

## The Role of Sindh in Making of Pakistan

*Sajfullah Jeyo*

After the Arab conquest of Sindh in early eighth century, the message of Islam was carried out by religious scholars, Sufis and Darvishes. Thus Islam spread slowly & gradually with love and affection in this part of South Asia having started from Sindh being gate-way of Islam, which made a mark in history of the subcontinent. After the end of Arab rule subsequently the four Sindhi Muslim dynasties ruled Sindh except Argoun, Tarkhan and Mughals who were aliens, till the British occupied Sindh in 1843.

In 1809, Lord Minto entered into a treaty with Mirs of Sindh. Under this treaty the English were allowed to use river Indus for the purpose of trade. However, they were not allowed to carry arms while crossing the river.

In 1838 A.D, the British rulers made a plan to attack Afghanistan. From the military point of view, Sindh held an important position. The English, therefore, decided to capture Sindh. They levelled against the Mirs of Sindh a baseless charge of violation of treaty, and demanded that some area of Sindh be surrendered to them. At the same time they declared war. The Mirs of Sindh were defeated. Thus Sindh slipped into the control of the English in 1843.

After its conquest, for four years Sindh was administered as a separate province, but in 1847 it was annexed to Bombay, the nearest British territory at that time. Even under the Mirs of Sindh, the day-to-day administration was in the hands of the Hindu Amils, whose position greatly improved under the British. Everywhere, trade and industry was of course under the Hindu domination. An effort to stem the tide was made by Khan Bahadur Hasan Ali Effendi, who was a successful solicitor of Karachi and was called "Effendi", as he exercised consular authority on behalf of the Turkish government in respect of the large number of pilgrims visiting Mecca and Medina, which towns in Arabia were then in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>1</sup>

Hasan Ali was born in 1830 A.D at Hyderabad (Sindh). His ancestors were attached to the court of the Talpurs of Sindh, but after the British occupation the position had changed. Hasan Ali was educated

according to the old tradition and had to accept a very low position in the beginning. Later on, he studied English on his own, and in course of time he became Head Clerk in the District Sessions Court. Later, he got himself enrolled as an advocate (Vakil) and after some years of practice at Hyderabad moved to Karachi. He distinguished himself here in course of time, became a Public Prosecutor, and this post he held for fifteen years. During this time he used to contribute articles to the English newspaper published from Karachi. In some of these articles, Hasan Ali replied to criticism against the Sultan of Turkey, usually published at that time in the European press. These articles came to the notice of authorities at Istanbul and, with the consent of the Government of India, Hasan Ali was appointed as Turkish Consul at Karachi.

For raising funds for Sindh Madrasah in Karachi, Hasan Ali toured extensively, but the main assistance came from the ruling Talpurs of Khairpur who promised that if the Madrasah had an English principal, his salary would be paid by the Khairpur State and accordingly the grant for the institution would also be increased. Thus, an English Principal, Mr. Percy Hyde, was recruited from England through M.A.O College Aligarh. Later when he left the institution. Professor Vines was appointed to the post, who spent some twenty years to build up the institution. The acquisition of a suitable plot for the Madrasah in Karachi city was not easy. Hasan Ali solved the problem by obtaining at a normal rent the old Serai where caravans to Kalat and Baluchistan used to halt and which had fallen into disuse after the introduction of the railways. Suitable additions to the building were made, including an impressive Mosque, a boarding house and a new school building. Hasan Ali died in 1896. By then the institution was on a firm footing and Hasan Ali's son who was working in the Education Department joined the Madrasah as its Principal on deputation.<sup>2</sup>

Hasan Ali was a great friend of Syed Ameer Ali, the celebrated author and founder of the Central National Mohammedan Association of Calcutta.<sup>3</sup> Under Ameer Ali's influence, Hasan Ali organized one of the earliest and most active branches of the Association at Karachi. In 1884, Syed Ameer Ali visited Karachi to help in a case which involved a large number of respectable Muslims and had created a great stir among the Muslims of the Punjab and Sindh. The case arose out of the conversion of a Hindu lady to Islam and nearly a hundred and fifty of the most respectable Muslim citizens of Sindh were involved. Syed Ameer Ali

received a most enthusiastic reception at all the important railway stations during his journey to Karachi. The fact that a barrister had to be brought all the way from Calcutta to Karachi to plead the case for the accused exposed the handicaps of the Muslims of Sindh and the need for taking effective measures in aid of them. Presumably, it was during Ameer Ali's visit to Karachi that a branch of the National Mohammedan Association was formed.

When Lord Dufferin, the Viceroy of India visited Karachi in 1886. Mr. Hasan Ali, on behalf of his Association, read an address in which it was openly asserted that, "the European officials of Sindh were under the influence of Hindus and that the Mohammedans were kept out every where".<sup>4</sup> After this, the Sindh administration took some remedial measures.

Even more beneficial was the establishment of Sindh Madrasa-tul-Isalm, Karachi by Hasan Ali and his colleagues, which had on its rolls the future Quaid-e-Azam for some years. Like the opening of branch of Central National Mohammedan Association in Sindh, Syed Ameer Ali referred to his visit to Karachi in 1884 in his presidential address at the Mohammedan Education Conference of 1899 and said:

When I visited Karachi in 1884, I delivered a lecture on the educational backwardness of the Indian Muslims. A committee was immediately setup and substantial funds were collected to establish a school on the lines of the Aligarh college. The Amir of Khairpur made a handsome donation.

And within a year to eighteen months Hasan Ali and his co-workers were able to set up an educational institution for provision of instructions on subjects of Handicrafts and Industry in addition to the normal educational curriculum".<sup>5</sup>

The Madrasah was started in a small building, but within a few years the foundation-stone of its present magnificent building was laid by Lord Dufferin. The demand for a proper grant for the Madrasah by Karachi Municipality was accepted after a short debate. Nagendranath Gupta who relates this episode, adds: "Since then for no tangible reason, Hindus and Muslims in Sindh have been drifting apart".<sup>6</sup>

Hasan Ali passed away in 1896, but his son Wali Muhammad, who became the Principal of the Madreshah, continued to look after the

institution. On 21<sup>st</sup> June 1943, the Madresah Board established the Sindh Muslim College, of which the foundation-stone was laid by the most distinguished "old boy" of the Sindh Madresah, Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

In 1907, the All-India Mohammadan Educational Conference held its session at Karachi, at which the position of the Muslims of Sindh was reviewed. Nothing substantial could, however, be done as Sindh was tagged on to Bombay and was being administered on indifferent administrative lines from the far-off place.

The administrative arrangements were so unsatisfactory and the Commissioner of Sindh had such dictatorial powers that when in 1913 the All-India National Congress held its annual session at Karachi, the chairman of the Reception Committee urged the separation of Sindh from Bombay. The Hindus of Sindh had already initiated the proposal for it.

The Muslims, largely under the influence of *Pirs* and *Zamindars*, were traditionally conservative, but during the visit of Edwin Montague to Karachi in 1917, the Sindh branch of the Central National Mohammedan Association raised again the question of separation of Sindh. In 1925, the All-India Muslim League adopted a resolution moved by Shaikh Abdul Majid Sindhi, urging separation of Sindh from Bombay. The Delhi proposals of 1927 included the separation of Sindh as one of the Muslim demands. Therefore, separation of Sindh became an all-India question. Even the Bombay Provincial Committee, which was appointed to work with the Simon Commission and was presided over by Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto, did not recommend separation, though Syed Miran Muhammad Shah dissented from the majority view. The Simon Commission only recommended the examination of the financial and administrative details of the proposal. By now, the Muslim of Sindh were getting organized and a new leadership was rising. The case for the separation of Sindh had been argued before the Bombay Committee by a deputation on behalf of the Sindh Mohammadan Association. The leading lights of this deputation were Khan Bahadur Muhammad Ayub Khuro and Khan Bahadur Wali Muhammad Hassan Ali, son of the founder of Sindh Madresah. Khan Bahadur Khuhro issued a booklet "*Sufferings of Sindh*", and appears before the Joint Parliamentary Select Committee.<sup>7</sup> The Muslim opinion was by now unanimously in favour of separation, and in the Government of India Act of 1935, the demand for separation of Sindh was accepted.



Sindh became a separate autonomous province on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1936 and, contrary to expectation, its financial position was also satisfactory, but politically the picture for the first few years was very confused. Coupland, who reviewed the working of provincial self-governments till the end of 1942, was however very critical:

"The separation of Sindh from Bombay had been a concession to communalism. Its Moslems had been lifted from a minority status to that of a majority. It was clearly up to them to make a success of the new Muslem Province, but they betrayed from the outset an even more desperate incapacity to unite for the purpose of forming a strong and stable administration.

...Elsewhere, as has been seen, governments were deprived of security and self-confidence by this lack of a steady and coherent party system, but nowhere was their hold on office more hazardous than in Sindh".<sup>8</sup>

An account of what happened in Sindh politics from 1937 to 1946 makes dismal reading. Nobody seemed to have any loyalty except to himself. Even the veteran leader of a party would unceremoniously cross the floor of the House, if that seemed the only means of securing a ministership. For quite a time Khan Bahadur Allah Bux maintained a pro-congress government mainly with the help of Hindu votes which were considerably in excess of the Hindu share on the basis of population. He was dismissed by the Governor when he renounced his title and expressed pro-congress views, after it started Direct Action against the government in 1942. On 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1942, Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah formed a coalition Government consisting of two members of the Muslim League, one independent Muslim, and two Hindus. This ministry started well and for the first time it appeared that the Muslim League had, after all, obtained control of the province. All the Muslim ministers joined the League, and on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1943 the Sindh Assembly passed a resolution on lines of the Lahore Resolution of 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1940. In the Lahore Resolution, which is also called as Pakistan Resolution, it was demanded that "the Muslim majority provinces, namely the Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan, NWFP, and Bengal should be separated from the rest of India and amalgamated to form independent states".<sup>9</sup> On 14<sup>th</sup> May the ex-Premier, Allah Bux was shot by four men near Shikarpur. The murder was said to have nothing to do with politics. Khan Bahadur M.A Khuro was however implicated but was discharged for want of proof.

The differences amongst the Muslim members, however, undermined the position of the ministry. Acute difference arose between G.M. Syed, the president of the Sindh Muslim League, and Premier Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, which gradually crystallized on the basis of principles. On 7<sup>th</sup> July 1944, the Working Committee of the Sindh Provincial Muslim League passed a resolution criticizing the Muslim League Ministry for failure to give relief to the Haris and formation of syndicates for handling food purchases, and called upon the ministers to resign. In December 1944, the Quaid-e-Azam tried to settle the differences between the provincial Premier and the head of the provincial League, but without real success, and the position of the ministry remained unsteady. On 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1946, G.M. Syed was expelled from the All-India Muslim League by the Action committee of the league. Next month, a coalition was formed between the Congress representatives and the Muslim dissident groups including supporters of G.M. Syed and Late Khan Bahadur Allah Bux, and Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah tendered his resignation. The position was so unsettled that the Governor of Sindh prorogued the Sindh legislative Assembly and ordered re-elections which were held in December, 1946. These resulted in the election of twenty Congressmen, thirty-five Muslim Leaguers, and three Europeans and two members of the Jamiat. The Muslim League Ministry was re-formed on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1947 with Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah as Premier and with M.A. Khuhro, Pir Ilahi Bux, Pirzada Abdus Sattar, Mir Ghulam Ali Khan Talpur, and Mir Bunde Ali Khan Talpur, as ministers. On 26<sup>th</sup> June 1947, Sindh Legislative Assembly decided at a special sitting that Sindh should join the new Pakistan Constituent Assembly and thus Sindh became the first Province to opt for Pakistan under the scheme of 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1947.

### References:

1. Dr. S.M. Ikram., *Modern Muslim India and the British of Pakistan*, (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1965), P.339, (here after cited, Ikram, Modern Muslim India).
2. *Tahzib-ul -Akhlaq*, Lahore, August 1968.
3. This organization was started as National Mohammedan Association on 12<sup>th</sup> May 1878, but was later re-named the Central

National Mohammedan Association after it had its branches in various parts of the sub-continent.

4. Nagendranath Gupta., Reflections and Reminiscences, (Bombay: Hind Kitabs, 1947), 90 p., (Here after cited, Gupta, Reflections).
  5. Ikram, Modern Muslim India, op.cit, p.341.
  6. Gupta, Reflections, opcit, .p.90.
  7. Ikram, Modern Muslim India, op.cit. p.342.
  8. Sir Reginald Coupland. The Indian Politics 1936-1942, (London: O.U.P., 1943), P.65.
  9. I.H. Qureshi (General Editor), A Short History of Pakistan, (Karachi: University of Karachi, 1967), p.872.
-