

DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STUDY OF
JACOBABAD DISTRICT: HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL ASPECTS

Azizullah Memon
Rahim Bux Sabayo
M.Ilyas Rajput

The history of this area is as old as the Indus Valley Civilization. After remaining under the rule of Aryans, the Budhist and Alexander, it came under the sway of Muhammad Bin Qasim. Around 1026 AD Sindh came under the tutelage of Mahmud Ghazni and later the Kings of Delhi, Soomras, Sammas, Kalhoras, and Talpurs governed Sindh for several centuries. After the annexation of Sindh by British India, Sir Charles Napier was appointed as the Governor of Sindh Province with headquarters at Karachi. Sir Charles Napier sent a detachment under Captain John Jacob to upper Sindh frontiers to stop Baloch insurrections in 1844-45, who made his headquarter at Khan Garh (presently Jacobabad). He defeated Jakhranis and Domkis then settled in Shirani, Lahri and other areas of Balochistan. Sir Charles Napier, the first British conqueror of Sindh, established Sindh Horse Garrison which was stationed at Jacobabad (Khan Garh) to contain Afghan aggression and in-surrection of Baloch tribes. By the end of 19th century Sindh Horse Garrison was replaced by Upper Sindh Frontier Special Force which still exists by the name of special police force with cavalry of about 30 horses. General John Jacob died in December 1858 and was buried in the Christian cemetery situated in the West of the town and his grave and memorial still exists. It appears that he loved his Arab Horse called "MESSENGER" so much that it lies burried in the corner of his grave.

After independence, a sub-division Nasirabad was created comprising Usta Muhammad and Jhatpat Ta-

lukas which were detached from Sibi district, and made part of Jacobabad district. After creation of Balochistan as a separate province in 1970, Nasirabad was made a district of Balochistan Province.

The majority of the population of Jacobabad district comprises of Baloch tribes namely Jakhrani, Khosa, Domki, Jamali, Umrani, Buledi, Mazari and Rind. Besides, the Sarkis, Shaikhs, Abras, Soomras and Hindu reside in the district. The main occupation of the people is Agriculture. Hindus dominate the commerce and trade. They are mainly settled in the major towns of the district.

The inhabitants are generally fond of folk music and dances, which are often arranged on ceremonial occasions. The musical instruments like Been, Alghuza, Nar and Yaktara are played locally. The famous "SAMAT" dance "JHUMER" is popular among men and women alike and is performed in separate gatherings. In this type of dance, performers dance rhythmically around drum-beater matching their movements strictly with the beats of the drums.

The famous festivals of the area include an annual fair of Hindus which is celebrated in village Ghouspur on the birth of their saint Guru Garib Das and a Horse and Cattle Show is held in Jacobabad town.

HORSE AND CATTLE SHOW

The Horse and Cattle Show is an important annual cultural event. Jacobabad being the central place on the borders of Balochistan, Punjab and Sindh, has developed into a good marketing place for sale and purchase of high breed horses and good quality cattle. Sindh province inherits mixed breeds of horses of Arabian, Kakani, Afghani and Garhi origin. In olden days the armies depend-

ed on good cavalry. The show used to provide an opportunity for the purchase of high breed horses for armies. The regular horse show was first organised in 1847 by General John Jacob commandant of the Sindh Horse Battalion which flourished during his life time. General John Jacob also organised an annual fair of cattle, crops and cottage industries and since he was himself primarily a horse man and interested in purchasing good breed horses for his battalion, the exhibition and races of good breed horses became its special feature.

The scope of the fair was expanded to include six categories: (i) Horse and Pony Show; (ii) Cattle, Sheep, Goat and Poultry Show; (iii) Exhibition of Agricultural Products; (iv) Products of Cottage Industries; (v) Malakhro (Sindhi Wrestling); and (vi) Governor Darbar (Nowadays Prime Minister or President Darbar in which the prize distribution ceremony is held). Besides agricultural equipments and advanced agricultural technology, handicrafts and small industry products are exhibited for educational purposes of the farmers.

Jacobabad district derives its name from its headquarter town, and owes its origin to general John Jacob, who was the first political superintendent and British Army Commandant who established an army camp here in 1847, which later flourished into a big city. This area was then popularly known as Khangarh.

Jacobabad district is stretched over an area of 5278 Sq. Km. bounded by Balochistan in the North-West and Punjab in the North East. The district lies between 27° -55' to 28° -29' towards North latitude and 68° -00 to 69° -44 in the East longitude. The general elevation of the district is about 50 meters above the sea level, slopping

Grassroots

from North -West towards South-East. The physical aspect of the district has been changed by the construction of a great protective bund, known as Kashmore Bund in order to protect the area from river floods. Before the construction of the Protective Bund the floods inundated the low-lying area of district in South-East every year. Jacobabad is one of the hottest places in the world. The climate is extremely hot during summer but pleasant during winter. The temperature usually ranges between the highest at 28°C to 44°C . Some times it goes as high as up to 48°C in the months of May and June. December and January are the coldest months with temperatures ranging between 8°C to 24°C . The climate in Kashmore and Kandhkot is temperate due to their proximity to river Indus. The average rainfall ranges between 25 and 75 millimeters approximately per annum.

According to population census 1981, the district's total population is placed at 10, 12, 476 souls, showing an increase by 42.8% during 1972-81. The average annual growth rate was recorded at 9.3% which is higher than provincial average of 3.52% mainly due to immigration. The total area of the district is 5,278 Sq.Km. with the density of 192 persons per Sq. Km. The urban population was recorded at 1,58,426 persons registering an annual growth rate of 4.6% during 1972-81. The sex ratio (males per 100 females) was 104. It was 103 for rural and 110 for urban area. The adult population (18 years and above) comprises 48.3% of the total population.(1)

The literacy ratio was recorded at 11% with 29.2% in the urban and 7.4% in the rural area. The male literacy ratio at 17.5% was comparatively higher than 3.2% for females.

Grassroots

The labour force constitute 28.7% of the total population of the district. The labour force participation rates for urban and rural areas were placed at 25.71% and 29.3% respectively. The participation rates for males and females were 55.61% and 0.8% respectively.

The major occupation groups comprise Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting which constituted 77.6% of the total labour force. The other important groups were "population and related workers, transport equipment operators and labours" and professional, technical and related workers" which absorbed 8.3% and 5.0% respectively of the total labour force.(2)

District Jacobabad is administratively composed of the five Talukas: Jacobabad, Garhi Khairo, Thul, Kandhkot and Kashmore. The details of major cities, towns, historical places and events are as follows:

Jacobabad

Jacobabad is one of the hottest places in the world with temperature ranging from 119° F to 125° F. It is connected with railway and road to Quetta and other important taluka headquarter towns. This city has rice mills, cotton ginning and processing factories and is an important food grains trading centre. The town is a hub of educational institutions and provides numerous recreational facilities for its residents. The important historical structures in the town are the Victoria Clock Tower and the Residency, which were both built during the British Rule.

Victoria Clock and Residency

The Victoria Clock Tower was erected in front of the Residency. A beautiful Residency building was con-

structed over 21 acres with spacious living and sitting rooms and beautiful lawns. General John Jacob the political superintendent and the Commandant of Upper Sindh Frontier Force lived in the Residency from 1847-58 and was buried in the Christian Cemetery situated in the West of the town.

Guddu Barrage

Guddu Barrage is located in the East of Kashmore at a distance of about 16 Km. It irrigates 27, 04, 304 acres of land in the districts of Sukkur, Jacobabad and Larkana and protects vast agricultural lands from inundation. A Thermal electric power station has been established near the barrage. The barrage is a place of tourist's attraction.(3)

Kandhkot Taluka

Kandhkot is situated on the right bank of the River Indus at a distance of 48 miles from Jacobabad. It derives its name from Kanditey-Kot, the fort on the river bank. It is a sub-divisional headquarter and is connected with Jacobabad by road and railway. It is an important centre of educational facilities and is a major mandi town.(4)

Garhi Khairo

Garhi Khairo is situated at a distance of 36 miles on the South -West of Jacobabad. It is connected with district headquarter by rail and road. The town provides higher educational and health facilities to vast catchment area and surrounding population.

Thul

Thul is situated on the bank of Sonwah. It is situated 24 miles on the Eastern side of Jacobabad. Thul is well known for rice and gram trade. There are many rice

husking and flour mills in the town.

WATER SUPPLY AND DRAINAGE

The population coverage through the existing water supply facilities was estimated around 1,49,000 persons in urban and 19,232 persons in rural settlements of the district upto 1983.

The household census 1980 placed 63% of household in the district using handpumps, 16% received piped water and 10% used wells. Access to piped water in urban areas was estimated at 42%. In rural areas 65% of household used handpumps as compared to 56% in urban areas.(5)

In 1978, six towns namely Jacobabad, Kandhkot, Kashmore, Garhi Khairo, Garhi Hassan and Thul had partial water supply coverage which has been provided full coverage by 1981 through expansion projects producing 2.624 million gallons of water per day. The rural water supply coverage was expanded to cover Karampur, Dadu-Dero, Buxapur, Jumo Dakan and Garhi Hassan.

Jacobabad and Thul were provided sewerage and drainage facilities. The drainage coverage in rural area is almost non-existent. The provision of water supply and sewerage facilities in this district has received priority since 1977.

Water supply schemes, Jacobabad (Phase III & VI) Kandhkot (Phase II), Kashmore and Garhi Khairo, are under implementation and are likely to be completed by the end of current financial year except for Jacobabad Phase IV scheme which is in its initial stage. The sewerage

Grassroots

and drainage projects are under implementation at Garhi Khairo, Kandhkot, Kashmore, Ghouspur and Jacobabad. In addition, three drainage schemes costing Rs.28.418 million were completed by the end of 1986, drainage schemes of Ghouspur and Jacobabad have also been completed. Rural water supply schemes Udi, Jafferabad rural, Babu Khoso, Madadpur, Muhammadpur and Hamidullah Buledi were implemented during 1985-86 at an estimated cost of Rs.9.73 million. Udi and Jafferabad water supply was completed in the end of 1986, whereas the works on the remaining projects continued. Rs.18.605 million were earmarked in ADP 1985-86 for all the water supply and drainage works under implementation in district Jacobabad, and Ghouspur with Rs.6.5363 million in minor works of local nature.(6,7)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The local government institutions have been fully activated since 1979. The local bodies structure comprises of a District Council, 2 Municipal Committees, 4 Town Committees, 43 Union Councils and 5 Tehsil Councils. District Council Jacobabad is an independent body with an elected Chairman, Vice Chairman and members from all over the district.(8) Among multifarious functions, the District Council Jacobabad is operating medical dispensaries, veterinary hospitals and maternity homes. District Council Jacobabad expended Rs.44.55 million on local development for construction of primary schools, roads, health centres and dispensaries.(9)

The Municipal Committee Jacobabad expended Rs.10.832 million mainly on construction of internal roads and drains. The Municipal Committee of Kandhkot undertook local development work and expended

Rs.2.592 million. Similarly Town Committee of Kashmir spent Rs.3.279 million, Gahi Khairo Rs.0.732 million, and Thul Rs.1.791 million.

CONCLUSION

A general survey of statistics has been done in the paper which would be beneficial for the further development of the district in respect of health, education, agriculture, roads and water supply.

It is also highly fruitful in order to solve the Demographic and Socio-economic problems of the district.

REFERENCES

1. Central Statistical Office, Population Census Report 1981, Karachi, p.29 (Report)
2. Department of Agriculture, Livestock, Food and Fisheries, Government of Sindh, Karachi 1983-84, p.61 (Report)
3. Sindh Agriculture Supplies Organization, Karachi 1981-82, p.61 (Report)
4. Irrigation and Power Department, Government of Sindh, Karachi 1981-84, p.60 (Report)
5. Census of Electricity Undertaking, 1984-85, p.136 (Report).
6. Directorate of School/College Education, Hyderabad 1985, p.226 (Report)
7. Directorate of Health Services, Government of Sindh, Hyderabad 1984, p.245 (Report)
8. Bureau of Statistics, Planning and Development Department, Government of Sindh, Karachi, 1986 p.23 (Report)
9. Sindh in Figures, Bureau of Statistics, Government of Sindh, Karachi, 1987 (Card)