

THE HUR MOVEMENT: A FOUNDATION FOR INDEPENDENT MUSLIM STATE

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ABSTRACT

The Hur movement was the first well-planned movement in the history of British India. This paper argues that the movement was primarily non-political in nature. The aim of the movement was to organize jihadi activities guided by theological philosophy. The house of Pagara had no political agenda and aspirations. However, the efforts were made to establish supremacy of religion and to oppose despotic rule. This study analysis the contribution of Pir Pagara who gave sacrifices for the homeland. The study further analysis the difference phases of Hur movement.

Keywords: Hur, Grang Banglow, Makhi Forest, Choki, Malfoozat, Hikayat

INTRODUCTION

The Hur movement which has its roots from 1843 was indeed the genuine rebellion against British colonial rule in the sub-continent. From 1843 and onwards up to 1945, this glaring movement underwent four different phases. Its last phase which initiated with the ascendancy of Pir Sibghatullah-II as Pagara (commonly known as Soorah Badshah) has added a novel chapter to the history of freedom movements in the annals of Indian history. The vivacity of the movement, its rationale and truth behind it was fully acclaimed and recognized by world history. The perspective of movement, if be evaluated from political points of view, it in fact provided the base for the foundation of separate Muslim state (Pakistan) in sub-continent. Accordingly, to the historians, the Hur movement was first well planned and well organized movement, which fully discomfited British power and enhanced the vision of self-determination among the nationalities of the sub-continent and British colonies throughout world.

Though, this movement had no political ambition which is obvious from its purely being a non-political movement. Its slogan of *waatan* or *kafan* (native soil or death) was purely imbibed with patriotism, had provided a platform to the political parties of sub-continent to work upon and compel the already weakened British Empire to wrap up from sub-continent.

This great movement which has its unique history of 38000 martyrs, thousands wounded, hundreds thousands arrests, establishment of hundreds

concentration camps spread all over Sindh and more important of all the martyrdom of its supreme leader Pir Seyed Sibghatullah shah through hanging on March, 20, 1943 at Hyderabad Central Jail and exile of his two sons Seyed Shah Mardan Shah and Seyed Nadir Shah in London culminated the Hur movement without any immediate result but its place in history heralds the establishment of Pakistan is undeniable. This can be validated from the fact that First Pakistani Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan officially visited London and settled the issue of the restoration of the Gadi of Pir Pagara, which was subsequently restored in 1952. Four years after the establishment of Pakistan It is indeed very unfortunate that the perspective of Hur movement had no adequate place in our history, which it deserved. The magnitude movements in four different phases and sacrifices given for the freedom of homeland by the natives of the land should have crystallized our history.

In 1858, British formally took the reins from the east India Company and proclaimed the enhancement of British Empire in Indian sub-continent formally, though its presence in sub-continent was also a century old. In the due course both British and east India Company has expedited their efforts to control on the administration of sub-continent and also convert poor class of Muslims as well as Hindus into the fold Christianity. This has raged the Muslims of the sub- continent too.

The next step which further aggravated the situation was the decision of the British Government to occupy mosques and demolish them and sell them which included Grand Mosque of Shah Jahan, Fatehpuri mosque, Zinat-ul-Mosque built by the daughter of Aurangzeb were direct threat to the Muslim religion in sub-continent

This has further infuriated the Muslim religious houses as well as spiritual houses endeavouring for the sanctity of the religion of Islam after the overthrow of Aurangzeb. Sindh was under Bombay Presidency had overwhelming Muslim population and had strong religious influence.

THE HOUSE OF PAGARA

House of Pagara has its history from Seyed Muhammad Baqa Shaheed the father of Pir Muhammad Rashid (Roza Dhani). There is obviously no reference about Pir Muhammad Baqa to have adopted the title of Pagara. The title of Pagara originates from Pir Sibghatullah-I Tajir Dhani elder among 18 sons Pir Muhammad Rashid as first former Pagara.

The house of Pagara is primarily a religious institution decided to work of preaching. When Shah Waliullah was striving Delhi to cement the rules of Islam in sub-continent, Pir Muhammad Rashid (Roza Dhani) was continuing his preaching mission in Sindh (Rajasthan, Punjab and Balochistan).

First Phase of the Movement

Pir Seyed Sibghatullah Shah-I joined Jihad against Sikhs; he became the part of Jihad against Sikhs initiated by Shah Abdul Aziz (Shamas-ul-Hind) Son of Shah Waliullah and His two disciples, Seyed Ahmed and Shah Ismail. The head quarter of this movement was Delhi. Shah Abdul Aziz sent his emissary Seyed Ahmed to Pir Jo Goth Khairpur requesting Pir Pagara to participate Jihad against Sikhs at Bala Kot. Being highly religious and pious, Pir Pagara immediately accepted the offer and directed Hur Jamait for war preparation against Sikhs.

The jihadi contingent of Seyed Ahmed and Seyed Ismail was warmly received at Pir Jo Goth. The contingent stayed at Pir Jo Goth for several days and had received necessary directives from Pir sahib Pagara. This Pir Sahib Pagara directed Hurs to seek soldierly trainings and divided Hur Jamait into 12 Chokis (branches). Each Choki had its Khalifa, who directly received directives from Pir Sahib and communicated those of the directives to disciples of his respective Choki or branch. Before moving to Bala Kot a band of 300 Hurs accompanied Seyed Ahmed Shaheed and fought at Bala Kot Hur Soldiers accompanying Seyed Ahmed Shaheed were skilled and fully equipped with arms and ammunitions. They inflicted heavy losses on Sikhs and killed them in huge number. The Mujahedeen of Seyed Ahmed including Hurs of Pir Pagara defeated Sikhs and occupied Peshawar city. The brave soldiers of Seyed Ahmed and Hur Mujahidin were accessing ahead soon they had to come across the treachery of local Pathans accompanying British clandestinely, British infuriated Local Pathans against Seyed Ahmed, who was later martyred by mid of 1831. The martyrdom of Seyed Ahmed lamented Pir Sahib deeply. After the defeat of Seyed Ahmed Shaheed, British troops occupied Sindh also.

The occupation of Sindh further aggrieved Pir Pagara. Now he fully adhered himself on the organization of Hur Jamait and heeded on their military organization and trainings as well. Pir Seyed Sibghatullah Shah-I was highly bold and man of valour. The tales of his bravery was being echoed all over sub-continent.

The Second Phase of Hur Movement

The second phase starts from 1880 when Seyed Hizabullah Shah, Pir Pagara Takhat Dhani waged struggle against British occupation of Sindh, as left over by Seyed Sibghatullah Shah-I. Pir Hizabullah Shah fully organized Hur Jamait.

Seeing the activities of Pir Sahib British Government registered number of cases against Pir Sahib. Pir sahib was involved in fabricated murder case and arrested. Famous Hindu lawyer, Mehta Ram Giddu Mal Shahani fought the case and Pir sahib was freed. Mehta Ram received rupees

one lac as fees from Pir Sahib and later donated it for the construction of DJ College Karachi

The Hur uprising was growing day by day. Hurs gallantly fought under the command of Darya Khan Nizamani, the commander of Hur force. He accompanied by several hundred Hurs killed during fighting with British Forces near Sanghar. Some 3000 Hur freedom fighters were also martyred during the second Phase of Hur movement. During the second phase of Hur movement, British Government introduced concentration camps or *lohras* in Sindh to put Hurs as War prisoners. Pir Sahib Pagara was also arrested several times. Due to lack of proper communication, this movement is being titled as scattered movement without proper planning. The second phase ended with the demise of Pir Hizabullah Shah in 1889.

The Third Phase of Hur Movement

The third phase of Hur movement started with the ascendancy of Pir Seyed Ali Gohar Shah-II Pir Pagara in 1895-96. Pir Ali Gohar Shah was son of Pir Seyed Hizabullah Shah Pir Pagara and supreme leader of the third phase of Hur Movement.

Pir Ali Gohar Shah was a towering personality. With his ascension as Pagara, he declared Jihad against British and reorganized Hur Jamiat for Jihad which was started by his father Pir Seyed Hizabullah Shah. Khairpur, Sanghar, Tharparkar, Hyderabad, Nawab Shah Districts of Sindh were the center of the Hur movement. The magnitude of Hur movement penetrated all over Sindh. Civil disobedience against British started all over Sindh. Hur Jamiat established self-proclaimed Government in District Tharparkar under Hur Mujahid Muhammad Bachal Khaskalli. Commonly known as Bachoo Badshah assisted by Peero Wazir.

Makhi forest Sanghar became the Guerilla Head quarter of the movement. British military operations started all over in Hur Areas. Scores of new police stations were established. Baloch and Punjabi communities from Baluchistan and Punjab were settled in Hur areas of Sanghar and Tharparkar. This impact of this movement lasted for 12 years. During this movement special military courts were established, thousand Hurs arrested, persecuted, and killed. Thousand Hurs were placed in concentration camps. Hur self-proclaimed Government under Bachoo Badshah was the first sign of self-rule in Sindh.

The Fourth Phase of Hur Movement

The fourth and crucial Phase of Hur Movement started under Pir Seyed Sibghatullah Shah-II (Soorah Badshah) was the turning point of all Hur movements, hitherto fought against British Empire against their occupation of Sindh. The earlier movements and their sequence clearly vindicate the

natural instinct of Pagara family as freedom lover which they subsequently exhibited generation after generation.

Just two years after his coronation, Pir Sibghatullah Pir Pagara called upon his Hur devotees to straighten their ranks and prepare for something very unusual. This was probably indication of something extra-ordinary, which the legatee of freedom fighters in Sindh has indicated to his devotees. British authorities in Sindh took different measures to pacify the young Pir but all proved futile to placate the Young Pagara. The pacifying efforts can be seen from certain move which the British authorities in Sindh undertook to please Pir Pagara. The British authorities in Sindh started to invite Pir sahib in official receptions, send their emissaries for consultation of official issues but very soon, they realized that the policy of appeasement would not work on young Pir of 14 years. He is as bolshie as his predecessor were.

Witnessing that the young Pir was not weak or irresolute with his commitment, British authorities used another track of intimidation of Pir Pagara. They registered false cases against Pir sahib and put him in prison. The first trail of Pir sahib took place in central jail Sukkur. Muhammad Ali Jinnah (Quaid-e-Azam) represented Pir sahib. Muhammad Ali Jinnah was directly coming from Bombay to attend the litigation of Pir sahib. On August 28, 1930, Pir sahib was sentenced for eight years Prison. Pir sahib remained in Prison for 8 years and was travelled in many locations including Ratna Ghar and many cities of Bengal. Effort of the British Government was meeting its failure.

The first act of political maturity of Young Pir Pagara was to be seen in the Masjid-Manzal Gah riots, when Pir Pagara Sibghatullah Shah directed his Hur devotees to protect the houses, properties and religious places in riots launched on Masjid issues. G.M.Sayed says that the approaches of Pir Pagara was of reconciliation and inter faith harmony.

Pir Pagara was an astute politician, though young but his influence on the politics of Sindh can be validated from the fact that Allah Bux Soomro became the Prime minster Sindh with the support of Pir Sahib Pagara.

Pir Sahib visited Saudi Arabia for the performance of Hajj. Pir sahib was fully a religious minded and strictly following Sharia. Before proceeding to Hajj, he delivered a sermon to his devotees at Pir Jo Goth, available in thousands; the salient features of the speech were as follows:

- Act on the Sharia and perform obligatory prayers.
- Promote brotherhood and harmony.
- Respect for neighbors and weak people.
- Marry daughters on time and extend full courtesy and respect for women.
- Love the native land and never hesitate in any kind of sacrifice for the homeland.

At the Grang Bungalow Gazis were selected to march against British power. According to an estimate 0.3 million Ghazis registered in first five days. Hundreds thousands others were eager to register their names. During Pir Sahibs stay at Grang Bungalow one female having 50 years age requested the Kamis to allow her to talk with Pir Sain. Permission was sought from Pir sahib and she was presented before Pir Sain.

Standing before Pir Sain she couldn't control her emotions and started weeping. Pir Sain glanced at her and asked "ama cha masaloo aha" (mother what is problem). She requested Pir Sain that her son is coward and has not enlisted his name in Ghazis. So her name is listed in register. "Pir Pagara-I want to sacrifice my life for you". Pir sahib smiled placed his right hand on her head. She came out of the room with stuffed slogans of Bhag Pagara. Deeplai in his novel Sanghar writes that: hundreds of Hur females, young girls equally fought with their male members in Hur freedom movement.

Like the second and third phase of Hur movement, Makhi forest was again declared the war base HQ of Hur movement. Special arrangements were made for the residence of Pir sahib at Makhi forest.

Hur jihad activities surfaced all over Sindh. Sanghar, Khairpur, Tharparkar, Ghotaki, Hala, Matari, Moro and number of other areas had seen tremendous protests and bloody events took place between Hur Mujahidin and British forces. Railway tracks destroyed, Nara, Rohari and Jamraio canals, breached, national highway deserted before sunset, irrigation department officially closed their offices, Irrigation bungalows in Sanghar, Mirpur Khas, Matari, Nawab shah and many other areas of Sindh were attacked and torched. Socio- political life fully crumbled in Sindh. British Government also fully retaliated the Hur uprising. Martial law imposed in lower Sindh, special military courts set up after the promulgation of Hur act, hundreds concentrations camps established throughout Sindh province. Massive activities, this has further mobilized the Hurs. It was now an open war which was inviting something very dangerous from both sides.

British Government now realized the gravity of Hur Movement, Pir Pagara stacked on one point agenda of *watan* or *kafan*. Reconciliatory missions of Ayoub Khuhro, Hydatullah and G.M.Seyed failed to bring supreme Hur leader on negotiation table. GM Seyed, Ayoub Khuhro and Ghulam Hussain Hydatullah failed to convince Pir Pagara on the legitimacy of British colonial rule in Sindh .therefore all such missions failed to bring maturity to dialogues. G.M.Seyed and Khuhro held several meetings with Pir sahib but were unable to justify the British right of Governance in Sindh province.

British Government and their cronies were at full scale of confusion, they now sent Ayoub Khuhro, minster British cabinet to negotiate with freedom leader. Khuhro reached Sanghar and thereafter proceeded to Makhi

forest, it was Midsummer Day and that day had 52 Celsius temperature. As Khuhro left Sanghar and travelled to Makhi, he has witnessed caravans of thousands of devotees accessing to Makhi which further perplexed Khuhro. Khuhro reached at dense Makhi forest, went in the place where Pir Sahib was sitting. Pir sahib was among thousands of devotees, sitting in Cot brought from Hala specially.

Pir Sahib: well come, minster, How are you, sorry for botheration, you would not enjoy the charm of civic life here, it is the safe haven of freedom fighters.

Khuhro: Pir Sain I have come with a special message from Lambrick.

Pr Sahib: What dog has said?

Khuhro: Pir Sain he wants to negotiate.

Pir Sahib: On what matter?

Khuhro: Sain on the movement that you have initiated.

Pir Sain: Go and tell him that the first and last demand of the movement is that British as occupier should leave and give us our freedom.

At this the gathering of thousand started slogans of *Bhej Pagara*. Ayoub Khuhro returned with disappointment and reported the scenario to British Government.

As the Hur movement was unstoppable and its magnitude was increasing day by day, British Government adopted two pronged policy to abate the movement. In first of their attempt, they brought local feudal against Pir sahib, who was being leaded by Pir Ali Muhammad Rashidi, the Cousin of Pir Sahib. On 22, October 1941, Ali Muhammad Rashdi wrote a letter to Governor sir Heuch Dow, narrating the details of Hur movement, Pir Sahib, main characters of Hur freedom Movement, their strategic location, and many other details of what British forces were hitherto not been able to attain. In this letter, Ali Muhammad Rashdi termed Pir Sahib as very cruel person and Hur freedom fighters as beasts.

The list of turncoats had many influential and well renowned names. They were bestowed with jagirs and titles. The history of Sindh has many Sir, Nawab, Khans, Khan Sahib and other innumerable titles bestowed in lieu of their opposition to Hur movement. They all had consented full support to British Government against Hur freedom fighting. These acts have encouraged British authorities and they now decided to re-arrest Pir Sahib Pagara. Pir Sahib Pagara was re-arrested on fictitious charges on 24 October 1941 and was travelled and imprisoned in Seoni in India. The Hurs of Pir Pagara took the arrest of Pir Sahib as life and death issues for themselves.

The Hur uprising had now expanded to whole Sindh and some areas of Rajasthan. Attacks on government installations, damaging irrigation installations, bridges, railway tracks, derailing Lahore and Bombay express, assassination of Allah Bux Soomro, Ex-Prime Minster of Sindh, Seyed Fateh

Ali Shah cousin of Ali Muhammad Rashidi, Seyed Ghulam Rasool Shah, son of Ghulam Hussain Hidyatullah, Land Lord Jan Muhammad Narejo of Sanghar and scores of other personalities who had supported British against Hur movement.

Allah Bux Soomro, during his ministry advised British cabinet to introduce Hur act in Sindh, and he prepared that Hur act and got its approval from the British Governor Dow. As the time went on, Allah Bux Soomro appeared as staunch enemy of Hur Movement. He now started to hatch conspiracies against Hur, which resulted in arrest and persecution of thousands of Hurs. In 1941, he addressed a meeting in Sukkur and termed Hur and Pir Sahib as rebellious forces. He demanded from British Government to precede rebellion case against Hur Freedom Fighters.

On May 10, 1942, he summoned 300 influential people of Mirpur Khas at Darbar Hall Mirpurkhas. During that meeting, he called upon local landlords to support British Government and provide full information about Hur activities at Local Police station. He also attended a reception hosted by Seth Seetal Das Bharo Mal (Member legislative assembly). During that reception both Allah Bux and Bharo Mal Criticized Pir Sahib and demanded stern action against them. When a group of Hur freedom Fighters had this news, they immediately planned to kill both Allah Bux and Bharo Mal. They attacked the residence of Bharo Mal; Allah Bux was already out for Nawab Shah. They killed Bharo Mal exactly five hours after that reception.

Now Allah Bux was given full security by British authorities. On May 12, 1942, Allah Bux attended a similar type of meeting at Nawab Shah. He blamed Hur freedom fighters for killing Bharo mal MLA. Now Hur and Allah Bux Soomro were in face to face retaliation in Sindh. Hur freedom fighters have now finally decided to kill Allah Bux Soomro.

Hur freedom fighters had sought information that Allah Bux Soomro, Hindu minster Nichal das Wazeerani and Son of Ghulam Hussain Hidyatullah are travelling by Lahore express for Sukkur. Accomplishing their planning Hur freedom fighters derailed Lahore express between Palajani and Tando Adam. They killed the son of Hidyatullah and Nichal Das Wazeerani shut himself in the toilet of the train. Allah Bux Soomro too was in the train up to Hyderabad. He stopped at Hyderabad and saved the attempt on his life. Hur freedom fighters not yet forgotten their wrath on Allah Bux Soomro and continuing attempting to kill him. In May 1943, two months after the Martyrdom of Soorah Badshah, Allah Bux Soomro was in his native Town Shikarpur, a group of Freedom fighters attacked him near Lakhi Dar in Shikarpur, while he was travelling in Horse cart (Tanga). They fired and killed him on Spot. Hur freedom fighters jubilantly rousing with Slogans of Bhag Pagara left the spot.

The Hur activities had compelled British Forces to the barracks. The arrest of Pir Sahib has further re- invigorated their fighting spirit. One of the event Hur freedom fighters blocked road near Sakrand and firing exchange took place, firing continued for one hour, British troops repulsed, fighters escaped safely. National high way now fully deserted after sunset. Railway track near Ghotki demolished, Nara canal breached, Irrigation bungalow at Sekhat attacked, four irrigation officials kidnapped. Hur freedom fighters attacked British Convoy near Berani. Shahdadpur, Sinjhor, Sanghar were fully handed over to British Troops. Special check posts were set up. Night raids were conducted in all areas. Existing jails were short to accommodate male and female Hur fighters. A loud slogan of Bhag Pagara was being echoed from jails and concentration camps. Deeplai mentions that loud slogans of Bhag Pagara, were being echoed from death cells from those of the prisoners who were waiting to be hanged.

The range of war was now enhancing day by day. There was full-scale freedom movement in Sindh right from Ratti to Tando Bagho Badin. British and their cronies were unable to faces onslaughts of the freedom fighters. From 1941 to the mid-1943, the air strikes were the regular activity of British royal air force. They stroke Dargah Pir Pagara, Kingri palace Pir Jo Goth, Grang bungalow Sanghar, Makhi Forest Sanghar, different locations of Khipro, Sinjhor and Sanghar Talukas. The British royal forces used Phosphorous bombs. Air Marshall (Retd.) Asghar Khan was Pilot in British royal air force. He was ordered to bomb a convoy of Hur travelling in district Sanghar. When noticed that Convoy was armless, he refused to bomb. He was immediately removed from operations in Sindh.

PIR SAHIB PAGARA MARTYRED

During his arrest Pir sahib was placed in several locations. At last it was decided to initiate case against Pir sahib and sentence him. This plan was shared with Ali Muhammad Rashdi. The Sir, Khan, Nawab and other dignitaries of Sindh had also full acquaintance with the Plan but all of them were satisfied to remain in mute. Pir Sahib who was imprisoned out of Sindh was brought at Bolhari British royal air base near Kotri. Hyderabad central jail was evacuated; all Hur prisoners were shifted to other jails. Special arrangements were made for the trail of Pir Sahib. Quaid Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah represented Pir Sahib. As the case was already settled therefore Jury has announced death sentence to Pir Sahib. On early hours of March 20, 1943, the supreme freedom fighter of Sub- continent Pir Sibghatullah Shah Pir Pagara (Soorah Badshah) was martyred. The two sons of Pir Sahib Pagara, Seyed Shah Mardan Shah and Seyed Nadir Shah were shifted to India and were given in custody of Dr. Ziauddin Ahmed vice chancellor of

Aligarh University and later shifted to London. This was the culmination of the fourth phase of Hur movement.

CONCLUSION

The Hur Movement, which has its more than hundred year's history, is one of the glaring chapters of the freedom movements in the history of universe. It was purely based on Jihad against the colonial rule in sub-continent. This movement has natural instincts which can be seen from its different phase. The Pagara throughout its 150 history during four different phases never become the cronies of British or have ever tried to receive jagirs, fiefs and Governmental positions. The sanctity of homeland and its freedom from colonial rule was the only urge of the House of Pagara. The Hur movement has flattened the British and crumbled its stature in sub-continent. The diminishing of British power brought the political parties at the mainstream of politics and paved the way for the separate Muslim state of Pakistan. The genuine role of Hur movement can be treated as the real base for the independence of Pakistan.

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