

ARAB ADMINISTRATION IN SINDH

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GEOGRAPHICAL CONDITIONS OF SINDH

Sindh lies in the north western side of the sub-continent. On the north it has Punjab. Its eastern border extends upto Rajistan (India). On South it has Rann of Cutch and the Indian Ocean. The Western border of Sindh extends upto Baluchistan.

There are different opinions as far as the name "Sindh" is concerned. Most of the historians are of the opinion, that "Sindh" was the name which was given to it by the Aryans, when they came to Sindh. In the language of the Aryans "Sindhu" means the river. As the great Indus is flowing from its heart they called it as "Sindhu". There are other group of historians, according to them Sindh had trade relations with Egypt since many years and from Sindh cotton was exported to Egypt as Egyptians called cotton "Sindhu". The country since then was known to them as "Sindhu".¹

The author of Tuhftul Karam while describing the name of Sindh is of the opinion that this land was named as Sindh, after the name of a son of Hazrat Noah, who came and settled in Sindh. Generally it is admitted by the historians Sindh gets its name from Sindhu (Indus) which is flowing through it. Politically as well as geographically, Sindh is a land of two parts upper and lower (North and South). Both the parts have different climate.

Sindh has always been a target of foreign invasions for the reason that Sindh was a land of plenty, whose prosperity, fertility and wealth deeply impressed all

of them and they wanted to subjugate it. Secondly its geopolitical situation also attracted foreign invaders. Being on the coast of the Arabian sea it was considered as a gateway to south Asia. Any invader who if occupied Sindh valued the acquisition of Sindh because it would furnish an excellent strategic position to carry on his marches in South Asia without any hindrances.²

POLITICAL CONDITIONS OF SINDH BEFORE THE INVASION OF ARABS

In about fourth century (A.D) Sindh was ruled by Rai Dynasty. This dynasty ruled Sindh for about one hundred and thirty seven years (Rai Diwal was the first ruler of this dynasty). Sindh was a vast country during the reign of Rai dynasty. During this period the boundaries of Sindh were extended in east upto Kashmir, in west upto Mekran, in South upto Arabian sea and Dybal port and in the north upto the mountains of Kardan and Kaidanan. The entire dominion of Rai Dynasty was divided into four regions. "The boundary of the first region started from the eastern bank of river Indus, Brahmanabad, Nirunkot, Dybal, Larkana, Lakha and Sama were under the jurisdiction of this region. The second region was located on the western side of river Indus, this stretched from Siwistan, Budho, Jankan, Koh-e-Payah, Rajhan upto the border of Mekran. Iskalandah, Dhaliya, Kotal warch and Chachpura were in the jurisdiction of the third region. The fourth and last region comprised of Multan Al-Sakka, Brahmanpura Karur, Ashhar, Kumb upto the frontiers of Kashmir".³

These regions (Provinces) were ruled by Governors, with least interference from the King. This big Kingdom was then ruled by Rai Diwaij. After the death of Rai Diwaij, Rai Saharis I succeeded his father. After the death of Rai Saharis I Rai Sahsi was enthroned, as the new ruler. After his death Rai Saharis II succeeded him.

But in his last days, when he fell ill his minister Chach son of Sailaij who was a very wise and cunning fellow got the throne with the help of queen Sundhi (Suhan Devi). Later on she married Chach, whom she loved madly.

Chach was opposed by the peoples of Sindh and they did not recognize him as a lawful and legitimate ruler. Thus they conspired against Chach. But Chach took steps against them and also tried to bring outlying province of his empire under his strict control. Jats and Luhanas raised the standard of revolt in Brahmanabad, but their revolt was suppressed with an Iron hand by Chach. "He ruled for forty years and on his death his brother Chander was enthroned as new ruler, who ruled Sindh for eight years. By profession Chander was a priest. Dahir son of Chach assumed the reigns of the government on the death of Chander. (700-712 A.D) (81-94 A.H).⁴

During the reign of Dahir, the majority of the population of Sindh was follower of Buddhism, whereas, the ruler was strictly adherent to Hinduism of pur Brahmanical thought. "The conquest of Sindh by Arabs commenced at the time when Bhudhism was fading and Brahmanism was once again re-asserting its supremacy in Sindh".⁵

EARLY RELATIONS OF ARABS AND INDIA

The trade relation between Indians and Arabs had existed long before the advent of Islam. The Arab merchants had visited the ports of India. They extended their commercial links as far as east India and China in the far east. "In the beginning of 7th century Arabs succeeded in establishing their colonies in Ceylon, Gujarat,

Malabar and Karomandal. The commercial activities of Arabs enabled them to re-organize colonies on the entire sea coast of Malabar, and Koromandal down to Ceylon. The people of Ceylon had very cordial relations with Arabs, these relations, however developed on sound basis after the advent of Islam in the 7th Century".⁶

The Arabs repeatedly attacked Sindh but nothing substantial was achieved by them. During the reign of Hazrat Umar (Second Caliph) Arabs attacked Sindh in 25 A.H. (637 A.D) from Oman a province on the eastern sea coast. But in the later period of Second Caliph these attacks were discontinued. During the reign of Hazrat Usman (Third Caliph) Arabs resumed their task and this time they subjugated Mekran a province of Sindh and brought it under their control, But later on due to some deficiency at the centre this province slipped away from their hands.

In 74 A.H. (694 A.D) Hajjaj Bin Yousif Thaqfi was appointed as Viceroy of the eastern provinces of the empire of Ummayyads by Caliph Abdul Malik Bin Marwan. "The ruling caliph sent an expedition headed by Muhammad-Ibn-Haroon Al-Nimari for consolidating the Arab power in Mekran. During that time Arabs also brought Panjgora and Armail under their control".⁷

"The cause for final attack on Sindh was that the ruler of ceylon (Sarandeh) sent some valuable gifts consisting of pearls, jewels and Abyssinian slaves to Hajjaj Bin Yousif. There were also on board a number of Muslim women, who were making a journey in order to visit Kaaba. The ships containing these valuable gifts and passengers unfortunately dashed to the shores of Dybal due to bad wind. These ships at Dybal were looted and attacked by

Sindh Pirates, women and children were thrown into prison at Dybal".⁸

According to the version of Chachnama among these women there was a woman who belonged to Banu Aziz tribe cried O.Hijjaj O.Hijjaj hear us and help us. When this incident was communicated to Hijjaj he immediately replied "Here am I".⁹

In 711 A.D. Hijjaj sent an army under young leader Mohammad Bin Qasim Al-Thaqfi, who was his cousin and son in law, to have final combat with Dahir. This young and able general defeated Dahir and conquered Sindh. The country was finally annexed to the dominion of the Umayyads empire. Governors to this province of the empire were appointed by the Caliph himself. Nine governors ruled Sindh during the reign of the Umayyads. After the downfall of Umayyads in 132 A.H. (750 A.D)- Sindh came under the control of Abbasides. During the reign of Abbaside Dynasty eight governors ruled in succession in Sindh.

About one and a half century Arabs ruled major portion of Sindh and Baluchistan.

"Mutawakil was the last ruler of Abbasides, on his Merciless murder by his own Turkish guards, the province of Sindh was split up into two parts. One was Al-mansurah and second was Multan. Hence forth those parts were held by local Chiefs of Arab origins." 9-A

POLITICAL ADMINISTRATION

"From the very beginning the Arabs did not interfere in the internal administration of Sindh allowing the

natives to carry on the administration of Sindh. Arabs continued the pattern of administration, on the same basis which had prevailed in the past. They incorporated the panchayat system in Sindh-Arab set-up of administration. As a result of this concession the natives were in a position to get their matters settled through these panchayats according to their own laws."¹⁰

The Arabs adopted a policy of tolerance towards the natives of Sindh, as such the Brahmans and Buddhist priests received the special treatment by Arabs. "They were also allowed to hold high offices of the state. Some of them were entrusted with the most important affairs of state, and discharged their duties, they were loyal and honest to the state."¹¹

The head of the province in new Sindh-Arab administration was "Wali" (Governor). He was appointed by the Caliph himself.

"After the appointment, the said governor immediately received from the Caliph, a Khilafat (a beautiful dress), two swords two bracelets, a parcham (flag) and a tanqe. These governors had powers to appoint (Amils) over the towns for the smooth running of the affairs of the province. These officials were also responsible to look after the cantonment areas and juddis which were established for the protection of the forts."¹²

The governor of the province in this new set-up was a military commander as well as the chief executive in the province. He was also allowed to exercise the powers of a treasury officer, in the provinces. He had authority to declare war and make peace. He was also authorized to conclude treaties with foreign countries on behalf of the

ruling Caliph. He could raise and decrease the land revenue according to the condition of the crops, and even could grant general remission when there was a dry season (draught) or a famine. "It was the prime duty of the provincial governor to provide protection to all the citizens irrespective of caste and creed. He was also responsible for the defence of the province as well as for remitting the fixed share of revenue from the province to the royal treasury"¹³

2. REVENUE SYSTEM

The Arabs adopted the same revenue system in Sindh which they had adopted in the other parts of their conquered land. According to that system the "Chief sources of provincial revenue were, Kharaj, Zakat, Sadqah, Jizyah, Khums and Ushr".¹⁴

Zakat is one of the five fundamentals of Islam. It is a kind of help from rich to the poor and needy individuals of the Islamic society. It was a kind of tax which is levied on capital goods, fruits, grain and dates. The uniform rate of Zakat is 2.172 % of the entire amount which a person or individual possess through out a year. In case of agricultural producer, Zakat was immediately levied after the harvest. But in case of domestic quadrupeds, precious metals, stones or on cash and on merchandise goods. The pre-requisite of Zakat was full one year uninterrupted possession."¹⁵ In Sindh Arabs introduced this tax (Zakat) and it was recovered from the Arab Muslims exclusively on the definite forms of property they possessed in Sindh.

KHARAJ AND USHR

"The Kharaj was an annual levy paid by the citi-

zens of the conquered countries to the Muslims. It was kind of a land tax collected from the non-Muslims at the rate of $\frac{2}{5}$ of the produce, if the land was watered by a public canal."16 "In case when a land was irrigated by artificial means or a lift, the rate was $\frac{3}{5}$ of produce, if land was unirrigated $\frac{1}{4}$ of probable produce was collected as tax. $\frac{1}{3}$ was fixed as tax on gardens, fish and pearls."17

The Arab landholders had to pay the land tax at a very concessional rate of $\frac{1}{10}$ of the produce. This tax was known as "Ushr". "In the case when a land was watered by artificial means the rate of the tax was reduced to $\frac{1}{20}$ of the produce."18

"Jizyah was a tax recovered from non-muslims, as they were exempted from the military services, which was on the contrary compulsory for Muslims. In lieu of this tax, Muslims were responsible for the protection of non-muslims."19

Házrat Umar the Second Caliph fixed three rates of Jizyah levied from the non-muslims, rich had to pay 4 (four) dinars, an individual of the middle class had to pay 2 dinars yearly and a poor had to pay one dinar yearly as tax. Women, Children, Beggars and men suffering from incurable diseases were exempted from the payment of Jizyah. "During the reign of Ummayyads, Jizyah was also imposed on the muslims (new muslims) . In return they were allowed to carry on their respective professions without any hindrances"20

GHANIMAH AND KHUMS

"Ghanimah (Booty or Spoils of War) was the wealth which was seized in the wars. One fifth of this

wealth was compulsory to be deposited in Baitual mal (Public exchequer).²¹ The ghanimah seized in Sindh during wars on various occasions was more enormous keeping in view the socio-economic conditions of Sindh at that time. After the conquest of Sindh and neighbouring countries like Gujrat, Cutch, Rajistan and Northern Punjab the conquerors siezed a large amount of wealth as Booty (Ghanimah) and they sent 40000 Million, dirhams as 1/5 of the entire amount of central Baitual mal." "Muhammad Bin Qasim deposited 120 million dirhams 13200 maund of pure gold, jewels, pearls and other valuable things as 1/5 of the spoils of war or Ghanimah, to the central Baitual Mal. These all valuable things were seized by him from Sindh during the wars/from temples of Hindus in Sindh."²²

JUDICIAL SYSTEM OF ARABS IN SINDH

Islam is a religion totally based on democratic as well as socialistic principles. It lays great stress upon the equality and brotherhood of men. After conquest, Mohammad Bin Qasim turned his attention towards the judicial system in Sindh. He appointed judges and courts were established in every nook and corner of the conquered land for dispensing quick justice to the people.

As far as the civil law, concerned local people were allowed to get their civil cases decided by those panchayats, and the muslim judges had least interference in their functions.

Those panchayats dispensed justice to the non-muslims according to their own laws and traditions. In the case when a muslim was the one or the other party in

the proceedings then Qazi (a muslim judge) generally interefered and decided the case with help of a Brahman or Budhist Shamani. The Muslims were governed by Shariat laws based on the principles of Muslim jurisprudence." 23

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The people of Sindh greatly benefitted by economic development which was carried on in the country by Arabs during the later period of their rule in Sindh. Sindh was well known throughout the world for the export of citrus. This was brought from Kashmir through river Indus at Dybal, a sea port of Sindh was an amporium of trade of perfumes, Chinaware, ornaments and the spices. It also served as an intermediary anchorage for the ships of the east and west.

Arabs were much interested in the agriculture of the country as a result of this they introduced new methods of irrigation and farming in Sindh. They encouraged gardening and plantation of different varieties of fruits and vegetables. These steps paved the way for the installation of various industries in Sindh. Digging of numerous wells as well as the spreading of a fine network of canals gave impetus to agriculture, which was in the hands of local people. "The internal administration of Sindh was in the hands of local people. Therefore, it was a condition for Arab soldiers that they could hold land on the basis of military services, but they were not allowed to devote themselves to agriculture or any other profession."24

Arabs, took keen interest in the development of Sindh. The traders of Sindh had regular contacts with the Arabs and other countries. Due to those contacts, a system

of lucrative trade between Sindh and most of the parts of west Asia had started. "During the rule of Arabs agricultural products like, Sugar, Wheat, Coconut, Mango, Lemon and Cotton were exported at a larger scale to the other parts of the world. Immense agricultural produce at that time showed Sindh as the most fertile and prosperous region of the muslim world. This prosperity also affected the life of the people in Sindh and made them happy and contented."²⁵

DEVELOPMENT OF LITERATURE AND ISLAMIC CULTURE

The advent of the Arabs in Sindh opened a new era in the development of Islamic culture. "Arab conquest of Sindh from the political point of view was an insignificant event in history of Islam but the effects of conquest upon muslim culture were profound and far reaching."²⁶ When the Arabs came to Sindh they were astonished at the superiority of the civilization which they found in the country." The sublimity of Hindu Philosophical ideas, the richness, and versatility of Hindu intellect were a stronger revelation to them. "The cardinal doctrine of muslim theology and concept of one God., was already known to Hindu Saints and Philosophers."²⁷

Infact when Arab embarked for the conquest of the world, they were unaware about Art and Civilization. But it is also a fact that as conquerors they patronized and encouraged the Arts in the conquered territory accordingly.

The economic background and geographical environments reveal that the sons of the desert were not advanced in Arts and architecture, paintings, music, science, and fine arts. In pre-Islamic days Arabs lived in small huts and most of them were nomads. They were uncivilized

and barbarious. But after the rise of Islam every aspect of their life was totally changed.

The teaching of Islam and the preaching of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) transformed Arabs as the main contributors to the development of the world civilization. After the demise of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) Arabia was at that time a merely geographical expression. But later on that tiny state was turned into a very mighty state. "The education of the Prophet changed their lives and infused in them an unquenched thirst for learning of Arts and Sciences."²⁸ It was held later on that under Umayyads the Arabs began to study, History, Geography, Philosophy and Theology. During that period the Arabs who were in Sindh had close contacts with Damascus and other seats of Islamic learning and consequently the light of knowledge spread towards Sindh which was destined to illuminate the whole sub-continent.

The Umayyad were interested in some branches of science known to foreign nations. The Abbassides on the other hand were keenly interested in all the branches of Arts and Science. That is why their period is known in History as the golden period of muslim learning". By that time mosques had become the places of public lectures, where the learned persons not only spoke on theology and tradition but also on other branches of the sciences."²⁹

Before the Arab conquest, Sindh was in fact inhabited by learned persons and philosophers. Due to this reason Sindh once was a great contributor to development of Arab science and literature. "The learned and wise persons in search of knowledge often travelled and visited

the capital Baghdad as well as the towns of the entire Muslim World. The scholars and learned men of Sindh travelled in pursuit of knowledge and learning. They engaged themselves with the delicate work tracing out the origin as well as the impact of Indo-Pak sciences on Mathematics, Philosophy, Politics, Medicine and various other subjects. The Arab governors of Sindh developed Arabic literature in Sindh. In this regard they also encouraged local as well as foreign scholars."³⁰

With these efforts some books on various subjects were translated into Arabic language and this was a great contribution of Sindhi Scholars towards the development and progress of science and Arts. Infact Sindh played a leading role in making the structure of Arab Sciences and some of the leading figures of Sindh were working in the various department of learning such as poetry, prose language etc. As such they all had contributed for the development and progress of Arab learning.

"When Imran-ul-Musa Barmaki was appointed as Governor of Sindh (His forefathers belonged to Budhist family of the Bacteria (Balkh) who were well known scholars) He was much interested in Art and literature. He sent a deputation of Scholars from Sindh to work at Bait-ul-Hikmah at Baghdad. They were engaged there to translate the books of various subjects which were formally brought by some Sindhi Scholars there. These scholars worked there and translated books of physical as well as social science."³¹

The out-standing achievement of the period of Al-Mansurah Kingdom was the first translation of Holy Quran in Sindhi language.

Writing of prose had probably been started from the days to early Ummayyads. They were much interested in the ancient history of the Arabs. All the stories of pre-Islamic days were collected and compiled in their day.

The Arabic language due to the absence of some signs was understood by Arabs only. Thus it was necessary that systematic form of writing be invented so that the language could be read and understood by the people of the conquered land. "The credit of this task went to Hajjaj Bin Yousif Thaqfi the renowned general of Abdul Malik Bin Marwan. He made some improvement in Arabic Alphabet and promoting the use of vowels and points above and below the words, made it quite readable by those who did not know Arabic."³²

Religious writing also occupied, a prominent place in Arabic works in Sindh, as such religious writings may be considered as great factor in the development of Arabic literature in Sindh. Commentaries were written on Quran. Hadith and text-books were also written during this period.

"The Arabs established centres for religious studies throughout Sindh. Academics at Dybal, Almansoorah, and Kuzelar were famous throughout the Arab world. The Ummayyad period therefore, known as the inaugural period of the Arabic literature in which both prose and poetry advanced quickly."³³

ARAB ARCHITECTURE IN SINDH

"Ummayyad as well as Abbasides were greatly interested in architecture. Damascus as well as Baghdad dec-

orated by most beautiful edifices".³⁴ Ultimately in Sindh after the conquest of Sindh Mohammad Bin Qasim had ordered for the building of Mosques. Under his instruction one mosque was made at Dybal and another at Al Rore. And from that day Sindh was called as Bab-ul-Islam. Besides these mosques, Arabs had also built forts and constructed towns in Sindh "The fort of Al-Mahfuza was built by Hakam Al Kalhe, Al Mansoorah was built by Amar son of Mohammad Bin Qasim. The town of Bayda was founded by Imran Barmaki, a Governor or Sindh."³⁵

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