SIND

A Historical Perspective

by

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In a broad sense, Sindh which takes its name after its river *Sindhu* (Indus) is synonymous with the larger Indus Delta or the Lower Indus Valley. Throughout its length, from North to South, the region assumes a pattern of three collateral belts: a central stretch of rich alluvial plain bisected by the long and winding silvery line of the Indus, flanked on the right (West) by a rocky range, and bounded on the left (East) by the sand dunes semi-desert region. Burton, whose imagination ran riot in the Indus Valley, metaphorically spoke of this "... flat valley of the Indus, a luxuriant green level blue-glazed by the intervening air. And throughout Sind, you will ever see this contrast of the desert and the fertile land; of Osiris sitting side by side with his mortal brother-foe, the ass-headed set-Typhon, god of rock." Along its course and on both sides of the river, lies the most fertile alluvial plain, superior in scenery, soil, cultivation and climate.

The Indus has been the main artery of West Pakistan and the life-stream of the lower valley of Sind. The economic life (and consequently, the political history) of Sind has been the function of the Indus. It has changed for better or worse with the changing course of the Indus. The river has fertilized as well as eroded the soil; it has made the most renowned ports to flourish in its delta
and then obliterated them by its sweeping changes; it has facilitated navigation from the ocean right up to the Punjab by cutting deep channels in the delta and has also blocked up all trade by silting them up beyond excavation; it has brought into existence flourishing towns and capital cities on its banks and in the fertile delta and has also impoverished them by shifting its course. On the whole, it has always provided the Sind population with sufficient means of livelihood in its rich and fertile plains by its unfailing seasonal waters. But the long historic struggle to channelise the course of the Indus permanently, has not yet been completely won.

It is important to note that throughout the ancient and the medieval times, the Indus valley has marked a vague but important political boundary lines between India proper and the trans-Indus lands. The territories west of the Indus valley have, in the remote past, more often formed parts of the Kingdoms and Empires whose seats of Governments were situated variously in Persia, Greece, Turkistan, Arabia and Iraq. Only at brief intervals did some Indian rulers gain any foothold in these lands. At other obscure historical intervals these trans-Indus territories became either no-man's land or every-man's land. Though the Greek historians still contested whether Indus was the westernmost boundary of India proper,
the Persian and the Arab Governments and historians later, were in no doubt that the Indus and its valley formed the boundary line between their domains and the territories of the Indian rulers. The ancient Indus Valley Civilization of Mohen-jo-Daro as an independent and distinctive 'non-Aryan civilization' of a people different from those of India and, contemporary and comparable with the latter part of the early dynastic period of Babylonia, further confirms the ancient sociopolitical affinity of the Indus valley lands with the Western lands.

**Early History**
The Indus Valley Civilization is the farthest visible out-post of Archaeology in the abyss of pre-historic times. Since this civilization (2500-2000 B.C.), there is a gap of more than A millennium, with the exception of one legendary tale of a mythological king (Jaydrath, 12-13th century B.C.), in the ancient history of Sind.

The early history of Sind opens up with contacts with Iran. Darius I sent an army (520-515 B.C.) and Sind was annexed to the Persian Empire. Nearly two centuries later, Sind was stormed by Alexander the Great whose sweeping march through the Valley (326-25 B.C.) has been fully described by Greek Historians. The exact route followed by Alexander has been conjectured by a
host of modern researchers with as many conflicting details as they were capable of guessing. The broad feature of Alexander's conquest of Sind is that he saw a hostile country and encountered tough opposition. The swords of Greek soldiers avenged his injury at Multan by an unparalleled slaughter in the Indus Valley. However, he also made a number of alliances and stationed Greek garrisons in the key towns. Foundation of the still existing town of Sehwan is attributed to Alexander. He also founded a town in the Lower Indus Delta from where he marched onwards through the present Las Bela and Makran territories.

The Greek influence may have lasted in Sind during the political supremacy of his successor Saleukas Nikator, also the founder of the Syrian monarchy, until 305 B.C. when his Indian possessions passed on as a dowry to his daughter whom he is said to have given in marriage to Sandracultus, Chandragupta of Mauryan Dynasty.

After an interlude of less than one hundred years during which the Sind rulers might have paid their homage to the Mauryan power, Greek rule was re-established in Sind through the Bactrian Greek conquest of N.W. India in 195 B.C. This influence lasted till probably 150 B.C., as the coins of Menander, the Hellinist king of Kabul,
Punjab and Sind (155 B.C.) have been found at Mohen-jo-Daro in Sind.

This was followed by the conquest of Sakas or Scythians and Kushans (120 B.C.-200 A.C.). Scythian remains unearthed at Banbhore (the old port of Debal) indicate that they had advanced far to the south of Sind. Both Scythians and Kushans were of Turki origin and their conquest also brought in Sind the cult and culture of the Turki tribes. Later, the great Kushan Emperor, Kanishka, became the champion of Mahayana Buddhism which spread into Sind during 100 B.C.-100 A.C. Kanishka's third successor Vasudeva ruled Upper Sind and the Indus territories. His coins have been found at Mohen-jo-Daro.

The Turkish influence was strengthened under the Parthian kings (50 A.C.-200 A.C.). The coins of the Parthian king Gondophanus (47 A'C.?) and his successors have been found in Seistan, Kandhar and Sind. The Turkish influence was further strengthened under the Epthalites and the White Huns (4th & 5th centuries A.C.). Under the White Huns, Buddhism suffered a heavy blow. Brahmanism infiltrated into the upper classes, though popula-tion remained attached to Buddhism.
With the rise of the Sassanids in Persia by the middle of the third century A.C., Sind passed under the suzerainty of the Persian Empire. It was only when the Persian power became weak at home that the Parthians, White Huns and local Indian rulers got an opportunity to extend their sway over the Indus lands. On the death of Emperor Firuz (459-531 A.C.) the White Huns dominated Persia which became their tributary (483-485 A.C.). They also conquered the N.W. India and crushed the Gupta power by about 495 A.C. Since Persian power did not recover from its internal weakness during the reign of Kubad (487-531), Sind probably remained under the suzerainty of the White Huns. It was during the reign of Kisra Nausherwan (531-599) that the power of the Ephthalites and the Huns was crushed and Sind along with other trans-Indus countries was annexed to the Sassanid Empire.

During the sixth century, the Princes of the Rai Dynasty ruled over the Buddhistic Sind and they seem to have become independent of Persia. With the defeat and death of Rai Sehras at the hands of the Persian army sent by the Satrap of Seistan, Sind again passed under the suzerainty of Persia.

The Persian power declined in the 7th century with the death of Khusraw Pervez (590-628). By
this time, a crafty Brahman, Chuch, usurped the throne of Sind (622 (622 A.C.) and the Brahman Dynasty supplanted the Rai Dynasty. Taking advantage of the waning power of Persia, Chuch became independent and tried to occupy the Makran Province of Persia. This brought him in conflict with the Arab-Muslim armies in Makran. A policy of antagonism and attacks against the Muslims initiated by Chuch was later continued by his son Dahar. A policy of restraint was followed during the Pious Caliphate and the early Umayyids and all efforts were made to conclude peace on the frontiers of Sind. When all efforts at conciliation failed, Hajjaj, the Governor of Iraq, sent a strong army under Muhammad b. al-Qasim and Sind was conquered and brought under the Umayyid rule in 711/12 A.C.

**Muslim Period**

**The Arab Period** (93/712-450/ 1058).

For nearly two hundred years since its conquest by Muhammad bin al-Qasim, Sind remained an integral part of the Umayyid and the Abbasid caliphates. The Provincial Governors were appointed directly by the Central Government, and history has preserved a record of some 37 of them. By the end of the 9th Century A.C., the Saffarids administered Sind for Baghdad. After the decline of the Central authority, the local Arab dynastic rule continued in Sind for nearly 150
years. During this period, the Fatimids of Egypt extended their influence in Sind. This influence was eliminated during the reigns of Sultan Mahmud and his son Mas’ud. The Sumras of Sind, who were also influenced for some time by the Fatimid propaganda, eventually threw off all foreign allegiance and established their independent rule in Sind.

The Arab rule brought Sind within the orbit of the Islamic civilization. Sindhi language now came to be written in the naskh script. Education became widely diffused and Sindhi scholars attained fame in the Muslim world. Agriculture and Commerce progressed considerably. Ruins of Mansurah, the medieval Arab capital of Sind (7 miles South East of Shahdadpur), testify to the grandeur of the city and the development of urban life during this period.

Rule of The Sumras (450/1058-750/1349).
Sumras belonged to the stock of the indigenous population of Sind. Having accepted Islam and associated themselves actively with the local Arab dynasties, Sumras eventually became powerful enough to establish their independent rule by the middle of the 11th century. The names of some 21 rulers are recorded in history. They ruled nearly for three hundred years. The great Sindhi epic of 'Doda Sumra-&-Alauddin' indicates that Sultan
Ala’uddin had sent armies against the Sumras, but they fought back bravely and preserved their independence. Tharri, Vigah Kot (now in the Rann), Muhammad Tur and Rupah were their capitals. Due to the change in the course of the Indus (probably the Eastern Nara and Puran System) their prosperity and power declined by the middle of the 14th century. It was a romantic period which gave birth to patriotism and folk literature.

**Sammas (750/1349-927/1520).**

The Sammas had accepted Islam with the advent of the Muslims in the early 8th century A. C. Their chiefs took over power from the Sumras, and were entitled as 'Jams'. They made Thatta their capital. Their grave-yard stands on the northern tip of the Makli Hill, where the tomb of jam Nizamuddin, the most renowned of their 17 rulers, is of great architectural beauty. It was during this period that Sind came in direct contact with Delhi and Persian became the official language in place of Arabic. It marked the birth of sufi poetry in Sind.

**Arghuns (927/1520-962/1555).**

Shah Beg Arghun sent his armies from Qandhar against the province of Sibi which was under jam Nizamuddin. These forces were defeated by the famous Prime Minister and Commander Darya
Khan, and Muhammad Beg, the brother of Shah Beg was killed. Being pressed by Babur, Shah Beg eventually left Qandhar and marched against Sind. By this time, jam Nizamuddin was succeeded by his son Jam Feroze, a weak ruler; in his reign Shah Beg conquered Thatta (927 A.H.) and established his power in Sind. The Arghun Dynasty came to an end with the death of Mirza Shah Hasan (son of Shah Beg) in 962/1555. The important event of this period was the advent of Humayun in Sind and the birth of Emperor Akbar at Umarkot (District Tharparkar).

Turkhans (962/1555-1000/1592). On the death of Mirza Shah Hasan, his two chiefs divided the country between themselves: Mirza Isa Turkhan ruled at Thatta and Sultan Mahmud Khan at Bakhar. The antagonism between the two, brought the Portuguese in Sind; they sacked Thatta in 1556 burning the city and massacring its population. This tragedy was followed by internecine wars between the son of Mirza Isa. Mirza Baqi won and reigned with terror. Peace returned when his grandson Mirza jani Beg took over the administration. Hardly had he settled down when Mughul armies knocked at the doors of Sind. Mirza jani Beg fought back bravely but he had to submit to the superior forces and strategy of Khan-e-Khanan.
The Mughul Rule (1000/1592-1150/1737). Mirza Abdul Rahim Khan-e-Khanan conquered Sind for Emperor Akbar from Mirza Jani Beg in 1000 A.H. However, the country continued to be ad-ministered as a jagir by Mirza Jani Beg and his son Mirza Ghazi Beg till 1021/1621 when the latter died and Sind came directly under the Mughul administration. Some forty governors were appointed during the period.

In the second half of the 16th century, Kalhora chiefs gained power in upper Sind (territories of the present Dadu and Larkana districts). The rule of the Mughul governors remained effective in Lower Sind with Thatta as the Capital. In 1150 A.H. the province of Thatta also came under the control of the Kalhoras.

During this period, the Mughul administrative pattern was adopted for Sind, and its basic features continued later for the next two centuries. Some beautiful mosques and monuments were founded, e.g. Akbar's mosque at Rohri, Mir Masum's monuments at Sukkur and Rohri, and Shah Jehan's mosques at Thatta and Sehwan.

The Kilhoras (1700-1196/1782). A clan claiming descent from the house of Abbas and long settled in Sind, produced religious leaders of whom Mian Adam Shah (whom Khan-e-Khanan paid
respects) attained prominence in the 16th century.' His descendants continued to gather large following and this enabled them to capture political power in the northwestern Sind under the leadership of Mian Nasir Muhammad. This happened in the 2nd half of the 17th century. By the rum of that century, foundations of the Kalhora power were firmly laid in the northern Sind under the leadership of Mian Yar Muhammad (son of Mian Nasir Muhammad). With the conferment of the title of 'Khuda Yar Khan' he received official recognition from the court of Farrukh Siyar. During the reign of his son, Mian Noor Muhammad, Lower Sind with Thatta as its capital came also under the Kalhora administration. (1150 A.H.).

His son Mian Ghulam Shah proved to be an illustrious ruler. He founded the city of Hyderabad in 1182/1768. After his death, his son and brothers, 'due to lack of statesmanship and personal designs, got their powerful Baloch chiefs and courtiers assassinated, and thus alienated the sympathy of the people. Under the banner of Mir Fateh Ali Khan Talpur, the Baloches defeated the last Kalhora ruler, Mian Abdul Nabi, in the battle of Halani in 1196/1782.

The Kalhora rule relieved the people from outside domination and released their energies for self
development and self expression. With improvements in irrigation and agriculture economy improved Sindhi Poetry reached its climax in the compositions of Shah Inayat and Shah Abdul Latif.

Talpur Amirs (1196/1782-1259/1843). Talpur Amirs regained the parts of Sind (Karachi, Khairpur, Sabzal Kot, and Umar Kot) which the last Kalhora' chiefs had conceded to the neighbouring rulers. By eliminating the foreign interference, which had plagued the Kalhora rule, and by their essentially democratic way of governance, the Talpurs were able to take the people into confidence, and thus achieved great many things within a short period of 60 years. They built up an excellent system of forts and out-posts guarding the frontiers; extended the irrigation system; encouraged scholarly pursuits and educational institutions; and promoted trade and commerce internally as well as with the neighbouring countries.

In 1843, Sind lost its independence falling prey to the British imperialistic policy. The Talpurs were defeated on the battle-fields of Miani, Dabba and Kunhera and taken prisoners. Napier had confessedly sinned to have Sind.
The British Rule (1843-1947)
The British had conquered Sind from their bases in Bombay and Kutch. Therefore, Sind was annexed to the Bombay Presidency and a consistent policy to subdue the Muslim majority and build up the Hindu minority in Sind was followed. Commerce, services and education became monopolies in the hands of the minority. Within a few years, 40% of the lands of the Muslim debtor passed on to the Hindu creditor. It was after a long struggle that the Muslims succeeded in getting Sind separated from the Bombay Presidency in 1937. The benefits of the Provincial autonomy, however, could not be reaped immediately due to the World War II, and both economically and educationally the condition of the Muslims of Sind remained poor till the establishment of Pakistan in 1947.

Struggle against foreign domination and achievement of Pakistan.

Due to its geographically isolated position, Sind could preserve its political independence for longer periods in history. Foreign domination was always resisted and the cause of freedom was always supported. During the Talpur rule, it was in Sind that Sayyid Ahmad Barelvi had received all support from Pir Pagaro, Sayyid Sibghatullah
Shah, to fight against Sikh domination in the Frontier region. Sind was one of the last provinces in the sub-continent to be conquered by the British, and the Muslims of Sind were never reconciled to the British rule; they aligned themselves with movements seeking to replace alien domination.

The first hero of the Freedom Movement in Sind was undoubtedly Mir Sher Muhammad Khan Talpur, the Chief of Mirpur. After the British had defeated the main Sindian force at Miani and the Talpur Chiefs of the ruling house of Hyderabad were taken prisoner, Mir Shdr Muhammad raised the banner of patriotism, gathered forces from all over and fought two battles against the British (at Dabba and Kunhero). He did not succeed but his patriotic struggle set an example to fight against foreign domination.

In the great struggle of 1857, Sind joined the sub-continent to throw off the foreign yoke. Besides open revolt in the British army units in the south, the three great leaders from northern Sind-Darya Khan jakhrani, Dilmurad Khosa and Sayyid Inayat Shah-had planned to 1 spearhead a general revolt from the north. They did not succeed, but the attempt had a great impact on the Balochi areas.
The Hur rising came 30 years later in 1914. By 1914, another revolutionary party started working in Sind against the British government.

Their leader was Ubaidullah Sindhi. He later carried on his mission from Kabul, where he planned to seek the support from Afghanistan to free the sub-continent from the British rule. King Amanullah was considerably influenced by his mission.

During the twenties, the people of Sind gave all support to the Khilafat Movement. In early forties during the World War II came the Second Hur Movement.

On the political front, Muslims of Sind supported the Muslim League overwhelmingly. They considered Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali jinnah (born at Karachi) as son of the soil. The Sind Provincial Assembly was the first legislature in the subcontinent to pass resolution demanding the establishment of Pakistan.

**National Independence**
During the 10 years of Provincial autonomy (1947-1956), after the establishment of Pakistan, the scheme of compulsory primary education was implemented with great enthusiasm; a number of high schools and colleges and a new University
(of Sind) were established; the scheme of Kotri Barrage was approved and work started; thousands of migrating Muslims were rehabilitated; and such cultural organizations as the Sindhi Adabi Board (a literary academy) and Shah Abdul Latif Cultural Centre were founded.

During the late fifties and sixties the Province of Sind comprising the Hyderabad and Khairpur Divisions remained merged into the new Province of West Pak-Pakistan. Due to an authoritarian form of Government and too much of centralization the Sind region received a set-back for want of local initiative and adjustment. In 1970, the Province of West Pakistan was discontinued and the Province of Sind was reestablished. Since then, the democratic institutions in Sind have come to flourish with all their problems and prospects, development in different sectors has gained momentum, and the Province of Sind has continued on its onward march along with its sister Provinces towards the achievement of common national goals.