pregnant. To save the child and mother she was taken to a safe place. The child was born near the city of Saka. In order to disguise his identity he was brought up by a cowherd. later on he was educated at the famous university of the times at Taxshshila.

For a long time he had to disguise his real identity. Therefore after his name the appaletion 'Gupta' i.e. secret. During the invasion of Alexzender he is said to have a meeting with him but his haughtiness infuriated Alexzender to such an extent that he ordered death for him.

Somehow he managed to escape and organized people to revolt against Alexzender. Thus while leading a sort of guerilla resistance once again he had to assume a secret identity. It is on record that in India in ancient times there have been many tribes which have refused to accept the institution of Kingdom and they practiced a sort of democracy. Such tribes are seen today also in the north west province of Pakistan. Chandragupta organized all such tribes under one banner and constantly harassed Alexzender's armies. Some of the historians of the times have referred to them with disdain as groups of robbers and looters, but the fact is perhaps they were the first instance of guerilla warfare found anywhere in the world. Chanakya became

Political Guru of Chandragupta and under his guidance Chandragupta became first emperor of the sub continent.

He introduced a planned administration. The army was paid directly by the ruler so that the soldiers are not tempted to interfere in the civil affairs and intimidate and coerce civilians to meet their requirements. Highways were made safe from banditry which encouraged commerce and free travel among the people. System of administration of justice was also put in a place. He ruled for 24 years and ensured the safety, peace and prosperity for his subjects. It is said that last 12 years of his reign he lived like a jain monk. Jain Holy person Badhra Bhanu prophesized that there would be famine in he Sindh for 12 years and in order to avert that he sacrificed his life by accepting death by fasting as pennance and died at the age of 55 years.

His son Samudragupta followed in the footsteps of his father but his grandson Asoka finds a place of unparalleled honour in the annals of the world history. He created history when after the victory he abjured violence and declared that the acquisition and rule over the land is futile and one should do such deeds and acts which ensure his place in the hearts of the people. It is better to rule over the hearts of people rather than over their land!. Such a thought is a tribute to the water of Sindhu because in his veins flowed the tradition of peaceful co-existence and inclusiveness cherished by Sindhi people since the dawn of human civilization. A new path was illuminated for the future governance and the concept of welfare state and co-existence owes it origin to this great emperor. It is not without significance that Independent India has adopted the Pillar of Asoka as it official emblem and the 'Chakra' in the national flag is a part of that emblem.

The emperor Asoka when embraced Buddhist faith and propagated

it as a state religion, the people, of Sindh accepted that new thought with open arms keeping with the inclusive nature of its culture and traditions. Asoka in order to spread the basic tenets of Buddhism engraved on the Hills the simple truths for the propagation of the faith they are known as Asoka's edicts. Sindh also abounds in the remnants of Buddhist viharas and monasteries and there a many ruins of those times in Sindh. Whichever places were visited by Buddha part of remains were taken there and memorials were built there , as Buddha had visited Sindh during his life time therefore a memorial in honour was built in Sindh also. The Guru (religious Teacher) of Asoka was Uppagupta. He also visited Sindh and a Stupa was erected to commemorate that occasion.

During Kushan period the descendents of Kanishka, Vasudev 1<sup>st</sup> and Vasudev 2<sup>nd</sup> who ruled Sindh built the memorial near Mohen Jo daro and Kahu Jo Daro (Mound). At 12 places the remnants of Buddhist monuments are found in Sindh, the important being those near Mohen Jo daro and Mirpur Khas. A figure found at the Mirpur Khas now finds its place at the Prince of Wales museum at Bombay.

Hung Tsang a Chinese traveler of 7<sup>th</sup> century has observed that during that period there were more than 10,000 Buddhists Bikshus (Buddhist Priests) in Sindh, spread all over Sindh living in their monasteries. Historians believe that Buddhist religion was prominent religion of Sindh upto, beginning of 12th century.

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## **Coming of diverse tribes in Sindh 187 BC-283 AD**

**A**fter the wane of Mourya Empire in the process of disintegration many small kingdoms were established. It created a power vacuum and many wandering tribes and ambitious tribes from the various parts of the world were attracted to India. In this situation Sindh being frontline state had often to bear the brunt of invasions. After the advent of Aryans it was second big and significant influx of tribes which made India as their permanent abode. They could not penetrate into the deeper regions and preferred to settle along the western parts of India.

Another significant development was to take place in India during that period. The royal patronage extended to Buddhism brought pomp, luxuries and power in its wake. The internal jealousies, conspiracies for more power and influence replaced the spirit of simplicity and service and adherence to high moral ideals which shook the faith of common people in the priestly class of Buddhism, the population was greatly disappointed and disillusioned. On the other, Sankaracharya infused Hindu religion with new vigour and the latent struggle for supremacy

between contending faiths i.e. Buddhism and Hinduism was ultimately won by Hinduism which re asserted itself. New tribes that came to India were accepted by both the religions in their fold. This influx of various tribes was also different from the previous invasions of Iranians and Alexzender that the latter were content to conquer loot and plunder and return to the country of their origin but nothing of the sort happened in the case of tribes who came to India and they made India as their own home. In 175 BC the last Mourya king was killed by his commander in chief Pushi Mitra who founded Sangha dynasty. In 190 BC the ruler of Balkans and Greece Sindh, Gujarat and Punjab and established his capital at Sagala near present day Sialkot. Menender defeated Pushi Mitra and adopted Buddhism as his religion. There after the sakka tribe entered Sindh through Bolan pass and occupied the banks of Indus on both the sides. In that period the lower part of Sindh was called Saka Dwippa. U-chi tribe was driven by Huns from the Kansu district of China. They spread all over Balkans, Afghanistan and parts upto river Narmada in India. They also adopted Buddhist religion and Kanishka has been a famous king of this tribe. In the year around 375 AD Gupta empire emerged in India as a powerful force. Vikramaditya of this dynasty conquered Malwa, Gujarat and Sindh. The Gupta dynasty was again overwhelmed by Scythian tribe but ultimately Skanda Gupta defeated them but they managed to put stay.

All these tribes who came in second wave after Aryans were to become a part of Indian society most of them are now known as Rajputs. They are concentrated in the western part of India. One of these tribes ruled Sindh from 450AD to 643 AD. This period of nearly two centuries in Sindh is called the era of Rai Dynasty. Five kings of this dynasty find mention in the old histories. They are 1.

Rai Devaji 2. Rai Sahras, 3. Rai Sahasi, 4. Rai Saras 2<sup>nd</sup> , and 5. Rai Sahasi 2<sup>nd</sup>. The boundaries of Sindh during this period stretched in the north upto Kashmir and Kandhar in the west Dabel and upto sea of Oman and in the south upto Surat port. Alor was capital city. During the reign of Rai Kings, there was peace and prosperity in Sindh. Forts were full with granaries and wealth.

Two important incidents of this time need to be recorded.

#### **Sindhi era or Sindhu Samvat**

Al Baruni in his travelogue 'Indica' has made some observation which will be worthwhile to reproduce here.

He has mentioned about Sindhi era in his book 'Indica'. It is necessary to go into the circumstances in which and when Sindhi or Sindhu era came into reckoning. Normally era are ushered in, to commemorate some achievement or significant victory or crowning of some king or emperor. The facts as they reveal themselves about Sindhi sambat do not confirm to any of the possibility mentioned above. Infact reverse is the case. This era was ushered in when a brave king died fighting for the independence of his country. When Rai Sahras died and his son ascended the throne this era was ushered in by his son Rai Sahasi. Chachnama originally called Fatahnama records the following train of events.

"Sharas Rai the father of Sahasi Rai the boundaries of whose empire in the west extended upto Kurd and included Kikan ( Present day Kalat and Makran in Balochistan) and his capital was a beautiful and strong city of Alor, ruled his kingdom in every ideal manner and there was all round development and people of his country very happy and prosperous. Suddenly he was attacked by Nimroz of Iran without any provocation. The King Sahras proceeded to halt the invading

armies. In the battles that ensued both the sides suffered heavy casualties and many a brave life was lost. Irani forces outnumbered Sindhi forces and encircled them King Sahras stood his ground and continued to fight against all the odds. King Sahras was killed in the attempt to save his country. The determination of the Sindhi forces and their fierce opposition forced Iranians to retreat. The son of Rai Sahras, Rai Sahasi ascended the throne and proved to be a powerful ruler.”

The writer of *Tuhaf Alkram* observes that Rai Sahras fell victim to an accident. He says “ Suddenly an arrow pierced the throat of King Sahras as result of which he died.” Tarikh Massoomi also maintains the same version (It is difficult to believe that the Iranian forces led by their King Nimroz in spite of winning the battle). Historians are unanimous about the fact “A victor instead of moving ahead retreated back to his country this proves the determination of the King Sahras and Sindhi soldiers.” The defeat of King Sahras actually translated into his victory and his son as result became stronger. “This event ushered in a new era called Sindhi era as written by Al Baruni. According to Hijra calendar’s 4<sup>th</sup> year and Year 626 AD on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of Chaitra month.” (Dr. Nabi Bux Khan Baloch-Historical Sindhi Era-Sindh through Centuries.)

### **Spread of Sindhi Music across the seas**

The relationship between Sindh and Iran has been a mixed one. There are epochs where the relationship is quite cordial and other times the relationship is prone to hostility. In fact it is an instance of love hate relationship. In one of those periods of sweet relationships. In 430 AD Iranian King Bahram Ghor visited Sindh and during that visit grand mother of Rai Bhungar Devai married her grand daughter

to him thus a relationship between two kingdoms was sealed. At that time the intermarriages between Sindhis and Iranian became a common practice. During marriage ceremony and the festivities that accompanied it, the King Behram Ghor was enchanted by Sindhi singers and a clan of Sindhi singers accompanied him to Iran. That clan was called *Iorai*. They established themselves in Iran and Sindhi music found immense popularity in Iran. Through Iran this music travelled to Arabian countries. The Gypsy tribes which had originated from Sindh had already made Sindhi music popular in many European countries. Dr. Nabi Bux Khan Baloch’s Book “The History of Sindhi Music” and Book of Aziz Baloch’s, “Spanish cante Jondo, and its origin in Sindhi Music,” very well chart the journey of Sindhi music across the seas.

Many experts are of the opinion that even Indonesian music bears the distinct traces of Sindhi music. All this is a matter of further research for the scholars.

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**Brahmin Dynasty**  
**641 AD -712 AD**

**T**he last King of Rai dynasty was Rai Sahasi. He endeavored to rule his country in befitting ruler of the great dynasty. People were happy and prosperous during his reign. He meted out justice to all aggrieved. He abolished forced labour and announced that the tillers who are too poor to pay the part of their produce as tax may be allowed instead to work at government projects in lieu thereof. He even issued orders that the taxes may be collected in installments if necessary. This highly speaks of his compassion towards his subjects, particularly if contrasted with the cruelty of the rulers of the time.

During the reign of Rai Sahasi his chief minister was a person Budhiman (A wise one). He was a great scholar. One day a young man approached him, who with his pleasant manners and intelligence greatly impressed him. Budhiman had an assistant to help him in drafting of letter/petitions etc whose name was Ram. One day Ram could not come to court for some reason and the young person who was already in attendance was assigned urgent work in place of Ram in the court of the King.. The name of the youth was Chach. His

presence and work greatly impressed the king and slowly he climbed the ladders of power in the Royal court. As his importance increased in the court so soared his popularity among the masses. Eventually he gained the confidence of the king to such an extent that he gained easy access to the royal palace also. While on one of visits to the royal palace he had audience with the queen Sohan Devi. His good looks and noble behavior impressed the queen which eventually blossomed into passionate love affair. It is believed that initially Chach was reluctant to respond to queen's overtures but her persistence paid off particularly when she appealed to his sense of chivalry, citing helplessness due to the fact that king was seriously ill and she did not have any offspring and she feared death at the hands of relatives of the King. It is said as king was lying on the sick bed Sohan devi removed the royal seal (ring) from the hand of the King and that the King has ordered that the royal seal should be handed over to Chach to officiate in his place till he recovers. After some time King expired. The news of death was kept secret. She called all relations of the King at the palace and imprisoned them and they were put to death. Other courtiers were called, Chach was declared as king and all the courtiers were lavishly rewarded. It is also mentioned that she told courtiers that whosoever would kill the imprisoned relative of the late king would inherit his property. (Later Historians are of the opinion that all this is a made up story to lend spice to narration in 'Chachnama') Eventually Chach married Queen Sohandevi.

In this way ended Rai dynasty and began Brahmin Dynasty. Chach was son of the famous priest Sailaj. Chach was very generous to his courtiers to keep them happy. One relation of Rai Sahasi rushed to ruler in Chittorh and brought soldiers to avenge the death of head of his clan. Chach had retained the same person Budhiman as his chief

minister. It was the first challenge for Chach. In order to avoid the bloodshed it was decided that the matter should be decided by duel between Chach and Rana Maharat. The rules of the duel were laid down and it was stipulated that both the adversaries would fight on their feet. At the last moment Chach ascended his steed, suddenly charged on Rana Maharat and killed him.

Chach consulted his chief minister who advised him to send his brother Chander as his deputy and started to reinforce his power on the borders of his kingdom. The ruler of Sewistan became his vassal. The ruler of Fort of Sewi also accepted his supremacy and he adequately strengthened himself. It is said, those who willingly surrendered he was very generous with them but those who dared to oppose were severely dealt with. It said that Jat and Lohana tribes had opposed Chach which infuriated him and he meted out severe treatment to them. Apart from the tribute that he exacted from them he ordered that they would not carry real sword but would instead carry wooden sword, they would not wear silken or velvet clothes. If at all they were allowed to wear on special occasions they would be only of black or red colour. They would mount their steed without a saddle and on bare back. They were not allowed to cover their head with any headgear. They would be accompanied by a dog and it will be their duty to provide wood fuel for the kitchens of nobles of Brahmanabad. Chach ruled for about 40 years

After the death of Chach his brother Chander, who was already his deputy during his lifetime, continued to rule. He adopted Buddhism as his religion. After the death of Chach the rulers of bordering area tried to revolt. The ruler of Sewistan tried his best to challenge new ruler. He got help from the King of Kanouj but nothing came of it. Ultimately he had to accept the superiority of new King

Chander and be content to be part of his kingdom. He ruled for seven years. After his death his nephew Dahir, son of Chach inherited the throne.



*4th-7th century- Brahma in brass from Bahamanabad National Museum Karachi).*



*Pre-Muslim period pottery mould from Banbhore (Debal) Moulded pottery was also common upto Samma period i.e. 15th century.*



*5th-8th century A.D. Siva lingum from temple in situation at Banbhore.*

**K**ing Chach had three children. Dahir, Dahirsinh, and a daughter Mahin. After his death the kingdom was divided in two parts. Aror became capital of Dahir and Brahmanabad became capital of son of Chander Raj. Raj expired within a year. Dahirsinh became ruler of Brahmanabad. Dahirsinh married daughter of King Agham. He resumed the work on the construction of Fort of Rawar which was stopped due to death of Chach and often stayed there. (The exact location of the fort of Rawar is a matter of controversy among the Historians) After resumption of the work at Rawar he came back to his capital Brahmanabad.

Dahir when ascended the throne showered the courtiers with abundant gifts and carried on the administration of the state in an efficient manner. After consolidating his position in the capital after a year he started to assert his authority along far flung frontiers of his empire. He assured the boundaries of his kingdom in the south and headed towards the kingdom of his brother Dahirsinh and went right upto Kech-Makran in present day Balochistan. When he returned to



his capital people welcomed him with celebrations and he bestowed his riches and bounty on them.

When all seemed to be going right an astrologer visited the court of King Dahir. He predicted dark future for both the brothers and prophesied that a person marrying their sister Mahin would remain ruler of Sindh. Mahin used to stay at Brahmanabad with her brother Dahirsinh. He had promised her in marriage to prince of Bhatia – a kingdom near Jaisalmer. Being escorted with, five hundred warriors and seven hundred horses, Dahirsinh sent her to Dahir with instructions that he should gift her an important fort as a dowry and sent her to be married to her betrothed. When Mahin reached Aror, Dahir recalled the prophecy of the astrologer. He consulted his ministers and courtiers who advised him to marry his sister so that the kingdom would not slip away to anyone else. Initially he is reported to have expressed outrage at the very idea but eventually he fell in with the scheme when he was assured that the marriage would remain only a ritual without any conjugal compulsion and implication. This act of his disgraced him in the eyes of common people. His brother Dahir sinh was infuriated at his action and rushed to him. In the process of confrontation the advisors of Dahir did not allow him to meet his brother. Some accounts say that actually a war between brothers took place on this account. During this time Dahirsinh became sick and died as result. He was cremated by Dahir according to royal customs.

In this context Chachnama mentions that on being reprimanded by Dahirsinh for such an ignoble behaviour, Dahir is said to have defended himself by asserting, “Mahin is our step sister born from the womb of a mother of Jat clan, who are rebellious and unreliable. As her nature is alien therefore marriage with her did not involve any sin.”

After the death of his Brother Dahirsinh, Dahir went to Brahmanabad and married his widowed sister-in-law who was daughter of King of Agham. He used to spend 4 months at Brahmanabad, 2 months at the fort of Rawar which was completed by Dahir and 4 months in Aror. During 8 years there was peace and prosperity in the kingdom and people enjoyed the fruits of peaceful and just rule. All the while the treasury continued to be filled with wealth and his grip on the far flung areas remained firm. In this time his indiscretions were forgotten and again he regained admiration and allegiance of his people. The ruler of Ramal made an unsuccessful attempt to attack Sindh. It is recorded in Chachnama that he adopted an unorthodox (rather unethical) strategy by sending the troops of an Arab courtier at night to attack the sleeping troops of King of Ramal, who in state of disbelief jumped into a flowing river. This way 80000 soldiers and 50 elephants were taken as prisoners.

As advised by his minister he entered into a treaty with the King of Ramal on advantageous terms and peace was restored. All this pleased King very much and asked his chief minister to ask for any gift that he wanted. He expressed a desire since he did not have any son who many perpetuate his memory his name also be inscribed on the reverse side of the coins as a memorial to him. His wish was granted. All this went to make Dahir more powerful.

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# 13

## **Arab Invasions on Sindh 711 AD – 714 AD**

**I**n intervening periods whenever Iranian Empire expanded westward it conquered Sindh and made it as western boundry of the Empire. In the aftermath of advent of Islam, Arabs spread their wings and emerged as empire builders; they destroyed and conquered Iranian Empire. During the period of Chach and his son Dahir the tales of riches of Sindh were enough for Sindh to be coveted by Arabs. They tried to conquer Sindh but their invasions were successfully repulsed by Sindhi armies. It is said they tried their adventure 17 times and every time it ended as misadventure at their great cost.

In the intial period of Islam during the Khilafat of Usman, Abdullah bin Amer bin Rabih became ruler of Makran (In present day Bulochistan). The Khalif sent a trustworthy person to find out the exact situation prevailing in Sindh, as Arabs had to face defeat every time they ventured to conquer Sindh. This trust worthy pesrson was Hakim bin Jabalah and his observations were, “Water is dirty, fruit sour, stony hard soil and other land salty.” On being enquired by Khalif about the people of Sindh he replied, “They are treacherous”.

This put an end to ambition of Khalif to conquer Sindh.

Chachnama mentions that the ruler of Lanka (Sarandeeep) sent a ship full of valuables and slaves to Khalif. Due to storm the ship had to lay anchor in one of the ports of Sindh which was looted by sea pirates operating in the vicinity. It is said that some of the women who had embarced Islam were also travelling in this ship. When Yusuf bin Hajaj who was appointed as governor of western region of the empire came to know about this incident he requested Khalif for the permission to invade Sindh, which was denied. He persisted with request. It was calculated that an expediton to Sindh would prove very costly, thus put an unecessary burden on the state. At last when the governor Yusuf Bin Hajaj, convinced him that all the expenses would be recovered from Sindh and stood personal surety in the matter then Khalif relented and granted permission for the expedition against Sindh. Yusuf Bin Hajaj collected 6000 troops from amongst the most reputed clans for their bravery and fierceness from Iraq and Syria. He put them under the command of his nephew, Mohamed bin Qasim who was a young lad of 16 or 18 years old. He was not empowered to take any decision on his own. All the powers were in the hands of Yusuf Bin Hajaj himself. A method of courier system was devised whereby the communication from Sindh to Baghdad would reach within seven days. Mohamed Bin Qasim was supposed to report every move to Hajaj and act according to instructions received from him. In a way this was first remote controlled war recorded anywhere in the world.

The first victory fell in the lap of Arab forces by capture of Port of Debal. Chachnama records this victory in the following manner:

“There was a temple in the fort, which had a minarate of height of 40 yards and a silken flag was hoisted on it. Mohammed bin Qasim

had laid the siege around the fort for a long time, but there was no sign of its capitulation and he was disheartened and was thinking of lifting the siege, at that moment of despondency a person stealthily came out from the fort and informed him that the people of the fort had a firm belief that as long as the temple remained intact in the fort no harm would come to them and no one will be able to win the fort. Therefore in order to demoralize them it is necessary to demolish the minaret of the temple and bring down the flag. After getting approval from Hajaj, Mohamed bin Qasim set about to destroy the temple and called his expert canon operators whom he promised a reward of 10000 Dirhams to bring down the flag and damage the minaret. The deed was soon accomplished. Steeped in superstition the Sindhi population of the fort surrendered without any resistance. Thus started the first leg of conquest of Sindh. After a week the army of Mohamed bin Qasim moved towards Nirun Kot. The Buddhist governor entered into a secret pact with advancing Arab army, but for pretence sake held on for five days. After five days he publicly apologised to Mohamed bin Qasim and welcomed Arab army. He even wrote a letter to the governor of Sehwan urging him to surrender to Arab army pleading that being followers of Buddhist religion the bloodshed is against their creed and the principle of non violence should be adhered to. The governor of Sehwan did not heed his advise. He fought with Arab armies for seven days, when he found that he would be overwhelmed he escaped to the fort of Sisiam to seek further reinforcements, thus the fort of Sehwan was acquired by Arab army with the help of governor of Nirunkot. The soldiers of Sisiam attacked Arab armies at night but did not succeed. In fact Arabs had solicited the help of astrologers and even before the war started the whisper campaign was set afloat that this time the Arabs would win the war and the present rulers

would be changed, thus psychologically people were demoralized and prepared to accept defeat even before the war started. Perhaps this was first psychological war in the world ever.

Inspired by the initial victories, Mohamed bin Qasim was goaded by his mentor, Yusuf bin Hajaj from Baghdad to be more aggressive and push further into the territories to confront the ruler of Sindh, King Dahir. Arab armies marched in the vicinity of forts of Rawar and Jewar and asked local vassal 'Mako' son of Wasayo to surrender. In the meanwhile the chieftain of Chana tribe surrendered before Arabs, thus the support for Arab armies had started snow balling. Initially Mako, Son of Wasayo vacillated but thought it prudent to bow before the rising force and join it rather than face it, and reap the benefits of Arab conquest. He was constrained by consideration of loyalty to the ruler. He thought, "What would happen ultimately if Arabs lost and Dahir was in position to push the invading army out?" A devious way was envisaged. He would move out for usual inspection and on a predetermined place he would be arrested by the Arab soldiers. After his arrest, Mako, Son of Wasayo, became a staunch supporter of Arabs and guided the Arabian armies through out and showed the uncharted ways and paths to important forts and helped to convince many a petty vassals to support the Arab army. In the intervening period the fort of Sehwan was again claimed by a local chieftain called Chandiram. He did not allow the Arab forces to re-enter the fort. He valiantly fought the Arab armies and died in battle but did not capitulate. It was the rare feat of courage before huge invading forces, when all important persons of the time thought it wise to align with the invaders rather than their own ruler. Of course the betrayal did bring in its prizes.

Dahir sent his son Jaisinh to prevent the enemy forces from crossing the river. Rasal, brother of Mako wanted to prove his loyalty to Dahir and led the forces under the command of heir apparent and boasted that he would avenge the shameful behavior of his brother. But when he reached the place of battle he thought it wise to follow in the footsteps of his brother and entered into a secret pact with enemy forces. At last Dahir had to come himself on the battle field. Dahir came with an impressive army of ten thousand armored and mounted soldiers, thirty thousand foot soldiers and many elephants. He was riding on a white elephant and on his both sides were maidens one to give him betelnut (paan) and another to give him arrow for his bow. As the battle raged, Arab forces started retreating and utter confusion prevailed in the Arab ranks. It was after some while that order was restored in the Arab camp. At that time some soldiers from the rear attacked their own forces in collusion with an attack from the Arab forces. The forces of King Dahir had not envisaged such a betrayal by its own forces and no precautions were taken against such an eventuality, as it was an unthinkable scenario. In the melee and confusion that ensued, an accident occurred. Palanquin on which Dahir was sitting caught fire and his elephant ran towards water and on the bank of the river was caught in quagmire. Some Arab soldiers gave him a chase. King Dahir got down from his mount and soon he was outnumbered and killed. Thus fate of Sindh was decided by an unfortunate accident and not a result of Arab military superiority notwithstanding the betrayal by own troops and opportunist turncoats.

The war was continued by sons of Dahirsinh and Gopi for many months in the hope that Dahir would come again with the reinforcements from the neighbouring Kings as they refused to believe that Dahir was dead. Eventually as they were deserted by their own

courtiers and fighters they went away to seek help from other Kings near Chitor. When eventually Sindh fell into the hands of Arabs many of the royal ladies committed 'Johar' (self immolation by jumping into fire pit) and one of the queens named Laadi married Mohmed bin Qasim.

*(This fact is hotly contested by Hindu Historians now- and some of them have gone to the extent that Dahir was not defeated at all - but that theory does not explain the subsequent events as they unfold in the History. As Chachnama was written two centuries after the event, it is likely that many oral traditions might have crept in the original writing and the question of sexual relationship is alluded to add spice to writing. But we do not have any other source for history of the times. Thus we have to accept Chachnama as a source for the History of the period though with a pinch of salt and that depends on the taste of taster.)*

It is mentioned that the princess of King Dahir were captured and sent to Khalif of Islam as a tribute. When Khalif wanted them to enter his harem they tricked him by leveling allegation against Mohmed bin Qasim having already defiled them. This provoked the wrath of Khalif and he ordered that Mohmed Bin Qasim be presented before him wrapped in raw skin of donkey. His orders were executed within three days thus princesses of Dahir avenged the death of their father and loss of Kingdom and thereafter they also committed suicide.

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## **Results of Arab Invasion on Sindh**

**I**n the medieval times the structure of the society is described as feudalism. Which means that entire structure of the society and economic and military relationship were defined by ownership and division of the land. The emperor was supposed to be the owner of entire country. He owed allegiance of kings, who in turn had many petty chiefs and vassals owing allegiance to them and those chiefs had jagirdars and zamindars as their subordinates. The superiors used to get tribute, obedience and loyalty from their dependants, and they all were duty bound to provide men and material help during any war and were suitably rewarded by the victorious superior for their efforts. It would be a mistake to consider this system as a disciplined monolith. Most of the time at all the levels there was intense rivalry and infighting among the constituents. No reason was required to wage a war. The reason of might was enough to wage a war against a weak neighbour. This hostility or enmity would endure for generations. But during all the wars the common feature was that only armies were engaged in the war and warfare did not involve the civil

population. They continued with their normal pace of life irrespective of who the ruler was, the only difference lay in the fact that head of the clan would swear allegiance to new ruler and would agree to pay him yearly tribute. All the changes effected the ruling classes. If, at the centre the grip on the power, appeared to be slightly loose the small kings and chiefs would proclaim their independence and in case of reassertion of the central power would resume payment of the tribute.

When Mohmed bin Qasim invaded Sindh, Islam was a new religion. Various Arab clans were welded together into a single society and they were charged with immense energy and enthusiasm. For the first time the territorial gain and expansion involved a dimension of spread of new religion and this combination was to prove a powerful force and many old empires crumbled against its advancing avalanche. But it can be said that in course of the time the main purpose was territorial gain and proselytisation remained only a thin veneer. It is a fact that those who accepted Islam as a faith were showered with gifts and titles. They were exempt from paying protection tax (Jazia Tax). Those who adhered to their traditional religion were allowed to do so with a stipulation that they would be subject to protection tax. This fact is evident from many letters written to Mohmed bin Qasim by his uncle Yusuf bin Hajaj. When people of Brahmanabad requested Mohmed bin Qasim that they should be allowed to continue adherence to their original faith, this question was referred by him to Yusuf bin Hajaj and this is what he got as reply:-

“I have received a letter from my cousin Mohmed bin Qasim and I have noted the contents. As regards the request of Buddhist priests and their community leaders to allow them to follow their creed vocation and repair and maintenance of their places of worship, I think we have no power over them beyond recovery of protection tax,

since they have accepted our dependence we have no power to interfere in their life or financial affairs. They should be left totally free to worship according to their faith openly.”

It is also a fact, wherever Mohmed bin Qasim encountered resistance, as an act of retribution he destroyed temples and built mosques at the same place. Where people surrendered to him he treated them kindly. In this also he followed the instructions of Yusuf bin Hajaj who constantly reminded him to be liberal in his grants. In one of the letters he instructed him thus:-

“You should behave with people of Nirunkot with kindness and make all efforts for their wellbeing. Those eminent or scholarly persons who visit you should be welcomed according to their status and bestowed with gifts and suitable titles.” At the time of conquest of Sewistan he wrote, “You should bestow gifts to the people of Sindh and those who ask for land grants (Jagirs). Don’t disappoint them and promise them your protection.” In keeping with the same tradition he restored the position of the kings of the lower ranks and Brahmins were also appointed in high positions. When he was convinced about their efficiency he did not hesitate to appoint Brahmins in various administrative posts according to their ability. Finance was to remain in their hands only. Small traders and artisans who had suffered during the war were paid Dirhams 12 each and were duly compensated. Even at that time Hindus and Muslims started living in harmony with each other. As per experts, “for seven hundred years in Sindh, Buddhism and Hinduism co-existed without any hatred or discrimination and had imbibed the spirit of tolerance, with the advent of Islam the same attitude continued, but instead of two now three religions could coexist without any friction.”

### **Ancient ties of Sindh with Arabia**

The relations between the Arabs and Sindh existed since ancient times but those relations were mercantile and not political. But with the advent of Mohmed bin Qasim and his success, the relationship acquired political dimension. It was initial period of emergence of Islam, the small tribes and clans were in the initial evolutionary stage of being transformed into a nation or a unified community of nations, who with the help of military power created a huge empire and collected unsurpassed wealth for themselves. After the affluence comes the desire to acquire the status, for that it became necessary for them to bring renowned scholars and artists from all over and settle them in their capital to lend them prestige.

With the advent of Mohmed bin Qasim the intercourse between Sindh and Arabs in the field of knowledge and arts got momentum. Many Sindhi scholars found place in the court of Arab Kalifs and made their name there. They assumed Arabic names but Alama Samkani has referred to them as ‘al hindi’ i.e. from India. One of them Abu Basha Sindhi proved to be a renowned scholar of Islamic jurisprudence (Hadith) Imama Aorazi bin Abdul Rehman a slave from Sindh is leader of ‘faqh’ creed of Islam. He had many followers in Syria and Indulus (modern day Spain). Abu Atta Sindhi acquired the title of ‘Qadir al kalam’, Poet Abu Fallah Mansoori was also a slave from Sindh who has composed the immortal song, “song of the country.” Many Sanskrit scholars were called from Sindh and many important Sanskrit books were translated into Arabic at that time. The subjects of the books translated are varied as of medicine, astronomy, astrology, philosophy, ethics, music and mathematics.

One historian named Yaqubi Matufi in his book records “People

of Sindh are intelligent and are thinkers, because of their education they are better than white skinned people. The book of logic is testimony to their intelligence. Sindhi scholars who translated Sanskrit books into Arabic, some of them are named as ‘ Bahal Makna, Kalp Rai, Ibn dan, Bakahr Raja, etc...’ (It is possible that due to difference in the Arabic pronunciation the names are not properly inscribed). When Harron Al Rashid fell ill Makahna was specially summoned to his court to treat him and due to his efforts his life could be saved.”

The first translation in the entire world of the Holy Quran was done in Sindhi language. Irrespective of political fallout of the invasion of Sindh by Mohmed bin Qasim it can be said with certainty that the cultural relations of Sindh with Arabs deepened and they are indebted to Sindh in this respect.

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**Arab Governors in Sindh  
715 AD – 845 AD**

**W**hen Mohmed bin Qasim was recalled from Sindh at that time the Arab world was in the midst of political turmoil. There ensued the war of succession for Khilafat. Groupism and factionalism was at its peak. Yusuf bin Hajaj and his relations were arrested and put to death. Many Arab historians discount the account of Chachnama that Mohmed bin Qasim was killed by utterances of daughters of King Dahir. The stark reality is that he was also put to death as he was closely related to Yusuf Bin Hajaj, whose group had lost out in the power struggle.

After the departure of Mohmed bin Qasim, as the grip of the central ruler loosened many small kingdoms came into being and the Arab governors appointed by Khalifa of Arabia wielded influence and power only near the port of Debal. During the era of Bani Umeh in the span of 40 years, 10 governors were appointed, all of whom proved to have only titular position. It is during this period that the story of King Dalurai is set and the epic story of Sasuee and Punoon immortalized by great poet Shah Abdul Latif is also said to have its origins in this

period. In Sindh also the infighting between different Arab groups was reflected. The initial power of Islam which weilded various tribes and clans speaking different languages into a formidable force was seen to be cracking at that point of time. Power became the driving force instead of religion. All this was reflected in Sindh also and Sindh was witness to intercene wars of Arabs.

The change of Khilafat from Bani Umeh to Bani Abass chiefs resulted in changes of Arab governors in Sindh also. This traditional ritual continued for 108 years. During this period, 31 governors were appointed in Sindh. Some enjoyed the power for some months and some for a few days only, while some could not set their feet on the soil of Sindh ! During this period, as a matter of political expediency, some small kings adopted Islam as their religion but except change in their name, their life style, customs and practices continued to be same as of the original faith. There was as is wont in the political field , the relationship of confrontation and co-operation between the kings irrespective of the religion that any one of them professed. One instance from the Islamic history amply demonstrates this phenomenon .

During the period of Khalifa Mansur Abassi , Omer bin Hafaz was governor of Sindh. Abdullah bin Shatter a renowned and influential person, due to his lineage from the Holy prophet, took refuge in Sindh and the governor was being pressurized by Khalifa to send him back to Baghdad to face the consequences. The governor was unwilling to comply. It was decided that Abdullah al Shatter would take refuge in the neighboring Hindu kingdom. Khalifa removed the Governor and other governor was sent in his place who waged the war with the Hindu King. The Hindu King thus keeping the ancient tradition that a refugee is a sacred trust, sacrificed his life to save a scion of Holy family. In the war that ensued even though Abdullah al

Shatter also lost his life, after which Khalifa sent his wife and children to Madina.

During this period many Sindhi scholars and doctors went to Khalifs court and thus the relationship at cultural and intellectual level became deep and abiding.

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# 16

## **Period of Independant states in Sindh 835 AD- 854 AD**

**A**fter the capital of Khilafat was shifted to Damascus, the Khalifa Abdullah Maak wanted Arab troops to stay put in Sindh itself instead of coming back to Khalifs capital. The Arab forces stationed in Sindh comprised of various tribes from various countries. The main tribes are described as Qureshi, Siddiqui, Farooqui, Tammimmi, Nazari etc. After they settled in Sindh, with the passage of time they were absorbed into the local community and they considered Sindh as their own land, their own country and the magic of Sindhi soil accepted them in it's lap. Due to changing circumstances some times Arabs settled in the villages exclusively made by them for themselves but normally they mixed into the local population. Around the year 195 Hijra Era, Baghdad had become a debating center for different religions. There used to be intensive interfaith debates to gain understanding of differing viewpoints in order to have better insight into the philosophical foundations of various religions.

At that time in the lower Sindh, Brahmanabad was considered to be a big and important city. Near Brahmanabad, Umro, son of

Mohmed bin Qasim, built a new city named Mansorah as the safe sanctuary for Arab forces, as Arab forces were confined only to coastal area of Sindh called Laar. During the period of Umeh Khalifas this city was spread across one square mile and had fortifications with four gates named 1. Bab Al bhar, 2. Bab Sindhan, 3. Bab Multan, 4. Bab Tooran. This city had houses in the style of Damascus built of wood and mud. As per practice of Hindu kings Arab forces also had acquired elephants. Forces are said to be about 40000 and city was prosperous and came to be known as an important center in the Islamic world at par with Damascus and Baghdad.

After the death of Haroon al Rashid, a local chief of Arab decent named Umer bin Abdul Aziz wrote to then Khalif that he would rule Sindh independently but would continue to pay him tribute. Due to continued civil wars in far flung Sindh the Khalifs were fed up with the situation there and he was appointed as a governor by Khalif with only condition that he would continue to pay tribute to him. Abdul bin Aziz surpetiously increased his influence and assumed independence without making any announcement or fanfare about it. He continued to rule the state of Mansoorah with increased influence upto 884 AD, till his death. He was succeeded by his son Abdullah bin Umer, who ruled till 914 AD and was succeeded by son Omer bin Abdullah. He is said to have lived in royal manner and had 3 lakh villages under his jurisdiction. His army boasted of five thousand eighty elephants. When Abassiad Khalifat was on the wane during this period, Mansoorah attracted many preachers of Shia faith, though they failed to make any significant inroads in Sindh but were successful in Multan region. This dynasty is said to have lasted upto 1011 AD. (Recent researches have arrived at the conclusion that Soomra, a clan of local rulers had already established themselves as effective rulers in

the ninth century itself).

The other Kingdoms which are mentioned during this period are as under :-

**Makran** :- During this time the ruler was Issa bin Masdan and its capital was Kech. This was a vast kingdom and this being a mountainous region the outsiders always avoided this region during their expeditions. It is said that even Alexzander had to face heavy losses while passing through this route. The inhabitants are freedom loving and strong, hence they have enjoyed freedom from foreign rule for most period in the history.

**Multan** :- The rulers of Multan initially accepted to be part of Mansoorah rulers and it was considered as a part of Sindh. But in the eighth century it declared independence. Again during the period of Ghaznavi and Ghori rulers it became part of Sindh. There was a temple in Multan which was revered by all Hindus and many used to come here for pilgrimage. The temple coffers were overflowing with riches and no Hindu king would dare to incur the wrath of diety of the temple, therefore this area was free from invasions thus even Shia Muslims enjoyed a sort of protection. Thus Multan was said to be protected by Golden frontier.

**Tooran** :- In Sindh one state of Tooran existed at that time. Mirza Kalich Beg is of the opinion that Tooran must have approximated Sahita territory. In Hijra Era 375, an Arab traveller named Maeen bin Ahmed has observed that the city was buit on two hills in between was a valley. On one hill were king's palaces while on the other common populace used to reside .This route lay on the old trading route and carvans of many merchants used to pass from here. Some of the travellers have referred to this city as "Kikhan" also.

**Wehand** :- One state as Wehand also finds mention. Historians are not in a position to pin point its exact location. It is presumed that it may be the same state which was known as Gandhara with its capital being Wehand. It is presumed to have existed in the east of Pushkalavati ( Present day Peshawar-now in Pakistan). A Hindu king ruled here. At the time of invasion of Mohmed Ghaznavi it was captured by him and it was considered as a part of Sindh.

**Kanouj** :- This state existed near border of Multan. Mohmed bin Qasim is said to have tried to conquer this state but could not conquer it. This remained an independent kingdom ruled by a Hindu king but was overran by Mohmed Ghaznavi and made a part of Multan.

**Balha** :- This state was between Tooran, Makran, Multan and Mansoorah, It was inhabited by pastoral tribes and abounded in rich forests. Its capital was "Qadhabil."

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## **The Period of Mohmed Ghaznavi and Delhi Emperors**

**M**ohmed Ghaznavi tried to invade India in 1010 AD and was ~~successful after~~ 17<sup>th</sup> attempt. After persistent efforts for 15 years to conquer Debal port and consequently he became ruler of Sindh. (In the foot steps of Mohmed bin Qasim). But this position of slavery of Sindh did not continue for long time. Within a short span of 27 years a Sindhi, Pal ibn Soomra, who was convert to Islam, regained the power of Sindh and Multan. According to historians at that time nine Hindu states existed in Sindh itself which are as under:-

1. Bambhore, 2. Brahmanabad, 3. Sewhan, 4. Alor, 5. Darbelo, 6. Roopaha, 7. Manek, 8. Manah Kot, 9. Bhagnari.

The rulers of these states were called 'Rano'. In 1179 AD, Shahbuddin Ghori invaded Sindh but in spite of his conquest Sumras continued to rule over Laar and Thar i.e. south and western Sindh. In 1206 AD, after the death of Sultan Shahbuddin Ghori, three slave chieftians divided the kingdom, thus part constituting Sindh came to be ruled by Nasseruddin Kabach. In the year 1221 AD Changiz khan chased Jalaluddin Khouram, the Tatar ruler on the run, right upto

Sindh but stopped in his tracks there. Jalaluddin left the trail of loot and destruction in Sindh and died in Makran while on his way to Iraq. One slave of Shahbuddin Ghori named Altmash ascended the Delhi throne after him, and he tried to browbeat his companion in arms Nasseruddin Kabach. In face of advancing forces of Altmash he put all his wealth in boats and headed towards Sehwan, but unfortunately he sank along with his boats. This made Soomra rulers as vassals to Altmash.

In the year 1277 AD Khilji Sultans started ruling Delhi. They ruled for 40 years. After Khiljis came Tughlaqs. During this period Moghuls tried to enter India through Sindh many times but Sindhis repulsed their advances every time and Soomras continued to rule Sindh, sometimes as independent kings and sometimes as tributaries to kings at Delhi whenever the pressure mounted. They ruled uninterrupted upto 1351 AD.

During this period Jats of Sindh gave stiff resistance to rulers of Delhi as they were fiercely of independent nature, they would prefer death to subjugation. Many Hindu soldiers also were part of army of Delhi Sultans, as Sindhis were good in archery they were offered important posts in the army at Delhi. This was a period of great upheavals and uncertainty but even at such a time the capital 'Uch' attracted many scholars in its court who have extensively written about the contemporary events which have proved an important source material for the historians probing that Era.

\* Some recent historians in Sindh have asserted that Soomra ruled for about 500 years.

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**Soomra Dynasty**  
**1010 AD -1440 AD**

**S**oomras are said to have ruled over Sindh for about 500 years in different capacities, sometimes quite independent or sometimes as tributaries to a central authority. As regards the actual lineage of Soomra rulers there is no unanimity among the historians. In keeping with the tradition of being aligned to more powerful, some ascribe their ancestry to Arab origin, but most have rejected that theory and are of the opinion that they were Rajputs before advent of Islam. As stated in earlier chapters many tribes, Lichvis, Huns, Bacterians and Sycthians came and settled in India after the invasion of Alexzander and were readily absorbed into Indian society and they accepted Hindu religion and Buddhist religion as per their expediency. They were accepted by original Hindu fold as belonging to 'Agni Kula' ( Fire Clan ) as Rajputs. With the advent of Islam some of the clans as a matter of political expediency or under coercion accepted Islam, as neither they had deep roots in Hindusim or Buddhism. The converts maintained the same life style and a mixture of Hindu-Muslim continued as the occasion demanded. They continued to observe

Hindu traditions and lifestyles and used Hindu as well as Muslim names as occasion demanded.

According to the historical tradition, after the death of Sultan Mohmed Ghaznavi his son Sultan Abdul Rashid succeeded him who was not competent and during Hijra 445, Soomra clan declared independence at Tharari and their chief Soomra started his rule. He was succeeded by his son Bhoongar.

23 generations of Soomras are said to have ruled over Sindh for the span of about 500 years. This period is considered as a golden period in the history of Sindh. Most of the folk tales immortalized in the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif are said to have been set in this period. This period has yielded a treasure trove of folk literature. The universal values of love, truthfulness, patriotism, love for the land and its flora fauna and spirit of sacrifice to uphold the noble values found expression in the compositions of minstrels and folk ballad of the period. Folk literature cannot be ascribed to any particular writer. Like life undergoes change as the circumstances desire, thus some part is taken from somewhere and some deleted while some additions are made, all this is done by the common folk who have no pretensions to scholarship but have intense feelings and worldly wisdom. These folk tales are the life blood of Sindhi culture today, akin to water of great Sindhu.

The main historical event of this period is the tale of "Dodo Chanesar". It is a historical event of great significance therefore it is necessary to dwell at it in some details.

After the death of Bhoongar Rai (There have been quite a number of rulers with same name), the question of successor was considered by the chieftians. As Chanesar was eldest he was chosen as head. He

told the chieftains to hold back their decision as he would have to seek permission from his mother. Chieftians were surprised and argued that a person who cannot take a decision for himself is unworthy of being head of the kingdom and thus they made his brother 'Dodo' as their head and he was crowned as a King. This infuriated Chanesar and he went to Allauddin Khilji, the ruler of Delhi to take revenge from his brother. Allauddin Khilji sent a message to Dodo, to give the hand of his sister Baaghi in marriage to him (as a token of submission). Dodo refused to yield. This led to war between Allauddin Khilji and Sindhi forces. Allauddin came to conquer Sindh with a force of million people. Dodo was not intimidated by such a brute force and faced the armies of Allauddin Khilji. Dodo lost in the battle but the forces of Allauddin Khilji were considerably reduced. The fact that Chanesar was with the Allauddin Khilji to show him all path and alleys and some sympathizers in the camp of Dodo also greatly helped Allauddin's forces to tilt the balance in the battle field. In fact his war became peoples war of Sindh against the foreign occupation and all sorts of people waged the war with whatever they could muster to fight. Sindh was totally ravaged and Allauddin had a pyrrhic victory.

In the meanwhile the royal women folk were sent to ruler of Kutch as "Saamoon". (A glorious chivalrous tradition among Rajput rulers to give shelter to women of other Kings in period of war and agree to protect them till the last drop of their blood). Allauddin Khilji chased them even to Kutch and the ruler of Kutch did not capitulate under the threats of Allauddin Khilji but instead bravely fought till he died in the battle. There upon the women folk of both the kingdoms jumped into the fire pit and ended their life in final ritual of death called 'Johar.'

It is said that Chanesar was overcome with a feeling of guilt and remorse and ended his life. Allauddin went back to Delhi.

In fact this is war epic and it is possible that there may be exaggeration of some details in the epic as is wont to happen. But it cannot be denied that Dodo preferred to fight and did not capitulate against the might of Allauddin Khilji thus showed an exemplary courage and he did not consent to give the hand of his sister and showed incomparable self respect.

Dodo was a king, to die and live for freedom of the country was his duty, and he died in the course of faithfully performing his duty. One would get many such instances in the history. In this period another occurrence which has attracted the attention of the great poet Shah Abdul Latif is that of incident involving king Umer and a village damsel Maruee. The love of a common woman for her land, her soil, her simple people, their food, their habits, their toiling life and rejection of palatial life – her fierce loyalty to her people and soil of Malir is unmatched any where in the world literature.

This period saw unfolding of story of Sorath and Rai Dhiyach also. A king who would keep his word to give his life to the master musician (Bijal's) melodious strings .

Another significant development that occurred during this period is that Sindhi language emerged in its present form to give Sindh a distinct identity as a nation.

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# 19

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## **Samma Dynasty 1351 AD- 1519 AD**

**S**ammas were main supporters and comrade in arms of Soomra rulers. In many parts they were the actual rulers. A deliberate smoke screen is seemed to have been created about their ancestry. In fact our people have suffered from inferiority complex and have always sought respectability from the powerful and ancient lineage. Some have tried to trace their origin in the Arabian soil, while others have tried to connect them with Jamshed the ruler of Iran because of their title 'Jam'. The fact is that they were a clan of Yadav Vanshi Rajputs some of whom had converted to Islam while others in Kutch continued to remain in the Hindu fold. It is said that they are descendants of Lord Krishna who ruled over Saurashtra and had a queen called "Jamboti". They were born of her hence were called 'Jams', as been observed by Mr.Behrimal Meherchand. They conquered Kathiawar and Lasbelo also.

17 Rulers of Samma dynasty ruled over Sindh for 170 years. During the Moghul period when Malik Ratan was appointed as Governor of Sehwan, Samma rulers chased him away and established themselves

as sovereign rulers of Sindh. The first ruler was Feroze al Din Jam Uner. Under their rule court conspiracies were rife and every ruler had to contend with rebellion intermitantly. No ruler could feel himself secure. They tried to bring about peace and prosperity to the country that was their first priority at the same time they were luxury loving and were fond of pomp and show.

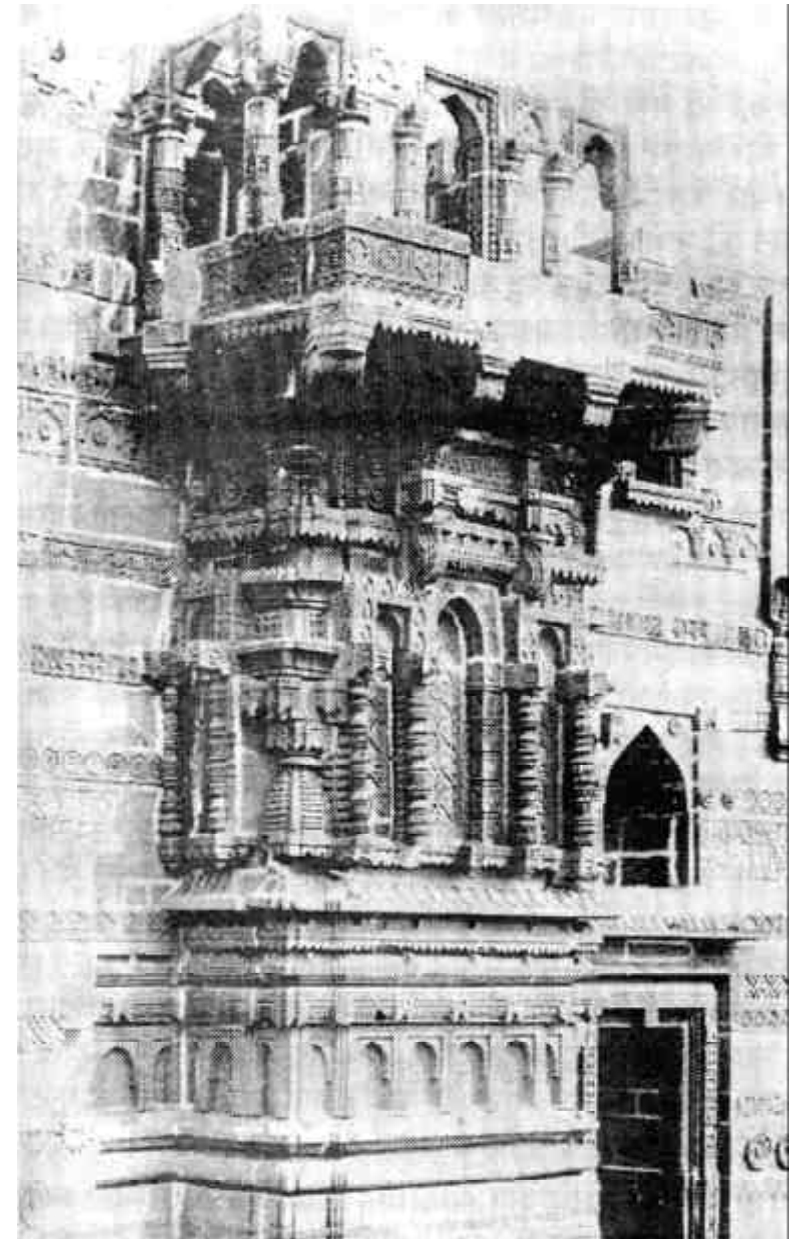
The fifth Jam Rukun al Din Shah has been immortalised by Shah Abdul Latif. His insistance on marriage to girl of "lowly caste" of fisher folk has become a part of folk literature. When he went to Kinjhar lake for Shikar he saw a lovely girl Noori an embodiment of humility and love and fell in love with her at first sight. He sought her hand in marriage from the fisher folk, who felt greatly honoured. He married her and gave her position of queen regent.

The most outstanding ruler of this dynasty was Jam Nizamuddin alias Jam 'Nando' (Junior). There was peace and prosperity during his reign. There was unparalleled Hindu Muslim unity. He held discourses of scholars of all faiths and participated in those discussions himself thus initiating the practice followed by Akbar the great which latter lead to establishment of Din-e-illahi. According to noted historian of Sindh, Pir Hissamudin Rashdi, in his book 'Makli Nama' he appointed many Hindus in his court. He was kind hearted and peace loving king. It is said that he would often go to his stable and lovingly tell his horse 'may god not bring the day when I have to shed any human blood astride you.' At the popular level the harmony between the two communities was amazing indeed! Many Hindu boys used to sing sufi songs at the shrines of sufi saints. It is said that Makhdoom Ahmed Bhatti of Halla was moved so much by the singing of a goldsmith's boy that he permanently fell into state of ecstasy and left his mortal abode. Many mistrels assumed the nom de plume of

Jogi. In his court was a great scholar and soldier whose name was Darya Khan (to whom we shall come to further details later in this chapter). During his period Thatta city was built anew or reconstruction was undertaken. In Hindi language 'Tat' means the bank of a river or water course, and it appears that at some time in the past estuary of Sindhu must have passed along this city therefore the name of the city as 'Thatta', which latter on assumed importance as a capital city of Lower Sindh. This city contained within itself a population of 2 lakhs and had 4000 centers of learning.

Jam Nando ruled for 48 years. During the last years of his rule Shah Beg Argun invaded Sindh but Darya Khan swiftly repulsed that attack. The retribution was so strong that while Jam Nando lived he did not dare to look at Sindh again.

After the death of Jam Nando his son Jam Feroze was to succeed him, since he was minor, Darya Khan was appointed as his guardian. As he was growing up he was surrounded by sychophants and self seekers. In the meanwhile his cousin Salahuddin staked his claim to throne which matter was handled by Darya Khan and he was persuaded and sent back. As the crown prince grew up he was addicted to all the luxuries and vices. Darya Khan tried to mend his ways but to no avail. Disgusted by all this Darya Khan retired to his estate. Siezing this opportunity his cousin Salahuddin again mounted attack on Thatta. Queen and Jam Feroze again pleaded with Darya Khan who came out of his retirement and led forces against Salahuddin, and again defeated him. Jam Feroze again replased into his old ways. His sychophants coaxed him to take reins into his own hands and get rid of domination of Darya Khan. Again court was rife with conspiracies. In the process, some followers of Shah Beg Argun were given place in the court . In the meanwhile even the queen was poisoned against



*Mehrab of the tomb of Jam Nizamuddin (outside view)*



Bullock cart of modern Sindh, still a common site on many roads

Darya Khan, she was advised to summon help from Shah Beg Argun to free her son from the clutches of Darya Khan. Thus Shah Beg Argun got much needed opportunity. Darya Khan valiantly faced the mighty force of Shah Beg but was out numbered and outmaneuvered as Sindhi forces were hopelessly divided. By his valliant defence of Sindh, Darya Khan added his name to martyrs who died in the cause of defence of Sindhi soil and immortalised himself in the annals of history.

It is said from 11<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> day of the month the army of Shah Beg was busy in massacre, loot and burning of Thatta city. It is said that Kazi Qadan's family was among those imprisoned and he raved like a mad man telling all and sundry that he was famous courtier and a poet Kazi Qadan and implored the chief Immam (Priest) of Shah Beg to release members of his family and he joined Shah Beg as an accomplice.

At this time the followers of Shah Bilawal Makhdoom a great sufi saint of his times organized resistance against the forces of Shah Beg. As an exemplary punishment he was ordered to be crushed in the oil mill and thus another glorious name was added to martyrs in the history of Sindh.

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# 20

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## **Argun Dynasty 1524 AD – 1554 AD**

**U**nder the influence of ill advised courtiers Shah Feroze coaxed his mother to invite Shah Beg Argun to break the stranglehold of Darya Khan on the power and that moment proved tragic turning point for the history of Sindh, as it put it under alien rule for centuries to come. Samma and Jadeja Rajputs valiantly tried to oust the invaders but as usual they were a divided house working at one upmanship and at cross purpose, therefore they could not succeed.

Arguns are descendants of Changiz Khan. Shah Beg himself captured Kabul and lost the same in quick succession quite a number of times. When he conquered Sindh, he thought at last he had found a place where he could continue to rule without being effectively challenged. After the defeat of Darya Khan, Jam Feroze fled to Pir Patho. He eventually surrendered before Shah Beg who appointed him as chief of Sewistan along with his trusted people and proceeded to invade Sewi. Before embarking for this expedition he took care to put all the loyalists of Darya Khan to death. In order to strike terror in the heart of people of Thatta he ordered mass killings.

As mentioned earlier the rulers of Samma clan did not accept their defeat easily and it was not a cake walk for Shah Beg. A cousin of Shah Feroze Jam Salahuddin who had made previous two attempts to stake his claim to Kingdom of Sindh, with the help of Rai Khangar of Kutch mustered 10,000 brave soldiers from Jadeja and Soda tribes and tried to wrest Sindh from Argun hands. During this phase also Shah Feroze stood as a staunch supporter of Arguns. In this fight the fisher folk of Indus played an important role to block the waterways and harass alien armies. All had to pay price for their patriotism. All Rajput warriors and the leaders of fisher folk were beheaded at the same time at different places.

In this entire episode of the history of Sindh an important poet of Sindh of those times Kazi Qadan comes out in a bad light. He emerges as self seeker, coward, and devoid of any sense of dignity and loyalty to his king or his soil. It is said that in the fort of Bakhar 47 Jadeja heads of the army were gathered when Shah Beg Argun looked to Kazi Qadan who in metaphorical manner advised him to behead all, and his advise was promptly followed and next morning their heads were displayed hanging from the minnارات of the fort. This phase of Sindh is called 'Kharbi-e-Sindh' (Unfortunate period in Sindh.)

Shah Beg died after a struggle of 2 years. His son Shah Hassan ascended the throne at Nasarpur. Again Shah Feroze saw this as an opportunity to rise. He had forgotten the fact that Shah Beg had forgiven him and made him a chief of a small province. Shah Hassan saw through these conspiracies and took control of Thatta. Shah Feroze fled to Kutch to take help of rulers from there. Rajput kings forgave him for his misdeeds and only with the hope to free Sindh from alien rule helped him. This was the last ditch attempt by Rajputs to liberate

Sindh from the foreign rulers. They fought valiantly. They tied their head gear to each others waist so that they fight till the last drop of their blood as one man. In this battle 20,000 people died fighting but again Shah Feroze fled to Gujarat never to return back. Shah Hassan conquered Multan also and gifted the same as a tribute to Babur who gave it to his son Kamran to rule it.

Very soon Humayun was defeated by Sher Shah Soori and was on the run. During this period he came and took refuge along with his entourage and rag-tag army in Sindh which was ruled by Shah Hassan a person of common lineage. It was practice of the time when another king took refuge in times of distress, the king would ruin the particular place as to give the impression of the country being desolate so that in event of that king rising to power, does not get tempted to conquer that land and he has carries the impression of the land being desolate and barren and not worth fighting for. Accordingly entire area was rendered a vast wilderness. Being of common origin and sharing the same bloodline and language every one was polite and had a word of consolation for Humayun but no one wanted to extend any practical help. In this situation a son was born to Humayun at Umerkot to a queen whom he had married while in Sindh. The son was to rise in future as Akbar- the great Emperor of India. Humayun's sister who was with him during this period in Sindh has described Sindh, thus, "The water of Sindh is sweet, fruits are heavenly and the gardens are enchanting." Another instance of this period which attracts special attention is that even the royal women of the palace placed much emphasis on the ethical aspect of wifely duties. Brother of Humayun who was stationed at Kabul demanded the hand of daughter of Shah Hassan, to which he readily agreed. When Humayun marched to Kabul to wrest it from his brother in the fratricide that resulted in

Kamran losing out to Humayun and as a punishment he not only lost Kabul but he was blinded to render him ineffective. He took refuge at Sindh in the court of Mirza Hassan Beg. At that point Mirza Shah Hassan Beg advised his daughter to free herself from Kamran, but she refused to leave her husband in his difficult times. She accompanied him to Mecca, this was an instance of steadfast loyalty of a wife to her husband as per Indian tradition.

In the last years of his life Mirza Shah Hassan was struck by paralytic stroke and doctors advised him to remain in a boat on which he used to constantly travel to and fro between Bakhar and Thatta. As he had no male heir, during his life time his kingdom was divided among his two generals, the portion south of Laki mountains was taken by Mirza Essa and northern part was taken by Sultan Mohmed Khan. Thus ended Argun dynasty and Turkhan dynasty started to rule over Sindh.

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# 21

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## **Turkhan Dynasty 1554 AD – 1591 AD**

**T**here is an interesting anecdote related to start of Turkhan dynasty. It is said that Timur, when he was merely 18 years of age, during his wanderings lost his way. At night he took refuge in a village. The people of village were very hospitable and served him well. He remembered that act of their kindness with gratitude. When he ascended the throne he called them and declared them 'Tur Khan' (free of obligatory labour). While another version is that their ancestors had bled profusely in a battle thereafter they were known as 'Tar Khoon' (full with blood). The fact is that, exact reason for their being called Turkhans is never known.

As mentioned earlier Mirza Shah Argun did not have a male heir therefore his state was divided between his two commanders. The part south of Laki mountains was appropriated by Mirza Essa and northern part was usurped by Malik Sultan Mohmed Khan.

Mirza Essa ruled his territory well. His courtiers would often come drunk in the court, make extravagant demands and he handled them tactfully. He had four sons, Mirza Mohmed Baqi, Mirza Mohmed

Saleh, Jan Baba and Ghalib. He built a modest fort and was living in that fort with his sons. Two brothers Mian Mohmed Baqi and Saleh fell out and Mirza Saleh rushed to Kutch and brought army in his support to oust Mian Mohmed Baqi but he was defeated in the enterprise and went to his brother Sultan Mohmed who was stationed at the fort Bakhar, he refused to help him on plea that he was bound by word to Mian Mohmed Baqi not to fight against each other. However he gave him permission to stay there and conspired to send him to Delhi as a prisoner. Before this plan could be executed he was killed by a Baloch chieftian. This gave opportunity to Mian Mohmed Baqi to march to Thatta. Mirza Essa was still alive he appointed Mian Mohmed Baqi as heir apparent and asked Malik Sultan Mohmed for the pact in favour of his son Mian Mohmed Baqi and proceeded to conquer that territory also. This event took place in the year 1655 AD.

As soon as Mirza Essa left Thatta, Portugese who were waiting in the wings, attacked Thatta, torched the entire city and wrought great destruction. It is surmised by some historians that they were invited by Mirza Essa and not finding him there infuriated Portugese; as a punishment for the affront, they torched Thatta. However this action of the portugese produced the devastating result. In order to prevent the entry of enemy ships the water way was blocked by the rulers (save a small trickle which could not be navigated without an expert guide) by putting big boulders which adversely effected mercantile and other activity in the region. Mirza Essa ruled for 18 years and Mirza Mohmed Baqi ascended the throne.

The period of Mirza Mohmed Baqi's rule is considered as dark period in the history of Sindh. He is considered as a great tyrant ruler of his period. As soon as he assumed reins of power he called courtiers

on the pretext of bestowing favours, he put all of them to death instead. He fought with his brothers and killed them deceitfully. He was paranoid who saw danger in every corner and resorted to cruelest of means. He would even kill his guest so that the information does not leak out. He would allow food grain to rot but would not give it to feed hungry stomachs. He was miser in the extreme. He would recover food grains from the horse keepers on the plea that the horse would not digest all the grain and some would come out intact during defecation! The writer of *Tahif- al- Karam* observes, 'Not a day passed when atrocities on the populace were not committed. People would curse him and beseech the heavens for the divine intervention and justice. Suddenly his son died and that triggered a blind fury in him.'

As a punishment cats were let loose in lower garments of the women and their breasts were cut off. During all these ravings he was overcome by depression and committed suicide by piercing his body with his own sword.

On the death of Mohmed Baqi Mirza, Mirza Jani Beg succeeded him. He put to death all the courtiers whose loyalty he suspected. This led to civil wars and strife as usual. He attacked his uncle Muzfar Turkhan. At the same time when Akbar learnt about the death of Mirza Mohmed Baqi he sent Sadiq Mohmed Khan to enter into a pact with the new king and collect tribute from him. In spite of the awe which Moghul army evoked he had to return empty handed. This came as a rude shock for Akbar. He dispatched a huge army under the command of Khan Khana. He also failed in this mission. When Khan Khana realized nothing would be accomplished by force he resorted to diplomacy and made all sorts of promises to Mirza Jani Beg and succeeded in persuading him to come to royal court at Agra.

This way the rule of Sindh came directly under the Moghul rule who appointed governors. Thus a period of governors of Moghul court started in Sindh.

During this period another event also took place. It was during this time that Maharana Pratap was on the move to muster support against Moghul emperor Akbar and for that purpose he approached ruler of Umerkot. According to Behrimal Meharchand at that time Umerkot was ruled by Rana Besu. Maharana Pratap suggested that he would invade Thatta to gather money to equip himself to fight Moghuls. Rana Besu told him that for the sake of money it was not necessary to risk an attack on Thatta, as he himself could give him the money required for his expeditions and equipment. At that time a businessman was present in Umerkot who also helped Maharana Pratap to carry out his fight against Moghul emperor and Maharana Pratap succeeded in recovering most of the territory of his kingdom.

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## **Period of Moghul Governors in Sindh (1591-1738 AD)**

**I**n 1599 Khan Khana took Mirza Jani Beg to Akbar's court. Akbar treated him kindly and was very generous to him. He appointed him as governor of entire Sindh, except Lahiri port and portion consisting Sewistan. Further he gave him a position of leader of 5000 troops in his court. He asked the hand of his daughter for his grandson Khusru, the son of Jahangir thus cemented the alliance through marriage.

For administrative purpose Sindh was divided into 6 parts. 1. Bakhar. 2. Sehwan 3. Nasarpur. 4. Chachkaan 5. Thatta. 6. Chakar Halla. As mentioned above Lahiri port and Sewistan were put under direct Moghul rule. Mirza Jani Beg ruled total of 18 years. 8 years as an independent king and the last 10 years as governor of the Moghul emperor. He died in the year 1600 AD due to excessive drinking.

Mirza Ghazi Beg succeeded him as governor of Sindh. When Mirza Jani beg came to Akbar's court, the age of Mirza Ghazi Beg was merely four years and he became governor of Sindh at the tender age of 13-14 years. The courtiers did not take him seriously as in their eyes he was merely a child. Slowly the trusted courtiers of his fathers time

were eclipsed and the place was taken by sychophants and hanger ons. One of his courtiers Yaqub Ali Koka ( The lame ) is said to be so mean that if king rewarded anyone for his good work he would manage to get it back from him and give him merely 10 percent of the original sum gifted. However he appointed a Hindu servant and elevated him to a position of 'Doulatrai' as incharge of financial affairs who raised the salary of court employees and satisfied their legitimate demands so that they were not tempted to indulge in corruption. That way people of Sindh were happier during this time. When Mirza Ghazi Khan was presented at the court of Jahangir he was respectfully received there, with due importance in addition to Sindh he was made governor of Multan and Kandhar also. This entire period of Moghul governors in Sindh is characterized by one feature that court conspiracies and local warfare was always rife during that period. This led to neglect of the country, its people and poor administration. It is said that Mirza Ghazi Khan was killed by his relatives by strangulation.

This period of Moghul governors in lasted for 148 years and during that period 67 governors were appointed. The tenure of some governors lasted for less than 2 years. It took quite some time for them to reach from Delhi or Agra to Thatta and they were disinterested in the affairs of the governanace which was left to local chieftains. This period saw one of the most despicable act of the period which took place during the time of 37<sup>th</sup> governor of Sindh. It relates to martyrdom of Sufi saint Shah Inayat.

Shah Inayat was renowned Sufi derwish of that time. He made Jhok village as his abode, which was near Ghazi canal in area called Dera Bathora. Due to his high piety and his pure living he attracted many followers. This evoked jealousy among other so called Pirs of his time, which included powerful Jagirdars on one side and on other

side Sayeds of Bulri were also irked by his popularity. They complained to governor of Thatta about his growing influence. But the governor dismissed it merely as a case of local rivalry and told them to settle the matter at their own level as they deemed fit. They complained to Governor that Shah Inayat was trying to organize an uprising. In fact the matter was quite different. Due to his sense of justice on a philosophical plane he came to conclusion that as the land has been created by god it cannot be owned by any body. Thus he struck at the very root of economic and political structure of the society. It was inspired by ethical considerations rather than socio-political revolutionary consciousness, but all the same, it struck at the very root of the system. He decreed that the land is like mother, whosoever tills it is entitled to its bounty. This attracted many followers who lived and worked on the land in co-operative spirit. It was a novel idea. In fact it can be called first experiment in establishing a commune even before the one established in France during French revolution.

This was a new thought – rather a revolutionary thought which could not be grasped by the rival Jagirdars and Pirs. All they could understand that a status quo is being disturbed which is going to diminish their influence and they attacked the abode of Shah Inayat and carried out the massacre of his followers. According to Islamic law the lands went to the descendants of the followers of Shah Inayat and the problem became worse than before. When new administrator was appointed at Thatta he was again persuaded to declare the activities of Shah Inayat as a treason and attack him. This time they succeeded. Firstly, he wrote to Shah Inayat to pay tax due to king for the land in possession of his followers. Shah Inayat replied that his lands have been exempted by the emperor from any kind of taxes. This was enough reason for the administrator of Thatta to issue orders that his reply smacks of treason and he should be crushed. On getting the order the

forces of Azim Khan, Yar Mohammed Abbasi mustered the forces and attacked Jhok Sharif. The followers of Shah Inayat put up spirited resistance. The attacking forces mounted an attack in the darkness of the night, the fighters on side of Shah Inayat in order to warn and awake their sleeping fighters raised the cry “Allah-o-Akbar”. That cry re-vibrated all around and those who raised this cry were readily identified and put to death. Thus even during Muslim rule so many people paid with their life for raising the cry “Allah-o-Akbar” (God is Great). In spite of all their efforts the Moghul forces could not subdue the followers of Shah Inayat. Their second weapon was treachery. They, with Holy Quran on their head, beseeched Shah Inayat for peace and persuaded him to come to Thatta to clear the misunderstanding. When Shah Inayat reached Thatta all the holy promises were forgotten, all the pretence of justice and fairness were thrown to winds, he was promptly declared by Qazi as a rebel and was beheaded on 7<sup>th</sup> January 1718 AD. The followers of Shah Inayat unsuccessfully continued to fight a sort of guerilla warfare and it was decreed that any body raising the slogan “Allah-o-Akbar” should be killed. Thus came to end the first noble and humane experiment based on the concept that the land should belong to tiller only.

The period of Moghul governors is one of the barren patches in the history of Sindh which does not record any significant achievement in any field. However some poets from outside did come to Sindh during this period and continued to pursue their literary careers and some Sindhi courtiers also took to writing in Persian which was court language, but there was total disconnect between local language and literary traditions as the language of the masses was looked down upon and it was often said, “Pharsi Godhe Charsi”. (If you learn Persian you will get opportunity to mount the horse- i.e horse being symbol of authority.)

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**Kalhora Dynasty  
(1700-1784 AD)**

**K**alhoras trace their ancestry to Prophet Mohmed's uncle Abbas, hence they are referred to as Abbasi also. Since they were Sayeds i.e. of Arabian descent they were worshipped as Pirs and had a large following among the rural population. Richard Burton in his book has affirmed that actually Kalhoras were from Rajput clan converted to Islam, who as per the fashion of the time to acquire legitimacy had resorted to this charade. It was the trend in time to disguise one's true identity and it is said even Shivaji in Deccan had to resort to elaborate rituals and paid Brahmins handsomely to declare him of Kshatriya descent. All this was due to inherent inferiority complex to overcome the deep rooted sense of inadequacy in one or other form. It is a fact that for centuries Kalhoras were inhabitants of Sindh and were settled in the village of Kalor, hence the name Kalhoras.

During Moghul period they were considered pious men and were significant jagirdars in the court. As the Moghul empire moved to its decline the local chieftains asserted themselves. As a result in the year 1701 AD Mian Yar Mohmed was invested with the title "Khuda Yar

Khan " and was made governor of the Sindh by decree of Moghul court. His capital was declared as Khudabad. The rulers of Bakhar and Thatta were powerless to challenge him. In the battle with Shah Inayat, the Kalhoras collaborated with then rulers and were rewarded with Jagir of Dubba. As usual during those times, Mohmed Yar Khan had to spend considerable time and energy of first 7 years to quell numerous uprisings in order to consolidate his hold over the territory and only during the last years of his life he could devote to bring law and order in his dominion. He died in 1718 AD and Mian Noor Mohmed succeeded him. He had also to quell uprisings in the initial period of his reign. In the year 1740 AD Nadir Shah attacked Sindh. Noor Mohmed fled to Umerkot and ordered scorch earth policy to be adopted so that Nadir Shah would get nothing but barren land mass. Nadir Shah was informed of this conspiracy and he acted swiftly to prevent it. Ultimately Noor Mohmed had to buy peace by giving him one crore rupees in cash apart from valuable jewellery and promise of paying a tribute of Rupees 20 lakhs per year. It is said that the granary was so full that Nadir Shah's army of 1 lakh soldiers were fed sumptuously for 15 days then also there was no shortage of food grains.

Besides plundering the Sindh of its wealth Nadir Shah caused Sindh incalculable harm by dividing Sindh into three parts. Sibi and Kutch were given to rulers of Kalat, Shikarpur area was gifted to Sadiq Mohmed Khan Daudpota, and the remaining parts of Sindh were only to remain with Noor Mohmed Khan Kalhora. This ensured that Sindh would remain rife with internal squabbles which would ensure to sap all its strength and render it a complete a weak state. Noor Mohmed's one son was to accompany Nadir Shah to stay in court virtually as hostage but his other three sons were also ultimately were brought up in the court of Nadir Shah.

After the death of Nadir Shah, Ahmed Shah Abdali again invaded Sindh and ensured that Noor Mohmed would continue to pay tribute to him as was being done during the time of Nadir Shah.

One interesting incident which merits to be mentioned here is about Diwan Gidumal. It is said that Mian Noor Mohmed sent Diwan Gidumal to Ahmed Shah Abdali to negotiate a peace deal. Along with some gifts Diwan Gidumal took two bags full with him. When he presented those two bags before Ahmed Shah Abdali he said, "This is the most precious gift that I can venture to offer. These contain the soil of Sindh in which the remains of our ancestors are mixed." On receiving the soil of Sindh Ahmed Shah Abdali took the hint and negotiated a peaceful settlement without resorting to arms.

Mian Noor Mohmed made a last will and testament for his successors which is quite significant. It would not be out of place to reproduce one part of his will, which states, "Abandonment of politics results in the state being weak. It is necessary to look at all the matters with a view of justice and fairness.....during peace be careful about strife and during strife keep desire for peace in your heart. Your welfare consists only in love and affection. It behoves you to consider every thing of advantage and consider everything pious. Always treat human beings with humanness." Mian Noor Mohmed died in the year 1755 AD.

After the death of Mian Noor Mohmed, Mian Mohmed Muradyab Khan ruled for three years. During his rule he could not enforce his will as there were numerous uprisings he had to contend with. He dealt with them with utmost cruelty and he was imprisoned. He was succeeded by Mian Ghulam Shah Kalhora who ruled from 1757 - 1772 AD.

About birth of Ghulam Shah there is a folk tradition which will be interesting to relate here. It is said that one lady named Gilan came and paid her respects to Shah Abdul Latif and sang before him. He was impressed by her and blessed her. She requested that as she was a professional singer she wanted to quit that profession which was not looked upon favourably in those times. He blessed her saying, "Gilan will produce a flower."

It is said that Mian Noor Mohmed married her and Mian Ghulam Shah was born. That way the blessings of Shah Abdul Latif proved to be prophetic.

Mian Ghulam Shah built a new city called Mohmedabad. He subdued hostile courtiers and chieftains but he could not obtain the necessary firman of recognition from ruler of Afghanistan. Initially that also added to his woes. He led an expedition to Kutch, as no side could win a decisive battle the matter was resolved when the ruler of Kutch gave the hand of a girl from royal family to Mian Ghulam Mohmed in marriage thus converting confrontation into an alliance.

Britishers established their office in Sindh at first instance in the year 1613 AD which continued till 1662 AD. Once again they started the activities of East India Company in the year 1758 represented by one Mr. Robert Simpson. When Ghulam Shah wanted help from the British their attitude was not helpful. At the instance of Ghulam Shah one of his courtier Gulabrai started putting impediments in the way of the British trade, actually Mian Ghulam Shah Kalhora wanted that British should wind up their operations in Sindh as he did not find them loyal enough.

During his reign the foundation for building of Hyderabad city was laid. This is described by Mr. Behroomal Meherchand as under :



“Hyderabad was once known as Nerunkot. Which was built by a Hindu king Nerun. This city was destroyed during the Arab invasion of Sindh. Mian Ghulam Shah Kalhora decided to built the new city at the same site and wanted to make it as his capital. He gave necessary funds – said to be two full boats of money- to Diwan Gidumal with the instructions to proceed with the work of construction. For workers one village (Tando) was created which latter on was known after his name as Gidu’s Tando. He built two forts, one was kutchha structure, another a pucca fort. This work was completed in 1768 AD and capital was shifted there. Thus started the development and increase in the population of Hyderabad.”

During the rule of Ghulam Mohmed commerce and trade prospered. According to his times he was efficient and just ruler who inspite of frequent uprisings and constant local wars managed good governance of state. He was much married man the exact number of his marriages can not be ascertained but his two sons Mian Sarfaraz Khan and Mian Mohmed Khan succeeded him. Mian Mohmed Khan ruled only for a few days though!

Mian Sarfaraz Khan ruled from 1772 to 1776 AD. In this period the decline of Kalhora dynasty is said to have started. As usual court conspiracies were rife in the court of Mian Sarfaraz Khan. In one of the conspiracies hatched, Raja Lekha succeeded in poisoning the mind of king against a prominent Baloch chieftian Behram Khan. Though Gidumal had already cautioned against such a move, but the ruler was swayed against Behram Khan. As Behram Khan was entering the court along with his sons they were assassinated. This infuriated all the Baloch clans. Actually Baloch chiefs were important support base of Kalhora rulers. Due to this unjust massacre of their respected leader they attacked the capital city of Khudabad and eventually even

Hyderabad. His courtiers deserted him as rats abandon the sinking ship. They joined the winning side of Baloch clans and tried to ingratiate themselves with their chief Mir Fateh Ali Khan.

Mian Sarfaraz Khan was deposed and Mian Mohmed Khan was made a titular head. Raja Lekha imprisoned him in one deserted island and the news of the same was kept secret. In the process his brother Ghulam Nabi was declared as a ruler in 1776 AD. At last when he was war weary and wanted to sue for peace with Baloch chiefs he was murdered by Raja Lekha.

It is said that Mian Sarfaraz Khan was of scholarly bent of mind . During his reign many poets came to Sindh, but his being swayed away by courtiers in the conspiracies and the killing of Baloch chief Behram Khan, proved to be his undoing.

This period will be known in the history of the Sindh not for any achievements of political ,financial or other civilisational magnificance but emergence of three major poets of Sindhi literature, who defined the genius of Sindhi people and invested it a unique value structure which has lighted the path of Sindhi people for centuries and hopefully will continue to do in the future centuries also - a path of unity in every particle of nature - a path of peace and brotherhood and not that of division and hatred. AND THESE THREE POETS WERE SHAH, SACHAL AND SAMI, the latter being even the part of Talpur dynasty. They have changed the Sindhi ethos for ever. (A detailed chapter will follow).

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**Talpur Dynasty**  
**1783 AD - 1843 AD**

**I**t would be erroneous to consider Talpurs as aliens to Sindh. In fact since the centuries the extreme winter rendered the parts of Balochistan inhospitable. The Baloch clans would come towards south in the northern part of Sindh which would be tolerable from climatic point of view and offer them sufficient food. As they come from rugged mountainous region they are strong and well built. In addition they are fearless and brave. They constituted the back bone of many an army of the kings of Sindh from the ancient times. During the reign of Kalhora rulers they constituted an important arm of their rule. By killing their respected chief Behram Khan, Kalhoras lost their loyalty and the kingdom.

Talpurs were an important branch of Baloch tribe. It contained various sub clans also. Mir Behram Khan was killed along with his son Mir Subedar Khan. Mir Subedar had four sons named Mir Fateh Ali Khan, Mir Karam Ali Khan, Mir Ghulam Ali Khan and Mir Murad Ali Khan. Mir Fateh Ali Khan wrested the power from the last of Kalhora king thus earned the title 'Conquerer of Sindh' by local court

bards. He divided Sindh into seven administrative parts. Four parts he kept for himself and his three brothers, two parts went to his associate Mir Sohrab and one part went to Mir Thahar Khan. He had Hyderabad as his capital whereas Mir Sohrab had Khairpur and Thahar Khan had Mirpur Khas as his capital. Though all the Mirs were independent in a way but before any enemy they presented a united front.

In Hyderabad Mirs used to rule with consensus with each other therefore it referred to as 'Chouyari' (Foursome). They retook the possession of Karachi port from the ruler of Kalat and Shikarpur from the Afghan kings, Umerkot from Jodhpur king, Lakhpat from king of Bhuj and made them integral part of the Sindh state. They had a see saw relationship with Afghan kings, whenever Afghan kingdom became weak they refused to accept their suzerainty but in case any powerful king threatened to attack Sindh they would pay him a tribute and accept his superiority. Mir Fateh Ali Khan ruled for 18 years and died in the year 1802 AD. Thereafter his brother Mir Ghulam Ali Khan wielded the reigns of power. Due to some misunderstanding he had to fight with Mir Thahar Khan. When he was injured in the battle he was nursed to health and again restored to throne. In this way internal strife was not allowed to escalate.

British had established their commercial offices in Sindh during the regime of Kalhora Kings. Due to objections from the Afghan king, Sindh did not permit British to continue their commercial activities, thus they were interrupted again till 1803. Till that time most of India came under British domination and they could not but resist the temptation of letting alone such a rich province. Their mechanizations were afoot to grab Sindh. They continued their pacts of multiple nature with Mirs they set one set of princes against others,

they cultivated significant sections of ruling elite in their favour, all the while assuring Mirs that the pacts were necessitated to save their sovereignty over Sindh – the pacts being between two equal partners.

On the other hand they nudged Maharaja Ranjit Singh the ruler of Punjab to keep a stern eye on the rulers of Sindh, to keep them in check. All this resulted in Mirs asking for protection from British against the designs of Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Punjab. They willingly obliged them and gleefully coveted the province of Sindh and make their sway over entire India complete and absolute.

Shah Shuja Al Malik took refuge in Shikarpur due to uncertainty in Afghanistan unleashed by internal strife. Mirs avoided to be embroiled in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and cold shouldered Shah Shuja Al Malik and did not give him any military support. This was in keeping with the designs of the British who demanded permission from Mirs for their armies to pass through Sindh to invade Kabul and Kandhar. Mirs were coaxed into giving that permission as there was no any other alternative. Thus Sindh was completely exposed to British army. They became familiar with all the roads and routes traversing entire length and breadth of Sindh. They now knew how to navigate river Sindhu. In this situation the enslavement of Sindh was only a matter of short time. Without any provocation and in violation of all the treaties and pacts Sindh was attacked. As stated earlier the seeds of dissensions within the ruling family and elite were sown and it was ripe time for the Britishers to take advantage of the divisions and dissensions. During the battle of Miani Baloch, forces fought heroically but lost the battle. On the second day Mirs sought audience with Charles Napier. They were graciously granted the same only to be treacherously imprisoned. This opened the way for British

troops to March to Hyderabad and indulge in the orgy of loot of Royal treasure and that of affluent sections of population.

Mir Subedar who had all along supported British, next day came to court to welcome British General with the hope that he would be declared ruler of Sindh, but to his dismay he was also imprisoned. Thus British fulfilled their promise of making him ruler of Sindh!

Imprisoned Mirs were sent initially to Bombay and latter to Calcutta. A mock trial was held and the judgement came along the expected lines. All went according to British plans.

During this entire episode one instance stands out of utmost courage and belief in the concept of freedom and paying the price for the same to attain the martyrdom which continues to inspire the future generations for centuries. No account of battle of Dubo can be complete without the mention of Hoshu Sheedi or Hosh Mohmed as he is popularly called. It is said, initially he was a slave of Mir Subedar and by sheer dint of his daring and bravery he went up the ladder and occupied the post of Commander in Talpur army. When some weak minded prince suggested a surrender to might of British he thundered, “Marsoon . . . Marsoon .. Sindh Na Desoon” (We shall die but we will not give up Sindh). His cry proved to be a cry in the wilderness at that time but today also it inspires the well wishers of Sindh. He added to the glorious list of martyrs of Sindh. His bravery was acknowledged even by enemy, they were so impressed by his bravery that he was accorded magnificent burial with the salutation of canon fire. Charles Napier remarks, “Even after his death his sword was held tight in his grip. Eye witnesses recorded that even after being beheaded his body continued to fight with his sword for quite some time.”

After the fall of Hyderabad other rulers of some parts of Sindh

were nominally allowed to retain the title of the ruler thus came into existence the state of Mirpur. Entire Sindh was annexed and made a part of Bombay presidency.

During the regime of Kalhoras and Mirs, Hindus continued to occupy important positions in their courts. The court language was Persian and many Hindus mastered it. It was common saying 'Pharsi Ghode Charsi' (If you learn Persian you will be able to ride a horse.) All financial matters of Kalhoras and Talpurs were in the hands of Hindus. To a question from Col. Pottinger, Mir Murad Ali Khan confessed, "we do not know any thing of accounts and book keeping – we are naïve in financial matters. We have entrusted them to Hindus who are quite capable in such matters and they provide us with whatever we desire and satisfy our demands."

During this period Hindus held many important political positions also. Diwan Gidumal was ambassador of Sindh Mirs, in the court of King of Kabul and Kandhar. His brother Jaspatri was accorded important ambassadorial post. Prataprai was munshi of Prince Subedar and Munshi Mushtaq Ram was advisor to Mir Ghulam Ali Khan. Diwan Gopaldas was representative in Kutch on behalf of Mir Karam Ali. Munshi Khushiram was advisor of Mir Murad Ali Khan. Diwan Choithram, Munshi Uttamchand, Kishindas, Kan Singh, Sujan Singh Moolram, Chandasingh and some others occupied important positions in the court of Mirs. Seth Naomal was appointed customs collector of Karachi. (The unfortunate incident involving Seth Naomal will be dealt with later). Following the footsteps of Akbar many Sindhi rulers married girls from Hindu households. Banking was entirely in the hands of Hindus. The promissory notes of Hindu Sindhis (called Multani Hundi) were accepted across many countries of central Asia and Russia. During Kalhora and Talpur period the Sindhi literature

specially Sindhi poetry attained unsurpassed heights. Shah Abdul Latif, Sachal Sarmast and Sami are great poets of this period. (About whom a detailed account shall be given later). Apart from the above mentioned trimurti the other significant poets of the period were, Siddiq Faqir, Murad Faqir, Hafiz, Fateha Faqir, Sayed Khair Shah, Khalifo Gul Mohmed, Diwan Dalpatrai, Ali Gohar Shah, Hamal Faqir Laghari and many others who enriched the suffistic tradition of Sindhi poetry.

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## **The life of Common people during Kalhora and Talpur period**

**M**r. H.T. Sorley and eminent British administrator and scholar has written an exhaustive Study on Shah Latif entitled, "Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit – His poetry-Life and Times" In this book he has given detailed account of his times and this chapter is culled from his book to reflect the life of a common man in Sindh during that period.

There does not appear to be any significant change in the life of a common man and as was found during British period. In Sindh no significant change has been observed even today. The life of Common man of Sindh continues to be in dire straits even today.

Mr. Sorley has relied on the documents of east India company with its reports and also account of many visitors to Sindh during that period. The account can be Summarsed thus:-

### **Commercial Activity :-**

The commerce used to be carried out between Multan and Thatta by water route on river Sindhu by boats and along the coast there were important trading centers for cotton in places like Bakhar, Rohiri, Darbelo, Gmbat, Kandiaro, Sehwan, Sunn, Nasserpur

and Thatta. Land routes traversed to Ahmedabad, Pali and Jaisalmer. The mode of transportation was camel caravan trains of more than 100 camels at a time. Rural commerce was encouraged by organizing fairs in memory of Pirs and Holy people, where the artisans from the surrounding areas would converge to sell their wares. Exports to Kabul, Kandhar, Iran and Central Asia was also a regular feature. Lari Port had the capacity to anchor the boats of about 300 Tonnes, After Laari Bunder Shah Bunder emerged as an important port of Import and Export. Eventually when Karachi was taken from the ruler of Kalat it emerged as one of the significant harbours in the entire subcontinent. At that time the population of Karachi was 13000 inhabitants and Hindus were in Majority among them.

The system of Tax collection at every port was responsibility of the government of the time. There were regular toll posts for that purpose and actual work of collection of taxes was assigned to Hindus. Some of them would make money and enrich themselves but would lead a modest life lest their affluence be found out by the representative of the ruler or any Aamir. It is rumored that even at that time there were many Hindus who could be counted among multi-millionaires (having cash of about 25 to 30 Lakhs) and would advance money even to British agents of East India company on interest. The names of Bambomal and Navaldas are mentioned in the records of East India company who had extended financial 'help' to the company for their trading operations in Sindh and Multan. Mostly Hindu agents would advance money to local artisans and manufactures/ cultivators and purchase their goods/ crops in advance for the ensuing season and would make huge profit in the bargain. They even used to supervise the actual production according to the specifications required by East India company. All this resulted in a boost to rural economy and

cottage Industries. In this period impressive quantity of Gold was imported in Sindh. In All this the local administrators also had a finger in the pie. In this period the important exports from Sindh were Cloth, Leatherwork, Saltpetre, cloth and Indigo.

The agent of East India company notes that cloth manufactured in Rohiri and Sukkar was of fine quality. He observes that weavers of Sindh are rather meek than in other parts of India. At one time about 80,000 people were engaged in making lungis. One traveler of that time Manucci observes, "Thatta abounds in very fine white cloth also in coarse cloth and also printed cloth of two kinds. It has much leather which is exported to Arabia and Persia." another person Mr. Withington observes, "concerning Sindh, no city is by general report of greater trade in Indies than Thatta...."

Trade of saltpetre was of great importance in those days as that was used as ingredient for making Gun powder and it was of strategic importance during those days when local wars were perpetual order of the day. The Kalhora rulers used to keep keen eye on this trade. The East India company enjoyed the monopoly in Sindh of this merchandise.

Indigo was also being exported from Sindh. Important centers of this trade were Boobak, Sehwan and Sunn. In the long run Sindhi Indigo could not compete with Indigo from Gujrat with the result this trade steadily declined.

Leather work in Sindh was of high quality and it was decorated by artisans of Sindh with attractive motifs and colours. During that time Sindh abounded in animal wealth therefore there was no dearth of good leather. The saddles of horses and containers for durable food stuff was Sindhi speciality. It is said that one could keep 320 pounds

of ghee in leather bag for more than a year without the fear of it being spoilt. One traveler Mr. Linschoten has observed, "The people of Sindh make excellent and fair leather and cunningly, wrought with silk of all colours, both flowers and personages. This leather in India is much esteemed to lay up on beds and tables instead of carpets." Another has observed, "the leather from Sindh is durable and as soft as that of Europe."

Fishing also occupied an important place in the commerce of Sindh during those times. The people living all along the banks of the river Indus would indulge in fishing as also people of coastal areas. The oil extracted out of fish was used for the shipbuilding purpose. The dried fish used to be exported to other far flung countries. European traveler Hamilton remarks that some fish was so big as to weigh more than 20 pounds. In Thatta one could observe freshly captured fish still gasping for breath. Apart, water birds were also hunted. Along with the fish they formed the staple diet of Sindhi people. Government imposed tax on the fishing activity also.

There were many camels in Sindh and from the camel hair many useful things were made. This used to augment the income of camel owners. As Sindh abounded in animal wealth the production of Ghee was also in abundance and its trade was also significant. The representative of East India company has observed, "People of Sindh are hard working as farmers as well as artisans of cottage Industry. The traders of Sindh are intelligent and industrious. Though government taxes are excessive but they enjoy comparative security. They are law abiding. Life line of Sindh is Sindhu therefore excess or scanty rainfall does not effect the crops of Sindh, with the result Sindh is immune to famine. Although due to change in the

course of flow of the river, Sindh often encounters flood but at all the time Sindhi farmer manages to produce to feed its population. Even with small effort one is able to eek out his livelihood. Those Europeans who were fired with evangelist zeal to reform 'barbarian' Indians have portrayed a horrible picture of India, but if the conditions in India are compared with the Pre Industrial revolution in Europe then there is no significant difference discernable between conditions prevailing in India and Pre Industrial Europe.

**Dwellings :-**

Ordinary people used to live in straw thatched huts along the banks of the river or water courses. Business people and small land owners would erect mud houses to live in, while rich people and aristocrats would build palatial houses with marble flooring and fountains of various sizes, adorned with wind towers, for themselves at great cost which would have big gardens and orchids along the periphery. A village of mud houses and thatched huts would invariably spring up around the Haveli of an Aristocrat/big Lanlord to render them services. In a village there would be a single lane - bazaar where Sindhi Hindus would have their shops and they would also reside in the same place. Some times the houses would be erected out of wood and mixture of gypsum.

The condition in the big cities was different. Thatta was a city of great importance. At that time the total population was reckoned to be about 10,00000 (One Million). Some place it to be 12,00000. Hindus were believed to be 25% of the population. Other important cities were Shikarpur, Hyderabad, Khairpur, Karachi, Sehwan and Mirpur.

The cost of living and of essential things was quite low. A cow

would cost Rs.12/- and a camel any where between Rs. 25/- to 30/-. A goat would cost between Re.1 to Rs. 4/- while chicken could be purchased 10 for one rupee. Similarly the wages of the people were also low. A worker would be paid a wage of fourteenth part of a rupee for a days' work, an artisan would be paid rupees three a month and domestic servant could be hired for the wage of rupees two a month.

Diseases were rampant and many would die due to various diseases. In particular the plague would wipe out the vast areas altogether. There were no health services to speak of for the common people during those days. In initial period East India Company did employ some Hakims and Vaidyas to render medical services to their employees.

From the beginning, Sindhi people are simple minded, fond of entertainment, imbued with sense of humour and fond of luxury. As is wont the rich were interested in gambling drinking and womanizing. This trait proved to be a fatal flaw in Sindhi character for a long time to come. Ordinary Sindhis were fond of music which was provided at many Sufi shrines across the land and were fond of hearing stories from the professional story tellers which latter on developed as the form of art of Sindhi Bhagat .Often a Bhagat would combine the art of music, dance, story telling and acting on the religious and social occasions which would be attended by people from many villages of the area cutting across the social or religious divide.

Hindus and Muslims would participate in the religious festivals of each community. Two important Eids of Muslims and two festivals of Hindus - Diwali and Holi were celebrated by all with equal zeal and gusto. These occasions were also used by Hindu traders to indulge in public relations and create good will among the people who mattered among East India Company or any where else, by offering lavish gifts.

This would mitigate to some extent the bitterness of the company employees at not being adequately compensated. The celebrations would go on for almost a week. Mr. Hamilton describes the festival of Holi thus:- “People awaited new moon in the month of February and this ushered in festival of Holi. Among all other festivals this stands out as one when everyone seems to have taken leave of his senses. People of all ages and both the sexes streamed into streets with drums and trumpets, they smeared red powder (Ghulal) on each other with abandon and ladies would distribute sweets to all and sundry. They would halt outside the home of some respectable friend or relative, drag him out and smear him with powder and colour and make him to join them for another point. Sometimes they would coerce some rich person to part with a silver coin and on his refusal to do so they would fling eccetra and urine at his house as a punishment. This continued till evening. The women folk were decked in jewellery. Some had their arms covered with ivory ornaments.”

The author of “Tarikh Tahiri” mentions that there used to be a fair on the first Friday of the month at Makli Hills which would be attended by people from both the communities.

Elite were fond of hunting. Mirs had their private estates as hunting grounds. Fisher folk would capture birds in their traditional manner. Many Sindhis were interested in falconry. There are many words for a falcon in Sindhi language. Camel and horse races were also a common practice. They would enjoy kite flying, cock fights and dog fights.

The rulers of Sindh would gift vast tracts of land as Jagir to their courtiers and retainers. Many Holy Pirs also received large Jagirs. The land was mostly in the hands of Muslims, but Mr Sorley records one instance where even a Hindu chieftian was gifted a Jagir. It is fact that

there were no land tillers among Sindhi Hindus and the land was tilled exclusively by Muslims Haris. Sayeds enjoyed a high reputation and no one could dare to oppose them. They used to extract gifts and taxes from their followers in various ways. In a way Sindh was fettered in tradition of obeisance to Pirs. This was almost institutionalized and strangely continues even today. Sindh can boast about more than one lakh Holy graveyards or Dargahs indeed! They were answer to all the demands and freedom from ailments – miseries! Any one wanting a son would go to a Pir and any one wanting to take revenge from someone would also approach his Pir for fulfillment of his mission, not to speak of cure from ailments and solutions to difficulties. This phenomenon did not admit any distinction of religion. Hindus as well as Muslims were afflicted with this. Same holy person would have a different name for Hindu devotees and Muslim name would be assigned to him by Muslim devotees.

G.M. Sayed in his Book “Sindhu - a - ji- Sanjhan- Part 2” observes that many Muslim seekers of the truth and darweshis would accompany Hindu, Jain and Buddhist, medicants like Yogis, Sanyasis, Advoot Nagas, and would visit their holy shrines and live like them, sing their holy hymns and Bhajans, learn the intricacies of spiritual journey from them.... The rulers also as respect for Hindu sentiments abjured the consumption of Cow meat..... Muslims owned up many Hindu darweshis by giving them Muslim names, such as Jinda Pir was given a name of Khaja Khizir, Udherolal as Sheikh Tahir and fairs were held in their honour. They started the practice of Shiva worship at many Muslim Dargahs such as at Ghaji Shah, Laki water springs, Amirpur (Jhumpir) and Mangho Pir. The Fakirs of Kalandar Shahbaz would shave their heads and beard in Hindu tradition. They introduced a Hindu form of Aarti every evening and had bells and



Drums (Naghara) were installed to sing in chorus what is called 'Dhamal' and would dance in ecstasy. The marriage rituals and practices like carrying a knife and wearing a "Moro", taking out procession of the bridegroom on the horseback; all Hindu customs are followed by Sindhi Muslims...."

Due to all these factors the Muslims of Sindh were not considered pure enough by orthodox and fundamentalist Islamists and the same was the case with Hindus whom the rigid Hindu orthodox of Indo-gangetic valley did not consider as pure Hindus. This synthesis is beyond the comprehension of the populace steeped into the quagmire of traditions and narrow outlook of the religion. The juxtaposition of two contradictory or opposites ultimately leads to a new and advanced condition of synthesis and thus the loss of purity signifies advance is the view not shared by many orthodox elements.

This situation was compounded by another factor. While the rulers of Sindh were Shias the majority of Muslim population of Sindhi Muslims followed Suni tenets. This fact did not lead to a great polarisation and divide as is found elsewhere. No significant wedge was created on account of this fact which has been often a source of great struggle elsewhere in the muslim world.

During this period the administration of Justice for the Muslim population was assigned to Qazi, Muftis and Mullahs and the disputes among the Hindus was assigned to their Panchayats. Thus Qazi, Mullah, Muftis were very powerful and by aligning themselves with the rulers always were on a look out for any opportunity to gain more power, which often bordered on being tyrannical. This attitude was evident in the martyrdom of Shah Inayat and earlier when avaricious Qazis held the sway. Many poor Hindus also fell victim to such a

bigoted mentality. Ironically 'punishment' for any Hindu for even a petty crime would be forcible conversion to Islam. Though Holy Quran strictly prohibits such misuse of authority. Often this misguided proselytisation zeal would be carried to ridiculous and absurd lengths.

Mr. Mohmed Ibrahim Joyo in his Book on Shah, Sachal and Sami gives some accounts of such events which would not be out of place to cite here.

'The condition of the minorities was such that only if a Hindu uttered a word 'Raso' (Rope) it would be presumed that he has uttered the word ' Rassol ' (Prophet) and would be converted to Islam even against his wish. One Hindu named Balchand was addressed as Vaniya and he said he is not Vaniya (Bania- a trader) this was sufficient reason to convert him to Muslim faith and again an example could be cited that a lady during an argument told another that we are not faithless (liar) that was sufficient reason to convert her to Islam inspite of all her protests.'

It is said that Diwan Gidumal who served with distinction Kalhoras and Mirs in important positions was also murdered. This could be attributed to the court conspiracies which were rife at that time, but one of the guess advanced is that some Mir coveted a girl of his family and Gidumal firmly refused to yield on that matter which caused his death.

Another instance which was to have far reaching effect on the future history of Sindh was that of one Mr.Hotchand Bhojwani. He was appointed as customs collector at Karachi port by successive rulers. At some time one of the Mirs was displeased with him and as a punishment he was forcibly converted. He felt humiliated and in anger and pique he proceeded to Kutch where he urged the British authorities

stationed there to invade Sindh and offered all the help and all his contacts would be placed at their disposal. His son Naunmal was to play an important part during British invasion as a valuable ally of the British forces. The diary maintained by Naunmal has been published by Sindhi Adbi Board after the partition of the country.

All this shows short sighted bigoted policy of Muslim clergy which wrought grave tragedy for Sindh.

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**M**r. Mohmed Ibrahim Joyo a great scholar has written a book with above caption and it would be quite appropriate to quote at length from that book to have the clear idea about the historical forces at work during Kalhora and Talpur period.

He writes, “the period of Kalhora rulers and Mirs was of grave crisis, during that period the national consciousness was developing among the Sindhi people at that very time they were face to face with grave crisis. It was the period when Sindhi people started to realize their collective identity and the foundation for Sindhi nationhood were being laid and the ground work was being prepared for the big breakthrough in future. The consciousness about collective identity arose as a bountiful cloud would arise at the horizon and spread its existence far and wide. The poetry of Shah Abdul Latif is expression of that sentiment of the importance of Sindhi identity, its future and its answers to fundamental questions staring the Sindhi people during that period and beyond!”

“Religion, State and civilisation are three basic institutions devised

by mankind as protection against basic insecurities- the fear of unknown-the fear of external elements and fear of life itself due to starvation including sexual starvation. To address these fears and insecurities he has devised an institution which is called society. From fear of unknown is created religion as a protection, from fear of another person is created state and to tame his wild impulses the civilization with a value structure is created. Faith and belief is foundation of religion, strength is foundation of State and both are dependent on each other for their sustainance and survival at the same time they compete with each other for supremacy. Somehow this alliance survives the power struggle as both need each other. Sometimes State becomes tool of the religion and some time religion becomes tool of State but both have a strong stanglehold over the civilisation and culture and are impediments in its growth independently- it has to be directed by the axis of above two agencies. Compared to religion ultimately the supremacy of the State prevails. Often this axis has brought about the downfall of many civilisations and arrest of progressive cultural movements. As against this situation it is also a proven fact that when both these institutions stagnate because they rely on brutal faith and bring about their down fall at that time the civilisation and culture asserts itself and becomes a driving force in the society for its very nature is dynamic.”

“It is not the destruction of the old, that power relations which require strength but creation of new value structure that releases tremendous energy which gives rise to great results. The sense of unparalleled beauty and keen sense of beauty and a feeling of sacrificing all at the altar of the ultimate comes to the fore in such situations. It is in the period of crisis that the serious questions about the identity and future are posed. It is during this period that the ground is laid

for the future of the nation which would raise the important and necessary questions about its existence and identity.”

“Shah, Sachal and Sami are great persons of the Sindhi peoples. They are the product of grave crisis of their period and such people have their hand on the pulse of the time- they are in sync with their era- they experience the feelings of the population deep in their heart and give an immortal expression to them- thus they become timeless and their message works as beacon for the ages to come. Shah , Sachal, and Sami were unique healers of their people. They realized the weakness of Sindhi society, they held mirror to them and made them aware of the crisis they were passing through and showed them the way through the same. They wanted to save Sindhi people from the divisive and sectarian feelings and emphasised the feelings of unity and peace. They worked to spread their ideals untiringly and wanted to see a society of harmony, peace and tolerance and they established their identity with the their time and became timeless.”

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## **Sindhi Hindus**

(Based on the Book By Behroomal Meharchand  
“History of Sindhi Hindus”)

**D**uring the rule of Akbar many Hindus found employment in the royal court. This practice was followed down to the provincial level also. Many Hindus studied court language Persian and acquired considerable proficiency in that language. They adopted the current court attire also, thus any evident difference between a Hindu and Muslim courtier became practically non-existent. During his rule Adam Shah Kalhoro appointed Diwan Gidumal in his court who enjoyed the positions of confidence and great importance.

During the days of Mian Noor Mohamed Kalhoro (Son of Adam Shah Kalhoro) a brave and daring swordsman Diwan Aadomal from Multan was employed in his army. Many Hindus followed him thereafter. There were Sindhi Hindus earlier also in Sindh who were mostly employed in trade and commerce and every village – town had at least one Hindu shopkeeper to cater to daily needs of population. Hindus ruled in Thar and Kutch and even in south ‘Laar’ many Hindus continued the tradition of overseas trade. Shah Abdul Latif has one Sur ‘Saamoondi’ assigned to them where he speaks about overseas

trader (Wanjaro).

In Arabic language ‘Amil’ means a worker. It appears that during the advent of Arabs those from indigenous population who offered their service were referred to as Amils. With the passage of time the word acquired the meaning of a local person working for the rulers. Thus all big/ petty workers of local origins were called Amils. This expression is not related to common ancestry in any way. In the same way the court of the ruler in Arabic is called Diwan. Thus all who were attached to the court were also called Diwans. Thus two sections emerged even in the service class of the rulers- Amils and Diwans. The other population engaged in the commerce and trade was referred to by them as Bhaibands and Muslims would refer collectively to them as “Vaniya” (Bania). With advent of communal strife and the divide the word “Vaniya” was invested with connotations of humiliation and hatred and the Hindus retaliated in the same vein by referring to Muslims as “Jat” (Ignorant.- uncouth). The post of Munshi was also a coveted one. Munshi Waliram Advani was chief advisor of Mir Nassir Khan. Munshi Awatrai Malkani managed the finances of Mir Subedar Khan.

The capital of Sindh was changed number of times. Noor Mohamed Kalhoro established Khudabad as capital which is near Dadu which was often raided by Baloch tribes for the purpose of loot. Many Hindus migrated there for the purpose of service and business. Again they followed to new capital Allahabad (not to be confused with Allahabad of U.P.) which was also abandoned, ultimately Diwan Gidumal was given two boat loads laden with money and assigned the work of building the capital near the old Nerron Kot and it was called Hyderabad which remained the capital of Sindh till British took over from Mirs.

The place where Diwan Gidumal landed and remained till the construction of inner and outer forts of Hyderabad, is known as Gidoo Bunder.

In newly constructed Hyderabad city Amils occupied the space between Chodki Bazar to Sri Ghat and till the vicinity of Juman Shah Shrine. A market was also erected which was in the straight line in the city. After, Mir Fateh Ali Khan entered the city, Diwan Gidumal was last to settle and erected a house for himself near Shrine of Juman Shah. That street latter came to be known as Gidwani lane. Thus there were many lanes named after the surnames of important people who were assigned lands there. In every lane there was a Gurdwara and its priest. Thus the population of Hyderabad kept on increasing.

#### **Shikarpur :-**

The modern Shikarpur came into existence in 1617. Prior to that it was a game sanctuary of Daoodpota Zamindars. For some time Shikarpur was under the rule of Afghan kings. It rapidly developed into an important trading center. Many Afghan Caravans would traverse this city for trading purpose. This attracted the population of surrounding areas and many Hindus flocked there to sieze the opportunity of emerging new markets.

In the history of Sindh, the city of Aror occupies important place but now it lies in ruins near present day Rohri at the distance of about five miles (Two and half Kos). This ancient city has witnessed so many important events and vagaries of nature like floods and earthquakes. The people of this area have been displaced number of times but they have endured it all with fortitude and have not abandoned their identity. They call themselves as Arorwanshi and some of them settled across the bank near Bhawalpur and as soon as they found opportunity

they came back to Sindh. Most of the Hindu population of Sindhis who settled in Shikarpur are Arorwanshis. This is evident from their surnames. Normally their surnames end with 'ja' which means 'children of'. There are 457 such surnames. To cite a few such as Jadeja, Bathija, Talreja, Jasooja, Kukreja, Makhija, Hinduja Etc. Often 'j' would change into 'Ch' just as Valicha, some surnames such as Bajaj, Nagdev, Sachdev also are indicative of Arorwanshi lineage.

Originally the Bhatias are descendents of Bhatti Rajputs of Jaisalmer. When Allaudin Khilji destroyed Jaisalmer they came to Sindh during the rule of Samma rulers as they were also of common ancestry i.e. being Yadavanshis, who trace their lineage to Lord Krishna. Bhatias came to Sindh via Rohri and some went to Kathiawar, from where they have spread all over India. They are worshipers of 'Srinathji' a Krishna temple situated near Udaipur. In order to maintain their cohesiveness Bhatia conferences on All India level are organized. They are in business as well as in services. Vallabhdas Parumal Gajria reached the position of deputy secretary. There are 84 surnames of Bhatias, such as , Gajaria, Kajaria, Udeshi, Bella, Jiya, Parmal, Jawa, Chchaiya, Soni, Gandhi, Gokul Gandhi, and some prefix 'Rai' before their surname. Jawahri Bhatias used to conduct the business of pearls with Mirs hence were known as Jawahari Bhatias.

At present the Sahta community in Sindh originally hails from Marwar region of Rajasthan. Once there was a severe flood in Marwar so many people from there migrated to Sindh. Initially they came to Sahiti area of Sindh from there they came to Karachi for better prospects. Some of them are found in Sukkur, Larkana, and Hyderabad also. Similarly Chaprus are from the mountaineous areas surrounding Karachi. Mountains spread from Karachi to Lasbella and from Malir to Thana Bolakhan are original abode of Chaprus. Those coming

from Bolakhan are called 'Thanai' and from Chak are called 'Chakai'. Similarly those who have come from Ghari Taluka of Mirpur Sakro are called 'Gharai.' At the same time all put together are known as Chaprus.

The tradition of going to other countries for trade and commerce is as old as 'Mohen Jo Daro' itself. During the time when Mirs ruled Sindh, some enterprising Sindhi took embroidered cloth to sell in overseas market. Fascinated by intricate designs the ladies would often ask them, "from where do you bring such beautiful work?" And they would reply it is 'Sindh Work' thus they were known all across the world as Sindh Workis and have kept the tradition of overseas trade alive till today with greater vigour. Sindh Workis continued to plough back their income into charitable and constructive work in Sindh- and they are doing it with great dedication in India today also which has proved to be exemplary for others also.

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**British period In Sindh  
1843 AD – 1947 AD**

**W**hen Charles Nappier conquered Sindh he sent a telegram to East India Company in latin which said, "PACAVI". This means I have sined. This expression lends itself to two different interpretations. It may be a common declaration of conquest of Sindh or it may also refer to the immoral and unjustified way in which the war was thrust on the Sindhi rulers against all the promises and treaties of friendship not withstanding. The brutal fact remains that History has never sought any justification from the conqueror. So great is our fixation with success!. Britishers wanted Sindh for their benefit and they obtained it. That is what all matters.

The advent of British regime brought many far reaching changes in Sindh. The magnitude of the changes was such as never witnessed at any time during the change of regime. The main reason was the changes sweeping across the Europe and the industrial revolution of which England was the epicenter. The industrial revolution ushered in revolution in every sphere of life. For thousands of years the economic, social and productive tools were dependent of distribution

of land. Industrial revolution changed all that. The machine dispensed with the necessity of survival on the land and an individual could earn his living while working on the machine, this created a working class and saw emergence of Middle class. This factor was to play an important role in the history of mankind. At that time India did not see emergence of Industry and labour class but emergence of the middle class and its interaction with the liberal ideas of contemporary British liberal middle class gave rise to many social reform movements in India. In the vanguard of this movement were Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Keshab Chander Sen and a band of dedicated workers. Keshab Chander sen established Brahma Samaj as vehicle for social change. At the time of British conquest of Sindh these movements had made significant inroads in other places and the threads of the social reform movement were quickly picked up in Sindh also, as some of Sindhi youth went to Calcutta for higher education and came back imbued with great ideals of the reform movement. This movement focused on injustice against women in Indian society and sex discrimination. In Sindh in the vanguard of reform movement was Sadhu Hiranand Navalrai.

During the times of Mir rulers the education was imparted through traditional teachers "Aakhunds", in villages the same work was performed by local Mullah or Maulvi of the mosque and the teaching was restricted to Holy Quran only. The court language was Persian which was confined only to elite, as masses did not have anything to do with affairs of the court. At the advent of British rule it was announced that all the administration would be conducted in Sindhi language. For that purpose it was necessary to standardize the script for the Sindhi language and start Sindhi educational institutions.

First School was opened in Karachi by collector Mr. Brady.

Subsequently this came to be known as Mission School. This School had two branches, one in the old town near Bolton market and another at Ranchor lines. Both the schools were only upto middle level. High school was situated at Lawrence Road. After passing from middle school the students would go to high school. As the city grew, many private schools also came into existence. The one started by Tarachand Kundanmal Shahani was 'New high school', which during the non co-operation movement of 1921 was changed to Mahavidhyalaya. This school saw the association of many renowned Sindhi writers of the time such as Jethmal Parsram, Lalchand Amardinomal Jagtiani, Assanand Mamtora and Jhamatmal Bhawnani. In 1926 Model school was established in New Chali. In 1936 a school named Wadhoomal Boolchand was started at Bunder Road extension. For girls an exclusive school Kanya Vidhyalaya and Indian girls schools were established. These were in addition to schools established by municipality in Karachi.

As was the case all over India the Muslims of Sindh also went into sulk at the advent of British and consequently due to anti British sentiment boycotted all the institutions which seemed to have any British connection and this included their attitude toward education also they shunned the modern education in great measure. After some time this alarmed the liberal leaders of the community who realized that this boycott of the modern education would prove to be fatal for Muslim community of Sindh. Consequently the president of the Sindh Mohammedan Association Mr. Hassan Ali Aakhoond established Muslim Madrasa near Bolton market, where the arrangement of lodging and boarding was also provided for the students.

Similarly in Hyderabad initially two schools were established. One was Government school another being Mission School. In the year

1888 Sadhu Hiranand established Union Academy. As stated earlier the efforts of sadhu Hiranand were not focused on education only very soon he inspired a band of idealist youth for the twin purpose of education and social reform. The foremost among the team included Navalrai Shaowkiram, Dayaram Gidumal and Koromal Chandanmal. Due to some differences another institution Nav Vidhyalaya came into existence in the year 1898. This had five branches in various parts of the city. Thus Hyderabad saw emergence of six schools in a short span and all proved to be very popular and successful.

In Sahiti region of Sindh no school was opened by government. All educational activities were voluntarily initiated. In fact that region could boast of number of quality schools unparalleled elsewhere in Sindh. In over all education this region ranked at second place only followed by Hyderabad. In the same way many schools were established in all parts of Sindh.

At that time no arrangements were made to conduct matriculation examinations in any part of Sindh and those handful who desired to appear for examination had to brave all sorts of difficulties to reach Bombay and appear for the examination. The efforts of Dayaram Gidumal to establish first college in Sindh succeeded in the year 1887 as Sindh Arts College. Subsequently this was named as Dayaram Jethmal College. This way in Hyderabad National College and in Shikarpur Chellasingh and Sitaldas College came into existence.

The students coming from the portals of high schools and colleges found ready employment in education sector, hospitals and other government offices and commercial establishment and this was the beginning of emergence of powerful middle class which unfortunately constituted mostly of Hindu community as Muslims were late and

rather reluctant to pursue the path of modern education. The Sindhi writers those who enriched Sindhi literature and were pioneer in prose writings in Sindhi language came largely from teaching fraternity. The outstanding figures in literature were Mirza Kalich Beg, Dayaram Gidumal, Koromal Chandanmal, Jethmal Parsram, Parmanand Mewaram, Lalachand Amardinomal. All contributed to growth of Sindhi literature in a large measure.

Education prompted appearance of News papers and Literary magazines. First Sindhi Paper was 'Sindh Sudhar'. In 1885 a mixture of Persian and a Sindhi paper 'Fawaidh al Akhbaar' was published. Along with 'Sindh Sudhar' another paper 'Sindhi Times' was also published and the responsibility for publications was shouldered by Sindh Sabha- a social reformation organization. Sadhu Hiranand was appointed as Editor and Nagendra Nath Gupta became joint editor of 'Sindhi Times'. 'Saraswati' magazine was also popular. All this led to process of urbanization and people from Hyderabad would go to Karachi for the employment sake. Cities also started growing so there was great movement in the population relocation. The casualty of this was break up of joint family system which was the social norm till then. 'Normally a man would go from Hyderabad and Karachi for employment and would complain that he does not relish outside food and persuade his parents to allow his wife to accompany him so that he could have luxury of home cooked food by his wife and with the passage of time even the daughter-in-law of the house would be reluctant to return to her in-laws after enjoying freedom from restrictions that joint family entailed. It was irony indeed that those who complained that they do not relish the food from outsiders, the very people employed servants from UP and other places to cook the



food once they were settled in Karachi' observed Behroomal Meherchand.

At the time of British conquest of Sindh population of Karachi was 13000. By 1947 it swelled to 4,00,000. Similarly population of all cities, Hyderabad, Sukkur, Larkana and other towns kept increasing.

As stated earlier the emergence of middle class mostly consisted of Hindus which had far reaching consequences in Muslim majority area. The majority of the population found itself denied of all the benefits that accrued to middle class, which mainly included financial and administrative clout. In this scenario another factor also manifested. During Muslim rule Sindhi Hindus did not hold any land. Traditionally Hindus conducted the business of banking they would advance money to land holders on interest against security of their land and gradually inability of the land owner to pay compound interest would result in slipping the land into Hindu hands. Hindu was never a tiller of land and Muslims would be hired to till the land. In the year 1947 Sindhi Hindus owned 30,00,000 acres of land whereas during Muslim period they did not own any significant portion of land as a rare exception. All these factors combined to vitiate the atmosphere of mutual tolerance and goodwill on which the edifice of Sindhi community was built during the past centuries and some Sindhi Muslims fell easy prey to anti Hindu communal propaganda unleashed by then Muslim league. This resulted in Sindh being first legislative assembly in the entire India which passed resolution supporting the demand of Muslim league for creation of Pakistan.

#### **Position of women in Sindh during British rule :**

As in rest of India in Sindh also the condition of women was beset with many obnoxious and abhorant practices. The women had to

remain in purdah, they had to cover themselves from head to toe and only a small part around the eye would be kept open. This applied to women of both the faiths Hindu as well as Muslims. Women would be married at a very tender age without taking into consideration the age of bridegroom and no consent of the woman was deemed necessary. The question of widow re-marriage did not arise! Women would be adorned with heavy covers of ivory along the arms stretching upto elbow. Nose would be pierced to hang a heavy nose ring often with heavy precious stones. The important thing was that they were denied education. Social reformers of Sindh raised their voice against all these practices. They advocated the equal status for women in society and at least humane attitude towards women. The scourge which continues till today with redoubled vigour is system of Dowry. All Social reformers have failed on this front.

When the doors of education were slowly opened for Sindhi women other ills waned and during freedom struggle many women came out and played a significant part. It is said that after Karachi congress of 1930 the inspiration provided by Mahatma Gandhi liberated many Sindhi women from self imposed inhibitions continuing since centuries. During civil disobedience movement ladies would also conduct drill and participate in processions and worked as volunteers. Thus women started breathing out side air. All India womens conference was held in Sindh twice one in 1934 another in 1940. Jethi Sipahimalani occupied the position of deputy speaker in Sindh assembly. But all this was confined to a small section but big segment of Sindhi women continued to suffer silently and continue to do so.

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## **Freedom Movement**

**W**hen British conquered Sindh they annexed it as a part of Bombay presidency thus the independent entity of Sindh was erased. The troublesome traveling modes rendered it a far off place. This gave rise to unnatural form of administration, as if administration by remote control. This act had a far reaching positive reaction also. The isolationist mentality that prevailed in Sindh gave place to interaction of Sindh with the rest of India and Sindh benefited from the liberal intellectual stream reforms, and political movements sweeping across the country Sindh soon joined the mainstream.

The movement for Independence for India encompassed diverse ideologies. Due to British education Indians came across the concepts of modern politics and value of democracy. Politics free from religion could not fail to appeal to many stalwarts of the movement. They wanted the same political system to be established in India also. They argued that if any institution is modern and advanced which is beneficial for the British population the same system should be established in India and British should help them to built such

institutions. They could not understand their double standards one for their own country and another for the country ruled by them. They considered Britain to be very just and fair nation and the double standards in governance were not acceptable to them. They were confident if the British people compelled the ruling elite they would be forced to adopt the same attitude towards India also. This feeling prompted some well intentioned Indians in collaboration with an Englishman, Dr. Hume to establish a forum called Indian National Congress in the year 1885. This organization was shortly prove to be a platform for the political rights for the Indian peoples and ultimately to lead the fight for independence of India. This chequered history is too long to detail here. Delegates from Sindh started attending Congress session from inception itself and their participation increased significantly with the passage of time.

Many Europeans studied Sanskrit, an ancient language of India, acquainted the world with rich past and glorious heritage of India. This created a feeling of pride among Hindus about their past and they became more confident. This yielded two fold result. On the one hand they were emboldened to do away with the ills of society which crept in due to tradition and gave rise to social reform movements, whereas others as a reaction to reform movement became more attached to traditional modes. The sense of pride in the past was inflated to such an extent that the Vedas were considered to be storehouse of all the wisdom in the world and only harking back to vedic times would ensure happiness for Indians and the entire world as that was considered to be golden period and the rest of the history was considered as a source of pollution. Adoption of Swastika as a symbol by Nazi Germany was considered and cited as proof enough of the Aryan superiority. Self confidence is good positive value but

arrogance is not. This subtle distinction was often blurred and this situation was used by some interests to further their sectarian agenda under the garb of Nationalism. This situation was compounded by Mahatma Gandhi who combined the Khilafat movement, a purely religious movement with the political movement of freedom from British and his oft repeated dream of Ram Rajya reinforced the confusion in political dialogue and brought about dangerous possibilities with itself. A heady mixture of religion and politics!

On the ground level due to centuries of Bhakti movement and propagation of Sufi thought had brought Hindu and Muslim masses together in their weal and woe and ensured the qualities of tolerance and cooperation. In spite of diverse faiths, practices, and languages India was considered as bouquet of flowers of various colours and hues and the diversity in the midst of unity or vice versa was accepted and celebrated by all. This had roots among the masses for centuries. This powerful fact also could not be denied.

Russian revolution in the second decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century also proved to be an important catalyst in the political thought of the world at that time and particularly for the countries struggling for independence from the foreign rule. This forced Indian National Congress party to concretize its concept of freedom and now the concept of freedom apart from being political included in its scope social as well as economic justice. As stated earlier Indian National Congress had people of all ideologies in its fold.

In the context of Sindh some additional feature that characterized and complicated situation was the fact that before British conquest Hindus were religious minority and due to its annexation to Bombay presidency Sindh Hindu community overnight found itself as a part

of majority community which led to change in its mindset and the fact that it wielded considerable economic and administrative clout, and it had a strong middle class changed its traditional mindset of tolerance and suffistic thought. All this lent an aggressive edge, combined with a keen desire to not only retain the benefits but to increase the same. It changed the perception and priorities which upset the earlier equilibrium and social, economic and political chasm continued to widen. In spite of all the above factors on individual plane the relationship between Sindh Hindus and Muslims remained cordial all along. All India organisation fighting for India's Independence attracted many Sindhis. It may be mentioned that even in 1857 Sindh did play a role, but as the bulk of the middle class consisted of Hindus, most of the Congress workers were from Hindu community and Muslims who participated in the Congress activity were very few indeed. It may be mentioned that Congress held its annual session in Karachi twice and a Muslim Landlord Burguri played an important role in organizing these sessions. During Khilafat movement many Sindh Muslims joined Congress and after its collapse many went into exile and established first provisional government of independent India. Moulana Ubedullah Sindh was first Prime Minister of that government in exile of independent India. He could return to India only after 1937 and continued as a disciplined soldier of the freedom movement in the Congress party. The Sindh leaders who attained towering positions in All India Congress party during freedom struggle were, Acharya Kripalani who became president of All India Congress and Jairamdas Daulatram its General secretary. Others who significantly contributed to the freedom struggle were Prof. N.R. Malkani and of course the sacrifice of Harchandrai Vishindas cannot be forgotten who went from his death bed to caste

his vote in the central legislature in pursuit of his patriotic duty. It is unique record, unmatched anywhere in pre- independence India that nine editors of Hindustan paper were arrested one after another and the rise of independence movement in Sindh could not be crushed. A movement to separate Sindh from Bombay presidency was started. Initially many Hindu Sindhis were luke warm to this movement but eventually even Congress supported this movement and Sindh was given a status of a separate province in the year 1937.

During freedom movement along with the mass movements launhed by the congress many young people continued revolutionary movements and resorted to armed actions. The call of Mahatma Gandhi in 1942 for British to 'Quit India' resulted in spurt of these activities and Sindh could not remain untouched by this revolutionary fervour. The youngest ever revolutionary to attain the martyrdom was from Sindh Hemu Kalani who smilingly faced gallows for the freedom of India.\*

Social contradictions are at the root of any divisive movement. Sometimes the contradictions are sharp and form the focal point of that particular time, other lie dormant for opportune time to come to fore and assume acute shape and thus cry out for urgent resolution and some are used as exigency by crafty politicians as a divisionary tactic. When British rulers found that the freedom movement had gone too far and was irreversible they played the divisive game in the hope of prolonging their rule. History proves how short sighted their tactics proved in the wake of shifting power equation in the international arena after the end of second world war and the freedom to India came at a great sacrifice of a permanent divide in form of Pakistan. The partition which was not the result of a surgical knife but of butchers hatchet. The wounds are still bleeding ..... AND

MILLION HINDU SINDHIS HAD TO LEAVE THEIR HOMES  
AND HEARTH.....BUT STILL HEART LONGS.....

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\* In post partion period Mr.Mohmed Usman Diplai has written a novel'Sanghar' in which he has depicted the Hur movement of Sindh and execution of their leader Pir Pagaro also as a part of the freedom struggle which claim needs to be probed seriously by historians in Sindh which may add new chapter to the history of Indian freedom movement.

## **PART II**

***“From an inward eye”***

**(A visual presentation)**

## **ASAAN JO ABAANO VARSO (Our Heritage)**

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**W**e are Sindhis, because Sindh was our country. Our forefathers lived there for centuries, and our language is Sindhi. At the time of partition we left behind a glorious history and tradition. We have our distinct history, language, literature and culture of which we are justly proud; it is a part of our natural heritage. Knowledge of that heritage is necessary for our fullsome emotional, intellectual and cultural life.

This section depicts our great personalities, scenes from various cities, music and instruments, characters from folk tales and folk life. All this will remind us of our rich heritage and make us conscious of our roots.

### **PROLOGUE**

After partition, Sindhi community had to pass through the most difficult times of their lives. Deprived of homeland, torn from their roots and leaving behind all wealth, they headed for India and were scattered all over.

Initially they remained occupied with their struggle for livelihood. Soon they realized that their existence as a distinct community is in danger and strived vigorously to preserve their distinct identity. Without language a community cannot exist. A dynamic movement was launched and ultimately in 1968, Sindhi language earned appropriate place in the Indian Constitution.

However the times had changed and new developments posed a serious threat. Satellites were launched orbiting the skies. Numerous

TV channels began telecasting round the clock. The invasion of the new satellite culture heralded tribulations for all indigenous languages and cultures, posing a threat to their existence, as if caught in a blazing storm! The intensity of pressure on Sindhi language was much higher as Sindhis in India and all over the world are widely dispersed in small numbers. They do not have land of their own under their feet. Thus the future of Sindhis seemed bleak.

Aseen Sindhi was an organization established in Dubai to create awareness among Sindhis about their cultural identity. Mr. Ram Buxani, Mr. Nari Sawlani and Mr. Mohan Gehani were main force behind this organization.

“Aseen Sindhi” fraternity is a link to the movement for preserving Sindhi identity. Our endeavor is to preserve the glorious Sindhi culture, language, values of life, and traditions. With this purpose in mind, this section has been added to present some glimpses of Sindhi life for refreshing our sweet memories of Sindh.