
**POLITICAL TURMOIL IN SINDH: FROM PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY
TO THE MAKING OF PAKISTAN (1936-1947)**

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ABSTRACT

This article seeks to analyze Sindh's political struggle and its contributions to the creation of Pakistan. This study examines whether the power struggle in Sindh between 1936 and 1947 strengthened the political autonomy that the political leadership had long struggled for, or whether the pursuit of national aspirations undermined it. The political leadership, rather than focusing on the social and political advancement of the province, consistently pursued the national priorities of the All-India Muslim League (AIML), the Indian National Congress (INC), and the British Raj. On the one hand, although Sindh's push for Pakistan enhanced its political significance, internal factionalism led to internal political instability. As a result, the benefits of autonomy never translated into political and economic development or the welfare of the people. After independence, Sindh's political struggle was labelled as parochialism and regionalism. The article has utilized primary and secondary sources to evaluate the role of provincial parties and the central leadership of the AIML in increasing factionalism and political instability.

Keywords: Pakistan, Sindh, Colonial Administration, Provincial Autonomy, Leadership.

INTRODUCTION

Demographically, Sindh, the second-largest province of Pakistan, is significant in South Asia. Its importance comes from its identity as one of the cradles of ancient civilization and other attributing factors, including the River Indus and its fertile land, its strategic borderland position, access to the Arabian Sea, and the resilience and hospitality

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of its people (Rehman, 1993). Since Islam arrived in South Asia, Sindh has been governed and administered by a series of local dynasties and foreign powers, including the Sumras (1026-1351), Sammas (1351-1520), Arghuns (1520-1555), Tarkhans (1555-1592), Kalhoras (1701-1783), Talpurs (1783-1843), and the British (1843-1947) (Panhwar (ed.), 2003; Boivin, 2008; Naz, 2019; Advani, 1934; Panhwar (ed.), 2022).

The geopolitical position of Sindh, especially in the nineteenth century, was considered essential to the ambitions and strategies of the great powers in the subcontinent. Located in the north-west of the Indian subcontinent, Sindh borders Punjab to the north, Balochistan to the north-west, Rajputana to the east, the Rann of Kutch to the south, and the Indian Ocean to the south-west. This strategic location attracted imperial powers—the British, French, and Russians—to the region, as they sought to strengthen their imperial hegemony and extract resources. Great Britain, in particular, was apprehensive about Russian intentions and maneuvers toward Persia and Afghanistan. Nabi (2017) argues that statesmen in London and officials of the East India Company (EIC) were highly committed to a policy of containment. Their objectives included establishing a grip on Sindh, securing control over the Indus River, and subjugating Kalat in order to ensure an efficient military route to Afghanistan. However, this study contends that colonization of Sindh was a part of the British policy to consolidate its imperial rule in India.

The conquest of Sindh in 1843, its administrative structure, and supporting measures marginalized the Muslim majority and provided the sense of psychological reassurance to the Hindu community which was no longer religious within a larger framework of the British (Kothari, 2004; Ansari, 1992). Furthermore, Sindh's merger with the Bombay Presidency in 1847 enabled Hindus to reassert their mercantile influence, acquire land, and establish the dominance of *baniyas*—the trading class. The British design towards Sindh dramatically altered the socio-economic fabric of the land, as about forty percent of Muslim-owned land was transferred to Hindu creditors (LAS, 1945).

In Asif's view, the conquest of Sindh was as not merely a political act by the British but it was a historiographic move rooted in an epistemology that asserted the foreignness of Muslims in India. He

argues that the British strategy intensified efforts of archivization and translation by Company officials who were philologists, archeologists, and historians (Asif, 2017). Undoubtedly, economic and military advantages consolidated the imperial control, but it had also faced challenges in the form of Hur Crisis (1890s) and the Khilafat Movement (1920s). These movements embarked upon political consciousness among Sindhi leaders who intensified their struggle for the separation of Sindh from the Bombay Presidency. As a result of their consistent efforts, the British government announced Sindh's separation on April 1, 1936 under the Government of India Act, 1935. However, soon after separation, the political consciousness turned into factionalism, and political turmoil. To examine political turmoil in Sindh, the study seeks to answer questions: how did political factionalism provide a space for mainstream parties, such as the All-India Muslim League and the Indian National Congress, to manipulate political circumstances and to assert their influence in the provincial affairs. Why were Sindhi politicians involved in factionalism, and opportunism and to what extent, factionalism affected newly achieved provincial autonomy?

LITERATURE REVIEW

In relation to the Indian subcontinent, the history of Sindh has attracted little attention of historians who perceived it as marginal. This article has examined literature focusing on the historical, political, and socio-economic conditions of Sindh in pre-partition India. Rehman (1993) highlights the geographic and economic significance of Sindh, remarkably attributed to the Indus River and the port of Karachi. Kothari's (2004) scholarship challenges the British project of treating Sindh as a frontier laboratory for imperial control, implemented under the pretext of civilizational reform. Asif (2017) interprets the British expansion in India as an orientalist approach, through which Muslims of the land were characterized as static, stagnant, and had no historical change. Thus, the British assumed their responsibility to civilize them (Abbasi, 2023).

Ansari (1992) argues that the British rule was consolidated not only through coercive measures but also through the incorporation of local elites—particularly religious leaders and landowners—who pursued their own interests within the framework of British rule. This

mutual relationship between the British and local elites laid the foundation for the mediatory political roles later assumed by religious leaders, especially the Syeds in Sindh. These interest groups continued to exert influence over political affairs through the patronage of the British and later of mainstream political parties, thus laying the groundwork for factionalism and political instability. Korejo (2000) discusses G. M. Syed's ideological transformation from Pan-Islamism to Muslim nationalism and finally to Sindhi nationalism. He portrays G. M. Syed a man of principle, who never compromised over provincial autonomy of Sindh.

Historians such as Hamid Khuhro argue that Sindh's integration into the Bombay Presidency led to the administrative and political marginalization of the Muslims, and that their demands for the separation of Sindh were largely ignored. However, it was in the mid-1930's that a final and more judicious effort succeeded in incorporating the demand for Sindh's separation—a development that proved essential for aligning Sindh with the Pakistan movement.

This study has utilized primary and secondary sources such as Sindh Legislative Assembly Debates as primary sources, and Jones (2002), Hussain (2011) as secondary sources to look into political changes in Sindh after its provincial status. These sources shows that political immaturity, personal loyalty and tribal affiliations condensed the significance of party's ideologies. Formation of ministries under Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah prompted opportunism, factionalism, and colonial manipulation (Syed, 1949; Jones, 2002). Jones critical analysis offers that politics in Sindh had been shaped by personality cults rather than institutionalization. For example, rivalry between Hidayatullah and Shah Nawaz Bhutto complicated provincial governance and political development. Earlier to the partition of India, Syed's controversies over party tickets with the central committee of the AIML are the important sources. In this regard, Korejo (2000) and Soomro (2004) highlight Syed's disillusionment with the League. It is pertinent to mention here; it was G. M. Syed who played an enthusiastic role in passing (1943) resolution in support of the Pakistan movement from the Sindh Legislative Assembly. Later, his ideological divergence led his resignation and eventually expulsion from the League.

Ahmad (2008, 2011) significantly contributed in the existing literature by extracting official documents to support his argument that internal factionalism in Sindh's Muslim League marginalized Syed's proactive politics. Resultantly, Syed dissented central authoritarianism of the League. The existing literature provides a recurring theme of political immaturity, lack of coherent ideological objectives, and prevalence of factionalism, that served centralist and colonial interests rather than provincial welfare (Syed, 1949; Soomro, 1986). This article argues that Sindh's political leadership failed to translate a limited provincial autonomy into the meaningful political and socio-economic reforms.

Sindh's Separation and Political Leadership: Undoubtedly, the separation of Sindh from the Bombay Presidency in 1936 led to the process for the creation of Pakistan. Mateke asserts that "if there had been no autonomous Sindh with its seventy-five percent Muslim population, the case for Pakistan would have been considerably weaker. The autonomous Sindh strongly anchored the call for Pakistan" (Mateke, 1979).

The quest for Sindh's separation persisted through the 1920s, but it gained momentum when the Muslim leadership from Sindh raised the cause and presented a demand to the Simon Commission and later to the Round Table Conferences (RTCs) with an assurance that Sindh could prosper as an autonomous province. The assurance had incredibly left no choice for the British but to declare Sindh as an autonomous province under the Government of India Act, 1935. Resultantly, Sindh became a Governor's province on April 01, 1936.

The autonomous province with seventy-five percent Muslim majority population provided the AIML a ground to strengthen its political base, particularly after its defeat in 1937 elections. The League started its political chapter in Sindh on March 1, 1917, yet it had no significant foothold before the separation of Sindh to wield little influence (Hussain, 2011). Because Muslim leadership from the province was reluctant to contest elections on League's tickets. However, the Congress communal policies and Jinnah's strategy to reorganize the League attracted Sindh's Muslim leadership including Sir Abdullah Haroon (1872-1942), Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto (1888-1957), Shaikh Abdul Majeed Sindhi (1892-1944), G. M. Syed (1904-1995), and Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah (1879-1948) to reinvigorate

a political base of the League. Abdullah Haroon along with his like-minded politicians organized the Sindh Provincial Muslim League Conference in 1938. Jones states that the Sindhi leadership had two objectives to organize the Sindh Provincial Muslim League Conference: to break the stronghold of Allah Bakhsh on power and to get reward in terms of power and offices (Jones, 2002). On the other hand, allegiance to the Central League provided a nucleus for the political organization of the League in Sindh. In this conference, resolution was passed, urging the right of political self-government for Hindus and Muslims in India and it was also pledged that future constitutional reforms would ensure full provincial autonomy for Muslim-majority provinces within a federal structure (Riffat, Chawla, & Tariq, 2016).

In the post-separation decade, personal interests of the politicians provided a ground to both the AIML and Congress to manipulate circumstances. The political rivalry started with the appointment of Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto as advisor to Governor. Bhutto's appointment provoked Hidayatullah to insert his influence in the evolving political structure of Sindh (Jones, 2022). Rather than focusing on political advancement and socio-economic development of the province, the political rivalry, opportunism, and factionalism ushered new challenges. First, a deepening communal divide hindered cohesive governance and social harmony. Second, the increasing involvement of mainstream parties—including the AIML and the INC—complicated the political landscape, as they often overlooked provincial interests in favor of national priorities. The League secured political concessions, such as separate electorates and weightage in Muslim-minority provinces, while the colonial administration used the situation to strengthen executive authority—notably by expanding the governor's power to ensure the recovery of funds allocated for infrastructure projects such as the Sukkur Barrage.

These developments prompted G. M. Syed—a political figure and *Sajjada Nashin*—to reflect critically on the political trajectory of Sindh and to conclude that the province would benefit more from a secular political party grounded in pragmatic economic programs rather than from an alignment with the All-India communal or ideological platforms (Soomro, 2004). Syed articulated his political position in his autobiographic work., *The Struggle for New Sindh*

(1949), in the following words: “I came to the Assembly to ameliorate the conditions of the people and help in the province’s welfare. Throughout these ten years, this has been my project, and I allowed myself to be associated with any All-India organization like the Indian National Congress or the All-India Muslim League; my primary object has always been the province’s welfare. All-India constitutional questions have never occupied the place of first importance in my political activities”.

At first, Syed was supporting the Congress and formed a central theme of his political life to welfare the people. But his disenchantment at the INC, that was mainly focusing on all-India issues rather than engaging with local issues of Sindh, forced him to join the AIML. However, his expectations with the League were soon met with disappointments. In Syed’s view, the League increasingly mirrored the Congress in overlooking provincial interests with regard to its national strategy. The League prioritized maintaining its political dominance and preserving its ministries, often at the expense of regional development and local representation. His refusal to compromise on his principles led to a growing friction with the League and ultimately resulted in his expulsion from the party (Syed, 1949).

The 1937 Provincial Elections: After its autonomous status, Sindh experienced provincial elections in 1937 to elect sixty representatives for the Sindh Legislative Assembly. Earlier to the autonomous status, Sindh had a representation in the Bombay Legislative Assembly consisting of nine members representing rural areas and four members to urban areas of Sindh (Jones, 2002). In the 1937 elections, three major parties emerged as principles contenders, including: the Sindh United Party (SUP) led by Sir Abdullah Haroon, the Sindh Azad Party (SAP) led by Shaikh Abdul Majeed Sindhi, and the Sindh Muslim Party (SMP), led by Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah. The first party was projecting a strong showing in Hyderabad and Sukkur districts and anticipated sharing electoral success in Larkana and Nawabshah. The later was expected to perform in Tharparkar, however, contested seats in Karachi district, and potentially win one or two urban constituencies in Hyderabad. The last party entered relatively late into the political arena, was expected to secure scattered seats (Jones, 2002).

RESULTS OF 1937 ELECTIONS, BY MUSLIM PARTY

Party	Official (GOS)	Official (GOI)	Press Version
SUP	21	17	23
SAP	3	1	3
SMP	3	15	3
Independent	7	NA	NA
Total	34	33	29

Source: Government of Sindh, Government of India Press Version, *The Daily Gazette*.

In the provincial elections, both Shah Nawaz Bhutto and Abdullah Haroon—the leader and deputy leader of the SUP, were unexpectedly defeated. Ironically, the people of Sindh had never experienced elections on party basis due to regions incorporation with the Bombay Presidency. It had yet to develop a strong tradition of public political engagement. Public opinion played a slight role in electoral outcomes. Even the League was not reflected in 1937 elections rather it managed very badly and emerged with no seats (Ansari, 1992). Conversely, most of the local candidates who were succeeded under party banners, did so on the basis of their personal influence, tribal affiliations, or social standing than on adherence to the ideological principles or party manifestos. Rather than convictions, many of them appeared to affiliate with particular political groups for the reasons of expedience. Only the Congress candidates and few Sindhi nationalists in 1937 elections won seats on the basis of clear public support and political alignment (Syed, 1949).

G. M. Syed contested the elections of 1937 under the party tickets of SUP and secured a seat in the newly established Sindh Legislative Assembly. In a demonstration of party loyalty, he offered to vacate his seat for Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto on the condition if Governor recognize Bhutto as the leader of the single largest party and invite him to form the ministry (Soomro, 2004). However, undemocratic strategies were used by the British government to undermine the political autonomy of Sindh. Exploiting the lack of political consciousness of the electorates and fragmented nature of party politics, the Governor of Sindh—a close associate of Hidayatullah—bypassed constitutional convention.

Thus, Sindh's provincial autonomy was marred by an undemocratic intervention when the Governor invited Sir Hidayatullah to assume the position of Premier. The governor disregarded the principle of inviting the leader of the largest party. Hidayatullah skillfully capitalized on the political advantage offered to him by the Governor's intervention. He extended offers to political groups, such as the Hindu Independent Party, and offered ministerial posts and the position of speaker to align with his government. While doing that, the party violated its democratic principles and long-term political considerations in favour of the immediate political gain. Hence, the disproportionate share of offices to Hindu representatives ensured their support for the Hidayatullah ministry.

Similarly, the influential Talpur elites, including Mir Bande Ali Khan and Mir Ghulam Ali Talpur benefited when they were offered a seat in the provincial cabinet. Resultantly, they withdraw their allegiance from the Sindh United Party. A floor crossing culture was introduced in this way. Hence, the formation of the Hidayatullah ministry was marked more by opportunistic maneuvering than by democratic consensus. The majority of seats winning party the Sindh United Party—under the leadership of Bahadur Allah Bakhsh, which was transmitted to the opposition benches despite its earlier position as the single largest party. The floor crossing illustrates how provincial autonomy was compromised by political expediency and the interference of the colonial administration, thereby setting a precedent for unstable coalition politics in the province (Syed, 1949).

Push and Pull Factors Over Ministries in Sindh: The first provincial elections of 1937, held after the separation of Sindh, revealed deep political divisions among Sindhi politicians, who were split into four groups: the Allah Bakhsh group with the support of eight legislative members, the Hidayatullah group with thirteen members, the Mir Bande Ali group with seven members, and the G. M. Syed group with six members (Soomro, 1986). Power struggle, rather than policy consensus, became the central objective of these factions. At the same time, the British administration maneuvered these groups to maintain administrative control. For instance, instead of inviting the majority party—the Sindh United Party—to form the government, the Governor invited Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah to establish the first ministry, despite his having the support of three members in the

Assembly. Consequently, a coalition government was formed under Hidayatullah as Premier, with the backing of independent Hindu members and the Mir group. This first ministry remained unstable due to its opportunistic character. Graham's decision to appoint Hidayatullah as Premier reflected his disregard for democratic norms and plunged Sindh into a recurring cycle of political instability (Jones, 2002). Nevertheless, it was the political enmity, jealousy, and disunity among Muslim politicians that ultimately enabled Graham to form Hidayatullah's government (Jones, 2002). The scholarship on the subject analyzes Governor's attempt a serious blow on the provincial autonomy of Sindh. Moreover, political intrigues were exploited by the Congress which kept the Muslim factions against each other. Jones (2002) enunciates that the manner in which Hidayatullah came to power demonstrated personality cult over party, reflecting personal ambitions as the key determinants of political power than loyalty to party principles. Hence, Sindhi Muslim politics set a precedent of chronic political instability.

The Sindh United Party, on the other hand, was ultimately declining as its members, except Allah Bakhsh Soomro, Muhammad Hashim Gazdar, and G. M. Syed, had aligned themselves with the Sindh Muslim Party of Hidayatullah. In order to consolidate his political base and to secure a stable governing majority, Hidayatullah initiated to form the Sindh Democratic Party (SDP). The SDP initially performed well to unify Muslim legislators under a single organizational banner. It brought a coalition of Muslim factions including Hidayatullah's own supporters, independent Muslim legislators and some members of the SUP. However, the coalition proved short-lived as SDP lacked ideological coherence and a common party agenda (Jones, 2002).

In the budget session of March 1938, Sindhi politicians including Allah Bakhsh, G. M. Syed and their supporters started a move to bring down Hidayatullah's ministry. They alleged that Hidayatullah's ministry failed to carry out party principles and programs. However, both leaders had personal rivalry with Hidayatullah. Hence, opposition effort to topple Hidayatullah's ministry through no-confidence motion had received a support of Hindu Independent Party and Congress affiliated legislators (Syed, 1949). Resultantly, Hidayatullah resigned on March 22, 1938, and the Governor invited Allah Bakhsh to form the

government. Allah Bakhsh did so with the support of Nichaldas Vazirani and his group of ten Hindu independents, Muslim legislators, three Europeans and two independents (Jones, 2002).

As Allah Bakhsh ministry had a great support of Hindu Independent Party and Congress affiliated legislators, he vowed to implement Congress policies based on socio-political and economic conditions of Sindh. In this regard, G. M. Syed and Pir Ali Muhammad Rashidi had taken the responsibility of drafting a comprehensive list of policy priorities based on public welfare. At this juncture, G. M. Syed stressed on defining objectives of the government that may strengthen a trust between state and the people (Syed, 1949).

On the other hand, non-compliance of the SUP program for people's welfare led to another political turmoil in Sindh. Allah Bakhsh perceived the Muslim opinion as an ineffective and Muslim support as personal interest rather than political principles. His perception intensified relations between the government and the SUP (Syed, 1949). Allah Bakhsh and Congress alignment gravitated G. M. Syed toward the League, so he resigned from the government and devoted himself for the cause of AIML (Hussain, 2011; Jones, 2002). Similarly, the SUP sought to align with the AIML and organized the Sindh Muslim League Conference in October 1938, where a resolution was passed for independent Muslim states in South Asia. Soomro, too, expressed his conditional willingness to join the League, if he had been allowed to continue as Premier (Soomro, 1986). The resolution also condemned the Congress for consciously establishing Hindu rule in certain provinces by forming ministries either without Muslim ministers or Muslim ministers having no following among Muslim masses (Hussain, 2011).

Participants of the Conference viewed Soomro's conditional willingness as incompatible to parliamentary principles. Many leaders attributed Soomro's conditional joining to the League as his subservience to Congress leadership. Considering an opportunity, the Congress Assembly Board sought approval from the Congress to support Soomro ministry against any move of no-confidence, signaling strategic alliance between the two despite their ideological differences (Soomro, 1986).

As the League firmly established Assembly party with Hidayatullah and Bande Ali Khan its leader and deputy leader,

respectively, the leader of Muslim League Assembly party initiated a campaign to unseat the Soomro ministry. At this juncture, Soomro had two choices: first, to maintain the support of the influential Hindu bloc, and second, to align with the League that may erode the trust of Hindu legislators. To defuse political instability, he chose the latter by incorporating both Hidayatullah and Bande Ali into his ministry, thus reduce the League's immediate opposition (Soomro, 1986). Meanwhile, the League, unable to dialogue Soomro through parliamentary maneuvering alone, recognized the necessity of shaping both Hindu and Muslim public opinion against the Premier. To this end, it called upon Central League to intervene and stimulate broader support for its cause (Soomro, 1986).

In an effort to bring down Soomro's ministry, G. M. Syed on his part, worked to establish a Muslim League-led government in Sindh. On the other hand, the League with the help of religious elite popularizing the issue of Manzilgah to achieve provincial importance (Ansari, 1992). The Manzilgah was an old place in Sukkur, claimed by Muslims as a mosque. It was in possession of the government for a number of years (Report of the Court of Inquiry, 1939). In August 1939, *pirs* of Sindh collectively passed a resolution which called for the government to accede to Muslim claims for the Masjid Sharif Manzilgah. On the other hand, Hindus viewed Muslim claims to the Manzilgah as a direct threat. When no arrangement was reached between Soomro's government and local League leaders, *satyagarha* was begun. Resultantly, a huge number of *ulemas*, religious devotees, and local Muslim League leaders, including G. M. Syed, were arrested. The situation was further intensified and turned into a wave of communal disturbance and rioting which spread from Sukkur district into the surrounding districts (Ansari, 1992). The intensified communal tension due to the administrative failure eroded Soomro's support base and led to his resignation (Soomro, 1986).

The Muslim League Experiment with Power: The Manzilgah incident played a pivotal role in reshaping the provincial politics of Sindh. More specifically, it enhanced the popularity of the League among the rural Muslim peasantry with strong communal sentiments, and allowed the party to connect itself at the grassroots level. Following the resignation of Soomro, the Governor appointed Mir Bande Ali Khan—leader of the Sindh Nationalist Party (SNP)—to

form the government as Premier of Sindh. Like his predecessor, he remained unable to resolve the persistent Hindu-Muslim tensions. Eventually, the Muslim League was offered the opportunity to form a coalition with the SNP to stabilize the political landscape of Sindh (Soomro, 1986).

Consequently, in December 1940, Jinnah established a seven-member League Organizing Committee, intending to accelerate the party's organizational efforts in Sindh. In this regard, G. M. Syed was appointed as Chairman of the committee. In its first meeting of 1941, the committee resolved to develop a comprehensive program focused on the attainment of the League's political objective—namely, the creation of Pakistan. The tug of war between the AIML and the INC continued in the political affairs of Sindh. At one end, the AIML was supporting Bande Ali Khan, on the other end, the INC was struggling to reinstall Soomro's ministry. In this regard, the INC moved a no-confidence motion against the Bande Ali Khan ministry. Bande Ali's resignation cleared the way for the INC to reinstate Soomro as the Premier of Sindh (Soomro, 1986).

The national politics had a drastic impact on the politics of Sindh. The INC's Quit India movement, once again bolstered the energies of the AIML against INC supported government in Sindh. For example, when Soomro publically renounced his titles and honors in protest against the repressive policies of the British government and in solidarity with the INC, the League leadership sought his removal from the office (Soomro, 1986). As a result, in February 1943, Soomro was dismissed and the Governor invited Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah to form a new government that was more aligned with the objectives of the League.

At this juncture, the Sindh Muslim League under the visionary leadership of G. M. Syed passed a resolution from the Sindh Legislative Assembly in support of Pakistan Resolution of 1940. This resolution further adhered that Indian Muslims constituted a distinct nation, and therefore, demanded to have independent national states of their own (Sindh Legislative Assembly Debates, 1943). It was Sindh Assembly's resolution that significantly influenced other provinces of north-west India for the Pakistan movement. It, further, effectively aligned Sindh with the AIML, by connecting it into the larger national interest of the League in. G. M. Syed was succeeded in mobilizing

Sindhi Muslims to Pakistan idea and committed it with unequivocally and unconditionally (Korejo, 2000).

However, the assassination of Allah Bakhsh Soomro on May 14, 1943, once again destabilized the political environment of Sindh reignited factionalism within the provincial Muslim League. Hidayatullah in his letter to Jinnah, alleged that Ayub Khuhro is involved in a murder of Soomro. Moreover, allegation of bribery and mismanagement of funds over Khuhro also intensified internal divisions within the Sindh Muslim League, which compelled Khuhro to resign (Ahmad, 2011). Hidayatullah's letter further highlighted the involvement of the British government in the political affairs of the province (Ahmad, 2011). Jinnah, in response to one of Hidayatullah's letters, urged him to be united. He stated: "our only salvation lies in our complete unity. Sindh had a great future before it; today, a great responsibility rest on you. I hope that you will successfully keep your team together" (Ahmad, 2011). Recent scholarship on partition of India shows that Sindh's move to secure a journey of Pakistan was not sufficiently strong and smooth (Chawla, 2024). However, as the Pakistan movement intensified, particularly in 1945, a sharp division surfaced vividly—specifically between G. M. Syed and his rivals, who disagreed over candidates' selection. Both Hidayatullah and G. M. Syed sought to assert dominance by appealing Jinnah and the League High Command. Despite, Syed's firm stance in support of his nominees, his rivals ultimately prevailed stance of securing party's endorsement (Korejo, 2000).

In reaction, G. M. Syed resigned from both the Working Committee and Action Committee of the AIML. In addition, Syed returned Leagues' ticket to contest a seat from the Muslim constituency of Dadu district. In fact, G. M. Syed fielded thirteen independent candidates, loyal to his personal faction, for the forthcoming Assembly elections (Ahmad, 2008). In contrast, the Central Parliamentary Board withdrew tickets, previously issued to Syed's supporters including Syed Muhammad Ali Shah, Syed Khair Shah, Pir Qurban Ali Shah, and Syed Hussain Bakhsh Shah on account of their support for Pir Ali Muhammad Rashidi in the central Assembly elections, in opposition to the League's official candidate—Yousuf Abdullah Haroon (Ahmad, 2008). Thus, Syed's refusal to comply with League's high command ultimately led his expulsion from the League. Resultantly, G. M. Syed

founded the Progressive Sindh Muslim League (PSML) party as a breakaway faction. This attempt reflecting his ideological divergence from the League rather than a pursuit of personal interests or political power (Chawla, 2024). Syed's dissent was rooted in his principled disagreement over key issues, and he consistently declined opportunities that could have advanced his political standing. Korejo (2000) observes that: "Syed had miscalculated his strategy, chosen untimely attempt of rebellion, or he may have been stubborn. But his integrity and sincerity were beyond doubt. Perhaps, he had lost his faith in the League for getting fairer deal for Sindh. In his judgement, any revolt after the creation of Pakistan would have been too late".

It has also been observed that G. M. Syed was committed to the welfare of Sindh and people of the land. He faced considerable hardships at the hands of the League's central command. His expulsion from the Provincial Muslim League reinforced a pattern of personal ambitions which had dominated Sindh's political leadership. Thus, political instability, factionalism and opportunism—rooted primarily in self-interest—compromised the political and economic autonomy that Sindh had initially sought. The preceding political turmoil in Sindh further provided an opportunity to the newly established Pakistan to maneuver circumstances for implementing centralist tendencies in Sindh which led the scheme of One Unit in 1955 (Abbasi, 2020).

CONCLUSION

This research has examined the political circumstances, political rivalry, and the influence of national politics over Sindh. The research finds out that while Sindh played a significant role in the ideological consolidation of Pakistan, but its internal political experience was marked with internal fragmentation, national parties' manipulation, and a failure to establish enduring institutions of self-governance. The post-separation Sindhi Muslim leadership failed to translate the provincial autonomy into meaningful socio-political reforms. Rather provincial autonomy was undermined by opportunistic alliances, shifting loyalties, and personal interests. The struggle for ministerial positions led to an unstable coalition governments and recurrent administrative breakdowns. This research concludes that Sindh's marginalization within the British and nationalist framework was not just by external intervention but by internal political disunity.

Moreover, the centralist tendencies of the League and the ambitious interests of the local elites eroded the province's hope for genuine autonomy and agrarian reforms.

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