

HERORIC STRUGGLE OF SINDH AGAINST FEUDALISM (1500 AD TO 1843 AD)

**BY
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Since Independence in 1947 AD one often hears a popular statement that because the British had conquered India from the Muslims and were afraid of retake-over, they kept them backward by joining hands with the Hindus who in turn were anti-Muslims having remained under the latter's subjugation for a thousand years. This statement is not correct except during the period between 1857 and 1885 or 1905. Only less than one third of India was conquered by the British from the Muslims and the rest was taken over from the Hindus and the Sikhs. The Provinces of Bengal, Bihar, U.P., Sindh and Baluchistan were conquered by the British from the Muslims rulers. The Nizam of Hyderabad Deccan also surrendered to them. Mysore was conquered from the Muslims who had ruled it only for 25 years. The whole of South India was conquered from the Hindus. Though the Marattas were defeated by Ahmed Shah Abdali in 1761 AD, they still remained powerful enough to continue their expansionist tendency had the British not subdued them. If the British had not taken over the U.P., and Bihar from the Mughals the Marattas would have surely occupied them. They were powerful enough to capture the Mughal Emperor, and enthrone him again. The Sikhs had their designs on Sindh and it was only at the British intervention that Ranjit Singh did not move Southwards.

Thus it cannot be said that the British were jealous of the Muslims throughout their rule in India. The Muslim Power had weakened to such an extent that if British had not occupied India, the Marattas would have replaced the Mughals and India would have been ruled by the Hindus since then.

The question then arises how the Sindhi Muslims remained backward? Let us go back to 1843 AD to review the situation. The Muslims in Sindh were equally backward as compared to the Hindus even in 1843 AD as is given in a large number of the British writings published before and soon after the conquest of Sindh. The important among these being Alexander Burnes, James Burnes Pottinger's, Burton, William Napier's selections from the records of the Government of Bombay, Vol. XVII, among others. In view of these we lose the above claim of blaming the British. Do we then have to blame the predecessors of the British i.e Muslims for keeping the Sindhis backward? In 1783 AD when the Talpurs took over from the Kalhoras and even in 1701 AD when the Kalhoras started advancing from North Western Sindh, we find the Muslims backward. In spite of this we can only partly blame the Kalhoras and Talpurs for allowing the Muslims to remain backward during the 140 years of their rule.

In order to probe into the real causes for this let us go back to another two centuries i.e to 1500 AD. Were the Sindhi-Muslims backward then also? The answer is

definitely no. In 1500 AD we find the Sindhi Muslims as heads of educational institutions, writers, poets, saints, warriors, heads of Government Administrative Departments, and businessmen carrying trade within the country and abroad. In general, we find them economically prospering. Militarily, they were strong enough to repel the Mangol troops of Shah Beg across the Bolan Pass. By then they had retained their military strength for nearly 130 years. In 1351 AD they could not be conquered by the Imperial forces of Mohammad Tughlaq, Emperor of Delhi and chased his troops out of their dominions. Fourteen years later in 1365 AD., Feroz Shah tughlaq, another Emperor, was defeated by them near Thatta and in another battle a year and half later, Feroz Shah facing the strength of Sindhi troops was compelled to bring in Makhdoom Jahania of Uch for a compromise solution. Since then the Sindh troops had faced no defeat at a battle front.

In History, only with a few exceptions, we find the successors of king who ruled for a very long period, to be as efficient as their predecessors. This is what happened after Jam Niddo, ruler of Sindh who died after a long rule of 48 years, leaving heirs who were inexperienced and incapable. The heirs fought among themselves, weakened the country causing the Mangol invasion and thereby the ultimate downfall of the SAMA DYNASTY. Thatta fell to Shah Beg on Muharam 15th and its massacre was allowed till the 20th of the month, during the course of which the inhabitants were treated with merciless severity and many of whom were taken as prisoners. Thus the statement that when kings enter a town as conquerors they destroy it, was fully exemplified in the case of Thatta. Masumi adds that the town was looted, the people were insulted and the women and children were made captives. In the final battle between Jam Feroz and Shah Hassan, 20,000 men fell on the field. Shah Hassan remained on the battle field for 3 days distributing horses and other booty. The historical causes of the backwardness of Sindhi Muslims thus started from this year i.e., 926 AH (1520 AD). The defeat of their rulers was not accepted by the Sindhi masses who rose against the invaders.

A strange incident of history unparalleled elsewhere was that even the leading saints, sufis and almost all the tribes of Sindh rose against the invaders. They were ruthlessly suppressed and savage punishment was inflicted on them. Resistance against Shah Beg was organized by Makhdoom Bilawal, a Sufi Saint and his Khalifas. Shah Beg, on arrival from Sehwan to Thatta, found the Sodhas and Sehtas under the leadership of Mahmood, son of Darya Khan backed by Makhdoom Bilawal, were ready to fight against him. Among those who fought bravely and laid down their lives were the Sodhas under the leadership of Rammal Sodha. Makhdoom Bilawal was finally captured and executed by crushing him under a wooden oil expeller. His Murids, the Machhis of Baghban who had also opposed Shah Beg Arghoon were killed en-masse, their property confiscated and their houses and castles raised to the ground. The Sindhi Sufis, saints and scholars were the first to be victimized. They started mass migration to places of safety moving to other parts of India or migrating out of the South-Asia. The Sindhi tribes under the leadership of local chieftains put up resistance but were ruthlessly crushed one by one and were even exterminated as a group. The tribes which role and resisted Shah Beg Arghoon and his son Shah Hasan have been described by Mazhar Shah Jehani and Tarikh-I-Masumi. These were:-

- (a) The Dharejas of Larkana crushed by Shah Beg Arghoon.
- (b) Jatoi Buledi and Koorai-Balochis, settled in Jatoi Purgana, (present Jacobabad District and Sukkur Sub-Division) were eliminated by Shah Beg Arghoon in 927 AH by sending his 42 trusted men who went and stayed in various villages and at previously fixed time treacherously put to death all the able bodied Balochis.
- (c) In spite of this the Baloch tribes of the Upper Sindh kept fighting during the whole reign of Shah Hasan, with the result that Mir Shah Muhammad Arghoon fearing their revolt and independence, began pressuring the Balochis and Burdessa in AD.
- (d) The Dharejas of Larkana who were crushed by Shah Beg Arghoon, soon rose, laid siege of Bukkar, the headquarter of Sultan Mahmood and after 6 month's fighting were over-powered and put to sword from a tower of Bukkar fort. The tower, after this incident was named as Burji-I-Khoon. Masoomi adds that the headmen Dharejas paid homage to Shah Hasan but all the same all the 47 leaders of their were ordered to be killed.
- (e) The Mangeja, another tribe, also rose against Shah Hasan Arghoon, laid siege on Gambat and Bhuchra fort and killed all the soldiers of Mir Adil, a lieutenant of Shah Hasan Arghoon.
- (f) Other tribes which kept fighting were: Sameja, Bughio, Lakhia residing in Purgana of Takar in Bukkar Sarkar i.e., the hills near Shahdadkot and Ghari Khairo. Sameja Dals of Nasarpur Sarkar, Shora Dals and Baluchis residing in the hilly tracts, west of Halla i.e., the hills of Kotri Taluka. Bughia, Sangi and Abra all of Sameja clan rising in Chanduka purgana i.e., Kambar Sub-Division.
- (g) Shah Beg Arghoon destroyed the houses of the Sameja and Turks living inside the Bukkar fort to reconstruct a new fort from burnt bricks of these houses.
- (h) In December 1523 AD Shah Beg Arghoon moved from Bakkar to Siwistan (Sehwan) punishing inhabitants on both sides of the river Indus, stayed at Sehwan for 15 days and after satisfying himself regarding the tribes of that region proceeded to Thatta.
- (i) In November 929 AD or 1524 AD, the Dahars and Machhis of Ubavro and Bhutta Wahan (10 miles north of Rahim Yar Khan) as also the Balochis rose against the Arghoons and harassed villagers of Matilo (Pargana). They were crushed and large number of them were put to sword.
- (j) In 927 AH, Shah Beg had the Machhis of Baghban killed en masse as they did not pay homage tax. The actual reason was that they were followers

of Makhdoom Bilawal who as already stated was first to organize resistance against Shah Beg Arghoon.

- (k) In 929 AH, the Serai Balochis and Mahars fought Baba Ahmed near the Bhati Wahan and killed him.
- (l) In 921AH, shah Beg Arghoon sent 1000 mounted troops, who ransacked Baghban and Kahan (Ghaha). Among the booty were 1000 camels of farmers used for lifting water by the Persian wheels.

The persecution was still on for another 2 decades at the hands of Shah hasan Arghoon when King Humayun been defeated by Sher Shah on May 17, 1540 took flight to Sindh. Shah Hasan fearing that Humayun may occupy Sindh if he finds it attractive enough divested the whole countryside, burning crops, destroying villages and towns and cutting off all possible means of communications so that Humayun may not have any footing. Shah Hasan organized a systematic destruction of Sindh in the following manner:

- (a) On simply hearing of Humayun's defeat (17th May, 1540) and fearing that he may advance to Sindh, the whole country from Uchh to Bakkar on both sides of the river Indus was laid waste and on confirmation of the report of the defeat, orders were issued to lay waste all the lands from bakkar to Sehwan which meant that the Rabi harvest was destroyed and the Kharif crop was not allowed to sown.
- (b) During the passage of Humayun's troops through Sindh in 947 AH (1541 AD) heavenly calamities like diseases descended upon Sindh. Great damage to crops and harvests as described above caused unprecedented famine in the winter the same year (i.e November, 1541 to February, 1542 AD) and independencies of Bakkar and surroundings i.e the area between Uchh and Sehwan. The famine was probably the worst ever heard of, so much so that people resorted to cannibalism. At times even raw hides and old skins were cooked in hot water and eaten.
- (c) On 28th Ramzan, 947 AH (27th January, 1541 AD) the Imperial (Humayun's) tents were sent up in Rohri, and the Emperor camped in Babarlo. Sultan Mahmood, the Governor of Bakkar on behalf of Shah Hassan, devastated the land around Bakkar by destroying the standing rabi crops.
- (d) On 17th Rjab, 948 AH (6th November, 1541) Humayun encamped outside the Sehwan Fort, but before his arrival, Shah Hassan's local commanders laid waste gardens and buildings around the fort. The siege lasted for 7 months which added to the misfortunes of all the parties.
- (e) The troops of Humayun numbering 2 lacs faced starvation as a result of which the Royal army scattered all over Sindh obviously with intentions of looting and killing. Surprisingly the Dhareja and Sehta tribes of Mathelo who had not

submitted to the Arghoons, voluntarily offered submission to Humayun while he was in the Bakkar area.

This affair lasted for full 2 years when Humayun decided to seek shelter in Persia. Shah Hassan had no rest for another 12 years of his rule as there was fear of organized confrontation from the Sindhis. The war of nerves was still on when after his death in 1554 AD due to the feud between Sultan Mahmood and Mirza Issa Tarkhan, the latter invited the Portugese to help him against the former. The Portugese, on arrival at Thatta in 1555 AD and hearing of a compromise between the adversaries landed troops at Thatta, looted the city, set it on fire and left it with the biggest haul of gold from all Asia. The gold was estimated at Rs. Crores. On hearing of the sack of Thatta, Mirza Issa Tarkhan, who was at Bakkar trying to settle the fued with Sultan mahmood, quickly marched back to Thatta. Sultan Mahmood pursued him upto Sehwan, destroying most of the Rabi crops on both the sides of the Indus. Tarikh-I-Tahiri gives details of the Sack of Thatta, but rejects the version that the Portugese came at the invitation of Mirza Issa. According to Beglar Nama, the Portugese killed 8000 citizens, looted and destroyed the area on both the sides of the Indus from Thatta to the sea.

This was the second time in less than 35 years that the Sindhi Muslims of Thatta were looted and massacred. The first time being at the hands of the Arghoons when the massacre went on for four days. Soon after the sack of Thatta the upper Sindh was laid to waste again. In 966 AH (1558-59 AD) Bairam Khan having been retired by the Emperor Akbar was on his way to Mecca. Sultan Mahmood of Bakkar hearing of his intention that like Humayun he may also like to stay in Sindh ordered that the Chahar Bagh at Babarlu be laid to waste.

The worst period of victimizing of the people was during the region of Miraza Baqi. If he heard of any person living comfortably, irrespective of whether he was a relative or an alien, a government employee or a member of the public, he managed to take over his possessions. He confiscated the grain of the poor rural people all through his rule. The victimization of the Sindhi seems to have continued upto the end of the century as indicated by migration of many Sindhi scholars to Kutch, Gujarat, Burhanpur and Arabia and also by migration of leading business community i.e the Memons of Sindh to Kutch, Kathiawar and Gujarat, wherefrom some of their descendents return to Sindh after about 4 centuries.

Some of the Sindh tribes viz., the Jadejas, Chuda-Sammas, Khattris, Sanghars, Lahanas and Memons settled in Kutch, Kathiawar and Gujarat, the Jadeja Parmars are descendents of Sama Rajput rulers of Sindh living in Kutch. The Khattris were weavers who migrated from Sindh to Surat in the 16th and 17th centuries. Surat suited them as there was strong European demand for cloth. It was this demand for cloth which made the British establish a factory at Thatta in 1635 AD. The Sanghars are both Hindus and Muslims originally from Sindh, who migrated and settled in the gulf of Kutch. The Lohanas are both Hindus and Muslims. The Muslms are also known as Memons. Many of Memons and other tribes migrated back to Sindh after 1947. Surprisingly they still speak Kutchi or Memoni, a dialect of the Sindhi language. No peace prevailed in Sindh

during the next 35 years, as there were continuous feuds between the Tarkhan Chiefs and the sufferers invariably were the locals.

Tribes kept fighting during the entire Tarkhan period. Mirza Baqi Tarkhan's boat and troops were attacked by Sameja Unars in the mid of the night. Mirza escaped to safety by a small boat but mistaking his wife Raija Begum daughter of Naheed Begum, for him, they killed her. Masumi states that it was Soda tribes from Umerkot and also Samejas collected by Jan Baba Tarkhan, a claimant for the rule of lower Sindh, who organized this assault.

The struggle of Sindhi tribes against the Arghoons and the Tarkhans is corroborated by Beglar Nama. Khan-i-Zamain who served Mirza Shah Hasan Arghoon and the Tarkhan Mirzas namely Isa, Jan Baba, Baqi, Jani Beg and Gazi Beg in turn had to encounter the Sindh tribes all through his youth and old age for example:-

- (a) The Jarejas and Rahumas (Rahujas) figure in a tussle between the Arghoons and Mirza Issa after Shah Hassan's death.
- (b) Some Sindh tribes like the Sameja, Hingora, Juneja and Unars supported Mirza Jan Baba in a civil war against Mirza Baqi.
- (c) When Sultan Mahmood of Bakkar chased Mirza Jan Baba, the Unars of Rail gave the former a strong battle.
- (d) After the death of Jan Baba, Khan-i-Zaman had to fight the Rahupottas, Hingoras, Deparjas and Sehtas.
- (e) During the rule of Mirza Baqi, the Khor Mubani tribe of Kakarala rose against the former.
- (f) In 989 AH (1581 AD), Khan-i-Zaman was deputed by Mirza Baqi to give the Unars a battle.
- (g) The Sameja Unars and Junejas were still fighting even after 1000 AH (1591 AD). They closed their lands, routed, and looted passer-byes.
- (h) In 970 AH (1562 AD) Mirza Saleh was killed by Murid Baloch whose relative had been put to death by the former.
- (i) There were feuds between Mirza Issa and his son Jan Baba; Mirza Saleh and Jan Baba and Mirza Baqi and Jan Baba. This resulted in turmoil in which Sindh tribes worked actively and helped one against the other.

Shah Hassan Arghoon is stated to be a person of great learning who liked poets, scholars, saints, around him and in the court. The historical fact is that Sindhi administrators, saints, scholars, poets, or businessmen were compelled by circumstances created as result of Shah Hassan's victimization, to migrate from Sindh and the

replacement came from the Central Asia as suited the conqueror. The migration of local scholars to other parts of India and the immigration of their substitutes from Iran and Central Asia continued till 1591 AD throughout the Arghoon and the Tarkhan rule.

The details of migration of a few of the Saints are given in “Burhanpur-ke-Sindhi Olya” by Syed Muhammad Mutiullah Burhanpuri. Some of them are:

- (a) Qazi Abdullah Bin Qazi Ibrahim migrated to Gujarat in 937 AH (1530-31 AD) Based on Akhbar-ul-Akhyar p.280 and P.Q}.
- (b) Shah Jehangir Hashmi left for Hejaz but was killed by robbers en-route. (P.Q.).
- (c) Though Qazi Qazan entered the service of Shah Hassan but seeing the circumstances he also left for Madian (P.R.).
- (d) Maulana Shaikh Abdullah bin Baulana Saad Sindhi of Darbela left for Gujrat in 947 AH (1540 AD) and from there migrated to Madina (P.R.). This was the year when Shah Hassan fearing Humayuns arrival laid to waste the entire area on both the sides of the Indus from Uchh to Sehwan (see also fnn. No. 3). This is also supported by Farhi in Kashaful Haqaiq.
- (e) In 950 AH (1543-44 AD) Masihul Olya’s father and Uncle Shaikh Qasim and Shaikh Tahir migrated from Patt to Gujrat, thence to Birar and finally to Burhanpur (P.R. and 31). This was during the year of famine and diseases caused by Humayun’s movements in Sindh.
- (f) Many learned people of Sehwan having become sick of the siege of Sehwan laid by Mirza Issa Tarkhan in 962 AH (1555 AD) left for Gujrat and then for the Deccan and became employees of Munaam Khan (P.S.).
- (g) A few of the other saints migrated to other areas: Shaikh Tayb (d. 991 AH or 1583 AD), Shaikh Ibrahim Kalhora (d. 956 AH or 1549 AD), Shaikh Ibrahim bin Umar (migrated in 947 AH or 1580 AD), Shaikh Mubarak Sindhi (d. 988 AH or 1580 AD), Shaikh Hakim Usman Bubakani (migrated 982-983 AH or 1575 AD), Shaikh Musa Bubakani (migrated 947 AH or 1540 AD), Shaikh, Ibrahim Qavi Shatari Sindhi (991 AH or 1583 AD), Shaikh Ibrahim Bakkri (d.998 AH or 1590 AD), Shaikh Lad Jio Sindhi (d. 1007 AH or 1598-99 AD), Shaikh Ishaq Qalandar (migrated 947 AH or 1540-41 AD) to Gujrat, Birar and finally (in 958 AH or 1551 AD)to Burhanpur and Shaikh Saleh Sindhi (d. 1008 AH or 1599-1600 AD).

The years of their migrations coincide with the worst inciendents that took place in Sindh during the Arghoon and Tarkhan periods.

In 1591 AD, the Imperial forces of Akbar the Great moved from Bakkar to Thatta, to conquer Lower Sindh. Bukkur was annexed to Akbar’s Empire in 1575 AD. The conditions, however, did not improve due to the annexation of Bakkar as from 1575 to

1591 AD. When the entire Lower Sindh was conquered the following incidents are reported to have occurred:

- (a) In 1575, Mir Adil was conferred the governorship of Bakkar by the Emperor Akbar. He fixed very high rates of assessment of land due to which the Mengecha tribe of Kakar (District Dadu) rose and killed many revenue officers and other employees. The Mengecha tribe, therefore, was expelled from the area.
- (b) In 1580, the Dhareja tribe entrenched themselves in Alor and fought against Madhvdas, a relative of Todarmal, and acting Governor of Bakkar, in two or three battles in which heavy casualties occurred on either side.
- (c) In November-December 1587, Nawab Sadiq Khan, Akbar's Governor of Bakkar marched on Sehwan, but failing to capture it (Akbar Nama Vol. III, P. 715) proceeded to Nasarpur, collected the spoils and returned to Bakkar.
- (d) In 1585, Akbar appointed Shiruya Sultan as the Governor of Bakkar. In his regime violence and cruelty exceeded the limits.

It has remained a mystery as to why Akbar was trying to subdue the small Arghoon Kingdom of Lower Sindh when the Arghoons themselves were Mangols like him and were ready for a peaceful co-existence with him. The Iranian documents reveal that Akbar was very skeptical about Shah Abas Safvi's expansion towards India and he wanted to have full control on the nearest outpost i.e., Thatta. The battle of this small kingdom facing the forces of the Emperor continued for a year and continuously frustrated their advances. Akbar's troops took more than a year to reduce the lower Sindh as the Laki hills were key to the lower Sindh. West of Laki in the hills dwelt Baluch, Nahmardi, Jakhia and Jat tribes extending as far as Kech Makran and to the east was the river beyond which lived Sameja and Nawa tribes who were spread as far as the sand hills of Umerkot. These two tribes had never acknowledged a master. For an army to pass through either of these two directions was impractical. Masumi states that after Jani Beg's abandoning of defence of Laki hills, Khan-i-Khan became sure of victory, but he does not give the reason why the Imperial troops could not take the alternative routes. It was during this time that the Lower Sindh was again divested almost completely. By the turn of the century the whole surface of Sindh had already changed a number of times.

After the conquest of Thatta in 1592 the whole of Sindh came under Akbar's control and until his death in 1605 AD the following incidents have been recorded:

- (i) From 1591 to 1599 AD (1001 to 1007 AH), when Bakhtiar Beg Tarkman was the Subedar of Sehwan, he mobilized troops against the hill tribes namely Nahmardis and Nuhani Baloochis; Machis of Akbarabad (Samtani) and Sameja Unars killing many of them; arrested 6 of their leaders namely Paryo, Bodla, Mahmud, Farid, Jiwandi and Jodho and imposed fines on them.

- (ii) Bakhar remained the Jagir of Khan-e-Azam from 1591-1599 AD. His representative Mirza Aziz Koha and the latter's son Mirza Anwar were defeated in an open battle by the Chandia tribes. Finally, Bakhtiar Beg, the Subedar of Sehwan, had to mobilize a large force to defeat the Chandias.
- (iii) In 1598, when Bakhtiar Beg was fatally ill, the whole of the Sameja tribe of Bakhar and Sehwan Sarkars rose against the rulers and attacked the peaceful and pro-Government people, (those who had surrendered to the Government) and burnt their villages and crops. As the Government could not come to their rescue, the aggrieved Panhwars and Kaurejas collected 5000 mounted and foot soldiers to fight the Sameja Unars in a fierce battle at Gachera (Taluka Moro). The Samejas were defeated and their leader Paryo was killed.
- (iv) When Khawaja Nooruddin Karwi became the Subedar of Sehwan, he sent a force under Temur Beg (his brother) to crush the Samejas. The latter defeated him and when he took shelter in Vijra fort, they laid siege to it and captured the Kharif crop of the surrounding areas. It was only when help from Ghaha (Kahan) came that the Samejas withdrew the siege, and fled to the desert.
- (v) After Khawaja Nooruddin, Sehwan came in the Jagir of Shaikh Musa Gilani. He sent his son Jan Mohammad to govern Sehwan Sarkar. The anti-Government tribes had become so powerful that he could not leave the Sehwan fort even for hunting, as the chances were that they would enter the fort and massacre the people.
- (vi) After the transfer of Shaikh Musa Gilani, Sehwan came in Jagir of Qarah Beg, who sent his nominee as governor. During his tenure fighting took place within the fort. One Sindhi Jan Mohammad after killing, Jagirdar's Shaqdar Aqqa Mohammad, broke the fort wall and escaped. This was around 1008 AH as Qarah Beg was replaced by Mir Namakeen in 1008 or 1009 AH (1601 AD).
- (vii) After the transfer of Qarah Beg, Sehwan Purgana was given in the jagir of Pir Ghullam. During his tenure an uprising of the Sameja Unars was crushed. On another occasion the Sameja Tribes of Baghban Pargana joined hands with the Chandias of Kachho (Johi and Kakar) but were subdued. Nahmardis also were subdued.

It is thus clear from the above that during the 16th century almost all the villagers were frequently burnt, all institutions, religious, educational or social, were destroyed and property of the Sindhis was forcibly taken over from them. No local books survived, no scholar remained as a result of which the Sindhis were converted into a mass of uneducated people. The cities were occupied by foreigners. The educational institutes were governed by them. Education, social and cultural activities, government services and job-opportunities were meant for people living in cities who were alien to the people of Sindh. Thus, one finds very few records of the Sindhi language, which was very well developed at the time of Jam Nindos death. A few poems of Gazi Gadans stands and verses of that period have survived, and they reveal the high level of its

development. The new immigrants who had settled in cities like Bakhar, Sehwan, Nasarpur and Thatta had all the opportunities available but there was lack of contact with the local soil and the local people. The pathetic condition of their mental attitude comes from the poor poetry they left as a result of isolation. They sang of Gul and Bulbul both unknown in Sindh and which existed only in Iran and Central Asia.

One would think that the conquest of Sindh by Akbar must have brought relief to the people of Sindh but this is hardly a fact. Complete records of the conditions of Sindh exist in Tarikh-e-Mazhar Shah Jehani written in 1635 AD and the further period of 1635-1662 AD is covered by the Factory Records of India. The conquest of Sindh by the Mughals brought in a new system of Jagirdari in Sindh. The Governors, Subedars and other employees were not paid any salaries but instead were given areas of Sindh as jagirs. The frequent transfers, of officials and frequent transfers of Jagirs from one allottee to the other resulted in disinterest in the development of land and the Jagirdar was simply interested in making the best out of the property during the period of his tenure. Surprisingly, a large number of the Mughal Governors in Sindh during Jehangir and Shah Jehan's rule were inefficient in administration as well as in management of the jagirs and they preferred to lease out Jagirs to a third party which charged heavy taxes. They also badly governed the province. During the reign of Jehangir also the Sindhi tribes fought en-masse against the Mughal occupation as they had been doing since 1519 AD. The account of conflict between the Mughal governors and the local tribes in the 17th century during the reign of Jehangir is as under:

- (a) In 1607-8 AD (1016 AH), Sardar Khan's (Subedar of Mirza Gazi Beg) troops had an encounter with the Sameja mounted soldiers, wherein the former lost 500 troops.
- (b) After the transfer of Sardar Khan, Sehwan was transferred to the Jagir of Pir Ghulam. During his tenure there were uprisings of the Sameja Unars in Lakha and Sameja Bughias at Gachero. These were suppressed, but the biggest battle took place at Saeed Garh Fort near Nasarpur in which 2000 Samejas were killed. On another occasion 500 Sameja Unars were killed. The Samejas retaliated by attacking the Jahangirabad Fort with 1000 horse and 2000 foot soldiers and lost 200 men.
- (c) When Taj Khan, the Subedar of Thatta, died, Shamsir Khan, Subedar of Sehwan, was appointed as the Governor of Thatta, and Sehwan came in the Jagir of Mir Abdul Baqa. He had to fight a series of battles with various tribes e.g:
 - (i) The Chandia and Sameja Thebas.
 - (ii) Nahmardi.
 - (iii) The Sameja Unars killed 10-15 troops in Lakha; and another time 40-50 soldiers were killed in the Eastern Desert (Thar); but in the last encounter 200 Sameja Unars were killed and 2000-3000 cattle of the Samejas were also slaughtered in retaliation.

- (iv) The Shora uprising near Khasai village.
 - (v) 200 villages of the Samejas were put to fire.
- (d) Khan Shamshir Khan was made the Subedar of Thatta, for the 2^d time, he camped in various Forts in Sameja country (The present Nawabshah District and the Hala Sub-Division) and sent forces who killed 50-60 Samejas daily, and brought their heads to him.

On one occasion, Shamshir Khan attacked the Baloachi-Chandias as they had ransacked Baghban, Ghaha, Akbarabad and ordered cutting of their jowar crops by swords. They later, however, on seeing the destruction of their own crops surrendered. During the same Subedari, the Nuhani Baloachi residents of Kai and Naing had been helping the Sameja Unars. Shamshir Khan, therefore, attacked them killing 50-60 of their men including Sardar Natala, his sons and his brother.

During Shamshir Khan's rule 700-800 Nahmardi foot soldiers attacked Kachi village 10 miles away from Sehwan killing some people and lifting their cattle. As they outnumbered Shamshir Khan's soldiers he made compromise with them on condition that they withdraw from Sann and Sehwan to the hills.

- (e) Shamshir Khan Uzbek when transferred from Thatta to Sehwan in 1025 AH (1616 AD) attacked the Sameja Dals at village Pali in Samwati, killing many and capturing others.
- (f) The Unars of Halla Kandi Purguna refused to pay the taxes, and fought the troops of Mir Hassamuddin Murtaza Khan II near Khyber, 8 miles south of Halla, and though defeated kept fighting.
- (g) The Shoras killed Khusro Beg, ruler of Thatta. Later they killed the troops of Shamshir Khan and laid siege on Nerunkot till Shamshir Khan came to rescue the fort. The only setback the Shoras received was a minor blow inflicted on them by Shamshir Uzbek, Subedar of Thatta, when they lost a few men in an encounter in the hills.
- (h) During the Governorship of Muzaffar Ma'amoori in 1025 AH (1616 AD), his troops were over-powered by the Sameja Dals, killing some of his men near village Shol.
- (i) Ma'amoori later on sent his nephew with a large number of troops to crush Ismail Shoro. The latter died in battle with the Imperial forces, but Shoras did not surrender. It was during the same year that Shah Khawaja, a relative of Sehwan's governor designate Khusham Beg, while acting in latter's place started by boats from Sehwan carrying a large number of troops and provisions and after landing at Bihan Pattan attacked Khasai Shora village, killing many of Daud Shora's men

and capturing among others Daud Shora's wife. It was only then that Daud came to Sehwan for compromise.

- (j) The Shoras were still not subdued because in 1028 AH (1619 AD) Syed Bayazid Bukhari, the Subedar of Thatta, had to take troops and lay siege on the village of Junjar son of Ismail Shora, taking their men and women folk as prisoners and capturing their cattle and property.
- (k) Syed Bayazid Bukhari, the Governor of Thatta sent forces under his maternal uncle's son Shah Mohammad to crush Kalamatis and Jokhias of Sakro Parguna (Hilly tracts of Thatta and Karachi District and the Sakro Taluka) but in a battle, the latter along with 50 soldiers was killed by Jaji, son of Bijar Jokhia.
- (l) The Sehta, Bhan and Rajyal (Rajar) tribes of Darbella had refused to pay taxes since the beginning of Mughal rule in Sindh (i.e 1575 AD). It was only at the time of Bayazid Bukhar (around 1620 AD) that they were subdued.
- (m) Mir Abul Baqa had an encounter with the Sameja Dals in which 360 Dals were killed.
- (n) The Unar and Sayara tribes of Lakhat, due to strength of their 1000 horse and 4000 foot soldiers, never paid taxes since the days of Sher Khawaja, Govenror of Thatta.
- (o) In 1032 AH (1622 AD), Sher Khawaja (Baqi Khan Khoja) became the Jagirdar of Sehwan and sent an agent to act on his behalf. The agent confiscated food grains of new crops, paid low rates and cheated in measurement. They imposed extra tax on boats of merchants and paid lower prices for their goods. If any body complained they were fined and insulted.

In spite of this in Rajab 1037 AH (1627-28) Sher Khawaja was promoted as the Governor of Thatta but died the same year.

- (p) On the death of Bayazid Bukhari in 1034 AH (1624-25 AD) the administration of Thatta was transferred to Sultan Shaharyar who sent Shariful Mulk as the Subedar of Thatta. The latter appointed Shamsuddin as the ruler of Thatta.

Shamsuddin's officer Khawaja Arif arrested some Sameja Thebas who were guests of Panhwars of Akbarabad Wahi. The Panhwars were infuriated by this and attacked Khawaja Arif, killing 200 of his horse and foot soldiers.

- (q) When Hakim Musa Alayh arrested Sidiq, son of Nido of Chanduka and Shah Beg son-in-law of Nido, and took them to Bakhar, Abras retaliated and killed Dayal Das relative of Mansing Diwan of Bakhar and Taraj son of Waris Gopal Qannungoo of Bakhar and looted the caravan of Siwi. They also defeated Tahir Muhammad, Shakdar of Takar Parguna in Lakhia village, killing all of his 80 mounted soldiers.

- (r) In June 1626 AD Shah Jehan rebelled against his father and came to Sindh. Nawab Shariful Mulk started encounter by using 9000 horse men, 12000 foot soldiers and European (Portugese) gunmen. In 3 battles Shah Jehan was defeated. The Dharejas, Jats and Nahmardis supported Shah Jehan just as they had in the case of Humayun.

These chaotic conditions are confirmed by a European traveler Nicolas Withinton who visited Sindh in 1613-14 and reported of the disorder and very weak Mughal control. He was tricked and looted but rest of his company was looted and killed by a local chief.

From Mazhar Shah Jehani and Factor Records we learn of numerous tribes continuously rising and fighting the administration. During the days of Shah Jehan resistance of local tribes further intensified, for example:

- (a) After Shariful Malik, 1035-1037 AH (1625-1627 AD) Saiful Malik Kashghar was made the Subedar of Sehwan, followed by Ahmed Beg, who became Jagirdar of Sehwan and Chanduka. Ahmed Beg was always in his Harem and his brother Yousif Beg, a great tyrant was virtual ruler. The Sameja Unars laid to waste the town of Bubak; Haveli and Sunn were destroyed by the Nahmardis, and the Chandias ransacked Pat, Akbarabad and Baghban. Yousif Beg crushed Panhwars of Chaha, a peace loving tribe which had not resorted to any violence. In retaliation, Ahmed Beg was defeated by the Panhwars on numerous times but could not do any thing.

Yousif Beg called innocent and respectable people and on false excuses tortured them, levied illegal taxes on businessmen, farmers and boats of foreign merchants, forced merchants to sell goods to him at low rates, organized looting and robbery, harboured notorious people and interfered in the work of Qazis. The Qazis imposed more fine than the culprits could pay. In spite of mismanagement, corruption, inefficiency, tyranny and torture of the peaceful public, no action was taken against Ahmed Beg but instead he was promoted to the governorship of Multan due to his relationship with Yaman-u-Daula Arif Khan.

- (b) After Ahmed Khan, when Dindar Khan became the Subedar of Sehwan, conditions deteriorated to the extent that the Sameja Unars looted the horses of the troops from the Sehwan Fort and killed Naimatullah Khan and Man Sing, reporters of Sehwan and Bakhar respectively, inside the Sehwan Fort. No one dared to leave the city after sunset.

During the same period Nahmardis broke open the gates of Sann fort and looted the residents. The Samejas killed many government employees during Ahmed Khan's tenure.

- (c) In 1638 AD (1069 AH), there was severe famine and cholera in Sindh. The same year Dara Shikoh arrived with his troops which worsened the situation in the whole province.

- (d) The results of mismanagement of Governors and Subedars according to Yousaf Mirak, author of Mazahar Shah Jehani written in 1044 AH (1634-35 AD).
- (i) Land taxation recovery in the Thatta province was less than half and some times even $1/3^{\text{rd}}$ or $1/4^{\text{th}}$ of actual estimates, due to mismanagement of the Jagirdars.
 - (ii) There was general tyranny, corruption, mismanagement, use of force, etc., exercised by the Governors and their representatives.
 - (iii) There were reporters (Wakia Naweess) but they were powerless before the local Governors and administrators with the result that true facts could not be sent to the Emperor.
- (e) The local tribes became so strong that:-
- (i) They were in virtual control of the rural areas.
 - (ii) The Sameja Unars charged taxes for the safe passage of boats on the Indus from Halla Kandi to Sehwan.
 - (iii) Lakhas (near Sann) helped the Government against the Sameja Unars. The latter looted them, took away their cattle, burnt their crops and killed many of their men.
 - (iv) The Jagirdars were too weak to control the Samejas.
- (f) The British factory in Sindh (1635-1662 AD) closed down due to lack of profits caused by unsettlement and turmoil in Sindh even though the East India Company itself was entering a period of special prosperity. In 1639, Henry Bronford made a journey from Agra to Thatta. He reported that between Sehwan and old Hala, the Samejas were a source of danger to traders and movement in the country was not possible without strong guard. The Samejas were in revolt against the Mughal Governor (1640 AD) and disturbed peace in Central Sindh.
- (g) After 1641 AD, the quality of Sindh cloth deteriorated due to unsettled conditions.
- (h) In 1641 Sebastin Manrique traveled from Agra to Sindh and after passing Bakhar when he entered the Sehwan territories he found the land on both the sides of the river uncultivated and uninhabited. It was the area of the Sameja tribes, who had ransacked the whole country. Here the Sameja pirates attacked Manrique's vessel, but were repelled with the help of bombs in possession of Manrique.
- (i) In 1644 AD John Spiller of the East India Company, who spent the summer months in Sehwan and the adjacent areas, reported that though the soil was

- fertile and could produce large quantities of indigo, but the people were exceedingly oppressed and were miserably poor and had no means to manure or sow the land. It may be mentioned that Spiller wrote that the area of Sindh lying between the river Indus and the Western Nara was most fertile.
- (j) During Aurangzeb's governorship of Multan the Jokhia, and Nahmardi tribes of Kohistan rebelled. Aurangzeb in his own letter wrote to Shah Jehan that these tribes did not pay homage to the subedars of Thatta, committed highway robberies and were not subdued since the Tarkhans. The chiefs of the rebels were Haroon, Khattal, Kambho, all Nahmardis, Murid Jokho. They had spread their activities to Kech Makran, and Kutch. They were supported by Jaffer nahmardi, Haji Raunjho, Jam Juma, Budho Nahmardi and the Jams of Kakralo, namely Halo and Gahi Halo who were also interfered. Aurangzeb deputed Malak Hussain to subdue these tribes and after a year's fighting they arrested 41 people including women.
 - (k) In 1647, there was much settlement in Upper Sindh owing to conflict of authority between Murad Bakash, Saiy Khan and Khan Azad Khan; for while customs had been allocated to one of them, the local jurisdiction had been given to the other. Shah Jehan left for Balkh putting his son (Aurangzeb) as governor of Multan, who in turn left many local Subedars with the result that it was difficult to know the authority of each of them. The Abras and the chief men (Zamindars) of the area between Darbelo and Kandiaro and further had fled till the authority of each Subedar was resorted.
 - (l) The Hindus were still well to do in the mid seventeenth century. It may be mentioned that the Sindhi Hinus (Lohana and Amils) have migrated from the Punjab to Sindh in the mid 17th century as ascertained by Bherumal in Sindh-ji-Hindunji Tawarikh and Amlan-jo-Ahwal. They most probably filled the vacuum caused by the migration of the business community of Sindh, i.e., the Memons.
 - (m) Bad Government and corruption of petty officials were the order of the day.
 - (n) In 1656 AD, the Chief of the Karamati Baloachis was insulted by the Mughal Governor. The former collected troops, sought the help of the Baloachis from Ghorabari and the large army so formed plundered the area between Laribandar and Thatta, carrying people and cattle with them but no action could be taken against them.
 - (o) In about May, 1656, the new Governor of Thatta arrived. His great status was too high for the poor conditions in which the city was found. His men were unruly, masterless and made people weary. His wife was uncontrollable. She took away goods of the traders and did not even pay half the price.
 - (p) The Samejas continued their show-down on the river Indus in the Central Sindh as is reported by the East India Company in 1656 AD. They looted boats and only those with the help of strong guard could reach their destination.

- (q) Manucci (1659 AD) reports about the chasing of Dara Shikoh by the two Division of Aurangzeb led by Shaikh Misr and Saf Shaikan, the former marching on the right bank and the latter on the left bank of Bakhar. These divisions pursued Daraout of Sindh to Gujarat, after a naval battle on the Indus near Sehwan. Dara's navy consisted of 5-7 boats with supplies and cannons capable of carrying shots from 60 to 120 lbs. Dara collected as many boats as he could to hinder the procurement by Aurangzeb's men.

The Administration was basically unsympathetic and ruthless. The conflict was virtually a civil war which continued throughout the 17th century.

The tribes which rose and fought the Arghoons, Tarkhans and the Mughals as given by Mazhar Shah Jehani in 1635 AD were:-

- (a) The Sameja Unars were active in the Pargunas of Sann, Lakhat (opposite Sehwan now on the left bank but in the 17th century on the right bank of the Indus), Khatah (north-eastern Sehwan Taluka), Juneja(Northern Dadu and Eastern Kakar Taluka), and Larkana, all on the right bank of the river then; Mathelo, Alore, Darbelo and most of the Nasarpur Parguna on the left Bank of the river. It meant that the Samejas were active in present Sukkur, Larkana, northern Dadu, nawabshah, northern Hyderabad, western Sanghar and north western Thar Parkar Districts.

The Samejas were so strong that during the rule of Shah Jehan they had complete control over the river and exacted taxes from boats for safe passage from Halla Kandi (Halla) to Sehwan. The Unar and Sanyara tribes of Lakhat alone had organized a force of 1000 horse and 4000 foot soldiers in 1044 AH (1635 AD). The foot soldiers were usually faster than mounted and the mounted soldiers usually got down from the horse to fight as foot soldiers. The Samejas were so strong that Yousaf Mirak, author of Mazhar Shah Jehani, recommended to Shah Jehan that the only way to crush the Samejas was to attack them from Bakhar, Thatta, Sehwan and Jaisalmir simultaneously, by engaging the Imperial troops from the 1st there forts and the troops of Raja of aisalmir from the east.

- (b) Chandia was another tribe residing towards north west of Baghban (north Johi and western Kakar Talukas). They usually joined hands with the Samejas and looted the settled pargunas of Juneja (north Dadu and East Kakar) and Khatah. They cultivated land and owned cattle. They had two groups in their clan, the 'Black' and 'White' by colour of their skins. They maintained 700 foot soldiers and 300 horse. They attacked the settled tribes of Baghban, Ghaha, Pattar (Pat) and Akbarabad near Samtani in the Sehwan Taluka.
- (c) The Nahmardis were staying in the hilly tract of Sehwan, Kotri and Mahal Kohistan Talukas Uthal Sawa, Azizani,Phanikot, Thani, Jhangara, Kaji and Nar; being respectively 38, 30, 26, 20, 14, 10 and 14 miles form Sehwan. They usually destroyed Kachha i.e., plains in west of Sehwan and Johi Talukas. The

nahmurdis belonged to the sub-clan of the Sameja tribe (now they call themselves Baloachs). In 1055 AH (1635 AD) they had, 6000 troops of which 1000 were mounted and the rest foot soldiers. They did not cultivate land but raised camels, horses, sheep, goats and cattle. Their main occupation was attacking the settled areas of the Government towards the river. Nahmardis as well as the Samejas also destroyed Terri, Kahi, Ma'ajubi villages, all on way to Laki from Sehwan, probably near Bhagothoro. Nahmardis and Samejas destroyed Parguna of Sann. Laki, Amri and Tahti (now on left bank).

These villages were inhabited by Syeds, Nahmardis and Samejas destroyed these villages and killed many Syeds (as they were pro-Government), so the rest of Syeds migrated to other areas. The Nahmurdis and the Chandias destroyed Kachha i.e., western parts of the Sehwan, Dadu and Johi Talukas.

- (d) The Nuhani Baloachis of Naing, cultivated land on the waters from two spring. They did not pay any taxes but some times offered sheep.
- (e) The Chanduka Parguna was occupied by the Bughia, Sangi and Abras all of the Sameja clan. The Parguna was covered with thick forests (to the east), desert like plains (to the west) and hilly tract (Khirthar range) further west. The Samejas were friendly with the Baloachi sects of Bulade of Sibi (i.e Jacobabad and Kachi District) and the Chandias of Sehwan, northern Johi and western Kakar Talukas). In time of offensive by the government, the Sameja of these clans of Chanduka sent away their families to Sibi and Sehwan and they hid themselves in the hills and forests.
- (f) The tribes of Shera Dal and Babar Baloachis residing in the hilly tract west of Hala (Kotri Taluka) were uncontrollable.
- (g) The Kalamati and Jokia Baloach tribes of the Sakra Parguna (the present Sakro Taluka), hilly tracts of the Thatta District and Karachi District maintained 3000 foot and horse soldiers in 1044 AH or (1635 AD).
- (h) Daud Shora of Khasai Shora village on the right bank of the river Indus maintained a force of Husras, Malahs and thieves who would strike on land as well as the river.

Ultimately, during the days of Aurangzeb, the tribes became strong enough to press Delhi to accept their governorship of Subedari in different territories of Sindh. Aurangzeb's reign started with famines and diseases in Sindh and during his last days high-way robberies became common.

- (a) In 1659, Sindh witnessed the ravages of famine and plague and the population dwindled as a result thereof. This affected trade badly.
- (b) By April 1660, so many people had died of famine and plague that those living were hardly able to bury the dead.

- (c) In 1699, Hamilton Alexander reported that the Jams, Baloachis and Makranis were operating and looting baots and caravans between Lari Bander and Thatta, the first tribe on the left bank and last two tribes on the right bank. The caravans moved under guard of 100-200 troops, but at times 4000-5000 robbers would come and loot. Some times guards would also mix up with the bandits.

The struggle of the Sindh tribes was for possession of land transferred to the Jagirdars, and was directed against the high taxes imposed by the Jagirdars and the Government. The Kalhora movement under the leadership of Adam shah Kalhora was the final struggle of Sindh tribes in this respect. During Aurangzeb's rule resistance of local tribes had become so strong that they asserted for power. When Moizuddin, son of Shah Alam, son of Aurangzeb, was made governor of Multan, at his orders Adam Shah Kalhora was killed and subsequently Din Muhammad Kalhora was summoned in the court of the Governor, and killed. The latter's brother, Yar Muhammad Kalhora, raised arms against the Government and conquered all the areas of Sindh on the right bank of the Indus, north of Sehwan between Nara and the river Indus. Moizuddin, was compelled to come to Sindh but finding Yar Muhammad Kalhora too powerful, he gave him the title of 'Khuda Yar Khan' and allowed him to govern the areas occupied by him. In addition, he allowed him to govern the Sibi Parguna.

By 1701 AD the Kalhoras, a local tribe, having subdued other local tribes and compelled the Mughal Governor at Multan (a grand son of Emperor Aurangzeb) to accept their governorship of the territories forcibly occupied by them. The Delhi Administration surrendered before the force of this tribe and since then they were appointed Mughal governors simply in name occupying more and more of territories and getting more and more concessions and sanctions over these territories from the Mugal Emperors. By 1736 AD, they occupied the whole of the present Province and the areas beyond in Baluchistan. According to Sorley the Kalhora policy was of seizing what they could and holding what they seized in the belief that Delhi was too far away to interfere.

During the century of Mughal rule, following were the highlights of mis-rule and victimization of the local Muslims by most of governors and Subedars:

1. Forced labour.
2. Forcible taxation.
3. Unlawful taxes.
4. Thefts and robberies organized by the Government officials.
5. Illegal confiscation of the properties of the people.
6. Destruction of the communications system.
7. Weakening of agriculture due to unsympathetic behaviour of Governors.

8. No silt clearance of canals.
9. Imposition of excessive land revenue.
10. Forcible confiscation of draft animals.
11. Mass killings of tribes.

The result of this was that the tribes kept struggling and moving from place to place for shelter.

In 1843 AD one could see a few large towns in Sindh with the Hindus forming majority of the population in each town. It is a mystery how the Hindus survived the ordeal of 200 years of the Mughal occupation. Bhirumal has given a clue that the majority of the Hindus in Sindh migrated from Punjab somewhere after 1600 AD and this migration seems to have been completed during the century. The year 1600 AD coincides with the migration of the Memon business community from Sindh and it is now understandable that the vacuum in the spheres of business and commerce was filled in by the immigration of the Hindus. The Kalhoras who ruled Sindh upto 1883 AD strived hard for the upliftment of the people. Their great achievement was the improvement of the irrigation system which had deteriorated since the times of the Sammas. As per estimates the total area under cultivation reached its highest of 30 lacs by 1754 AD in the last days of Noor Muhammad Kalhora. The aspiration of Sindhis for land was met by bringing new land under cultivation. The Kalhoras, however, maintained the Jagirdari system of the Mughals. The Jagirdari was normally hereditary or at least lasting the life time of jagirdar. This made a good incentive for the Jagirdar who put more efforts for improvement of land. This improved the lot of the Sindhi Muslims considerably as compared to that during the previous two centuries, but what the Kalhoras did not realize or understand was that the mere improvement of agriculture would not uplift the Sindhi Muslims. They made no attempt to move the Sindhis to the towns. In the economic set up existing then, the wealth and power was not located in cities but was centred in the jagir. The system compelled a jagirdar to live on the land away from education and culture. It left him and his children ignorant and un-educated. In spite of various claims, the development of the Sindhis in the field of education was hardly significant in the days of the Kalhoras, mainly because they were living in villages and with poor means at their disposal. It was difficult for them to travel to far off towns, to acquire education. The situation did not improve during the Talpur regime too. Thus in 1843 AD we find towns occupied mostly by Hindus and villages invariably by Muslims. A few Hindu traders were doing business in villages but their families were usually located in the towns nearby. The two great setbacks to the Sindhis in the 18th century were:-

In 1739, Muhammad Shah succeeded all the territories of the West of the Indus to Nadirshah. Yar Muhammad Kalhora did acknowledge this treaty and, therefore, Nadirshah attacked Sindh in 1740, and carried away the whole of Sindh treasury and library of Noor Muhammad Kalhora the ruler. He further levied Rs.20 lac

annual tax on him. The Kalhoras' avoided the payment and in 1754 Ahmed Shah Abdali with a large army came to Sehwan to exact the tax. The Kalhoras evaded the payment specially after Ahmed Shah.

In 1883, the last Kalhora ruler sought the Afghan help against the Talpurs. Madad Khan Pathan came, looted, burnt and laid to waste most of the Sindh area. This was the worst blow to the Sindhis as even the remotest villages like Badin were also not spared.

Charles Napier is blamed for having sinned to conquer Sindh. Since no historian has gone to the basic cause of the conquest of Sindh, it is worth while to introduce this paragraph for the general interest of the reader. In 1830 AD, Lord Elenborough's beautiful wife Jane Elenborough's love affair with an Austrian diplomat resulted in the former's request to the Parliament for granting him permission to divorce her. Psychiatrists know that a person of his caliber having been defeated by a woman seeks conquests in some other fields. Lord Elenborough therefore recommended to the British Government and to the East India Company that very year to conquer Sindh. This fits into the psychologists' reading that he wanted to convert his defeat at the hands of his lady Jane into a conquest of a new land. Lord Elenborough is reported to have 12 major love affairs, three of which were with kings and the last one with a Badvi of Syria. Her love affairs apart, Elenborough had to pay her compensation of 6000 pounds a year while her affairs were being published in the London Papers. On becoming the Governor-General in 1840 AD he lost no time to convert his defeat into a conquest, and Napier did it for him but in guilty conscience the latter wrote to the former 'Pacavi' i.e. "have sinned".

Napier was a good administrator. He probably would not have continued the Jagirdari system but the sympathizers of the cause of the Sindhis, namely Outram, Eastwick, John Jacob and Buist propagated that the Sindhis would rise against the British. Napier, therefore, was compelled to win over the ex-jagirdars and he quickly restored the jagirs to them. The total area under cultivation by 1843 AD had reduced to 10 lacs. Due to the modernization of the irrigation system the British raised the total irrigated area to 30 alcs by 1930 AD and further expansion came after the Sukkur Barrage. The Jagirdari system had left the farmers hardly with any thing. He lived from hand to mouth and during the British rule when opportunity for purchase of new and came, it was usually Jagirdars or big land owners who had the necessary finance and means to purchase and cultivate more land resulting into strengthening of the Zamindari and Jagirdari system and weakening of the economic structure of poor farmers, who formed more than 70 percent of the total population and 93 percent of total population of Muslims of the Province.

British could not be blamed for keeping the Muslims backward. In 1853 AD the present Alphabet of Sindhi language was introduced by Sir Bartle Frere, then Commissioner in Sindh. To him goes the credit for introducing Arabic script inspite of Government of Bombay's communication of supporting Devnagri script for Sindhi language. He argued that 80 percent of the population were Muslims, the available Sindhi literature was in Arabic script, the educational institutions were run by Muslims

where they taught Sindhi, Persian and Arabic all in similar script and it would be doing injustice to Sindhi Muslims by adopting any but Arabic script. He did not allow the Committee appointed by the Government to function but simply dictated his views. To help Sindhis he very benevolently introduced competitive examinations in all Talukas. These were to be held every six months and the top 3 candidates from each Taluka were to be awarded; by direct appointment to 1st number, scholarship for 5 years to 2nd number for studies at Karachi, and scholarship to 3rd number for 7 years for studies at Bombay. At the end of studies candidates were to be appointed in Government jobs. This meant 270 new jobs each year for those who tried to learn Sindhi language. This innocent action of Sir Bartle Frere caused further backwardness of Sindhi Muslims. What was not realized was that majority of population in the Taluka headquarters were Hindus. They were the first to pick up the Sindhi language, appear in the competitive examinations and thus in due course of time they occupied 90 percent of the Government jobs, which afforded further opportunities for educating their children, in trade, art and culture and mental development. In next 90 years the gap between Sindhi Hindus and Sindhi Muslims widened. The common Sindhi Muslim working as a farmer had no means to migrate to the towns. The zamindar and jagirdar would not move, as he was tied to the land.

During the British occupation of Sindh new avenues of economic development came up. For example, introduction of Sindh Railway Company and subsequently its extension into two important lines in Sindh, one on the right bank of the river Indus and another on the left bank. Major towns of Sindh got connected by rail within 35 years of British rule. This opened new opportunities in trade and new townships rose at every railway station. The businessmen who were predominantly Hindus moved to the new railway stations, which in time turned into local Mandies and controlled the whole trade.

At the time of British conquest only 10 lacs acres were irrigated. This figure increased to 30 lacs in 1930 and the opening of the Sukkur Barrage tripped this figure. New opportunities in the development departments like employment and contracts went mostly to the residents of the towns. New lands were disposed off to any person who had money to invest. It was for the first time in History that the Hindus started purchasing the lands and competing with the Muslims who had till then enjoyed the monopoly over agricultural production. The British also introduced some development work like education, health, industries, agriculture, roads, buildings, fisheries, etc. The jobs went to the dwellers of big towns who had easy facilities at hand for education. The British also built infrastructures as public utility like roads, telephones, telegraphs, electricity, water supply, hospitals, etc. This, in fact, meant development of the people living in towns i.e the Hindus.

Thus economically and intellectually the gap between the Hindus and the Muslims widened. It can be seen that the main cause of the backwardness of the Sindhi Muslims was due to their living in villages where facilities for economic and intellectual development lacked.

Social life in the villages is very complex. The Jagirdari system introduced by the British created Jagirdars and Zamindars who were to govern the people virtually by strength of their power. The system thus on the whole continued for four and half centuries and it is only recently that it has started crumbling.

Before the British and during the century of their rule Sindh was the exporter of grain. The grain prices automatically adjusted to the level of International prices. The new development in agricultural technology which started by about 1800 AD did not penetrate in the Indo-Pakistan South Asia including Sindh. In 1800 AD 80 percent of the population of U.S.A was on the farms which reduced to 7 percent by 1947 but in Sindh the population on farms remained at 80 percent during these 160 years. The technological development that a farmer in the U.S.A could produce at least 10 times more than a farmer in Sindh and therefore, he could enjoy 10 times higher standard of living. The technological knowledge was not introduced in our South-Asia till 1928 after the Report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture. The farmer had to sell the grain at International prices until in 1942 by artificially controlling the prices, the farmer was given less than International rates.

In nut-shell, the main cause of the backwardness of the Sindhi Muslims was due to their being thrown out from the towns after 1520 AD, and thereby compelled to go to the villages in which they were brought under Munsabdar and Jagirdars who tried to subdue them. The Sindhis, however, continued the struggle for eliminating the tyranny by all the means at their disposal.

COMPLETED ARTICLE # 01

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