

MIAN NOOR MUHAMMAD KALHORO'S RULE IN SIND AND ITS IMPACT ON SINDHI SOCIETY (1719-1753).

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After the fall of Thatta in 1520 A.D., the last *Sindhi* King Jam Feroz of *Samma* dynasty lost crown of Sind and consequently the country went into foreign hands viz *Arghun* dynasty (1520-1555) which was followed by *Tarkhans* dynasty (1555-1591) and *Mughals* (1591-1737) A.D. respectively. The ruling span of these three dynasties was more than two centuries, and during this period people of Sind underwent a worst type of Colonial rule and thus all the social institutions were destroyed by the rulers. Such were the conditions under which various tribes of Sind, which included *Dhareja*, *Sameja*, *Mangneja*, *Channa*, *Panhwar*, *Jatoi*, *Sodha*, *Sindhi-Baloch* and many other *Muslim and Hindu* tribes united themselves on one platform and raised their arms against alien rule.¹

After a long and gruesome interval, *Kalhoros* being native of Sind first appeared as ruling dynasty on the political arena of Sind at the dawn of eighteenth century, "*Kalhoros* acquired a reputation for sanctity, indicated by the title *Mian*, and wielded themselves with spiritual authority."² In fact they first appeared in the affairs of the country some time in the middle of eighteenth century, they were appointed Governors or Viceroys in 1701 and finally they seized total power in 1737. The long political struggle of dynasty alongwith the common people of *Sind* can be traced back with the name of Amir Muhammad Channe Khan (d. 1220) who enjoyed power and prestige in the court of Multan during the reign of *Ghasnavid* and *Ghour* dynasty.³ The next prominent person in the lineage of Amir Muhammad Channe was Mian Adam Shah *Kalhoros*. (d. 1606). In the beginning *Kalhoros* were believed mendicant and later on they used to preach religion and had become spiritual leaders, especially in the days of Mian Adam Shah who brought name and fame to dynasty with large number of disciples. Mian Adam Shah had wealth and greed, therefore, he purchased huge lands in upper Sind and settled down in *Chandka Pargana*, thus he wielded much influence as prominent landlord as well as spiritual leader (*Pir*) in Upper Sind.⁴

At that time the great Mughal, Akbar was not happy with Mirza Jani Baig, the ruler of Sind, and therefore, he assigned an important task to Abdul Rahim *Khan-e-Khanan*, his army commander. *Khan-e-Khanan* came to Sind and stayed at *Bukhar* where he heard about Mian Adam Shah, he went to this mysterious man and asked him that he intended to invade *Sind*, if Mian Adam Shah would "help him in achieving his goal, and in return he will be pleased with good reward." ⁵ Later on *Sind* was conquered and annexed with *Mughal* Empire in 1591 A.D. and Mian Adam Shah, a traditional *Pir* of *Sind*, received fertile lands in *Chandka Pargana* (old name of present *Larkana* District in *Sind*) as a reward for his traitorous act. The old and new masters of *Sind* were equally tyrant in nature and character. History will never forget the betrayal of Mian Adam Shah in helping invaders, who showed more wickedness, increased the misery of the people and committed perpetual massacre on the common people of *Sind*.

The rising influence of Mian Adam Shah and his involvement in religion and politics agitated minds of the alien rulers and very soon on the orders of Governor of *Multan*, he was eliminated. Mian Shah Ali *Kalhor*, another survival of the family was also found involved in politics, therefore, he was also *assassinated* by the Governor of *Bukhar*. Mian Naseer Muhammad was the first person in the family who continuously fought desperate battles for more than three decades against alien rulers in a well-organized manner and as a result he took control of some more parts of *Sind*. ⁶ After the death of *Mian Naseer Muhammad*, his son, *Mian Din Muhammad Kalhor* fought with *Moizuddin Jahandar Shah*, a grand son of *Aurangzeb* and Governor of *Multan*. He extended his territories and gained enough political power. Now it became evident to the Mughal rulers that *Kalhor* family was rising as a rival political power in *Sind*, and posed a potent threat to the Mughal rule in *Sind*. They took pains to have him executed. *Mian Din Muhammad* was the third member of the family who fell prey to the Mughals but even then it did not shake the determination of *Kalhoros* to grab power from alien rulers. With full support of the people of *Sind* the family continued its struggle under the leadership of *Mian Yar Muhammad*, who succeeded his slain brother *Mian Din Muhammad*. *Mian Yar Mohammad* ruled more or less half of the *Sind* for about eighteen years, and died in 1718 A.D, and was succeeded by his illustrious son *Mian Noor Muhammad Kalhor*.

Mian Noor Muhammad Kalhoro was enthroned on 13th November, 1719 as new ruler of *Sind*. Very little is known about his early life, it is believed that he was born about 1680 A.D. ⁷ He received traditional education under the supervision of his father, *Mian Yar Muhammad*. *Mian Noor Muhammad* was crown prince, therefore, he had received best education and his long association with his father, *Mian Yar Muhammad*, who gathered, or better say got freed, most part of *Sind* bit by bit. *Mian Noor Muhammad* held command of many war fronts and fought many fierce battles during the life time of his father. More experienced and matured he had great insight in foreign policy, War strategy and militarism. Thus *Mian Noor Muhammad* took reign of *Sind* at an appropriate time, when he was groomed enough to run the affairs of the kingdom. He proved himself an able administrator and tackled the affairs of the country with ease and confidence. Let it be borne in mind that the *Sindhi* society was then passing through a critical period. Political chaos, lawlessness, and social disorder prevailed all around. Agriculture, the main stay of the people of *Sind*, as well as other sources of their livelihood, were completely destroyed during the alien rule. Not only economic and political institutions but even the family institution was badly affected by the perpetual tyranny of the alien rulers. The peasantry class had abandoned their villages, farmsteads, houses to seek refuge elsewhere in order to fight against tyranny and tyrant. ⁸ *Mian Noor Muhammad* realized the misery of the people and attributed it to the singular fact that people of *Sind* had been trampled under the feet of aliens. Therefore, the foremost task he set for himself to rebuild *Sindhi* Society and restore confidence among its people. With this object in view he changed his attitude towards his subjects and saw to it that whatever he did had a soothing effect on them. The way he galvanized the people of *Sind* and prepared them for bringing about a definite change in the country was a great achievement.

In fact, "*Mian Yar Muhammad Kalhoro* may be regarded the real founder of the *Kalhoro* dynasty." ⁹ He took control some parts of *Shikarpur*, *Kandyaro*, *Larkano* and *Sivi* (*Sibi*) and in addition an area between *Indus* River and *Nara* obtained from *Aurangzeb* and therefore, he had right to call himself *Khudayar Khan*, and thus he claimed strong hold in upper *Sind*. Immediately after taking reign of *Sind* *Mian Noor Muhammad* made his allegiance to Emperor *Muhammad Shah* and in return received, like his father, the title of *Khudayar Khan* and a province of *Siwistan*. *Mian Noor Muhammad* had plans in mind to capture the remaining *Sind* also but was prevented

from it by the conflicts with the ruler of *Kalat* and *Daudpotras* which he had inherited from his late father.¹⁰ *Mian Noor Muhammad* was forced to attack on *Shikarpur*, the strongest hold of *Daudpotras*, with 60,000 soldiers under the command of his Generals namely *Shah Baharo*, *Murad Kalery* and *Rajo Lekhi*. In the battle heavy losses were suffered by both parties, meanwhile conditions for peace were accepted by both parties and thus war was stopped. As the matter was not fully resolved war broke out again and immediately one more battle was fought between the two, in which *Shikarpur* and *Khanpur* came under the control of *Mian Noor Muhammad*.¹¹

The chief of *Kalat*, *Abdullah Khan* who claimed himself "falcon of Mountains", after violating peace treaty had attacked on *Kachhi* an area under *Sindhi* territories. The battle between *Sindhi* forces and *Balouchi* forces were fought at a place known as *Jandari* (present *Khanpur*) in which *Abdullah Khan* the ruler of *Kalat* was killed.¹² At that moment if *Mian Noor Muhammad* had wanted to take control of *Kalat* he could have done it easily but he did not. It was simplicity and sincerity of *Mian Noor Muhammad* because he respected *Baluch's* of *Kalat* as they were also rulers and happened to be living in the immediate neighbourhood. It evidently shows that *Mian Noor Muhammad* was a man of great character and did not believe in land grabbing or expansionism. Very soon *Mian Noor Muhammad* was appointed as Governor of *Thatta* by the Court of *Delhi*, and later on he also occupied province of *Bakhar*, then the strongest fort of *Sind*, in 1736 A.D. By this time *Noor Muhammad* became virtually the ruler of the whole *Sind*. Upper and lower, from the desert of the east to the rocky hills of the west, including territories of former *Bahawalpur* state.¹³ The unification of *Sind* was result of *Mian Noor Muhammad's* sagacity. His military organization was so efficient that colonial rule of more than two centuries crumbled before it and *Sind* was once again reunited under his dynamic and courageous leadership. The total emancipation of the country was a good omen for the future of *Sind*. For this purpose tremendous sacrifices were offered by the common people of *Sind* alongwith *Kalhoru* dynasty. The achievement of this noble cause added further prestige to *Mian Noor Muhammad's* name.

Allegations were made against *Mian Noor Muhammad* that he was involved in the assassination of *Makhdoom Abdul Rehman* of *Khura*, a prominent religious leader of upper *Sind*. All these allegations were false. It may be mentioned here that, first of all *Mian Noor*

Muhammad himself descended from religious family and he always held all religious scholars and men of letters in great esteem. Had he been in any manner involved in the murder of *Makhdoom* Muhammad, the elder son of the deceased, would not have accepted *Jagirs* (huge-lands) granted to him by *Mian Noor Muhammad* in different parts of *Sind*.¹⁴

Mian Noor Muhammad was busy in consolidating his power, when *Nadar Shah*, on his return from *India*, and way back to *Iran* invaded *Sind*. On hearing of this sudden attack, *Mian Noor Muhammad* left *Khudabad* and fled away to the desert of *Thar*, where he put himself in the fort of *Umerkot*. *Nadir* chased him and reached *Umerkot* where he accepted defeat. As a result *Mian Noor Muhammad* paid 10 million cash and promised to pay 2 million as an annual tribute and made his allegiance to the Court of *Persia*. *Nadir Shah* took away two sons of *Mian Noor Muhammad* as hostages to the Court of *Persia* where they remained till the assassination of *Nadir Shah* in 1747 A.D. It may be mentioned here that *Mian Yar Muhammad* and his son *Mian Noor Muhammad* through a relentless struggle had, after a long time reunited *Sind* in its original form and shape. Now, with one blow of the tyrant, once again, the unity and cohesion of the country was shattered. *Nadir Shah* in his attack on *Sind*, looted or burnt invaluable goods and killed hundreds of thousands innocent people of *Sind*. He took with him books from Royal Court of *Sind* to *Persia*.¹⁵ Thus *Sind* lost its rare books for ever. *Mian Noor Muhammad* showed cowardice and committed heinous crime by running away to the desert. Had he stayed in his capital and faced the enemy with courage and dignity, may be people would not have met such a catastrophe. That is how *Sind* suffered a lethal blow at the hands of the *Persian Conqueror*. *Nadir Shah*, in which it once again lost its sovereignty and independence. *Nadir Shah* decided to divide *Sind* into three parts viz *Sibi* and *Kachhi* which were given to rulers of *Kalat* as a blood money for the slain ruler *Abdullah Khan*, *Shikarpur* was awarded to *Daudpotras* and rest of *Sind* to *Mian Noor Muhammad*. Thus the country suffered a national tragedy which led to its disintegration and resulted in spreading chaos and lawlessness in *Sindhi Society*. *Mian Noor Muhammad* first restored law and order in the country and then fought with the rulers of the states located in the *Indus delta* country, say *Dahar Raja*, *Jam of Kakarala* and *Fort of Kanji*. He won these battles and once again established his military supremacy.¹⁶

After the assassination of Nadir Shah, the sons of Mian Noor Muhammad returned safely from the Court of *Persia* where they had been in captivity for a long time. Mian Muhammad Muradyab Khan was made crown prince and Mian Noor Muhammad handed over reign of government to him and himself left *Khudabad* and retired from active life. He spent last four years of his life at *Muhammadabad*, another capital built by him which was located in the present district of *Nawabshah*.

After the death of Nadir Shah he was succeeded by Ahmed Shah Durrani who claimed parts of *Persia* and *Afghanistan* as his kingdom. He forced Mian Noor Muhammad to pay tribute to *Kabul*. Mian Noor Muhammad avoided its payment. After sometime he threatened to attack *Sind* to extract the tribute. Finally Ahmed Shah invaded *Sind* and stayed at *Siwistan* in 1753 to collect the tribute. Mian Noor Muhammad again fled away to the desert of *Thar*, where he died on 9th December, 1753 and was laid to rest in *Muhammadabad*.

The people of *Sind* had welcomed *Kalhoros* as and they were the first among the *Sindhi* dynasties to wield permanent power since the fall of *Samma* in 1520 A.D. It may be noted here that *Samma* was the *Sindhi* dynasty which built *Thatta* and ruled *Sind* for two hundred and thirty years before the invasion of Arghun and Tarkhans from Central Asia. Kalhoros rule had therefore some elements of popularity at grassroots level in the countryside, especially during the reign of Mian Noor Muhammad who was held in great esteem by the people.

It may be mentioned here that alien rulers imposed an economic system in *Sind* which tended to exploit the *Sindhi* society. ¹⁷ It caused a great set back to the economic conditions of *Sind*, especially to its agro-based economy. The wide spread poverty resulting from it gave rise to many social evils, say theft, robbery, murder, cattle lifting, piracy and other criminal activities. As highway robbery was common, trade and commerce could not flourish. ¹⁸ This phenomenon does not suggest that *Sindhis* were habitual criminals, on the contrary, "the sociological perspective emphasizes the importance of environmental factor in determining an individual's internal state and subsequent behaviour." It further suggest that. "Depressive states result from unemployment. Men who are unable to function as breadwinners, which is a crucial basis of masculine identity in our society, will experience unemployment as a loss of self-worth and will display depressive symptom. "(as well as anger)."

The cure is not more mental health clinics but more jobs for unemployed.”¹⁹ However, Mian Noor Muhammad gave priority to law and order situation, improved administration of the provinces and gave special attention to agriculture and excavated many canals, as *Kalhoros* were great canal builders. Thus crime rate was reduced and peasantry made concentration on agriculture. Highways and water-ways being safe and sound, and agriculture greatly improved, trade and commerce of *Sind* also flourished.²⁰ Mian Noor Muhammad put his country on the road to progress and prosperity. Henry Pottenger, who was a member of the *British Mission to Sind* in 1809, has given a vivid account of the conditions of *Sind* during the reign of Mian Noor Muhammad. It shows the prosperity of *Thatta*, the largest river port and commercial emporium of lower *Sind*. He says that “Even so recently, as the period of Nadir Shah visiting *Thatta* on his return from *Delhi*, it is said there were 40,000 weavers of *calico* and *loongees* in that city and artisans of every other class and description to the number of 20,000 more, exclusive of bankers, money changers shop-keepers and sellers of grain, who were estimated at 60,000 more”.²¹

The social and cultural milieu during the reign of Mian Noor Muhammad was also very impressive. Mian Noor Muhammad *Kal-horo* was also contemporary of Shah Abdul Latif of *Bhit* (1689-1752), Shah Abdul Latif is the poet par-excellence of *Sind* and *Sindhi* language. Through his poetry he has opened new vistas on *Sindhi* language and literature, especially on poetry. The poet, realizing the agony of the people during the colonial rule, had expressed in his poetry the visionary ideas of sovereign and independent *Sind*. Through collective struggle Mian Noor Muhammad changed the dream of the great poet into reality. Mir Ali Sher *Qa'ana* (1727-1788) A.D, the first *Sindhi* historian also lived during the reign of Mian Noor Muhammad. He was author of more than 42 books on different aspects of *Sind*. Historians like Shavakram Attarad, *Munshi* Abdul Rauf, Bagh Ali *Khaif* and poets like Mohsan *Thattavi* and many others were patronized by the Royal Court. All these prominent literary figures use to participate in the literary discussions at the court of Mian Noor Muhammad regularly. Renowned religious scholars, such as *Makhdoom* Muhammad Moin *Thattavi* (a friend of Shah Abdul Latif of *Bhit*) and *Makhdoom* Muhammad Hashim *Thattavi* also lived in this period and imparted *Islamic* education and gave guidance to the people of *Sind*.

Mian Noor Muhammad was himself a scholar and had copied the Holy *Quran*, which was taken away by Nadir Shah and is still preserved in *Iran*. He also has written *Munshoor-ul-Wasiat* in *Persian* language which gives insight of the man who possessed more virtues than weaknesses.

Mian Noor Muhammad *Kalhor*, who ruled *Sind* for about 35 years, was a man of iron will. His name deserves special mention for effective administration and deep knowledge of military science. It goes to his eternal credit that he waged war against the alien rulers through collective struggle. People of *Sind* joined hands with him and ousted invaders and alien rulers and succeeded in achieving national liberation. Unfortunately he could not preserve the hard earned freedom of the country for long due to the blunders which he committed during the invasions of Nadir Shah and Ahmed Shah *Durrani*. He, however, deserves full credit for standing firmly against enemy alongwith the common people of *Sind* whom he gathered at the time of distress. He thereby proved that he had the qualities of a people's leader. His long reign is remarkable not only for unifying the country but bringing unity and cohesion among the people of *Sind*. His outstanding achievements include building of the grand irrigation system, improvement of agriculture and economic betterment of *Sindhi* Society. During his reign there was a remarkable change in the quality of life and people lived in peace and harmony. After a long time the common man in *Sind* felt a sigh of relief and *Sindhi* Society as a whole got a new lease of life.

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