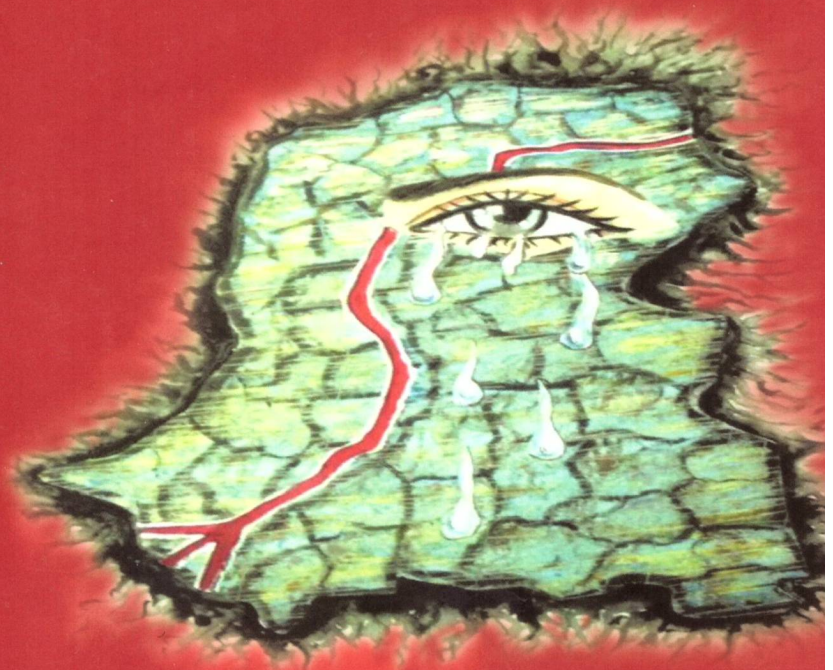
NASEER DASHTI

TEARS OF SINDHU

Sindhi National Struggle in the Historical Context



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Naseer Dashti

2018

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Dedication

If you think you are beaten, you are;
If you think you dare not, you don't.
If you'd like to win, but think you can't,
It is almost a cinch you won't.

If you think you'll lose, you're lost,
For out the world, we find
Success begins with a fellow's will –
It is all in the state of mind.

Life's battles don't always go
To the stronger or faster man;
But soon or late the man who wins,
Is the one who thinks he can.

(**Walter D. Wintle**)

This work is dedicated to the unwavering belief of millions of Sindhis that it is not their destiny to be dominated or subjugated; that the adversary is not invincible; that they will ultimately regain their sovereignty and dignity as a proud nation.

Foreword

Sindhis are among the few people who retained their national identity for five thousand years. Their journey from ancient times to present era is tortuous. It can be traced from the era of Indus civilization. The ruins of many cities on both sides of Indus River still fascinate archaeologists and researchers but because of the failure to decipher the ancient script, there are many unanswered questions regarding the details of that era. The second period began with the collapse of Indus civilization most probably by a multitude of central Asian tribes. After a brief period of turmoil in the aftermath of their invasion, the Greeks, as well as many other nations, made intrusions in the region.

The Sindhi national identity began to emerge with the amalgamation of the indigenous population and the newcomers. The encroachments by various nations proved not to be an occupation but the relatively cultured Dravidian population of Sindh and the barbarian central Asian tribes intermingled in such a way that they created the frame of a Sindhi nation. This era marked the creation of a tolerant society where people of different socio-cultural orientations and believers of many mythological faiths were living together in harmony.

The third period began with the emergence of a kingdom and its transformation into a mighty empire. After Roman and Persian empires. Sindh emerged as the third major power in the region. However. the whole scenario of the region changed with the advent of a new religion of Islam from Arabian Peninsula in the 7th century. Within a short span of time. the Arabs destroyed the mighty Sassanid Empire. Ancient Arabian god Allah became the supreme god of the whole region making redundant powerful Persian god Ahura Mazda and Islam replaced well established Zoroastrian religion in Central Asia. The unstoppable Arab fighters also forced the Romans to withdraw from the Middle East unceremoniously. Sindh was the last major power which crumbled. The Arab incursions and the ultimate demise of Sindhi empire was a watershed in Sindhi history and it brought drastic changes in the region.

The fourth period was important as showing resilience. Sindhis created the autonomous state ruled by Sumros and Sammas in succession. The first Sindhi state lasted for more than three hundred years despite tremendous pressures from various Central Asian and Middle Eastern powers.

The fifth period is their struggle to re-emerge as an independent nation during the 17th century. After the kingdoms of Sumros and Sammas. the rule of Kalhodas and Talpurs was an effort for Sindhi sovereignty which because of various compelling reasons. could not last for long. During that period. a quite unexpected phenomenon was happening in South Asia and adjoining regions. Several European nations were spreading their commercial enterprises in Asia with the support of their highly advanced military machines. After a long-drawn power struggle. the British defeated their rivals (Dutch. Portuguese. and French) and got the monopoly of trade in the region. They became the ultimate power in the

region and remained the master of a vast territory and ruled over a multitude of nations in Asia and the Middle East. Sindh was the last of Indian states which were conquered by them in 1843. The occupation happened in a milieu of increased tug of war between Czarist Russia and Great Britain for gaining colonial territories or holding onto their existing possessions in Asia and the Middle East.

The incorporation of Sindh into the religious state of Pakistan in 1947 was the beginning of another tragic episode of their national history. After two great wars during the first half of 20th century, changing internal and external socio-political dynamics of colonialism compelled the British to withdraw from India. But in order to safeguard it's vital economic, political and strategic interests in the region, it became imperative for them to divide India and create a client state. Tragically, the religion of Islam was used as a tool in the creation of this state and many nations were amalgamated in the newly created country against their will. Sindhis became the victim of the grand designs of a powerful imperial power and were merged into the religious state of Pakistan. Since then, for them, it is a tale of humiliations, insults and exploitation.

For the last 70 years, Sindhis are living in a state which is in constant denial of their rights as a national entity. It appears that for the state, they don't exist and there is no Sindhi cultural or societal values. The ruling Punjabis and their allies don't want to accept them as equal. There is no intention for the resolution of their grievances. They just want to finish with the Sindhi national resistance. They are using excessive force to suppress nationalist mobilization. They are adopting various strategies of assimilation and the demographic shift to make them into a minority.

Upholding the historic traditions of resisting alien rule. Sindhis have been struggling in various ways against the powerful religious state. Inspired by the leadership of GM Syed. they waged a heroic political struggle and rendered exceptional sacrifices to end the domination of their new masters. It is tragic that their leadership after the death of GM Syed failed to streamline the national sentiments. The nationalists are divided and are consistently undermining the call for a united front.

It is the moment that the present generation of Sindhis has to make the most difficult decision in order to reach the cherished destination of liberation. honour and prosperity. Their leaders have to deal with a variety of issues. The solution to problems facing their national resistance can only be found in a dedicated united struggle under the combined leadership with credentials of utmost honesty. patriotism and a clear vision. It is high time for the nationalists to revisit their strategies. It is also the historical duty of conscious elements to be in the front line. They have to force the multitude of small nationalist organizations into working together under a united front in order to contribute at the end of insults. injustice and subjugation.

Unfortunately. Sindhis have few friends among the community of nations. Perhaps the policy makers in the civilized world find in their struggle none of the heroism. romance. and moral legitimacy which they have been admiring in more fashionable liberation struggles in recent decades.

The 21st century. Sindhi struggle for an honourable existence is the continuation of their historical journey. Although. their painful struggle of over seventy years in overthrowing the yoke of subjugation has yet to bear fruit: nevertheless. this

situation of domination and oppression cannot be continued and Pakistani state ultimately has to bow before the will of the Sindhi people to be the master of their land and resources and to live according to their own socio-cultural traditions.

The Sindhi journey from being a nation having a powerful empire into being a subjugated people is fascinating with all elements of adventure, intrigue and controversy. This book is the story of their sufferings in the hands of invaders through ages and their valiant struggle for overthrowing the yoke of domination and subjugation. It was not easy to write about a complex phenomenon such as Sindhi national resistance. Sindhis are among those nations whose history has been recorded by conquerors and invaders and their narratives have a particular theme, which was to belittle this great nation. Their accounts are highly biased against Sindhi history and culture. Presenting a true picture of Sindhi national resistance against foreign rule can only be possible by reading between the lines from the writings of Arabs, Persians, British and Pakistani writers. This work is an attempt to present a neutral version of Sindhi national resistance against invaders and conquerors. It is an attempt to present the story of Sindhi national struggle in a historical perspective, beginning with the rise and fall of Sindhi power in early medieval times, to the emergence of contemporary Sindhi nationalism. It is based on the review of available written material and from interviews and deliberations with Sindhi academics, political leaders and activists.

Naseer Dashti
London
March 2018

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1. Introduction

> *History, which is indeed little more than the register of the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind.*
> Edward Gibbon

The terrain which is watered by Sindhu (Indus) River is called Sindh. Historically, in ancient Indian texts, Sindh was called Sindhu-Desha, for Greeks; it was Sindo-mana and ancient Arabs called it simply Sindh. Contemporary Sindh, population wise and by landmass is the second largest province of Pakistan, bordering on the north with Punjab, Balochistan on the west, Rajasthan province of India on the east, in the south it borders with Run of Kutch and the Indian Ocean. Topographically, Sindh may be divided into three natural regions running parallel to each other. Kohistan or hilly tract is on the west, Thar or Registan lies in the east and in between is the alluvial tract of land.

The fertile landmass of Sindh is the product of mighty Sindhu River which has been nourishing the land since immemorial. Both land and its people derive their identity from the river which has been the founding centre of Indian religion and civilization. Its role in the protracted warfare between Koroos and Pandoos, and in giving the name of Bharat to India as depicted in the Indian mythological texts are features of ancient Sindh. In Indian mythology, it was god Varuna who

dug the river and according to oldest geographical texts. Periplus. it discharged into the Indian Ocean with its seven mouths (branches).

Sindh as a country and Sindhis as a people was mentioned in the texts founded on tablets and rock inscriptions of Achaemenes Emperors 500 BCE. Later in edited versions of Mahabharata and in Greek texts. they were mentioned as Sindhu and Indos. In the oldest Indian religious texts. Reg-Veda. Sindhis were mentioned as Aryanised people settled in the Indus valley.

Sindh served as a meeting place for many people and been a confluence of diverse cultural phenomena. Its ancient history can be divided into periods of Indus civilization and the Empire of Sindh. The Indus civilization and its empire (the empire of Indus) was centred at Mohen-jo-Daro and lasted for nearly two thousand years. The empire flourished by extensive trade links and cultural communication with other empires in Mesopotamia and Central Asia. Indus civilization was characterized by a sophisticated urban system in the Bronze Age. They used bricks as a building material in their cities scattered on the flatlands of Indus valley. The well-organized and planned city of Mohen-jo-Daro was one of the richest cities in the world at that period.

Aryan inroads into the Indian subcontinent was believed to be responsible for the eclipse of the Indus civilization. With the domination of Aryan tribes and their intermingling with indigenous Dravidians. a new Sindhi civilization emerged. Aryanised Sindh became actively engaged in the great civil war of ancient Indian history. "the Mahabharata". After the dust of the protracted and bloody war was settled. the Empire of Sindh emerged on the horizon in which Sindhi language. traditions. and cultural norms developed forming the basis of

contemporary Sindhi national identity. The Sindhi language is a member of the Indo-Iranic group of Aryan languages, in its modern form was developed in that period.

In the period between the collapse of Indus Civilization and the emergence of the Empire of Sindh, the region was in political turmoil. For a while, Sindh became a protectorate of Achaemenid Empire of Iran. As part of the imperial forces, Sindhi warriors took part in the war against the Greek invasion of Persia under the command of Alexander the Great; however, Emperor Darius III of Achaemenes Dynasty failed to offer a robust resistance to the invaders. The empire collapsed within a few months under the hooves of Greek cavalry. The army of Alexander the Great invaded and briefly occupied Sindh. After the end of Greek power, Saka tribes made inroads in western India including Sindh. For a short period, the region witnessed the rise and fall of Sakas, White Huns or Hephthalite and the Mauryan Empire. From the rubbles of collapsed Mauryan Empire, Sindhis managed to establish their own state which soon emerged as a mighty empire.

A period of nearly two centuries before the Arab conquest is important in Sindhi history. The emergence of a powerful Empire during 6th century AD is considered to be the golden era of Sindhis in their recorded history. The Empire of Sindh which was consolidated by the heirs of Diwaji Rao was a rich and powerful country of that period. It was expanded by King Chach Silabij and his son King Dahir. During that period, Sindh was one of the prosperous countries in the world and the society was a mosaic of the followers of many religious and mythological beliefs. A culture of tolerance between various religious sects and national entities was the hallmark of Sindhi society during the age of the empire. The development of a tolerant and secular Sindhi society, respecting the mythological beliefs and way of life of every

community within the larger Sindhi national entity was one of the attributions of the Empire. The days of glory for Sindh in early medieval times lasted for more than two hundred years until the invasion of the Arabs during the 8th century.

The invasion of Arabs during 8th century was a watershed in the history of Sindh. In search of material and heavenly rewards, the poverty-stricken Arabs under the banner of a new religion of Islam became invincible. Mighty Romans and Persians could not stop their onslaught. The Romans lost their Middle Eastern territories and the whole Persian Empire crumbled. After Persia, Sindh was their next target. Despite the tough resistance offered by Sindhis under the leadership of a valiant King Dahir, the Arab forces overwhelmed Sindhi defences and occupied whole Sindh within five years. The Arab occupation initiated far-reaching changes in the geography, society, and polity of Sindh. It was undoubtedly the darkest period in the history of Sindh.

The Arab intrusion was the beginning of a series of invasions and occupations by other nations and darkness prevailed upon Sindh for many more centuries. After the Arab withdrawal, Sindh bore the brutalities of various marauders and plunderers from the Middle East and Central Asia. These were testing times for Sindhis and on many occasions, they showed extraordinary resilience and tried to regain their sovereignty. There came a brief time of glory for Sindhis when two of their tribes, Sammas and Sumros, established an autonomous state in Sindh before it was occupied and incorporated into the Mughal Empire.

After the collapse of Mughal Empire, Sindhis like many other constituent nations of the empire regained their sovereignty. Sindh became an independent state ruled by Kalhodas and Talpurs during 18th and 19th century. However, historical

events in faraway Europe resulting in the rivalry of European powers in Central Asia and the Middle East caused the occupation of Sindh and humiliation of Sindhi people in 1843. The British entered the Indian political scene as traders during the 17th century and became master of the whole region within a short period of time. Their land was invaded by the British. Sindhis fought valiantly for the preservation of their dignity and the sovereignty of their nation but faced a crushing defeat. The hundred years of British rule in Sindh was the start of a process in which the Sindhi society began to transform into a society dominated by Pirs and Sufis, and rogue elements of the various sectarian background. A network of collaborators and traitors of all political orientations was developed in Sindhi society. This network was handed over to the religious state of Pakistan when it replaced the British colonial rule in 1947.

During the 20th century, circumstances forced European Imperial powers to abandon their colonial possessions in Asia and Africa; however, in the strategy to safeguard vital economic and strategical interests, before withdrawing, they divided nations and communities. They created artificial states on different pretexts. Pakistan, as a client state was created by the British, using religion for the division of India and Sindh was incorporated in the newly created religious state. Under Pakistani occupation, Sindhis are going through one of the worst periods in their tortuous history in the sense that the religious state has been eroding the very foundations of a Sindhi nation. It is bringing unprecedented demographic changes which might change thousands year old Sindhi nation into a minority within a few decades. Thousands of Muslim immigrants from India were settled in Sindhi cities from the very beginning. The language of these immigrants (Urdu) was imposed on Sindh as the national language of the state and medium of instruction in educational institutions side-lining

Sindhi language. A superfluous culture of religious narrow-mindedness was sponsored in order to dilute the secular mindset of Sindhi people. Sindhis have been excluded in the political power circles which have been dominated by state establishment comprised of an alliance of Punjabi Military, Indian immigrants (*Muhajirs*) and religious elites (*Mullahs*). Unlike past, where the migrating tribes and people from many ethnic and linguistic origin after settling down in Sindh merged themselves into greater Sindhi national identity, the newcomers from North India not only retained their separate identity but with the help of their ruling partners imposed their cultural and social traditions upon Sindhi people. Contemporary Sindh is presenting a picture where fast demographic changes are occurring alongside the domination of alien cultural values.

Sindhis have been resisting the subjugating measures of Pakistani state for the last 70 years; however, for various reasons, they have not been able to defeat its overwhelming power. Contemporary Sindhi society is a classical colonized society with a system which is the sum total of Pakistani state policies, interests, institutions, culture, social traditions, ideologies, and personalities. The union of these elements makes the present colonial social formation in Sindh which dominates or influences Sindhis on every sphere of human activity.

The contemporary Sindhi national struggle began with the occupation of Sindh by the British in 1843. It sharpened the sense of subjugation among them and their desire to achieve the cherished goal of regaining their sovereign status once again. Creation of Pakistan and the incorporation of Sindh into the religious state gave impetus for the development of a new Sindhi national consciousness. The 20th century was the era of national liberation and events which occurred in Asia, Africa,

and Latin America during that era was of great importance in the evolution of the Sindhi national struggle. Revolutionary fervour of that period also sparked the imagination of Sindhis.

The situation in contemporary Sindh is one of the most complicated political issues in the world. The socio-political and economic exploitation of Sindh has reached such a level that Sindhis are universally alienated. Sindhi masses are angry. Sindhi intellectuals, writers and conscious elements of the society are traumatized by the strangulation of their thousands year old secular societal traditions by a state which openly advocates religious fundamentalism and extremism. Sindhi political elite has been terrorized by bloodthirsty security agencies and any talk of Sindhi nationalism or of fundamental human rights will result in disappearances and mutilated bodies. The level of state violence against Sindhi masses and nationalist political cadre has never been so high. Blood and tears happen to be the hallmarks of contemporary Sindhi history.

A nation is a group of people with common ancestry, cultural traditions, language and history in a territory while nationalism is the expression of national sentiments. Sindhi nationalism in Pakistan developed as an alternative to the political and religious ideology of Pakistani state. The Sindhi struggle evolved around the deep issue of cultural and historical identity. In the beginning, it was for the recognition as an equal partner in the running of state affairs. Soon Sindhis began to feel the rising encroachment on their land and resources. They realized the true intentions of the ruling alliance of Punjabi Military, *Mullahs* and *Muhajirs*. The pace of exploitative measures increased and with same proportion, the Sindhi resentment against Pakistan rose. In this context, Sindhi nationalists openly declared that the objective of the Pakistani state is to take away their land, change the

demography of Sindh in order to eliminate them from the face of the earth or to eliminate Sindhis as a nation who has been the master of this piece of land since time immemorial.

In the 21st century, China, which is intruding in the region in the guise of initiating developmental projects. Sindhis see the danger of ruthless exploitation of their resources and the imminent danger of becoming a minority in their motherland within a few decades. With various projects under China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the proposed Zulfiqar Abad mega city initiative, there is a universal fear among Sindhis that they are destined with a fate like that of Native Americans after the European incursions during the 15th century.

The historical journey of Sindhis is tortuous with episodes of glory and power, alternating with periods of occupation and subjugation. Like many other nations in the region, they were engaged in bloody conflicts with invaders from the Middle East and Central Asia for the last many centuries. In the prevailing circumstances, the situation is not rosy for Sindhis. Their national resistance is weak, resourceless and divided. The international community is turning a blind eye on extreme violation of human rights in Sindh. Nevertheless, Sindhis have amply demonstrated their resilience in the face of major political and social disasters. Despite the odds, thousands of Sindhi political workers are keeping the flag of resistance high. With Pakistan at the brink of social, political and economic collapse, Sindhi nationalists are hopeful that in near future they will be able to initiate a robust challenge to the enemies of Sindh and regain their sovereignty and dignified place in the community of nations.

The book is divided into fifteen chapters.

Chapter One

Chapter two is an overview of political, social and religious developments of ancient Sindh. The empire of the great civilization of Indus valley was based in magnificent cities like Mohen-jo-Daro and Harappa flourished for thousands of years. It was an amazing feat of history that a civilization which was at par with the great civilizations of Sumer and Akkad suddenly collapsed with the invasion of barbarian tribes from Central Asia. With the advent of the Aryans, new mythologies developed with the admixture of Aryan and indigenous Dravidian concepts and contemporary Indian religious beliefs began to shape. However, these were not periods of tranquillity. The whole region of north-western India including Sindh witnessed a period of constant upheavals. Besides being involved in the great battles fought between Koroos and Pandoos of Mahabharata, Sindh became the battleground for various invading powers including Persians, Greeks, Mauryans, Sakas, Kushans and Hephthalite Turks. Several states were established in the Indus region by these powers.

The early medieval period is the subject of Chapter three. It is an exploration into the happiest days in the life of Sindhis with a detailed description of the emergence and consolidation of their first empire. This period can comfortably be termed as the golden era of Sindh in which it emerged as a powerful empire beginning from 6th century AD. It was the period when modern Sindhi national identity began shaping itself and in many ways, the origin of contemporary Sindhi nation can be traced from that period. Socio-cultural traditions which are cherished by contemporary Sindhis were developed during that period. The development of a unique national identity came as a result of the intermingling of various intruding nations and Dravidian people. The Sindhi language and rich socio-cultural behaviours developed in such a way that they made the strong frame of a nation in which all subsequent

newcomers into the Indus valley were merged. The Empire of Sindh was a truly multi-ethnic and multi-religious state. The period of the empire was the period of fame, prestige, and glory for Sindhis. With extensive trade links, they became a trading people and their wealth became the envy of surrounding nations. The metropolitan city of Deval was the hub of international trade.

Sindhi destinies changed when during the 8th century, Arab Bedouins after a war of attrition became able to conquer Sindh and occupy it for more than 100 years. Chapter four explores the phenomenon of Arab invasion and occupation. Many reasons have been cited by Muslim writers for the decision of invading Sindh during the reign of Caliph Abdul Malik in 710 AD. Whether it was the episode of slave girls, the wealth of Sindh or giving asylum to the enemies of Umayyad Dynasty, the destroyers came out of desert armed with mundane and heavenly desires, invaded a country which was highly civilized and one of the richest. With the occupation, there began a period of mass murders, large-scale slavery, forced conversion to the Arabian faith, stealing and plunder of the wealth of a proud nation. The chapter analyses motives behind the Arab incursions in Sindh, why Sindhis were overwhelmed and what were the consequences of the fall of Sindhi Empire.

Chapter five is a brief story of the first Sindhi state, shedding light on the activities of plunderers in the turbulent period in the aftermath of Arab occupation. The Arab ruled Sindh with an iron hand for more than hundred years but their grip loosened later during the Abbasid period. With the weakening of Abbasid Caliphate, Sindh faced the onslaught of many regional powers who invaded the region for plunders. However, this era was also known as the resurgence of Sindhi power. Taking advantage of loosening Arab grip, two Sindhi tribes (Sumro and Samma) managed to establish the first

Sindhi state after the collapse of Sindhi Empire. Their state lasted for more than 300 years. Although, under attack from plunderers of all orientations, the first state was not only able to sustain itself but also Sindhi culture and language blossomed to great heights. However, the whole period was characterized by frequent incursions of marauding Turkish and Mongol invaders who initiated a reign of terror and plunder surpassing the Arabs on many accounts.

Chapter six is an exploration of a tragic era of Sindhi history where the second and the last Sindhi state was overrun by British forces in 1843. Showing their extreme quality of resilience, Sindhis managed to free themselves from the domination of the Mughals and a second Sindhi state emerged during the 18th century with Kalhodas as the rulers. Later, Kalhodas were replaced by their military commanders belonging to Talpur family. This was the time of growing power of the British in the subcontinent and Sindh became the last victim of independent Indian states which succumbed to their imperial designs. The protection of opium trade and the tug of war between Russians and the British in Central Asia were the causative factors in the demise of second Sindhi state. The chapter also describes the internal dynamics of Kalhoda and Talpur dynasties and the consequences of the British occupation of Sindh.

Chapter seven deals with the resistance of Sindhi masses after the British occupation. In the changing social and political dynamics, Sindhis participated in the broader nationalist struggle of Indian people. Several local social and political organizations were established and when the Congress Party was formed, the majority of Sindhi nationalists joined the party. During the 1857 rebellion, Sindh also put its share when several Sindhis were either executed or sentenced to various terms of imprisonments. Although, except some

episodes of violent outrages. Sindhi resistance to British rule remained largely peaceful and confined to political agitation: nevertheless, with the development of Hur phenomenon, the violence became one of the ingredients in their struggle against foreign rule. The chapter also provides an analysis of the Hur phenomenon in a logical perspective.

Chapter eight is the description and analysis of Pakistan phenomenon in a historical context. The creation of a religious state and the use of political Islam as the doctrine for dividing India was a unique phenomenon in the history of the world. Because of devastating wars, the internal socio-economic and political dynamics of European imperial powers changed. They became exhausted and weak. This resulted in an increased momentum for national liberation among the colonised people forcing them to draw up strategies for decolonization. However, in order to protect vital economic and strategic interests in occupied regions after the withdrawal, they divided nations and created artificial states by drawing arbitrary boundary lines. Tragically, it was the Muslim desire for re-establishment of true Islam which was used as one of the tools in their efforts to safeguard colonial interests in the Indian Ocean, Central Asia and the Middle East. Pakistan was created to build a geographical and political wall against the ambitions of Soviet Russia in the region and to protect oil and strategic interests in the Gulf and the Middle East.

Chapter nine is a discussion on various contextual factors which are responsible for the cohesion of a Sindhi national conscious. Sindhi nationalism is the expression of unreserved loyalty to their people and land. It is both a political ideology and a sentiment of belonging to an ancient community with a set of symbols, beliefs and way of life. The Sindhi belief of being different is based on geographical, political,

socio-cultural and historical foundations. The chapter is an analysis of Sindhi nationalist narrative which has been built upon the basic ingredients of a Sindhi national identity and has been the major inspirational tools for the mobilization of Sindhi masses.

Chapter ten is the description of Sindhi national struggle during the formative years of Pakistan. When the division of India was being planned, a significant number of Sindhi politicians supported the merger of Sindh with Pakistan; although, soon it dawned to them that the dreams of having a better status in the newly created state were a mirage. Sindhis realised that their national identity and way of life is increasingly encroached by policies adopted by the ruling alliance of Punjabi Military, *Mullahs* and *Muhajirs*. Sindhis became alarmed with the influx of a huge number of refugees from India. Majority of these refugees were Urdu speaking and on arrival in Sindh, they became part of the ruling alliance and overnight transformed to become the ruler of their hosts. Karachi was separated from Sindh on July 23, 1948, by declaring it the 'Federal Capital Region' sending shock waves throughout Sindh. With the realization that their support for joining Pakistan was a blunder, Sindhi nationalists started raising voices and began to mobilize the masses. Led by GM Syed, a national resistance was initiated for the preservation of Sindhi socio-cultural values and political interests of Sindhi people.

Chapter eleven is an exploration of the tortuous history of Sindhi national struggle during the turbulent period of last decades of the 20th century. The second half of 20th century saw many ups and down in the struggle. Sindhi nationalists mobilized to oppose the ever-increasing oppressive and subjugating measures of the religious state. Losing hope in a co-existence with Punjab within a true federation of Pakistan,

in 1972. GM Syed demanded the independence of Sindhu Desh and remained persistent in his demand throughout his life. Last decades of the 20th century witnessed a growing involvement of Sindhi masses in the national resistance. The state establishment sharply reacted taking countermeasures. These measures included manufacturing and launching of leaders like Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Rasool Bux Palijo in order to dilute Sindhi national sentiments: introduction of *Muhajir* politics: establishment of a web of religious schools and patronization of a drug and Kalashnikov culture. Excessive state power was also used in countering the Sindhi national struggle.

Chapter twelve is an analysis of a developing chaotic situation in a 21st century Sindh in which Sindhis are facing a classical colonial situation because of socio-economic. politico-administrative. and cultural strategies taken by the state. The conflict of Sindhi nationalists with the state has converted Sindh as a virtual war zone with its accompanying human right tragedies. For Sindhis. most alarming is the entry of China into Sindh with its colonial and imperial designs. Sindhis are genuinely worried about the prospect of being converted into a minority in the face of drastic shifts in the demography of their motherland because of various developmental aggressions.

National liberation movements generally use the demand of the right of self-determination as their political objective in line with the United Nation Charter. which emphasizes the granting of that right to all people. Chapter thirteen is a theoretical discussion on the phenomenon of the national liberation struggle and the principle of the right of self-determination.which appeared on the political horizons after First World War. The chapter also analyses Sindhi claim to self-determination and how its legal and humanitarian aspects

can be used for a negotiated and peaceful resolution of Sindhi conflict with Pakistan.

Contemporary Sindhi national resistance is passing through a critical period. It is engulfed with a variety of problems causing considerable weakening of its capacity to engage the state in a meaningful way. The lack of a robust leadership, divisions among the ranks and file of the resistance, infiltration in the nationalist politics by state security agencies are among major weaknesses of the resistance. Entry of religious extremism, phenomena of Pirs and Sufi and the *Muhajir* issue causing major socio-political instability and adversely affecting Sindhi national resistance. Chapter fourteen is the analysis of various internal and external factors which are casting dark shadows on Sindhi struggle for national salvation.

The last chapter of the book explores the prospects for an independent Sindhu Desh. Favourable conditions for the success of a national liberation struggle depend on the strength of the resistance and weaknesses of the colonizing power. On the one hand, Sindhi national struggle has been facing structural and strategic problems, on the other hand, Pakistani state is also struggling with insurmountable economic, social and political problems internally together with growing isolation internationally. The possibility of an imminent collapse of the religious state is being discussed on many forums internally and internationally. For many political analysts, because of changing dynamics in international polity, since the fall of Soviet Union, conditions are increasingly becoming favourable for the success of Sindhi national resistance.

2. Prehistoric Sindhis: the Indus Civilization

Happy is the nation without a history. **Cesare Beccaria**

An advanced civilization has been postulated to be in existence during third millennium BC which encompassed modern Sindh, Balochistan and Punjab. Harappa and Mohen-jo-Daro are believed to be the main cities of this civilization popularly known in the historical literature as the Indus civilization. This was a technologically advanced society and was in contact with the mighty empires of Sumer and Akkad in the Middle East through trade and commerce. Some 2000 years before the Christian era, the empire and its civilization were invaded by a group of tribes from Central Asia calling themselves Aryans. On the face of Aryan incursion, the original inhabitants of the region, called Dravidians, were either pushed southward into southern India or absorbed into the emerging and dominant Aryanised society. The advent of the Aryans was followed by many incursions from Persians, Greeks and Turkish tribes into the area and several states were established in the region.

The Indus civilization

The prehistoric civilization of Indus was established by the Harappan people, also known as the Indus people. The archaeologists believe that before the arrival of Harappans,

Indus plain was inhibited by a community called Amri who had replaced the primitive hunting or nomad graziers. The Indus people were highly civilized and with their technological know-how established wonderful cities which formed the nucleus of an expanding empire. The empire of Indus, according to Lambrick (1973) was more extensive than the empires of Sumer and Akkad combined and greater than the united Upper and Lower Egypt of Menes. Ruled from two cities of Harappa and Mohen-jo-Daro, it extended up to Kashmir, Gujarat and Balochistan. Through Balochistan, it was engaged in extensive trade with Sumer and northern Persia. Lambrick (1973) insisted that Kotla Nihang Khan, Dabarkot in Northern Balochistan, Mehi in Southern Balochistan and Sutkagen Dor in Mekran are all apparently at nodal points on the routes by which this trade moved. There is strong archaeological evidence which suggests that Sutkagen Dor in present-day Tehsil Dasht of Kech District in Balochistan was accessible by sea during the period of Indus civilization.

Many researchers on ancient civilizations such as Kuz'mina, (2007); Childe, (1926); Frawley, (1994) and Bongard-Levin, (1980) believed that the people who inhabited Mohen-jo-Daro, Kot Diji, Amri, Nal and various other places and sites in Indus valley might have been a branch of Sumerians or vice versa. Some of these also believed that Sumerians initially came to Mesopotamia from Sindh. In some of the Babylon inscriptions, they are referred to as Oannes and as a monstrous nation which swam up the Persian Gulf and introduced the art of writing and various other skills necessary for the development of civilization in the valley of Euphrates. It has been asserted that they introduced for the first time the plough and wheel which are the basis of human civilization. In Sumerian tablets discovered from Iraq and dated 2000 years BC, it has been mentioned that Indus valley was in contact

with Sumer by commercial. religious. and artistic connections. In some of the tablets. Indus valley was called as Meluhha and the people were called as Meluhhaites (Frawley. 1994).

Initially. the settlements in the Indus valley were located away from the Indus river system towards Balochistan on the west. and Gujarat in the East. It was because smaller river systems were more suitable for irrigation. cultivation and settlements of farming communities. However. soon Harappa and Mohen-jo-Daro became the central urban places to exploit the Indus River for communication and trade (Lambrick. 1973). Mohen-jo-Daro was one of the most sophisticated urban development in ancient history. It is believed that the whole landscape was artificially raised to construct buildings. The main element of architecture was the use of burnt bricks in the foundations of building as a substitute for stones.

The Indus people were a literate community: however. till today. the language of this magnificent civilization cannot be decoded and deciphering of various recovered texts is an impossible task for linguists in many ways.

It is estimated that more than a thousand cities and settlements have been established in the Indus region (Bongard-Levin. 1980). The cities in the empire of Indus were densely populated. At its peak. the Indus Valley Civilization may have had a population of over five million people. The ruins shows urbanised planned city structures. The use of baked bricks and drainage systems were the hallmark of urban development in that period. Although Mohen-jo-Daro as the largest city was the centre of the Empire. Harappa was also a centre of excellence in its administrative setup. religious and academic activities.

The majority of city-dwellers in the Indus valley were artisans and traders. Being a Bronze Age society, they developed new techniques in working with copper, bronze, lead, and tin. They were also the first to develop a system of standardized weights and measures. They were also experts in seal carving— the cutting of patterns into the bottom face of a seal. The Indus script still remains a mystery so is the knowledge about the mythological beliefs of the people in the cities of Indus civilization. However, from the recovered items one can guess about their mythological beliefs. It appears that at that time the religious orientation of the people of Indus Valley has been diverse. Objects depicting the worship of Mother Goddess have been recovered as well as the worship of a nude god with two horns. Phallus worship was also prevalent (Childe, 1926). Many trees, animals, birds and stones were also worshipped. There is also evidence of the Zoroastrian way of burial of the dead in many settlements.

The collapse of the Indus civilization: causes and consequences

Some 2000 years before the Christian era, the magnificent civilization of Indus valley collapsed. There are many theories about its demise. Some researchers believed that as the civilization was based on cities, due to some unknown reasons, perhaps because of moving away of Indus River, the cities could not be managed and abandoned by the populace (Bongard-Levin, 1980). Others believed that as the civilization flourished by trade mainly with Sumer and Akkad empires in the Middle East, because of political turmoil in Mesopotamia for a long period, the trade suffered and the cities collapsed in the Indus region (Childe, 1926). Many others postulated that the civilization was doomed with the invasion of Aryan tribes from the north. This has been corroborated by ancient Indian religious texts which mentioned great wars in which the Aryan tribes with the help of their gods, destroyed non-Aryan cities

in northern India. The destructions of cities by Aryan god Indra or Agni has been graphically depicted in some of the hymns in Indian mythological text, Rig-Veda (Kochhar, 1999). It may also be probable that the Indus Civilization was facing a decline phase which the Aryans exploited. It is a historical fact that when society stagnates for some reason, the ruling elite degenerates. A situation develops in which they failed to realise the gravity of internal and external threats, and as a result, whole civilization collapses. That might have happened to Indus Civilization. The majority of researchers believe that the most probable cause of the collapse of Indus civilization was the sustained incursions of Aryan tribes from West and Central Asia and resulted in the destruction of great cities including Mohen-jo-Daro.

> After the destruction of Mohen-jo-Daro, there was a period of total chaos in the Indus valley. However, it is also possible that the elements of the subdued empire were incorporated into the culture of the new society. The Dravidian language of the conquered people of Indus valley, impacted on the Indo-Aryan language of the newcomers. In the contemporary Sindhi language which is from the family of Indo-Aryan languages, traces of Dravidian language can easily be found. The volatile Aryan tribes at the time seem to have adopted the indigenous culture of patience and peaceful co-existence. They took advantages of the technological know-how of the indigenous people in agriculture and cattle breeding. From the ashes of the past civilization, a new one developed.

The advent of the Aryans

The Aryans were believed to be the original inhabitant of Central Asia and in waves of migration, they left their homeland, spread into Europe, India, and Iranian plateau

before the Christian era. These migrating tribes were seminomadic pastoralist people and, according to their linguistic divisions and their migratory patterns, were also called as Indo-Europeans and Indo-Iranic people. They brought drastic changes in the language, culture, and sociology in regions of their final settlement. Their languages were further subdivided into Indo-European and Indo-Iranic, and these groups later became the present nations and nationalities in Europe, Iran, and India (Morris, 1888). It has been postulated that before their mass migration, the Aryans were living in the region between the Black and Caspian Seas, stretching northward up to Russian steppes and southwards up to Caucasian mountains. Many scholars of Old Persian and Avestan texts had identified Airiianem Vaejah as the "mythical homeland" of the Aryans and had placed it anywhere from Choresmia on the Aral Lake in Uzbekistan to Azerbaijan, or to southern or north-western Afghanistan. Recent researches correlate archaeological evidence with later linguistically identifiable groups sharing similar cultural traits, suggesting that the Proto-Indo-Iranians originated in the eastern European steppes in the third millennium BC (Kuz'mina, 2007). They moved eastward to the region of the southern Ural steppes and the Volga, then further onto Central Asia. At that stage, they appear to have already formed two groups: the Proto-Iranians in the north, and the Proto-Indo-Aryans in the south. After 2000 BC, the Indo-Aryans moved southeast via Afghanistan into the Indian subcontinent, as well as southwest via the Iranian plateau into northern Mesopotamia (Ghirshman, 1954). Indo-Iranic group of Aryans were supposed to be located in the south-eastern Caucasian region.

The migration of these tribes into the Iranian plateau took place with a succession of numerous tribes, each speaking its own variety of Iranian language. The earliest groups contained

the "Western" Iranians (Medes and Persians), whose migration is generally placed at the end of the second millennium BC. There are two possibilities of their exact route of migration as observed by Morris (1888):

- They went north of the Caspian Sea, crossed the Caucasus and the Armenian Highlands, and then went southeast.

- They came directly from the steppes in the north or northeast and crossed the Dasht-e-Kavir only to be brought to a halt by the Zagros Mountains.

Eastern Iranians were, apparently, the last to come. They settled in the region extending from Margiana and Bactria to Arachosia and Balochistan. Morris (1888) listed some of these migratory groups as Ossetes, Armenians, the Kurds, the people of ancient Media and Persia, the Afghans, the Baloch, and Hindus of the Indus and Ganges. According to Bongard-Levin (1980), the region of ancient Bactria was the point of common residence for these Indo-Iranic groups of tribes before dividing into Iranian and Indian groups prior to their final migration into Iran and India. Before migrating into India and Iran as two distinct groups of people, these tribes spoke a similar language and offered worship to same gods—Mithra and Indra—and cherished similar myths and legends (Ghirshman, 1954).

Ghirshman (1954), observed that little is known about the speakers of non-Iranian languages whom the speakers of Iranian languages encountered on their way into Iran. In the east, in Balochistan and further east in Gandhara (Kabul) region and Arachosia (Kandahar), the Iranians were most likely still in contact with speakers of Indo-Aryan and Dravidian languages during the second half of the second

millennium BC. This assumption is based on the close resemblance of Indic names and customs. particularly in Rig-Veda with those in Old Iranian texts, which points to the Kandahar region and Balochistan and is dated to the middle Rig-Vedic period between 1500 and 1350 BC.

The exact reasons for the mass migrations of Aryan tribes are still being argued. However, it is widely believed that scarcity of food and the pressure applied by neighbouring tribes from the north were among the main factors that forced them to move away in different directions.

The region where the early Aryans settled in India is called the 'Land of Seven Rivers or Sapta Sindhava' (The Indus and its five tributaries and the Saraswati). These nomadic and barbarian tribes settled in Indus valley and over the course of several centuries. they gradually took up agriculture. The Indo-European languages and socio-cultural values of these tribes gained supremacy over the indigenous languages. The development of Hindu religion also occurred probably with the combination of Aryan religious beliefs and that of indigenous mythological practices (Childe, 1926).

With the collapse of Indus civilization, bronze was replaced by iron and horses and camels replaced the bull as the mode of transport. The Indus script and symbols of arts and culture mostly disappeared. Instead of a centralised government based in Harappa and Mohen-jo-Daro, the region was ruled by regional princes and tribal chiefs. The linkage with Mesopotamia and the Middle East was also replaced by new affiliations with Central Asia which was manifested in pottery and metal artefacts of the era. The pastoral Aryans did not exterminate the indigenous population but rather imposed themselves upon them. They indeed assimilated to some degree the main features of their civilization. This assimilation

phenomenon became one of the marked characteristics of Sindhi nation throughout their history.

Socially, family or Kula was the basic unit of the Aryans, several families made a clan and several clans made a tribe. The tribe was run by a democratically elected chief. Many chiefs of the tribes elected a king who run the kingdom. Aryan tribal chiefs gained the status of kings in alliance with the priesthood. They were declared divine by the priests; nevertheless, their power emanated from being warriors kings leading their forces in battles. The priests recorded the battles of Aryans with non-Aryans and between various gods in Vedas which later became the divine truth for the believers of Hindu religion. The famous among the Vedas is Rig-Veda which is consisted of hymns of more than 10 thousand lines in ten books. With the admixture of indigenous social values, a four-tier caste system developed consisting of warriors, priests, commoners and *Shudras* (the lowest of the castes). The admixture of Aryan and Dravidian religious and mythological belief became the foundation of present Indian religion and the creation of the belief of three supreme gods of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiv (Frawley, 1994).

The history of Sindh from the early periods of Aryan invasions can be read between the lines in Sanskrit, Pali and Persian texts which are a mixture of myths and historical events. In the epic story of Mahabharata, there is mention of the Kingdom of Sindh with Jayadratha as the king of Sindhus and Sauviras. Also in the Indian epic Puranas, Sindhu, Sauvira and Sibi had been mentioned as ruled by King Jayadratha. Sauvira is most probably the modern regions of South Punjab or Seraiki belt. The dialect of this region is modern day Sauviraki language spoken in southern Punjab. In Dharma-Shastra literature, people of these regions were mentioned as of mixed origin and non-Aryans (Mlechchhas).

In the protracted conflict between Koroos and Pandoos. King Jayadratha was the ally of former. Blamed for the enticement and abduction of Drupathi (sister of Pandoo chief), he was confronted by Pandoos, chased and murdered in the eastern deserts of Sindh.

The new Sindhi society developed after the collapse of Indus valley civilization went through three stages of development. With the dominance of Aryans, it was characterised by pastoralism, tribalism and warmongering. However, after settling down of nomadic tribes, settled cultivation again became necessary and city-states and empires were created in the process. Besides Vedic mythological concepts, non-Vedic religious practices such as Jainism and Buddhism also flourished during this period. From the beginning of Christian era, Sindhis emerged as a united nation, their kingdom transformed into a mighty empire having a formal administrative and economic system, an organized priesthood with a web of temples of various gods and goddesses.

An event of importance was the encroachment by a Middle Eastern power in that period. In 810 BC, the great conqueror, Semiramis II was involved in the invasion of Sindh. A Sindhi ruler named Veraseen made a tough resistance against the intruding army and Semiramis was forced to withdraw taking the coastal route of present-day Balochistan. His army suffered from extreme conditions of southern Balochistan, like the Greek army under Alexander the Great some three hundred years later (Gilmore, 1887).

The history of Sindh remained murky for many more centuries till the arrivals of Iranian powers in the region. An Indo-European group of tribes called Medes emerged as the major power after defeating the Assyrian empire in the Middle East during 1000 BC. They extended their empire from Syria

in the west up to river Indus in the east (Herzfeld. 1968). Cyrus the Great defeated Medes and occupied their capital Ecbatana (modern Hamadan) and laid down the foundations of Achaemenes dynasty. incorporating all regions of Median Empire including Sindh.

During the reign of Emperor Darius Hystaspes in 518 BC. Sindh became a protectorate of the Iranian Empire. It was the twentieth and one of the richest satrapy of the Empire (Brosius. 2006). In a text found from Persepolis. the ancient capital of Achaemenid Empire. the proclamation of Darius included Sindh in the list of countries his empire comprised of:

> *"Darius. the great king. king of kings. kings of countries which I hold, from Saka who are beyond Sogdiana. from there as far as Kush. from the Indus. as far as Sardis. which Ahura Mazda. the Greatest of the gods. bestowed on me (Stoneman. 2015. pp. 69)."*

Herodotus mentioned cavalry and infantry of Sindhis (Indians) in the army of Xerxes which invaded Greece under the command of a Persian prince Pharnazathres son of Artebates (Herodotus 1996). However, later in the reign of Xerxes. Sindhis revolted because the Emperor ordered to destroy certain temples of their gods and ordered that the Daivas[1] shall not be worshipped. Emperor Xerxes was believed to be a fanatical follower of Zoroastrian religion and tried to impose

[1] Daivas were believed by ancient Persians as demons who can cause any kind of misery including plagues and diseases. They were supposed to be against the Persian god Ahuru Mazda and anti-religious and followers of Angra Mainyu or Ahriman. Daivas in ancient Persian religious text clearly indicate towards various gods of Indian mythology.

the worship of god Ahura Mazda on countries which were allied to Achaemenid Empire:

> *"Among those countries, there was a place where previously false gods were worshipped. Afterwards, by the favour of Ahura Mazda, I destroyed that sanctuary of the demons and I made proclamation, 'The demons shall not be worshipped' (Stoneman, 2015, pp. 93)."*

The country referred to in the text was Sindh where he destroyed the magnificent temple of goddess Indra. But despite the estrangement, Sindh remained allied with the Empire and Sindhis supported the Persian Emperor with men and elephants when Iran was invaded by Greeks and Macedonians under the command of Alexander the Great.

In 325 BC, Alexander the Great in his last episode of invasions, conquered Sindh and made it a province of his extended empire. He made Peithon son of Agenor as the viceroy and Porus, the ruler of northern Sindh, who earlier surrendered in Punjab, as his assistant. At the time of the invasion, southern Sindh was ruled by a confederation of states ruled by various Kings (Herodotus, 1996). King Sambus (Moeris) of Sindimana state (Sehwan) submitted while Musicanus, king of Alor was overpowered by Greek forces. Because of fierce resistance offered to the invading Greeks and Macedonians by Sindhis, it took a whole year for Alexander's mighty army to occupy whole Sindh. However, after a brief interval, Sindhis rose in revolt. The Greeks acted swiftly and mercilessly. Mass slaughter and public hanging of ruling family members including king Musicanus and religious elite were carried out and thousands were made slaves by the conquering army. So was the terror of the Greek army that the famous city of Patala in the Indus delta was evacuated en masse before the arrival of the invaders. Sindhi

revolt was defeated but the Greeks faced a war of attrition involving frequent raids on Greek army camps and settlements by Sindhi fighting bands (Arrian. 1958).

After occupying Sindh. the invading army retreated to Kerman by taking three routes. A part of the army under the command of Craterus marched through Arachosia and Zarangania (Kachchi. Sarawan and Sistan). another under the command of Nearchus took the sea route and the main body of the army under the command of Alexander himself marched westward through Gedrosia (Mekran). After the death of Alexander the great. the people of Upper and lower Sindh resisted the alien rule and the Greek viceroy Peithon was forced to actually share power with King Porus of northern Sindh.

With the weakening of Greek power. the kingdom of Magadha made intrusions into Greek territory of northern India. After the takeover of Chandragupta Maurya as the king. the kingdom of Magadha was transformed into a mighty empire which replaced the Greeks in north-western Indian regions. The infighting among the Greek generals which resulted in the protracted war of succession after the death of Alexander resulted in their withdrawal from territories up to Kabul. In 303 BC. the Greek ruler. Seleucus Nicator. who became the ruler of Alexander's empire in the east. formally ceded the territory up to Kabul to Chandragupta Maurya and Sindh became a province of Mauryan Empire (Bellinger. 1949). The western and northern frontiers of Sindh were demarcated in an agreement with Seleucus Nicator. These borders included part of present southern Afghanistan and central and southern Balochistan. This was the period in which Sindh observed the introduction of Buddhism. Under the rule of Chandragupta's son. the famous Asoka. Buddhist influence increased in Sindh and many Sindhis were converted to Buddhism. After the

collapse of Mauryan Empire, in 175 BC, Demetrius, the Greek king of Bactria invaded northern India and Sindh also came under his rule for a brief period.

Bellinger (1949), observed that after the collapse of Mauryan Empire, the Bactrian Greeks tried to recapture their lost territories in Western India but were repulsed by local chiefs; however, Sindh was soon invaded by Sakas and incorporated into their Empire known as Indo-Scythia according to Greek historians or Saka-dvipa as known in the Indian literature. This empire was created around 139 AD. Sakas were defeated by Parthian emperor Mithridates the Great in Sistan. They fled eastward and established an empire in the north and west of India for a short period (Puri, 1994).

After the collapse of Saka rule in the second half of the first century AD, northern India and Sindh came under the rule of advancing Kushan tribes from Central Asia (Herzfeld, 1968). But with the advent of Sassanid Empire in Iran, in AD 226. Kushans lost power in Sindh and it acquired an independent status under a king with a council of local chiefs of various regions. However, with the increased pressure and belligerent attitude of Sassanid emperors, various provinces of Sindh including Mekran, southern Sistan and Turan were ceded to their Empire. Sindh according to Persian historians practically became an ally or a protectorate of the Sassanid Empire (Herzfeld, 1968). The ruling princes of Sindh assembled and extended a warm reception to Emperor Naushirwan (531-578 AD) when he visited Sindh. Emperor Bahram Gur made many visits to Sindh and married a Sindhi princess (Lari, 1994). Movements of his army and the naval fleet was much disrupted by activities of Jat tribes in the interior of Sindh and Meds in the high seas. In retaliation, he forcefully dislocated thousands of Jats and settled them in the marshes of southern Iraq. He also took hundreds of musicians and entertainers

(Lories and Domes) from Sindh and Gujarat to be settled in various regions of Iran (Lari. 1994). Some of them in later periods became modern-day gypsies of Eastern Europe.

The power and prestige of mighty Sassanid Empire were dealt a mortal blow by another group of tribes called White Huns or Hephthalites Turks. During 4th and 5th century, the Hephthalites made their inroad in the region which now comprised of Afghanistan, Balochistan and Sindh. The Sassanids became engaged with them in bloody battles in a protracted war. As a result, the might of the Sassanid Empire weakened, and their power eclipsed. The Hephthalites killed the Sassanid emperor Feruz 1 and occupied Afghanistan and surrounding regions in 465 AD (Herzfeld, 1968). The Sassanid became so terrified of Hephthalites that they agreed to pay tributes to these nomadic tribes. Despite being much powerful than the Sassanid family, instead of directly capturing the power, for a time, Hephthalites acted as kingmakers and on instances under their pressure many Sassanid emperors were deposed: one example was the dismissal of Emperor Balaach. The power of Hephthalites receded when they were badly defeated by an alliance of Chinese and the Sassanid during the reign of Emperor Naushirwan 1; nevertheless, they remained in Afghanistan, Balochistan, Sindh and Punjab for a long time. At the time of Arab invasion of Sindh, central regions of Balochistan and southern Afghanistan were ruled by local Hephthalites as the representatives of Sindhi King. As Hephthalites were Turkic tribes, the Arab historians in their accounts named South of Afghanistan and central Balochistan as Turan (the land of Turks). The imprints of Hephthalites can be found in many names of places in the region which have their definite origin from the Turkish language[2].

[2] Contemporary writers erroneously claim that Karachi is the deformed version of Maee Kolachi. In fact, Karachi originates from a Turkic background. Karachays were a tribe of Hephthalite Turks who were

Chapter Two

The ancient history of Sindh begins with the story of Indus civilization and the ruins of great cities like Mohen-jo-Daro and Harappa provide the greatness of this civilization. The civilization collapsed and it is still hard to ascertain the cause of its demise as very little is mentioned in Sanskrit, Pali or Persian texts in this regard. However, Vedas which contain the oldest recorded history of this region, present much relevant information for understanding the phenomenon. It is postulated that a civilization with the grandeur of Harappa and Mohen-jo-Daro, and which was at par with the great civilizations of Sumer and Akkad suddenly vanished from the face of the earth in the hand of a group of barbaric Aryan tribes. Aryanised Sindh played an important role in the development of Indian religion and giving the name of Bharat to India. Indian religion encompassed many other indigenous mythological beliefs besides main Aryan mythological concepts. With the emergence of Mauryan Empire, the phenomenon of Buddhism was introduced in Sindh. In the turbulent periods after the advent of the Aryans, the whole region of north-western India including Sindh witnessed constant upheavals as several alien powers from the Middle East, Central Asia and Europe intruded into Sindh and it became the battleground for various invading powers including Persians, Greeks, Mauryans, Sakas, Kushans and Hephthalite Turks.

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in this region for more than a hundred years among other Hephthalite tribes. Karachi is also a Turkish word for a place where nomad gathered with their cattle for grazing purposes. The city of Karachi is either named from the Hephthalite tribe of Karachays or from the word Karachi which means the grazing place. Same can be said to the small island of Hephthalar near Ormara in Balochistan although, it is also believed that Hephthalar Island is named after the pirate tribe of Hephthals who were based in the southern Persian Gulf in ancient times

3. The Empire of Sindh: the golden era

> Look back over the past, with its changing empires that rose and fell, and you can foresee the future, too.
> **Marcus Aurelius**

It was the loosening grip of Sassanid Empire during the 6th century which caused many political changes in the region. Sindh was among many countries which were either allied to or a protectorate of the Empire. With the emergence of Sindh as a sovereign state began a golden era for Sindhis lasting for more than 200 hundred years. Sindhi state transformed to become a powerful empire. It was the happiest time in their history. It was the period of fame, prestige and glory for the Sindhi nation. Sindhi national identity began shaping itself and socio-cultural traditions developed in that period became the basic elements of contemporary Sindhi national psyche. Sindhi society was one of the most affluent and Sindhi power and prestige was at its zenith for many centuries. The Empire of Sindh incorporated a vast region including present day Balochistan. Punjab. Kashmir. southern Afghanistan and parts of Gujarat.

The Empire of Sindh

Northern Persia and north-western India faced the onslaught of White Huns (Hephthalite Turks) during 3rd and 4th century AD. In the prolonged conflict with Sassanid Empire. they

were pushed eastward and southward into Afghanistan and Western India. But in the process, both, the Sassanid Empire and Hephthalites became weak. In western India and Sindh, the White Huns were confronted by a united force of north Indian kings and princes. King Mihirakula was defeated in 540 AD[3].

After the end of the supremacy of White Huns, Diwaji Rao established the first Sindhi state in Southern Sindh which later became the first Sindhi empire. The Rao and Chach family ruled for almost two hundred years and were powerful emperors ruling a vast region. Chachnama and Tuhfat-ul-Karam, which are the Muslim versions of Sindhi history, mentioned Kandahar, Sistan, the Suleiman mountains and the Kaikanan hills as the northern boundaries of Sindh were[4].

> *"On the east, to the limits of Kanauj and Kashmir: on the west to Mekran: on the south, to the sea of Deval and shores of Oman: on the north to Sistan, Kandahar and the mountain of Suleman and Kaikanan hills and on the south the seaport of Surat (Kufi, 1900: page, 11)".*

The Arab historical chronicle, Muntakhabu-t-Tawarikh, termed the king of Sindh as an emperor equal to Roman and Persian emperors in status. Sindhi kings were respected and much honoured by the people of Sindh. From their magnificent capital of Alor, they ruled over a multitude of

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[3] However, Hephthalites were not completely routed as they were still present in Kashmir and some parts of present day Balochistan at the time of the Arab invasion of Sindh. The Arab writers named the present day central Balochistan as Turan (the land of the Turks) in their chronicles. However, in these areas, the Turkish chiefs served as subordinates to various Sindhi kings.

[4] Kaikanan hills are believed to be the hilly regions of present day Balochistan, north of Kalat.

nations and tribes including Afghans, Turks, Baloch and Kurds[5]. These people practised a variety of religious beliefs. Sindh proper was inhabited by Lohanas, Jats, Meds, Rajputs, Lakhis, Sammas, Sumros and Saraswat Brahmins.

The golden era

The Raos established their rule over a vast area, annexing several territories. After the death of King Diwaji Rao, his son, Sahiras Rao succeeded him. When Sahasi Rao, the son of Sahiras Rao took the reins of the Empire, Sindh gained the reputation of being one of the strongest and richest countries in the region. When Seharas Rao became the king, the empire of Sindh was in its height of prestige and strength. However, an unexpected event led to the death of this noblest of Sindhi rulers. Rao Seharas was a warrior king and was killed when he was leading an army to Mekran from a Persian attack.

> *"Seharas Rao S/O Sahasi Rao, the western boundaries of whose kingdom extended up to the Kurd Mountains and Kaikanan (corresponds to modern day Kalat and Mekran), had continued to rule his realm successfully from the capital city of Aror, when all of a sudden, from the side of Fars, an army of the King of Nimruz arrived in Kech. When Seharas heard of this, he personally marched out and engaged the invading army in a fierce battle in which a number of brave warriors from both sides were killed. Then the Persians made a determined attack and the army of Seharas was routed. For the sake of his honour and prestige, Seharas took a firm stand and continued*

[5] Some of the migrating Baloch tribes had already settled in the Sindhi provinces of Mekran, Turan and Rakhshaan. They were expelled or forced to migrate from their original place of abode in the Balakashan region west of Caspian Sea because of their conflict with Sassanid emperors Nosherwan and his successors.

fighting till he was killed. Thereupon, the ruler of the Persians returned to his country. Rao Sahasi son of Seharas then ascended the throne of his father and became strong in that realm (Kufi, 1900; pages, 12-13)."

The last ruler of the family was King Sahasi Rao II, who died without an heir. On his death, a council of elders proclaimed his Prime Minister, Chach Silabij as the King of Sindh and Budhiman as the Prime Minister. However, the new king had to fight many battles against various contenders for the throne before establishing himself as the powerful emperor of Sindh. He faced opposition from the members of Rao family who were chiefs of various regions and a strong challenge from Mattah, the Governor of Siwistan (modern Sehwan) and Akham Lohana, the ruler of Brahmanabad who was also the chief of a tribal confederacy consisting of Lakhas, Sammas and Sahtah tribes.

King Chach Silabij was a brilliant strategist and rapidly crushed all rebellious activities and tranquillity prevailed throughout the empire. He dealt harshly with the rebellion of former king's relatives but reconciled with Mattah by reinstating him as the governor of Siwistan. His marriage with the widow of late king was politically motivated. He tried to take over the fortress of Barahmanabad but failed to achieve his target, and reached a matrimonial arrangement with Lohana family by marrying the widow of Akham Lohana, the murdered chief of Lohanas, and by accepting Akham's daughter as the wife of his younger son Prince Dahir. He also gave one of his relatives as the wife of Akham Lohana's son Sarhand (Kufi, 1900).

A remarkable achievement of King Chach Silabij was making a treaty of friendship with the Sassanid in 623 AD during the

reign of Empress Purandukhth. An agreement was signed for border demarcation between the two empires. He marched at the head of a huge army up to the boundaries of Mekran with Kerman where he planted date palms to mark the boundary line of Sindhi empire with that of the Sassanid:

> *"After the death of Kasra son of Hurmuz, the king of Fars (Persia), the management of the affairs of the kingdom had come to the hands of a woman[6]. When Chach learnt of this state of things, he started with a large army for the territories of Kirman. .....There is a small river between Kirman and Mekran. He encamped there and marked out the eastern boundary, by declaring that certain date trees growing there defined the limit between Kirman and Mekran (Kufi, 1900, page37-38)."*

King Chach Silabij ruled for 40 years and was succeeded by his brother Chandar Silabij in 671 AD who ruled for seven years. On his death. Prince Dahir son of King Chach Silabij took the reins of the empire until his death in the battle of Rawad in 711 AD.

The state and governance in the Empire

The vast empire of was ruled by two dynasties (the Raos and Sahais) throughout its existence. The Raos belonged to the royal family of Mauryan Dynasty and there is mention of five kings from this dynasty. They introduced far-reaching political and administrative changes.

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[6] At that period in the history of Sassanid Empire. because of the Hephthalite advances, the empire was facing a kind of anarchic situation. The chiefs of various regions became powerful and the Hephthalites had assumed the role of kingmakers. For a brief period. Puran Dukht. a daughter of Emperor Khusro was installed as the Empress of the Sassanid Empire. This anarchic situation continued in the Empire and exploited by advancing Arabs in finally tearing apart one of the mighty powers which ruled the Iranian Plateau for many centuries.

Chapter Three

a. The Empire as a confederation

King Diwaji Rao, formed various political alliances with the neighbouring Indian states and established the administrative basis for the empire following the example of Parthian and Sassanid empires. The empire became a sort of confederation where authority was delegated to various principalities of the empire and the King acting like the *Shahanshah* (king of kings) of Parthian Empire. The Parthian successfully devised this method of governance to intact their vast domain consisting of various national entities and geographical boundaries without resorting to the frequent use of military prowess.

Administratively, Sindh proper was divided into four regions, ruled by governors appointed by the king. According to Chachnama, during the reign of King Sahasi Rao, the Empire of Sindh was divided into four governorates ruled by *Maliks* (kings):

> *"He had appointed four governors (Maliks) in his kingdom: one at Brahminabad; and the fort of Nerun and Debal, Luhanah, Lakhah, Sammah and the river were left under his management; another at the town of Siwistan; and Budhia, Chingan, the skirts of the hills of Rojhan up to the country of Makran, were given into his charge; the third at the fort of Iskandah; and Babiah, Sawara, Chachpur, and the supplementary territories of Dhanod were given in his possession; and the fourth at the town of Multan; and the town of Sikkah, up to the boundary of Kashmir were entrusted to him. The king himself had his headquarters in the city of Alor, retaining Kurdan, Kikanan, and Barhamas directly (Kufi, 1900: pages, 11-12)."*

As in the Parthian Empire, these minor kings acting as viceroys of the emperor, exercised unlimited power over the people. Based at Alor, the Emperor himself directly ruled the central regions of Sindh proper. The governorate of Brahmanabad comprised of present-day central Sindh eastward of Indus River together with the whole lower Sindh, Cutch and Siwistan including modern districts of Dadu, Larkana and Las Bela. While Multan region comprised of Bahawalpur and areas of Punjab up to the Salt Range. As was inevitable, viceroys in far-flung regions sometimes exceeded their autonomous status and created problems for the king: accordingly, Sindhi kings were to deal with such events frequently when their authority as the supreme power was challenged in any way by a governor.

b. Emperor as the supreme authority

According to the traditions of that period, kings or emperors were the supreme authorities, their words being the law and binding on all. In the running of the state, the Emperor of Sindh was assisted by a Prime Minister, a chamberlain and various clerks and writers. For the position of Prime Minister, the ablest of the able were to be selected. Sharp intellect, erudite scholarship, political acumen and wide experience of politics of the empire were needed in the person of the Prime Minister. The same qualities were also required for the Chamberlain, who acted as the intermediary between the ruler and the ruled. He was responsible for keeping the files and presenting cases to the Emperor. The most influential person in the empire was, however, the Prime Minister, without his advice the King did nothing. Nevertheless, the advice of the Prime Minister had been overruled by various kings on various occasions. For example, King Dahir rejected the proposal of his minister and the council of elders for a negotiated settlement with the Arabs by offering them a huge

sum of money. He declared this as tantamount to dishonour the king and the people of the mighty Sindhi empire. Sindhi Kings were warrior kings and as the supreme commander of the armed forces, they were the symbol of courage and honour. Many kings of Sindh personally led their armies when the empire was threatened by external aggression. One of the kings, Seharas II was killed in the battlefield fighting a Persian force under the command of the ruler of Nemroz who invaded Mekran province of the empire. King Dahir, who is said to be one of the best archers, also led his army in the fatal battle against the Arabs at Rawad.

c. Defence of the state

Unlike the Persian emperors, the King of Sindh maintained a disciplined regular army which was highly paid and trained. The army consisted of infantry and cavalry. Elephants were also used in battles. Archers were at the vanguard. With the help of this standing army, Sindh was able to defeat nearly 13 attempts by plundering Arabs on various cities of Sindh like Deval or outlying provinces like Mekran and Turan.

Fortresses were central to the defence of the land. There were strong and extended forts all over the territory. These were well maintained and garrisoned by trained troops. The defences of some of the forts were believed to be impregnable. Although, the Arabs were armed with sophisticated catapults, nevertheless, many forts resisted for months to be overrun by them. There were long periods of siege to occupy capital Alor and Multan. The fort in Brahmanabad reportedly had 1400 turrets indicating its huge circumference. It took the Arab forces six months to occupy the fort despite devastating bombardment by catapulting machines (The fall of Brahmanabad became possible only with an act of treachery by the commander of the fort when he opened the gates for the Arabs).

d. Administration of Justice

The administration of justice was exemplary in the empire. Justice was delivered in a systematic manner. Initially, the information was received from a person. The next stage was the finding out under what title of law the information falls. The third stage would be the consideration of the pleas of the opposing parties and analysis of evidence and the finally the judgement.

Justice system was based on sound and efficient legal institutions in which the King acted as the supreme judge of the empire. The Supreme Court headed by the king was called as Sabha or Dharamasthana. The King had the divine duty to dispense justice with the advice of the priests, council of elders and the Prime Minister. The king was also required to decide the litigations in the association of judges, ministers, Hindu and Buddhist priests and the assessors. The Sabha has been reported as having ten components, including the king, the chief judge, the assessors, the accountant, the scribe and the bailiff. One of the judges acted as the prosecutor, declarer of the law and the king was to award the punishment. The duty of the assessor was to examine the dispute, the scribe wrote the wealth or the subject matter of the dispute and the bailiff summoned the defendant, witnesses and the assessors. Apart from the king's court, three other categories of the court were also functioning. These were Kulas, srenis and the Ganas which acted as arbitration courts.

Apart from these state legal procedures, some divine ways of delivering justice had been reported in the Sindh of the 6th and 7th century. In case of lack of any evidence, the accused was required to hold a very hot piece of iron in his hand. Then the hand was to be sealed with the kings' seal. After three days, the accused was required to pick out the corn from the

grain head of rice. If succeeded, he was regarded as innocent and was to be compensated with gold by the complainant. Sometimes the accused was required to take out an iron ring from a pot of boiling oil. The punishment of any offence varied according to the severity of the offence and also according to the social status of the culprit. Offences of a high caste person were treated leniently as compared to a low caste. Highway robbery, sodomy and child abuse were considered offences with capital punishments.

e. Sindh as a secular state

Sindh emerged as the first secular state in the Indian subcontinent. In the Empire of Sindh people with Hindu, Buddhists, Zoroastrianism, Christianity, Judaism and many other faiths intermingled but there was no discord in the society on religious ground. Some members of the ruling Rao family were believed to be the followers of the Buddhist doctrine; however, the Council of Ministers comprising of tribal chiefs were the followers of Hindu mythology and the people in the outlying provinces of Mekran, Kashmir, Punjab and Southern Afghanistan professed a myriad of religious beliefs. Likewise, King Chach Silabij and his descendants were Hindus but many of the important administrative positions were held by Buddhists. Some sections of Sindhi society also worshipped Sun (Danakitiya) and Moon (Chandra Bhaktiya) gods. Besides Hinduism and many of its sects, main religions practised in Sindh included Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity and Judaism. Sindh was the mosaic of different people and various religious belief during the days of the empire. The intermingling of different faiths became responsible for the development of a tolerant and secular social behaviour of Sindhis in their later history. Keeping with their historical traditions developed during the days of the empire, in spite of state-sponsored extremism

and religious fundamentalism. contemporary Sindhis. by and large. believe in a very adaptive and tolerant behaviour regarding faith and religious beliefs of other people.

f. Sindh as a trading nation

Sindh was among the wealthiest of nations during the period of the empire. The guarantee of abundance in agricultural produce was the foundation of an economic stability that enabled Sindhis to trade their surplus in Mesopotamia. Central Asia and other parts of India. But the wealth of Sindh was not only because of agriculture but Sindhis were engaged in extensive trade with a long list of other products. The port cities were vibrant and vessels from different nations were busy carrying merchandise of various nature to and from them. Deval was a marvel of the day. It was a meeting place for traders and merchants from far away nations. It was the first metropolitan city of that period in the region. It became a hub centre of trade where traders were dealing with the Middle East. China and India. Sindh was famous for its cotton produces. pottery. ceramics of every kind. and exquisite works of silver. gold and steel. However. Sindhi textile products and rice were among the top of exported items. Indigo was also one of the important export items. Sindhi ships. boats and other sea vessels were highly valued by sea traders of the Middle East and Africa.

Development of Sindhi cultural values

Culture is the sum of social behaviour and the way of life of a people. Cultural processes markedly shape many behavioural and attitudinal aspects of human life (Boas. 1940). Although. undeniably the part and parcel of the brotherhood of Indian nations. Sindhis retained their distinctive way of life and spiritual philosophy. The early medieval civilization in Sindh was a mixture of Aryan and indigenous Dravidian civilization.

It had also been influenced first by the Persians and later by the Greeks and various other central Asian nations who intruded into north-western India from time to time. During 6th and 7th century, Sindhis developed a frame of nationhood and national conscious when the Empire of Sindh was at its peak[7]. The social and cultural ethos practised in that period became the foundations of contemporary Sindhi national identity.

The basic elements of a culture and societal values which were developed during 6th and 7th century have been reinforced or modified or influenced by the people who have invaded Sindh throughout history but because of the richness of these founding cultural and societal ethos, even today, they formed the peculiar characteristics of Sindhi society. By all accounts, 21st century Sindhi cultural norms are the manifestation of a culture which has its essence in the days of the empire and flourished through ages. The founding father of Sindhi national struggle in Pakistan. GM Syed believed that the contemporary Sindhi cultural norms developed as a natural process:

> *"Sindh with its racial amalgam provides a great illustration of this process. ..... there have been Dravidians, Aryans. Semitics and Mangoloid races and other, whose. families, clans and tribes have settled in this land through the course of centuries. There have been Samaats. Rajputs. Luhanas. and clans of Pathans. Baloch. Arab and other origins. who have joined into one Sindhi people.*

[7] After the collapse of the empire, however, the dynamics of Sindhi society were changed and the contemporary Sindhi nation comprised of a people which emerged after the intermingling of indigenous population with various Aryan and non-Aryan nations and invaders from the Middle East and Central Asia beginning from 8th century.

getting their languages, customs and traditions, costumes, manners, folklore and such other tribal, or sometimes even national, peculiarities with which they originally arrived on the scene, and having participated in the business of living here, have helped to grow a very rich common culture in Sindh. Age old relations, common needs and requirements of life, intermarriages, the climate and other general environment and above all dependence on common means and sources of livelihood have all contributed to the levelling of the initial differences among them. All these elements, in due course, fell into a pattern, adopting a common tongue dress, folk, traditions, religious approach, social customs and behaviours, and thus assumed a national completion distinctively of its own form, which they now proudly call the Sindhi culture. Thousands of years passed by before the process nurtured into this shape. The entire psychological, social and intellectual character of the Sindhi people today is a reflection of that culture that took ages to form (Syed, 1994: page, 33)."

For centuries, Sindhi society was run on a patriarchal design and joint family system was in practice. However, the place of women in the family and society was one of the exalted. These traditions are still cherished and practised by Sindhis today. Women were given a high position regarding respect and honour of the family. A Sindhi mother was simple and kind. Women were supposed to be faithful and the guardian of family honour. The stigma of dishonouring of a woman is usually washed with the blood. Murder to uphold the honour of a female member of the family was a matter of pride. Women were responsible for the overall maintaining of household affairs. They also, in many instances, help in agricultural activities of the men.

Polygamy was a norm of Sindhi society especially practised by ruling elite. A widow had the choice of remarriage, living a celibate life or die with her husband by jumping in his funeral fire. A legalized form of prostitution was in practice in the shape of *Dev Dasis*, who were beautiful girls dedicating their lives in the service of gods and goddesses, living in various Buddhist and Hindu temples in order to entertain visitors to the temples. Caste system was another ingredient of Sindhi society and people were broadly divided into four major castes of Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and the Shudras. Sindhis were also a generous and hospitable community. The guests were respected and given facilities as they were considered to be sent from God. The cherished code of personal ethics among Sindhis is respecting the elders. Folding both hands, bowing to or touching the feet of people with higher qualification, age, and status has been the hallmark of the personal ethos of Sindhis throughout history.

The century's old Sindhi dress code underwent changes with the intermingling of various other cultures. In the present era, the dress of a Sindhi male usually consists of a trouser (*Shalwar*) and a shirt (*Kameez*). In villages, elder people still wear turbans and in contemporary Sindh, *Ajrak* (a large colourful scarf) has replaced the traditional *Longi* as part of the Sindhi national dress. Sindhi women before marriage avoid wearing colourful dresses and after marriage, they prefer wearing embroidered shirts. Ornaments of different kinds are usually included among the dress code of married women of Sindh.

The mythological and religious beliefs of Sindhis have been shaped by the interaction of various religions. Aryan mythological beliefs became integral components of Hindu religion. Buddhism also made inroads in culture and society. The Greeks and Arabs brought their own mythological beliefs.

Chapter Three

Of all alien religious beliefs. only Islam was successful in retaining its original tenets while all other religions were one way or the other merged with Hinduism. Although they tried hard to convert. the penetration of Islam in Sindhi society was not carried out by the original Arab invaders but it was done by later invaders who came into Sindh for their plundering activities in the guise of spreading Islam.

Contemporary Sindhi social values were developed with the admixture of a variety of people belonging to different nationalities and followers of many religious beliefs since the arrival of the Aryans in this land. The icon of Sindhi national struggle, GM Syed emphasised that:

> *"An amalgam of different religions and philosophies took place here...Buddhism was born in India. but it flourished here. When Islam appeared in Sindh. Buddhism was still extant. Islam added a positive element to the teachings of Buddha. Philosophies of Vedanta and the Unity of God first interacted with each other in this land. This influenced the thinking of Hindus. reducing their interests in idolatry....religious or sectarian prejudices. caste differences and the impulse for violence are absent in this land (Syed. 2010 page 21)."*

In his book. *Sindhu Desh: A Study in its separate identity through ages*. Syed explained the manifestation of a secular mindset of Sindhis by mentioning that in Sindh. Hindus used to go the shrines of Muslims and asked for their guidance. took education from Muslim saints and teachers. Muslim fakirs and Sufis visited Hindu temples and religious places. Muslims used to listen to the teachings of Hindu Dervishes. He asserted that by adopting mixed traditions and customs and rituals. the people of Sindh showed religious broad-mindedness and sense of tolerance (Syed. 1984).

With the development of Sindhi cultural norms and national identity, patriotism became one of the personal characteristics of the people. Offering extreme sacrifices for the upholding of national honour became their inherent quality. It has been universally accepted by friends and foes of Sindh that the Sindhis are down to earth in their social behaviour, tolerant, philosophic, peace-loving but extremely nationalistic people.

Sindhi language

The Sindhi language belongs to the north-western family of Indo-Aryan languages. It has probably been derived from Prakrit dialect of Sanskrit with some residuals from Dravidian languages which were in use before the Aryan advent in Sindh. However, some of the linguists believe that Sindhi is older than Sanskrit and can be termed as its elder sister. Saraiki, Thareli or Dhatki, Lari, Kachchi and Lasi are various dialects of contemporary Sindhi language. Pahlavi (precursor of Persian and Balochi languages), Hunish, Greek and Arabic languages undoubtedly influenced Sindhi language and left their footprints by enriching its vocabulary. Reciprocally, many Sindhi words have also been adopted by these languages.

It took many centuries of the intermingling of Aryans and indigenous Dravidian people to gain the shape of a national entity. This nascent national entity also absorbed some of the cultural, linguistic and mythological influences before emerging as a distinct nation different from other Indian and central Asian nations. With the emergence of the empire, Sindh had come a long way since the days of isolation and turmoil beginning from the invasion of Greeks under Alexander the Great. Establishment and consolidation of the empire of Sindh during 6th and 7th Century was a unique political phenomenon in the history of western India. It was the first time that a kingdom was created having a truly

multi-ethnic and multi-religious foundation. One could hardly find terms adequate enough to describe the vision, bravery and virtues of Sindhi rulers of that period who raised Sindh from the rank of an irrelevant kingdom to a mighty empire. Extensive trade contributed to the wealth of Sindhi nation. A rich and peaceful Sindh became a shining example for the region. The port city of Deval emerged as the first metropolis in the region and busiest of trading places, famous for its shipbuilding industry among the surrounding seafarer nations. Development and consolidation of Sindhi language and national values were among the major phenomena of the era. The origin of contemporary Sindhi nation can be traced from 6th and 7th century Sindh. Although, some of the Sindhi nationalists claim that their national identity is as old as the Indus civilization; however, for all historical, social and cultural purposes, the emergence of contemporary Sindhi nation can be traced from the establishment of the Empire of Sindh. The Sindhi language and the socio-cultural traditions began to shape in such a way in that period that they made the frame of Sindhi nation in which all newcomers into the Indus valley and the fine elements of their cultural values were merged or absorbed. The contemporary Sindhi nation can conveniently be called the continuation of a national conscious developed during the golden era of the empire of Sindh with the merger of some of the ingredients of social and religious traditions of numerous national entities. The period of the empire was the golden era of Sindh.

4. The fall of Sindhi Empire

> No negotiation with the Bedouins. Bargaining with invaders implies submission which is not an option. I am heavily indebted to this land which has given me honour, respect and power. It is perhaps the time to pay my debts. It is now apparent that time has come for me to sacrifice my life in the sacred cause of preserving the kingdom of Sindh and my personal honour. It became necessary that my blood should mingle with the blood of thousands of brave sons of my land. I must fight, I must sacrifice, and it is imminent; let it be done. (**King Dahir's** response to the suggestions from his council of elders asking for negotiating with Arabs before the fatal battle of Rawad).

Sindhi destinies changed drastically during the 8th century. The Empire faced an unexpected threat from the newly emerging power of the poverty-stricken tribes of Arabian Peninsula. The Arabs, experiencing centuries of insults from powerful Roman and Persian empires, were inspired by the new religion of Islam to gain a place of respect among the nations. Armed with the desire for material and heavenly rewards, they caused the crumbling of these powers. The volunteer fighters of the nascent state of Medina, established by Prophet Muhammad in the 7th century, indoctrinated in the

philosophy of jihad in the way of Allah became unstoppable even by trained Roman and Persian armies. After the collapse of Sassanid Empire, Sindh became the frontline in the Arab war of domination. After more than a dozen exploratory and plundering raids by small expeditionary forces into outlying Sindhi provinces of Mekran, Rakhshaan and Turan, finally during the reign of Caliph Walid bin Abdul Malik of Umayyad Dynasty, Sindh was invaded by a formidable force. Led by Muhammad bin Kasim Al-Thakafi, the Arab army gained the upper hand in Sindh within three years beginning from 713 AD and ruled Sindh for more than 100 years except for a brief period when in 716 AD Sindhis managed to regain the control of some parts of Sindh.

The Advent of Islam

During the 7th century, 'Allah', the ancient god of Arabian Peninsula, revealed Himself via angel Gabriel to Muhammad bin Abdullah from the Hashemite tribe of Quresh and nominated Him as His messenger. The revelations or words of Allah through Gabriel later collected into a book which became the Holy Qur'an. The sayings of Prophet Muhammad (Hadith) and the Holy Qur'an became the basic tenets of the new religion which differed from the existing ones practised at that time and was a mixture of modified versions of Judaism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism and Hinduism. The new religion changed the socio-political structure of the region. The messenger of Allah and His followers became able to establish a primitive kind of state in Yasrab (later renamed as Medina) north of Mecca in present-day Saudi Arabia. The financial and military foundations of this state were strengthened with frequent pillaging raids (*Ghazwas*) into surrounding regions and on trade convoys. Armed with prospects of mundane riches and heavenly rewards, the Bedouins fighting in the Islamic army became invincible and defeated Rome and Persia. After consolidating power in

Arabian Peninsula, the Prophet sent expeditionary forces to Roman and Persian boundaries. He also sent letters to rulers of the two great powers of the day, to submit or face the rage of his warriors. After the death of the messenger of Allah, His successors followed the policy of expansion and conquest and within a few years, their domain extended to lands in the North, East and West of Arabian peninsula. Once these poverty ridden tribes got the taste of luxuries offered to them in their conquered lands, they became more ferocious. The Romans were forced to withdraw from the Middle East while Persia was totally destroyed. The boundaries of Arab Empire touched the Roman lands in Asia Minor, deserts of Central Asia and the Empire of Sindh within 50 years after the death of Prophet Muhammad.

The Arabs and Sindhis: the war of attrition

Before the advent of Islam, the Arabs were in contact with Sindh in two different ways. The Arab merchant boats used Deval and other Sindhi ports in their sea voyages. They were also in contact with Sindhis with the plundering raids carried out frequently by Arab pirates on the coastal regions of Sindh. With these raids and commercial activities, Sindh became famous among the Arabs as one of the richest countries known to them. Traders usually got higher prices for their goods in Sindh compared with other regions. At the time of Caliph Muaviya, the Arab raiding parties in the Mediterranean gathered a lot of golden idols and precious diamonds and a variety of jewellery. The Caliph was in need of money and he ordered them to be sent to Sindh so that they should be sold there to the princes of the country in order to get better prices.

The Arab armies came into direct contact with Sindhis after the collapse of Sassanid power in Iran when Sindhi frontier provinces became the eastern borders of the expanding Arab Empire. Various viceroys or governors of eastern regions

based in Basra (Iraq) sent several exploratory parties into Sindhi territories beginning from the reign of first Caliph Abu Bakar. However, it took decades for the Arabs to take a final decision to invade Sindh. It was mainly because their geostrategic knowledge was very rudimentary about Sindh and this knowledge was mainly acquired through merchants who were only able to visit the coastal areas of Sindh. Numerous exploratory raids were made into outlying regions of Sindh before the major invasion in 713 AD. The final invasion of Sindh sanctioned by Umayyad Caliph Abdul Malik and carried out during the reign of his son Caliph Walid bin Abdul Malik.

The Arabs made the first inroad into Sindh by sending a raiding party from Bahrain toward the Sindhi coast by Usman ibn Abul Has Al-Thakafi, the Governor of Bahrain and Oman, this attack was repulsed with heavy losses suffered by the invaders. The leader of the raiding party Mughira bin Has Al-Thakafi was killed near Deval. Several other incursions were also made in the outlying provinces of Mekran and Turan. These raids were taken lightly by Sindhi rulers as the Arabs usually after collecting booty, withdrew or repulsed by Sindhi forces in the border regions. At that time, whole Iranian plateau was in turmoil and the Arabs were engaged in a war of attrition with Persians under the leadership of fugitive emperor Yazd Gird III who was wandering in the eastern regions of his empire to mobilize resistance. The Arabs decided to have a final push to end the costly and protracted conflict with Persians. Kerman was believed to be the stronghold of some of the barbaric and predatory Baloch tribes who have given protection to many state functionaries and Zoroastrian priests and from where they were organizing attacks on Arab military encampments. A strong force under the command of Mujashi ibn Masud Al-Sulami was organized and sent to Kerman to deal with the situation. The force ransacked Bam and

Jiruft, the main cities of Kerman, reduced Sirjan massacring thousands of the Baloch and Persians including women and children to avenge the killings of a large number of Arab fighters by the Baloch in their night attacks on Arab camps. However, a significant number of the Baloch escaped towards Sindhi regions of Mekran, Rakhshaan and Turan. The end of the resistance against the advancing Arabs in Kerman rang alarming bells in Sindh as western limits of Sindhi empire bordered with Kerman. From their bases in Kerman, the Arabs overran neighbouring Sistan.

After getting a firm hold on Kerman and Sistan, the Arabs did not wait for long and began their plundering raids in Sindhi territories. Mekran was first invaded during the reign of Caliph Omar. The governor of Mekran Rasil who was also a relative of King Chach Silabij asked for help. A contingent to reinforce the defences of Mekran was sent from Nirun which included many war elephants but the Arabs overpowered Sindhi defences near Kech and the governor of Mekran and the commander of the force sent by the King in his support were killed in the battle. For some months, Mekran was occupied by the Arabs but they suffered heavily from the hit and run activities of the local population. On receiving the news of loses, and lack of provisions, Caliph Omar decided to withdrew his forces and stopped any further incursion into Sindhi territory. He already decried against any new adventure against Sindh by sea after the defeat of the expeditionary force sent earlier towards Deval. The Arab forces retreated from Mekran taking huge booty and many slaves. The borders of Sindh became relatively peaceful but not for long. Soon, a raiding party under the command of Abdul Rahman bin Sumroh attacked Rakhshaan region of modern-day Balochistan from the Arab base in Zarang in Sistan. It met no strong resistance; nevertheless, the raiding party returned without collecting much booty as the region was mainly a desert.

However. a serious threat was felt by Sindhi rulers at the time of Caliph Usman decided to invade of Sindh. The Caliph ordered an invasion of Sindh under the command of Tugir bin Saghir but the plan was abandoned with the murder of the Caliph by a rebellious mob. After the proclamation of Ali as the successor of Caliph Usman. drastic changes were made in the administration of the Islamic state in Medina. Al-Harith was nominated as the commander of the Arab force assembled for the invasion of Sindh. This force was successful in that the Arabs penetrated up to Khuzdar (Central Balochistan) but could not advance to the heart of Sindhi empire. The expeditionary force remained in the area for nearly three years as it was harassed by the local population in their surprise hit and run activities. The attack on Sindh was postponed and the army withdrew. While returning with a huge quantity of plundered goods and many captives, the army was ambushed near Kalat. A very few among the soldiers managed to escape. After hearing the loss of the army and the booty. Hans bin Marih Al-Adi was sent with a strong force towards Khuzdar to take revenge. He defeated the local forces in many battles and was successful in looting many surrounding regions. but soon returned after hearing the news of the murder of Caliph Ali.

During the reign of Caliph Muaviya of Umayyad Dynasty. another raiding party attacked the frontier regions of Sindh under the command of Muhallab bin Abu Sufran and recaptured Kalat but Muhallab was killed and the party withdrew. To avenge the murder of Muhallab. Abdullah ibn Sawwar was sent with a strong force but he was also killed near Khuzdar. Before his death: however. he sent valuable loot to Damascus including fine horses and a magic mirror (crystal ball) through which one could have seen the future. During this period. Mekran was also restive and several times it changed hand between Sindhi and Arab forces. Caliph Muaviya subsequently sent Sinan bin Salamah and Hakim bin

Jabalah who were able to conquer Mekran and permanently occupying the region. Another attempt to capture Khuzdar and Kalat met with failure. It was reported by the viceroy of Iraq and Iran to the central authorities in Damascus that small forces cannot overcome the fierce resistance of local population in the provinces. Hence, a strong force was sent under the command of Mundhir bin Jarud Al-Abdi (according to some accounts, the commander was Abul Rehman Ash'ath), Khuzdar was captured and a huge booty was sent to Caliph including a large number of Sindhis and Turks as slaves.

Hajjaj bin Yusuf Al-Thakafi was appointed as the viceroy of eastern regions of the Arab Empire during the reign of Caliph Muaviya. He organised the first major attack on Sindh from Mekran. A 3000 strong Bedouin army was sent under the command of Bazil which, travelling very fast, reached the fortified city of Nirun (present-day Hyderabad) where Prince Jaisiah, the son of Emperor Dahir, soundly defeated the Arab army, killing thousands including the commander, and capturing hundreds of the Bedouins.

It was the period when the Arabs were engaged in a civil war between Yemeni and Hijazi tribes in the Iranian plateau. As an extension of this war, the occupied outlying regions of Sindh including Mekran and modern-day Central Balochistan (Khuzdar and Kalat) also became a battlefield of the warring tribes. The inter-tribal conflict between the Arabs gave a period of respite for Sindh as no major attempt was made towards Sindh proper in those years. However, with the changing situation, the period of respite was short. Saeed bin Aslam who was nominated as the ruler of Mekran was killed by the Arabs of the Alafi tribe. He was a close friend of Hajjaj bin Yusuf Al-Thakafi. Fearing the repercussion, the Alafi chief and many of his tribesmen fled and took asylum with King Dahir. During the same period, the episode of slave girls

occurred. Hajjaj bin Yusuf Al-Thakafi bore grudges against Sindh for the earlier murder of his relative in the encounter near Deval and for giving asylum to the Alafi killers of another of his relative Saeed bin Aslam. using the case of virgin slaves. strongly pleaded to the Caliph Abdul Malik in Damascus for sanctioning an invasion on Sindh. He got the formal approval of the Caliph who was much disturbed by the loss of beautiful virgin slaves when the merchant convoy carrying them was raided by Meds in the coastal regions of Sindh.

After getting the permission for the invasion of Sindh. Hajjaj Bin Yusuf Al-Thakafi organized a strong army with all provisions available at his disposal. He sought many stone-throwing catapults which later proved to be very effective in breaching the strong walls of Sindhi fortresses. He appointed his nephew Muhammad bin Kasim Al-Thakafi as the commander of the invading army[8]. Muhammad was at that time in south-central Iran curbing a rebellion of the Baloch. Kurdish and other Iranian tribes. It is proudly reported in the Arab chronicles that Muhammad bin Kasim Al-Thakafi killed the Kurds in thousands in order to crush their revolt against the Arab incursions in their socio-cultural life and against the forced conversion into Islam. This account also refutes the claims of some of the Arabs and Indian writers that Muhammad bin Kasim Al-Thakafi was a teenager when he was made the commander of the forces assembled to invade Sindh. The invasion army for Sindh was a formidable force. Besides Arab Bedouins. the invasion army included six thousand battle tested Syrian mercenaries from the disbanded Roman units. Several thousand Iranian fighters from newly

[8] According to some Islamic writers. he was the cousin of Hajjaj from his mother's side. For some other authorities like Masum. Muhammad was the cousin of Hajjaj's father Yusuf and son in law of Hajjaj

occupied territories in Iranian plateau were also made part of the army with the promise of huge loot and exemption from taxes (Jaziya). In a real sense, the invading army was a mix of Bedouins and mercenaries.

The motives for the Arab invasion of Sindh

Various reasons have been mentioned for the Arab invasion of Sindh which deserves consideration. Beside the general desire to expand their empire and to convert the whole humanity into newly founded religion of Islam, the reasons for advancing towards Sindh included Sindhi help to Iranians, King Dahir's decision to grant asylum to the opponents of Umayyad dynasty, the riches of Sindh. tribal vendetta and the case of virgin slaves.

1. Sindh as an ally of Sassanid Empire

Some of the Persian historians noted that Sindhis sent armies in support of Iranians against the invading Arabs and participated in the battles of Nahawand, Salasal and Qadisiyyah in Iraq. As historically Sindh has been in alliance with the Sassanid dynasty in Iran, Sindhis might have expressed their resentment over the collapse of Iranian empire. In this context, the stories of sending people in support of Emperor Yazd Gard III may have authenticity. The Arabs might have marked Sindhis as the ally of their adversary. In the generalized political and strategic milieu of that period, it became logical for Arabs to subdue all allies of their adversary.

2. Granting Asylum to the opponents of Umayyad Dynasty

King Dahir had given asylum to Muhammad, the chief of Alafi tribe who was the nominated murderer of Saeed

bin Aslam and Abdul Rehman, the Arab governors and commanders who were leading raids in Mekran and surrounding regions after the initial incursions of Arab hordes into the western provinces of Sindh. Giving asylum to Arab renegades by King Dahir was quite natural as refusing asylum to a needy person is considered to be the lowest of the social behaviours among Sindhis. It was also taken for granted in those days that members of ruling elite have the divine right of getting asylum from another ruling family. Granting asylum to a prominent person from the enemy camp might also have been a political decision in order to gather as much information about the enemy as possible. King Dahir repeatedly rejected pleas from Umayyad authorities to handover the Alafi chief[9]. The Umayyad rulers were aware that under the protection of King Dahir, Muhammad Alafi was also in contact with Abdul Rehman bin Abbas, another enemy of Umayyad rule, who lived in a border region of northern Sindh.

3. The wealth of Sindh

The Arabs from ancient times have been lured by the Sindhi wealth. In Arabic literature, the traders wrote that the rivers in Sindh are pearls, the mountains are rubies, and trees are perfume. *Ghazwa* to collect booty is an ancient

[9] King of Sindh extended every facility to these Arab rebels and Muhammad Alafi acquired the status of an advisor on military strategies in the royal court at Alor. Muhammad Alafi and his 500 hundred strong force later played the role of Brutus. With the Arab invasion of Sindh they not only refused to take an active part in the campaign in support of Sindhi army but acting as fifth columnist, they sent vital information of strategic and social importance to Muhammad bin Kasim Al-Thakafi in exchange for a promise of pardon from the Umayyad ruler. Before the decisive battle of Rawad, the Alafis re-joined the Arabs and became part of the army of Muhammad bin Kasim.

tradition among the Arabs. From the early days of Prophet Muhammad, *Ghazwa* had been a successful strategy to enrich the treasury of the emerging state in Medina. This strategy was implemented by raiding mercantile caravans belonging to Quresh and other tribes in the Arabian Peninsula. After subduing the tribes of Arabian Peninsula. the raiding parties were sent to areas governed by Romans and Persians. The Arab raiding parties were also sent towards far-flung regions in Central Asia, Africa and the Mediterranean. These raiding parties not only brought wealth but also furnished the rulers in Medina or Damascus with vital information about the people and the countries. In this context, the Arab raiding parties towards Sindh were not only for plunder but also to reconnoitre.

According to Baladhuri, the final conquest of Sindh was a very profitable adventure. Only in Multan. the Arabs captured 6000 women as slaves besides a huge quantity of gold. In total, Muhammad bin Kasim Al-Thakafi sent to his uncle Hajjaj bin Yusuf a sum of 120,000,000 Dirham recovered from Sindh. Later. this sum was disputed by the authorities in Damascus believing that Muhammad and his uncle Hajjaj have hidden a large part of the booty in secret places. It is believed that besides the accounts of King Dahir's daughters, one of the reasons for the dismissal of Muhammad as the commander of Arab army in Sindh. his imprisonment, torture and gruesome murder was the supposed theft of the booty collected from Sindh.

4. The case of virgin slaves

The episode of the loss of some beautiful girls bought for the Umayyad Caliph Abdul Malik was another reason for the invasion of Sindh. According to Masoom (1855), as mentioned in Tarikh-i-Masumi, Caliph Abdul Malik of Umayyad

dynasty sent some Syrian merchants to Sindh and Hind for the purchase of girls.

> *"....he gave orders to some of his servants to go Sind to buy Hindustani female slaves, and other things. Some merchants from Egypt having joined them, they came to Sind. They bought and collected female slaves, and other things, as ordered, and having made their arrangements, started on the return by sea route. When they got to Daiwal Bunder, a band of highway robbers came upon them, killing many, taking a few prisoners, looting whole of their property; and the remaining few escaping, they returned to, and made their complaint before, the Khaliph, who was so incensed, that perspiration issued from his body: he warned an army to go to that country, and then he died, the force remaining stationary (Masoom, 1855; page, 6)."*

Included among the looted merchandise were the 10 most beautiful virgin girls bought for the Caliph. That can explain his outrage on hearing the news of the loss of merchandise. According to Muslim chronicles, the convoy was attacked by the Meds who were the citizens of Sindh. The governor of Basra, Hajjaj bin Yusuf Al-Thakafi wrote to King Dahir demanding the release of the women and other valuables which were intended for the Caliph. The letter was sent to King Dahir through Muhammad bin Harun, the commander of Arab forces in Mekran. King Dahir in response declared that the pirates operate in high seas and are not in his control. Hajjaj bin Yusuf Al-Thakafi ordered the ruler of Oman to send an expedition against the pirates to recover the girls. However, the mission failed and the commander of the punitive force, Budail ibn-Tahfah Al-Bajali was killed by the pirates near Deval. The reply of the King of Sindh and the outcome of

the expeditionary force to recover the girls were sent to the Caliph who had already ordered Hajjaj bin Yusuf to arrange an army for the invasion of Sindh. With the death of Caliph Abdul Malik, the invasion of Sindh was postponed for a time; nevertheless, his son Caliph Walid bin Abdul Malik gave the wish of his father a practical shape by renewing the order for the invasion of Sindh (Pathan1996).

Some of the Muslim authors have mentioned that the women captured were the family members of Muslim traders living in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) or in the west coast of India. The version of slave girls' story has been mentioned in Tarikh-i-Masumi which is considered to be one of the most authentic accounts of Muslim history in India and one must rely on its account as the truthful one.

5. Jihad: Fight to kill in the path of Allah

Islam is standing on pillars which include recognizing Allah as the only God and Muhammad as His final messenger; performing the duties of prayers and fasting during the month of Ramadan; payment of taxes (*zakat*); performing the pilgrimage of Mecca (*hajj*); and answering the call of *jihad* which is to subdue infidels and believers of other faiths if they refused to convert and refused to pay a special tax (*jaziya*) (Tabari, 1997). Islam which came as a blend of ancient Arab religious beliefs and some of the tenets of Judaism, Christianity and Zoroastrianism, was radically different from existing religions of the time. Firstly, there was no distinction between the religious and the secular and secondly, violence became the resort of Muslims in order to achieve the goal of bringing the world into the fold of Islam.

With the belief of Allah being the only God and Islam as the only true religion, it became obligatory for every Muslim to

convert all humanity to Islam. The Holy Prophet on various occasions emphasised that He has been ordered to fight against people until they testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. quoting the Holy Qur'an with the prediction of the ultimate triumph of Islam over the whole world:

> *"...it is He Who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth, to make it superior over all religions (Qur'an, 9:33)."*

To fight for Allah and to impose the true religion of Islam over the universe. became the duty of every Muslim until the word of Allah became supreme. In this context. Islamic worldview divides the world into two opposing camps of *dar al-Islam* which is the realm of Islam; and that of *dar al-harb* which is the realm of war. *Dar al-Islam* is the region where the Muslim faith is dominant. while *dar al-harb* is the region where the Muslims were engaged in violent conflicts (*jihad*) to impose the true faith (Al-Tabari. 1997). As the founding pillar of Islam. it became the mission of every pious Muslim to fight and impose Islam over the world. In this struggle. Muslims are endowed with divine assistance. Every Muslim has the power ten time greater than that of the infidel:

> *"O. Apostle! Rouse the Believers to the fight. If there are twenty amongst you, patient and preserving. they will vanquish two hundred: if a hundred. they will vanquish a thousand of the unbelievers: for these are a people without understanding (Qur'an, 8.65)."*

In any case. the fight against the infidels and unbelievers is a win-win situation for Muslims. Qur'an is specific about the fate of those who are killed in the path of Allah:

> *"Think not of those who are slain in Allah's way as dead. Nay, they live, finding their sustenance in the Presence of their Lord (Qur'an, 3:169)."*

For Allah, those who fight in His way are distinguished and worthy of a special reward:

> *"...not equal are those believers who sit at home and receive no hurt, and those who strive and fight in the cause of Allah with their goods and their persons (Qur'an, 4:95)."*

It is not astonishing that the Arab forces easily defeated two superpowers (Roman and Persian empires) within a short period of 30 years. Their invincibility was mostly because almighty Allah is very generous in promising rewards of unimaginable magnitudes for the fighters in His cause:

> *"Allah hath promised to Believers, men and women, Gardens under which rivers flow, to dwell therein, and beautiful mansions in Gardens of everlasting bliss (Quran, 9:72)."*

The reward of the Garden of Paradise is so promising that even Prophet Muhammad has been quoted in various *Hadith* books[10] as saying that he would love to be killed in the path of Allah, then to be revived to life again, then to be killed and then to be revived to life and then to be killed and then to revived to life and then to be killed. In Sahih Bukhari, one of the most authentic of *Hadith* collections, the Prophet has been quoted as saying that the *Mujahid* (i.e. fighter in *jihad*) is rewarded even for the footsteps of his horse while it wanders about (for grazing) tied in a long rope. Abu Hurraira quoted Prophet Muhammad as saying that Allah guarantees that He

[10] *Hadith* are the sayings of Prophet Muhammad

will admit the *Mujahid* in His Cause into Paradise if he is killed. otherwise He will return him to his home safely with rewards and war booty. Even the wounded in the fight for the cause of Allah are fascinatingly rewarded in the afterlife. The Prophet has been quoted in *Sahih Bukhari*:

> *"By Him in Whose Hands my soul is! Whoever is wounded in Allah's Cause....and Allah knows well who gets wounded in His Cause....will come on the Day of Resurrection with his wound having the colour of blood but the scent of musk (*Al-Bukhari. 1997. Volume 4. Book 52. Number 59*)."*

The reward for Muslims in this world includes making them powerful to rule others and become the owner of tremendous riches and master of fertile lands. the beautiful women of the conquered people and of numerous slaves. There are other wonderful rewards waiting for them in the afterlife: the gift of Paradise and escape from the eternal fires of Hell. In a way. there is a clear trade-off between joining the struggle in the cause of Allah and reserving in return a place in the Garden of Paradise in which there will be available as companions. *houris*. purposely created females of insurmountable beauty. In Qur'anic *Sura* 56 (*Al-Waqia, ayat* 35-36). Allah described *houris* as:

> *"We have created (their Companions) of special creation. And made them virgin-pure (and undefiled)."*

According to Al-Tirmidhi:

> *"A houri is a most beautiful young woman with a transparent body. The marrow of her bones is visible like the interior lines of pearls and rubies. She looks like red wine in a white glass. She is of white colour.*

> *and free from the routine physical disabilities of an ordinary woman such as menstruation, menopause, urinal and offal discharge, childbearing and the related pollution. A houri is a girl of tender age, having large breasts which are round (pointed), and not inclined to dangle (Al-Tirmidhi, 2007, Hadith: 2687)."*

The Prophet has been quoted as saying that a single *houri* from Paradise would fill the space between Heaven and Earth with light and pleasant scent; her head cover is better than the world and whatever is in it (Al-Bukhari, 1997; volume 4, Book 52, Number 53). It was not only the houris but in the Garden, there will also be a variety of fruits, flowing wines, honey and so many other things for the fulfilment of the heart's desire of a Muslim.

For Bedouins, living a life of misery, disgrace and poverty, Islam was the opening of new horizons of dignity, pride and riches. The Arabs were considered uncivilized and brigands by neighbouring civilized nations. The degree of disgrace which the Arabs faced in that period can be imagined by the fact that the people of Arabian Peninsula were not allowed to enter the cities in Persian and Roman territories after the sunset. Majority of the Arabs were not even aware of various delicious dishes, fruits and other food material consumed by the people of surrounding regions. *Tharid* (a traditional meal of curry mixed with pieces of bread), was the dream dish of the Bedouin but only a few could afford to taste it while visiting the Roman or Persian controlled cities in northern Arabia. When the conduct of the Prophet was criticized by His relatives and family friends because of rendering undue favours towards the youngest of His wives, A'isha, Muhammad replied by equating A'isha's characteristics with that of *Tharid*. Allah's Apostle said:

> *"The superiority of A'isha over other women is like the superiority of Tharid to other meals (Al-Bukhari, 1997: vol. 5, no. 114)."*

It was the combination of acquiring material and heavenly rewards of unimaginable proportions, which prompted the Arabs to invade rich nations like Sindh.

6. Tribal vendetta

There was another strong motive to invade Sindh. Hajjaj bin Yusuf Al-Thakafi, the most trusted of the governors of the Umayyad Dynasty, acting as the Viceroy of Iran and Iraq, had developed personal grudges against Sindhi rulers on two accounts. The commander of the first raiding army which was sent from Bahrain was a close relative of Hajjaj bin Yusuf. He was killed near Deval. Another reason for the development of the personal grudge by Hajjaj against Sindhis is that King Dahir granted asylum to Muhammad Alafi, the murderer of his relative and friend Saeed bin Aslam and Abdul Rehman. They were murdered as a consequence of intertribal disputes between Yemeni and Hijazi Arab tribes in Mekran and Sistan. After the murder of Saeed bin Aslam, a strong contingent was sent by Hajjaj which attacked Alafis and killed many dignitaries of that tribe including their chief Sulaiman Alafi. It is noteworthy that Hajjaj bin Yusuf was a major player in the protracted civil war between the northern and southern Arab tribes fought mainly in Iranian plateau during Umayyad reign. It is believed that the decision by the Caliph for sanctioning the invasion of Sindh was the result of persistent demand from Hajjaj. Appointing his nephew Muhammad bin Kasim as the commander of the invasion force, and keeping the daughters of King Dahir captives in his private prison also indicated a strong element of a personal grudge.

Chapter Four

7. The Arab imperial designs

The motives for the invasion of Sindh discussed above should be seen in the political setting of the region in that period. In the broader context of the emergence of Islam after gaining control of whole Arabian Peninsula and the Iranian Plateau within a short span of time, the newly emerging Arabian Empire inevitably aspired to expand. This was imperative in order to assemble financial resources to keep up with the newly acquired luxurious lifestyle of Bedouin tribes. However, after the initial conquests in the Middle East and North Africa, the Arab adventurers faced tough resistance in their expansionist designs. In the west, the decaying Roman Empire was still in a position to check the Bedouin advances north of Syria. In the north, the Turk and Mongol tribes were more barbaric and ferocious than the Arabs and they were not wealthy enough for Arabs to take the risk of losing men in battles. After Egypt, the interior of Africa was not promising in terms of resources to be considered for looting or occupation. The only area of least resistance with an abundance of wealth was in the East and the first country beyond the borders of Sassanid Empire was Sindh. Besides reserving a place in the garden of paradise in exchange for subduing and converting the infidels, Sindh was the land where unimaginable riches were waiting for the Arabs. The invasion of Sindh was inevitable.

The story of the occupation of Sindh

The final invasion of Sindh was the climax of a war of attrition which began with the plundering raids during the reign of Caliph Abu Bakar and Omar. After many failed attempts, the province of Mekran falls to Arab tribes during the reign of Caliph Muaviya. The regions of Rakhshaan and present-day central Balochistan, although, were in turmoil because of the fierce resistance from the local population.

But. for all practical purposes. the upper hand in these areas rested with the Arabs. With the occupation of these outlying provinces. the way for the invasion of Sindh proper was clear. Apart from land offensives. exploratory raids were also conducted in the coastal regions of Sindh. Two expeditionary forces were sent towards Deval. during the reign of Caliph Walid bin Abdul Malik. in the guise of finding the pirates who have taken away the slave girls bought for his father. Both commanders of these raiding parties. Ubaidullah bin Nahiyan Al-Sulami and Badel bin Tahfa Al-Bajali were killed by Sindhi troops led by Prince Jaisiah. the elder son of King Dahir near the shores of Deval.

The beginning of the end

The Muslim chroniclers including Baladhuri (in Futuh al-Buldan) and Kufi (in Chachnama) mentioned enough isolated details to establish the overall nature of the conquest of Sindh by the Arab army under the command of Muhammad bin Kasim Al-Thakafi in 712 AD. In 710 AD. Caliph Abdul Malik. enraged with the loss of his slave girls. and the failure of King Dahir to recover them from the pirates made the go-ahead to Hajjaj bin Yusuf for the invasion of Sindh. The army assembled for the purpose was to be disbanded because of the death of the Caliph. During the reign of his son. Caliph Walid bin Abdul Malik. a strong army was recruited under the command of Muhammad bin Kasim Al-Thakafi[11]. The new invading army for Sindh was composed of Arab tribesmen and six thousand Syrian mercenaries[12]. Also included in the

[11] Muhammad bin Kasim gained fame among the Umayyad ruling circles when he mercilessly crushed the Kurdish rebellion in Central Iran. It is said that the whole Kurdish population of Shiraz region was massacred by him within a few months. The historical city of Istakhra. believed to be built by Achaemenes emperors. was raised to the ground.

[12] Details of the conquest of Sindh have been taken from the accounts of various Muslim writers and as a Sindhi version is not available. truth

army were many members of tribes from various regions of the Iranian plateau. The total strength of the invasion force is believed to be around twenty-five thousand, a mighty army according to the standards of that period. With the news of early victories in Sindh and the collection of immense booty reaching Damascus and other Arab regions, waves of adventurers, eager for plunder and proselytise, joined the invading army. When Muhammad bin Kasim left Multan to make further inroads in the east, he had 50, 000 troops marching under his command. A significant number of soldiers were left in forts and garrisons in various regions of Sindh. To confront successfully this huge army became a mission impossible for a numerically outnumbered Sindhi army.

The army began its march from Shiraz via Sistan. The first bold but disorganized resistance from scattered Sindhi forces was offered in present day Punjgur region of Balochistan. It took a whole month for the Arabs to subdue the resisting forces and both sides suffered heavy casualties. After occupying the main fortress, all settlements in the regions were burnt down by the Arabs. The people who surrendered were massacred; however, the majority of the people survived by fleeing into surrounding southern hills of Mekran and northern desert areas of Rakhshaan.

From Punjgur, the army reached Armabel (the present day Bela town in Balochistan) where the commander of the Arab forces in Mekran, Muhammad bin Harun joined Al-Thakafi with a sizeable force. After reducing Bela, the army advanced towards Nirun (present-day Hyderabad); however, a Sindhi contingent sent by King Dahir blocked their advance near Hub River. The attack on Nirun was cancelled and instead, it was decided that the port city of Deval should be attacked first.

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can only be found by reading between the lines.

Near Deval. the invading army was joined by a flotilla carrying sophisticated catapults sent by Hajjaj bin Yusuf. Deval was protected by a strong wall and a well-built fortress. The Arabs surrounded the city and began to attack its walls. After nine days of pounding. walls began to collapse. the Arabs entered the city via breaches created on the walls. The defenders were overwhelmed. After taking the city. the fortress of Deval was stormed by scaling its wall. For three days. the inhabitants were massacred. Thousands were taken as slaves including seven hundred priestesses (*Dev Dasis*) of the famous temple of Deval. Every house in the city was searched and looted.

King Dahir. after hearing the news of the fall of Deval. assembled Sindhi forces and marched to confront the invading army. while his son. Prince Jaisiah was consolidating the defences of Nirun. The prince was later recalled to lead the forces in Brahmanabad. That appeared to be a major blunder as the Buddhist priest made responsible for the defence of Nirun. surrendered to Arab forces without a fight. According to Muslim writers. he was in contact with Arabs even before the arrival of the invading army. The loss of Deval and Nirun were heavy blows for Sindhis and were the decisive factors in the final outcome of the war.

The invading army from its base in Nirun. attacked Siwistan region of northwestern Sindh which was also occupied without a significant resistance and the ruler of the region. Baoji Rao. who was a close relative of King Dahir fled towards to south in the Budhia region. After his failure to mobilize the Buddhist citizens for a meaningful fight against the enemy. the ruler of Budhia also surrendered. The Arab forces also occupied Sibi (modern-day town of eastern Balochistan) and the fortress of Seesam on the banks of Manchar Lake. without a fight. After taking these areas without suffering any major

losses, the army returned to its headquarters in Nirun to prepare for a final battle with Sindhi force which King Dahir himself was commanding. King Dahir chose Rawad as the place to confront the Arab army which was encamped on the right bank of Sindhu River. Rawad was believed to be not very far from present-day Hyderabad.

Battle of Rawad: the Sindhi nemesis

The battle at Rawad between forces led by King Dahir and Muhammad bin Kasim Al-Thakafi was although not the final encounter between Sindhis and invading Arabs, its outcome decided the ultimate fate of Sindhi Empire and the future of Sindhi nation forever. The battle did not begin immediately. To gain time, the Arabs exchanged letters with King Dahir. Meanwhile, they secretly arranged for the crossing of the river far away in the south. Deceiving Sindhi reconnoitring parties, they crossed the river near Sakro, a distance from the encampment of their army. The crossing was made possible with the help of Mokah son of Basaya, the governor of Jahm, who earlier surrendered to the Arabs. The Sindhi contingent under the command of Raja Rasil offered tough resistance but failed to stop the crossing. With this unexpected turn of event where the Sindhi army was caught unaware, King Dahir consulted his advisory council. They advised him to order an immediate withdrawal towards capital Alor. They suggested to the King that as in present circumstances a head-on collision might not result in favour of Sindhi forces. They forming small ambush parties to harass the invading army in order to force them to retreat. The council of elders and the Prime Minister also suggested talks with Muhammad bin Kasim in order to offer him a huge sum of money in exchange for his withdrawal from Sindh. However, King Dahir rejected the idea and prepared for the battle.

The Sindhi army was probably comprised of less than 20 thousand foot soldier. 5 thousand horsemen and 26 elephants. It was vastly outnumbered by enemy forces which numbered around 50 thousand horsemen, archers and foot soldiers. The position of Sindhi army became precarious with the desertion of a large number of fighters from allied tribes to the enemy camp. They not only deserted but also fought against their fellow countrymen. With the crossing of the river a situation of near encirclement of King Dahir's forces developed. The cutting off communication from rest of Sindh blocked vital supplies and it also became hard for other units to join the main army. This caused the outnumbering of Sindhi army. Worst happened when the fugitive Alafi chief with his 500 fighters asked for the leave to go back as they would not like to be with the King who is preparing for a final showdown with their Arab brethren. They were granted the permission to leave. After joining the invasion army, they furnished valuable information about Sindhi defences.

The battle for Sindh lasted for five days. On the first day, it is stated that the commander of forces defending Rawad region. Raja Rasil, defected to the Arabs after his whole garrison was totally wiped out. His inside information about the Sindhi forces and its weaknesses and strength played an important role in the defeat of King Dahir. Under his guidance, the Arab army marched to Juiyur, practically surrounding the King's forces. With a state of siege, the Sindhis had no option but to fight until death.

On the second day of the battle, two valiant sons of Sindh perished while leading their troops to break the encirclement of the enemy. The chamberlain of the king and General Jahim and their armies were overwhelmed by the enemy forces. This forced King Dahir to take direct command of the battle. It is stated that for the whole of the fourth day of engagement

with the Arab army, King Dahir was himself shooting arrows towards the enemy forces sitting on his elephant and helped by two girls from his harem who were handing over arrows for his bow. In the afternoon, a charge by King himself with the help of elephants caused much havoc in the enemy camp, a large number of Arabs were killed before the sunset including one of their prominent commander Mahriz bin Thabith, while another Arab general was seriously wounded.

On the fifth and final day of the battle, King Dahir was assisted by his brother Dahirsen, cousin Jaybin, nephew Kaksah and nobles like Abhi, Wado Kanwar, Dhol, Gih, Bil, Nailo, Jhuno and Mashbad as wing commanders[13]. Right in the beginning of the battle, an attack by Sindhi vanguards was repulsed by the Arabs and their burning arrows and swordsmen slaughtered the whole contingent as no Sindhi was ready to turn his back from the battlefield. King Dahir was observing the situation sitting restlessly on the royal elephant. After watching the slaughter of his men, he came to lead the assault. With his 400 strong royal guards, he made a daring incursion into enemy lines, scattering them and forcing them to flee the field in large number. King Dahir showed extraordinary courage and bravery on the final day of the battle but his army was unable to defend itself from burning arrows (naphtha arrows) which also created panic among the elephants. He was on a white elephant which was bombarded by the Arabs with naphtha arrows. After the royal guards perished one by one, the Arab soldiers surrounded the King's elephant and wounded the beast with arrows and spears. As the elephant became unable to move and could not be manoeuvred further, the King came down and engaged the attacking Arabs. Although wounded by an arrow, King was fighting relentlessly. Ultimately, he was overwhelmed. Three

[13] After the murder of King Dahir some of the commanders surrendered to the Arabs including Kaksah

Arab soldiers surrounded him and one of them struck him between the neck and shoulder-blade, cutting off his head. His severed head was presented to Muhammad bin Kasim Al-Thakafi. The Head of King Dahir with the heads of all of his nobles who laid down their lives in the defence of their land were sent to Damascus.

On hearing the news of the murder of their king, remaining Sindhis forces fought to the death and thousands perished. A few hundred survived but exhausted and were taken prisoners by the Arabs and in an act of extreme savagery, were decapitated. On the news of the defeat at the battlefield, in Rawad town, one of the wives of King Dahir along with the wives of other nobles, committed mass suicide by jumping in the fire before the arrival of the Arab army. After the capture of the town, thirty thousand people were enslaved, including thirty daughters of Sindhi nobilities, and two daughters of King Dahir.

The death of King Dahir and the occupation of Rawad was a decisive victory for the Arabs as whole Sindh was now open. Prince Jaisiah was in Brahmanabad when Rawad was conquered. After taking charge as the King of Sindh, he began to organize an army to engage the Arabs. He wrote many letters to rulers of various regions of the empire asking for immediate help to counter the mounting threat of the enemy. He wrote to his brother Prince Gopi who was at the capital Alor, his cousin and the son of uncle Dahirsen who was at the fort of Bhattiya and the governor of Bhudia and Kalat region who was also his cousin. He informed them of the murder of the King and the disaster at Rawad. As the new king of Sindh, he ordered them to prepare for a showdown with Arab invaders.

Chapter Four

After the tragic defeat at Rawad, and recovering from the initial shock, the Sindhis offered stiffened resistance to the Arab army. Sometimes, it took months for the invaders to take a small fortress. It took Muhammad bin Kasim Al-Thakafi four months to conquer the fortresses of Bahror and Dahlilah. The Arab army finally reached the vicinity of Brahmanabad where King Jaisiah was based with his newly assembled army. For six months, Brahmanabad was besieged and the city walls were bombarded by catapult machines. Sindhi volunteers used to come out of the fort and engage the Arabs throughout the day before returning to the fort in the evening. Sorties sent from secret outlets of the fort disrupted the supply line of the Arabs.

According to some Muslim writers, King Jaisiah, finding that he could not avert the fall of Brahmanabad, fled and took refuge along with his family members in the territory of Chitor after crossing the sandy desert. Another version is that his mother, Queen Laadi, asked him to go to the interior of the country and collect an army and she would in the meanwhile take the charge of defending the city. However, with the departure of King Jaisiah to Chitor, the situation became out of control in the city and the Arabs were able to buy some of the Sindhi commanders who ultimately surrendered the city to the Arabs and Queen Laadi was captured. It is said that she was forced to marry Muhammad bin Kasim Al-Thakafi. According to Muslim chronicles, she herself willingly agreed to be his legal wife.

After the conquest of Brahmanabad, the Arab army moved towards Alor. The capital city was built on a hilltop and was believed to be invincible. Prince Gopi, the younger brother of King Jaisiah was in the capital. However, one day when he was out of the city to arrange for provisions for his army, the fortress was treacherously handed over to Arabs by the

defecting commander of the fortress. After hearing the news, Prince Gopi went to Chitor. According to Muslim writers, Queen Laadi, the captive wife of King Dahir mediated for the surrender of the fort in exchange for an amnesty for the surviving family members of King Dahir. After Alor, the fort of Bhattiya also capitulated. The fort at Askalandah and Sikkah were captured by the Arabs after facing the fierce resistance by besieged defenders for many days. Askalandah fell after seven days while it took seventeen days for the Arabs to take the fort of Sikkah after suffering a heavy casualty. The town of Sikkah who was governed by a relative of King Jaisiah was raised to the ground and all its inhabitants were massacred.

The last stronghold of the Empire was Multan. The governor of Multan, Raja Kanda, organized the resistance by accumulating a huge quantity of provisions within the fort of Multan. The Arabs besieged the fort for two months, suffering from extreme weather and a shortage of provisions. However, getting a tip from an insider, they blocked the source from which the fort was getting its water supply. This compelled the defenders to give up. Six thousand defenders were murdered after they surrendered. A huge number was taken as slaves. It is stated that 13200 Manns of gold was looted from Multan alone[14].

King Jaisiah, continued the resistance until 722. He was offered, by the new Caliph Omar bin Abdul Aziz, the rulership of eastern regions of Sindh on the condition of becoming a Muslim. On the suggestions of the council of elders and his mother Laadi, he began a process of reconciliation by exchanging letters with the Caliph but soon he and his brother Prince Sassah were treacherously killed by the governor of Sindh Junaid bin Abdul Rehman Al-Murri.

[14] A Mann is equivalent to 40 kilograms

who wanted to be the ruler of whole Sindh. With the murder of King Jaisiah, the nobility which mainly comprised of northern and southeastern Lohanas and other tribes in a grand gathering finally decided to end the resistance and wait for an opportune time to rise again but unfortunate for Sindhis that time came too late after 150 years when Sindhi tribes of Samma and Sumro gained power after the weakening of Arab hold. The struggle for the occupation of Sindh was a protracted one and only in the reign of Umayyad Caliph Omar bin Abdul Aziz, the whole Sindh practically came under the occupation of the Arabs. However, according to Baladhuri, Multan and Northern provinces of Sindh including Kashmir were occupied during the reign of Abbasid Caliph Al-Mansur.

The fate of Muhammad bin Kasim

Princess Purmal Devi and Princess Suraj Devi were daughters of King Dahir. They were among the four hundred "virgin" girls sent to Hajjaj bin Yusuf as part of the booty collected from Sindh. It is said that instead of sending the girls to Damascus, he kept them in his secret prisons[15]. After the death of Hajjaj bin Yusuf Al-Thakafi and during the reign of Caliph Suleman bin Abdul Malik, his secret prisons were discovered and the Caliph ordered that daughters of King Dahir be presented to him in Damascus[16].

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15 According to Arab historians, Hajjaj bin Yusuf was one of the cruellest of governors during the Umayyad period. He was responsible for the death of thousands of Arabs, Persians, Kurds, Sindhis and the Baloch in his tenure as the viceroy of Eastern regions. After his death, many secret prisons were discovered where 25 thousand men, women and children were being kept by him. These captives mostly belonged to his opponents among the Arab tribes, Persians, Kurds, Sindhis and the Baloch prisoners of war and their family members.

16 as the family members of the royal family, the daughters were meant only for the use of the Caliph himself.

When Princess Purmal Devi and her sister were presented to the Caliph, they told the story of their captivity and implored the Arabs for the treatment of members of the royal family of Sindh. Reportedly, they described the way they were abused first by Muhammad bin Kasim, and then by his uncle Hajjaj bin Yusuf while in captivity. She told the Caliph that they were not worthy of the bed of a magnificent and mighty King like Suleman. On hearing this, the Caliph immediately ordered for the dismissal of Muhammad bin Kasim as the commander of the occupation forces in Sindh. He was brought back to Basra in chains and imprisoned. On the orders of the Caliph, he was tortured to disclose the location where he and Hajjaj have reportedly kept the stolen money from the booty collected from Sindh[17]. On his refusal, he was wrapped and stitched in a donkey's hide. Within three days he died of broken ribs and a collapsed chest as the hide began to dry. Masoom described how the murder of Muhammad bin Kasim was carried out by the governor of Basra on the orders of the Caliph:

> *"He wrapped Mohamed Kasim in a raw hide and departed. Three days later the bird of his life left his body, flying to heaven (Masoom, 1855: page, 21).*

Many Arab writers, however, mentioned the loss of a great part of booty collected from Sindh as an important factor besides the abuse of King Dahir's daughter for the murder of Muhammad bin Kasim.

Causes of the fall of Sindhi Empire

Many factors were responsible for the fall of Sindhi empire and the success of the Arabs in a very short time span. The

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17 Another reason for the dismissal and his tortured death was believed to be the rumours circulating in Damascus of a hidden treasure by Muhammad and his uncle Hajjaj out of war booty from Sindh which was not presented to the Caliph.

negative role of Buddhist functionaries of the state, the Med and Jat factors, the treachery of the Arab refugees, internal rivalries, misjudgement of enemy intentions, and the use of superior military technology by the Arabs can be cited as major factors responsible for the end of a glorious period of Sindhi history.

1. The Buddhist factor

The Buddhist monks played a negative role in the Sindhi resistance against the Bedouin invasion. A significant section of the society was afflicted with Buddhist ideas of pacifism and non-violence. It appears that in the western part of Sindh, the defence of their motherland was left with professional soldiers while rest of the general populace remained non-committal to the war efforts of their king. The lack of zeal from a section of the population in participating in the defensive measures of their state was a decisive factor in the defeat of Sindhi forces. The Arabs who remained poverty-stricken for centuries, with the hope of mundane riches, beautiful women of Sindh and aspirations of a place in the paradise where there were everlasting pleasures were no match with docile reactions of a significant section of Sindhi people. The preaching of non-violence, especially in the region of Siwistan which took the brunt of early invasion weakened the forces of Baoji Rao, the governor of that region who was forced to flee. The Buddhist functionary who was the governor of Nirun surrendered to Muhammad bin Kasim after a short period of siege, without offering a meaningful resistance. Some analysts like Thakur believed that an "ideological dualism" of Hinduism and Buddhism prevailed among the masses and the ruling elite and that complex dynamic of the society was one of the causes of the weakness of Sindhi Empire at the time of Arab invasion.

2. The role of Meds and Jats

The Arab commanders. armed with vital information regarding the social and political contradictions of Sindhi society collected from earlier reconnoitring raids upon Sindhi territories. successfully exploited minor socio-political differences and attracted a significant number of sympathizers in the empire. These disgruntled elements not only furnished valuable strategic information about Sindhi troops and fortifications but in many cases, they became actively involved in battles against their own forces.

It has been mentioned in several Arab chronicles that Jat and Meds of western and southern Sindh collaborated with the invaders as they were hard pressed by King Dahir on their unlawful activities of highway banditry and piracies in high seas. Meds in Sindh at the time of Arab invasion were seafarer people and some of them were engaged in piracy of all kinds. Their actions caused much disruption in the trade between Sindh and other parts of the world. especially. Persian Gulf region, as they were heavily settled in the coastal belt of Mekran province. Due to unlawful activities. their relations with the administration was not cordial as from time to time. the government functionaries initiated operations to curb their activities. It is believed that some of the Meds collaborated with the invaders in furnishing them with vital information regarding the social. and strategic weaknesses of the Empire. Muslim writers also mentioned the joining the enemy of 4000 Jats from Siwistan during the final battle between King Dahir and Muhammad bin Kasim Al-Thakafi at Rawad[18].

[18] Jats were a nomadic tribe of western India. Their tortuous presence in the Middle East has also been reported by many writers. Some of the Jats are believed to be brought into Persia by Sassanid emperor Bahram Gor and settled in the delta of Euphrates. Some of them were also serving in the Royal army of the Sassanid emperor Yazd Gard III

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3. Treachery of Arab refugees

Extending a helping hand to the needy has been a fundamental characteristic of Sindhi national behaviour. King Dahir gave asylum to a fugitive Arab tribal chief and hundreds of his followers who developed enmity with powerful Umayyad governor Hajjaj bin Yusuf. The Alafi chief Muhammad bin Haris Alafi along with 500 hundred fighting men and family members sought asylum. Muhammad bin Haris Alafi was allotted lands and given a prominent position in the court of the King. Arabs who were given protection, status and respect by King Dahir, repaid him by deserting to the Arab army. They also fed the invaders with vital information on Sindhi governance and society. For many observers, the strategic information given by Alafi refugees to their brethren helped the enemy to defeat Sindhi forces.

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at the time of Arab invasion of Persia. They deserted the Persians and joined the Arab army under the command of Abu Moosa Al-Ashaari along with some of the Baloch tribes under the leadership of the Baloch chief Siah Sawar. They were settled in Basra and given land and a canal for agriculture. Afterward, they also developed enmity with the ruling Umayyad Dynasty during the reign of first Umayyad Caliph. The Governor of Eastern regions, Hajjaj bin Yusuf unleashed a reign of terror upon the Baloch and the Jats and massacred a huge number of them. The surviving Baloch and Jat were deported to Syria and detained in the region of Allepo. During the reign of Walid bin Abdul Malik, more Jats and some of the remaining Baloch in Basra region were deported to Antakia and they remained there until the collapse of Umayyad dynasty. With the advent of Abbasid regime, the Baloch and Jat returned to Persia and some of the Jats settled in the lower marshes of Iraq. However, during the reign of Khalifa Mamun of Abbasid dynasty, Jats rose in rebellion and Ujaif bin Anbasah was deputed with a huge army and Jats were subdued, their settlements destroyed and they were scattered in various corners of the Abbasid empire.

4. Internal rivalry

Sindhi society was strife-ridden at the time of Arab invasion. There was disharmony among many tribes and also among Hindus and Buddhists. The Buddhist governor of Nirun. Kakah son of Kotak surrendered the strategically important city without a fight. Islamic historian. Baladhuri claims that when the preparations were being made for the invasion of Sindh. he actually sent envoys to Hajjaj bin Yusuf Al-Thakafi. requesting a process of negotiation for his defection. Mokah son of Basayah another Buddhist chieftain of Budhia also surrendered without a fight. According to Muslim chronicles. the hereditary Lohana rulers of Siwistan developed a personal grudge against the royal family due to the murder of Akham Lohana by King Dahir's father. It is believed that although. they were running the bureaucracy and the finances of the Empire: nevertheless. Lohanas of Siwistan were half-heartedly resisting the Arabs and in consequence. the whole region west of River Indus came under the control of invaders without any significant loss. giving them a strategic edge.

5. Misjudgement of enemy intentions

The Sindhi ruling elite at that time totally misjudged the intentions of the Arabs. After the news of an approaching huge army with the intention of attacking Sindh reached the capital. King Dahir prepared to confront the enemy at the border regions in Mekran: however. the council of elders suggested to the King to remain patient. They believed that the Arabs will raid for plunder and return. According to Tarikh-i-Masumi. they suggested to him that:

> *"If they make raids here and there. loot some areas and after that. they leave our country it will be good as this will spare precious lives of our soldiers.*

Otherwise, we must deliberate, and if it will become necessary then we will give them much money from the treasury, to save our country from their mischiefs (Masoom, 1855; page 15)."

King Dahir obliged them and deferred his plan to confront the enemy with full force at the border regions. There were no major engagements with Arab forces in Rakhshaan and Mekran regions (although, the local governors afford tough resistance without any success) until they reached the gates of Deval. It appears that King Dahir was persistently making wrong decisions on the advice of his council of elders regarding the defence of his country.

6. Use of superior military technology

Stone-throwing Catapults used by the Arab army caused havoc among the defenders of Sindhi fortresses. This was a new and unheard military machine and Sindhi commanders were unable to counter their devastating effects. Their beliefs about the invincibility of their forts were shattered when the Arabs easily made holes in the walls, sometimes wide enough for their cavalrymen to enter. The barbaric and ferocious nature of the invasion also caused many psychological effects. The speed of the invasion astonished Sindhis. After tasting the humiliating defeat at Deval, many among the nobles came to the conclusion that the Bedouins are difficult to be defeated. This perception created a defeatist mentality which contributed to the final collapse of Sindhi Empire. On the enemy side, strategically important triumph in Deval and the capture of Nirun without significant resistance swelled the chests of the Bedouins who felt like giants. The news of early victories prompted thousands of other soldiers of fortune to join the invasion army.

Chapter Four

The darkest period of Sindhi history

The Arabs were tribal and nomadic. They were uncivilized to a degree that bordered on barbarianism and savagery. The occupation of civilized Sindh by savage Arabs inflicted a high toll on Sindhi way of life. The Arabs humiliated Sindhis in such a way that according to GM Syed, they lost their national pride. Lamenting on the Arab occupation of Sindh, the icon of Sindhi national struggle observed that the Arabs looted and took the riches, treasures, and men and women to labour in their country. They destroyed the self-respect of brave Sindhis. In order to perpetuate their imperial grip, they forced them to follow the Arab traditions and customs and to adopt Arabic names. They forcefully converted them into their faith and imposed *Jaziya* on those who refused to be converted. Ironically, these practices were replicated by coming invaders of India in letter and spirit. Durant (1935), observed that:

> *"The Mohammedan conquest of India is probably the bloodiest story in history. The Islamic historians and scholars have recorded with great glee and pride the slaughters of Hindus, forced conversions, abduction of Hindu women and children to slave markets and the destruction of temples carried out by the warriors of Islam during 800 AD to 1700 AD. Millions of Hindus were converted to Islam by sword during this period" (page, 459).*

❖ Wholesale massacre of Sindhi population

The large-scale murder of able-bodied was carried out after the occupation of every town. The biggest of all mass murders were committed in Deval, where nearly every person above the age of 17 was killed. In Brahmanabad alone, 30 thousand were slaughtered in three days. In Multan, like Deval, all adult men were killed, children and women were made

slaves including six thousand Buddhist priests and temple *dasis* (nuns). 6000 were massacred in Rawad, and 4, 000 in Iskandalah. In a letter to Muhammad bin Kasim, the Governor of Iraq and the overall administrator of the invasion. Hajjaj bin Yusuf Al- Thakafi outlined the policy:

*"My ruling is given: kill anyone belonging to combatants; arrest their sons and daughters for hostages and imprison them (*Kufi. 1979; page 219)."

❖ Forced conversions

As part of divine obligation for all Muslims to convert humanity into their religion of Islam, Sindhis were forcefully converted. The conversions were accompanied by terror, torture, humiliation and circumcisions. One of the mechanisms for forced conversion was the imposition of *Jaziya*[19]. When Deval was sacked, Muhammad bin Kasim Al-Thakafi ordered for all men to be circumcised as part of the ritual for becoming a Muslim (Titus, 1959). A person who accepted Islam was exempted from slavery and poll-tax. However, the majority of Sindhis refused to convert despite the harsh treatment meted out against them including mass slaughter of adult population.

❖ Large-scale plundering

Sindh was plundered by Arabs on an unprecedented scale. Government treasures, temples and houses of nobility were the main targets for the search of valuables, but also whole settlements were rounded up by the army and house to house searches were conducted to find gold, silver and other precious material from the general population. Hajjaj bin Yusuf

[19] *Jaziya* is a kind of poll-tax imposed on non-Muslims (*Dhimiz*) in Muslim occupied lands according to the Sunna of the Prophet

Al-Thakafi, while reporting the details of the occupation to the Caliph, sent 60 million Dirhams, as his personal share of the collected booty[20] with the head of King Dahir as the bonus. Once the Arab rule was firmly established in Sindh, they began a series of raids in the surrounding regions. Junaid bin Abdul Rehman, during 6 years of his governorship in Sindh, collected a booty of 200 million Dirhams. For many years, Sindh was one of the major revenue earning regions of Islamic Empire. Even in the days of Abbasid Caliphs, Sindh's share in revenue generation was 11, 900, 000 Dirhams per year. With large-scale looting and plundering, after a few years of occupation, Sindhis were reduced to extreme poverty.

❖ Slavery

During initial 5 years of the occupation, it is believed that nearly 50 thousand men and women were sold into slavery. Only from the secret prisons of Hajjaj bin Yusuf 13 thousand Sindhis were recovered. From the main temple of Deval seven hundred nuns (*devdasis*) were captured and sold. Lari (1994), observed that Sindh as the land of infidels became a continuous source of male and female slaves who were sold in the markets of Iraq and Syria. Thousands of able-bodied and skilled workers and females from noble families were sold into slavery, causing a devastating brain drain. The governor of Sindh, Junaid bin Abdul Rehman (724-730 AD) informed the Caliph that he has made 650000 Sindhis slaves and asked for further instructions for their disposal.

❖ Humiliation

Although humiliation was part of the Arab tactics to keep people under control, the way they dealt with Sindhis is

[20] Ten percent of any war booty was supposed to be given to the Caliph as his personal share

unprecedented. Forced circumcision was among the ugliest acts of invaders. After the conquest, Sindhis were ordered not to cover their heads and walk barefoot in front of Arabs. Every family was to "entertain" an Arab for at least three days. The Arab commanders gave the task to their local collaborators to find out the family members of Sindhi nobles. Majority of Sindhi women killed themselves in order to escape rape and slavery. However, many among the women of the elite were captured and taken as slaves and mainly kept by local commanders or tribal chiefs among the Arabs. Among the booty sent by Muhammad bin Kasim to Basra were four hundred "virgin" ladies including two daughters of King Dahir and 30 women from the nobility.

❖ Colonization of land

After the completion of the occupation process, several Arab tribes were brought and settled into various regions of Sindh. For their protection, military cantonments were established near their settlements. During the initial period, many people from the tribes of Quresh, Kalab, Thamim, and Asad colonised many townships in Sindh. They became part of the administrative setup of occupied lands beside providing fighters for the army. Arab settlers were allotted large tracts of lands, and in a very short time, they became the most affluent. This encouraged other Arab tribes and they came to Sindh in waves. This was the beginning of a policy of demographic shift in medieval times. In some of the occupied cities, a section would have been exclusively earmarked as for Arabs only.

❖ Damage to the cultural heritage

Sindh was a garden of beautiful temples of gods and goddesses. There were Buddhist temples of utmost beauty in

many cities. The temples and places of worships were also the centres of intellect and learning. However. the Arab forces composed mainly of Bedouins. unaware of anything civilized or cultured. caused irreparable damage to the beautiful historical and cultural heritage of Sindh. They demolished magnificent temple buildings. burnt hundreds of manuscripts containing religious and historical texts. Hundreds of singers and dancers were either made slaves or forbidden to carry out cultural activities which were not compatible with the teaching of the Prophet and the sayings of Allah in the Holy Qur'an. Artisans and skilled persons were enslaved and transported to Syria and other places in the Middle East. a near mortal blow to historical. cultural and social heritage.

Sindh under the Arab administration

After the dismissal of Muhammad bin Kasim. Umayyad Caliphs appointed a total of 9 governors who ruled for 39 years from 711 to 750 AD. When Umayyad Dynasty was replaced by Abbasid in 750. they appointed 43 governors who ruled till 855 AD. However. it has been recorded that after two decades. the firm grip of the Arab army was considerably loosened in the majority of the regions. The Arab soldiers became so vulnerable with hit and run operations of Sindhis that in 736 AD. a well-fortified town in the name of Mahfuza (protected) was hurriedly built and soldiers and settlers were shifted into that city. In 1740 AD. another city Mansura was established to settle the families of the new arrivals from Arabia.

Sindh became turbulent for a long time where Yemeni and Hijazi Arab tribes were engaged in a protracted civil war. Various Islamic sects were also operating against each other. The sectarian and tribal conflicts lasted for decades and became the hallmark of final years of Umayyad and the duration of Abbasid rule in Sindh. The Kharijites zealots

operating from Sistan and present-day Balochistan also entered Sindh and became part of never-ending bloodshed. The sympathizers of Umayyad clan opposed governors sent by Abbasid rulers and many of the governors were also killed in bloody clashes between Yemenis or Hijazis. With the weakening of Abbasid rule, and after the murder of Caliph Al-Mutawakkil in 861 AD, Sindh became practically independent of Baghdad government. Two Arab tribes of Banu Asad and Banu Habbar practically refused to be subservient to dying Abbasid Caliphate. Banu Asad clan ruled upper Sindh from Multan while lower Sindh was ruled by Banu Habbar from Mansura. However, with the emerging power of Saffarids in eastern Iran, Sindh also came under their control and these two families became subservient to Saffarid rule. The situation became relatively calm during Saffarid rule.

The advent of the Arabs in Sindh ended the glorious period of a proud nation. They overran strong Sindhi defences, inflicted crushing defeats to their armies, occupied the region and destroyed irreparably the fabrics of the society. With the occupation there began a period of mass murders, large-scale slavery, forced conversion to the Arabian faith, stealing and plunder of the wealth. The Arab army which invaded and occupied Sindh was composed of Bedouins, mercenaries and soldiers of fortunes. They were lacking any moral principles. After a victory on the battlefield, usually they sacked and burnt down villages, adults who survived the fighting were murdered and temples of gods and goddesses and the shrines of Hindu and Buddhist faiths were their special targets for destruction. Those were the darkest days for Sindh. Thousands of their brave sons were slaughtered while defending their land. Their women and daughters were raped and sold as slaves and people were forcefully converted. Sindh never regained the same status after the occupation. However, the Arab-Sindhi conflict was a magnificent expression of one of

the fine elements of Sindh national character. which is not to surrender national or personal honour to a superior force. In the wake of the invasion. they have the option of submitting to the authority of the newly emerging and invincible power armed with the divine assistance of their god Allah. However. they opted for not compromising their national honour and thousands of them embraced heroic death while resisting the onslaught. Whatever been the motives for the invasion. the Arab conquest brought irreversible changes in the society and polity of Sindh forever. From an empire. it became a subordinate country. from one of the wealthiest nations Sindhis became one of the poorest. After the decisive defeat at Rawad. the resistance was ineffective and disorganized. It was manifested with spontaneous and isolated acts of resistance: however. soon King Jaisiah was able to coordinate these efforts and expelled the Arab forces from the eastern regions of Sindh which practically remained under his control for many years. The treacherous murder of King Jaisiah and his brother was the end of any organised resistance and completed the sad episode of the conquest of Sindh.

5. The foundations of first Sindhi state

> The difference between a strong man and a weak one is that the former does not give up after a defeat.
> **Woodrow Wilson**

Arab rule in Sindh lasted for more than a hundred years. However, during the later period of Abbasid Caliphate, conflicts between northern and southern Arab tribes and Kharijites[21] intrusions left Sindh without a firm administration. During this period, there was also an influx of a large number of the followers of Ismaili and Qaramites sects. Some of them came for espionage against rivals and posed as Pirs and Sufis, others as preachers while some as simple

[21] After the death of third Caliph, Usman, the Islamic Empire was engulfed with a bloody civil war between supporters of Hashemite tribe or the family of Prophet Muhammad and the supporters of Umayyad tribe. Led by Prophet's son-in-law Ali and the Umayyad chieftain Muwaviya, they fought several battles and thousands of the Arabs from both sides were killed. The Kharijites phenomenon emerged when a group of people defected from Caliph Ali's camp when he initiated a process of negotiation with Muaviya and ultimately divided the Empire in two, ruled separately between them. The Kharijites termed the agreement against the Quranic teaching and the sayings of Prophet Muhammad. The defected fighters raised the slogan of true Islam and declared the rule of both Ali and Muaviya unislamic. They fought several bloody battles against the forces of Caliph Ali before being crushed and scattered in various places in the Arab occupied lands.

refugees fleeing from persecution. The weakening of Abbasids was responsible for several regional powers to emerge in the Iranian plateau. They ruled vast areas independent of Baghdad. Taking advantage of the loosening grip of Abbasids. two Sindhi tribes of Sumro and Samma managed to establish an autonomous state. However. Sindh was frequently attacked by Ghaznavids. Ghuris. Khiljis. Mongols. Timurids. Suris and Mughals. Sindhis took their share of atrocities from these notorious adventurers. The state founded by Sumro and Samma tribes ultimately collapsed with the establishment of Mughal Empire in Delhi during the 16th century.

The advent of Central Asian plunderers

The waves of adventurers in search of wealth descended upon India and many of them used Jihad as their pretext for atrocities on the regional population. In a way. the whole medieval period was the time of plunders. massacre and humiliation for the people of northwestern India.

The emergence of various regional dynasties was the result of the weakening of Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad. Various central Asian tribal groupings sought to control many eastern regions of the Islamic Empire. Some of them made expanded their influence up to in India and the region either from Iranian Plateau or from northern India. Many among these powers also tried to maintain control over Sindh.

After the eclipse of Abbasid Caliphate. Yaqub bin Laith and his brother Amer bin Laith founded the Saffarids dynasty (861–1003). They capture Kabul. Khurasan. Kerman. Fars. Mekran. and Sindh (Bosworth. 1977). Saffarid rule did not last long. A crushing defeat by Samanids in AD 900. confined them to Sistan. and their role reduced to that of vassals of the Samanids and their successors.

Chapter Five

The first among the prominent marauders from Central Asia who raided Sindh many times was Mahmud of Ghazna. He was the son of Sebuktegin, a Turkish slave of Samanid family. The Samanid Dynasty from the beginning of 9th to the beginning of 11th century ruled a large part of northern Iran. Their domain stretched north as far as Chorasmia and the upper Oxus valleys, to Khurasan, Gurgan, and, for a while, it stretched as far as the present-day Iranian border with Iraq. Samanid rulers enslaved a large number of captives, mainly from Turkish tribes. They were placed as pages and servants in their palaces. The brilliants among them served as soldiers and officers in the army and when the Samanid power began to weaken, some of these military officers rebelled. Sebuktegin was one of these slave officers, who established a powerful dynasty centred at Ghazni in Southern Afghanistan. During the reign of his son Mahmud, the Ghaznavids Dynasty was at its peak (Bosworth, 1963). His raids on the Indian plains of Punjab and Sindh enriched him with wealth and slaves. He also recruited a large number of mercenaries to bolster his war efforts. He penetrated the Ganges-Jumna Doab and went in search of Indian riches as far as Gwalior in Central India.

The Ghaznavid inflicted heavy blows on already wounded Sindh. Their raiders under the command of Mahmud and his sons not only killed people en masse but laid waste the land in a way that Sindhis who were trying to recover from the plunders of the Arabs, again plunged into poverty and misery. Mahmud gained the control of northern Sindh by devastating Multan and Mansura in 1010 AD. Mansura and surrounding regions were attacked and plundered by him several times from 1011 to 1030 AD. Ultimately, this Arab garrison city was totally destroyed by his forces. People from surrounding townships were forced to abandon settled life. Some took to the river and lived on boats while others wandered in deserts

in order to save their families. The masses were desperate in search of a saviour[22]. The plundering raids by Ghaznavids continued till 1151 AD when another Turkish chief Ala-ud-Din Husain Ghuri occupied Ghazna and ended the actual rule of Sebuktegin's family. The Ghurid Dynasty continued until 1212 (Pazhvak, 1966).They were no less evil than Ghaznavids. They also began a series of raids in Sindh. Ghuri hordes laid to waste the hinterland and reduced the coastal regions. The Ghurid power was based at Afghan region of Ghur and stretched over an area including the whole of modern Afghanistan, the eastern parts of Iran, and northern India as far as Delhi. The Ghurid was succeeded by the Khwarezmid Dynasty.

The local rulers of Khwarezm threw off their subjection to Qara-Khitai Empire and gained much strength and power. Subsequently, with the collapse of Seljuqs power, replaced them in Iran and Iraq. Under Alau-al-Din Muhammad ibn Takesh, Khwarezmid Empire extended from Persia to Transoxania, and in the east, they defeated the Ghuris in Afghanistan (Rashid al-Din Tabib, 2001). Their empire, established in 1077, eclipsed by 1230 AD by the Mongol onslaught. Forced by Genghis Khan to flee from northern Iran, the last of Khwarezm Shah, Jalal-al-Din made his way into Sindh where he brought terrible miseries and sufferings on Sindhis in order to collect enough booty for reorganizing

[22] In their desperation they invented the mythological story of Jhule Lal in which Ratan Rao Lohana's wife Devki from Nasarpur gave birth to a son, Oderolal, from god Varuna, the same god who created Sindhu River. Odero Lal who became popular as Jhule Lal performed magic and saved thousands of people from marauders. After the creation of Pakistan when thousands of Sindhis migrated to India, Jhuley Lal became the symbol of Sindhi Identity (Thakur, 1979). In the celebration of Cheti Chand, Sindhis sing to praise Jhuley Lal and dance to express their love for him.

his resistance against the Mongols. He occupied and plundered Deval for a short period before returning to Iran.

During the 13th century, Genghis Khan established an empire stretching from northern China through Siberia and Central Asia to the Middle East, Russia. Ukraine, and Eastern Europe. The great majority of cities in Transoxania and Persia that refused to submit were destroyed, with their population put to the sword (Amitai, 2007). During the 13th century, Sindh and adjoining regions witnessed frequent raids by various Mongol hordes who took not only material but also all adult human beings into slavery. The only way to avoid being killed or becoming a slave was to abandon the settlements and during this period people of many areas in this whole region adopted a life of constant mobility.

People were still suffering from the aftershocks of Mongol invasions when another mass murderer and plunderer *Timur Lang* (Tamerlane), appeared on the horizon of Central Asia. By 1370 AD, he became an unchallenged ruler of Transoxania (Nicolle, 1990). In 1398 AD, he invaded India, sacked Delhi, and massacred some 100,000 people. Sindh also suffered by Timur Lang who claimed to be the Sword of Islam. His descendants also continued their frequent incursions into wealthy cities of India.

It is interesting to note that many among these plunderers extensively used the services of Pirs and Sufis[23] in the achievement of their objective of defeating any resistance in Sindh or elsewhere in India. They not only planted their own Pirs but also hired the services of already established Pirs and Sufis. Shaikh Safi al-Din, Pir Usman Shah Marwandi, and Suhrwardi Pirs are believed to be supporting one or

[23] The religio-political phenomenon of Pirs and Sufis will be discussed in detail in chapter fourteen.

many adventurers in their efforts to subdue the people of northwestern India. As these plunderers were mainly Sunni Muslims. the Shiite Fatimid Dynasty in Egypt used their Pirs to counter the influence of Sunni Pirs associated with central Asian adventurers. Many Sufis and Pirs were sent to Sindh for the advancement of Shiite Ismaili interests. Famous among them was Pir Shams Sabzwari.

The emergence of first Sindhi state: the kingdom of Sumros and Sammas

Sindhis suffered from the brutalities and massacre for many centuries but with extraordinary resilience. they rose again and established their independence with the creation of first Sindhi state which was the first meaningful effort to regain their sovereignty lost during the 8th century. From 1026 AD up to 1350 AD. Sindhi tribes of Sumros and Sammas became successful in establishing a Sindhi state free from any firm allegiance to regional powers.

Sumros belonging to Paramara Rajputs and said to have migrated towards the eastern desert region of Sindh in order to escape from Mahmud of Ghazna. From their state of wandering away from cities, in a grand assembly at Thuree. the tribal elders selected Sumar son of Chundur as their chief. Soon he took the control of lower Sindh and was declared as the King of Sindh. King Sumar consolidated his power by intermarriages with other powerful tribes in the region (Masoom. 1855). He was succeeded by his son Bhungar and Bhungar's son Duda further strengthened Sumro rule by annexing Nasrpur. Duda's son Sanghar conquered a part of Cutch and included it in his kingdom. After a period of the inter-family feud. Pithu. a decedent of Duda. took the reign of the Kingdom. King Pithu was succeeded by Khafif whose reign was the peak of Sumro rule. He was succeeded by King Unad. who was succeeded by Dudo II. Sumro family ruled a

great part of Sindh till 1186 AD. With the invasion of Ghuri hordes, Sumro kings became weak and became the vassals of Ghurid. For a period they also acted as governors appointed for the Turkish Slave dynasties of Delhi or served as their vassals in Sindh. The last nominal Sumro ruler of southern Sindh, King Chanesar fled Sindh in 1221 when Jalal al-Din of Khwarezm attacked Deval.

Sumro rule was noted for creating a formal administration after the chaos consequence upon the collapse of Arab rule. The state administration was based on historical and social traditions. Sindhi language, arts, crafts, architecture, music and various traditional sports activities were patronised by the state.

In their last decades, the weakened Sumros faced competitions from the emerging Samma tribe with their ambitions of ruling Sindh. Sammas were pushed to Cutch and Gujarat during the ascendency of Sumros. They were believed to be among the ancient tribes of Sindh and a Samma named Sambus was the king of Western Sindh with its capital Sindhimana at the time of Greek invasion of Sindh in 325 BC. In some of the chronicles, they were mentioned as belonging to Yadava group of Rajput tribes. During 1315, Samma mobilized under the leadership of their chief Banhbina, gained the upper hand on Sumros and set up their own rule in Sindh based in Samui. From 1315-1524 (1336-1494), Samma chiefs tried to regain sovereignty by declaring independence from Delhi. They fought many battles against Tughlaq forces. Delhi Sultans ultimately acknowledged them as sovereign rulers of Sindh.

The chief of Sammas was called Jam and they ruled with the title of King of Sindh. In 1333, Jam Unad established his rule on Sehwan and neighbouring areas and was formally proclaimed as the *Raja-i-Sindh* (King of Sindh). However, the

Sumro claim on the throne of Sindh still remained a challenge for Sammas. The governor of Multan on behalf of Sultan of Delhi came in support of the last Sumro king, attacked Jam Unad forcing him to flee. Jam Unad rallied his forces and gained the strength to defeat the last Sumro king, Dudo II and his allies. He initiated the firm rule of Sammas based in Thatta. To appease powerful and ambitious Sultans of Delhi, Sammas for a while agreed to pay an annual tribute of 4 lakh tankas to Sultan Firuz of Delhi. In this way, with force and diplomacy combined, the firm grip on the power by Sammas became possible and Sindh eventually attained the status of a sovereign state (Mirza, 1902). Most popular of the Samma rulers was Jam Tamachi who ruled until 1392. He is one of the famous romantic figures in the folk literature of Sindh and has been depicted as a hero. He was also a great statesman of that time and strengthened his rule by using the services of local Pir Shaikh Hammad Jamali.

The emerging power of Arguns caused the demise of Sindhi state. Shah Shujah Beg Argun invaded Thatta in December 1520. The Samma rule ended with the death of their famous General, Mubarak Khan in the battle near Thatta. For the next four years, the Sammas offered fierce resistance to Arguns but they never regained their status as the sovereign rulers. Last of the Samma chiefs, Jam Firuz was killed in 1536 in Gujarat where he was living in exile when Mughal Emperor Humayun invaded the region.

Samma rule was one of the brightest periods in the history of Post-Arab Sindh. Under the Jam rulers, Sindh became relatively prosperous, harmonious and peaceful despite the inroads of Central Asian adventurers. Peace was brought in many regions of Sindh when the violent tribes were kept in check with the army. Artistic, cultural and educational activities flourished. Thatta became a famous city in the

region with an extensive trade in the Middle East, Central and South Asia. Agriculture was developed on a large scale and people were described as prosperous and happy. It was the height of Sindhi poetry. The romance of Jam Tamachi and the story of Sasui and Punhu became an integral part of Sindhi folklore. Lakho (2006) observed that several rulers of Samma dynasty were devoted to learning and literature. Jam Sanjar and Jam Nizamuddin patronised poets, artists and literary persons. Jam Nizamuddin was himself a scholar.

After the death of Jam Nanda, the power and dignity of ruling family reduced. Sindh fell into anarchy, the royal court became the place of conspiracy and intrigue. Bad governance at all levels, weaken the security and stability of the region. This gave opportunities to vultures who were lurking in the dark to take their piece of flesh from a dying kingdom.

Arguns, a Mongol tribe ruling Kandahar and Southern Afghanistan were displaced by Babur, the Mughal King of Kabul[24]. Pushed hard by Mughals, the Arguns descended on Sindh under the command of Shah Shujah Beg Argun. Sindhis offered tough resistance. In their first encounter, in Bolan Pass, near Bibi Nani, Sindhi forces under the command of Darya Khan dealt a crushing defeat to Agruns. There was a period of respite for Sindh but the Arguns soon resumed their advances after the death of Jam Nanda (Lakho, 2006). In 1519, Shah Beg occupied whole western Sindh and attacked capital Thatta. Sindhis tried to save their country by showing a great feat of bravery. It is said that Sindhi warriors tied themselves to each other with their turbans in order to exclude any idea of fleeing the battle. After the death of Darya Khan, who was commanding the army, Sindhi soldiers became demoralized and Arguns became victorious. 20 thousand valiant sons of

[24] Babur invaded India from his base in Kabul and founded the Mughal Empire.

Sindh became the prey of Mongol swords. Shah Hasan, the Son of Shah Beg became the ruler of Sindh until his death in 1555. After his death, an alliance of Tarkhan family members who were related to Shah Hasan, under the leadership of Sultan Mahmud became the rulers of Sindh (Mirza, 1902). Argun and Tarkhan rule ended when Mughal Emperor Akber established his rule over Sindh and it became a province of Mughal Empire for more than a century.

It is said that during the last decades of the kingdom of Sindh, the enemies of Samma family successfully exploited the influence of various Pirs and Sufis. When Samma kings came heavy with these collaborator Pirs and Sufis, they began a campaign of slander and disinformation against them, openly predicting the arrival of the storm from the north and the capitulation of Sindh. The skilled skilful manipulation of a large segment of the populace reduced Sindhis resistance, supplementing the already overwhelming military might of these Mongol tribes.

One of the events, although, appeared to be of minor importance at that time, but became very important later was the advent of the Europeans in Sindh. Portuguese traders under the protection of their imperial navy forced Summa rulers to allow them to establish a factory at Lari Bandar. The advent of Portuguese in the Indian Ocean and surrounding region was the precursor of the inroads of Dutch, French and the English in the region. All India was ultimately occupied by the British and the last of the territories which came under their rule was Sindh. In 1635, the English East India Company established their first factory in Thatta. The Dutch East India Company also tried for 8 years to establish a trade link in Sindh but because of the rivalry of Portuguese and the English they could not establish a foothold and abandoned their efforts in 1662 closing their factory in Lari Bandar.

Chapter Five

The history of medieval Sindh is a mix of Sindhi resurgence and the inroads of plunderers from the west and central Asia. For many centuries, marauding hordes played havoc to the region on a large scale and Sindhis bore the brunt of their atrocities. The most important development of that period in a Sindhi context is the establishment of the first sovereign state after the collapse of Sindhi Empire. The rise to power of Sumros and Sammas was the beginning of a period when Sindhis became able to claim independence from the invaders of northern India or powerful rulers based in Delhi. Establishment of a Sindhi state and assertion of sovereignty of Sumro and Samma kingdom was the manifestation of Sindhi resilience. The period of first Sindhi state is considered to be one of the glorious periods for Sindh. Sindh not only attained independence but it was also a time of increased prosperity. Centuries of Sumro and Samma rule was characterised by the development of Sindhi language, arts and cultural heritage.

6. The rise and fall of second Sindhi state

> Strangers coming from afar, more civilized, more knowing in science and arts, more energetic of spirit, more strong of body, more warlike, more enterprising than the people among whom they settle, must necessarily extend that power until checked by natural barriers or by a counter civilization. **Major General Napier**

The first Sindhi state after the Arab invasion lasted for nearly 300 hundred years and crumbled under the pressure of rising Mughal power. The Mughals made Sindh a part of their empire and ruled it through appointed governors. Sindhi destiny changed once again with the decay of the Mughal Empire. A second state emerged when the Kalhodas overthrew the Mughal domination. Kalhodas were replaced in a military coup by Talpurs. The whole period from the beginning of the state to its final collapse was turbulent and tortuous. The second Sindhi state was finally overrun by the British in 1843.

Kalhoda Dynasty

The Kalhodas were believed have migrated from Mekran in Balochistan during Samma rule. They were the followers of an Indian religious leader Syed Muhammad of Jaunpur who established a renegade Islamic sect during the 16th century.

In India, his followers were called as Mahdavi. The Kalhodas were popularly known as *Mian* because of their religious background[25]. Their religious practices involved healing illnesses and treating the cases of possessions by rituals. They created huge wealth and property in Western Sindh. They ultimately settled in Shikarpur. Although, as Mians, they were expected to be without ambition and politically harmless; they quarrelled with the Mughal representatives in Multan. But taking into account their wealth and popularity among the masses, a Mughal Governor of Multan made Mian Yar Muhammad Kalhoda, as the ruler of Sibi (Mirza, 1902). After his death in 1718, his son, Nur Muhammad Kalhoda was also given the charge of Sehwan and Bhakkar. Later, Shikarpur was also included. After defeating Mir Abdullah, the Khan of the Baloch, in 1731, Nur Muhammad became very powerful and his prestige increased. A weakened Mughal Empire was forced to acknowledge the suzerainty of Sindh under Kalhodas in 1737. This was the birth of Second Sindhi state.

While Kalhodas were consolidating the state, the whole region was in the grip of turmoil. Many events were unfolding with far-reaching consequences. The Mughal Empire was collapsing in the east while in the west once the powerful Safavid Empire was ruined by the unexpected invasion of Gilzai Afghan tribes. These tribes ruled a large part of Persia for nearly 25 years. Nadir Shah, a brigand from Afshar tribe in northern Iran, rallied Persians and defeated the Afghan chief Ashraf in 1729, seized power by deposing the last Emperor Shah Tahmasp II in 1736.

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[25] Mias were those religious people who were supposed to have no ambitions (Dervish) or not interested in mundane or political affairs unlike other Muslim religious leaders who were openly involved in the politics of the day. They were a kind of primitive ascetic group but not sophisticated and organised like Sufis and Pirs.

Chapter Six

Nadir Shah bolstered his much-depleted treasury by raiding India. In 1739. he plundered Delhi. murdered nearly 50 thousand people and forced the Mughal Emperor Muhammad Shah to sign a treaty in which he ceded his territories west of Indus to Persia. Although Sindh and Balochistan were not under the Mughal control at that time. exploiting his agreement with the Mughals, Nadir Shah began to assert his suzerainty over these two independent states. Mian Nur Muhammad Kalhoda refused to pay tribute to Nadir Shah. Nadir Shah heading a huge army descended on Sindh. Mian Nur Muhammad Kalhoda fled eastward. pursued by the Persian army up to the gates of Umarkot. After prolonged negotiations and bargaining. Nadir Shah agreed to leave Sindh. But Sindh had to pay tribute and was forced to cede Sibi and Shikarpur. The Persian plunderer also took two of his sons as hostages.

Soon after his return to Iran. Nadir Shah was murdered. but the troubles for Sindhi state did not lessen. Ahmad Khan Abdali. the commanders in Nadir Shah's royal guard. became the chief of Afghan tribes and established the Kingdom of Afghanistan in 1747 AD. He became known in history as Ahmad Shah Durrani. In search of money to pay his mercenary army. he began a series of raids in India. He demanded tribute from Kalhodas in exchange for a promise of not attacking Sindh. Sindhis rejected the demand and faced his invasion in 1755. Sindhi forces were no match for bloodthirsty Afghans. The Sindhi ruler was forced to flee to India where he died in Jaisalmer. His son became the new ruler of Sindh and agreed to pay tribute and the matter was settled. However. things were not going smoothly in Sindhi state. The rulers in order to collect tribute for the Afghan ruler made extortionist demands from businessmen mainly belonging to Hindu community. When faced with resistance. Mian Ghulam Shah killed up to six thousand in Cutch.

Kalhodas were said to be religious fanatics and introduced many fundamentalist values. Mian Ghulam Shah issued a decree (*firman)* which included ridiculous restrictions on the social behaviours of Sindhi people.

> *"The functionaries of the state should forbid the practice of mourning and Tazias during Muharram*[26]*. Women should be stopped from visiting parks and graveyards. People should be prevented from mourning for their dead. Animals should not be painted. Hindus should be forbidden from having 'Choti'*[27] *and wearing 'dhoti'*[28]*, or sitting in their shops with bare knees. Muslim should be told not to keep moustache---and not to grow their beard long. The beard should not exceed the size of a fist. Hindus should not be allowed to play Holi or sing with musical instruments like sarod, shehnai, drum or bugle. Hindus should also be stopped from bowing to the idols or to the river".*

Despite weaknesses in their personal and religious life, Kalhodas once again united Sindhis. The emergence of an independent state was a welcome development after the fall of first Sindhi state established by Sumros and Sammas. It was the second time after the collapse of their empire when Sindhis were living in a sovereign state. After tactfully dealing with Nadir Shah and diffusing the tension with the Baloch state of Kalat[29], the Kalhodas concentrated in

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26 These are religious practices of Shia sect of Islam in the memory of family members of Prophet Muhammad who were killed by rulers belonging to rival Umayyad tribe during 8th century in Iraq.

27 This is a hair style

28 The traditional Sindhi dress

29 With the intervention of Nadir Shah, a large tract of land comprising modern town of Jacobabad and surrounding areas in Kachchi was ceded to the Baloch state, as part of an agreement to solve the crisis

the development of various economic sectors in the state. Agriculture was given priority. Canals were built which increased agricultural and fish production.[30] Enhanced cotton production was recorded. Thatta became an industrial city with famous textile products. International commerce from Thatta increased many folds during Kalhoda rule. Several madrassas were established and cultural activities were at their peak throughout Sindh. Besides Thatta. Shikarpur became the hub of inland business activities for the traders in India and Central Asia. generating huge revenue for the kingdom. A new city of Hyderabad was developed on the ruins of ancient city of Nirun which soon became a centre of cultural and economic activities. At the time of British occupation. Hyderabad was the capital of Sindh.

The rebellion of a local Pir was a major socio-political event of Kalhoda period. The Pir of Jhok. Shah Inayat. tried to mobilize people first in support of Kalhodas against the Mughals but after gaining a following of a large number of devotees (*Mureeds*). he openly challenged the authority of both Kalhodas and the Mughals. Many believed that he was trying to establish a commune of his followers. A Mughal contingent surrounded the stronghold of Shah Inayat for two months but was unable to overrun the defences. However. Shah Inayat was tricked into abandoning his fort by a promise on Holy Qur'an of a fair deal. He was imprisoned. tried and executed on 7. January 1718. Another feature of Kalhoda period was

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created after the killing of the Khan of the Baloch in 1731 by Sindhi forces. The Kalhodas and Ahmedzai ruling families later entered into matrimonial relations. Because of these relations. Khan of the Baloch sent volunteers from Baloch tribes to help Kalhodas in their struggle against Talpurs on many occasions. In recognition of the services rendered by him. the Khan of the Baloch was authorised by Kalhodas to collect the revenue income of the coastal town of Karachi for several years until it was reclaimed by Talpurs rulers.

30 The fish became so abundance that it was as cattle food.

the emergence of Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit Shah as the secular and nationalist poet and literary icon. For Sindhis, he became the Shakespeare of Sindh. The poetry of Shah Latif Bhittai became an integral part of the narrative of Sindhi nationalists in the coming decades.

The Kalhodas ruled for 80 years. They used the zeal of their religious following and Talpur Baloch soldiers to maintain their grip on power. As Kalhoda rule was heavily dependent on the army, the commanders became more powerful and began to interfere in the ruling family. Ultimately they became kingmakers. Mian Sarfaraz who succeeded his father, Mian Ghulam Shah, in order to curb the growing influence of Talpur commanders, treacherously killed two prominent chiefs, Mir Bahram and Mir Sobdar in 1774. The army reacted and arrested Mian Sarfaraz and raised Mian Ghulam Nabi as the ruler of Sindh. In 1776, Talpurs killed Mian Ghulam Nabi, Mian Sarfaraz and three other Kalhoda princes and the only surviving son of Mian Ghulam Shah, Mian Abdul Nabi was proclaimed as the new ruler of Sindh.

Mian Abdul Nabi was the ruler of Sindhi state but Mir Bijjar Talpur was the de facto ruler. To establish his authority, Mian Abdul Nabi discretely sought help from Timur Shah, the Abdali ruler of Afghanistan. The Afghans sent an expeditionary force in support of Mian Abdul Nabi which was defeated by a Talpur force led by Mir Bijjar in 1781. Shikarpur which was earlier ceded to Afghan suzerainty was occupied and once again annexed with Sindh. The Afghan King ahead of a large army arrived at Sindh to punish Talpurs and revenge the defeat of his army. Unable to engage the Afghans militarily, Mir Bijjar submitted to the Afghan king and accepted Mian Abdul Nabi as ruler of Sindh in letter and spirit.

Mian Abdul Nabi Kalhoda had the blessing of the Afghan government. but still felt threatened by the power of Mir Bijjar Talpur and arranged for his murder. After the killing of Mir Bijjar. afraid to face the consequences and the rage of Talpurs, he fled to India. The Talpur chiefs assumed full control of the state machinery. Mian Sadiq Ali Fakir Kalhoda was announced to be the nominal ruler of Sindh but Mir Abdullah Talpur. the son of slain Mir Bijjar. became the de facto. This was not acceptable to Mian Abdul Nabi. He tried to regain his throne by soliciting the support of Rajputs in Rajasthan and the Baloch from Kalat, and Afghan commander of Bahawalpur region. Sardar Madad Khan. The Talpurs defeated the Rajput and Baloch supporters of Mian Abdul Nabi but avoided direct confrontation with Afghan forces. instead. they kept their forces intact by moving into the interior of Sindh. Mian Abdul Nabi was reinstated as the ruler of Sindh with the help of Afghan troops headed by Sardar Madad Khan. While Talpur forces were scattered. unopposed. Sardar Madad Khan and his army brought a reign of terror on whole Sindh. plundered every nook and corner of the region. However. after collecting a large war chest. they left Sindh leaving Mian Abdul Nabi alone to face the might of Talpurs. Having no choice. Mian Abdul Nabi made a truce with Talpurs and both sides swore of friendship and forgiveness on Qur'an. But when Talpur chiefs. Mir Abdullah Talpur and Mir Fateh Khan Talpur went to his court unarmed and without guards. they were promptly murdered. This was the end of Kalhoda regime as Talpurs openly declared their rule and became known as the Mir rulers of Sindh[51].

The Mir Dynasty

The rule of Talpurs on Sindh is popularly known as the government of Mirs. Talpurs who originally belonged to Mari

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[51] Mir among the Baloch and other central Asian nations was an exalted title equalling the title of Knight in medieval Europe.

tribe of Balochistan became the recognised rulers of Sindh by 1783 and ruled until 1843. The family members of murdered Mir Bijjar ruled jointly, various regions were administered by different members of the family while central decisions were left with the Mirs of Hyderabad.

The central government of Sindh based at Hyderabad was run jointly by four brothers, Mir Fateh Ali Talpur as the head. There rule was popularly known as the government of "Chauyari", the four friends. Mirpur Khas and Khairpur were ruled by other members of Talpur family namely Mir Thara Khan and Mir Sohrab Khan respectively. On the local administrative level, Sindh was divided into seven districts, three were under Mir Fateh Ali Khan and his brothers, two were under Mir Sohrab Khan, one under Mir Thara Khan of Mirpur and one was under Mir Mahmood Khan.

After the death of Mir Fateh Ali Talpur in 1801, an internal conflict arose on the nomination of Mir Ghulam Ali Talpur as ruler of Sindh. Mir Thara Khan, the ruler of Khairpur rose in rebellion but was defeated in a bloody clash in 1803. After the death of Mir Ghulam Ali in 1811 AD, Mir Karam Ali Talpur assumed the rulership of Sindh. After his death in 1828 AD, Mir Murad Ali Khan took over and ruled until his death in 1833. The joint rule of Mirs continued with Mir Noor Muhammad Talpur as the ruler and assisted by Mir Naseer Khan Talpur, Mir Sobdar Khan and Mir Muhammad Khan. After the death of Mir Noor Muhammad his son Mir Naseer Khan Talpur became the ruler in the last years of the state. With the presence of a huge contingent of the British army, the actual power rested with the British East India Company who was dictating terms.

The second Sindhi state and the rule of Talpurs came to an end on 17 February 1843, when Sindhis and the British forces met

at Mianni. Sindhi fighters showed great valour and bravery but were crushed. as valour alone has never determined the outcome of any battle. The primitive weaponry of Sindhis was no match with the British forces. After the crushing defeat at Mianni, on 18 February, Mir Naseer Khan surrendered to General Charles Napier and Hyderabad fell. It was the tragic end of the second Sindhi state and the beginning of a period of perpetual slavery for Sindhis. After the fall of Hyderabad. Mir Sher Muhammad Talpur tried to continue resisting the British but failed.

The advent of the British East India Company

With the beginning of the industrial revolution in Europe, a period of prosperity began with a rising number of consumers demanding exotic materials from anywhere in the world. The discovery of Americas was still in the infancy and Asia and the Far East were the main targets of Dutch. French. Portuguese and English companies for taking European industrial goods to wealthy Asian nations and returning with exotic spices, tea. opium. slaves and other valuable materials which were in high demands in European markets. The merchant fleets of these rich companies were protected by the navies of their states which were increasingly establishing bases in the region. Many areas of South Asia became battlegrounds for these competing traders as they were not only engaged in intrigues and conspiracies in the Moghul court for trade concession but also fought against each other on land and sea.

The phenomenon of British occupation of India is fascinating on many accounts. In South Asia and the Persian Gulf. after a prolonged and bloody conflict. the English finally became able to defeat the French. Dutch and Portuguese whose influence remained limited to some pockets of lands on Indian coasts. After gaining a monopoly in the Indian trade. The East India

Company became so powerful that it was able to manipulate local rulers and ultimately the English became the master of a huge landmass stretching from Burma (Myanmar) to Basra in Iraq for nearly 300 hundred years. For a while, the British domination in south Asia and the Middle East remained unopposed. However, it was threatened by an ambitious Czarist Russia which was expanding southward by occupying several central Asian Khanates. To stop Russian advances towards India, the British formulated multifaceted strategies. One of them was making a buffer zone comprising neutral states between Russia and India, a strategy given the name of "the forward policy". The other was to instigate the Muslim population of Central Asia against Russia. To make success these plans, a great game of espionage and subversion was initiated in Central Asia which is popularly known as "the Great Game".

In the beginning, the East India Company was not interested in Sindh and it remained primarily under the trade monopoly of Portuguese. During 1602, East India Company got permission from the Mughal Emperor Jehangir to establish a factory in Surat (Gujarat). In order to look for new areas for the supply of raw material for the factory, Sindh was selected where indigo and coarse calicoes were manufactured in large quantities and at reasonable prices (Khera, 1941). A *Farman* (a royal decree) was obtained from the Mughal court for trade in Sindh. Lari Bundar was selected for shipping which was a preserve of the Portuguese regarding foreign trade activities in Sindh. An understanding was made with the Portuguese admitting the British vessels to the Portuguese harbours (Khera, 1941). However, after some years, the company closed its commercial activities in Sindh for lack of cost-effectiveness.

The political situation in Sindh was changing at the period. With the weakening of Mughal rule in India during Emperor Aurangzeb. Kalhoda rulers declared the independence of Sindh. During the rule of Ghulam Shah Kalhoda. in 1758, the company got permission to establish a factory in Thatta. Khera (1941) observed that Ghulam Shah showed a very friendly disposition towards the company by signing a document in 1761 excluding all Europeans except the English from trading with Sindh. However. the commercial and political relationship of the company in Sindh came to a standstill until the beginning of 18th century because of the civil war between Kalhoda and Talpurs for the throne of Sindh. The East India Company again tried to establish trading links with Sindh and got the permission for a factory but according to Lambrick (1952), it was withdrawn in 1775 the new ruler. Sarfraz Khan Kalhoda.

The forward policy and the great game

The occupation of Sindh by the British is believed to be one of the casualties of the "Great Game" played by the British and Russian empires in the region during the 19th century[32]. However. protecting trade routes or establishing unchallenged opium trade to China through Indus River and land routes were also among the factors for the occupation of Sindh by the East India Company.

During the 18th century. the East India Company was in all practical purposes ruling India: although. Moghul princes were nominally still the emperors of India. These decadent heirs of great Moghuls were content with their rule within walls of Red Fort in Delhi. It was the century which witnessed great anxiety by the British Empire on the vulnerability of

[32] The casualities included the occupation of Balochistan and Afghanistan. and the division of Persia into British and Russian areas of influence.

its possessions in India and the Middle East from the French and Russian Empires. Hunttenback (1962) observed that consequently, during the first half of the century, virtually all British diplomatic, commercial, and military mechanizations in the countries to the west and northwest of India were directed toward the repulse of anticipated threats to its precious colonial possessions.

In June 1807, the French Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte concluded the alliance of Tilsit with Czar Alexander 1 of Russia. It is believed that the details of a combined invasion of India by land route were also agreed between them. To provide against this danger, the British strategy was to create two layers of friendly states as lines of defence for India. According to Khera (1941). the inner layer was to comprised of Punjab and Sindh while Afghanistan and Persia were to form the outer layer.

In the British defensive plan against the perceived Russian or French offensives, Sindh became very important as it geographically lay along the routes of any anticipated invasion from the west or from the north. To make Sindh part of their defensive layers for the protection of India, the British authorities adopted a three-pronged strategy:

1. To establish commercial and strategic relations with Sindh
2. To frighten Sindhi rulers against an invasion of their country by Afghanistan
3. To frighten Talpur rulers with the threat of Kalhoda pretender Abdul Nabi and to use Maharajah Ranjith Singh of Punjab to force the vulnerable Sindhi rulers into submission.

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Even before the formation of the alliance between Russia and France, the British were trying to establish diplomatic relations with Sindh. The first political contact was made with the arrival of a mission headed by Nathan Crow in 1799 in the court of Mir Fateh Ali Talpur in Hyderabad. However, with the kind of Sindhi relationship with Afghanistan, it was not possible to achieve a durable and meaningful understanding between them. Mr Crow was asked to leave Sindh on October 28, 1800, and the communication between parties was suspended. There was a pause of many years before new developments in Europe prompted the British to re-engage Sindhi rulers. With the signing of the Treaty of Tilsit in 1807, London ordered the Governor-General of India to take immediate measures to prevent a hostile army from crossing the Indus and to cultivate the favourable opinion and cooperation not only of all states and countries in the region but also of the Afghan Government and the Tartar tribes east of Caspian Sea.

Another event which greatly alarmed the British was the news of the arrival of a Persian emissary in the court of Mir Fateh Ali Talpur in May 1808. The emissary was believed to have offered joint help from Persian and French governments to Sindh against any threat of aggression either from Afghans or from the British. To counter this initiative, a British delegation headed by David Seton from the Muscat residency was ordered to visit Sindh and tasked to make possible a treaty of friendship. This time, the rulers of Sindh bowed to British pressure. A treaty was signed on 24th July 1808 and in its article one it was proclaimed that a firm alliance shall exist between the two states, and the friends of one will be the friends of the other, and the enemies of one will be the enemies of the other, and this friendship shall remain forever. It was also stipulated that an agent on the part of the Honourable Company, for the increase of friendship

and good-will, shall reside at the court of the Mir of Sindh. Permission for the establishment of a factory in the town of Thatta was also agreed between the two parties in the agreement (Aitchison, 1865, vo; VII: page 34).

The pledge of "eternal friendship", however, was not carried out as the situation in Afghanistan changed. The instalment of a hostile government in Afghanistan under Dost Muhammad Barakzai was assumed as an immediate threat to British interests in the region. A decision was to deal with the situation with force without any delay. Occupation of Sindh became part of the grand design of invading Afghanistan. The treaty reached between the ruler of Sindh and Seton was abrogated and the British initiated a war of nerve with their "eternal friends". The strategy was asking Shah Shujah, the exiled former ruler of Afghanistan to renew the claim of Afghan sovereignty over Sindh. It was also to encourage Kalhoda claimant to the throne of Sindh. The sudden appearance of Abdul Nabi Kalhoda on the scene was enough to unnerve the vulnerable Talpur rulers. Hunttenback (1962), observed that the Sindhi ruler, Ghulam Ali Talpur decided to keep at bay the British from Sindh but was also aware of the danger of aggression from them. In this background, soon, another British delegation was welcomed by him which was headed by Nicholas Hankey Smith. Mir Ghulam Ali Talpur signed an agreement with Mr Smith on August 22, 1809, again with professions of eternal friendship, allowing East India Company to establish a factory in Sindh and to reject any overture from "the tribe" of French in Sindh (Aitchison, 1865, vo; VII: page 35):

> *"Article 1: there shall be eternal friendship between the British Government and that of Sindh, namely Meer Ghulam Ali, Meer Kuram Ali, and Meer Murad Ali.*

Article 2: Enmity shall never appear between the two states

Article 3: the mutual despatch of the vakeels (representatives) of both governments, namely the British Government and Sindhian Government, shall always continue.

Article 4: The government of Sindh will not allow the establishment of the tribe of the French in Sindh."

This treaty was renewed on November 9, 1820. Article 3 of the new agreement stated that:

"The Ameers of Sindh engage not to permit any European or American to settle in their domain (Aitchison, 1865: Vol. VII, page36)."

Included in the agreement were the clauses of mutual exchange of representatives (*vakeels*) and suppression of predatory activities of Sindhi tribes in Cutch[33]. However, with the fast developing situation in Central Asia, the agreements signed with Sindh became irrelevant. The unabated Russian

[33] The inclusion of the article restraining the activities of Sindhis into Cutch was important in a British perspective in containing the Talpur rulers who were expanding their domain by regaining sovereignty over Karachi from Balochistan and Shikarpur from Afghanistan. They were also eyeing to include the areas of Cutch under their sovereignty. Their ambition on Cutch prompted a conflict with East India Company. As Cutch was declared a dependency of the British, the East India Company found an excuse to put the Sindhi rulers under pressure accusing them of sending Khosa tribal robbers and others into Cutch or keeping a blind eye on the activities of these predatory tribes. There occurred an armed conflict between the Sindhi forces and the forces of the company led by Lieutenant Colonel Barclay in 1820 in which the British forces killed many Sindhis (Hunttenback, 1962).

advances towards the south by annexing several central Asian Khanates and an unfriendly government in Afghanistan forced the British to implement their plan of invading Afghanistan in order to make it the part of the defensive layer for the protection of India. In the background of the struggle between two superpowers for gaining influence in Central Asia, the ultimate British decision regarding Sindh sealed the fate of the country.

Protecting the opium trade

It appeared that the Afghan situation or the Russian threat was not only reasons for the occupation of Sindh but it was also to utilize the commercial capabilities of Sindh and Indus River. During the first half of 19th century, East India Company was amassing a huge profit from the opium trade with China. Operated mainly from Bengal, this was indeed the major source of revenues for the Company and opium amounts to 50 percent of British imports into China. Khera, (1941) observed that losing the monopoly of opium trade from Bengal in the east, Sindh with its port of Karachi remained the only outlet for trade especially opium produced from Rajputana in western India. River Indus could have also been the route for opium produced in north-western regions of India. Sindhi rulers not being in the position to resist did not obstruct the Company's trade of opium through Sindh and the Company got huge profits from the opium trade through Sindh during the 1830s. Although, 1832 and 1834 treaties with Sindh and the pliant attitude of Sindhi rulers gave the company unrestricted access as the sole client of Sindhi government in its commercial activities, nevertheless, the company in its ambitions of grabbing more profits wanted to control the port city of Karachi, the whole trade route leading to China and even the local opium markets in Sindh (Khera, 1941). Despite the insulting behaviour of British envoys and provocative and belligerent actions on the part of the Calcutta administration,

Sindhi rulers did not provide an excuse for a British attack on Sindh. Perhaps, the British found it hard to convince themselves of the occupation of a land, where the rulers were extending concession after concessions and where the British envoys were the de facto controller of Sindh without a formal occupation. The famous quote of the conqueror of Sindh, General Charles Napier is very interesting:

> *"We have no right to seize Sindh, yet we shall do so, and a very advantageous, useful, humane piece of rascality it will be (Napier, 1857: page 94)."*

The survey

As preliminary to the occupation of Sindh, the British planned to conduct a comprehensive survey of Indus River. Besides ascertaining its use for military purposes, the other objective was establishing commercial activities. For conducting the survey, a team was formed under the command of Lieutenant Alexander Burnes. To get permission from Sindhi ruler, it was presented to them that the team is to carry gifts from the British Monarch for Maharajah Ranjith Singh (the ruler of Punjab and an ally of the British) via River Indus. Alarmed by the British insistence on taking the gift via the river, Government of Sindh initially refused to grant the permission. Instead, they granted the permission for the team to use the land routes. However, under tremendous pressure, the Talpur rulers were forced to allow this survey team to voyage through the river. They agreed after Henry Pottinger, the British Agent in Cutch threatened to use force against Sindh in order to stop incursions of Khosa tribes in the British protectorate for plunder. Sindhi rulers were also forced to grant the permission in the background of increased sabre rattling of Ranjith Singh's forces for an invasion of Sindh. The British had been able to gauge the river depth and map the countryside during this famous trip of Alexander Burnes. For Sindhis it was the

beginning of an end as one elderly Sindhi reportedly cried after seeing Mr Burnes flotilla navigating through the waters of Sindh:

> *"The evil is done, now Feringhee (a term used for English or Europeans in India) have our country, and the fate of Sindh has been sealed".*

Creating divisions among the Mirs

The unity of the ruling family was another target of British officials. Talpurs after defeating Kalhodas ruled Sindh by dividing it into provinces administered by various members of their family. These ruling families later became known as Hyderabad family and Khairpur family. Hyderabad was the centre of Talpur rule over Sindh. It was governed by a committee consisted of four brothers. To weaken the already crumbling dynasty, in a very mischievous but calculated move, the British authorities tried to create divisions between two ruling families by trying to negotiate with them as two sovereign states. Talpur resisted the British move by emphasising that Sindh is a unitary state and Khairpur is just an administrative entity. However, under tremendous pressure, in 1832, the British authorities became able to sign two separate treaties with Khairpur and Hyderabad achieving navigational rights for the British goods and merchandise through Indus River. The most important was the article 3 of the Treaty of Hyderabad where Sindh agreed to allow the use of River Indus and roads with three conditions:

1. That no person will bring any description of military stores by the river or roads
2. That no armed vessel or boats shall come by the river
3. That no English merchant shall settle in Sindh.

With the signing of the treaty. the lower part of the Indus River and the whole of the Sutlej were thrown open to commercial navigation for the East India Company. A British agent to watch over the trade of these two rivers was stationed at Mithankote.

In October 1835. after the death of Mir Murad Ali Talpur. Mir Noor Muhammad Talpur became the ruler of Sindh. He refused to allow the creation of a British residency in Sindh. This was not acceptable with the British and they began to exert pressure from different quarters to force Sindhi government to follow the articles of the agreement. Ranjith Singh. the ruler of Punjab. suddenly began claiming Shikarpur city. the exiled former king of Afghanistan who was living in Punjab under British protection. claimed sovereignty over Sindh and Kalhoda contender of power Mian Abdul Nabi Kalhoda reappeared with his own claim on the throne of Sindh. These measures were enough for forcing Sindhis into submission.

Ranjith Singh as a tool

As part of scaremongering strategy. the claim of Ranjith Singh on Shikarpur was effectively used. Shikarpur as the hub of business activities was called the pearl of Sindh at that period and a source of major revenue generation for the state. In 1835. Ranjith Singh was asked by the Company to advance towards the Baloch tribes of Dera Ghazi Khan which were under the protection of Sindh. While seeking to capture Shikarpur. in 1836. forces of Ranjith Singh captured Rojhan and came close to Shikarpur. In desperation and finding no alternative. in November 1836. Mir Noor Muhammad Talpur agreed on a provisional treaty with Henry Pottinger allowing for the residency of a British agent in Shikarpur. In return. the British promised to ask Ranjith Sindh to withdraw from Sindhi

territories. On April 1838, a final treaty was signed whereby a British resident was also to be stationed at Hyderabad.

The Army of Indus

Meanwhile, events were rapidly developing in Afghanistan which was considered by the British as alarming and dangerous to the security of its Indian possessions. The Afghan Ruler Dost Muhammad Barakzai was secretly engaged with Russians. To counter this, the British authorities finally decided to intervene directly in Afghanistan by a grand plan of regime change. They have a readymade choice for the replacement of Dost Muhammad Barakzai in the person of Shah Shujah-ul-Mulk who was earlier deposed by him.

Preparations were initiated to raise an invading army to install Shah Shujah on the throne of Afghanistan. The army became famous as "the Army of Indus". It was decided that the Army of Indus should attack Kabul through Khyber Pass via Punjab and through Bolan Pass via Sindh and Balochistan. The consent of the ruler of Punjab was acquired for using his territory. The plan of invading Afghanistan was agreed between the Company, Ranjith Sindh and Shah Shujah in a tripartite agreement. As the company's finances could not bear the expense of a war Afghanistan, it was decided the expenses would be recovered mainly from Sindh. An excuse was readily available for exacting a contribution. The exiled former king of Afghanistan was asked to claim tribute as Sindh was once a dependency of Afghanistan. However, in the tripartite agreement signed in June 1838, it was stipulated that after receiving the money to be determined by the British, Shah Shujah would relinquish all claims on Sindh or any of its territory. Sindhi rulers were not taken into confidence with all these developments neither they were aware of any tripartite agreement.

To achieve the objective of collecting money from Sindh for the expenses of the Army of Indus, it was conveyed to rulers of Sindh that if they failed to pay the stipulated money, the British government would not stop Shah Shujah from the assertion of those claims on Sindh mentioned above. According to Napier (1845), instructions to Colonel Pottinger, the British resident at the court of Mirs in Hyderabad, were explicit.

> *"Tell the Ameers, a crisis menacing British India has arrived. The Western Powers have combined to work evil. The Governor-General has projected a counter combination. He calls on his friends for aid. The King (meaning the exiled Shah Shujah) has ancient claims on Sindh, but he will accept money in discharge of them and makes the Governor General arbitrator of the amount. Great is the benefit thus conferred on the Ameers. They will gain undisturbed possession of their territory and immunity from further claims. Warm is the Governor General's friendship for the Ameers and in return, he demands ostensible proof of their attachment. The Ameers must, therefore, agree to pay him (Shah Shujah) the money or abide the consequences, one of which will be, to take military possession of their town and district of Shikarpoor (page, 63)."*

Sindhi rulers were also asked to grant the permission for free movement of the Army of Indus which was to attack Kandahar through Bolan Pass. Initially, they tried to resist the passage of British troops through their territory and claim of money for the expenses of the army. They made frantic efforts to establish some kind of relationship with the Persians to counter the British. However, the Persians themselves soon succumbed to the British pressure and became subservient

to the British authorities in India. Meanwhile, the British occupied Karachi without any resistance from Sindhi forces. For face-saving, an agreement was concluded on February 7, 1839. It was signed by Rear Admiral Maitland and Brigadier Valiant on behalf of the British and two representatives namely Hassel Butcha and Khair Muhammad on behalf of Sindh Government. Karachi was handed over to the British with the declaration that the full possession of the fort and town of Karachi shall be given up to the British forces (Aitchison, 1865).

In March 1839, Sindhi rulers succumbed to the mounting pressure and agreed to pay a sum of twenty lakhs of rupees for the expenses of the Army of Indus. They also signed an agreement practically surrendering the sovereignty of Sindh to the British. The 14 articles treaty provided for a British force to be stationed in Sindh, and a payment of three lakhs rupee for expenses of this contingent. It was also stipulated that Sindhi rulers could not enter into negotiation with any foreign power without prior knowledge and approval of the British government. Rulers of Sindh would supply when required, 3,000 men to work in subordinate cooperation with the British for purposes of defence. Sindhi currency (Bakroo or timooree) was declared to be of equal value to the company Rupee. British ships voyaging through River Indus were exempted from any tax. A separate treaty was signed with the Mir of Khairpur on similar patterns. But these agreements, monetary support and other concessions extended by Sindhi rulers did not deter the British from the occupation of Sindh.

The beginning of invasion process

By 1842, with the British decision to formally occupy Sindh, the architects of the occupation process began to find excuses in order to invade a country to which they were bound with treaty obligations of eternal friendship.

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Mir Noor Muhammad Talpur died in December 1841 and his son Mir Naseer Khan Talpur became the ruler of Hyderabad. The excuse was found against Mir Naseer Khan to charge him of preparation for war against the British. The charges against the ruler of Sindh were framed which included violating the treaty agreements between the two governments and various other actions against the British. They accused him of asking the chief of Bugti tribe (Mir Beeberg) for help against the British. He was also charged with the offence of helping a prisoner Muhammad Sharif, to escape to Balochistan in order to raise an insurrection. Major Outram presented the list of following offences presumed to be carried out by Sindhi rulers:

- Intercepted letters from the ruler of Hyderabad to Diwan Mul Raj of Punjab government. This was considered a violation of the eighth article of the Treaty of 1839, which forbade Sindhi rulers to negotiate with foreign States without the sanction of the British Government.
- A secret plot to instigate the Baloch tribes to rise against the British on a favourable opportunity.
- Communicating with the Shah of Persia
- The dominating influence in the government of Sindh of a man called Fateh Muhammad Ghuri, well known for his hatred of the English.

On September 25, 1842, General Charles Napier sought a new agreement with Sindh. It was asking for the formal cession of Sukkur, Bukkur, Sabzalkot, Karachi and Shikarpur from Sindh. He also sought the introduction of a new Sindhi currency bearing the head of Queen Victoria and the right to cut wood along the banks of Indus River. The Mirs submitted.

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Despite the acceptance of the treaty by Mirs of Sindh, hostile activities by the British continued. In a show of strength, General Charles Napier on January 11, 1843, obliterated the desert fortress Imamgadh. Describing its destruction, Napier jubilantly wrote in his journal:

> *"The light was grand and hellish beyond description; the volume of smoke, fire and embers flying up was a throne fit for the devil! I don't like this work of destruction, but reason tells me two things. First, it will prevent bloodshed, and it is better to destroy temples made by men than temples built by the Almighty. Second, this castle was built and used for oppression, and in future, its ruins will shelter the slave instead of the tyrant (Napier, 1857: pp. 289)."*

On 27 January, Napier gave Sindhi rulers an ultimatum until February 1 to send envoys to his headquarters. If they failed to comply, they would be treated as enemies. On 30 January, he began the march towards Hyderabad. In a last-ditch effort, to achieve the annexation of Sindh without a military conflict, negotiation between Mirs and Outram began in Hyderabad on February 8. The rulers of Sindh succumbed to the pressure and ultimately signed the final humiliating treaty on 12th of February, surrendering their sovereignty. However, this did not stop the British from implementing their plan. The army, under the command of General Charles Napier, marched to Hyderabad. Seeing no option, the Mirs finally decided to meet the British on the battlefield. The British and Sindhi forces met at Mianni to decide the fate of Sindh.

The battle of Mianni: they fought like heroes

At Mianni, the advancing army of General Charles Napier met the Sindhi army on 17th of February 1843. Circumstances have drawn Sindhis into an unwinnable confrontation. However,

instead of surrendering to the forces of the mighty superpower of the day, they decided to embrace death gracefully by showing an extreme degree of bravery. Thornton, (1895), reported in his journal about the battle of Mianni that with their sword and shield, they in more than one impetuous onset, shook and forced back the British line. A line which was composed of well-trained soldiers equipped with latest rifles and protected by heavy shelling. Sindhis were shattered by the artillery fire before they could reach the British lines with their swords and spears. In the battle, six thousand laid down their lives for the honour of their motherland, included among them were many elite and prominent figures, while the losses on the British side were just sixty-three. The battle of Mianni was a beautiful but bloody demonstration of the superiority of the Musket and bayonet over the sword, shield and matchlock.

After the battle, General Charles Napier while talking to his officers admitted the bravery of Sindhi fighters:

> *"The battle was terrible: this whole blood is on the Ameers, not me. How I escaped Heaven knows, I do not. We were for three and a half hours only a yard apart, man to man: fearful odds and they fought like heroes (Napier, 1990: page, 139)."*

Another famous officer of the British army, General John Jacob while admitting the bravery of Sindhi fighters mentioned that:

> *"They did not run: to a man, they smote sternly to the last....Our charge decided the battle... our rear was not attacked, and thus ended one of the hardest and most honestly fought battles ever recorded in history (Napier, 1990: page.139)."*

Chapter Six

The victorious General Charles Napier jubilantly wrote to the Governor-General of India "I have Scinde". He immediately proceeded to loot the treasury and the palaces of Sindhi rulers. In a show of "extreme kindness", Napier allowed the ladies of the royal family with the allowance to carry only dresses, one each.

The conqueror of Sindh, General Charles Napier on March 5, 1843, issued a proclamation to Sindhi people asking for their total submission:

> *"Your princes are prisoners; their capital and Treasure are in my possession. You fought like men, but were defeated, and many of your chiefs slain. Master of Scinde I now address you in the words of reason, in hopes that I may not be obliged to shed more of your blood.*
>
> *The Talpurs have fallen before the swords of the English as the Caloras fell before the swords of Talpurs; so God has decreed it should be and so it is. The Decrees of God are unchallengeable. If you resist I will treat you harshly and drive you over the Indus. I have abundance of soldiers. Thousands more will come; your blood will be shed. But if you are tranquil and return to your homes, your Jaghires and possessions of all kinds shall be respected and the English be your friends. You will be happy* (Thornton, 1895: page, 108)."

The Battle of Dabbah: "Marveso Merveso par Sindh na deso"

On March 26, 1843, General Charles Napier marched towards Mirpur. A Sindhi army led by Mir Sher Mohammad Talpur met the English forces on 27th of March near the village of

Dabbah. The Sindhi army was badly defeated despite the show of extraordinary courage and bravery (Mirza. 1902). General Hosh Muhammad Sheedi. one of the brave sons of Sindh. embraced death with his last battle cry before advancing towards the British lines *"Marveso Merveso par Sindh na deso"* (I will die but never give up Sindh). His battle cry later became the motivating slogan for Sindhi nationalists in their struggle against British colonial administration and the Pakistani state. Mir Sher Muhammad Talpur in a bid to take refuge with Sher Singh. the ruler of Punjab. fled towards Sehwan with 400 hundred fighters but came under attack by a chasing British force under the command of Colonel Wright. Almost all members of his entourage were massacred and a wounded Mir Sher Muhammad Talpur was arrested (Mirza. 1902).

Within two months. the total control of Sindh was taken by the English: the last of the region was Umarkot. occupied on 4th April. In August. the formal annexation of Sindh into British India was announced. Although. with the treaties signed in 1832. 1834. 1838 and 1839. Sindh became a client state as the British were in control of not only external but also of internal affairs of Sindh; however. with the occupation. the objective of making it a buffer against the presumed Russian attack on India and making Indus a major line of communication and opium trade with Central Asia and China was achieved.

During their whole period of governance. Talpurs played the game of cat and mouse with Afghans and the British or vice versa. The Afghans were always demanding tribute while Talpurs were denying on one or other pretext. When in 1790. an Afghan army under the command of Payanda Khan reached Sindh for the intention of plunder. ruler of Sindh Mir Fateh Ali Talpur. agreed to pay a huge sum but in the bargain they regained the control of Karachi from Balochistan. Talpurs

were also successful in taking Umarkot from Jhodpur, a chunk of the south-eastern desert from Sodha Rajputs, Sabzalkot and Bhang Bhara from Bahawalpur and Shikarpur from Afghans. The British were pressing for not only increased trade concessions but also they wanted a share of political control of Sindh. Under mounting pressure, Talpurs conceded nearly every demand put forward by the British; however, in the grand design of the forward policy, Sindh was ultimately conquered and made a part of British India.

Several causes have been cited for the collapse of second Sindhi state. These included visionless leadership, collaborators and internal divisions, poor military strength and the overwhelming might of the British Empire They also could not understand the repercussion on Sindh of the protracted struggle for the supremacy of Central Asia between two superpowers of the day, Czarist Russia and the British Empire. Sindhi political and armed resistance against the British advances was chaotic and much disorganised. Although they fought valiantly, Sindhis were not prepared militarily to engage a mighty superpower. In the British endeavours against Russia, Sindhis lost their state and sustained heavy losses in men and material.

Consequences of the occupation

The victorious British incarcerated all male members of the ruling family. Their households were looted and stripped of valuables. The arrested Mirs were sent to Calcutta and other places in India where many of them died in prisons, including Mir Sobdar Khan Talpur, Mir Fateh Ali Talpur and Mir Naseer Khan Talpur. During the 1850s, the surviving members of ruling family were released and allowed to return to Sindh. For seven years, Sindh was in the firm grip of a classical conqueror. The new ruler of Sindh, General Charles Napier, chose a novel way to gain support from the

local population. He announced that whoever will salute the picture of Queen Victoria, and obey me, their lands will be returned to them. After the humiliating 7 years of Napier's rule, Sindh was attached with Bombay residency and Sir Bartle Frere was appointed as the commissioner of Sindh. He was shocked about the dismal situation of Sindh and began a process of administrative and economic reforms. The British tried to reshape Sindh socially, economically and politically and many positive initiatives were taken for the benefit of ordinary people. The Sindhi language was declared to be the language of administration at lower levels. The first postal stamp was issued as the "Scinde District Dawk", in 1852. A grand program of building a vast network of roads, railways, canals, bridges, schools and hospitals was initiated which in a few decades changed the face of Sindh giving it a modern outlook. Hyderabad, Shikarpur and Karachi were at the zenith of their fame as the huge business centres and beautiful cities in the Indian subcontinent. Sindhi educational institutions began to produce learned and skilled people in large numbers.

Sindh was changed beyond recognition as drastic changes were brought about by the colonial administration in the social and political life. Politically, a herd of collaborators and protégés were patronised by the administration. Religious elements including Pirs and Sufis were showered with extraordinary favours, practically creating a new political class of religious personalities. During the whole period of occupation, genuine Sindhi leaders were excluded from power circles and Sindh was ruled by the English with the help of their local business managers, loyalist landlords and Pirs and Sufis. The new bureaucracy in Sindh was established on the line of other Indian provinces. Land revenue system was also made similar to that of British controlled India. The land ownership for the loyalist was confirmed while the lands of those who resisted the British advent in Sindh

were confiscated. Local traders (*Banyas*) emerged as a powerful class with the extension of their loaning provisions to landlords and tenants. As a consequence of wide-ranging defaults by farmers, they became the major landowners at the end of 19th century. Gaining of financial as well as political powers by *Banyas* in an artificial manner was exploited later by the Muslim League leaders in their demand for the incorporation of Sindh into Pakistan.

Large-scale migration into Sindh was another feature of the British occupation of Sindh. Punjabis, Gujaratis, Kutchis, Parsis and Jewish traders made their presence increasingly felt in Karachi and other townships in Sindh. This phenomenon threatened the middle class and business community of Sindh and fuelled the Sindhi national sentiments. In the early decades of 20th century, the large number of Punjabi immigrant workers created panic among Sindhis and by 1930s, the issue of who was and who was not a Sindhi became the part of political discourse among Sindhi political activists.

One of the development as a consequence of the occupation was the creation of division in Sindhi society; a short-sighted colonial plan with dire consequences for Sindh in coming decades. The first person employed by the British to sow the seeds of the division was Hassanally Effendi. In 1884, he was retired from active government service and tasked to establish a branch of Mohammedan Association which was initiated in Bengal by another British agent Syed Amir Ali. Sindh Mohammedan Association was a pilot project to organize Sindhi Muslims and to separate them from the general struggle against the British occupation of India. Claiming to struggle for the interests of Muslim community, the association was a springboard for activities of government loyalists. Later it was given the task of advocating the separation of Sindh from Bombay. The leaders

of the association. Sir Shahnawaz Bhutto. Ayub Khudo and Wali Muhammad Effendi played un-official roles in the separation of Sindh from Bombay. After the objective of separation was achieved in 1935. the colonial administration thought the association irrelevant and stopped patronising it and in this way it withered. However. to keep its Muslim supporters intact and prevent them from joining Congress or other anti-colonialist organizations. the administration helped to create two political organizations from the ashes of the Sindhi Mohammedan Association. the United Party and the Democratic Party. Soon these parties were more or less merged into the main pro-British party. the All India Muslim League.

The 17th century witnessed the emergence of second Sindhi state. Ruled by Kalhodas and Talpurs. the establishment of a second Sindhi state was a brilliant expression of Sindhi power of resilience. Although. it cannot be justified to say that the rulers were extraordinary visionaries: nevertheless. it was not easy to withstand pressure from Mughals. Safavid. emerging power of Abdalis in Afghanistan and ever-increasing demands of the British by a newly established state like Sindh. Sindhi state could not sustained itself for long and crumbled within 150 years and ultimately became the last victim of independent Indian states which succumbed to the British imperial designs. The British never bothered to respect the agreements they signed with Sindhi government on various occasions. With the ultimate aim of extending the buffer zone between Russia and British India and the protection of opium trade in mind. they trod carefully towards the achievement of desired objectives. They used the claim of Ranjith Singh on Shikarpur. Shah Shujah for claiming sovereignty over Sindh and the threat of Kalhoda contender of power Mian Abdul Nabi Kalhoda to scare Talpur rulers into accepting their demands. The British encounters with Sindhis on the

battlefields were the manifestation of the superiority of the Musket and bayonet over the sword, shield and matchlock. It proved that battles are not won merely with the show of bravery and velour. At Mianni, Sindhis lost the war and were massacred like goats and sheep. It was a national catastrophe for them but not unprecedented. The British occupation was a watershed in the history of Sindh. It brought far-reaching consequences for Sindh and its people.

7. Sindhi national struggle under colonial rule

> No matter how many times a country has been conquered, subjugated and even destroyed by enemies, there is always a certain national core preserved in its character, and, before you are aware of it, a long-familiar popular phenomenon has emerged. **Johan Wolfgang von Goethe**

In 1857, the British faced first meaningful resistance to their rule in India when a section of their army comprised of Indian recruits agitated against the use of a certain kind of cartridges. Later this agitation transformed into a mutiny. This mutiny was used by Indians who were looking for an excuse to exploit the people's sentiment against the occupation of their land. Whole North India was engulfed in turmoil with the increased fervour of a liberation struggle. In Delhi, an eighty years old degenerated Mughal Emperor was forced by the rebels to declare the independence of India. At the time of rebellion, Sindh was still licking its wound inflicted in 1843; nevertheless, it contributed in the rebellion to some extent. The rebellion which is being termed in India as the war of liberation was soon crushed with the help of Punjabi and Pakhtun mercenaries and the British rule was re-established; nevertheless, it caused the end of East India Company rule and from then onward India was directly governed from

London. The direct British rule provided a space for political activities. A period of opposition against colonial rule began with the formation of various social and political organizations including Indian National Congress. Sindhis participated in the struggle against the colonial rule by forming various political and semi-political organizations. Some of the Sindhi nationalists joined Congress Party which soon became the largest representative party of Sindhi people.

Politics of National liberation in Sindh during British rule

Sindh Sabha was the first organization formed after the occupation of Sindh. Its expressed aim was to struggle for the preservation of Sindhi socio-cultural traditions but it also presented the case of Sindh on various political issues.

During the rebellion of 1857, Sindhis joined the struggle against the rule of East India Company; however, their participation in the struggle was not so intense compared to other parts of India and the reason might be that they were still in shock after 14 years of occupation. There was no major upheaval during the revolt in Sindh but Sindhis enlisted their names among the martyrs of the uprising when Mir Sher Muhammad Talpur tried to mobilize an armed insurrection but was captured and blown from cannon-mouth at Ramgargh in Karachi. Another rebel Darya Khan Jakhrani was spared but exiled into Yemen for his part in the rebellion. In Shikarpur after a failed attempt to attack the British military camp, several people were arrested. Mir Alif Khan, the planner of the attempt was executed while others were sentenced to life imprisonments and deported to the Andaman Islands.

The formal or legal nationalist politics in Sindh was from the very beginning affiliated with the activities of Indian National Congress. Two Sindhi delegates, Dayaram Jhetmal

and Udharam Mulchand, attended the first-ever session of Indian National Congress held in Bombay in 1885. Politically conscious elements in Sindh became greatly influenced by Indian freedom movement leaders. In different townships of Sindh, branches of Home Rule League of Lokmanya Tilak and Dr Anne Besant were founded. Sindh became practically involved in Indian freedom movement after the division of Bengal in 1907 and the hanging of Bengali leader Khudiram Bose in 1908. Motivated by events in Bengal, Virumal Begraj and Lokram Sharma held the first ever All-Sindh Political Conference in Hyderabad in 1908. In Shikarpur, the Pritam Dharma Sabha, originally a religious organization became involved in nationalist politics. Its various members wrote inspirational pieces in their literary works. Because of these activities, three of its leaders, Seth Chetumal, Virumal Begraj and Govind Sharma were sentenced to five years' rigorous imprisonment. The Brahmacharya Ashram in Hyderabad which was set up by Acharya Kripalani, Kaka Kalekar, Swami Govind-Anand, and Dr Choithram in 1910 was practically a forum for nationalists in Sindh who were involved in the freedom struggle (Malkani, 1984). The Ashram in many cases also offered shelters to people from other parts of India, engaged in revolutionary activities against the British rule. Many revolutionaries hid in the ashram for various periods when they were hotly looked for by colonial administration.

Sindhi writers were also highlighting burning issues facing their people and many political and social workers, writers and journalists were prosecuted on charges of writing against the massacre at Jhalianwala Bagh in 1919. In the process, they suffered and prominent among those who were awarded various prison terms. Prominent among those included Jethmal Parsram, H D Mariwalla, Durgdas Advani, Virumal Begraj, Chetumal Hariram and Govardan Sharma.

Indian National Congress became active in Sindh when prominent Sindhi activist, G M Bhurgari was appointed as the general secretary of the Party by its president Dr Annie Besant. So was the nationalist fervour in Sindh that Sindhi nationalist politician vehemently opposed the policy adopted by Mahatma Gandhi to support the British war efforts during the First World War. A political stance against Gandhi which only a few politicians could afford at that time in the Indian political history.

Another political stance of Mahatma Gandhi created far-reaching negative impact in Sindh. Gandhi announced his full support of Khilafat Movement[34] in the 1920s. For some months, Sindhi Muslims and Hindus became in the forefront of the agitation. Hundreds of activists were imprisoned by colonial authorities while a large number of Sindhis were among those who migrated to Afghanistan in protest; nevertheless, the future impacts of this policy was perhaps beyond the comprehension of many Indian leaders. It is a very unpleasant truth of Indian nationalist politics that the great Indian leader, Mahatma Gandhi contributed to the increased significance of religious elements in Sindhi politics because of his role in the Khilafat Movement. It was a miscalculated adventure on his behalf to gain sympathies of Muslims for the liberation movement of India. With his action, by default, the *Mullahs* (Muslim priests) were made politicians for the first time. Once they took roots in the politics, thanks to the efforts of Mahatma Gandhi, these *Mullahs* were easily used by colonial administrators in their plan of dividing India on

[34] Khilafat movement was a political agitation from the religious elements among the north Indian Muslims in support of Turkish rulers who were the nominal Caliphs of Islam before the defeat of Turkey during First World War. These religious elements were mobilizing Indian public to pressurise the British government to restore the Ottoman family rule over Turkey after they abdicated in favour of a secular regime under Kamal Ataturk.

religious grounds and to create a client state of Pakistan to safeguard its imperialistic interests in the region.

Sindhis demonstrated a very strong show of unity against the British when Prince of Wales visited Karachi on 17 March 1922 (Malkani, 1984). A complete strike was observed in the city. Sindhi nationalist also played a significant role in the success of the Satyagraha movement of 1930-32[35]. For the first time, Sindhi women actively participated in processions and picketing. More than a thousand activists were imprisoned during the movement. A group of 20 volunteers from Sindh led by H D Mariwala and Shewak Bhojraj participated on Dharsana Salt Depot Raid organised by Indian Congress Party under the leadership of Sarojini Naidu as part of Salt Satyagraha Movement[36]. The 1942 Quit India Movement[37] was a great success in Sindh and many Sindhis gave their life during the agitation. Hemu Kalyani and Nirmal Jivtani were the prominent victims. Almost all the Congress leadership in Sindh were rounded up and put into prisons. During the Quit India Movement of 1942, the Prime Minister of Sindh.

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[35] Satyagrah movements were non-violent agitations introduced by Mahatma Ghandhi in Indian liberation struggle.

[36] The Salt Satyagrah movement was to refuse paying tax on salt as a defiance but non-violent act against the British administration. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi announced his famous Salt March to produce salt from the seawater in the coastal village of Dandei, as was the practice of the local populace until British officials introduced taxation on salt production. Thousands of people joined Gandhi in his march.

[37] The Quit India Movement was a civil disobedience movement launched by Indian National Congress on 8 August, 1942 on the persuasions by Gandhi in order to force the British to end its colonial rule immediately. Gandhi made his famous Do or Die speech in Bombay and the British authorities reacted with the arrest of Gandhi, all congress party leadership and nearly 60 thousands protesters; most of them spent many years in prisons until the end of World War Second.

Allah Bux Sumro was removed from his office and later mysteriously murdered. It was believed to be because of his open support for the movement. Allah Bux Sumro added his voice to anti-colonial agitation by renouncing the title of Khan Bahadur and the award of the Order of British Empire (OBE). Many analysts of that period believed that this caused him the dismissal of his government and perhaps his life.

Sindhi nationalist politics produced some of the brilliant leaders in the history of Indian freedom movement. Acharya Kripalani, Jairam Doulatram, Professor Ghansham Shivdasani, Alimchandani, Dr. Choithram, Sirumal Vishindas, Gidvani, Shivdasani, Bharwani, Jamshed Mehta, Sobhraj Valecha, G M Bhurgari, R K Sidhwa, Parsram Vishinsingh Tahilramani, Issardas Varandmal, Moulvi Muhammad Amin Khosa, Barkat Ali Azad, Ali Makrani and N R Malkani were among the most famous of the leaders and activists associated with the liberation struggle.

Some of the Sindhi youth also became involved in violent activities during Quit India Movement. Menghraj Lulla and Dattatraya were shot dead by the police in Karachi while another young person Hemu Kalyani was hanged by colonial authorities on the accusation of subversive activities. Besides participating in the political struggle led by Indian National Congress and other regional organizations, Sindh also became a safe haven for militant revolutionaries from other parts of India who sought sanctuaries among Sindhi nationalists. Baba Gurdutt Sindh, Ras Bihari Gosh, Kaka Kalekar, Hansraj Wireless and Baba Kharak Singh were among those who sought shelter among the Sindhi nationalists on various occasions. Sindhi affluent persons generously donated for the nationalist cause. Seth Hotchand and Tejumal were among the Sindhi Diaspora businessmen who financially contributed

in the armed resistance against the colonial power led by Subhash Chandra Bose during the Second World War.

Frustrated with the increased momentum of the liberation struggle, the British administration in Sindh openly encouraged religious elements among Muslims in order to counter the momentum created by the nationalistic zeal with the religious one. Pro-British *Mullahs* were helped in many ways. Religious leaders were also used in demanding the separation of Sindh from Bombay, which in later years paved the way for its incorporation into the religious state of Pakistan. Muslim leaders were shown a picture of future Sindh where they will be free from the dominance of Hindu businesses based in Bombay. Initially, the nationalists also were enthusiastic of having their own province and as the rebirth of their national aspirations. However, after they realized the objective of the move, it was too late and the British plan was successful. Sindh became a province on 1 April 1936. It appears that Sindh was in the very initial list of Indian regions which the colonial establishment wanted to be included in a client state after its eventual withdrawal from India. For many analysts of the British imperial policies in India during the 20th century, the issue of separating Sindh from Bombay was a deliberate attempt in order to create a region of Muslim majority besides Bengal and Punjab. Many towering figures of Sindhi politics including GM Syed fell into this colonial trap and demanded the separation of Sindh from Bombay residency. However, soon they admitted their mistake but emphasised that their struggle was for an autonomous Sindh. GM Syed asserted that Sindh can play a historic role in the future of India, and even in Asia, provided it is not merged by Sindhi Hindus under the domination of Hindu-majority provinces and by Sindhi Muslims towards the tragic fate of a Punjabi colony.

Chapter Seven

The elections which followed the separation of Sindh from Bombay brought a medley of parties in the Sindh Legislative Assembly. Majority of the members were known British protégés. Sir Shahnawaz Bhutto's pro-British Ittehad Party won 24 seats, Sir Ghulam Hussain's Muslim Political Party 6, Azad Party of newly converted Muslim Sheikh Abdul Majid won 5 seats, Congress 9, and other 16 seats went to Europeans, labour representatives, women representatives, and independents. It is believed that the establishment of that time saw a robust leader or a strong government in Sindh might be an obstacle in its future strategies of dividing India. In this context, they initiated a game of replacing one government with another and one Prime Minister with another; although they were all known supporters of the British regime. This musical chair ended with the dismissal of Allah Bux Sumro's government and his tragic murder.

With overt government patronization and the covert support of the establishment, Muslim League was organized in the province on an unprecedented scale. The web of Muslim League branches raised to 400 from 30 within two years. Also, the Hindu-Muslim divide was widened in an organized and systematic way. Dozens of Hindus, among them, were some very prominent literary and religious personalities, were killed, allegedly because of the provocative statements of Muslim League leaders. Ironically, respected leaders who later became the icons of Sindhi national struggle including GM Syed could not comprehend the lethal consequences of Muslim League politics and their political activities were used in the fulfilment of the British establishment's designs.

In the elections before the creation of Pakistan in 1946, no party was able to gain a clear majority in the Assembly. In a 60 member Assembly, after the election of the Speaker, Muslim League and the Congress Party-led alliance had the

support of equal members. The governor asked the Muslim League to form the government in the province. However, soon Muslim league lost the support of 4 of its members. The governor, instead of inviting Congress Party to form a government, dissolved the Assembly and new elections were held. These elections in Sindh are believed to be the first rigged elections in the history of Indian political life. With open manipulation and naked interference in the electoral process, the establishment became able to secure 35 seats for the Muslim League. With this rigged elections, the fate of Sindh was sealed and the way for its joining the proposed religious state of Pakistan was paved. However, 54 percent of the Sindhi masses despite massive rigging, registered their opposition to Muslim League and its demand for Pakistan by voting anti-Muslim League candidates.

The strategy of the colonial administration in countering the national struggle in Sindh besides persecution of activists included the creation of divisions in the society, patronising religious elements among Muslims and terrorising nationalist activists. The communal divide was also used to create a polarised society in Sindh. The administration sponsored *Mullahs* became very active in fomenting Hindu-Muslim differences on minor issues while extremist Hindu nationalist organizations such as Arya Samaj put their share in the disgusting politics of that time. In order to counter the nationalists in rural areas, the administration also patronized dacoits and robber to harass the workers of nationalist organizations.

The Hur Phenomenon

Hur was the term given to the volunteers among the disciples of an influential Pir in Sindh, the Pir of Pagaro. They were supposed to offer the ultimate sacrifice on the order of their Pir. These volunteers were organized in a much-disciplined

manner unlike the followers of other Pirs and Saints in Sindh. Sindhi nationalists believed that the Hur rebellion was part of their national resistance struggle against the British rule while the narrative of the administration of that time put it as purely an administrative issue nothing to do with the Indian national politics.

The Pir of Pagaro, Sibghatullah, who became the Pir after the death of his father in 1818 was an enthusiastic supporter of the East India Company. The British administration in India used the useful information given by the Pir in their invasion of Sindh and in return, the Pir got the blessings of the colonial administration after the occupation of Sindh. But the relationship with Pir of Pagaro did not remain same after the murder of another claimant of the throne, the Pir Jhandewaro who was also believed to be one of the staunch supporters of the British colonial administration in Sindh and whose information was valued in dealing with the situation in the newly acquired territory. However, no open conflict happened between the Pir and the administration despite the tension created by the murder. Ansari (1992), observed that for many years, an uneasy and unannounced truce prevailed between the *murids* (followers) of the Pir and the British authorities in which both the Pir and the local administration pretending that they are loyal to each other's interests.

During the time of Pir Syed Hizbullah Shah, the Hurs transformed into well-organized bands with such kind of activities which the British authority thought of anti-social and the cause of law and order situations. Their activities included kidnapping for ransom and targeting the opponents of Pir Pagaro. The thick jungles in Sanghar region were used by these bands as sanctuaries in case of a police operation against them. Their activities continued during the time of Pir Syed Ali Gohar Shah II. The group of Hurs led by Bacho

Badshah and Piro Vazir actually created a law and order situation by killing a police officer Jula Singh. The authorities asked the Pir for the surrender of miscreants; however, the Pir handed over some other members of their bands to the authorities instead of proclaimed offenders. It is believed that the Pir handed over his followers on the promise of a general amnesty or at least some kind of lenient treatment from the authorities; however, they were tried and hanged by authorities inviting the anger and mistrust of the Pir for years to come. In 1896, Pir Mardan Shah I became the Pir of Pagaro. He was compelled to hand over to the authorities, two leaders of Hur bands, Bacho Badshah and Esso Dahri in 1898. In 1914, the Pir was asked by the commissioner of Sindh to handover the gang leaders of the Hur bands who were still engaged in what the authorities termed as unlawful activities. The Pir under pressure signed a document promising to hand over any miscreant among the Hurs to the authorities.

In 1921, Pir Sibghatullah Shah II took the charge as the Pir of Pagaro. He was 14 at the time of his inauguration. With his succession as the sixth Pir of Pagaro, the long-standing undercurrent tension of Pagaro Pirs and the British administration came into the open. As a result of the imprisonment of many members of Hur brotherhood and harsh measures taken by law enforcement authorities, the unlawful activities of Hurs were at a low ebb at that time. The youthful Pir began to organize the brotherhood with a new zeal and instilled new spirit to his followers. On the British side, in order to limit the influence of the Pir, the administration openly began to patronise opponents of the Pir among his family members, while on the Hur side, supporters of the Pir actively tried to suppress any voice of dissent. Many opponents of the Pir known to be on friendly terms with the administration disappeared suddenly. The climax of this cat and mouse game ended with the trial of

the Pir in a kidnapping and unlawful detention of a young person named Ibrahim who was recovered by the police from the private area of Pir Jo Kot (the official residence of the Pir). The Pir was not sentenced in this case, but in a case of wrongful confinement of a lady, he got arrested and sentenced to 10 years imprisonment in 1929. He served his sentence in different prisons in India, while his followers agitated for his release. The Hurs adopted an aggressive posture and organized themselves into armed *Firqas* (gangs). They caused disruption in the law and order in their areas and began to terrorize opponents of the Pir. However, when the British tried to control these gangs, the Hur rebellion took a form of a nationalist struggle against the colonial administration and with their religious zeal, the *murids* (followers) of Pir of Pagaro gave a tough time to law enforcement agencies for many years. Many individuals from other religious faiths (Hindus and Sikhs) also joined these *firqas* and took the oath of allegiance with the Pir. Various organizations and prominent political leaders of Sindh wrote to the governor of Bombay for the release of Pir of Pagaro. However, there came no relief for the Pir and he was released from the prison after completing the term of his sentence on 25 November 1936. A large number of public gathered on various railway stations to welcome the return of the Pir.

The jail sentence transformed the Pir into a staunch opponent of the British. He came closer to the struggle for the independence of India. While in prison, he had abandoned the luxurious lifestyle and wore handwoven coarse clothing. His relationship became so estranged with the authorities that he refused to accept the award of a gun and a sword by the collector of Sukkur District. Refusing an award from the British authorities by a Pir or Sufi was considered to be an extraordinary act of defiance. It was not only that the Pir shifted his allegiance towards the national cause of Sindh

but interestingly he showed much maturity and analytical capabilities after his release. When the prominent Sindhi leader, GM Syed met the Pir before his final arrest in 1943, he was clear about what is going to happen to Sindh after the British withdrawal from India:

> *"In the first place, the British will not grant you independence. And even if the demand for Pakistan is conceded, the new country will be a tailored affair where the British will call the shots for years..... that only those will be in the saddle who have been born British lackeys. You will be the fly in the ointment and you will be thrown out of the ointment. Not only thrown out but possibly put in prison. If we live and if my predictions come true, then we'll know who is more adept to politics between the two of us. I will, by the grace of God, either get my country or my coffin, but you will be nursing your wounds (Syed, 1994: page, 18)."*

During the Second World War, The Pir started intensive military training of his followers in the thick jungle of Keti Pir Pagaro. He reportedly hired soldiers of nationalist fighters of Indian National Army which was fighting the British under the command of (Congress Party leader) Subhash Chandra Bose aided by Japanese. It is believed that to camouflage his anti-British designs, he generously contributed to the British War Fund. However, based on intelligence reports about Pir's anti-British speeches, the administration became suspicious of his actual designs. In July 1941, he was ordered to remain in Karachi. The restricting order of his movements caused widespread and bloody encounters between the law enforcement agencies and the supporters of the Pir. With increased activities of his followers, the administration was paralysed in Sanghar and adjoining areas.

After the refusal of his appeal against restrictions of his movements, the Pir escaped from Karachi in October. This was tantamount to treason according to colonial rules. In Sinjhoro, he met his confident followers and told them to be prepared for the consequences of his arrest. Reaching Pir Jo Goth, he issued instructions to the Hur brotherhood for future actions. After three days, on October 24, 1941, the Pir was arrested (Somroo, 2004). He was sent back to Karachi from where to Nagpur prison. He was formally charged with waging war against the King of Great Britain.

It is interesting to note that the leader of the Muslim League, Mr Muhammad Ali Jinnah, was the lawyer hired by the Pir of Pagaro when he was arrested in 1929. Many among the followers of the Pir at that time expressed dissatisfaction with the way he pleaded the case. There was a strong belief that as a friend of the British administration, Mr Muhammad Ali Jinnah actually purposely pleaded the case in a way that culminated in Pir getting 10 years imprisonment. He also behaved in the same manner when he was hired by the Khan of Kalat to plead the case of Balochistan for the recovery of areas leased to British India.

The Muslim League Party and the provincial government of Muslim League in Sindh presented a very hostile attitude towards the Pir and his followers. The Muslim leaders opposed Pir of Pagaro on the pretext that his followers reportedly murdered some Wahhabi[38] *mullahs*. On the other

[38] Wahhabi phenomenon developed in the eastern region of contemporary Saudi Arabia in 18th century as a fundamentalist Islamic movement. Later, it was successfully used by the British in the attainment of some political gains in 20th century in their conflict with Ottoman Turks in the Middle East. The contemporary Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is based on the principles of Wahhabi Islam. The phenomenon of Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in 21st century is also the manifestation of Wahhabi Islam.

hand. the Congress Party and other nationalist organizations and personalities fully supported the release of the Pir.

With the arrest of the Pir. his followers began targeting government installations. functionaries and loyalists of the British administration. Telegraph and other communication lines were destroyed in many places. The Hur fighters were not only fighting the security forces but all those they believed to be opponents of the Pir. They also made breaches in the protective Bunds on canals to punish those landlords who were either against the Hurs or helping the administration in its confrontation with them. Railway tracks were also damaged leading to the derailment of some trains. On May 16. 1942. a train was derailed near Tando Adam station in which causalities of some prominent persons also occurred. One prominent police officer. Ghulam Rasul Shah was murdered by the Hurs in Khenwari on 14 March 1942 along with many other members of security forces.

On March 20. 1942. the Sindh Legislative Assembly passed the Hur Act giving the administration unlimited power to crush the uprising. However. the civil administration failed to curb the violent activities of Hurs and on June 1. 1942. Martial Law was declared in Sindh. The trial of Pir under Martial Law regulations started in February 1942. He was charged with treason in a military court. The trial ended in March 1943 and the Pir was sentenced to death. He was executed on March 20. 1943. and his body was not given to his family members and buried in an unmarked grave. His sons were arrested and sent to England for education and for a decade. the Hurs were without a Pir. In 1952. Shah Mardan Shah II. the eldest son of Pir Sibghatullah Shah was reinstated by Pakistani authorities as the Pir of Pagaro.

The Hur movement was initially apolitical but later it became political. The slogan of *waatan ya kafan* (motherland or death) of Hur resistance roused the national sentiments of a large section of Sindhis. It provided a platform to the political parties of sub-continent to work upon and mobilize patriotic forces for the liberation of India. On his death, Pir Sibghatullah Shah became a martyr in the eyes of Sindhi nationalists. He was included in the list of those who sacrificed their lives in the fight against slavery and for the achievement of the cherished dream of liberty and sovereignty for their land.

The role of Sindhis in the independence movement of India had never been highlighted or given due credit; they participated in the freedom struggle and got their share of atrocities beginning from the failed rebellion of 1857 up to the end of colonial rule in 1947. It appears that the Congress leadership was not assertive in case of Sindh as compared to other parts of British India while the colonial administration was very active in patronizing religious elements and the Muslim League party in order to create divisions in the nationalist struggle and to foment chaos in society. For more than a hundred years, the Hur rebellion has been a much contested political phenomenon in the history of Sindh. For nationalists, the defiance of Pir of Pagaro and his followers was for the struggle to liberate Sindh while for others, it was simply a law and order situation. They emphasise that Pir of Pagaro was never involved in the Indian national struggle in any way and the armed activities of his followers were merely the expression of disapproval for his prosecution and detention for kidnapping and murder.

8. Pakistan: the flail of Allah

> *I am the flail of god. Had you not created great sins, God would not have sent a punishment like me upon you.* Genghis Khan

Among many other unprecedented political and geo-strategic developments in the wake of the decolonising process in the 20th century, the creation of a religious state by dividing India is one of the unique phenomena. The historical context of "great game" of the 19th century and the use of religion in the making of a client state by a colonial power are the hallmark of the creation of Pakistan. It came out of the blue and was so meticulously planned by the colonial administrators in London and New Delhi that the leaders who were involved in the struggle for the liberation of India, could not comprehend the context and the consequences of Pakistan phenomenon on the region.

The historical context of Pakistan phenomenon

At the dawn of 20th century, Africa, Asia and Latin America were almost divided into their ambits by European imperial powers like France, Spain, Portugal, Germany and Great Britain. These great powers engaged in two bloody and protracted conflicts in the first half of 20th century. The after effects of which were so grand in magnitudes that both victorious and defeated became weak in many ways. Internally

socio-political dynamics of colonial powers changed and externally with the weakening of their economic and military power, momentum for national liberation in Asia and Africa increased among the subjugated people. The combination of internal and external factors forced them to initiate a process of decolonization. However, the process of decolonization was not smooth. The colonial powers had developed enormous economic and geo-strategic interests in regions which they dominated for centuries. These powers in order to safeguard their interests, divided nations, and created artificial states. Creation of a client state in South Asia became imperative for the preservation of British interests as the independence of India became inevitable.

Indian independence and the British interests

After the establishment of Soviet Union, international political and economic situations were mainly being analysed in a capitalist-socialist or East and West prism. This was because, with the political and moral support of Soviet Union, national liberation struggles gained momentum in various parts of the world. In a historical context, these liberation movements were mainly dominated by progressive nationalist and anti-imperialist parties and personalities. Any newly independent country would naturally seek friendship with the socialist bloc countries. After First World War, the prime objective of the British Empire was to counter the ever-growing danger of Bolshevik revolution. This revolution was mesmerizing not only the European masses, but also a significant section of Muslim society was influenced by its anti-imperialist rhetoric. In western capitals, there was a genuine fear that after decolonization, their interests would be harmed by socialist-oriented and pro-Soviet Union regimes. As Britain was still the guardian of western interests against emerging socialist Russia, its interests in the region were multifaceted and safeguarding of not only its own national interests but

also the interests of western powers became an emerging task for the policymakers in London and New Delhi in the background of Indian independence. An independent India with an anti-western and anti-capitalist attitude was seen as a threat to the British and Western interests in South Central Asia and the Gulf region. Persian Gulf region was increasingly becoming important with newly discovered oil fields. Building a geographical and political wall against the expanding wave of socialism and safeguarding economic interests in the Gulf became main objectives for Great Britain while their officials were giving final thoughts on the independence of India. In this context, plans for the division of India and creation of a client state which could serve the purpose were put into action. The phenomenon of political Islam was successfully used in the creation of Pakistan by the colonial authorities as an effective tool.

Pakistan: the legacy of the "great game"

During the 19th century, in the face of continued advances of Russia in Central Asia and the presumed threat to India from the north, safeguarding the Indian possessions became the obsession of policy planners in London and New Delhi. For them, Afghanistan and Persia were vulnerable spots and if they (Russians) became successful somehow in gaining control of these countries, the next Russian target will certainly be India (Thornton, 1895). A "great game" of espionage and subversion began in regions bordering Russia, the Middle East and British India. To make a physical barrier around north and west of India was postulated which is popularly known as the "Forward Policy". This topic has already been described in Chapter six.

The players of the great game changed when Czarist Russia became the Soviet Union in 1917. A socialist Russia was considered to be more dangerous than Czarist Russia with

its open support for national liberation struggles and with the ideology of exporting socialist revolutions all over the world. The emerging phenomenon of socialism in China under the leadership of Mao Tze Tung and an untrustworthy Congress Party[39] which was supposed to take over from the colonial administration in an eventual withdrawal from India forced the British policymakers to formulate counter strategies. It was decided that the great game of 19th century should continue and Islam should be used again as a tool in countering the socialist menace in Asia; India should be divided and using religious affiliations of a people, a client state should be created in order to protect the Western interests in the region.

The use of Islam in the division of India

Following the mutiny or rebellion of 1857, (where followers of different religions joined against the rule of East India Company) concerted efforts were made by the colonial administration to disrupt the communal unity of Indian society. Although Pakistan was created in a hurry in 1947 in a post-second world war perspective, the seeds of the division had already been sown and from 1857, the colonial administration in India had been fomenting religious divisions by encouraging the theory of Muslims being a separate national entity in India. Indians belonging to two nations (Hindus and Muslim) was thought to be the most acceptable theory for dividing the country on the religious ground. In order to establish the religious differences of Indians as the basis for 'two-nation theory', writers were commissioned. Their task was to present Indian history, pointing to the

[39] Although, Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru were pursuing a democratic and peaceful line of struggle, the rhetoric of the majority of Congress leadership was progressive and anti-western. One of the presidents of Congress Party, Subhas Chandra Bose began an armed struggle against the British rule in India during the World War Second with the help of Japan.

religious beliefs of the dynastic rulers of India. The British colonial authorities helped establish various religious schools in different parts of India. In 1888, Syed Ahmad Khan, a retired clerk and spy of the East India Company was financed to open the famous religious school in Aligarh and officially portrayed as a great Muslim intellectual (Janmahmad, 1989). Later, the colonial administration assembled all the loyal persons among the Muslims in an 'All India Muslim Conference'. The network of religious schools and the All India Muslim Conference were the institutions from where the ideology of Pakistan[40] was propagated. From religious schools and the All India Muslim Conference, the future activists and leaders of the religious party-the Muslim League-were recruited. The party was later given the task of demanding a Muslim state by dividing India.

Originally, it was not India where the British needed Islam as a political tool, but the phenomenon of using Islam as a tool began in Central Asia in the 19th century. Alarmed by fast reaching Russian moves towards the Indian borders, plans were made to stop the menace before it reached the precious colonial possession. As the population of Central Asian Khanates was Muslim by religion, it was thought by the colonial administration to use their religious sentiments in order to encourage the population to oppose Russians or to seek support for the British cause. In this context, all efforts were made to politically mobilise Muslims of Central and South Asia, the Middle East and North Africa in the name of fighting the infidels (Russian Christians)[41]. The slogan of Pan-Islamism was created, and the terminology of Islamic

[40] ideology of Pakistan is the official doctrine of Pakistani State, which states that followers of Islamic faith in India form a separate nation so they have the right of having a separate state

[41] Later on, after the advent of socialism in Russia, the target became the atheist socialists.

Umma[42] was re-manufactured to create a transnational Islamic movement, which could serve the British colonial interests. Writers from different parts of Asia were commissioned for that purpose, and political activists were hired from India, Turkey, and Egypt for the propagation of Pan-Islamism. They were handsomely financed by the colonial administration in India and Egypt. One of the British agents was Jamaluddin Afghani. There is much controversy regarding his origin; born either in Kabul or Asadabad in 1839, Afghani was the son of an East India Company representative in Afghanistan (Keddie, 1972; Dreyfuss, 1981). There was also a lot of controversy regarding his social background; whether he had Jewish or Persian Shi'ite connections, Afghani became the powerful tool for spreading Islamic fundamentalism, and in many ways was the founder of political Islam in the contemporary world.

Controlled by the British experts on affairs of the East, Wilfrid Scawen Blunt and Edward G. Browne, Afghani was given different assignments and appointed to various important positions in Afghanistan, Turkey and Iran with active British scheming (Dreyfuss, 1981). He was installed as the Prime Minister of Afghanistan in 1866 for some time (Dreyfuss, 1981). In 1869, he was sent to India to coordinate intellectual efforts on the "two-nation theory" with other British agents like Syed Ahmad

[42] The Umma is an ancient Arabic terminology meaning a group of people who follow a particular person or ideology. The early Muslims used this for the followers of Prophet Muhammad. The term was abandoned after the creation of the state of Medina. However, after the period of Rightly Guided Four Caliphs, the fundamentalist Muslims used the terminology for pure or pious Muslims against the corrupted ones. The term was altogether forgotten for many centuries until it was revived in 18th by Wahhabis and in 19th century by Jamaluddin Afghani and his group. In contemporary terminology it represents true followers of Prophet Muhammad, ruled by an Ameer ul Momineen or a Caliph in accordance with Qur'an and Sunnah.

Khan (Kia, 1996). Syed Ahmad Khan and many other religious leaders and academics, allied with the colonial administration in India, were tasked to propagate the "two nation theory" which was based on the notion that as Muslims and Hindus are two separate religious entities, so they cannot live together in one country. However, Afghani was withdrawn from India as he developed serious personal differences with Syed Ahmad Khan and his group. For a short period in 1870, Afghani became a member of the Board of Education in Istanbul (Kiddie, 1968; Landau, 1990), and according to Dreyfuss (1981), this became possible only through active manipulations in the Istanbul court circles by British officials. Later, while based in Cairo, he intensified his efforts in the formation of a network of activists under the slogan of Pan-Islamism. Using his important position in Al-Azhar University, he was able to recruit young students for his cause[43]. During 1879, Afghani became overtly involved in the British and French efforts to depose Khedive Ismail of Egypt; however, instead of rewarding Afghani, the newly installed Khedive of Egypt, Taufiq, suddenly ordered him to leave Egypt and according to Kiddie (1968), this was either because of inflammatory speeches or the unwanted political intrigues of Afghani. Afghani was now installed in Paris where he established an Arabic journal called *Al-Urwah al-Wuthkah* besides one in French (Landau, 1990). Among his Pan-Islamist circles in Paris were Egyptians, Indians, Turks, Syrians, and North African propagandists; mostly recruited by the British military establishment in Egypt and India. Afghani was soon found to be useful in dealing with the

[43] Famous among the recruited persons of Afghani included Muhammad Abduh—who later became the founding ideologue of Muslim Brotherhood Movement. A majority of radical movements in today's Middle East is the direct offspring of the Muslim Brotherhood Movement.

crumbling Qajar Dynasty in Persia. In 1885, with British connivance, the King of Persia, Naseer ad-Din Qajar, appointed Afghani as the Prime Minister of his Kingdom (Dreyfuss, 1981). But he was expelled from Iran on charges of plotting to kill the monarch and was installed in London during 1886. From his London headquarters, he was instrumental in the destabilization of the Qajar Dynasty by recruiting and handsomely financing Ayatollahs[44] and other religious personalities. The immediate objective of his endeavours was to build up an uprising in Persia led by his recruited Ayatollahs to blackmail the Qajar Dynasty in order to gain commercial favours for British companies, curtailing Russian influence in Persia and accepting British demands of strategic importance (Keddie, 1972). From his London base, Afghani also campaigned vigorously for the formation of a military pact between Britain, Turkey, Persia, and Afghanistan against Russia (Landau, 1990).

Afghani's clandestine web of writers and religious leaders played important role in the consolidation of British efforts to divide India on religious grounds. Indian "two nation theory was an offshoot of the "Pan-Islamic Movement". This was effectively used by strategic planners in London and New Delhi for the division of India in 1947. Some of the Muslim religious leaders and an elite group of Muslims—affiliated with East India Company and the colonial administration in India—were organized into a political party, the Muslim League, and were given the task of demanding a state out of India on religious grounds. Khimjee (2013) observed that Muslim religious element in India influenced by Afghani's 'Pan-Islamism' soon became the dominant factor in the Muslim politics of India. Afghani's magazine '*Urwat al-Wuthkah*' was continuously urging Indian Muslims to

[44] Some of the powerful Ayatollahs and religious leaders ruling Iran since 1979 are the direct descendants of Afghani's recruited people.

reclaim their territory (*Dar al-Islam*) as a religious obligation. describing Muslim presence in India as living in *Dar al-Harb*[45].

Pakistan: as protector of colonial interests

In the changing political scenario where the Soviet Union emerged as the second superpower after Second World War: China and an independent India were eventually to be ruled by communists and nationalists, creating a client state was thought to be imperative. It was also felt necessary to safeguard British interests in the Middle East with its newly found vast oil reserves. The eventual creation of Pakistan was to establish a British base in the region after the withdrawal. The Muslim League which was formed in 1906 was a political party composed of loyal Muslims, spies of the British administration in India and personalities whose families had been on the pay-roll of East India Company for many years. Its leaders were ready to serve the purpose of safeguarding British interests. A pilot project of dividing Bengal in the early 20th century was implemented. Azad (1988). believed that although the immediate objective was to weaken the nationalist forces. the partition of Bengal became the model for future division of India. The Communal Award in 1932 was the next step. which enhanced the communal divide (Azad. 1988).

The open rebellion on the part of Indian National Congress by initiating 'Quit India Movement' of 1942 gave impetus to the British efforts of dividing India before withdrawing. However. Muslim League party was not serving the purpose of gaining

[45] Dar al-Islam (the place of peace) is where the Muslims are in command while Dar al Harb literally means the place of war: however. in an Islamic perspective. the term is used for areas of the world where non-believers or infidels live. According to Qur'an and Sunna Dar al-Harb and Dar al-Islam are in perpetual conflict until the final victory of Islam over the world.

support from the public as its leaders were not trusted by Muslim masses because of their open connections with the colonial administration. Despite sending their trusted person Muhammad Ali Jinnah from England to take over the Party in order to give it a new lease of life, in elections held in 1937, the League failed to secure a majority vote in any of the Muslim majority provinces of India. As the British authorities failed to muster enough support for the Muslim League party among the Muslims of India on its manifesto of division on religious grounds, they decided to impose the partition and to do it fast. After World War II, the British hurriedly put into action their well chalked out plan of dividing India and then quitting. The British Prime Minister Winston Churchill in 1940, in Cairo, discussed the unfolding events regarding India with the pro-British Indian politician Sir Skindar Hayat. Sir Skindar Hayat after returning to India told his colleagues that he had discussed India's constitutional problem with the British Prime Minister and had tried to make two points clear to him:

> *". ...I tried to impress upon him the fact that only the martial races of Punjab had contributed to the British War effort with loyalty and it would be a travesty of justice if they were made subservient to the Congress and the Brahmins who would be in majority at the centre in a free India.....A loyal Punjab deserved to be the leader of a separate dominion, which should include Sindh, the NWFP and Baluchistan. This could be easily achieved provided the British statesmen were convinced of its advantages. Such a federation would be loyal to the British under all circumstances. The defence of the new dominion and the rest of India should for some time, be joined under British supervision. Later, a mutually agreed formula could be evolved for the purpose. The new dominion would be economically self-sufficient (Syed, 1994: page, 51)."*

He told his colleagues that the British Prime Minister has assured that a country would be created for the loyalists of the British administration in India. GM Syed supplementing Sir Skindar Hayat's disclosures pointed out that:

> *"Winston Churchill met Sir Sikander in Cairo and personally thanked him for having helped the British in their hour of the trial while the Congress had added to their problems. Therefore: the Congress did not deserve British attention or friendship. He said that the British could not remain in India in the face of opposition from its 400 million people. He asked Sir Sikander Hayat to assure Mr Jinnah that in order to teach the Congress a lesson, the British would quit the sub-continent soon after the War but only after having created a 'Muslim India' in India. Mr Jinnah need not be afraid, and he could have this pledge verified by the Viceroy of India (Syed, 1994: page, 50)."*

During the meeting. Winston Churchill praised the loyalties of Indian Muslims towards the British Empire by saying that the Indian Muslims have shown their loyalty: their help in this critical moment has proved that they will be loyal after the independence of India. He declared that the British government. therefore. has decided to divide India and handover a part of it to loyal Muslims. He emphasised that a government loyal to Britain in the Muslim part of divided India will in future help in the creation of a group of countries friendly to the British. By leading the Muslim countries in the Middle East. the Muslim leaders in India who were loyal to the British are going to get the position of a future leader of Muslim states.

Meanwhile. Mr Muhammad Ali Jinnah was asked to increase the campaign for the division of India. In this regard. a

resolution to be passed during the 1940 Lahore convention of Muslim League was drafted by officials of India Office in London. Lord Zetland, the then secretary of state for India discussed fully and endorsed the resolution when Muslim League leader Choudhry Khaliquzaman met him in London to deliberate on the Lahore meeting of the Muslim League (Sarila, 2006). The resolution was passed demanding the partition of India and creation of a state for Muslims.

The British objectives in the creation of Pakistan were summarized in a memorandum to the Prime Minister, by the military establishment of Great Britain as follows (Sarila, 2006, p. 26):

> *We will obtain important strategic facilities [such as] the port of Karachi and air bases in North West India and the support of Muslim manpower.*
>
> *We should be able to ensure the continued independence and integrity [of] Afghanistan.*
>
> *We should increase our prestige and improve our position throughout the Muslim world, and demonstrate, by the assistance Pakistan would receive, the advantages of links with the British Commonwealth.*
>
> *Our links with Pakistan might have a stabilizing effect on India as a whole, since an attack by Hindustan on Pakistan would involve Hindustan in war, not with Pakistan alone, but [also] with the British Commonwealth.*

The position on the Frontier might well become more settled since relations between the tribes and Pakistan would be easier than they could be with a united India.

Lord Mountbatten, the last Viceroy of India, in an unsigned memorandum, summarized the crux of the British view for the creation of Pakistan (Sarila, 2006, p. 28):

"The Indus Valley, western Punjab and Baluchistan[the northwest] are vital to any strategic plans for the defence of [the] all important Muslim belt...the oil supplies of the Middle East. If one looks upon this area as a strategic wall (against Soviet expansionism) the five most important bricks in the wall are: Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Only through the open ocean port of Karachi could the opponents of the Soviet Union take immediate and effective countermeasures. The sea approaches to all other countries will entail navigation in enclosed waters directly menaced by Russian air fleets...not only of the sea lanes of approach, but also the ports of disembarkation.

If the British Commonwealth and the United States of America are to be in a position to defend their vital interests in the Middle East, then the best and most stable area from which to conduct this defence is from Pakistan territory.

Pakistan is the keystone of the strategic arch of the wide and vulnerable waters of the Indian ocean."

On February 26, 1947, the British Government declared its intention to quit India by June 1948 and transfer the authority

from British to Indian hands. On 3 June 1947, Viscount Louis Mountbatten, the last British Governor General of India, announced the partitioning of British India into India and Pakistan. With the speedy passage through the British Parliament of the Indian Independence Act 1947, two provinces of Punjab and Bengal were divided and with the merger of Sindh and North-Western Frontier Province, the state of Pakistan was created out of India on 14 August 1947. In a controversial referendum, British Balochistan[46] was also merged with Pakistan.

Pakistan: the Allah given country

'Divide and rule' had been employed by imperial powers throughout history. India was divided and Pakistan was created to safeguard the multi-faceted strategic interests of the British Empire who at that time was also the guardian of Western Imperial interests in the region. However, Pakistan is the only country in the contemporary world whose creation has been sanctioned, according to Pakistani state narratives, by a divine entity[47]. In the school curriculum, Pakistan is being mentioned as an 'Allah given' country for the believers of Islamic faith in India. However, for the people who were engaged in a protracted struggle against the colonial power, it was a British created country; nevertheless, as put forward by a Sindhi nationalist, many unique and unnatural characteristics of Pakistan makes a person seriously think about a supernatural origin of the country.

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[46] British Balochistan consisted of leased areas of the Baloch state of Kalat and some regions of southern Afghanistan which were ceded to the British India with the drawing of Durand line during last decades of 19th century.

[47] The only other example of a divine sanction of granting a land was the promise of the land of present day Israel by god Jehova to Jewish Patriarch Abraham in ancient times.

Chapter Eight

The genesis of Pakistan is a unique experience in the history of political science in the sense that it was the first country created on the assumption that the people of one religious faith cannot live with the people of another religious faith in one country. It was also unique in that in order to give an ideological base for the creation of the state, a new theory of nationhood was manufactured which was based on the perception that people of different cultural, historical and linguistic background can form a nation only upon the basis of their religious faith denying all established social science definitions of a nation. Janmahmad (1989), commented that people who invaded ruled and settled in India since 8th century was a medley of various Middle Eastern and Central Asian nations and tribal groupings who never constituted a nation. The Indian two nation theory outrightly rejected the universally accepted definition of national identity based essentially on a common race, common language, common social values and traditions, a common history and a territory.

There are many other unique features of this 'Allah given' state. The speed in which the creation of Pakistan was finalized is unprecedented in the history of colonialism. In 1940, a resolution was passed at the meeting of a pro-colonialist party demanding the division of their country on religious grounds, and within six years, they achieved what they demanded. It was also unique in the history of political science, that a country was created without any movement on behalf of the general population and without even a nosebleed in the struggle to liberate a people from a powerful colonial power. It was unique that the entire national leadership of this newly independent state was exported from elsewhere, its ideology was created by the colonial power, its national language was not the language of any national entity of the country, and the population of regions, which now comprised Pakistan, was overwhelmingly against the creation of

Pakistan. All these uniqueness force someone to believe in a divine intervention in the creation of Pakistan.

With the baggage of its artificial creation, its superfluous and fallacious founding philosophy and later developments in international polity, Pakistan was bound to become a satellite state subservient to the wishes of the Western Bloc throughout Cold War era. A vital component of the stability of the Pakistani state came from its strong relationship with Great Britain and the United States. Both states became patrons of Pakistan and sources of military and economic aid (Haqqani, 2005). Stabilization of Pakistan became vital for the UK and the US. as it was to be an important part of the physical 'Islamic barrier' against presumed Soviet advances towards the warm waters of Indian Ocean.

For the people of the regions, which now comprised Pakistan, creation of a religious state came as a shock; however, the British decision of partitioning India and creating a religious state was the culmination of a long-standing and unrelenting policy of the colonial administration in India and policy planners in London for the Middle East and Central Asia. The occupation of India, the rivalry of Czarist Russia with Britain in Central Asia, the emergence of the Soviet Union on the horizon of world politics, and discovery of oil reserves in the Middle East can be cited as causative factors in the creation of Pakistan. Pakistan is a unique case of exploiting a people's religious or mythological beliefs in the division of a country by powerful forces in the political history of the world. Although, the creation of Pakistan shows the brilliance of a colonial administration, in successfully carving out a client or subservient state; nevertheless, it was a mortal blow on the aspirations of Indians who struggled long for the sovereignty and national integrity of their country. It

was a blow came from heaven and for which they were not prepared. For them. Pakistan appeared to be a real divine punishment. Pakistan. as it appeared later. was really a flail of Allah for the people of this region for their committed or uncommitted sins.

9. Essence of Sindhi national question

> Sometimes people hold a core belief that is very strong. When they are presented with evidence that works against beliefs, the new evidence cannot be accepted. It would create a feeling that is extremely uncomfortable, called cognitive dissonance. And because it is so important to protect the core belief, they will rationalize and even deny anything that doesn't fit in with the core belief. **Franz Fanon**

Common traditions and a shared historical past knit people together into a single nation and nationalism provide a group of people with its true identity and an inspiring will. Inseparably linked with the concepts of nation and nationalism is the land, to which the people give unreserved loyalty. It is an emotional outlook on patriotism. This emotional expression has its sway in the principle of national sovereignty. Sindhis remained under foreign hegemony for many centuries but remarkably, they preserved their national identity, language and culture. Seventy years of Pakistani domination has further increased their national awareness. With the creation of Pakistan in 1947, a new and tragic history of Sindh began in which Sindhis are facing the worst of socio-cultural, economic and political exploitation of a kind never known to them in their tortuous history spanning for several thousand years. The Sindhi national question in Pakistan in its essence has

historical. social. economic and political elements and their national sentiments are the reaction of oppressive measures and assimilation efforts by the state establishment.

Nation and Nationalism in context

A nation is a group of people sharing a common culture. common past. attached to a clearly demarcated territory. The nation was defined by Renan (1990). as a soul....a great solidarity created by the sentiments of sacrifices to be made in the future. Each nation forms a separate. independent entity. expressing itself in its language and culture. setting its own standards of values and conduct. and is thus entirely self-determining. According to Smith (1983). a nation has six attributes: a collective distinctive name: a myth of common ancestry; shared historical memories; shared culture: an association with a specific homeland; and a sense of ethnic solidarity. Anderson (1991). famously termed the nation as an imagined community because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members. meet them. or even hear of them, yet in their minds lives the image of their communion. He formulated that the nation secures its symbolic continuity through time and mobilizes the willingness of current generations to die in its defence by interpellating them as members of an imagined community which transcends death. Stalin (1947). postulated out that a nation is a historically evolved community of people. emphasizing the influence of material conditions of existence of a people on the growth of their group identity.

Nationalism has been defined as a state of collective mentality which represents the peoples political will aim at achieving a national state where it can live for the good of all its members. The genesis of nationalism can be traced to ideas linked with human dignity and equality. freedom and solidarity. The growth of nationalism has a different origin in

various countries under varying circumstances. Historically, it would be invidious to give a firm date to the rise of nationalism. Man, however, has always made a distinction between different peoples and has always been loyal to his own linguistic or cultural group. For Weber (1996), the nation exists as a culturally distinct body of people who share a sense of the prestige associated with their culture and the consequent need to ensure its preservation. Modern nationalism is the magnified and most sophisticated form of primitive group loyalties and sentiments and binds the group together with a deep sense of national pride. The contemporary concept of nationalism is the product of intellectual discussions during 17th 18th century Europe regarding the nation and the general concept of nationalism, which resulted in the argument that human beings are divided into nations and the concept of loyalty to the nation emerged as a progressive theory in subsequent decades. It has grown within the short span of a few hundred years from a mere theoretical abstraction to a major reality of modern age. According to Smith (1983), as an ideology, nationalism has four doctrines:

1. The world is divided into nations, each with its own individuality, history and destiny
2. The nation is the source of all political and social powers and the loyalty to nation override all other allegiances
3. Human beings must identify with a nation if they want to be free
4. Nations must be free and secure if peace and justice are to prevail in the world

The desire to be united and accomplish great deeds is the true manifestation of the great soul of the people, which needs grandeur and glory, prestige and power. Throughout history, great feats of national consciousness and pride were displayed

by nations. These acts were motivated by the threat of subjugation and a burning hatred of the alien rule. According to Herodotus, the Persians, who had overrun the neighbouring country, were approaching Xanthe. Seeing no way out but to resist the invaders, the men of Xanthe collected together their goods as well as the people, women and children, set fire to them and vowed not to give up to the Persians and die rather than surrender. Many examples can be cited where the Baloch, Sindhis and various other nations remained firm in their decision to fight to the last. The Baloch are proud of their ancestors who walked towards imminent death in the battles of Kalat, Adab and in various battles against the Qajar forces in recent history. Likewise, Sindhis expressed their love for the dignity and honour of their nation by showing extreme acts of courage while fighting in Rawad against the Arabs, in Thatta against Arguns and in Mianni and Dabbah fighting against the overwhelming firepower of English troops. These acts of valour performed by the people with a high spirit of national sentiment and deep hatred for foreign domination.

National and territorial states

In the contemporary context, terminologies of nation and states are intertwined. Two different definitions of the State can be proposed here: the territorial or geographical state and the national state. A national state has been defined as the government on the territory of a people having a common language, common culture, historical past and moreover an intense desire to live together under a common law. But the territorial state is devoid of most of the attributes of the national state. It is a union of many peoples speaking a variety of languages, who may have no cultural, religious or racial affinity at all, and is by and large maintained by the coercive force of the state. The present territorial states which erroneously claim nationhood are mostly reminiscent of

primitive imperialism and the dynasties of the ancient world and the logical extension of the previous empires.

Conceptually, in the national state, the feelings of loyalty and patriotism and the readiness to accept the will of the state are overwhelming, while in the territorial state many groups consider themselves unequal citizens and in this sense loyalty to their own people will ride high. Here the general will for the state is apparently absent. In the decolonization process of the 20th century, in the majority of cases, the will of the people of many national entities were not considered while merging them into a multinational state.

Everywhere in Asia, Africa or Latin America, the emergence of the territorial states has created manifold problems, where national entities are divided by artificial boundaries. Pakistan stands out as a similar forceful union of peoples, with no racial or cultural harmony among them. Pakistani nationalism is identified with the Islamic nation, which has never existed. With its religious ideology, the territorial state of Pakistan is progressing on lines where the dominant nationality is vested with divine authority to rule Sindhis and others. Pakistani state nationalism is an example in which religious faith of the subject population is used as a state legitimation principle. The key point is its emphasis that since all peoples or majority of the people in the state believe in one particular mythological belief, therefore they are of one nation, and by this principle, they should be loyal to the state. This was in total contrast to the perception of Sindhis and other national entities having national identities of thousand years old.

Contextual factors in the development of contemporary Sindhi nationalism

The spirit of nationalism has been the guiding spirit throughout history and during the height of imperialism

aroused the consciousness of people to resist alien rule. This spirit of nationalism banking on a distinct identity. It aims at mobilizing a people. demanding the right of self-rule or cultural. religious and economic autonomy for them. Kelman (1997). argued that:

> *"...national identity is the group's definition of itself as a group. its conception of its enduring characteristics and basic values. its strength and weaknesses. its hopes and fears. its reputation and conditions of existence. its institutions and traditions. its history. current purposes and future prospects" (p. 17).*

The context in which Sindhi national conscious in Pakistan has become so strong included geographical. historical. socio-cultural. economic and demographic factors.

Geographical Context

Definition of a national identity is not possible without demarcations. boundaries and frontiers that include and exclude. Many groups of people are united because the bounding of territory has forced them to belong to integrated systems. The emotional bonds of groups to politico-territorial identify cannot be underestimated. Shafer (1955). pointed out that whereas a socially coherent group. once defined its territory. in time the politically defined territory came to define the people. In this context. people from different regions of a particular geographical entity came to develop a sense of belonging to a territorial unit and in turn this geographical territory will come to define who these people are. Sindhis regard the historical landmass of Sindh Desh as space to which they attach their national identity as a distinct people. Geography has made the frame of Sindhi nationalism with Sindhu River as the baseline of Sindhi

national consciousness. Sindhu River and Sindhu Desh cannot be separated from the fundamentals of Sindhi nationalism.

Historical Context

History has been one of the basic pillars on which the strong building of Sindhi national sentiments stood. Sindhi nationalism is based on the premises that they are the heir of a thousand years old civilization. They are proud of the fact that a country named Sindhu Desh from time immemorial has existed. Sindhis take pride in its heritage from the Indus civilization and glorious days of the Sindhi empire of the 6th and 7th century. They consider the period when Sindh was an empire incorporating various surrounding regions as their golden era. Narratives of heroic deeds of their ancestors are among one of the motivating factors of Sindhi masses. The historical memories of a long and protracted struggle against foreign invaders is another ingredient of Sindhi nationalism. National myths created by the history of Sindhi Empire in the 7th century and heroic resistance of Sindhis during the dark days of medieval times entered into their nationalism and shaped the modern concept of Sindhi national identity. It can justifiably assert that contemporary Sindhi national consciousness is the product of foreign conquests of Sindh by various powers for the last many centuries.

Sindhis believe that the religious state of Pakistan through its media and educational institutions has been carrying out a program of systematically mutilating their history. In Pakistani textbooks, history begin with the Arab invasion of Sindh. There is no mention of the past of a proud Sindhi nation which is basking in the glow of ancient Indus civilization and the powerful empire of Sindh during early medieval times. Robbers, plunderers, and rapists of all kinds, who were responsible for the plunder of Sindh, the mass murder of people and slavery of thousands of Sindhi

men and women are being glorified in state narratives and historical books. Notorious personalities like Muhammad bin Kasim Al-Thakafi, Mahmud of Ghazna, Ghuris, Mongols, Mughals, and Abdalis are being portrayed as the national hero of Pakistan and Sindhi children are forced to sing songs in praise of these adventurers. There is no mention of a single person from Sindh in the Pakistani textbooks who heroically resisted the Arabs, Turks, Mongols and the British invaders and valiantly offered the ultimate sacrifice in the defence of their motherland. The people who were on the payroll of East India Company and the British colonial administration in India like Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Syed Ahmad Barelavi, Poet Sir Muhammad Iqbql Lahori, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Liaquat Ali Khan and many other collaborators with colonial power are being portrayed as great leaders and freedom fighters.

Sindh has been part of Pakistan for more than seven decades. Two generations of Sindhis got their education in its schools and universities with state-created curriculum fabricating the very existence of a glorious past of Sindhi people. However, the sense of nationalism and the urge for the preservation of their national identity is stronger and more intense among the new educated generation compare with earlier generations.

Socio-cultural Context

The identity checklist for a Sindhi nation also includes socio-cultural values and a rich language. They were fundamental in establishing strength and resilience of Sindhi people throughout history. The social, political and religious consciousness of Sindhis is a mixture of various religions and cultures that were merged with the greater Sindhi identity through ages. It is generally acknowledged that memory of a glorious collective culture has been vital for the shaping and spreading nationalist sentiments in Sindh. Sindhi national unity was shaped by inventing traditions, such as symbols,

rituals, heroic stories, legends and myths which provided them with traditions and roots that characterised the unique history and social character of their nation.

The term Sindhi culture or social traditions denote values which were prevalent during the glorious days of Sindh during the 6th and 7th century before the invasion of Arab Bedouins. With its broad base, the Sindhi culture has been able to merge the cultural ethos of many invading nations and this ethos became inseparable from the original Sindhi socio-cultural traditions. With the admixture of several national entities with their varying religious and mythological beliefs, the Sindhi society with the passage of time, emerged as one of the most tolerant and adoptive societies in the contemporary world. Sindhis are proud of their secular mindset which is very distinct from the religious extremism and narrowmindedness of Pakistani state. This secular mindset of Sindhis can be traced from the days of the empire of Sindh which was an example of peaceful coexistence of people observing different religious faiths. Such has been the impacts of a very rich cultural and civilizational strength that all people coming to Sindh soon merged with Sindhi society and became part and parcel of Sindhi national identity. Huns, Arabs, Persians, Turks, Afghans and the Baloch once in Sindh, within a few decades discarded their original national identity and became proud Sindhis, adopting Sindhi language and Sindhi socio-cultural norms. These socio-cultural traditions are so embedded in the society that even after 70 years, the state-sponsored introduction of superfluous social, religious or sectarian doctrines failed to make a significant impact on Sindhi social traditions.

With the introduction of Buddhism during the 6th century, nonviolence became a part of Sindhi social behaviour; nevertheless, it could not become an impediment to rise

against the powerful or aggressors. To stand against personal and national injustice has been an important character of Sindhis throughout history. They never hesitated in offering the ultimate sacrifice to safeguard their land and people against any aggressor of any might. The personalities like King Dahir. Dodo Sumro. Darya Khan. Rana Rinmal Sodho. Makhdum Bilawal. Shah Inayat of Jhok. General Hoshu Sheedi and countless known and unknown heroes of 21st century Sindhi national struggle in Pakistan are the torch bearers of the sacred values of Sindhi nation which were developed through the sufferings of hundreds of year.

Although various Sufis and Pirs are considered as collaborators and fifth columnists. Sufiism was used by Sindhi nationalists to furnish a Sindhi national identity different from Pakistani state identity[48]. Shah Latif Bhittai became the nationalist Sufi saint of Sindh and his literary works depicted a Sindhi society of tolerance and coexistence which was far different from the fundamentalist. rigid. exclusive Muslim societies in the region. In this context of toleration and coexistence, there is no doubt that Sindhi Hindus and Muslims practice a social behaviour which does not match the socio-religious behaviour of the people

[48] Intensive debate is going on among Sindhi nationalists how to define the role of Sufis and Pirs. Many among them believe that open discussion is necessary to create awareness among the masses about the historical contexts of Pirs and Sufi phenomenon in Sindh. For many observers and even for many Sindhi leaders. the patience and being content in adversity tantamount to being docile is being preached by Sufis and Pirs. However. for others. it is not being docile but because Sindhis having faced atrocities. aggressions. genocide and a multitude of criminal activities from invaders for the last many hundreds of years. they have developed a quality of patience and perseverance. They have never given up the idea of rising up against the powerful when there was a call for it. The history has shown that Sindhis are among the few nations in south Asia who stood against mighty invaders.

of surrounding regions. It was the reason while Punjab and Bengal were engulfed by violent clashes between Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims in the wake of the creation of Pakistan in 1947, Sindh remained relatively peaceful. The tension between Hindus and Muslims in Sindh which resulted in the later migration of Hindu Sindhis was masterminded, planned and executed by the colonial administration with the help of its proxy religious organizations and protégés. The aim was to dilute the Sindhi national struggle for a sovereign status.

In Pakistan, despite the state-sponsored religious extremism and militancy, Sindhi masses, by and large, have been successful in containing the waves of religious extremism and radicalisation. The credit would justly go for the rich secular and tolerant mindset of Sindhi masses in their social behaviour. Contemporary polarization on sectarian grounds which is being witnessed in some parts of Sindh is a phenomenon mainly present among the immigrant population from north India, Afghanistan and Punjab.

Political Context

Political marginalization has been one of the strong ingredients of Sindhi national consciousness in Pakistan. In the initial 10 years of Pakistan, *Muhajirs* were one way or the other, on the top of the ruling hierarchy of the State. Sindhis and other national entities were excluded from the power. Even, a loyalist like Ayub Khudo was not tolerated and dismissed as the chief minister when he opposed the separation of Karachi from Sindh. It has been the state policy of not allowing any person having any sympathy with Sindhi national cause to enter the corridors of power. Only lackeys of the ruling alliance or people with dubious character were kept as ministers and chief ministers with nominal powers. No genuine Sindhi representative was allowed to the top political jobs with actual powers. The creation of "One Unit"

of West Pakistan in 1955- the merging of Sindh, Balochistan, Frontier Province with Punjab-was a unique example of not only blatantly denying the existence of thousands years old national entities but also a smart endeavour to further limit the already minimal access of Sindhis and others to power corridors of the state. The alienation of Sindhis with Pakistan became universal.

Economic Context

Economic exploitation has been another context in the rising Sindhi national sentiments in Pakistan. After Balochistan, Sindh is the most deprived region of the country despite the fact that it is the major revenue generating province of Pakistan. 70 percent of the gas consumed in Pakistan is coming from Sindh. Karachi is the only operational seaport of the country and the major source of state income. Coal and oil are other important natural resources of Sindh. There is the strong perception among Sindhis that their natural resources are being ruthlessly exploited for the benefit of Punjab. Despite Sindh being rich in resources, half of its population do not have potable water and 70 percent of them don't have a proper sewerage system. Communication, health and education systems in the land of Sindhu are just grotesque jokes for a region of such immense wealth.

Demographic Context

Demographic factors which became influential in creating a Sindhi national consciousness after the creation of Pakistan included Sindhi fears of becoming a minority in their homeland. Demographic picture of Sindh drastically changed after the creation of Pakistan with the influx of Urdu speaking immigrants from North India and thousands of farm workers from Punjab. For poverty-stricken Muslims in north Indian provinces, Sindh became a land of opportunity. They became not only the rulers of their host nation but controlled all

economic and social activities in the province. This instigated others and thousands of immigrants came and settled in Karachi and other major cities of Sindh, totally changing the outlook of Sindhi cities within a decade.

Thousands of labourers from Punjab were brought into Sindh to work on the newly acquired lands by the defence personnel. During the 1960s, several new barrages were constructed on River Indus after the signing of Indus Water Treaty with India. 60 percent of lands irrigated by these new canals and barrages were allotted to serving or retired military officers and soldiers from Punjab. Besides regular allotments, the army, in the guise of national security also grabbed thousands of acres of agricultural lands. These lands were used not only for the establishment of cantonments in various regions of Sindh but for housing complexes, business centres and agricultural purposes, bringing many thousands of extra settlers from Punjab.

In recent decades, more than a million Afghan refugees have been settled in Karachi and other townships in Sindh. These refugees not only aggravated the demographic situation but they brought a culture of drugs, arms and religious intolerance in Sindh. Their anti-social activities are being patronised by the security establishment of Pakistan[49]. The influx of Urdu speaking immigrants from India and in later decades planned and unplanned settlement of millions of people from other parts of Pakistan is not only changing the fabrics of a secular Sindhi society but there is a genuine fear of Sindh losing its character of being the land of Sindhis in near future.

[49] It is widely believed that the web of terrorist activities which the Pakistani establishment is operating in the neighbouring countries is being financially supported by drugs and arms trafficking conducted through Afghan refugees in Sindh and Balochistan.

The people cannot easily forget the pride of national belonging. A strong urge for preserving the national identity and a common desire for the struggle for that purpose is the spirit of nationalism. Sindhis are among one of the surviving ancient nations proud of their distinct geographical land mass which was created by mighty Sindhu River. Sindhi nationalism is the expression of unreserved loyalty to their people and land. It is their affirmation of love and oneness towards one of the most diversified groups of people in the contemporary world. For Sindhis, nationalism is both political ideology and a sentiment of belonging to an ancient community with a set of symbols, beliefs and way of life. The concept of Sindhi nationalism is incompatible with the Pakistan state nationalism which is based upon the existence of an Islamic nation. It does not recognise the multinational character of the state. Sindhis simply believe that they are different. They don't share the same language, the same culture nor the same social and economic vision of the state. By demographic changes, they are becoming a minority in their own homeland, economically they were exploited, politically they were kept out from the corridors of power and culturally they felt that their thousand year's old cherished traditions and national identity faced mortal danger of being extinct. A vast majority of Sindhis now perceive the state as an occupying force which is the expression of a profound sense of emotional detachment from the state. It can be observed that the main objectives of the Sindhi national struggle throughout have concerned with the central issues of preserving their socio-cultural traditions and regaining their national sovereignty.

Kiwuwa (2007), observed that one of the key roles of a multinational state is to ensure that no nation develop the feeling of domination and alienation within both the social and political arena. However, the Punjabi dominated ruling

alliance of Pakistan has been treating Sindh, Balochistan and other regions as conquered territories. As the guardians of a divinely created country, they don't feel responsible for any worldly code of ethics in the running of their religious state. Dashti (2017), observed that the efforts of the establishment of Pakistan to create an artificial Islamic national identity are futile and based on self-imposed ignorance. The state failed to comprehend that the integration of various nations into the system of a newly created state required conceding to every national entity the right of national existence in an overall political arrangement within the state. For many analysts on Pakistani affairs, it is now too late and an impossible task to correct the wrongs. The establishment is persistent in its refusal to recognize the multi-national character of the state. It is not only denying the national rights but from the very beginning, it has been very derisive of Sindhi socio-cultural traditions. It was not only the fabrication of history, belittling of Sindhis as a people or showing disrespect to Sindhi social norms, but also the discourteous manners towards much loved Sindhi leaders that enhanced the degree of hatred between Sindhis and the state. Deliberate attempts at the mutilation of Sindhi history, the imposition of alien cultural and social traditions; belittling of cherished Sindhi cultural norms; the humiliation of Sindhi nationalist leaders; the economic exploitation and violent curbing of nationalist political activity has manifested in a protracted national resistance against Pakistan. Sindhis believe that an artificially created fundamentalist religious state has no historical, legal or moral justification for ruling them or occupying their land. The essence of their nationalism is the assertion of their uniqueness and the strong urge for living a life in accordance with their own cultural values and social traditions.

10. Sindhi National struggle in Pakistan: the first decade

> To revolt is a natural tendency of life. Even a worm turns against the foot that crushes it. In general, the vitality and relative dignity of an animal can be measured by the intensity of its instinct to revolt.
> **Mikhail Bakunin**

On 26 June 1947. the Sindh Assembly with a majority of 33 to 20 voted for a resolution to join the Federation of Pakistan. in accordance with the British government's June 3 Partition Plan for India. It was the beginning of what in coming years proved to be the new phase of occupation of Sindh far different from those of earlier periods. The merger of Sindh into Pakistan put its physical. cultural. historical and civilizational existence into great perils. Immediately after their incorporation into Pakistan, Sindhis began to raise voices for national rights and there began a protracted struggle what Sindhis believe to be their national liberation struggle. Planned demographic changes. imposition of an alien language 'Urdu' as the national language. superimposition of the culture of immigrants from north India over their thousand years old cultural traditions. separation of Karachi from Sindh. humiliation and persecution of Sindhi leaders. adoption of economic policies detrimental to the interests of Sindhi people and exclusion of Sindhis from the power corridors of the state

were alarming signs. They began a resistance movement against perceived injustices and this became the foundation of a national struggle based on safeguarding Sindhi national entity, language, culture, political and economic interests.

National liberation struggle in the context

A national liberation struggle is the movement of a subjugated or colonized nation in the pursuit of freedom. It is the sum total of individual, organizational, and political expression, the goal of which is the realization of national aspirations. In other words, national liberation struggle is the expression of nationalism and is a conglomerate of individual endeavours and desires which has been appropriated and shaped to mark and define their sense of belonging to the nation. Cabral (1972) pointed out that the struggle of peoples for liberation and independence undoubtedly constitutes one of the essential characteristics of contemporary history. When the struggle against subjugation is supported by whole communities of an oppressed nation, it becomes the national liberation struggle of that nation. Taber (1965), asserted that these are struggles of rebellious nations against foreign invaders or ruling classes of their society, of the exploited against the exploiters, of the governed against the governors. Another characteristic of a national liberation struggle is that it is the movement of weak against the strong. They are fundamentally patriotic movements of a defensive nature as a reaction to occupation, economic/political oppression, and cultural genocide which is the attempt to wipe out their culture through forced assimilation.

National liberation struggles have always been accompanied by an ideological narrative. 20th-century national liberation struggles expressed a tremendous range of ideological diversity. Many were left-wing with Marxist or socialist ideologies, appealing to the poor and to oppressed people.

Some were right wing, while others claimed to be liberal or purely based on the idea of the past glory of a nation. Majority of 20th-century national liberation movements were a combination of nationalism, socialism, and anti-imperialism. The majority of contemporary national liberation movements lack ideological clarity. They evolved basically as a result of the creation of artificial states after the collapse of colonialism in the aftermath of the Second World War. The collapse of Soviet Union also caused much ideological confusion among the struggles for national salvation.

The mobilization of masses on nationalistic footings has been an effective phenomenon in colonial and post-colonial multi-national states. Nationalist organizations and individuals usually exploit collective griefs of a national entity in order to initiate political actions. Memories of national heroes are important are important ingredients of mobilization efforts because they influence the way new generations look at their past. The success of these political actions is assumed to depend largely on the political-institutional conditions present in a certain state which provide a political opportunity for nationalist organizations. These opportunities include political and institutional makeup of the state, clash of interests at political and economic institutions of the state, the strategies of the ruling elite in dealing with the grievances of national entities and the perception of excesses among the dominated national entities. In this context, the preservation of national identity and to resist increasing encroachments on their socio-cultural traditions and oppressive economic and political measures of the state have made the basis of contemporary Sindhi national struggle.

The great betrayal

Sindhi national struggle in Pakistan began with the realization on the part of Sindhi leadership that they have been betrayed

and their national sentiments have been cheated upon by the establishment of the newly created state. They have their reasons for developing this perception.

Majority of Sindhi politicians who supported the demand of Pakistan and joined Muslim League justified their stance on the belief that 1940 resolution of Muslim League in which the demand of division of India was put forward, was to guarantee the autonomous status for Sindh. This was manifested by Sindh Assembly resolution passed in 1943. But the Pakistani state soon adopted a strict centralized policy in the running of the state. It also adopted economic measures which were assumed by Sindhis as merely serving the interests of the ruling nationality of Punjab. In foreign policy, the perception gained ground among nationalists that it became a satellite state subservient to the wishes of the former colonial power and its allies. The negation of national rights of constituent nationalities and economic policies detrimental to the interests of minority nationalities created a generalized feeling of frustration in Sindh, Balochistan and Bengal. With the realization that Pakistan is a state-created not for the wellbeing of the people, but for serving the interests of the colonial power through the alliance of Punjabi military, *Mullahs* and *Muhajirs* from north India, Sindhi politicians from all spectrum of political divide began to assert themselves in order to safeguard their national interests.

At the time of the proposed British withdrawal from the subcontinent, the Sindhi politics was dominated mainly by the landed aristocracy and an emerging class of traders or merchants who were directly and indirectly under the patronage of the colonial administration of India. Although, a section of Sindhis were against the merger of Sindh with Pakistan but Indian National Congress and other nationalist parties in Sindh failed to make an important imprint, as a

result. a significant section of Sindhi society by and large supported the inclusion of Sindh in Pakistan by misconceived belief that they will be better off politically. and economically.

During the process of dividing India. the Sindhi politicians were presented with a picture of a far greater share of power in a small state of Pakistan then the huge country of India. The emerging traders and merchant class of Sindh were made scared about the domination of well-established business class of a post-partition India where there might not be enough chances for them to flourish. Even conscious elements of Sindhi politics fell into this trap which was cleverly laid down by the colonial establishment and they began supporting the inclusion of Sindh into Pakistan. However. soon they realised that they have been deceived. But this realisation was too late and came at a time when the Pakistani state was in firm control of the situation. Sindhi people astonishingly observed a unique phenomenon soon after the creation of Pakistan. Waves and waves of Urdu speaking migrants came into Sindh. occupied Sindhi lands. jobs and businesses under state patronage. They soon monopolized educational institutions and state and private media outlets. As part of a ruling alliance, they were considering themselves superior to all national entities of Pakistan[50]. From the very beginning. these immigrants (*Muhajirs*) refused to adopt the secular socio-political traditions of Sindh. Organized on religious and sectarian grounds. they formed their own religious and fundamentalist political organizations like Jamaat Islami and

[50] Even after 70 years. the Muhajirs are not only refusing to merge into society of the land which has given them protection and unexpected and undue advantages. but with the blessing of their partners in the state power structure they are now openly declaring the immigrants as a separate ethnic entity demanding the division of Sindh and a state for the refugees out of Sindh.

Jamiat e Ulema Pakistan. Many among them were already affiliated with Muslim League.

With a developing perception of being cheated, many among Sindhi leadership began to express their feeling of disgust. As put forward by GM Syed (1974: page, 83):

> *"How and to what limits have our hopes been belied in the establishment of Pakistan's sway over our lands.*

1. *We had expected that in terms of the Lahore-Resolution, the Sindhi, Balochi, Punjabi, Pakhtoon and Bengali people will acquire independent and sovereign status as nations but that did not happen. After the establishment of Pakistan, the overwhelmingly powerful Muhajir-Punjabi vested interests betrayed the trust and, denying the very existence of the separate national entity of each of these peoples, imposed a unitary form of government on them and started ruling over the smaller and weaker ones among them as their colonies and exploiting their, ruthlessly. If anyone from among the victims made any protest, he was condemned and remorselessly hunted as an enemy of Islam and of Pakistan, a parochial, a subversionist, and an enemy agent.*
2. *We had expected that after the establishment of Pakistan, the Sindhi people, the majority of whom were Muslims, will find freedom from exploitation by the Sindhi Hindu vested interests. However, we instead fell into the predatory claws of the non-Sindhi Muslim vested interests, from the Muslim minority provinces of India, whose exploitation proved to be incalculably worse than that of the Hindu capitalist.*
3. *The Sindhi people expected that their being a highly productive land, all its formidable revenue collections*

will be spent fully on the reconstruction and development of their homeland, which had suffered terribly under callous neglect during the British Raj over the Indian sub-continent. However, their hopes did not material use under the new dispersion. More than 80% of the taxes raised in Sindh are now spent on serving the Muhajir-Punjabi interests both inside and outside Sindh.

4. *The Sindhis hoped that in Pakistan, Sindh will see the days when in the management of their internal affairs at least, the people of Sindh will have freedom of decision and freedom of action. But experience proved that even that did not come about. Ever since the creation of Pakistan, the Muhajir-Punjabi Axis has ravaged Sindh s autonomy and has dispensed its affairs arbitrarily and to their own advantage."*

GM Syed like other Sindhi nationalists was disturbed by the plight of Sindhi Hindus with the creation of Pakistan:

> *"The Sindhi Musalmans mostly protected their compatriot Sindhi Hindus against the deadly attacks of Muhajir goondas during the riots, wherever the same occurred in Sindh. The Sindhi Hindus in face of organized mob-violence against them under active incitement from the Center Government saw their only safety in leaving Sindh en masse. They left behind their agricultural lands, their well-established trade and commerce, their shops full of merchandise, their fine residential Buildings, their factories, valued at hundreds and thousands of millions of rupees (Syed, 1994: Page, 84)."*

Language became another arena where Sindhis felt betrayed. The Pakistani authorities imposed on them Urdu, a North

Indian language. It was declared the national language of the state and introduced in schools and colleges as the medium of instruction in Sindh too.

During 1947, when the division of India and creation of Pakistan was on horizons, many Sindhi leaders and intellectuals, seeing its negative repercussions on their land and people, warned their fellow countrymen to realize the gravity of the situation. A section of Sindhi intelligentsia and politicians were already showing their scepticism on the proposed merger of Sindh with Pakistan. Led by Ibrahim Joyo and Shaikh Ayaz, they were not convinced on the merits of joining the proposed religious state. They had already initiated the discussion of an independent Sindh when it became clear that the colonial power has decided to divide India. Ibrahim was a disciple of GM Syed who later became the icon of Sindhi national struggle. Although Syed was still in the Muslim League, the proponent party of Pakistan, in the foreword of Ibrahim's booklet, Save Sindh, he endorsed the contentions of Ibrahim Joyo.

Ibrahim foresaw a dark future for Sindh with its proposed merger with Pakistan. In his famous pamphlet, the prominent Sindhi intellectual and one of the founders of Sindhi national struggle in Pakistan pointed out that:

> *"We, the people of Sind, today, stand literally on the crossroads of our history. Either we wake up from the century-old dark night of slavery and go forward to welcome the glorious dawn of freedom, or we prefer, afresh and for ages to come, political subjugation and economic enslavement at the hand of our alien neighbours (Joyo, 1947, page2).*

He lamented on ignoring the Sindhi identity as a separate national entity and warned that with the inception of two countries of Pakistan and India, Sindhis lose everything. He demanded the restoration of the sovereign and independent status of Sindh. Pointing out towards the distinct identity of Sindhis in the Indian subcontinent. he emphasised that they have their own way of life with unique customs. manner. tastes. dresses and names. The Sindhi language is one of the oldest on this planet earth. In legalistic terms. he emphasised that as Sindh was occupied by the British as an independent state. it deserves the legal and moral right to claim sovereignty once the colonial power withdraws from the region.

Ibrahim Joyo and his colleagues openly advocated for a sovereign Sindh after the British withdrawal. However. in an eventual forceful joining of Sindh in the newly proposed countries of Pakistan and India according to them must be based on equality:

> *"We. the people of Sind. must have our sovereign status and independent existence now restored to us ..... In either of the proposed combinations of Pakistan and Hindustan, if our presence is needed. we must be given a status of absolute equality with every other constituent Unit (Joyo. 1947. page 4).*

The danger for Sindh in joining Pakistan was also foreseen by pro-establishment Sindhi leader Allah Bux Sumro when he opined that the difficulties for Sindhis will begin after Pakistan comes into being. He prophesied that today we curse the plundering activities of money lenders from Sindhi Hindus. tomorrow. Sindhis have to face the soldiers and bureaucrats of Punjab and the mental designs of northern India. He expressed his firm opinion that Pakistan will be a threat not only to Sindh's independence but also to Indian

unity and the peace and progress of other Asian nations. Pir of Pagaro is on record that before his arrest in 1943, he advised GM Syed to dissociate himself from the politics of the Muslim League.

Sindhi politician Pir Ali Muhammad Rashidi in his book "*Faryad e Sindh*" published in 1947, pointed out to Sindhis that it will be logical to take into account the economic issues facing Punjab in discussions regarding the phenomenon of Pakistan. He noted that it (Punjab) will endeavour for the total occupation of this unfortunate land (of Sindh); where besides the abundance of land, there are job opportunities, and resources for trade and industry are available; where the people are simple and not far-sighted. He emphasised that they (Punjabis) would fool Sindhis on various pretexts. According to him, they had already initiated their plan of domination. He predicted that after some time, the Sindhis will realize but then it would be too late for them. He was sure that the next generations of Sindhis facing hunger and humiliation, will curse the present Sindhi leadership. He suggested to the Sindhis that they should not share anything with Punjabis and behave independently. He advised Sindhi ministers not to attend Punjabi arranged social gatherings. He also demanded that Punjabi officials in high positions should be replaced with Sindhi ones; no Punjabi should be inducted into district-level administration; Sindhi jobs should be reserved for Sindhis only; agricultural land must not be sold to any Punjabi or non-Sindhi and already allotted lands to non-Sindhis should be taken back and no domicile certificate should be issued from now onward.

Sindhi national resistance after the creation of Pakistan

The immediate reaction of Sindhi leadership was mainly on six issues, which became the stimuli for the beginning of Sindhi national resistance in Pakistan:

Chapter Ten

1. The triggering event at the beginning of Sindhi national resistance was the issue of Karachi. It was immediately declared as the capital of Pakistan outside the control of Sindh government. Sindhi leaders vehemently opposed the move. Even the Muslim League chief Minister and enthusiastic supporter of the division of India. Muhammad Ayub Khudo. was dismissed on 26th April 1948 as he opposed the separation of Karachi from Sindh. Six weeks after Khudo's dismissal. on 15th June 1948. another stalwart of Sindhi politics and supporter of Pakistan resolution in the Sindh assembly. GM Syed was detained. GM Syed was not in the good books of the new Muhajir led Muslim League party and the government as he was openly expressing his disgust on giving prominence to the known supporters of the colonial power in the institutions of Muslim League party as early as in 1945.
2. The influx of a huge number of Urdu speaking refugees was another cause of worry for Sindhis which was an unprecedented phenomenon in the history of Sindh. Organized migrations were planned by the government of Pakistan to bring Urdu speaking refugees from different parts of India to be settled in various cities in Sindh. Within a few months. the demographic profile of Sindh was drastically changed. Karachi became increasingly an alien city for Sindhis.
3. Forced migration of Hindus was also alarming for Sindhi leadership. Under state patronage. Sindhi Hindus were attacked and forced to migrate en masse. thus initiating a process of converting Sindhis into a minority in Sindh. The properties of Sindhis were confiscated and were given to the refugees. For Sindhi nationalists. this was the forced expulsion of Sindhis from their homeland. They openly voiced their belief

that migrating Sindhi Hindus were first Sindhis, then Hindus. They were correctly foreseeing a future scenario where the forced migration will change the demography and damage the economy of their land irreparably.

4. The insulting behaviour of ruling alliance towards Sindhis was another factor in the mobilization of Sindhi nationalists. The Urdu speaking refugee Prime Minister of Pakistan was on record to openly deny the existence of a Sindhi nation or a Sindhi culture. His remarks were considered derogatory by Sindhis. Soon after the creation of the religious state, respected political and social figures were rounded up. They were humiliated or mishandled while they were in detention.
5. The ruling alliance of Punjabi civil/military bureaucracy, *Muhajirs* and *Mullahs* began to appropriate lands and property in Sindh at an unprecedented scale. The appropriation of land and the property left behind by migrating Sindhis was without any legal and moral foundation. It was the open theft and stealing. They were given away in free to immigrants coming from north India or offered at ridiculously low prices to Punjabi settlers or personnel from army and bureaucracy.
6. Urdu, the language of the refugees was officially declared as the national language of the state at the expense Sindhi and other languages of the constituent national entities of Pakistan.

The beginning of nationalist mobilization

Alarmed by speedy developments, detrimental to the interests of Sindh, the Sindhi politicians became active in a campaign of mass awareness. Sindhi writers and intellectuals began to raise their voice against the imminent dangers to Sindh.

The politicians initiated a process of making alliances with nationalist leaders of other constituent's national entities of Pakistan in order to resist the ever-encroaching policies of Pakistani state on socio-cultural, economic and political spheres of their respective nations. GM Syed, after severing his links with Muhammad Ali Jinnah and his party, the Muslim League, convened a conference of national leaders from East Bengal, Sindh, Balochistan and Pakhtunistan at Karachi on May 8, 1948. A formal political structure was formed with the name of *Awami Tanzeem* (People's Organization) to pursue a policy of achieving democratic and constitutional rights for the constituent nations of Pakistan.

After a few years of the creation of Pakistani, 'One Unit' was imposed. United in opposing the merger of all provinces of West Pakistan into a single unit, Sindh Awami Mahaz, Sindhi Hari Committee, National Awami Party and the Awami League began a campaign by organizing demonstrations throughout Sindh. GM Syed demanded a referendum in Sindh to ascertain the will of the people before the implementation of One Unit[51] plan. He was imprisoned on the orders of Governor General Ghulam Muhammad.

GM Syed as the father of Sindhi national struggle

Fortunate for Sindhi nationalists, they got a charismatic person as the leader of their national resistance immediately after the creation of Pakistan in the person of Ghulam Murtaza Syed. One of the most active politicians and all-time players of Sindhi politics, GM Syed was born on January 17, 1904, in

[51] In 1955, all provinces of West Pakistan, Sindh, Balochistan, North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Punjab were merged into a single unit of West Pakistan. The One Unit scheme was devised by the ruling alliance of Pakistan to counterbalance against the majority of East Bengal. For smaller nations of West Pakistan, it was a deep ploy to dominate them politically and economically and to impose upon them the cultural and social values of immigrants.

village Sann of Dadu district of Sindh. He was a descendant of a Pir family who migrated to Sindh along with or during the invasion of India by notorious central Asian plunderer *Timur Lang* (Tamerlane) in the 14th century. His family supported the Samma's endeavours to rule Sindh during 15th century against the Sumros. From an early age, he took interest in active politics. Later on, he developed his ideologies about religion and spirituality which became an ingredient of contemporary Sindhi national consciousness. At the time of his death in 1995, he became one of the legendary personalities which Sindh produced throughout history. In fact, he became the person around which the entire Sindhi national struggle revolved beginning from the formative years of Pakistan until his death. There is no doubt that his life and political thoughts would be the binding force for Sindhi nationalists for generations to come.

However, the early political career of GM Syed up to the creation of Pakistan was tortuous and lacked consistency in thought and actions. He began politics with the formation of *Al-Muslimeen*, a local organization aimed at the awakening among the Muslims and for the introduction of social reforms. The beginning of his involvement in the mainstream politics of pre-independent India was his joining of the Khilafat movement of the 1920s. In 1930, he practically laid down the foundation of a peasant movement in Sindh by convening a Sindh Hari Conference with Nusserwanji Mehta, a move which was also supported by progressive politician Hyder Bux Jatoi. In his deposition to the court, GM Syed explained his involvement in active politics because of the miseries of Sindhi people:

> *"When I acquired political awareness and began to look at the world around me politically, I found that poverty was a universal problem and Sindh was no*

exception. After the advent of the British, agricultural land was distributed to a select group of families for services rendered. As a result, excepting these feudal families, the common people lost their land and their stable livelihood. They were forced to work on the land as mazdoors (labourers). Other farmhands were called kisans (peasants). However, the difference between the farm mazdoors and kisan was that while the mazdoor was paid daily wages, the kisan got his dues after a year. The mazdoor worked singly but the Kisan's entire family had to toil hard. At payment time, only the leading member of a kisan family was paid. He had no right to the land on which he worked. Again, a kisan family was put under concocted debt and evicted or made to seek similar position under other landlords He spent all his life in grinding poverty in utter social degradation, unable to educate his children or afford a proper health cover to himself or to his family. So in order to save the kisans from the clutches of the landlords, the bureaucrats, the money-lenders and dacoits and to obtain for them medical, educational and other civic amenities, and to enable them to live in peace and security, I with the help of my friends, laid the foundations of the Sindh Hari Committee under the Presidentship of Jamshed, Mehta, in Mirpur Khas in 1930 (Syed, 1994: page 7)."

During the 1920s and 1930s, he became very active in demanding the separation of Sindh from Bombay. Many Sindhis at that time were carried away with the prospect of an ultimate sovereign Sindh and supported the separation of Sindh from Bombay. Jones (2002), rightly observed that:

"the prospect of a separated Sindh with its obvious benefits for the Muslim community captured the

> *imagination of the Sindhi Muslim leadership and generated a political movement which had, as its goals, the achievement of separation, and the establishment of Sindh as an independent and autonomous province, (page; 179."*

In 1933, he founded People's Party with a known protégé of colonial administration. Sir Shahnawaz Bhutto but the party soon dissolved as Sir Shahnawaz Bhutto became busy in Bombay. In 1936, with Abdullah Haroon, he was instrumental in the formation of Sindh United Party, who got an absolute majority from 35 Muslim reserved seats by securing 22 seats in the Sindh legislative assembly election after the separation of Sindh from Bombay. However, the party was not allowed to form the government of Sindh by the governor Sir Lancelot Graham. In 1938, he joined Muslim League party. Jones (2002) observed that the addition of Syed's energies and talents to the Leagues' organizational work served to greatly reinforce the position of Abdullah Haroon and Muhammad Ali Jinnah in their attempt to give the League a solid base in Sindh. However, in later years, he regretted his decision of joining Muslim League but tried to justify his action:

"The Muslim league was a communal party, which had a fair sprinkling of British loyalists, many of whom had been knighted or made Khan Bahadurs. It had no programme for the emancipation of the people. It lacked sincere workers and I thought that if devoted workers like my colleagues and me joined it, we could change its character and turn it into an anti-imperialist and pro-people party. It was in this spirit that I joined the Muslim League (Syed, 1994: page, 10)."

Many among Sindhis now also question the role of GM Syed on the issue of *Manzilgah*[52] which practically created the

[52] In 1939, a controversy developed in the northern town of Sukkur on

chasm between Hindu and Muslim Sindhi nationalists. But many analysts absolve GM Syed and other Sindhi politicians with their involvement in this communal dispute. They believe that Sindhi politicians from both spectra of Sindhi politics were caught in the web of communal politics prepared for them by the colonial establishment in their grand design of creating an atmosphere in order to justify the division of India and the creation of a state on a religious basis.

On March 3. 1943. he moved a resolution in Sindh assembly favouring the division of India on religious ground. an action which he repeatedly regretted publicly. The assembly resolved that:

> *"This House recommends to Government to convey to His Majesty's Government through His Excellency the Viceroy. the sentiments and wishes of the Muslims of this Province that whereas Muslims of India are a separate nation possessing religion. philosophy. social customs. literature. traditions. political and economic theories of their own. quite different from those of the Hindus. they are justly entitled to the right. as a single. separate nation. to have independent national states of their own. carved out in the zones where they are in majority in the sub-continent of India (Syed. 1994: page. 115)."*

GM Syed's involvement in Muslim politics proved to be a short-lived affair. In 1945. he developed serious differences with Muhammad Ali Jinnah over the issue of toppling the Muslim League government headed by Sir Ghulam Hussain.

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the nature of a disputed Mosque (Masjid). The case of the Manzilgah Masjid was taken up by the Muslim League to inflame communal passions. In the resultant riots many Sindhis from Hindu and Muslim communities were killed.

Later, the gulf between Mr Muhammad Ali Jinnah, as the leader of the Muslim League and GM Syed, as the president of Sindh Muslim League widened on ideological issues and on the issue of delegating powers to the provincial organizations of the party. The final blow in relations was dealt with the awarding of tickets for party candidates in the coming elections before the partition of India. On 2nd January 1946, GM Syed was not only removed as the president of Sindh Muslim League but his basic membership of the party was also cancelled (Soomro, 2008). This appeared to be the turning point in the personal and political life of GM Syed. In the coming years, the religious state of Pakistan faced the robust opposition of one of the untiring and charismatic political personalities in the history of the country and Sindhis got not only their political icon, but with his nationalistic doctrine, they also got a clear direction to tread in order to reach the cherished destination of national salvation. Syed himself mentioned his reason for dissociating with Muhammad Ali Jinnah as follows:

> *"Mr Jinnah's view that the country should be divided because the Muslims are a separate nation on the basis of religion is not acceptable to me because this ideology is UN-Islamic, archaic and against all modern principles of nationalism (Syed, 1994: page 21)."*

With the end of his association with Muslim League and Mr Muhammad Ali Jinnah, GM Syed became the torch bearer of communal harmony not only in Sindh but he also became the symbol of religious harmony and secular politics in Pakistan. After the creation of Pakistan when Sindhi Hindus began an en masse migration from Sindh, he relentlessly worked to convince them not to leave Sindh. Following the teachings of GM Syed, there is no distinction of any kind on the religious

ground among his disciples who are engaged in a tenuous struggle of national salvation in Sindh.

To streamline and unite the struggle of like-minded leaders, GM Syed founded Sindh Muttahida Mahaz in 1953. As the task of combating a powerful state establishment was daunting and needed solidarity and cooperation of other oppressed nations, he made frantic efforts to form alliances or working relationships with politicians of other national entities in Pakistan. The creation of One Unit became the immediate stimulus for the formation of a united struggle. In 1955, with leaders including Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan from Pakhtunistan, Shiekh Abdul Majid Sindhi, Abdul Samad Khan Achakzai from Balochistan, Amir Ahmed Khan from Pakhtunistan, and Shiekh Zaheeruddin, Shiekh Hassan Mahmud, Munshi Ahmeduddin from Punjab, he was instrumental in the formation of Anti-One Unit Front. The front espoused autonomy for constituent provinces of Pakistan and social justice for the people and religious harmony among the followers of various faiths. In a hard-hitting speech, GM Syed declared that the people of Sindh had launched the struggle to see a self-governing Sindh in a federated Pakistan. He pointed out that the authorities in Pakistan have planned to administer Pakistan under a theocratic system through a strong centre. He emphasised that this course of action would create disharmony and distrust between communities and various national entities. Later, in 1956, he became very active in the formation of a single progressive, secular and nationalist political party-the National Awami Party (NAP). The party was a united platform of robust political figures from Balochistan, Sindh, Pakhtunistan and Bengal. It attracted a significant number of nationalist and left-oriented writers and intellectuals from every corner of the country. Soon after its formation, it became the major opposition party challenging the ruling alliance of Military, *Mullahs* and *Muhajirs*. It is

believed that one of the reasons for the proclamation of Martial Law in 1958 was the fear that National Awami Party might win the next general elections. The party was banned after the promulgation of Martial Law as political activities declared illegal. During the Military regime of General Ayub Khan, when open political activities were not allowed, GM Syed clandestinely continued his anti-One Unit activities under the banner of Bazm-i-Sufia-i-Sindh.

GM Syed founded Jiye Sindh Muttahida Mahaz in 1967 which later in 1972 became Jiye Sindh Mahaz. The Mahaz declared an independent Sindhu Desh as its aim. With the persistent advocacy of an independent Sindhu Desh, Syed became the unchallenged hero of contemporary Sindh. For generations to come, Sindh, Sindhis and their struggle for dignity, honour and sovereignty cannot be separated from one name: GM Syed or Saeen Syed as he is popularly known among Sindhis. His political journey was not smooth. He achieved this exalted position among his people by trial and error. At the beginning of his political career, for many decades, he flirted with various Muslim religious organization. He was also instrumental in the passing of the infamous resolution for the joining of Pakistan. However, showing magnanimity, he always regretted not only this action but also of joining hands with the known protégé of the colonial power in India, Mr Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Sindhis, from all walks of life whether they are the supporter of his doctrine or in opposition to his political stance, highly respect him. Nearly all political figures in contemporary Sindhi nationalist politics have been educated in GM Syed's school of thought in their college and university times.

Although the majority of Sindhi politicians joined Muslim League and supported the demand for the creation of Pakistan, Sindhi national aspirations were to achieve the status of

an autonomous region after the withdrawal of the British from India. However. with the incorporation of Sindh into Pakistan in 1947. the dreams of regaining sovereignty fell apart and Sindhi leaders began to coop with the reality of being the part of a religious state under the domination of Punjab and its allies. They believed that in their simplicity they were trapped into a situation where they had to support the merger of Sindh into Pakistan. Many factors made the basis of what emerged as the phenomenon of Sindhi national struggle in Pakistan which were actually the grievances initially felt by Sindhis soon after the creation of Pakistan. The phenomenon of Sindhi national struggle emerged on the belief that Sindhi national identity is being attacked by the superfluous and narrow-minded Pakistani national ideology basing on religion being the only bond between various national entities. Sindhi national resistance was based on the belief that the fundamentalist religious mindset of the ruling alliance of Pakistan is incompatible with the secular democratic outlook of Sindhi masses. It was based on the belief that their cherished socio-cultural traditions are under attack from alien cultural traditions of north Indian immigrants. It was based on the belief that Sindhis have been excluded from power corridors of the state by a ruling alliance comprised of Punjabi Military, *Mullahs and Muhajirs*. It was based on the belief that with an unprecedented influx of Urdu speaking immigrants into Sindh. the demography of their land will shift in the coming years. making them into a minority. During the early years of Pakistan. while Sindhi leadership and intelligentsia were deliberating on the ways of protecting socio-political and economic interests of Sindh on the face of increased encroachments by the state establishment. a new event happened in the political life of Pakistan. It was the creation of One Unit by the merger of all provinces of West Pakistan. The dissolution of constituent units and their merger for the formation of a single province of West Pakistan

was perceived by Sindhis as a mortal blow to their national identity. During the formative years of Pakistan, under the inspiring leadership of GM Syed, the Sindhi nationalists united in resisting the dominating measures of the religious state. Supported by intellectuals and writers, Sindhi national resistance during the first decade of Pakistan was an attempt to create awareness among the Sindhi masses, the formation of alliances with other nationalist movements in the country and the formation of a unified platform for the struggle of national rights. During this period, the Sindhi national struggle was focussed on the preservation of constitutional rights of Sindh, preservation of Sindhi language and dismantling of 'One Unit' of West Pakistan. The basic elements of the struggle were demands of a secular, democratic and truly federated state in which the national rights of all constituent national entities could be protected.

11. Dynamics of Sindhi national struggle during Second half of 20th century

> No political event can be judged outside of the era and the circumstances in which it took place. **Fidel Castro**

Sindhi national resistance began as a political struggle for safeguarding the socio-political and economic rights but transformed into a movement for an independent Sindhu Desh after the promulgation of Martial Law in Pakistan in 1958. Like the Baloch and Bengalis. Sindhis lost the hope of gaining their national rights in a state which was run covertly and overtly by the military establishment of Punjab in alliance with *Mullahs and Muhajirs*. The dynamics of Sindhi national struggle changed when GM Syed openly began preaching for the independence of Sindh from the Federation of Pakistan in 1972.

Sindhi national struggle from 1958-2000

With the imposition of Martial Law in 1958. Sindhi leaders. including GM Syed. Kazi Faiz Muhammad. Ghulam Muhammad Leghari. Shaikh Ayaz. and Hyder Bux Jatoi were arrested. Many were held for long periods. Several publications. advocating the rights of Sindhi people were proscribed under Martial Law. This was one of the harshest periods for Sindhi politicians when the utterance of the very word 'Sindh' became an offence. GM Syed was released only

in 1966 and he established a cultural organization, Bazm e Sofia e Sindh (the council of Sindhi mystics). Under its banner not only cultural events were organized but heated discussions were also initiated for the adoption of a future strategy for the preservation of national rights of Sindhi people. The organization was soon declared illegal, terming its activity as anti-Pakistan. GM Syed was detained in his house while Heyder Bux Jatoi, Shaikh Ayaz and many other activists were awarded rigorous imprisonment.

The period of the 1960s brought the phenomenon of Pakhtun settlers in Sindh. A significant number of Pakhtun were settled in Hyderabad and Karachi with the active encouragement of General Ayub Khan's military regime. This rang alarm bells among Sindhis who were already dreading the influx of a huge number of Urdu speaking immigrants from north India during the 1950s. The One Unit phenomenon, direct military rule after 1958, persistence encroachments on Sindhi traditions, land grabbing in cities by *Muhajirs* and in rural areas by Punjabi settlers and a continued flow of immigrants from other parts of Pakistan into Sindh were factors turning Sindhi national struggle into a struggle for rights in a federated Pakistan into being an outright secessionist movement.

In 1967, GM Syed formed an umbrella organization for different Sindhi political organizations in the name of Sindh United Front. However, the front was not openly advocating liberation of Sindh from Pakistan in the beginning. Its main objective was to mobilize the masses against "One Unit" and for the achievement of maximum provincial autonomy in a federal Pakistan where central government's writ should be restricted to Defence, Foreign affairs and Currency. It also advocated the recognition of Sindhi as the only national language of Sindh.

Chapter Eleven

After the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, GM Syed was riding on a high tide of popular support for his cause. In June 1972, he renamed his Sindh United Front as Jiye Sindh Mahaz. The Mahaz openly expressed its aim of establishing an independent Sindhu Desh. It also made public the salient features of an independent Sindhu Desh which included:

- The recognition of the principles of secularism, socialism, democracy and nationalism
- The redistribution of agricultural land from non-Sindhis to Sindhis
- The restrictions on immigration into Sindh and expulsion of all those immigrants who are still resisting to merge in the greater Sindhi national identity.
- The recognition of Sindhi as the sole national and official language of the state and the cancellation of citizenship rights of those having no knowledge of Sindhi language.
- The welcoming of all Sindhis who left the country after the creation of Pakistan and giving them back the properties or equivalent whenever they come back to Sindh.
- The guaranteed separation of religion and state affairs.
- The industrialization of Sindh and nationalization of all means of production
- The encouragement of greater role of Sindhi women
- The establishment of friendly relations to all countries of the world, especially to India, Afghanistan, the Arab world and the Soviet Union

Since the formation of Jiye Sindh Mahaz, GM Syed became uncompromising on the independence of Sindh. The demand for an independent Sindh became a household item throughout Sindh attracting the imagination of a great number of Sindhi

youths in colleges and Universities. Jiye Sindh became a junction where Sindhis from all spectrum of politics whether they were leftist, rightist, secular, and an atheist could have interacted. Sindhi youth openly and publicly began to brand Muhammad Ali Jinnah as Gaddar e Azam (the great traitor)[53]. Among Sindhi youth. Jiye Sindh and Sada Jiye became an alternative term against Islamic way of greetings-Asalam alekum and Walekumuslam.

The reaction of Urdu speaking immigrants over the introduction of Sindhi language bill of 1972 by the People's Party government marked another milestone in the political history of Sindh after the creation of Pakistan. The bill declared Sindhi as the official language and medium of instruction in Sindh. The Urdu speaking immigrants reacted violently with the covert blessings of the state establishment which believed the initiative as an act against the foundation of Pakistan. The subsequent agitation by Muhajirs was also a ploy to tame down Bhutto which in some cases was crossing the red line. Believing that the bill will encourage secessionist tendencies in Sindh, the establishment with the help of immigrants, came heavily against its own creation and ally, the People's Party. Within hours, *Muhajirs* from all walks of life were organized in violent demonstrations against the Bill. Major cities including Karachi and Hyderabad were paralysed by violent agitators while the law enforcement agencies just watched the bloody clashes between Sindhis and the *Muhajirs*.

As the creation of the establishment, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was well aware of the consequences of a head-on collision on the issue of Sindhi language bill. He began to appease *Muhajirs* knowing that they have been activated by secret agencies.

[53] Muhammad Ali Jinnah, leader of Muslim League Party and the appointed first Governor General of Pakistan has been given the official title of Quaid e Azam (the great leader)

Sindh government was forced by invisible forces to withdraw the language bill in utter humiliation. Mumtaz Bhutto. the cousin of Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. was dismissed as the chief minister of Sindh and a known protégé of the establishment. Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi. was made the Chief Minister. Adding salts on the wounds of Sindhis. in his bid to appease the *Muhajirs* and the establishment. Bhutto also pledged to settle thousands of Urdu speaking *Biharis* from Bangladesh into Sindh.

Sindhi national struggle during last decades of the 20th century

During the 1970s. Sindhi youth rallied on the personality of GM Syed and his program of an independent Sindhu Desh. Jiye Sindh Mahaz's affiliated Jiye Sindh Students Federation became the dominant force in the youth politics of Sindh controlling all university campuses in Sindh except *Muhajir* dominated educational institutions in Karachi. The declaration of Urdu as the national language of Sindh. the demand for division of Sindh to create a province for Urdu speaking Indian immigrants and state-sponsored settlement of thousands of *Biharis* from Bangladesh into Sindh were burning issues which created an increased momentum of Sindhi national struggle and farther the distance between Sindhi people and the state of Pakistan. It became clear to even ordinary Sindhis that Bhutto as the nominee of the establishment is carrying out anti-Sindhi and pro-establishment. pro-*Muhajir* policies which are highly detrimental to the national interests of Sindh. The hatred of Bhutto and his regime became so intense that the Sindhi nationalists openly supported the movement to overthrow Bhutto regime[54]. No tears were shed on the overthrow of

[54] The secret agencies combined all opposition parties and patronised them to launch a civil disobedience movement accusing Bhutto of rigging the 1977 elections. The protracted agitation by this alliance

People's Party government in 1977 and the subsequent hanging of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto by the majority of Sindhi nationalists who genuinely believed that Bhutto had been launched by the establishment to detract the Sindhi struggle for national rights. GM Syed openly supported the hanging of Bhutto by describing him as a criminal, accusing him of ruthless suppression of Sindhis. He accused him of killing and torturing of hundreds of Sindhis and turning Sindh into a prison for sons of the soil.

However, the political consequences of Bhutto's hanging was a serious blow to the nationalist politics in Sindh. The way he was tried in a fake trial, humiliated and hanged by the military establishment caused the majority of Sindhi masses to believe that Bhutto was a martyr and was murdered because of him being a Sindhi. Many nationalist activists also became the victim of this false perception which was propagated by People's Party with its massive media and financial resources. For a whole decade, until 1989, the Sindhi national struggle went into the background while Sindhi politics was dominated by the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD) led by Bhutto's People's Party.

The introduction of violent conflict in Sindh

During the formative years of Pakistan, there was no clear voice for an independent Sindh neither there was an element of violence; however, in later years, the demand for a true federal setup for the country transformed into one of an independent Sindhu Desh and violence became a feature of Sindhi national struggle. Violence was for the first time introduced in the politics of Sindh but it was not from Sindhi nationalists. In fact, it was introduced by the establishment using Sindhi language bill by inciting *Muhajirs* to attack commercial enterprises owned by Sindhis during language riots of 1972.

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was used as an excused by the Military for its takeover in 1977.

Sindhi youth also reacted violently when major cities were paralysed by armed *Muhajir* gangs.

After the hanging of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto in 1979, much Sindhi youths affiliated with People's Party and nationalist parties felt humiliated. This feeling was exploited by sons of Bhutto who created an armed organization in the name of Al-Zulfiqar to avenge the hanging of their father. Again, in an atmosphere of increased feelings of national humiliation and in a general political milieu of idealism, Sindhi nationalists became the victim of the emotionally charged situation. A section of Sindhi youth affiliated with national politics ignored the voice of reason from GM Syed and other conscious elements of Sindhi national struggle. They affiliated themselves with the militant activities of Al-Zulfiqar organization. In the subsequent crackdown by the establishment, a number of Sindhi youth were killed, imprisoned, and inhumanly tortured while many fled the country in order to save their skins.

The decade of the 1980s was one of the worst periods for Sindhi nationalists. Not only hundreds of Sindhi political and social workers were reported to be killed by the security forces but Sindhi intellectual and academic activists were also targeted. The security forces also came heavily on Sindhi cultural activities. Nearly 36 Sindhi periodicals and newspapers were banned during this period.

Countering the Sindhi national movement: the state initiatives

Alarmed with rising tide of Sindhi mass mobilization beginning from the late 1960s, the state establishment took countermeasures which in coming decades, caused considerable weakening of Sindhi national resistance. Major elements of countermeasures included manufacturing or creating political organizations, use of excessive force,

the introduction of *Muhajir* politics and the introduction of a culture of drug and Kalashnikov. The objectives of these measures were to weaken the Sindhi national struggle.

Launching of Bhutto

The launching of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto as a popular leader was the most successful measures taken by the establishment in order to counter the increasing momentum of Sindhi nationalism. Son of Sir Shahnawaz Bhutto, a known protégé of colonial administration of Bombay and Sindh, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was inducted in the military government of General Ayub Khan and served on many positions including the foreign minister of Pakistan for many years. Later, he was tasked to establish his own party, the Pakistan People's Party and with massive media publicity, the establishment became successful in portraying Bhutto as the champion of Sindhi masses; thus diverting the affiliations of a significant number of political activists from GM Syed towards Bhutto and his Party

Bhutto was made the first civilian Martial Law administrator of Pakistan after the debacle of Bangladesh in 1971. As the agent of the military establishment of Pakistan, he was relying on the unconditional support of the army and in his misconception, made some decisions which created a great chasm between him and his creators. The Sindhi language bill and the unceremonious dismissal of top army generals were the events after which the army seriously began to discard him as not trustworthy. Bhutto in his utter stupidity, also alienated the chief patron of Pakistan, the United States of America by initiating a program of achieving nuclear capability and by misbehaving with powerful Secretary of State Henry Kissinger by making public his official letter. Many analysts of the international politics of that period believed that Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was marked as undesirable as early as in

1974 by Western friends of Pakistan. For Sindhi nationalists. Bhutto was known as a servant of the establishment. For GM Syed, he was acting as the lackey of Punjab:

> *"Mr Bhutto's accession to the highest office in Pakistan was the zenith of Sindh's constitutional struggle. In spite of this, however, he continued to be only a second fiddle to the Punjabis, the Muhajirs and the civil and military bureaucracy. Therefore, he could only act as a traitor to his own motherland, Sindh. He could get a turban but only after lowering his head in return (Syed, 1994: page, 93)."*

GM Syed tried to warn Bhutto on his alliance with the establishment. He also tried to bring him into the fold of Sindhi nationalism. In a letter he advised Mr Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto:

> *"....he should, instead of following them and serving them, work for the independence and emancipation of Sindh (Syed, 1994: page 130)."*

In the letter, he pointed out that with the independence, Sindh would be rid of the Muhajirs-Punjabi imperialism for good. With immense resources, Sindh would make rapid progress. Our country (Sindhu Desh) would be on the road to democracy, secularism, nationalism and socialism. He warned Bhutto that Punjabis and Muhajirs will dump him once they used him for the achievement of their purposes. Syed's predictions proved right.

The army establishment planned to get rid of Bhutto by organizing protest meetings after the 1977 general elections, accusing him of mass rigging. The army created Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) which was a conglomerate of various

political and religious organizations. The alliance with the blessing of secret services became able to paralyse major cities including Karachi. Lahore and Hyderabad. In the pretext of stopping the anarchic situation in the country, the army took the control of the state on 5 July 1977. Bhutto was later tried on a false murder charge and hanged on 4 April 1979. But the hanging of Bhutto became another setback for the national struggle of Sindhis. The murder of a Sindhi by the Punjabi military absolve him of all his crimes against Sindh. His family and party again became the focus of Sindhi politics. Sindhi nationalists and the politics of national salvation were side-lined. With his hanging and the re-emergence of *Muhajir* power after the overthrow of People's Party government, Bhutto became a martyr and a hero for Sindhi rights. Once discredited People's Party gained the support of a significant number of nationalist political activists. Sindhi youth forgetting the aim of establishing an independent Sindhu Desh used their energy in participating in the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD. Several Sindhi political activists were killed or imprisoned during the 1980s in connection with their involvement in the movement.

For GM Syed, whether it was the military, the bureaucracy and the so-called democrats from Punjab, they all have the target of grabbing lands in Sindh, establish their business there to control the trade, leading to the perpetuation of the enslavement of Sindhi people and Bhutto was their representative. During the 1980s, when Sindhi youth joined the movement for the restoration of People's Party government after the hanging of Bhutto, a disgusted GM Syed called upon Sindhi masses not to be fooled. He tried to remind the youth about the role of Bhutto and his Party in neglecting the Sindhi rights when he was in government. He tried to remind them that it would be a blunder to shed their blood for the reinstatement of Bhutto family or People's Party which are

known protégés of establishment in Islamabad. But in the emotionally charged situation, many Sindhis were not ready to follow his advice and Jiye Sindh and the nationalist politics of GM Syed was unexpectedly kept into backburner during the 1980s and 1990s.

Launching of Palijo as a progressive nationalist

Sindhi national struggle led by GM Syed suffered setbacks from other political organizations claiming to be struggling for the rights of Sindhi people. Prominent among those was Rasool Bux Palijo. As the leader of his party, Sindh Awami Tehrik, he played the role of sowing the seeds of ideological confusion among Sindhi youth. At a time, when youths all over the world were mesmerized by the ideals of socialism. Palijo dismissed the idea of an independent Sindhu Desh as an imperialist agenda. He termed the Sindhi nationalism as a ploy in order to impose the exploitative class of Sindhi landlords and reactionary politicians upon Sindhi masses. He was concentrating his endeavours in rural Sindh which was the backbone of Sindhi nationalism and became successful to some extent in dissociating a section of the political activists from national struggle. Palijo and his party developed a parallel support base among the nationalist cadre, thus weakening the support base of GM Syed and Jiye Sindh Mahaz.

Introducing a culture of drug and Kalashnikov

The first phenomenon introduced by the military government in the 1980s was the culture of drugs and Kalashnikov. Pakistan became the frontline state against the Soviet Union backed government of Afghanistan. Afghan refugees were encouraged to settle in Sindh bringing with them the business of drug and arms trafficking. Karachi became the major centre of drug forwarding for various international destinations. Many observers of the events of that period believed that

security forces became. for the first time in the history of Pakistan, partners in drug and arms business. After some years, the socio-political landscape of Sindh changed beyond recognition. The overt support of the establishment, anti-social elements or social outcasts and Afghan refugees became prominent political and social figures. After a few years, they were openly challenging the influence of nationalist and non-nationalist political parties by occupying spaces left vacant when political cadre was imprisoned or their activities were suppressed by security agencies. The main victim of the introduction of these steps taken by the establishment in the 1980s was the Sindhi national struggle.

The beginning of Muhajir politics

The Urdu speaking refugees from India were settled in major cities of Sindh after the creation of Pakistan. Their political activities were centred on the politics of Muslim League and other pro-establishment religious parties like Jamaat Islami and Jamiat e Ulema Pakistan. Some of the *Muhajir* activists having no following in their community posing as progressive or socialists also joined National Awami Party.

With the increased popularity of GM Syed and Sindhi nationalist politics. the state establishment moved in to counter the "growing menace". Besides patronising Bhutto and Palijo as alternate leaders of Sindhi masses. the establishment created a broad-based political alliance of anti-Sindhi forces. It was named as *Sindhi Muhajir Punjabi Pathan Muttahida Mahaz* and formally announced as a political front in Hyderabad in October 1969. The main demands of the front included actions on those officials who are working against the ideology of Pakistan and Islam (pointing to the sympathisers of Sindhi nationalists in the bureaucracy), the opening of borders for Urdu speaking people to migrate into Sindh, protection of Punjabi settlers and end of the Quota system in Sindh.

Chapter Eleven

Soon after the promulgation of Martial Law in 1977, the Inter-Services Intelligence agency (ISI) began to organize *Muhajirs* into a single political party. Initially, *Muhajir* youth were organized into All Pakistan Muhajir Students Organization (APMSO) in 1978. From the leaders and workers of this student organization, a political party-Muttahida Qoumi Party (MQM) was created in 1984. At that time, many analysts presented a simplistic reason for the creation of MQM. For them, it was just to prevent a robust opposition to the military rule by weakening main political parties. But ultimately it was proved that MQM was created to counter the Sindhi national struggle. A semi-military organization was also established recruiting anti-social elements among the Muhajir community and served as the militant wing of MQM. The organization violently confronted nationalist activists in Karachi, Hyderabad and other cities in Sindh. Initially, militant activities were carried out in the name of Muhajir Liberation Front. It was outsourced many criminal activities by the establishment including kidnapping, torture, dumping the bodies of murdered Sindhi political workers and harassment of political leaders who dared to oppose the policies of the establishment. An estimated 300 of nationalist activists were physically eliminated by the armed gangs of MQM. In order to further divide Sindhi society, in the manifesto of MQM, it was included that Indian immigrants are a separate nation. After the death of General Zia ul Haque, the military ruler of Pakistan, elections were held for a new civilian dispensation in 1988 and for the next ten years, the parliamentary strength of MQM was also used by the ISI in making, destabilizing or overthrowing so-called civilian governments. To create an atmosphere of increased ethnic polarization in order to overshadow the struggle for the national rights of Sindhi people, the security agencies asked MQM to attack Pakhtun settlers in Karachi and Hyderabad. It was also tasked to begin ethnic clashes between Sindhis and

Urdu speaking communities. During two decades of the 1980s and 1990s, it was reported that more than 2300 people were killed in clashes between Muhajirs and Sindhis and Muhajirs and Pakhtuns.

With increased violent and criminal activities of MQM, by the end of the 1980s, Sindh became a conflict-ridden region where there was increased tension between Muhajirs, Pakhtuns and Sindhi nationalists. The establishment was successful in creating an atmosphere where carrying out normal political activities became impossible. In response to militant activities of the state establishment through MQM and other proxy organizations, Sindhi nationalists seriously began to think of a counter militant strategy.

The use of excessive force

One of the tactics in dealing with Sindhi national struggle has been the use of brutal force in order to terrorize Sindhi masses. For many analysts of Sindhi politics, the state establishment used the dacoit phenomenon in Sindh during the 1980s and 1990s for a crackdown on nationalist cadre based in rural Sindh. In the generalized milieu of hatred against the state establishment, many genuine political workers were caught in the trap and became the victim of manipulative powers of the state. In many ways, the dacoit phenomenon caused considerable damage to the nationalist cause.

After the suppression of MRD movement in the 1980s, rural Sindh was engulfed with the activities of many groups of bandits. Many disgruntled political activists and unemployed youth also joined these bandit outfits which were mostly comprised of social outcasts and criminal elements of the society. Some dacoit groups were blamed by security agencies of having connections with Sindhi national struggle. For all practical purposes, the activities of these bandits were

detrimental to the broader issue of the struggle for a Sindhu Desh. Many analysts on Sindhi nationalist politics believe that in fact, the army patronised many of these bandit groups. The purpose of the patronage according to them was primarily to engage rural Sindh (which was the base of Sindhi national struggle) in the tussle between the dacoits and the local population. leaving behind the national issues and secondly to provide an excuse for the mobilization of the army and security agencies into interior Sindh or establishing more army bases in order to infiltrate deeply into Sindhi society. Later development proved the logic of this observation. In the guise of curbing the activities of Dacoits. the army began a crackdown on nationalist forces during Benazir Bhutto's Premiership in the 1990s. This military operation continued throughout the 1990s until the overthrow of Nawaz Sharif government by General Pervez Musharraf in 1999. This was the hard time for nationalist organizations in Sindh as in the guise of eliminating anti-social elements. their workers were victimised during the prolonged military operations.

The Islamization process

One of the measures having far-reaching consequences taken by the establishment in the 1980s was the Islamization process in which not only religious parties were actively patronised by the security agencies but thousands of *Madrassa* (Islamic religious schools) were established throughout Sindh. The purpose of these schools was two-fold. First to dilute the secular social ethos of Sindhi society and second was to produce fanatical *Jihadis* for the activities against Afghanistan and India.

The resurgence of Sindhi nationalist activities

Against extreme odds. Sindhi national struggle was successful in gaining its lost ground and in 1992. Jiye Sindh Mahaz was successful in organizing a huge gathering in a Karachi park to

celebrate the birthday of GM Syed. The map on the birthday cake for the occasion depicted the exclusion of Sindh from Pakistan. An 89 years old but jubilant GM Syed spoke not only about an independent Sindhu Desh but asked for the independence of Balochistan, Pakhtunistan and Seraiki Desh. This was more than the establishment could have digested. GM Syed was put under house arrest. Accusing GM Syed and his party for being on the payroll of Indian secret agencies, a reign of terror was unleashed in Sindh in which villages were raided, people were tortured to seek the whereabouts of Sindhi nationalist activists and for the first time in Sindh, the media reported extra-judicial killings of nationalist activists by security agencies. Imprisoned activists were inhumanly tortured and many cases of sexual assaults on detainees were reported. Hundreds of nationalist party workers were killed without being reported in the censored media.

Another feature of those years was that MQM began to cross the red line when its militant wing targeted some army officers and demanded protection money from Punjabi businessmen. The army tried to cut its creature into the size and many of its leaders including Altaf Hussain were forced to flee the country. The army also tried to create other organizations out of MQM in order to have a firm grip on the *Muhajir* community.

Death of GM Syed

Another event of far-reaching consequences on the Sindhi national struggle in the 1990s was the death of its founding father GM Syed who died in April 1995 while being detained in his house, at the age of 92 out of which he spent 29 years in various Pakistani prisons.

GM Syed focussed the goal of his entire life on the achievement of social, political and economic independence of

Sindh and Sindhis. For him. his struggle was the continuation of a long tradition of Sindhi patriots:

> *"The struggle that I am waging is in continuation of these elders of Sindh and those who laid down their lives for the motherland before them (Syed. 1994: page. 107)."*

He suffered enormously for his struggle against the injustices to his motherland. He was declared as anti-state and anti-Islam by the state. frequently imprisoned and his political and social activities were curtailed.

As a prolific writer. he was the author of more than 60 books on various socio-political issues facing Sindh. For many analysts. in his thoughts. GM Syed appears to be confused regarding some basic philosophical concepts. For example. he outrightly rejected the concept of revelation and instead offered a theory of the evolution of religions where Hinduism. Buddhism. Judaism. Christianity. Islam and science were considered as the different stages of the evolutionary process but at the same time he believed that mysticism. not science is the final and ultimate destination of humankind's search for absolute reality. In his theory of mysticism. perhaps he was trying to counter the superfluity of the state's Islamic ideology but for many. he was innocently trying to replace one superfluous ideology with another. Syed equated mysticism with love and he believed that the land of Sindh has to deliver a special message of love and it has to play a particular role in this regard. However. for many nationalist intellectuals. a particular social or religious phenomenon such as Sufiism or mysticism which is the product of rivalry between various Muslim rulers for perpetuating their rule or for expansion of their domain. cannot be the base or rallying point of a national liberation struggle in modern times. Makhdum Bilawal.

Shah Inayat, and Pir Pagaro might have been rebels with a cause but one cannot deny that throughout history, Sufis and Pirs were the tools employed by various invaders of Sindh. In the contemporary context, Sufiism in Sindh cannot be termed as a symbol of resistance against subjugation but it is a collaborative phenomenon which is being used by the state establishment to dilute and weaken Sindhi national resistance.

There is no denying of Saeen Syed's exceptional qualities in inspiring a whole generation of Sindhi youth. There is no doubt in his un-breached devotion to the cause of his nation. There is no doubt in the fact that he endeavoured relentlessly in the face of unfavourable odds. Saeen Syed attained a kind of spiritual grandeur; even he failed to achieve practical victory. His struggle will continue to be an inspiration for the generations of Sindhis to come. It is also a fact that in his lifetime, Sindhi nationalists made a miniscule impression on the politics of Sindh, but after his death, they further gained ground until the end of the first decade of 21st century, when they witnessed a steady decline in strength and reliability among the masses. The death of Saeen Syed shook everyone in Sindh, even if the emotions it aroused varied. But as a whole, for Sindhis, a person who was unshakeable was gone.

During last decades of 20th century, the use of force against Sindhis and other manipulative practices by the state establishment in order to create a chasm in the society in effect became responsible for the overwhelming support for the national cause and the lasting bond uniting the people of Sindh. Luckily Sindhi nationalists found a person who relentlessly endeavoured for the mobilization of Sindhi masses and with his writings created a milieu of increased nationalistic fervour among Sindhi youth. With the charismatic personality of GM Syed, Sindhi national struggle, against all odds, was successful in raising the

sentiments of a significant section of Sindhi masses towards the goal of national liberation. The creation of proxy organizations and political parties to dilute the Sindhi national resistance, expropriation of natural resources of Sindh and the phenomenon of Muhajir politics of the 1980s and 1990s have been a constant source of anguish among Sindhis. These major issues fuelled the Sindhi sentiments in galvanising their mobilization against the State. Sindhi national sentiments were constantly in opposition to the narratives and practices of the Pakistani state. Throughout the 20th century, the response of the state to counter the mobilization of Sindhi masses against perceived grievances has been the use of force and the efforts for creating divisions among Sindhi nationalists and Sindhi society as a whole. It was not only MQM or religious organizations which were created or controlled by the security establishment but manufacturing nationalist leaders and organizations was another success for security agencies in their efforts to dilute Sindhi national resistance. The genuine representatives of Sindhi people were targeted, and their activities were kept under strict control.

12. 21st century Sindh: a society under siege

> Those who do not move, do not notice their chains.
> **Rosa Luxemburg**

From the beginning of 21st century, Sindh has been witnessing a state of misrule and massive corruption and mismanagement in public sectors. As a result, the law and order situation is precarious; there is an exponential growth of Islamic militancy, and Hindu community is facing unprecedented aggression. The forced conversions and forced marriages of teenage Hindu girls with Muslim men are causing the migration of thousands from their motherland. With the influx of people from India, Bangladesh, Burma and Afghanistan, Sindhis are increasingly becoming a minority in their own land. Adoption of many political, administrative and cultural strategies by state establishment, have changed the dynamic of Sindh and Pakistan relations. From being a federating unit of the state, Sindh has been witnessing a virtual colonial situation. With counter defensive strategies of Sindhi nationalist forces, it has been converted into a war zone where brutal measures are being adopted by Pakistani security agencies with impunity.

Chapter Twelve

Sindh in turmoil

Sindh has witnessed turbulent times before but for the last many years, it has been engulfed by unprecedented social and political turmoil. There is an increased feeling of generalized insecurity. A milieu of instability has been the feature of life since the beginning of 21st century. This is created by Political violence and a general worsening of law and order situation.

1. Law and order situation

An unprecedented increase in violence in cities and rural areas can be observed in recent years where banditry, kidnapping for ransom, extortion or demand of protection money, sectarian violence and suicidal terrorist attacks have become the norms of life. Many government officials have expressed openly their disappointment over a chaotic situation. In 2014, federal Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan admitted that the law and order situation in Karachi was heading towards chaos (Naseer, 2014). After a series of fatal incidents of sectarian target killings and street crimes, on November 07, 2016, the Chief Minister of Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah while speaking to a high-level meeting, showed dissatisfaction over the overall security condition in the port city of Karachi (The Nation, 2016).

It is of common knowledge in Sindh that the law enforcement agencies are directly involved in numerous unlawful activities. It is a general belief that anti-social elements are creating havocs in partnership with police, paramilitary forces and security agencies. It is a bitter truth that officials posted in the province became millionaires within a few years, a manifestation of rampant corruption. It is also a public belief that criminals who operate without the consent of law enforcement agencies or refuse to share the booty are exterminated extra-judicially in fake police encounters.

In its various annual reports, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan graphically presented scenarios and case studies on unbridled crime against people and their property. The reports also highlighted the government failings in protecting the safety of citizens and enforcing the rule of law. In 2014, the Commission in its annual report mentioned that instances have been reported where policemen were arrested for committing a crime. It cited many other incidents where they were caught supporting criminals, including land grabbers, car snatchers and blackmailers. On July 15, 2016, the Supreme Court of Pakistan expressed its 'annoyance' at the deteriorating law and order situation in Karachi while hearing the kidnapping case of Barrister Owais Ali Shah and the murder case of prominent Muhajir singer Amjad Sabri Qawal. In July 2017, the court was told that 12000 police officials were found involved in suspicious activities (Pakistantoday 2017). The list mentioned names of police officials on very higher positions in the province including Deputy Inspector General of Police and Senior Superintendent of Police. In January this year, Rao Anwar, a district police chief in Karachi was formally nominated in a case of extra-judicial killing after Supreme Court took suo moto action on the matter. However, in the prevailing situation, no person or institution can dare to speak about the involvement of military or para-military forces, despite the common knowledge that they are involved in several cases of extortions, kidnapping for ransom, extra-judicial killings, drug trafficking in high seas and smuggling of petroleum products from Iranian borders into Sindh.

Since the beginning of 21st century, Sindh has been a safe ground for political murders and abductions. These crimes are being carried out by militant wings of political groups controlled military establishment of Pakistan. Several groups of MQM and numerous religious sectarian organizations are involved in these activities. Only in the first half of 2013,

almost 298 political workers and leaders were killed. Besides MQM and sectarian organizations. many other terrorist groups like Taliban, ISIS and Al-Qaeda. operating in Afghanistan and India have been given safe havens in Sindh. These organizations are also reported to be involved in heinous social crimes.

2. Islamic militancy

From the very beginning. the religious element was one of the partners with the Punjabi civil and military establishment in the running of the country. Religion was also used in the endeavours of dominating other constituent nations in Pakistan. Later. the ruling alliance developed the firm belief that exploitation of religious sentiments of an overwhelmingly illiterate population is the best countermeasure against secular nationalism of the Baloch and Sindhis. In recent decades. these forces of 'Allah' have been overtly proclaimed as the best ideological counterpoint to nationalists. Various extremist groups such as Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat and Lashkar-i-Jhangvi. Terik e Taliban e Pakistan (TTP). Al Qaeda and now Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) have been given space in Sindh as part of the strategy to use militant Islam as the first line of defence and as part of the state policy to achieve desired foreign policy objectives in the neighbouring states. They are also being used advantageously by the security forces in their countermeasures against separatist and nationalist elements. This policy in Sindh appears to be a replication of what the security agencies are doing in Balochistan. Since the 1980s. Sindh witnessed the mushroom growth of madrassas (religious schools) in every town and far-flung rural areas under the direct or indirect supervision of state security apparatus.

The religious and sectarian organizations are not only attacking nationalist forces but are ravaging the fine fabric of Sindhi society by attacking shrines of Pirs and Sufis, killing members of different Islamic sects, and engaged in proselytizing activities to convert Hindus and Christians. This has caused social chaos where many Hindus and followers of other faiths were forced to migrate. Many are internally displaced to save their life and honour.

3. Forced conversions and marriages

In recent decades, with the rise of militant Islam in Pakistan, forced conversion has become one of the major social issues in Sindh. One of the disgusting aspects of this crime is the abduction and conversion of minor Hindu girls and their marriage with Muslim men. This has not only enraged the Hindu community but slowly but steadily transforming the social behaviour of this multi-religious nation. One of the reasons for the increased rate of forced conversions is because it is not included in the criminal offences in the Islamic state's penal codes. Any move to include this into the category of a crime tantamount to a 'conspiracy enacted by the enemies of Islam' to destabilise the Allah given country. A 2014 yearly report of Human Rights Commission of Pakistan mentioned Sindh police claiming that it has registered 1,261 cases of kidnapping of women for forced marriages. These are believed to be mainly from Hindu community. Another phenomenon which is closely linked with forced conversion is the blasphemy issue. Many cases of blasphemy have been reported in which Hindus and Christians were accused of insulting either Quran, Prophet Muhammad or Allah with resultant killings of accused by violent mobs.

4. Demographic shift

For Sindhis, the demography of their land is shifting drastically and they believe that this is orchestrated by the State in order to make them into a minority. There are two elements in the demographic shift in Sindh which include emigration from Sindh, and migration into Sindh. CPEC and Zulfiqar Abad constitute the third element of the demographic shift. Sindhis are genuinely worried that after the completion of these projects, Sindh will be ceased to be a country of Sindhis as they will be in the virtual minority within a few decades.

1. Emigration from Sindh

Before the creation of Pakistan, 30% population in Sindh were the followers of Hindu faith. As a result of engineered Hindu-Muslim riots, a number of Hindu families began to emigrate. Repeated appeals by nationalist leader including GM Syed could not stop the flight of Hindus. This emigration is continuing unabated because of newly introduced phenomena of Islamic militancy and forced conversions. The kidnapping of Hindu teenage girls and converting them to Islam and their forced marriage without the consent of their parents has been frequently reported in the press and some cases were taken to higher judiciary without any relief to the affected girls or their families. These are blatant acts to force Sindhis to emigrate. It is estimated that presently the population of Hindu Sindhis has dwindled to less than 10% of the population as millions of them have migrated during the last few decades.

2. Migration into Sindh

The changing demography of Sindh over the past decades has not been caused only by the migration of Sindhis but it is also because of the influx of immigrants from Bangladesh, Burma and other parts of Pakistan especially from Punjab into

Sindh. From the beginning of the Afghan conflict during the cold war years of the 1980s, millions of Afghan refugees were brought into Sindhi cities and an overwhelming majority of them has now permanently settled there. The influx of these immigrants and refugees not only caused demographic shift but also created various social and law and order issues.

3. CPEC and Zulfiqar Abad

China as s newly emerging economic giant with imperial designs is expanding its economic and strategic web in Asia for the last many decades. The need for increased energy resources and search for consumer markets for its industrial products has made China an unstoppable monster. China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is being considered by Sindhis as the cause of the ultimate demise of their majority. As an auxiliary to CPEC, the proposed development of a new city of Zulfiqar Abad in Thatta District is causing many worries among them. The project is likely to be expanded to 1.32 million acres of land. Chinese firms are to set up an economic zone in the proposed city which will house leading investors and industrialists from China to undertake mega developmental projects. Environmental experts are unanimous in their belief that the project would likely have a negative impact on Marho Kotri Wildlife Sanctuary. Livelihoods of local communities are linked with the surrounding natural resources including mangroves, marine fishery and agricultural lands. The metrological and geological hazards will cause extensive disaster, resulting in the loss of lives and properties of local inhabitants. The Zulfiqar Abad project will make it impossible for them to continue their fishing activities and thus put them in a similar situation when their elders were left after the construction of dams on Indus River, a few decades ago.

It is not only the environmental hazards of CPEC and Zulfiqar Abad projects which are worrying the nationalists but also their social impacts. Nationalist parties fear that with the influx of workers on these projects from other parts of Pakistan, the demography of the area will change.

Dr Lakhumal Luhana, Sindhi nationalist activist and the leader of World Sindhi Congress summarised the impacts of CPEC and Zulfiqar Abad on the demography of Sindh in alarming terms. He categorised the impacts in two areas:

- The influx of immigrant workers: Nearly 800,000 jobs created by various CPEC projects will be based in Sindh. In the prevailing situation, the majority of these jobs will be filled by workers from Punjab.
- The influx of settlers into Zulfiqar Abad: Zulfiqar Abad is the only megacity of its nature in the world which encompasses the entire coastal area of Sindh and will be spread over more than 5200 sq. km. The megacity will be populated by immigrants from other parts of Pakistan.

According to him, with the huge influx of workers in CPEC projects and settlement of millions of people from Punjab and other parts of Pakistan in the megacity of Zulfiqar Abad, there is no way to stop Sindhis being converted into a minority. His worries have been shared with other nationalists. Sindhi nationalist parties like Jiye Sindh Qaumi Mahaz (JSQM), Jiye Sindh Muttahida Mahaz, and Sindhi Nari Sangat deem the projects, not in the Sindh's interest. They believe that Zulfiqar Abad isn't a development but a destruction for Sindh.

Sindh is facing a classical colonial situation

21st century Sindh presents a classical colonial situation where dominant Punjab is inescapably preoccupied to

seek domination over all spheres of life with structural maintenance, economic, political and cultural control. The actions of the Pakistani state and the reactions from Sindhi nationalists are in a peculiar setting within which colonized societies and their colonizers interact. Having totally different cultural roots. sharply separated by customs and traditions, standards of living and pursuing conflicting interests. Sindhis and their oppressors are in a state of the inevitable clash. But the conflict is between uneven powers. The socio-political and economic agenda of the state in Sindh is being imposed and maintained by force of arms, or by the threat of this. The tactics for the control on the politics not only include actual arm-twisting by the security agencies but also by creating pro-establishment organizations. dividing nationalist organizations and the extensive use of state communication apparatus like print and electronic media and so forth. In the economic field, the developmental aggression has been the method in the strategy of perpetual domination of Sindh.

It is not only the exploitation of raw material or natural resources but it also includes the agenda of settling millions of migrant workers in townships. further shifting the demographic balance against Sindhis. The development projects in the 'underdeveloped' or 'backwards' Sindh are in fact economic activities keeping into consideration not the Sindhi interests but to the overall needs of Punjab. These are resulting in the ousting of Sindhis from ownership of the means of production. They are being reduced from the owners to mere associates in these enterprises and mainly as providers of labour but also to an extent as consumers. The ramifications for Sindh are endless. This situation is posing major threats to the overall future of Sindh as consequences involve the confiscation of land, transfer of population, mobilization and settlement of foreign labour. There is already observable evidence of a decline in traditional crafts and agricultural activities.

On an administrative level, only those Sindhi officials are allowed to be posted on strategic positions who have been screened by security agencies as either belonging to families loyal to past colonial administration or allied with Pakistani establishment. It has become hard to see a competent Sindhi officer with nationalistic sympathies in a high administrative position. Sindhis are regarded as too 'backwards' for regular postings on vital administrative positions. As Sindhis were not categorised by the British colonial administrators as among the "martial races" of India, their regular access to armed forces is nearly made impossible.

Culturally, using curriculum and media, the desire to dominate Sindhis has been expressed in the sense of superiority by Punjabis and *Muhajirs* over Sindhi cultural traditions which are being portrayed as primitive and Sindhi people as docile and submissive. In an effort to mutilate the history of the region, the Marauders and murderers who plundered Sindh are being portrayed as heroes. Intertwined with this are religious policies which include forcing fundamentalism and extremism through the chain of religious schools (madrassas), the introduction of extremist versions of Islamic faith imported from Saudi Arabia and Iran, proselytizing practices against followers of other faith like Hindus and Christians. Through a politico-administrative framework, a well-organized strategy of "Pacification" of Sindhi masses involving direct social manipulation and entailing direct and indirect intrusions by flaming violent conflicts within Sindhi society. This has resulted in the weakening of social cohesion among Sindhis.

The state establishment of Pakistan in a classical colonial way is trying to entrench itself by monopolizing historical accounts of the region and social values and cultural traditions. In the state narratives, one can find the glorification of myths

of the physical, mental and spiritual superiority of invaders who occupied this part of the world for the last one thousand years. In their zeal to develop a Pakistani Muslim national identity, they are preaching the superiority of non-existing Islamic science; medicine; technology; military prowess; economic management; and the higher sophistication of Islamic literature and art. The history which is being taught in Pakistani schools is embroidered with heroic tales of mass murderers and executioners of Sindhis and the Baloch. Sindhis and other dominated nations have been cut off from the values of their own past and are genuinely believed by the new generation of Punjabis as primitive and irrational.

The religious, cultural, political and economic exploitative measures and the resultant instinctive reaction has created a situation in Sindhi which involves violence besides political agitation. The violent phenomenon in Sindhi national struggle is nascent and mainly it involves sporadic and disorganized hit and run campaigns on government installations. The threat of an organised violent movement in future is leading the state establishment in frantic efforts to either seek the services of old loyalists among Sindhis or acquire new prospective collaborators in order to "nip the evil in the bud" before it transforms into a full-scale armed confrontation.

China as the new East India Company

With colonial ambitious, the role of China in the region is increasingly being seen as the advent of a new East India Company. It is not only Zulfiqar Abad but the Chinese are penetrating deep in other districts of Sindh in search of economic plunder.

China's growing interests in Sindh has manifested in a number of Chinese companies being involved in many projects in different areas of the province. The involvement of Three

Gorges International Corporation (TGIC) in building a run-of-the-river hydro project at the Sukkur Barrage. acquiring the assets of the British Petroleum (BP) worth $775 million in the South Asian countries by Hong Kong-based United Energy Group (UEG). signing of a multi-billion dollar deal with Sindh government for coal mining and setting up a power plant in Thar coalfield are being perceived as the increased Chinese domination on the economy of the region specially of Sindh. Main assets of the BP in Pakistan include nine production and exploration blocks in Sindh.

China is a major investor in Pakistan with its public and private sectors currently involved in over 250 projects in the country from mega to minor and from strategic to ordinary businesses. Many Chinese firms are also establishing joint ventures with local companies. China's investment in the country has expanded from natural resources to home appliances. communications and finance. The Chinese banking giant. Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC) has started its operations in Pakistan by opening its branches in Karachi and Islamabad. Like the decaying Mughal Empire of 17th century India, the Pakistani government has assured providing all possible assistance and facilitation to Chinese companies and investors. Sindhi nationalists perceive CPEC and Zulfiqar Abad projects as state initiatives to exploit their natural resources and turnin Sindhis into a minority. Sindhis widely believe that the projects are posing an existential threat to them.

Sindh as a war zone

The intensity of state countermeasures against the national resistance has increased disproportionately in recent years. With the rising activities and mass mobilization efforts by nationalist from the beginning of 21st century. the state establishment began to initiate measures to

counter the presumed threat to its national integrity. The multi-faceted measures taken against the Sindhi national resistance converted Sindh into a virtual war zone with its accompanying human right tragedies. In this context, Sindhis are facing a variety of issues. Some of them are being discussed below.

1. Enforced disappearance

One of the inhuman tactics being employed by the security agencies in their strategy to counter the national struggles in Sindh and Balochistan has been the phenomenon of enforced disappearance. The security agencies pick up people and keep them in secret prisons for years without charging them or presenting them in a court of law. The captives usually are inhumanly tortured while in detention and in some cases when some of the captives returned to their home after a prolonged disappearance, they were scared enough to name any agency or to testify in the courts for their ordeal showing the extreme mode of torture they suffered.

In Sindh, the phenomenon of enforced disappearances came into limelight in 2003, when prominent Sindhi leader from Jiye Sindh Qaumi Mahaz (JSQM), Dr Safdar Sarki was kidnapped by security agencies and kept in solitary imprisonment where he was physically and mentally tortured for nearly a year before releasing him.

Various reports from Human Right Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), Asian Human Right Council (AHRC), Home departments in Sindh and Islamabad, the Judicial commission set up by the federal government to investigate on the issue of disappeared persons and UN agencies provided different numbers for disappeared people from Sindh. US Department of State, Human Rights Watch (HRW), Un-represented

Nations People's Organization (UNPO) and World Sindhi Congress in their recently published reports described the situation regarding the phenomenon of disappearance in various regions of Pakistan including Sindh as alarming (Channa, 2012: Amnesty International 2017: Jiye Sindh Muttahida Mahaz, 2017): Human Rights Watch, 2016): United States Department of State, 2016; UNPO, 2017; World Sindhi Congress, 2017). The political organizations in Sindh put the figures for enforced disappearances of political activists from the beginning of the 21st century to 2017 in thousands.

2. Kill and dump policy: extrajudicial killings

In many ways, the phenomenon of extra-judicial killings in Sindh is very similar to what is happening in Balochistan for the last 17 years. This is the phenomenon in which mutilated bodies of political activists bearing marks of extreme torture are dumped on roadsides or in desolate areas. Majority of these bodies are of those people who disappeared before hundreds of witnesses and in broad daylight. The situation is becoming a daily phenomenon in recent years. Sindhi nationalist believe that this is to terrify politically conscious elements of the society in particular and the masses in general in order to scare them to withdraw their support for the national resistance.

Most shocking was the murder of Bashir Khan Qureshi, Chairman of Jiye Sindh Qaumi Mahaz (JSQM) and his brother on April 7, 2012. Sindhi nationalists blamed that they were poisoned to death allegedly by one of the agents of Inter-Services Intelligence agency (ISI). Before his murder, he was threatened with dire consequences by the security agencies after his party organized an "Independence March" on March 23, 2012, in Karachi, where hundreds of thousands of people gathered. Some of the prominent figures

belonging to Sindhi national resistance who lost their lives in recent years in the kill and dump policy of Pakistani security agencies include Jabbar Kehar (JSMM),Zamin Shah (JSMM), Muzaffar Hussain Bhutto, a senior leader of Jiye Sindh Muttahida Mahaz (JSMM), Dewan Prem Chandio (JSMM), Afzal Panhwar (central Vice President of JSMM), Sobal Dahar and Yameen Chachar, (Jiye Sindh Tahreek (JST), Sajjad Murkhand, Amir Khuhawar, Asif Bhutto, Muzaffar Bhutto, Sahib Khan Ghoto (JSMM), Maqsood Khan Qureshi (spokesperson of Jiye Sindh Qaumi Mahaz (JSQM), Salman Wadhio (JSQM), Munir Choliani (Media Coordinator of JSMM), Anees Soomro (district president of the JSMM, East Karachi), Fateh Dahri, (JSMM West Karachi), Saleem Panhwer (district president of JSMM Korangi), Jani Bhatti, (district president of JSMM Malir Karachi), Saleem Panhwar, Shakeel Khoharo (JSMM), Sayed Paryal Shah (district president of JSMM), Zamin Shah (JSMM), Roshan Brohi (JSMM), Asif Panhwar (JSMM), Barkat Chandio, Waheed Laashaari (Jiye Sindh Quami Mahaz (JSQM), Sarwech Pirzado (JSMM), Allah Wadhayo Mahar (JSMM), Fahim Bhutto(JSMM), Karim Memon (JSMM), Wajid Langah (JSMM), Manzoor Ahmed Channa (JSQM), Raja Dahir Bhambhro (JSMM), Haneef Zoar, and Zakir Bozdar (JSMM). These are only the names of prominent figures reported in the media. The human rights organizations and political and social activists claim that hundreds of unidentified dead bodies were thrown into Indus River from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province during 2015 and 2016 are believed to be the bodies of nationalist activists from Sindh and Balochistan.

Sindhi national resistance at cross-road

The 21st century Sindhi national struggle is facing a crisis situation. Although internal disunity among the nationalist groups, increased infiltration in the ranks of nationalist organizations, increase in religious extremism, the

phenomenon of enforced disappearance of political activists and the policy of kill and dump adopted by security agencies have created lots of demoralization among nationalist cadres; nevertheless, realising the gravity of the situation, Sindhi nationalist leaders and organizations, are streamlining their resistance in order to make it more meaningful.

Sindhis became much alarmed by the total control of their province by Muhajirs under the direct patronage of the Military. From October 1999 to 2007, Pakistan was under the direct military rule of General Musharraf with a *Muhajir* as the chief Martial law administrator. It was one of the blackest periods for Sindh as the military authorities handed over Sindh to MQM in all matters of political and economic spheres. Frustrated with the developments, the nationalists began to mobilize opposition. One group headed by Syed Imdad Shah joined the struggle of nationalist leaders from other provinces and participated in mass mobilization under the banner of Pakistan Oppressed Nations Movement (PONM). Jiye Sindh Qaumi Mahaz and other nationalist factions hold demonstrations on various issues in Hyderabad and other Sindhi townships. Withholding of water of River Sindh by Punjab became a burning issue and the nationalists initiated a campaign for increased water share for the province and against the proposed Kala Bagh Dam project on the River. In the volatile situation of 2002, despite the Martial Law, thousands of Sindhis gathered to pay tribute to their legendary leader GM Syed on his sixth death anniversary in his native village of Sann. Throughout the event, loud slogans in favour of an independent Sindhu Desh were raised by the participants.

In Sindh, under the rule of Army through MQM, it was free for all. No legal, constitutional or moral code was observed in the running of the province. While Sindhi officers in the

bureaucracy were humiliated and side-lined, *Muhajirs* of dubious characters and reputations were promoted and posted in higher positions. The hallmark of military rule of General Musharraf in Sindh was the mushroom growth of sectarian and militant religious organizations. These were considered to be invaluable assets in Military's covert wars in Afghanistan and India. These organizations with the open support of security agencies created a strife-ridden society with religious sects fighting each other in their turf war. Above all was the MQM, which with the consent from the army, tried to hold its grip on Karachi and Hyderabad through the use of brutal state force on nationalist activists and Sindhi inhabitants of these cities. With kidnappings, murders, looting and other criminal activities of MQM and religious militant organization, for a time, it became nearly impossible for the nationalists to even hold cultural functions in these cities.

With the mobilization efforts of Sindhi nationalists, the security agencies came heavy upon them. Besides the use of excessive force, one of their strategies was to infiltrate nationalist organizations with their agents. It proved to be a successful strategy. Many among the conscious elements in the national struggle firmly believe that the present dismal state of affair in the resistance is because of fifth columnists who gave advanced slogans to the cadre and paved the way for a pre-emptive strike on the resistance. Fomenting internal dissent in the ranks and file of nationalist activists was another successful strategy of the planted agents.

In order to further obliterate Sindhi language and culture, strict control has been imposed on Sindhi publications and press. Renowned literary persons have been categorised as traitors or agents of the enemy in order to limit their influence on Sindhi youth. The State television and the private TV channels are exclusively controlled by *Muhajirs* or owned by

Punjabi businessmen. Dozens of channels are busy mutilating the history of the region in general and of Sindh in particular. They are depicting a picture of non-existing glories of robbers and plunderers who invaded India for the last 14 hundred years. Mass murderers and those who committed crimes against humanity are being portrayed as heroes. They are busy in fabricating the history by highlighting stories of past adventures, successes and inventions of a fictitious Islamic Umma or Islamic Nation. There is no mention in Pakistani media about those who valiantly defended their motherland against foreign invaders. A few Sindhi channels which have been allowed to broadcast are for obvious reasons, dancing on the tunes of the state establishment. By all practical purposes, through socio-economic, politico-administrative, and cultural strategies, Sindh is facing a classical colonial situation which was a feature of many regions in Africa and Asia during 19th and 20th century when European imperial powers were occupying several nations and territories. Sindh has become a war zone as a result of mobilization efforts by nationalist forces to preserve their national identity and political and economic interests and by countermeasures taken by state establishment. Most alarming is the entry of China into Sindh with its colonial and imperial designs. The political and cultural situation in the 21st century Sindh appears to be getting worse in a nationalistic perspective.

13. Sindhi national question and the principle of the right of self-determination

> The use of force alone is but temporary. It may subdue for a moment; but it does not remove the necessity of subduing again; and a nation is not governed, which is perpetually to be conquered. **Edmund Burke**

The right of self-determination is the right for freely determining a peoples' political status and freely pursuing economic, social and cultural development agendas. After the end of Second World War, several nations got their independence with the application of the principle of the right of self-determination. However, several nations are still under occupation as they were merged into multi-national states contrary to their will. The negation of the right of self-determination has resulted in a number of protracted conflicts in many parts of the world. Sindhis are among many nations facing the curse of colonialism in a 21st-century world. Their claim for self-determination has both legal and humanitarian aspects. Demanding right of self-determination is in line with the United Nation Charter, which emphasized granting the right of self-determination for all people. Granting the right of self-determination is the only peaceful way of resolving national conflicts in multi-national states.

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Principle of self-determination

Self-determination, as observed by Cassese (1995), started off as a political concept implying exclusively the right of free political separation from an oppressor state. It was promoted by protagonists of the American Declaration of Independence and the French Revolution, by socialist leaders and by American president Woodrow Wilson during the First World War. It became the principle of the decolonization process and was adopted by the League of Nations for the settlement of territorial arrangements within Central and Eastern Europe in the aftermath of the Great War.

After Second World War, the right of peoples to self-determination was enshrined in the charter of the United Nations Organization, and in the International Covenants on Human Rights. Article 1 of the United Nations Charter declares one of the purposes of the United Nations to 'develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples'. The common article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which were both adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1966, spelt out this principle in unequivocal terms. 'All peoples', it says, 'have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right, they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development'. The fact that the right to self-determination is the only right common to two human rights covenants of 1966, and the fact that it was placed in the first article of both, strongly suggest that the member states of the UN were recognizing its special importance.

There are several other resolutions adopted by the General Assembly mentioning the right of self-determination. These include:

- Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, adopted by the General Assembly on 14 December 1960;
- The Declaration on the Inadmissibility of Intervention in the Domestic Affairs of States and the Protection of Their Independence and Sovereignty;
- The declaration on the strengthening of International Security; Definition of Aggression;
- The Resolutions on Permanent sovereignty over natural resources;
- Resolutions on the International Development Decade and the establishment of a new international economic order;
- The Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States; and
- The Declaration on Social Progress and Development.

In 1975, in its landmark resolution 3382 (XXX), the General Assembly reaffirmed the importance of the universal realization of the right of peoples to self-determination, national sovereignty and territorial integrity and of the speedy granting of independence to colonised countries and peoples as imperative for the enjoyment of human rights, and it further reaffirmed the legitimacy of the people's struggle for independence, territorial integrity and liberation from colonial and foreign domination by all available means, including armed struggle (UNO, 1975).

The interpretation of the principle of the right of self-determination is not without ambiguities. Throughout its inception, it has been a matter of legal, political and academic discussions. Freeman (1999), emphasised that the literal interpretation of the right of self-determination is not possible because there is no agreed definition of 'peoples' in international law. However, the UN conception of the right

to self-determination of peoples was closely associated with the world-wide movements against colonialism and racism. Heraclides (1997). emphasized that the principle of the territorial integrity of states. the restrictive interpretation of the right to self-determination. and the extreme caution in recognizing new self-determination claims were all normally justified by an appeal to the values of peace and the stability of the international order which showed the confusion of the international community in their policy towards the self-determination principle. The case of Yugoslavia is among the examples that manifested the priority to territorial integrity over the self-determination which left national minorities vulnerable and fearful. It not only encouraged 'ethnic cleansing' and generated massive refugee flows but also provoked unprecedented violence and gross violations of human rights; threatening international peace and security for many years.

In the schema developed by the UN resolution 1541 (XV) of General Assembly. there are three forms of exercising the right of self-determination: the creation of an independent and sovereign state: free association with another state and integration into another state (UNO. 1960). As observed by Rauschning et al. (1997). decolonization in many instances was achieved by one of the above mentioned three methods. Castellino (2014). observed that although. it is an ongoing academic controversy. whether it is a legal. political. or a politico-legal concept: the concept of self-determination with its attending promises of freedom from oppression. keeps raising its head in various differing contexts:

> *"...the whole history of the right of self-determination is, for better and worse. the story of adaptation to the evolving struggles of peoples attempting to achieve control over their own destinies (Falk. 2000:48)".*

There has been strong resistance in the application of the right of self-determination from certain quarters of the international community. It is feared that if this principle is implemented in its letter and spirit then the entire world political map, especially that of Asia, Latin America and Africa, has to be reshaped and remodelled. In South Asia and the Middle East, granting the right of self-determination to Baloch, Sindhis and Kurds means the breakup and reshaping of the boundaries of Iran, Syria, Turkey, Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

International law and the right of self-determination

Various decisions of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) linked the right to self-determination with the granting of independence to colonized nations and affirmed that the very process of decolonization could be explained in terms of the application of the right to self-determination. The Court through the wording in its decisions; nonetheless, displayed a conception of self-determination as a substantive right that accrues to peoples, or at least to non-self-governing territories, and that those peoples or territories might wish to see enforced (Klabbers, 2006). In the Namibia case, it expressed its affirmative support to the international legal norm of self-determination as enshrined in the UN General Assembly resolution1514 (XV). Sections 2 and 5 of the resolution state that:

> *(2) All peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development*
>
> *(5) Immediate steps shall be taken, in trust and Non-Self-Governing territories or other territories which have not yet attained independence, to transfer all powers to the people of those territories, without*

> *any condition or reservation, in accordance with their freely expressed will and desire, without any distinction as to race creed or colour, in order to enable them to enjoy complete impedances and freedom (Dietrich, 1997: 69).*

In the famous *Advisory Opinion on Kosovo* on 22 July 2010, not only the position of Kosovars and their claim for independence were factually and politically strengthened and but also paved the road for the peaceful settlement of international disputes.

In the context of various UN resolutions and decisions of International Court of Justice, violation by a state of the right of people to self-determination is an international crime and constitutes a ground for international intervention. The breach by a state of an obligation deriving from the recognition by international law is an international crime, precisely characterized as such, which give rise to an international responsibility governed by a specific regime (UNO, 1976). In this regard, it has been vehemently advocated by human right organizations and in various working papers of the United Nations, that any criminal act committed by an individual, for the purpose of establishing or maintaining colonial rule should be a matter of international law. This prompted the trials of several military officers and civilian leaders of former Yugoslavia.

Solely as a legal concept, self-determination may relate to the political and the constitutional rights of the people which form the foundation of the concept. In this perspective, Sindhi national struggle is based not only on morality but on the law - the legal right of self-determination. By demanding the right of self-determination they are asserting an international right and Pakistan by denying that right is in breach of international law.

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The principle of international intervention

When a distinct minority national entity is systematically repressed within an existing state and denied an equal opportunity to participate in the political process or subjected to ongoing gross violations of human rights, international intervention is justified. In such a situation, the UN organs, such as the General Assembly, the UN Commission on Human Rights, and even the Trusteeship Council may be in a position to act. According to Stromseth (1992), the question of a UN response to a struggle for self-determination and ultimately secession is part of the larger question of humanitarian intervention by the United Nations. In this perspective, the right of self-determination or secession and intervention by the international community are legally intertwined. The denial of a legitimate case of the right of self-determination will certainly create situations where there is a gross violation of basic human rights or threats to regional or international peace and security. Then the principle of international intervention become applicable as was done in case of Kosovo when United Nation Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) took over civil administrative responsibility as well as the security of the province until 2008.

The main obstacle for the application of international intervention in the implementation of the right of self-determination to settle national disputes in multi-national states appears to be the principle of state sovereignty. But in a 21st-century world, the principle of state sovereignty should no longer be a license to abuse the fundamental rights of a particular community or national entity, neither should it be the licence to abuse the constitutional entitlements of a group and their legal rights. It should neither allow the state to resort to the use of force in dealing with the political demand of a national entity. The United Nation General Assembly Resolution 2625(1970) para, 1 (3), demands that the States do

not oppress their citizens, as directed by the Article 1(3) of the Charter. This obligation is also included in para 5 and in the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights Article 1 and in the compliance provisions of Articles 40 and 41. Wellman (2005), observed that there is nothing conflicting or troublesome in valuing legitimate states on the one hand and, accepting their division on the other. There is also nothing strange about redrawing state boundaries, as they were drawn by colonial powers without the consent of local people: if it will save lives, and provide a better security, especially for those concerned and generally for the whole world. The international community by intervening in the dispute between Pakistan and its component national entities at this stage of conflicts may be able to mobilize pressure on parties to exercise to seek negotiated solutions. It can impose economic and diplomatic sanctions through Security Council.

As enshrined in various covenants and resolutions of the United Nations Organization, the self-determination and the human right principles are inseparable and it might provide the international community with the best possible options to solve the most complex conflicts in the world in a peaceful way. The 1960 resolution of the General Assembly on decolonization stated that the subjection of peoples to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation constitutes a denial of fundamental human rights. With the application of the right of self-determination, the independence of Bangladesh, South Sudan and East Timor was made possible: however, for many other subjugated nations, the incomplete agenda of ending colonialism is waiting for completion.

After Second World War, with the intervention of international community, many national questions ended with the breakup of multi-national states. Taking into account the realities of world politics, resolution of the national question with the

application of the right of self-determination is only possible with the consent of the western powers whose interests and concerns would decide the ultimate fate of national conflicts. Western nations have been ignoring national questions of the Baloch and Sindhi. This may be because of various reasons;

1. As a creation for the purpose of utilizing its services in safeguarding western interests in the region, the Western establishment still believes that Pakistan can be useful in containing Russia and China or its army can be used in protecting western allied Arab Sheikhdoms in the Persian Gulf. Without Pakistani army, the west has to send its own forces to protect the oil routes and the discredited ruling families of these tiny states. Using the services of Pakistani army by the West is much cheaper for them and without creating any political problem among their public back at home.
2. A significant section of policymakers in the West believes that the ultimate demise of Pakistan would create problems worldwide as thousands of extremists and nuclear experts would be roaming the world without a firm controlling authority.
3. There is increased apprehension about the viability of small states, a fear which has been ever-present among western strategists on Asian and African affairs in a post-Second World War international polity.
4. There is a belief in the West that resolution of national questions in Pakistan is still possible through peaceful means.
5. With the re-demarcation of boundaries of multinational states, there is the fear of reopening the Pandora's Box.

Whatever the apprehensions of the international community, regarding national questions in Pakistan, it is an accepted

political norm that the legitimacy of a state can only be based on the general acceptance of the people of that state. A state cannot claim legitimacy by killing thousands of people or to keep a section of its population under economic exploitation or try to assimilate one national entity into another by force. If the state continues with such strategies, then there would be no chance of unity among those people who faced the systematic state violence. The international community must think whether maintaining the territorial integrity of states like Pakistan is worth the loss of thousands of Sindhi and Baloch lives and the socio-political and economic misery which they are facing in the religious state.

Right of self-determination and Sindhi national question

Although the aim of creating Pakistan was to safeguard the interests of the colonial power in the region after its withdrawal from India, on the face of it, the decision was justified on the grounds that as Hindus and Muslims practice two different mythological beliefs, they cannot live peacefully in one country. It was the novel interpretation of the term nation in that religious faith alone was considered enough to define a particular people as a nation.

The control of the newly founded religious state was handed over to an alliance of Punjabi landlord politicians, civil bureaucrats, army personnel belonging to the western part of a divided Punjab, religious elements and the refugees (*Muhajir*) from the north Indian provinces of Bihar, and the United Province. In order to sustain the grip on different national entities and to strengthen the hold of the ruling alliance over the state apparatus, strict imposition of "Islamic Ideology" became imperative. Jalal (1994), noted that crucially, the *Muhajir*/Punjabi-dominated civil and military bureaucracy acquired almost unchallenged control over the levers of state power. Janmahmad (1989), observed that it was puzzling for

social scientists of the time that an imported bureaucracy, imported military establishment, a cohort of imported politicians armed with an imported ideology of north Indian origin invented by a colonial power and some thousand refugees became able to control a multi-national state to the extent that an alien language (Urdu) was also made the national language of an independent state. Most shocking for the constituent nations of Pakistan was the adoption of cultural traditions of a refugee group as the national culture of a state where the population of Bengal, Sindh, Pakhtunistan and Balochistan had languages and cultural traditions going back many thousands of years. Janmahmad (1989), emphasised that:

> *"Pakistan undoubtedly is a unique society. The philosophy behind adopting Urdu, Arabic, Persian or any other alien tongue as the national language or the medium of education and communication, cannot be comprehended by an ordinary intellect except those whose thinking has embraced a host of obnoxious ideas since the formation of this state (Janmahmad, 1989, p. 247)."*

It became imperative for the ruling alliance in Pakistan to deny consistently the existence of different nations and national identities and Islam became the only binding force. These endeavours made Pakistan a laboratory for all kinds of hypocrisy, and social, economic and cultural corruption. Consequently, truthfulness, dignity, honour and sincerity became an anathema in Pakistani socio-political practices. It also became imperative for the state establishment to create an education system aimed at creating a population of a fanatic adherent to a falsified religious doctrine based on hatred towards the followers of other faiths. Janmahmad (1989), observed that:

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> *"The Pakistani leaders emphasized the inviolability of 'two nation theory' in the preservation of the country's integrity and promptly dubbed 'un-Islamic' any advocacy of a socio-political system based on equality and justice; and branded those favouring progressive reforms as traitors disloyal to the cause of Pakistan and Islam (page. 76)."*

Faced with increasing resistance from constituent nations, the ruling alliance had to adhere even more to its religious narrative and became dependent on the use of militant power to counter any attempt to either secede or destabilize the state. In order to keep control on the different nationalities amalgamated into the religious state against their free will, the state created a ramified military organization with its affiliated political and religious outfits to combat the national aspirations of the subjugated national entities (Cohen, 1984; Rizvi, 2000; Cohen, 2004). Consequently, Pakistan became a security state and the military became the *de facto* ruler of the state, whether this was an overt takeover of the government or behind the scenes governance using puppet politicians as a facade. With a highly centralized system of governance, smaller national entities were denied due access to the power structure of the state. To undermine their self-esteem, with a constant media propaganda, the Sindhis have been portrayed as inherently weak and submissive, and the Baloch as ignorant and savages, not fully in line with strict Islamic tenets.

Sindhi national aspirations

The fundamentalist state ideology and a falsified worldview presented by Pakistani state are running parallel to Sindhi social norms. Sindhi national sentiments and the narrative of the religious state of Pakistan have been incompatible as historical happenings in Sindh have shaped a tolerant society where co-existence with all religious beliefs has been the

hallmark of socio-political behaviour. It is hard for Sindhis to comprehend why the state is negating their thousand years old existence as an autonomous and sovereign nation. It is also hard for them to digest the portrayal of murderers and plunderers as national heroes. It is very hard for them to accept the replacement of their tolerant, secular and democratic social behaviour with that of a narrow-minded, superfluous religious worldview of the Pakistani state.

Sindhi national sentiments are the expression of a strong urge for national sovereignty. The spirit of Sindhi nationalism is based on the existence of a glorious nation from the very beginning of human history thousands of years ago. Their national struggle is for regaining their national pride and overthrowing the yoke of subjugation. Their nationalism is the affirmation of their historical resistance against the aggressions of the powerful. Having a proud sense of belonging to a historical national entity, their struggle is in direct confrontation with the artificial national identity of Pakistan.

Sindhi national sentiments intensified in the 20th century with the negation of their historical identity by the Pakistani state. Since the incorporation of Sindh into Pakistan, a strong urge for independence has been the spirit of Sindhi nationalism. they have never accepted Mr Muhammad Ali Jinnah, as the 'Great Leader'. By and large, he is considered to be a protégé of the colonial power and his services were used for the division of India and the creation of a religious state. In their hearts, they have never accepted the occupation of their land and subjugation of their people by Pakistan. However, having no options, initially, they accepted as fait accompli the inevitability of becoming part of the new religious state. Their leadership began a political struggle with the demand for greater autonomy within a federated Pakistan in

alliance with other progressive and nationalist leaders from Balochistan, Pakhtunistan and Bengal in united fronts and single parties. They raised their voice in strongly opposing any role for religion in the state affairs. They endeavoured for the establishment of an appropriate state structure run on the basis of secularism, federalism and democratic principles. However, the state establishment became intolerant to a degree that any talk of decency, secularism or autonomy from the constituent national entities became equivalent to anti-Islam and anti-state activity and thus treasonous. After the failure of seeking a decent place in the state of Pakistan because of the intolerant and violent attitude of the state, Sindhi nationalists were forced to demand an independent status, resulting in an open confrontation.

Pakistan claims its legitimacy as a state 'sanctioned by Allah' and is thus not answerable to anyone or bound to obey recognised international laws or norms of the civilized world with regard to the running of their state affairs. Its national identity is based on the superfluous ideology of Muslims being one nation and that the followers of a particular religious faith can form a nation. Its rulers, bureaucracy, political leadership, and national language together with cultural and social traditions were imported. As observed by Dashti (2017), the Pakistani state nationalism is without a nation: it is not a voluntary multinational association. It is dedicated to the political and economic hegemony of Punjabi nationality. The pillar on which the state nationalism of Pakistan is based is the brutal and inhuman use of state power in order to assimilate its national entities into a non-existing state identity. Sindhis believe that their cause is just as they consider themselves the master of their land and resources and are hopeful for a bright future of living with dignity and honour.

Chapter Thirteen

The right of self-determination and international peace

Conflicts between different national entities in multi-national countries are prime forces in both the promotion and destruction of peace, human dignity and social justice. The creation of artificial states and unjust international borders in the process of decolonization are among the major destabilization factors in many regions of the world. It has also caused many inter-state conflicts. With the displacement of thousands of refugees and violation of fundamental human rights, these regional conflict became international. On the other hand, granting the right of self-determination to subjugated nations by implication has impacts on regional and global peace and would contribute to world peace and harmony. Sindh is geographically located in the most dangerous region on Planet Earth. Pakistan is without a doubt among the epicentres of terrorism and religious fundamentalism. An independent Sindh would create a strong watching corridor against the rising Islamic fundamentalism in the Persian Gulf region. This will also pave the way for the liberation of the Baloch, Seraikis and many other national entities in the region. The emergence of democratic and secular sovereign states will contribute to maintaining regional peace and world security, acting as counter check for the religious fundamentalist states of the region.

Resolving the Sindhi national question: is there a peaceful way out?

After seven decades since the creation of Pakistan, one thing has become more and more clear. It is that the state seeks to establish domination over Sindhis and other national entities. This domination strategy is not limited to the physical occupation of the land but also seeks the systematic and total destruction of their social, political and economic existence. It is also to deprive them of their history and cultural heritage. This would inevitably result in violent conflict with very

undesirable consequences. But historically, the end of a violent conflict is always with a peaceful resolution. The use of force neither can create a state identity nor will it lead to a peaceful solution of a national conflict in a multi-national state. It is a historical fact that suppression further fuel such conflicts. However, the reality of the religious state of Pakistan is that it is devoid of any national consciousness on the basis of ethnic, linguistic, cultural or historical unity but is merely an administrative unit governed by one dominant nationality. It is only the coercive power of the state which has sustained its integrity.

The cardinal question regarding the Sindhi national question in Pakistan is whether it can be resolved peacefully? Peaceful resolutions need first of all the realization among the ruling elite of a state that the grievances leading to the conflict need to be resolved. The situation for a peaceful resolution calls for political will from all concerned. As observed by Lustick, etc. (2004), it is fundamental to arrange for political and institutional measures to satisfy demands of national entities with secessionist potentials and appears to threaten the integrity of any existing state. For a peaceful resolution, the use of force must be stopped before a process of peaceful co-existence could begin. In order to reach a peaceful agreement with Sindhis, the estate establishment must strip away the use of camouflage terms and explanations in the bid to hide the true nature of Sindhi question. In this context, it is important that it should stop seeing Sindhi national resistance as a foreign-sponsored phenomenon.

There are several examples of peaceful separation of nations from a state or empire or simple bifurcation of states on a national basis with mutual consent. Many states in contemporary Europe were created out of Austro-Hungarian Empire. Norway and Sweden became independent countries

in 1905 after the dissolution of their confederation. During 1961, Jamaica quit the Federation of the West Indies after the referendum. Singapore seceded from Malaysia in 1965. In recent decades, dissolution of Czechoslovakia into republics of Czech and Slovakian republics and the peaceful separation of former Socialist republics from the Soviet Union are other examples of peaceful resolution of national questions. On the other hand, one can find in recent history several examples when multi-national states failed to comply with the demand of national entities or failed to realise the gravity of the situation facing them, the situation turned violent with humanitarian tragedies. We can observe the phenomena of violent secession in case of Yugoslavia, Biafra, Sudan, Bangladesh and Kurdistan.

The civilized and peaceful way of conflict resolution goes through a dialogue process in a fair reconciliation process. The genuine process of reconciliation has experimented in different parts of the world with positive results. A result oriented reconciliatory process always include:

- Confidence building measures

Trust building is of fundamental importance in a violent or would be a violent confrontation. Where mistrust has been the hallmark of the entire 70 years of relationships between Sindhis and the state establishment, substantial and meaningful confidence-building measures are necessary before any serious attempts of a negotiated settlement. The open and loud acknowledgement of all injustices committed to Sindhi people and immediate release of political workers languishing in secret service dungeons and prisons without any trial for the last many years and recovery of missing persons would create a suitable atmosphere.

- Suspension of hostilities

Ending the cycle of violence is a must for paving the way for a negotiated settlement.

- Negotiating the issue

After taking mentioned confidence-building measures, creating a mechanism is must to formulate constitutional actions. It would be possible to negotiate on cultural, political and economic issues on which the Sindhi national question is based. As the military establishment is the de facto ruler of the state, it is imperative that negotiation with Sindhi nationalist leadership should be conducted by the military establishment or through its declared representatives.

The negotiation process will not be an easy one as interests of the state establishment and Sindhi masses are in many ways diametrically opposed to one another. Sindhi national struggle is for cultural, historical, geographical and economic rights while the state is concerned with making an artificial Islamic nation, political marginalization of Sindhis and other national entities, and the ruthless exploitation of their resources. Negotiation agenda should include grievances on which the whole conflict is revolving.

Extending national rights to Sindhis through democratic means is the only way forward to avoid a violent and devastating conflict. A peaceful settlement is not only in the interest of Sindhis but it will immensely bolster the economic prospects of Pakistan. A resolution of the demands from Sindhis, Baloch and other national units for national rights could ultimately strength solidarity among the people and make the state stronger. In a peaceful atmosphere, Sindh and Balochistan are two regions which represent for Pakistan

a possible way out of its endemic economic downturn and possible collapse. Through utilizing the abundant natural resources, they are a potential economic boon to Pakistan.

Although the peaceful resolution of national conflict has been successful in many instances in recent history; nevertheless, taking into consideration of military mindset of the Pakistani state, there is no immediate prospect for a negotiated settlement of Sindhi national question. On the other side, as a national entity, Sindhis never accepted foreign domination for long and have never compromised on their socio-cultural traditions, national identity and sovereignty. On the other side, the Pakistani state establishment is totally ignoring the ground realities where Sindhis are alienated with the state on a large scale. Every colonial and exploitative system in history has inevitably engendered resistance. The determination of Pakistani state to perpetuate their grip on Sindh has been rivalled by the equally unflinching will of Sindhi masses to throw away the yoke of subjugation.

Imposing an alien rule on a nation is the extreme degree of injustice and it causes extreme reactions. The drive for national liberation by many subjugated and occupied nations resulted in a violent confrontation between the occupied and occupier. They have been a source of tremendous suffering, misery and destruction. The only way to prevent humanitarian tragedies is the granting of the right of self-determination to colonised nations. The principle of the right of self-determination has its own weaknesses and pitfalls but it is the only panacea for resolving the contrasting interests of many nations in the contemporary world in a peaceful way. The solution of getting rid of protracted and bloody conflicts obviously lies in the granting of the right of self-determination to all aspiring nations. Implementation of the right of self-determination in case of Sindhis, Baloch would

save thousands of lives. Sindhis have lived a painful history since their incorporation into Pakistan. Their national question is an unresolved issue waiting for a peaceful resolution. Sindhi national struggle is based on the legal right of self-determination and Pakistan by denying that right is in breach of international law. It is not the destiny of Sindhis to be ruled. They deserve to rule themselves according to their own societal norms and values in a dignified way. This is only possible by upholding the charter of United Nations and the principle of the right of self-determination which guarantees to extend cultural, economic and political rights to all nations.

14. Problems of Sindhi national struggle

> It does not matter how small you are if you have faith and a plan of action. Fidel Castro

The Sindhi national resistance in its present form is complex and it has many unresolved internal issues and complex external dimensions. Major problems facing the Sindhi national struggle include lack of an inspiring national leadership, the absence of a clear aim of the struggle, the failure to make a feasible strategy for the resistance and the lack of a unified political organization in order to streamline the sentiments of Sindhi masses. Presence of collaborators, fifth columnists, sponsored religious extremism, and Muhajir phenomenon are other issues facing the struggle. The question of a viable Sindhu Desh, lack of international support and apathy of Hindu Diaspora with Sindhi national cause are factors causing much disappointment among nationalist cadre.

Lack of a robust leadership

One cannot deny the fact that without an inspiring leader, national liberation movements fragment and get to nowhere. A charismatic leader is needed in order to inspire the masses through his actions, encourage activist's commitment towards the national cause and to engage all sections of society involved in the resistance.

Chapter Fourteen

With his persistent struggle beginning from the creation of Pakistan. Saeen GM Syed emerged as a person on which the whole structure of Sindhi national struggle was erected. His personality raised hopes and expectations of Sindhi masses. Many among them began to believe that Saeen Syed might be the deliverer for their nation. He was seen as the messiah for a people who were under the heavy weight of oppression and bearing the insults and humiliations of their new rulers from Islamabad. After the iconic figure of GM Syed, Sindhi national struggle has been without a leader of such calibre.

Many among the disciples of GM Syed are hardworking dedicated political activists with lots of following among Sindhi masses especially among the youth. However, in the given situation, where the state establishment is not ready to provide space for open political activities, it became hard for them to recognise themselves as inspiring leaders of the movement despite their hard work and deep commitment to the cause. Bashir Qureshi was increasingly becoming a central figure in Sindhi politics of 21st century. He gained the trust of not only the Sindhi masses but a significant section of Sindhi political analysts and intellectuals were pinning their hopes on his leadership. However, he was tragically eliminated by state secret agencies. Another rising star of Sindhi politics, Dr Safdar Sarki was kidnapped by security agencies, kept in solitary confinement for months and subjected to inhuman torture. His political colleagues and family members are increasingly worried about his personal safety if he ventured to restart his full-scale political activities in Sindh. Lack of a robust leadership in contemporary Sindh is understandable as leaders develop through trial and error in the political process, which is not there for Sindhi nationalists. In a colonial situation such as Sindhi people are facing, the presence of a trustworthy leader with a crystal clear vision of future is of fundamental importance. Sindhi intellectuals believe that the

only solution for the absence of a single inspiring figure is the collective leadership which is still to be evolved.

The absence of a clear aim for the struggle

In a national liberation struggle, presenting clear aims and objectives is fundamental. It is important in order to motivate the masses to tread towards the final destination and to present a clear picture of the struggle to the international community. Although GM Syed clearly envisioned an independent Sindhu Desh as the ultimate goal of his struggle, it can be observed that many contemporary nationalist groups are presenting a rather confused set of aims and objectives to Sindhi masses. Voices for greater provincial autonomy, autonomy under 1940 resolution of Muslim League and granting of the right of self-determination are being raised as the objectives of their struggle. This has been causing much confusion not only among the masses but among prospective supporters of Sindhi cause internationally. Although, many conscious leaders among Sindhi nationalist have been trying to declare a clear-cut design for the struggle expressing clear aims and objectives. They have been emphasising on the concept of freedom and prosperity for Sindhis in their own land, inspired by their own suffering and their own experience. However, the confusion on the aim of the struggle is still there. Due to conflicting and sometimes confusing claims regarding aims and objectives of national struggle, Sindhi nationalist activists failed to mobilize a significant section of the population which is mainly watching the developing situation from a distance, hesitating to commit itself wholeheartedly with the national struggle. The problem to reach the people and speak a language that the Sindhi masses can appreciate and the international community can understand is still to be overcome by the leadership of the resistance.

Chapter Fourteen

The absence of a united front

National liberation struggle is a political movement by definition. It requires political organization. skilled political leadership and resources to achieve its objectives. As emphasized by Taber. (1965) and Cabral. (1972). the archetypal organizational structure of a national liberation movement is composed of three basic ingredients:

1. A nation who desires for liberation.
2. A political organization or party to streamline the desire of the nation for liberation. and
3. An armed resistance or guerrilla army which can confront the enemy forces on the ground.

Going through the history of national liberation struggles. one can observe that in many cases several groups. organizations or parties have been involved in the national resistance. It can also be observed that where there has not been unity among these organizations. the task of national salvation has been tortuous. It is believed that in a situation where a plethora of organizations are involved in the struggle. acting on their own manifesto and constitutions. a united front of nationalist forces is the answer to many questions.

National struggle are always faced with the most burning question of how different elements of the struggle should be united in order to confront the enemy in a meaningful way? In a protracted struggle where the nation is facing the might of an enemy having far superior prowess. the solidarity of masses can only be achieved through collective efforts by the leadership. However. there is observable lack of collaborative efforts between various factions of Sindhi national struggle in recent years. It appears that the leadership is unable to shed their scepticism about each other and are engaged in constant grumbling. In many instances. they wavered on

important national issues. One of the factors for delaying the formation of a united front is the scepticism of some leaders and groups regarding the "individuality syndrome" among Sindhi leadership. Also, the role of agent provocateurs in creating obstacles for a joint struggle cannot be ruled out. However, one can not only blame the state manipulations for the present situation in which the nationalist parties are usually fighting more bitterly amongst themselves than they fought the common enemy. Sindhi leaders must take some of the blames for this sad situation of divisions and infighting. A prominent Sindhi intellectual observed that nationalist groups from all orientations are wasting their energy fighting over trivial issues.

Jiye Sindh Mahaz seized to exist as a unified organization soon after the death of GM Syed. Many splinter groups were formed including Jiye Sindh Qaumi Mahaz (JSQM Bashir Khan Qureshi group) led by Qureshi's son Sanan Qureshi; JSQM Abdul Wahid Arisar group; Jiye Sindh Tehreek (JST) led by Dr Safdar Sarki; Jiye Sindh Mahaz (JSM) led by Riaz Chandio; and Jiye Sindh Muttahida Mahaz (JSMM) led by Shafi Burfat. These groups are carrying out their political activities on their own and on most of the occasions accusing leaders of a rival group of being traitors to the national cause. Some of the followers of GM Syed are now advocating a more reconciliatory policy by stressing on the implementation of 1940 Lahore Resolution of Muslim League which was demanding autonomous Muslim regions in the Northwest and Northeast of India after the British withdrawal. Parties towing this line of action include Sindh Taraqi Pasand Party (STP) led by Dr Qadir Magsi; Sindh United Party (SUP) led by Jalal Mehmood Shah; and Sindh National Movement (SNM) led by Ali Hassan Chandio.

The phenomenon of acting individually can still be observed among the nationalist groups whether they are functioning inside Sindh or in Diaspora. No serious attempts, so far, has been made to unite all groups into a single party or a united front. The situation of political unity in order to streamline mass mobilization is far from being satisfactory and the lack of unity among nationalist groups and personalities has been a major obstacle in the consolidation of gains in the struggle. The majority of the analysts believe that the failure of leadership to develop a broad-based alliance of nationalist forces is detrimental to the aims of the resistance and longer it continues, the resultant outcome would create an insurmountable disconnect between the masses and the national resistance.

Collaborators and fifth columnists

Sindhi national struggle has been fighting a ruling alliance which includes military, *Muhajirs* and *Mullahs* since the inception of Pakistan. With state resources, this alliance became able to get support from various sections of Sindhi society. The collaboration of Sindhis with Pakistani establishment comes in all kinds of form and affects all walks of life and can be categorised into intellectuals, Pirs/Sufis, and political groups like People's Party and Awami Tehrik.

- **Intellectuals and academics**

The ideology of Pakistan based on Muslim brotherhood is the state narrative for keeping it intact and to present a logic for the incorporation of Sindhis and other nations into Pakistan. This has been propagated through school curriculum and media. With increased opposition to this superfluous ideology from Sindhis, the establishment apparently hired the services of many intellectuals and academics among them in order to dilute the opposition. These writers and intellectuals are

presenting a very pessimistic scenario to Sindhi masses regarding their dream of getting sovereignty. Since 1947, they have been busy in advocating the idea that Pakistani state is invincible, that it is the destiny of Sindhi nation to be part of this state and that the best way for Sindhis is to adapt themselves to the ways of their new masters and that to resist is to suicide. These collaborators are active in the guise of progressivism and liberalism. To counter the narrative of nationalist intellectuals of sacrifice and sufferings on the part of the oppressed, they are trying to convince Sindhi people that a resistance movement would offer the state of Pakistan limitless opportunities for the indiscriminate slaughter of Sindhi people. A Sindhi activist in Diaspora lamenting on the behaviour of these collaborators termed their actions as mere blindness;

> *"The so-called intellectuals are living in the total darkness of the reality of the situation faced by Sindhis. The darkness has blinded their vision on the actions of state establishment which is carrying out a repulsive display of power on Sindhi masses. The darkness has blinded them not to feel or see the pain and humiliation felt by thousands of their fellow Sindhis. In their blindness, they failed to feel the sorrows of Sindhi mothers, sisters and elderly caused by the disappearances, torture and murders of their loved one by state security apparatus. In their writings, they are trying not to mention the fact that Sindh is already drenched with the blood of innocent Sindhis. These loyalists are also trying to downplay the ideal of liberation as worth fighting and if need be, it is an ideal for which one should be prepared to die."*

They are presenting the resistance as the work of either some confused youth or agents of foreign powers. With meagre

resources and the extreme high-handedness of the state towards nationalist intellectual cadres and academic figures, the national resistance was unable to counter the nefarious propaganda of the powerful establishment of Pakistan with the help of hired academics. Hired intellectuals and writers were able to create mistrust and confusion among a large section of Sindhis regarding the goal of their national resistance.

For the last many decades, it has been the preoccupation of Sindhi national resistance to withstand the onslaught of state propaganda of submission which has been carried out by or through actions of hired Sindhi intellectuals. As put forward by a Sindhi nationalist writer, actions of these collaborators might be because of ignorance and fear but worse through selfishness. They are assisting the oppressors directly and thus tend to sabotage, though ineffectively, the efforts of Sindhi masses to realize freedom in their lifetime. Taking extensive measures in order to counter the malicious propaganda of collaborative elements in the garb of intellectualism is one of the important tasks for Sindhi nationalists.

- **Pirs and Sufis**

Sufiism originated as an expression of apathy towards mundane affairs during the turmoil caused by protracted and bloody civil war between Arab tribes of Umayyad and Hashemite soon after the murder of Caliph Usman. Nevertheless, after gaining popularity among a section of Muslim society, it became a tool in the power struggle and Sufis and Pirs became the agents of various warring parties struggling for power in the Middle East and Central Asia. In Sindh, throughout middle ages, the services of Pirs and Sufis were extensively used by different adventurers and plunderers in order to sustain their grip on the people. Their services were also hired by British colonial administration

and after the creation of Pakistan, they are being used by state establishment in order to weaken Sindhi national sentiments.

Sufis and Pirs in historical context

With prolonged infighting for power among the family members of Prophet Muhammad and the powerful Umayyad tribe, many pious Muslims became disgruntled and began to dissociate themselves from the affairs of the community. They began to realise that their leaders are deviating from the sayings of the Prophet, thus not capable of being the medium between ordinary Muslims and Allah. They sought a direct relationship with Allah and in its essence, Sufiism was the practice of some rituals or techniques by which they sought a direct encounter with the divine[55]. In order to establish a direct association with Allah, Sufis distanced themselves from the corrupt politics of the time and became the antithesis to the legalistic Muslim establishment. However, they generally followed the lifeways of Islamic customs, offering daily prayers, holding fast in the month of Ramadan, and abiding the Sharia laws with the addition of some ritualistic techniques such as *dhikr* (remembrance) of Allah, *meraqaba* (meditation) and *sama* (listening to music). Such collaborative activities needed someone to lead and from here emerged the phenomenon of Pir, Saint, *Murshid* or Shaikh who acted as leaders or masters. These ascetics were given the name of Sufi

[55] On a broader ideological perspective, Sufis and Pirs are the friend of Allah and the intermediary between people and Allah. Allah is the remote, and almighty Ruler, inaccessible to the common man. The Prophet Muhammad was the channel of final direct revelations of Allah's Will to man. According to Islamic doctrine, after Muhammad there will not be any direct channel of communication, nevertheless, Allah has chosen Pirs and Sufis as His friends and assigned each a specific territory of the world to watch over. They are the channels through which communication with Allah flows. They are to act as mediators between their *Murids* (followers) and Allah.

by the general populace as they usually wear coarse woollen clothing instead of finely made luxury ones.

Sufiism transformed to become a cult during the struggle for power between Prophet Muhammad's cousin Ali and chief of Umayyad tribe. Muaviya. Initially began as an individual phenomenon. slowly. individual Sufis began to communicate with others and in the process. a small circle of companions evolved. In this way. soon many aspects of Sufiism became collective and public rather than individualistic and private. It was also bound to become a brotherhood because of the compulsion of a primitive society where survival of individual was nearly impossible. In this context. in order to survive. gradually it became an organised system. with rules of discipline and devotion which the devotees (*murids*) learned from a spiritual teacher (Pir). to whose guidance they submitted themselves completely. With the passing of time and with the development of the perception of complete obedience to the master. the phenomenon became sufficiently authoritarian. The authority of Sufi saint was automatically transferred to his offspring. the way dynastic rule perpetuated in the middle ages. The phenomenon of various *silsilas* (Dynasties of Sufi families) developed on the same footings as the development of dynastic rules. With the passage of time. these *silsilas* transformed and became equivalent to modern day mafias or business syndicates where the protection of social. political and financial interests of each family members became the responsibility of every other member of the *silsila*. On spiritual front. building on their original claim of inheriting the tradition of the Prophet. over a period of time. the reputation of masters developed as "friends of Allah" (*awliya*) and were seen as the living interface between the created and the creator. With varying degrees. these masters were regarded as having access to Allah's special qualities by

way of their special knowledge (*ma'rifa*) and having the ability to work miracles (*karama*).

Paul (1994) and Tor (2007), observed that once established, these masters or Sufi saints or their heirs used their position to negotiate a mutually advantageous relationship with rulers. While the Pirs were dependent on the ruler to strengthen their financial position, rulers in many cases became dependent on the intelligence gathered from Pirs. Sufis and Pirs adopted a social role as intermediary between the ruler and the ruled. One can see the phenomenal increase in Sufiism during the prolonged period of rivalry between Fatimid and Abbasids and then during turbulent periods after the Mongol holocaust. It can be observed that wherever there was a struggle between various power centres there appears a strong presence of Sufis in that region showing a direct relationship between activities of Sufis and the power struggle.

During 10th and 11th centuries, the rivalries between Fatimid and Abbasid dynasties for religious and political supremacy of Islamic world caused the creation of various categories of Sufis and Pirs. Trained and fully knowledgeable personalities among Sufis were dispatched to various regions in the Islamic world by these rival powers for political propaganda in favour of their cause and for gathering intelligence of all sorts (Karamustafa, 1994). The rivalries of their masters transmitted to the followers of respective Pirs and Sufi which is still present among the followers of contemporary *silsilas*.

After the collapse of both Fatimid and Abbasids there developed various regional powers or dynasties who were constantly in the war against each other for ultimate supremacy. Opposing but well-established sections of Pirs and Sufis in various regions, were patronized by rulers or they worked for different contenders of power. It was not only

the influence of Sufi saints on the masses which was used by the contenders of power but their networks of *Khanqahs* (Sufi lodges) were also used for information gathering and propaganda purposes. This triggered massive investment in the shrines and lodges. With the initial patronage of their favourite Sufi orders. the Sufis became so influential that in the majority of the cases. Sufi saints began to dictate their terms on rulers and it became hard to even for established empires like Othman to either curb or control the activities of certain Sufi orders. However. in some cases. Sufi saints which became overt in their support to rival contenders also faced persecution and death sentences.

Sunni Othman and Shiite Safavid dynasties in Turkey and Persia successfully employed the strategy of using Sufi orders as tools in their never-ending rivalry for the supremacy of the Muslim world. This rivalry even extended to areas where there was no direct control of these empires. In Sindh. the Ismailis were working for the interests of Safavid while Qadiri *silsila* was representing the strategic and political interests of Othmans. A large number of Othman functionaries arrived in Sindh as Qadiri Sufis and settled in various Sindhi townships. They associated themselves with already established Gilani and Hujwayri Sufi orders. After a while. it appeared that the Othman functionaries posing as Pirs and Sufis overwhelmed Safavid agents and Ismailis were pushed southwards toward Gujarat. The Mughals successfully exploited Sufi orders in north India to dislodge Afghans led by Suris and then to establish their own legitimacy among the Muslims of northern India. After gaining firm ground through many bloody battles for the throne of Delhi. Mughal rulers used Qadiri Sufis and Pirs as their vanguard in getting public support. Before the advent of Mughals. the services of famous Pirs and Sufis of that period were successfully utilized by some of the cruellest of rulers of north India during medieval times.

Sultan Iltumish was blessed by Khawaja Muinuddin Chishti, Ghiasuddin Balban was blessed by Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj-i-Shakkar, and Muhammad Tughlaq was blessed by Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya (Aziz 2001).

When Arguns decided to invade Sindh, they tried to hire the services of Suhrawardi Pirs and Sufis in order to collect information on Samma dynasty and also to spread disinformation and scaremongering among the general populace. However, Suhrawardi *silsila* of Sufis were well taken care of by Samma rulers and in the beginning, they refused any cooperation with Arguns. In retaliation, when they got a foothold in Sindh, the Arguns not only punished Sufis like Makhdum Bilal but also brought their own Sufis and Pirs from Central Asia to replace Suhrawardi Pirs. The Sufis and Pirs brought by Argun invaders were mostly from Qadri and Naqshbandi orders. However, when Suhrawardi Pirs realised that the Arguns cannot be defeated by Sindhi rulers, they submitted and offered their services to Shah Hasan Argun, the new conqueror of Sindh in return of land and stipend. Arguns also got help from Mahdi *silsila*. Mahdi *silsila* was affiliated with Sammas but the period of cordial relationship between Samma rulers and Sayyad Muhammad Junpuri, the proclaimed Messiah (Mehdi) ended with the mounting pressures and manipulations of Pirs and Sufis of other *silsilas*. A number of the followers of Mahdiism migrated north in the protection of Arguns after they lost the patronage of Samma rulers. Some of the Mahdi Sufis were sent back to Sindh prior to the invasion and from them, Shah Hasan Argun got valuable information about the prevailing situation in Sindh. However, with the eclipse of Argun power, Mahdiism was declared as a renegade sect and during the Mughal period, they were persecuted in Sindh.

The practice of hiring the services of Sufis and Pirs was earlier practised by Safavid dynasty in order to gain power in Iran. Faced with the crisis of legitimacy, the Qajar dynasty of Iran sought the services of Sufi orders of Bistami and Shah Wali. In return, they not only paid stipends to individual Sufis of these orders but their shrines and *Khanqahs* were given huge monetary assistance. In south India, Sufi saints became so influential that they were openly inducted into the royal courts and there occurred intermarriages between the ruling clan and some of the Sufi families. During the 17th century, Ahmad Shah Abdali tried to extensively use the espionage network and propaganda services of Sufis and Pirs in his struggle for the control of north India.

Sometimes, it became imperative for the powers to manufacture new Sufis and Pirs and on many occasions, some Sufis and Pirs acted as double agents. In "the great game" fought between Russian and British Empires for supremacy in Central Asia during the 19th century, both adversaries utilized the services of Syed Ahmed Barelavi[56] and Faqir Epi against each other in northwestern India. In Caucasia, the British and Othman Empires used a Sufi order led by Ghazi Muhammad and Shamil to engage the Russian army for a long period. Green (2012), observed that Sufi orders in India were brilliant enough to offer their services to the invincible British Empire. Their services were successfully used by the colonial administrators in reaching rural masses of Punjab, Sindh and for upholding the morale of those Muslim soldiers who were serving in the British army. Green (2012) pointed out

[56] Syed Ahmed was a former cavalry officer in the British army who was trained and sent in the northwest frontier region of India as a Pir and Jihadist. The purpose of launching Syed Ahmed was to mobilize tribal population against an eventual Russian advance upon India. Later he was also used to terrorise Ranjit Singh, the ruler of Punjab. *Syed Ahmed later became a double agent also taking money from the Russians.*

that this alliance of the colonial administration and the Sufis reinforced different elements of Sufi tradition in India after the 1858 rebellion of Indian soldiers. Their affiliation with colonial administration created significant new opportunities for Sufi orders and their power and prestige over Muslim masses increased exponentially.

Pirs and Sufis in Sindh

Pirs and Sufi phenomenon is Sindh goes back to early Arab period. It got a foothold during late Umayyad period and blossomed during the turbulent period when Sindh was facing the brunt of plunderers and adventurers from Central Asia and the Middle East in medieval times. From the beginning to present times, they have been used (one way or the other) by various dynasties in weakening their opponents or creating a psychological milieu for the advance on Sindh or used in civil war conditions by rival contenders of power[57]. Religious leaders especially Pirs, Sufis and *Sajjadanasheens* (the head of a Sufi or Pir family) in Sindh represented a very valuable source of collaboration for powers who subjugated Sindh through centuries. Shaikh Bahauddin Zakaria, Makhdum Jahaniyan, Shaikh Nuh, Usman Marwandi (Shahbaz Qalandar) were prominent among those who actively collaborated with marauders.

Sumro and Samma dynasties in Sindh got the services of the competing Sufi silsilas. As Sumros and Sammas were in constant conflict with the Sultans of Delhi, some of the Pirs, for example, Makhdum Jahaniyan 'Jahangasht' of Uch rendered intelligence services to both Sammas and Sultan Firoz Shah Tughluq. At one point, acting as mediator, the Pir successfully convinced Samma ruler to submit to the authority of the Sultan of Delhi. The Arguns patronised one of the clans

[57] There are two exception regarding the role of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittaee and Sachal Sarmast.

of Suhrawardi silsila. headed by Makhdum Ishaque of Halah Kandi to counter other Sufis of Suhrawardi silsila who were supporting Sindhi rulers. During their reign. Hala became the centre from where a web of Sufis was established in places like Bukera. Matiari. Bulri and Sann.

Sufis and Pirs as power brokers in Sindh

During early medieval times. Pir Patho. Sayad Sajjan Sarwari. Pir Haji Mango. all belonging to Suhrawardi Silsila. became prominent power brokers in Sindh. In 17th and 18th century Sindh. Sufis and Pirs became so entrenched in power politics that they transformed from being intelligence gatherer for rulers into becoming kingmakers. Their role as kingmakers came into open when they played a pivotal role in justifying Talpur Coup which ousted Kalhoda dynasty from power. For the first time in the history. Talpur Mirs inducted some of the family members of Sufis and Pirs on the important ministerial portfolio. With the induction in the government. they became more aware of weaknesses of Talpur regime and properly assessed the rising tide of the British. They discreetly prepared themselves for the coming rulers and began establishing links with East India Company officials giving them vital strategic information and analysis regarding the socio-political situation in Sindh.

The Pirs and Sufis during the colonial period

The Sufis and Pirs of the colonial period in India used their services in gaining power and material benefits from the authorities. Their collaboration with the colonial administration was a direct continuation of Sufi traditions which had existed in Sindh for hundreds of years. One of the reasons for securing the support of Muslim religious leaders and Pirs was in line with the long-standing British policy designed to secure the maximum cooperation from them in the task of administering the large landmass of India with a huge

population where their own human and financial resources were inadequate. Ansari (1992), summarized the role of these religious leaders during colonialism as:

> *"...their long-held role as intermediaries between powerful outside forces, earthly or unearthly, and ordinary men and women offered colonial authorities a potent means of securing control over large sections of the population" (pp 3).*

Suhrawardi and Naqshbandi silsila of Pirs were at the forefront of the collaborative process and accumulated a vast amount of wealth in return. To expand their influence among the masses; using their wealth, they tried to establish religious schools in every corner of the country. The web of shrines and Dargahs which can be witnessed in contemporary Sindh is the continuation of the permanent struggle between Pirs and Sufi saints of different origins for gaining benefits from colonial authorities. In the process of gaining the support of the colonial administration, on many occasion, intense rivalries were witnessed between various silsilas. It is noteworthy that only an insignificant section of Pirs and Sufi saints adopted a nationalistic approach towards colonial power and never sought collaboration.

At the time of the invasion in 1843, the British had already secured the support of powerful Sufis, Pirs and Sajjadanasheens in Sindh. The role of Makhdum of Hala was pivotal in the general policy shift of Sufis and Pirs to support the British in case of an invasion. Pir of Pagaro also contributed in the British mechanizations prior to the occupation of Sindh. The services of Pirs and Sufis were extensively used to pacify Sindhi people, as a result, there was no significant resistance from them against the colonial power, once Sindhi forces were defeated at Mianni. From East

India Company officials. they were not only given the task of gathering information about any opposition towards British occupation but were also asked to advocate among the people a submissive attitude. Ironically, this same service is being tasked to contemporary Sufis and Pirs of Sindh by the state establishment of Pakistan.

During the period of British occupation of Sindh. these pious mediators between Allah and ordinary Muslims came into open as collaborators and became advisors to colonial rulers in a different capacity. They were openly and proudly boasting their close relationships with district and divisional officials of the administration. In the annual congregations (durbars) of British loyalists held at the divisional level. Sufis and Pirs struggled to get a chair on the right side of Divisional Commissioner as sitting near an officer meant closeness to the administration. Aziz (2001) described that the British were too clever to privilege them according to their local followings. A Pir with a large local following was given the membership of provincial durbar and in a case of the small following: he was restricted to the membership of a lower durbar. It was not only the Pir but the family members of a leading Pir were also endowed with ziladarships, lambardaris and some non-commissioned ranks in the colonial army and so on (Aziz 2001). It was the period when these Sufis and Pirs not only accumulated vast wealth and *jagirs* (agricultural lands) but also enhanced their social standings using their influence in government circles. As put forward by Ansari (1992). in Sindh. the British constructed a system of political control which hinged on the cooperation of local allies. of whom Sufi and Pirs made up a sizeable section. These allies looked after local affairs on behalf of the colonial administration and besides acting as an intermediary between ordinary Muslims and Allah. they also became the interpreters/intermediary between the British administration and general body of

population. Ali (2005), while describing the political status of sajjadanashins (descendants of a Pir or Sufi Saint) argued that the British recognised their local authority and entitled them with high-class privileges, large tracts of land and patronage to implement their bureaucratic policies. Possession of land transformed them into feudal lords in rural areas. Thus, over the time, state patronage had let the sajjadanashins establish a strong political authority, especially, in Punjab and Sindh, through their inherited religious power and feudal influence. However, one of the Pir family became an exception by defying the British administration during the last decade of the 19th century when Pagaro Pirs transformed from being British loyalists into becoming champions of national liberation as was discussed in a previous chapter. Perhaps it was one of the rare cases in the history of Sufi phenomenon where a Pir, well known to be a brutal gangster, metamorphosed into a nationalist and initiated a fierce although unsuccessful resistance against the British Empire.

Pirs and Sufis as active politicians

Because of having inherited religious status and massive wealth, the sajjadanashins and pirs have always been successful in maintaining their spiritual and political position strong. The descendants of eminent Sufis have also been participating in electoral politics in pre-partition India (Aziz, 2001). In this regard, they have been an obstacle, especially to local socio-political development in many regions of present-day Pakistan. Lieven (2011), argued that these sajjadanashins holding the controls of shrines did not genuinely advance local democracy in order to maintain their influence and control over local masses. Ewing (1983) pointed out that during the 1960s and 1970s, both General Ayub Khan and Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto attempted to increase the number of Sufi shrines. On the one hand, they tried to use them in their misguided zeal for the glorification of

Pakistan and Islam and on the other hand, they also tried to capture the political authority of shrines but failed because of their personal political interests (Ewing 1983). Moreover, General Zia ul Haq with the introduction of his own brand of Islamisation tried to control the authority of Sufis and Pirs in the same way but for different purposes. He wanted to replace the traditional teachings of shrines by the orthodox Wahhabi doctrine of Islam but latter instead of antagonising them, he also found it useful to utilise the religious and political influence of sajjadanashins and pirs (Ewing 1983; Hassan 1987; Aziz 2001; Rehman 2006).

Sufi Pirs and Sindhi nationalism

The portrayal of Sufiism as one of the elements of Sindhi national identity has been a historical fallacy but ironically majority of Sindhi nationalists used it for political purposes. They used it to present the Sindhi secular mindset against the religious extremism and intolerance of Pakistani state. However, it was quite simplistic on their part to conclude that the contemporary Sindhi behaviour of religious tolerance and secularism is the result of Sufiism which arrived in Sindh from the 9th century onward. This would ignore the historical fact that Sindh was a mosaic of various religions, languages and national entities during the golden days of Sindh in the 6th and 7th century, far earlier than the introduction of Islam in the region.

The narrative of Sindh being the land of Sufis which is ironically gaining widespread acceptance is historically incorrect. It gained strength during the 1950s and 1960s from the efforts of renowned nationalists. For Sindhi nationalists like GM Syed, Ibrahim Joyo and Shaikh Ayaz, the rhetoric of Sindh being the land of Sufis might have been vital at a particular phase of their struggle in order to counter the religious orthodoxy of the state. During early decades of

Pakistan. Sindhi nationalists believed that the state is using its monolithic concept of society. culture and faith as a political and social tool in order to seize and neutralise the pluralistic Sindhi society. For them, Sufiism was to project the Sindhi nation whose social. political and religious consciousness was influenced by various religions and cultures that had arrived and established themselves in the region throughout history. Glorification of Sufiism and the role of Sufis in the development of a secular Sindhi mind-set was deliberately exaggerated as a counter-narrative to one which was being propagated by the state. However, this strategy of Sindhi nationalists backfired as Sufis and Pirs keeping with their historical traditions became a tool of the state establishment. The concept of preordained destiny and submissiveness of Sufi doctrine were immediately taken up by the state to instil in the minds of masses that as being the inhabitant of a land of Sufis. they should remain docile and patiently suffer the injustices of the state as their destiny.

However. there are exceptional cases where Sufis and Pirs contributed not only to the development of Sindhi literature and culture but also in the development of Sindhi national consciousness. One cannot deny the contribution of Shah Latif of Bhittai and Sachal Sarmast in spreading the ideals of patriotism, freedom. the prosperity of the masses. deliverance from corruption, the spirit of self-sacrifice and tolerance through their literary works. Although, belonged to Sufi and Pir families; nevertheless, their role was totally different from that of others who were involved in power struggles. Their contribution is literary, cultural and academic and for that, they are the most respected Pirs and Sufis among nationalist circles. It can be justified to term them as Sindhi philosophers of the middle ages. They were indeed the icons of the collective social consciousness of Sindhi nation, proponent of Sindhi social ethos and exponents of deep sorrows of

the people of Sindh during those turbulent times. Sindhi nationalists could feel proud of having such brilliant sons of the soil. However, in the context of contemporary Sindhi national struggle, using the examples of Shah Latif and Sachal Sarmast in order to absolve the whole Sufi phenomenon for its committed sins as collaborators and fifth columnists cannot be justified. It appears that for all practical purposes, Sufi and Pir phenomenon was not only a problem for Sindh in the past but it would also haunt the Sindhi national struggle in the future also.

- **People's Party and Awami Tehrik: the detractors**

In the tortuous struggle of Sindhi masses against Pakistani oppression, two factors played important roles in not only detracting the direction of the struggle but they were also successful in diluting the national sentiments of Sindhi masses. The formation of People's Party by Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Awami Tehrik by Rasool Bakhsh Palijo in the 1960s are two significant events in the weakening of Sindhi national struggle in many ways.

Bhutto: in the line of collaboration

After the end of British rule, Pakistan inherited all protégés of colonial administration in the region. The state establishment of Pakistan efficiently used the services of these inherited colonial protégés and their offspring in the endeavours to perpetuate its oppressive rule over constituent national entities. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto son of Sir Shahnawaz Bhutto, a known British agent was included in the first military government of General Ayub Khan and served in various positions including being the foreign minister of the country. Later, he was launched as a popular leader by the establishment in the late 1960s. His launching was to achieve multiple objectives: to dilute the danger of increasing

popularity of Sindhi nationalism under the charismatic leadership of GM Syed; to create confusion in the politics of left by raising progressive slogans; and to create an alternative party and leadership in West Pakistan to replace much discredited Muslim League party and its leader General Ayub Khan.

In a sophisticatedly chalked out plan, the establishment began to present a new picture of Bhutto. First, asked to resign from the military-led government in 1966 and then overnight, he was portrayed by state-controlled media as a great democratic leader. Out of blue, from being the secretary general of fundamentalist Muslim League party, he was propagated as a progressive person. Soon, all right-wing feudal lords, Sufis and Pirs, former bureaucrats and politicians loyal to state establishment were assembled into his party- The People's Party- with a progressive and leftist façade. By clever manipulation and massive media coverage, the new party managed to get majority seats in Punjab and Sindh in the general elections held in the 1970s while Awami League of Sheikh Mujib Ur Rehman gained the majority of seats in the National Assembly and in the provincial assembly of East Pakistan. National Awami Party was elected as the single majority party in the provincial assemblies of North West Frontier Province (now renamed as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) and Balochistan. However, despite winning only two provinces, the military government of General Yahya Khan portrayed Bhutto as the leader of West Pakistan. He was inducted into his cabinet as the foreign minister. So deep was his loyalty with the military establishment that after the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, Bhutto was made the first Chief Martial Administrator of Pakistan, a unique happening in the political history of the world.

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Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto loyally performed and carried out tasks given to him by the state establishment. He dented the popularity of progressive and secular parties in Punjab and Sindh. Banned the secular and progressive nationalist party, the National Awami Party (NAP) and initiated a ruthless and bloody military operation in Balochistan in which thousands of the Baloch were killed by the army during the 1970s. All the leaders of National Awami Party were imprisoned and tried on treason charges in the infamous Hyderabad Conspiracy Case. However, the damage he inflicted on Sindhi national struggle was colossal and irreparable. After becoming a liability, he was unceremoniously disposed offed by his creators in 1979 but his People's Party is still haunting the nationalist politics of Sindh.

For Sindhi nationalists, Bhutto phenomenon came as a surprise. Although, soon, it became clear that who is behind him: nevertheless, he was successful in diverting the support of a significant section of Sindhi youth from the national struggle. He accused the leadership of Sindhi national struggle for serving the interests of feudal and Pirs. It is interesting to note that all Pirs, Sufis and feudal were with him in the People's Party. Although, nationalists were unable to present a clear picture to the masses and to convince them about real motives of Bhutto behind his popular slogans but, soon he gained reputation of a villain in Sindhi politics by his anti-Sindhi actions. However, with his hanging by military authorities in 1979, the emergence of *Muhajir* political phenomenon after the takeover of the military, he became a martyr and a hero for Sindhi masses. Once again, discredited People's Party gained the support of a significant number of nationalist political activists. Sindhi youth forgetting the aim of establishing an independent Sindhu Desh used their energy by participating in the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD) in 1983, initiated by the People's Party

and its allied organizations. Although GM Syed tried his best to convince Sindhi youth about the negative consequences of their misguided actions in an emotionally charged situation, many were not ready for listening to the voice of reason. The nationalist politics of GM Syed was unexpectedly kept into backburner during the 1980s and 1990s. Tragic to Sindhi national struggle, son of a trusted loyalist of colonial administration in India, and a protégé of the military establishment in Pakistan became able to deal heavy blows to Sindhi national struggle and under the weight of Bhutto phenomenon, it is still suffering.

Palijo: the detractor in progressive attires

In the 1970s, when Sindhi national struggle was shattering under the impact of Bhutto wave, another phenomenon. Rasool Bakhsh Palijo's Awami Tehrik acted as a double whammy for Sindhi nationalist forces. As discussed in a previous chapter, Awami Tehrik was successful in sowing the seeds of ideological confusion among Sindhi youth. Palijo and his party have been preaching the futility of resisting the overwhelming power of the state. They advocated an accommodation with the state establishment. In the name of accommodation within the federation of Pakistan, the aim was actually diluting the Sindhi sentiments of a sovereign Sindhu Desh. One of the Sindhi nationalist intellectuals sarcastically opined that People's Party of Bhutto and the Awami Tehrik of Palijos are heavenly curses upon Sindhis; perhaps this generation of our nation is paying for the sins committed by earlier generations. Although, initially, People's Party and Awami Tehrik caused major confusion among Sindhi youths; nevertheless, in recent years they have been fully exposed as the lackey of the state establishment.

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Lateral entry of religious extremism in Sindhi society

Sindhi national struggle is based on the assertion that Sindhis have their separate cultural, social and historical identity which is markedly different from the fundamentalist behaviour and fallacious ideologies of religious-based state of Pakistan. Sindhi nationalist politics has always been revolved around secular and democratic principles. Socially, Sindhis have an observable liberal and secular mindset compared with Pakistani fanatical religious mindset and religion was never politicalized by them. However, from the last years of colonial rule when Pakistani state was being planned, in order to dilute national sentiments of Bengalis, Sindhis, Baloch and other nations which were targeted to be included in Pakistan, religion was systematically encouraged as a political factor in the region.

After the creation of Pakistan, Sindhis were portrayed in state narratives as being under the influence of Hinduism. Interestingly, the same narrative was used for Bengalis. The mission of extricating them from the 'darkness of ignorance' and making them "perfect Muslims" became the crux of Pakistan's state doctrine. State establishment has justified the subjugation of various national entities in the name of religion as they see Islam as the only unifying force and in this context, it has been the declared policy of the state to encourage the religious elements in order to weaken the hold of secular politicians. Various extremist religious groups were created. Political or extremist Islam was used as a retrogressive force in the achievement of the goal of diluting the national resistance dominated by secular Sindhi political parties. With this strategy, *Mullahs* (priests) became increasingly prominent in Sindhi society, both socially and politically. In contemporary Sindh, increased penetration of extremist Islam in a fundamentally secular society and the mushroom growth of Islamic sectarian groups is a cause of great worry for Sindhi national resistance.

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Political Islam, from the very inception of Pakistan, has been an integral part of the official dogma. Primarily, it was to justify the creation of Pakistan and later on, for the manufacture of a common Muslim identity for the state as a substitute for its multinational character. As a political instrument, religion was also considered to be important by the establishment in its efforts to sustain the artificially created state. The military establishment during the last many decades has encouraged the setting up of more Madrasas to achieve two objectives; firstly, to divert a section of Sindhi youth from nationalist politics and secondly, to recruit *Jihadis* for subversive activities in Afghanistan and India. As a consequence of these state policies, there is a growing danger of spreading religious fundamentalism as signs of increasing sectarianism and radicalization can be observed in today's Sindh. The state establishment is facilitating the presence of extremist organizations such as the Taliban, Al-Qaeda, Lashkar-e-Janghvi, Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan, Imamia Student Organization, Sipah-e-Muhammad, Harakat-ul-Mujahideen and Harakat Jihad-e-Islami in various cities. The presence of Daesh or Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has also been reported by media in recent years.

Damaging the secular fabric of the society by the state is a matter of grave concerns for nationalists. While deliberating on the issue, Sindhi leaders expressed their concerns on the entry of religious extremism and sectarianism. One of the leaders pointed out that it became a priority for activists and organizations affiliated with Sindhi national resistance to oppose forcefully the lateral entry of religious extremism and sectarianism before it is able to inflict severe damage to the integrity of the society and the struggle for national liberation.

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The Muhajir Phenomenon

One of the complexities of Sindhi national identity has been the definition of who is a Sindhi or native and who is a non-native. For many decades, the Sindhi national struggle was engulfed with this issue. But the answer to this from Sindhi nationalists was very simple. For them, people who adopt Sindh as their country, Sindhi as their language and Sindhi socio-cultural tradition as their own would be considered as a Sindhi. In a historical context, with a tradition of absorbing people of different orientations into larger Sindhi national entity, the question of who is a Sindhi was not a major issue. However, since the creation of Pakistan, this has been plaguing Sindhi politics. The historical process and the context in which the immigrants from North India came into Sindh created the contemporary issue of Muhajir-Sindhi divide. The problem was created because they came as refugees but overnight became the rulers. Instead of merging themselves in the cultural identity of their host nation, with the help of the ruling alliance (of which they were a part), they imposed their language and socio-cultural traditions on Sindhis. As part of the ruling alliance, they used their manipulative skills to exclude Sindhis from political power circles. They became part of the economic exploitation of Sindh and above all they did not commit their loyalties to Sindh. This did not create an atmosphere of the synergetic relationship between the immigrants and the natives.

The *Muhajirs* as the ally of the ruling alliance governing Pakistan since its creation is being used by the establishment as the first line of defence in the strategy of countering Sindhi national aspirations. Urdu speaking immigrants from India who settled in Sindh are the only group of people who are still refusing to become Sindhis after 70 years of their presence in this land. This is unprecedented in the history of Sindh as all alien people once they settled here, within a

few decades, totally submerged their previous ethnic identity into greater Sindhi national entity. Unlike other immigrant people, these new settlers from North India did not reciprocate the kindness of Sindhis. They behaved and still behaving like the land which has given them shelter is a foreign land. For them, Sindh has been gifted to them by Allah. Tahir (1990) observed that the refugees came with an occupier mentality. They are treating Sindhi who has extended undue favours by accepting them and showering respect and brotherhood, as inferiors, believing that their language Urdu and cultural norms are superior to that of Sindhis. As observed by Zaidi (1991), it is an undeniable fact that the inundation of Urdu speaking immigrants immediately following the creation of Pakistan, changed the political and social complexion of Sindh completely. In a short span of time, they took over the bureaucracy and economy of the province. Separation of Karachi from Sindh gave further impetus to the power of these immigrants. Being the most articulate and skilled in manipulations among the partners in the alliance which ruled Pakistan from the days of Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan, for a decade they enjoyed unchallenged power in the country. As the masters of the country, they did not feel the need to be merged into the host society. They even refused to mingle with Sindhi population, like all the victorious peoples or ruling groups, they avoided closer social relations with Sindhis. Lacking any kind of affiliation with the land, and faced with an identity crisis, they began to look towards Central Asia and the Middle East for identity. Instead of Sindhi cities, they began to consider Mecca, Medina, Baghdad, Damascus, Shiraz, Mashad, Bukhara and Samarkand as their beloved cities. Above all, from the 1980s, with the blessings of the military establishment, *Muhajir* ideologues are propounding the doctrine of *Muhajirs* being a nation deserve a separate homeland out of Sindh.

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The *Muhajir* phenomenon has created a strong polarization in Sindhi society. Forming a significant section of the population especially in big cities, playing as pawns of the establishment, they are doing much harm to Sindhi national struggle. Earlier attempts by Sindhi leadership including GM Syed to create a kind of harmonious relationship with them were foiled by the establishment. The leadership of MQM took an extreme negative stand on various issues which are very dear to Sindhi nationalists. Although, in recent years, a significant section of *Muhajirs* has realized the futility of their behaviour and are more flexible for a joint strategy or line of action to safeguard the interests of Sindh; the *Muhajir* phenomenon is a permanent issue and it needs vision, persistence, and magnanimity on both sides in order to find a feasible way of ending the chasm between Sindhis and Urdu speaking refugee community.

Infiltration of the resistance movement

Sindhi national resistance appears to be successfully infiltrated by security agencies of the State. The conscious elements involved in the struggle firmly believe that the present anarchic state of affairs in the resistance is because of the fifth columnists. These fifth columnists not only are functioning as party activists but some of them became leaders of some factions of the national struggle. Many observers of Sindhi politics believe that these agent provocateurs gave advanced slogans to nationalist cadre and propagated a very extreme view of national resistance. This extreme line of action not only exposed sincere and hardcore activists but also paved the way for a pre-emptive strike on the resistance by secret agencies. Many nationalist leaders are in the opinion that raising of advanced slogans by a section of nationalists from the beginning of the 21st century was a deliberate act of the infiltrators to prepare a mindset of militant activities among nationalist activists. This extreme mindset manifested itself in sporadic violent activities by

some of the youth affiliated with the national resistance. The militant activities without proper preparation and without giving proper thought to state reaction and its overall repercussion on the nationalist political mobilization, caused the resistance to become the victim of manipulations by security agencies. The security establishment not only came heavily upon the militants but making it as an excuse, hundreds of political activists, intellectuals, writers, and leaders of the resistance were killed during last two decades. In contemporary Sindh, it is nearly impossible for genuine Sindhi nationalist parties and organizations to carry out political, social and literary activities. Any activity on their behalf is easily being termed as sponsored by Indian intelligence agencies and labelled as anti-Pakistan and anti-Islam. Identifying agents of the establishment among them and getting rid of fifth columnists are pertinent issues to be tackled by nationalist leadership.

Lack of external support: Indian apathy

The role of international community is of vital importance in the triumph of a national liberation struggle. History of national liberation struggles is clear examples of the fact that the interests of various regional and international powers could make a demand for independence successful. The fact cannot be denied that the prospect for gaining the right of self-determination not only depends on adopting the strategies and tactics of a protracted national liberation struggle on behalf of a colonized nation but also on the degree of international support. In the history of colonialism, a powerful colonial power has not been defeated without the help of another power. According to Chinese leader Mao Tze Tung, it is a fallacy that victory over the occupying power is possible without external help (Mao (1949).

The issue of gaining external support is one of the problems of Sindhi resistance. In the contemporary unipolar world, support

of western nations or their allies is of fundamental importance in deciding the fate of a colonised nation. However. the civilized world has patronized and sustained Pakistani state as it was created only to serve the interests of Western nations in the region. Although. western nations have been at the forefront of facilitating. by all means. the independence of former constituent states of Soviet Union in Central Asia. the component states of Yugoslavia. East Timor. and South Sudan in recent decades tragically. they have been turning a blind eye on the sufferings of many other nations. It appears that the territorial integrity of rogue states like Pakistan has become sacrosanct for them. This is illogical and against their much-acclaimed protection of human values and democratic principles. Many political observers believe that in the present circumstances. the creation of an independent Sindhu Desh is not desired by any regional or international power. Some of the analysts believe that as Sindhi right of self-determination would certainly end up with the breakup of Pakistan: the international community has shown its anxiety concerning a possible breakup of the religious state with huge nuclear arsenal and its consequences regionally and internationally.

India is the only power from which Sindhis could pin their hopes for any assistance. So far, several internal and external factors prohibited Indians from playing a favourable role in the Sindhi endeavours to regain a sovereign status. However. the Pakistani establishment has blamed India for fuelling Sindhi sentiments on various occasion. During the 1980s. Pakistan repeatedly accused Sindhi nationalists and Al-Zulfiqar activists of getting financial help and military training from India[58]. In May 1990. Benazir Bhutto as Prime Minister of Pakistan accused India of destabilizing Pakistan in order to

[58] Al-Zulfiqar organization was formed by sons of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto to avenge their father's murder by carrying out sabotage activities in Pakistan.

divert attention from internal disorders. Again in 1995, after becoming Prime Minister for the second time, she accused India of fomenting violence in Pakistan. In 1998, Pakistan accused India of establishing 40 camps in Rajasthan, Delhi, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kashmir to train anti-Pakistan militants and the Pakistani information minister, Mushahid Hussain Syed declared the acts of terrorism in Pakistan as attempts to divert the attention of Indian people from political instability at home and to create a scared and destabilised Pakistan.

Many Sindhi nationalists migrated to India after the creation of Pakistan. Among them included LK Advani and several other prominent political personalities. They became very influential in Indian politics and held important positions in various governments and in the hierarchies of various political parties. During the freedom struggle against the British, many leaders of Rashtriya Sevak Sangh (RSS) which is the main component of powerful Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) hailed from Sindh. However, Indian political parties and the establishment had never given due attention on Sindhi national question. Indira Gandhi, although, attended the New Delhi Session of World Sindhi Conference but she only demanded the restoration of constitutional rights of Sindhi people. For many, there is no Sindh policy of Indian state. If somehow Sindh was discussed by the Indians, the focus is on how to use Sindhi national question as a tool in their strategies of countering Pakistani involvement in Kashmir. With his meeting with GM Syed in 1987, the Indian Prime Minister outrightly refused to support the demand of an independent Sindhu Desh, neither had he promised any kind of material support to Sindhi national struggle.

India has sustained strong economic growth despite a persistent global economic downturn in the 21st century.

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An energy-hungry India has been scanning the globe in search of energy partners to meet its industrial and domestic needs. The most feasible of energy resources for India lies in Central Asia and Pakistan is the only hostile territory on the way of transporting oil and gas to India. A section of Indian establishment believes that a submissive but integrated Pakistan can better serve their purpose than a turbulent and unstable Pakistan. This section is strongly opposing the extension of any meaningful assistance towards Sindhi and Baloch nationalists. Sindhi nationalists are seeing the Indian role with disgust. Despite the rhetoric of many Indian political leaders that Sindh means a lot for them, the Indian state with its goal of economic progress has been avoiding any direct confrontation with a nuclear-armed Pakistan on the miseries of Sindhi people.

Generally, international community considers some factors before extending their support for the creation of a state in post-colonial national conflicts. These considerations include whether in a globalized world a new state is competitive enough to survive as an independent state; what is the plan of action to run and sustain the state; and how well prepared and well-planned are nationalist parties and their supporters to face the herculean tasks of preserving the socio-political rights of not only their own population but also the interests and aspirations of regional and international interest groups. In this regard, they consider the available skills for resource development; viable economic plans; social, intellectual and human capital; capable leadership; and effective institutional structures. Tragically, there has been no helping hand extended towards Sindhi national struggle so far from any quarter of international community. Pakistan has been busy portraying Sindhi national resistance as the work of some misguided youth. It is being propagated by the state that in the absence of a visionary leadership, and with a

horde of nationalist parties. the viability of an independent Sindhu Desh that serve the interests of its own people and safeguard geo-strategic and economic interests of regional and international powers, is out of the question. Sindhi national resistance is to deal with this impression.

Sindhi Hindu Diaspora: the lost generation

Subhash Chandra Bose and Mahatma Gandhi both termed Sindhis as world citizens since they are to be found everywhere. However, it appears that the world citizens are forgetting their roots and are indifferent to the happenings in their ancestral land.

After the creation of Pakistan, a significant section of Sindhi Hindus migrated from Sindh. They dispersed in India, Hong Kong, London, New York and various other major cities in the world. In exile throughout, they lived in scattered locations. Even in India, they settled in different cities. In the history of mass migrations where people were forced to flee their country, they tried to remain in very compact communities. This was fundamental in retaining their identity, language and traditions. One can observe that when the whole Jewish population of Jerusalem was deported to Babylon by Assyrians, they not only retained their cultural and mythological beliefs but were successful in presenting the history of the Middle East in a Jewish perspective which later became their holy book and the symbol of their national identity. The write-up which became the sacred book as the Old Testament of today was written by Jewish exiles in Babylon. When circumstances changed with the collapse of Assyrian empire and the rise of Achaemenid power, the Jews returned with their language, historical account, mythological beliefs, socio-cultural traditions and a sacred book.

This was not in the case of Sindhis. The overwhelming majority of them who migrated in the wake of the creation

of Pakistan belonged to trader and merchant class. Being financially on sound footings, once in Diaspora, they selected countries and regions where they can initiate their business activities or where there was a chance of more business opportunities. Although somehow, they managed to be in touch with the developing events in Sindh during early decades of Pakistan, over time, it became hard for them to keep contacts and majority of Sindhis merged into their newly adopted societies. After 70 years in exile, 21st century Sindhis in Diaspora have only the vague idea of a motherland without much sentimental attachment to the land, language and traditions which form their personal and national identity. Sindhis who migrated to India became very prominent in politics and business. They were in a position to plead the case of Sindh in India and abroad. This did not happen and no significant contribution either physically or financially is visible in the contemporary Sindhi national struggle from an affluent Sindhi Diaspora.

Many analysts believe that this apathy of Sindhi Diaspora towards their motherland is because of bitter memories of Sindh transmitted to the second and third generation by their elders. These were the memories of a land where they were mistreated by Muslim rulers in general and by a section of the Muslim population in particular. It was natural for these elders to exaggerate or add some spices to the real stories in order to give the justification of migration to their offspring. The stories of discrimination created a repelling effect on the efforts of Sindhi nationalists to approach the second or third generation of Sindhi Diaspora and to bring them into the fold of Sindhi national resistance. However, the main reason for the indifference of Sindhi Diaspora is the lack of meaningful communication and absence of a feasible strategy on behalf of Sindhi nationalists in Pakistan to attract or encourage them to take the ownership of Sindhi national struggle.

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The issue of armed resistance

A strong sense of alienation has developed in the hearts of Sindhi people against the oppressive measures of last 70 years. They have suffered more than just national humiliation. They have been deprived of their due share in the country's wealth; their skills have been suppressed and poverty and starvation have been their life experience. They believe that their national identity is more at peril than ever before. With the long history of rejecting their genuine demands put forward in a democratic way by their leaders, trust on a peaceful political resistance has wavered. There is disillusionment among a significant section of Sindhi nationalists with the prospect of achieving national salvation by traditional peaceful means. They are in firm belief that under the highly sophisticated security state of Pakistan, it is questionable whether a peaceful movement can succeed in a program of mass mobilization beyond a certain point without starting a new type of action. This section of Sindhi nationalists sees the only viable way to end the cycle of oppression is to resist it with force. This has already created division among the nationalist forces as some nationalist believe that the issue of armed resistance and its feasibility must be debated, taking into consideration the objective conditions and its positive and negative aspects on overall Sindhi national struggle.

It is a historical fact that winning freedom for a nation by armed struggle demands more than passion. The armed struggle is the political struggle with the use of militant force. In a typical colonial situation, it becomes feasible only if there is a readiness to respond to the strategy of armed resistance with all the enormous sacrifices which it involves. The fundamental requirements of an armed resistance include the existence of a leadership which has both the experience and the ability to carry out the painstaking process of planning, preparation and overall conduct of the

resistance and the existence of favourable conditions in the international and regional polity. Foremost among the consideration is the sustainability of an armed resistance. On the one hand, the opponents of the armed struggle believe that it is not sustainable without external support and without the formulation of minute details, it would be detrimental to national cause and without proper preparation, it would be suicidal for their national resistance. They believe that militancy of any kind is not being appreciated in today's international political milieu. On the other hand, the proponents of an armed resistance have their own reasons. The leader of one of the main nationalist party stressed that the struggle for the honour and dignity of our people is necessary and our people must fight it, cost what it. He emphasised that history has proved that the struggle for gaining the national honour is daunting and involves immense losses in men and material and our people are prepared for this. He was optimistic that his people have shown their courage to strive with every means to attain their rightful place in the community of nations. Another leader asserted that the ideals of living in dignity with one's own values and traditions are worth fighting for and to realize the long-cherished goal of a liberated and dignified life, an all-out mobilization of Sindhi masses is the need of the hour.

Although sporadic events of militant nature have been occurring in Sindh from the beginning of 21st century, the debate on the issue of a full-fledged armed resistance is hotly being contested by various nationalist groups. Whatever may be the final decision in this regard: it clearly demands an understanding and an implementation of theory and techniques in the actual conditions facing Sindh. It demands a sober assessment of the obstacles and an appreciation that such a struggle is bitter, bloody and protracted.

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Many unresolved issues have increased the complexity of Sindhi national resistance in the 21st century. Among the problems facing Sindhi national resistance, the issue of armed resistance has been a continuous and hotly contested issue after the death of GM Syed. For many nationalists, all lawful modes of expressing opposition to the domination and cultural and economic exploitation had been closed by the state and Sindhis are placed in a position in which they had either to accept a permanent state of inferiority, or to defy the state with the only option left for them; the armed resistance. However, for many others, it would be suicidal. With varying positions taken by different sections of Sindhi national struggle on the issue, armed resistance will continue to be the topic of academic and political debate. The involvement of Sindhi Diaspora is minimal in the struggle for Sindhu Desh and been very disappointing for the leaders and cadre of the resistance. One of the increasing element of frustration among Sindhis is the lack of external support especially any meaningful gesture from India for their struggle. Sindhi national resistance has been facing the problem of infiltration in the ranks and files of nationalist parties. Activities of infiltrators and collaborators have proved to weaken the resistance considerably. The *Muhajir* phenomenon in Sindh is unique. This is the only occasion in the political history of the world where a refugee community became the ruler of that country. As a partner in the ruling coalition of Pakistan, *Muhajirs* did not feel the necessity to merge in the greater Sindhi society, instead, they are trying to divide Sindh in order to carve out a separate geographical area for themselves. With intensive state manipulation and with the inclusion of a superfluous Islamic worldview in the school curriculum, a very non-Sindhi phenomenon of religious radicalisation can be witnessed to be creeping in the emerging middle class. The *Muhajir* phenomenon and the lateral entry of religious extremism and sectarianism is

a growing threat to the future of a coherent Sindhi society and its national resistance. Originated in the turbulent periods of the bloody conflict between the Hashemite and Umayyad clans, Sufiism soon became a political tool to be used by various powerful dynasties in the Middle East and south-central Asia in their efforts to maintain power or to conquer new territories. The state has not only used the services of Pirs and Sufis in countering the Sindhi national sentiments but also created personalities and political parties to dilute Sindhi national struggle. People's Party and Awami Tehrik have done irreparable damage to Sindhi cause for the last many decades. National liberation struggles are the endeavours of the weak against the stronger and for their success, it is imperative that they are fought on sound ideological footings under a well-organized party or united front of all nationalist forces. The policy could be realistic when it is based on the actual conditions of the people concerned and their enemy, and the world in general. Lack of such an organization and clear-cut aims and objectives have been hampering the progress of Sindhi national struggle.

15. Prospects for Sindhu Desh

> As long as the will of Sindhi masses for regaining the lost sovereignty is alive, as long as the will of our colleagues is strong, as long as our youth are willing to sacrifice; we will never give up our struggle, neither we will allow religious fundamentalism to flourish in our secular society, nor we will allow the spread of any thought of submission and capitulation on the pretext that the enemy's power is overwhelming. **Bashir Qureshi** (Sindhi leader, murdered in 2012)

The asset of Sindhi national struggle has been the readiness to respond to the strategies envisaged by various nationalist parties and leaders with all the enormous sacrifices involved. In recent years many internal and external developments are making Sindhi nationalists more optimistic on the prospects of achieving their objectives. The expected close collaboration between the Baloch national struggle and Sindhi national resistance, existence of a strong, efforts from a section of committed and vocal Sindhi Diaspora, the degeneration of Pakistani state, the drastic changes in the international polity after the collapse of Soviet Union, the emerging phenomenon of international terrorism, and the promotion of religious fanaticism and extremism by Pakistani state are believed to be favourable signs for Sindhi national struggle.

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The will and determination of Sindhi masses

A firm resoluteness from the masses is necessary for a national resistance to be successful. Historically, one of the national characters of Sindhi people has been their desire to overthrow the yoke of foreign domination. A strong sense of national pride had developed among them from the memories of a glorious past and a long and tortuous history of facing oppression and subjugation for many centuries. GM Syed, the father of Sindhi national struggle in Pakistan, summarised the love of his people for an independent life in his deposition before a court which was trying him on treason charges:

> *I wish to state here, Your Honor, that Sindh is a distinct geographic entity where there are rivers, forests, lakes, mountains, deserts and verdant valleys. Through the ages, it has been expanding and contracting. It has been independent and enslaved during various stages of its history but, at the same time, it has always had a pure and proud soul that has never accepted slavery or indignity. It has never surrendered to death despite the fact that attempts have been made to bond or break it. This spirit has flitted around Sindh like monsoon clouds as the last voice of the Dravidians of Mohen-jo-Daro. It has emerged from time to time- sometimes in the shape of Raja Dahir, sometimes in the person of Dodo Soomro, sometimes in the shape of Darya Khan and Makhdum Bilawal and Shah Hyder Sannai. It has expressed itself in the love and courage of Shah Inayat (*Syed, 1994: page. 3).

The occupation of Sindh by the British and its later incorporation into Pakistan have sharpened Sindhi national feelings. The subjugating measures of Pakistani state did not terrify them and instead of weakening the demand for national

liberation, they are increasingly participating in mass agitation and other mobilization efforts of nationalist parties. On the face of extreme oppressive measures, Sindhi men and women, young and elderly believe that they are paying their debt to the motherland. In recent years, hundreds of youths have been kidnapped or disappeared. Hundreds were tortured to death by security forces accusing them of being involved in militant activities against the state. It would not be an exaggeration to say that in contemporary Sindh, thousands of families have been afflicted by high-handed tactics of security forces in one way or the other but their spirit of resistance has not been diminished.

The scale of Sindhi resilience is extraordinary. Throughout history, they have withstood the onslaught of several invaders with immense sacrifices. It has been established that the will of Sindhis as a national entity for living a dignified and independent life is one of the major factors in the intensification of their national liberation struggle.

Greater awareness among the nationalist cadre

Last many years has witnessed a greater awareness among Sindhi leadership regarding the strategies and tactics of their struggle. Almost all leaders in their deliberations were convinced that a united front of all nationalists is the need of the hour in order to mobilize the masses. Sindhi leaders are aware of the fact that the cohesion and unity of action between various national and social groupings will take the struggle to new heights. With this realization, it appears that they are prepared to deal with any ambiguity regarding the aims and objective of the resistance movement. There is a consensus that wavering on provincial autonomy or federalism is creating confusion and a condition of uncertainty among the masses and international community about the real targets of their Sindhi national resistance. Now, a consensus among the

leadership has developed that the right of self-determination for Sindhi people should be the aim of the struggle.

Another positive development in the resistance is the greater emphasis on the formulation of strategies based on ground realities. In their interviews, the Sindhi nationalist leaders and activists appeared to be well aware of the fact that aims of a national struggle cannot be achieved arbitrarily, according to subjective whims and fancies without dealing with fundamental issues facing a national resistance. This realization could play a pivotal role in the formulation of feasible strategies in future.

Sindhi leadership also appears to be aware of the fact that the state will continue its efforts to disrupt the self-confidence of nationalist activists, to limit the impacts of unification measures taken by the nationalist groups, and to increase social unrest in order to create all forms of disunity among masses. Now in their discussions, Sindhi leaders and cadres are stressing on the analysis of the strength and weaknesses of the resistance and that of their adversary. Many among the leaders are convinced that armed resistance should not be seen as the only road to national salvation. However, they are not discarding it altogether. In the words of an activist:

> *"We should meet force with force, reasoning with reasoning and dialogue with dialogue."*

Sindhi nationalists are aware of the fact that the struggle for gaining the national honour is daunting and involves immense losses in men and material; however, as put forward by a prominent nationalist leader:

> *"Sindhi national struggle is not a matter of cost and benefit but it is to stand up against the oppressor*

and is the fight between justice and injustice. It is to uphold the historic right of resistance against the aggressive forces. It is to uphold the ideals of living in dignity with one's own values and traditions."

Sindhi nationalists are aware of the fact that a charismatic leader is of fundamental importance to the success of a national resistance. Nearly all factions of nationalists are now openly stressing on the need of a collective leadership working under the umbrella of a united front in order to compensate the absence of a national figure after the death of GM Syed. Leaders of World Sindhi Congress who have been campaigning for the formation of a united front of Sindhi nationalists are hopeful that this is happening. A united front would certainly bolster the efforts of national salvation, intellectually, psychologically and materially.

The most welcoming change in the narratives of the nationalists is the growing realisation about Pirs and Sufi phenomenon. For many, the notion of being the followers of Sufiism, Sindhis are peaceful people, has caused much damage to the fighting spirit of masses. To some extent, Sufiism has been responsible for transforming a section of the society into being pessimistic and submissive. They are the people who believe in preordained destiny and are waiting for the end of their miseries out of the blue. Now, it is being asserted by the nationalists that the perception of destiny should be cast aside as it is not their destiny to live in a perpetual state of subjugation. Some of the leaders interviewed also blamed that the mindset of peace-loving Sindhis has been the cause of occupation of their land in the past because it inevitably gave way to many adventurers who coveted the land and wealth of Sindh. It is increasingly clear that the present generation of Sindhi leaders is well aware of the fact that this planet Earth has been inherited by nations having militant

power and that Nature decrees the survival of the fittest in the never-ending struggle for existence. One of the Sindhi leaders based in North America insisted that if this trend of peaceful resistance or waiting for a miracle to save Sindh is not totally rejected, the enemies of Sindh would be encouraged to strike deadly blows at the heart of our people. He emphasised that we should not forget the bitter truth that dignity and honour of defenceless nations will always be at the mercy of those having militant power.

The Indian factor

As discussed in the previous chapter, Sindhi nationalists have been disappointed by the Indian attitude towards their national resistance; however, in recent years, the circumstances are compelling the Indians to take a final and positive approach towards Sindhi and the Baloch national questions in Pakistan. A section of Indian establishment is seriously thinking for the inclusion of Sindhi and Baloch national struggles in their strategies against Pakistani interference in Kashmir, Afghanistan and other parts of India. The proponents of this idea believe that helping the Baloch and Sindhis will divert the attention of Pakistani military establishment from its cross-border terrorist activities in India or Afghanistan. They also believe that strong Sindhi and Baloch resistance groups could be a counterbalance to the Chinese presence in Sindh and Balochistan. This section of Indian political leaders and opinion makers have been stressing on their government to explicitly show its solidarity with the Baloch and Sindhis. They are also urging the government to adopt strategies in which supporting national resistances in Pakistan should be a permanent feature of Indian state objectives. The assertion among Indian policymakers is gaining ground that a tit-for-tat reaction regarding the negligible or meaningless extension of help towards the Baloch and Sindhis is not the answer to their never-ending conflict with Pakistan. They believe that a

coordinated resistance from the Baloch and Sindhi nationalists will keep Pakistani forces busy internally, weaken their morale and divert their attention from venturing into India. They are asserting their position that eventual independent states of Sindh and Balochistan will serve as a natural conduit for oil and gas pipelines from energy-rich Central Asia. This group got a lot of leverage in policy planning with the instalment of Modi government. Most significantly for India and the rest of the world, given its long traditions of tolerance and peaceful co-existence between the followers of various faiths, an independent Sindh will provide a launching pad against religious extremism and fanaticism in the region. The urgency for taking sides in Pakistani conflict with the Baloch and Sindhis is also emanating from the Chinese ambitions of reaching Persian Gulf, virtually surrounding India on four sides. China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is believed to undermine India's strategic and economic interests in Persian Gulf region. As an emerging economic giant with wide-ranging political ambitions, India cannot afford a permanent state of violence which they believe to be orchestrated by Pakistani state establishment in various parts of India. Pakistan has been the only obstacle for India to enter the club of the world's great powers. The recent development in Indian strategy is being seen as an opportunity of getting meaningful Indian support for Sindhi national struggle.

The emerging factor of armed resistance

For many decades, Sindhi national sentiments were expressed through political means and mass mobilization. However, with increased atrocities and with the development of a perception of now or never among Sindhi politicians and intelligentsia, the new phenomenon of answering the state oppression with armed resistance is increasingly gaining ground. A nascent armed struggle is already on the horizon. For many nationalists, the militancy which now became a part of their

struggle evolved as a reaction against the state atrocities. One of the prominent Sindhi leaders sarcastically rejected peaceful agitation as the only way for the achievement of objectives of their struggle. He pointed out that over time, the Sindhi nation is wanting in strength. Their militant spirit has systematically been discouraged by the introduction of a docile doctrine of Sufiism and a belief in peaceful resistance. However, the opinion on the merit and demerit of armed resistance are still being debated, with both sides defending their position harshly.

With changing political scenario, it appears that inclusion of armed resistance in the struggle is gaining the upper hand as all acceptable peaceful endeavours have proved worthless in the face of the mindset of the ruling alliance of Pakistan which has been in a constant state of denial of the existence of a Sindhi national question. With unprecedented atrocities by security forces and the emerging danger from CPEC and Zulfiqar Abad Megacity, there is genuine fear among Sindhis that these projects would ultimately convert them into a minority. The belief is gaining ground that if it became too late to respond, then Sindhis would never be able to confront the Pakistani state in a meaningful way. The perception is gaining ground that political mobilization combined with armed resistance in the course of a protracted struggle will place a further burden on the workings of an already collapsed economy of the state. With the prospect of a well-prepared strategy of including the element of armed resistance, the Sindhi national struggle would be far more effective than it is today.

The Baloch-Sindhi equation

One cannot deny the fact that the struggle for national salvation cannot survive in isolation. Sindhi nationalists are aware of the fact that it is of fundamental importance for an

emerging national resistance to cooperate and coordinate with the likeminded resistance movements. In the present circumstances and in a historical perspective, the Baloch and Sindhis are natural allies. History, geography and culture have intertwined their fate. The present landmass of Balochistan has been a part of Sindhi empire before the Arab invasion of the region. Many Sindhi tribes have been merged with greater Baloch national identity so as millions of people originally belonging to various Baloch tribes are now part and parcel of Sindhi national entity. Countless number of Sindhis and the Baloch have relations and properties in each other's country. Many Baloch leaders from central and eastern Balochistan speak Sindhi as their second language.

Politically, Sindhis and the Baloch began their national resistance on the platform of National Awami Party (NAP) during the 1950s. With the taking over of power by the army in 1958, political activities were banned and when they were allowed after some years, GM Syed formed his own Sindh based organization but still retained his personal and political relations with Baloch leaders who were active on the platform of NAP. Many other Sindhi nationalist and progressive politicians were in the fold of NAP until it was banned by Bhutto government in 1975.

After the release of Baloch leadership from prison with the disbanding of Hyderabad Conspiracy Tribunal[59], many attempts were made to create a joint platform of all nationalist forces in order to resist the increasing onslaught of state

[59] The Hyderabad tribunal was constituted in 1975 by Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto to try the leaders of National Awami Party on treason charges for conspiring to dismember Pakistan. Nearly all prominent Baloch and Pakhtun leaders and many others from Sindh were tried for several years in Hyderabad prison. The tribunal was disbanded in 1979 and leaders were released but the ban on National Awami Party remained.

establishment on national rights of minority national entities. During the 1980s and 1990s, veteran Baloch leader, Sardar Ataullah Mengal tried to forge a kind of alliance between the Baloch, Sindhis, Seraikis and Pashtuns by forming the Confederation Front and Pakistan Oppressed Nations Movement (PONM). Although, they were good initiatives, they could not be made into effective alliances for various reasons and did not produce the desired result. However, one can observe some closeness between Sindhi national resistance and the Baloch national struggle in recent years. Since the beginning of 21st century, main Baloch nationalist party, Balochistan National Party (BNP) and many Sindhi nationalist groups have been exploring possibilities of making a formal alliance for a mass mobilization on common issues facing the two nations. The most vocal among Sindhi Diaspora organizations, the World Sindhi Congress (WSC) has been striving hard for a meaningful alliance between two struggles. Sindhi and the Baloch Diaspora have been campaigning jointly on issues of enforced disappearances, army operation in Balochistan and Sindh, CPEC and other socio-political and economic problems which are adversely affecting the destiny of both nations.

Majority of Sindhi and Baloch leaders are trying to use their existing personal contacts and closeness for a formal alliance in and outside Pakistan. They are aware that an alliance of such nature could be in the advantage of both resistance movements. The equation of the Baloch and Sindhi national resistance will offer a wider landmass and tremendous opportunity for armed resistance which will make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for occupying forces to keep the whole region under armed surveillance in strength and in depth. It will also bolster the morale of nationalist activists and the strength of political mobilization will be enhanced exponentially. Majority of the nationalists are in the belief that

it is necessary to stress upon the unity factors not only because they give balance to the efforts of Sindhis and the Baloch forces but because – properly assessed – they help destroy the myth of enemy's invincibility. Any progress on a joint strategy on the part of the Baloch and Sindhi nationalists will encourage activists of both national struggles and enhances the resistance potentials of their volunteers.

Changing scenario in international polity

The role of international community in the furtherance of the national cause of subjugated nations is of enormous importance. International support is must for a national liberation struggle to achieve its goal. So far, the independence of Sindh has never been on the agenda of any foreign power near or far from Sindh. During the 1970s and 1980s when GM Syed was trying to gain international recognition for Sindhi national cause, he experienced disappointments from all concerned quarters. He was much disappointed by the attitude of Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi when he sent a junior ranking intelligence officer to discuss the issue of Sindhu Desh with him. He was also unable to get some kind of help from Afghanistan, the United States and Russia. In recent years, things have moved forward on an international level and a new political milieu has evolved. Beginning from the dawn of 21st century, on the international level, a polarization of forces has occurred where the civilized world is fighting against religious fundamentalism and international terrorism. With their secular social behaviours, the Baloch and Sindhis are the natural allies of the civilized world. Their leadership has clearly and loudly declared that they are on the side of international forces. Regarding the support of the world community to their cause, Sindhi nationalists believe that they can benefit from this polarization of forces on an international level.

Chapter Fifteen

Pakistan has been a client state of West or more precisely of the US and the UK for a long time. It was created by the UK and sustained by the US and other Western powers in order to use it for protecting their economic and strategic interests in the Middle East and the Indian Ocean. Pakistan was a key partner of the West in the fight against socialism in the region and was a member of various defence pacts against the Soviet Union during the cold war era. Ensuring the stability of Pakistan has been a key aspect of Western strategy. The United States and its European allies have counted on Pakistani cooperation throughout their military involvement in Afghanistan. Pakistan is heavily dependent on the US and Europe in the fields of diplomatic support against India. budgetary assistance. acquiring weapons and technological know-how for its armed forces, and civil and military training. Major western powers such as Britain. Germany. France. United States and Japan, having an enormous stake in the ongoing war against terrorism, constitute a formidable support for the religious state of Pakistan. Already they have done much to develop armament program of the state. Billions of dollars have been pumped to bolster the failing economy of Pakistan.

However. in recent years, because of several factors. the nature of the relationship has changed between Pakistan and its benefactors. After the collapse of Soviet Union. the need of Pakistan as a partner against the Socialist bloc is no more there. India. a long-term ally of Soviet Union has developed extensive economic and strategic relationship with the West in recent decades. The involvement of Pakistan in the destabilization of Afghanistan. its involvement in terrorist activities in India and its Islamic nuclear bomb are factors transforming Pakistan from being as an asset for the West into becoming a liability. Policy planners and public opinion makers in Western capitals are now discussing on the merit

and demerit of sustaining the religious state. Despite Pakistan having the status of a non-NATO member of the Western alliance fighting in Afghanistan and the grant of billions of dollars, in recent years, there has been observable tensions over conflicting interests and challenges regarding Pakistan's destabilizing role in Afghanistan. In Washington, there is a growing realization that Pakistan's intelligence agency (ISI) has been extending assistance to Al-Qaeda leadership and maintaining active support to Taliban forces fighting in Afghanistan. Pakistani establishment, on their part, expressed feelings of betrayal by the West particularly with regard to the Kashmir conflict and the growing Indian influence in Afghanistan. The Pakistani establishment had already reacted very strongly against certain hearings in the US houses of Congress regarding human rights situation in Balochistan. It also expressed its extreme unhappiness with the introduction of a resolution in 2012 in the House of Representatives, by three Republican representatives Dana Rohrabacher, Louie Gohmert, and Steve King, advocating "self-determination" for Balochistan. The new republican regime headed by Donald Trump is openly pressurising the Pakistani establishment to end its intervention in Afghanistan. President Donald Trump's policy speech for South Asia in August 2017, caused much alarm in military and civilian circles in Islamabad. The policy speech was a clear departure from earlier US policies as it viewed Pakistan very much as a central contributing factor to the quagmire in Afghanistan. It was also an overt threat to Pakistan in case of non-compliance. On first January 2018, President Donald Trump again reiterated his stance on Pakistan's involvement in the destabilization of Afghanistan.

There is a widespread belief among the political observers on international affairs that the ongoing support of western alliance to countries like Pakistan with a fundamentalist establishment and nuclear potentials is a temporary one and

a major strike by western powers is on the card against such rogue states. With drastic shifts in international political environment regarding Pakistan. anything can happen. observed one Sindhi leader. Any shift in the policy of Pakistan's western patrons would be advantageous to Sindhi national resistance by default. However, on the other side. despite the developing tension. many analysts are not seeing any drastic change in western policies affecting the integrity of Pakistan in near future. They believe that Pakistan will ultimately end its intriguing war in Afghanistan and revival of cordial relationship with the West will occur. However. it can be postulated that the business. as usual. will never be witnessed in the relationship between Pakistan and the West. This is because, according to analysts of Pakistani scenario. the ruling establishment has totally lost the realities of contemporary world politics as it has virtually been taken over by religious extremists. They believe that despite tremendous pressure from its Western friends. the state establishment will continue its efforts to destabilize Afghanistan and continue supporting other Jihadist groups causing disturbances in India and elsewhere in the world. With a scenario of Pakistan under the influence of religious zealots. its nuclear prowess is increasingly being perceived in the Western capitals as a threat to international security. Taking into account all above mentioned factors. a sustained friendship between Pakistan and the West could be difficult. Any rift of substance between them in this regard would extremely weaken the vulnerable state and enhances chances of the success for national struggles of various national entities. In this context. Pakistan's future relationship with the West will not only decide the fate of the religious state but also of the national struggles of Sindhis and the Baloch.

Changing context of national liberation movements

The other factor which goes to the benefit of Sindhi national struggle is the fundamental change in the context of the national liberation struggle, which has now fundamentally changed. With their progressive and anti-imperialist essence, historically, national liberation struggles have been seen as anti-West and moves for the extension of Soviet influence. Throughout the cold war era, national liberation struggles were considered in the context of East-West confrontation. With the demise of Soviet Union, the policy planners in the West are now analysing the struggles of subjugated nations keeping into consideration their vital strategic, economic and political interests in respective regions of the world. Pakistan has given China the most privileged status in its foreign and economic policies in recent years. The Pakistani plan of leasing out the whole exploratory rights and the control of coastal regions of Sindh and Balochistan to China will affect the power balance in the region, as it has put the Chinese in a controlling position in the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. As an obvious threat to unchallenged western control in the oil-rich region, this will not be acceptable to the West. If the circumstances governing the geo-strategic situation of South-Central Asia and Gulf region changed drastically against the interests of Western powers, then opportunities might arise for Sindhis and the Baloch as their struggles could be viewed more favourably by Western powers.

The imminent collapse of the Pakistani state

A combination of factors which include international isolation, loss of benefactors and friends, extreme religious intolerance, economic and political turmoil is leading the Pakistani state towards an imminent collapse and raising new hopes for oppressed nations. Chomsky (2006) observed that although the definition of failed states is hardly scientific they share some primary characteristics. They are unable or unwilling

to protect their citizens from violence and perhaps even destruction. They regard themselves as beyond the reach of the domestic or international law, hence to carry out aggression and violence. Baker (2006) conceptualized a failed state as one that is losing legitimacy, maintains few or no functioning state institutions, offers few or no public services, and is unable to contain or deliberately inspire social fragmentation. By all accounts, the religious state of Pakistan fulfils the definition of a failing state and in the list published by Foreign Policy in 2010, it was among the top ten states defined as failed. It is moving at a reasonable pace towards its logical end as there are many examples in recent history that state facing such conditions were doomed.

Adoption of terrorism as a tool in state's foreign policy, its role in the destabilization of Afghanistan, subversive activities in India, its nuclear proliferation policy, and a milieu of extreme religious intolerance in Pakistani society are factors responsible for its increased isolation. Its past friends and benefactors are not so enthusiastic in defending Pakistan in international forums and the flow of donation from European countries has already plummeted significantly.

Religious extremism and sectarianism is another factor which is eroding the very foundation of the Pakistani state. Forced conversion of Hindus and followers of other faiths, persecution of minorities in the guise of blasphemy have created irreparable damage to the peaceful co-existence of people of different religious beliefs. Rioting in the name of protecting the honour of Prophet Muhammad is a routine practice in Pakistan in which the followers of other faiths are subjected to violence and their properties are damaged. Many Hindus, Christians and followers of other faiths were forced to migrate from the country while millions of others are living a life of increased fear for their life and property in Pakistan.

The never-ending sectarian conflicts are another factor which is causing much bloodshed and chaos in the country. The historic Shia-Sunni divide of Islam is manifesting itself in today's Pakistan. Hundreds of believers in Shiism have been slaughtered in various events involving suicidal bombings on the places of worship and indiscriminate firing on pilgrims' convoys. Within Sunni Muslims, there developed several factions which are also at dagger head with each other. Their frequent sectarian activities are causing significant disturbances in civic and economic lives of major cities. Years of violent campaigns against each other by rival sectarian organizations, accompanied by the literature of hatred, inevitably produced a highly polarised population. For many analysts, the actions of these sectarian organizations are aimed at showing their prowess in order to gain further patronage from state establishment which is using their services in its efforts of creating disturbances in neighbouring countries or to weaken those political parties opposing increasing encroachments of the military in the running of the country. Many socio-political analysts believe that the situation in Pakistan will soon transform into an uncontrollable civil war as from the state patronized religious institutions which are spread all over the country, and especially in Punjab, nearly 350,000 religious fanatics are being produced annually, indoctrinated with militant sectarian dogma.

The ruling alliance of Pakistan which historically was composed of Punjabi civil and military bureaucracy, Mullahs and *Muhajirs* are facing a severe upheaval within. There are observable conflicts between Punjabi civilians and the military for the overall control of the state. The financial and political interests of influential civilians in Punjab, grown from its long-term alliance with the military, are in direct clash with that of the military's which is now also running petty businesses such as bakeries and petrol pumps. Punjabi civilian elite is in the firm

belief that the security establishment which is taking the bulk of gross domestic product in the guise of securing the national and territorial integrity of the state has taken the state to the brink of economic collapse[60]. Majority of civilian analysts believe that the starting point for an economic revival is the need of ending non-developmental expenses on the military establishment. This means the ending of jingoist policy towards its neighbours especially India and Afghanistan. This would ultimately result in the dismantling of the huge and parasitic military network. With the military in total control, this kind of development is nearly impossible in near future. Punjabi civilian business class supported by a section of Punjabi intellectuals and civil society has openly revolted against the unchallenged military rule in recent years. The dismissal of Nawaz Sharif as the Prime Minister in 2017, who is representing the civilian face of Punjab and his unexpected defiance against the establishment are the signs of a protracted internal conflict within the ruling nationality. This would inevitably harm the already damaged social and economic fabrics of Pakistan.

All is also not well with other partners in the ruling alliance. It appears that every actor in the power structure of the state is busy building its own castle of sand and has witnessed observable cracks within their relations in recent years. The *Muhajirs*, who were united into a political party by the military establishment in the 1980s, is becoming out of control. The other partner in the alliance, the Mullahs which have been transformed from a very insignificant social class in the early days of Pakistan into a dominant one in the 21st century, are increasingly becoming power hungry, and are threatening the overall control of its own ally, the almighty military of Pakistan.

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60 Pakistan is spending Sixty-percent of its 'Gross National Product' on its armed forces directly or indirectly.

In the increased chaotic conditions, it is free for all in today's Pakistan. The media, in the firm control of the army mostly through *Muhajir* intellectuals, writers and journalists, is working to spread hatred against the neighbours of Pakistan. Lies, hypocrisy and superfluity in state narratives and the rottenness of the state ideology are manifesting itself in a near-anarchic situation. The chaotic situation is increasingly manifesting itself in the social, political and economic spheres. The infrastructure, on which a state's economy is run, is increasingly in the process of complete disintegration. Economically, Pakistan has become a known "basket case", surviving on the handouts of Western nations and oil-rich Arab Sheikhdoms. While the political situation is in a total mess, the economic disaster is imminent and approaching at a breath-taking pace with every Pakistani is nearly indebted to international and national financial institutions for a sum of nearly 100,000 Rupees. It is hard to see how Pakistan can avoid the economic meltdown. The standard of education has declined and the level of poverty has increased exponentially during last 30 years. Its superfluous Islamic nation ideology has manifested itself not only in a widespread religious sectarian divide within its society but also has antagonized all constituent national entities, creating insolvable internal conflicts. Different nations are at each other's throat; everyone is convinced of its superiority over other. Besides the hostility of Sindhis and Punjabis, relations are particularly bad between Punjabis and the Baloch. In recent years, the *Muhajirs* which are although part of the ruling alliance, were blamed by the military establishment, as being not so loyal to the state.

International isolation, anarchic situation, dismal economic performance and increased sectarian divide together with tensions between various national entities have made Pakistan a vulnerable state and its vulnerability is bound to be exploited by regional and international interest groups and states and

this would definitely put the national struggle of Sindhis and other subjugated nations in a better position in near future.

Sindhis are optimistic for a bright future

Realization of the dream of a dignified and sovereign status has been the undisputed and universal phenomenon among Sindhis and this remains the major strength of their struggle. Struggling with internal and external complexities. for the last many decades. conditions have not been favourable to the success of Sindhi national struggle. However. circumstances are changing and Sindhi nationalists are confident that the dark days for their land and people are coming to an end and a bright and dignified future is waiting for them.

Among the factors which are important in the progress of a colonized nation's endeavours for salvation. the internal dynamics of the occupying state is of fundamental importance. The entire structure of Pakistan is built on lies and falsification. Decades of rule by mediocre generals and their puppet politicians have created a society that is corrupt from top to toe. Ending this unprecedented level of decay can only be possible with the efforts of a dedicated group of people who are capable and organized enough to take on the well-entrenched ruling mafia. In the prevailing circumstance in Pakistan. one cannot foresee the development of such happening to change the situation for the better. With the passing of time. a situation has developed where all rational individuals are losing faith in the future of the state. With the denial of democratic rights and the breakdown of political institutions. the state is solely dependent on its armed forces for its integrity. With unlimited corporate and political interests: the culture of rampant corruption in ranks and file of the military is affecting its overall capability. With the moral bankruptcy and religious narrow-mindedness of Mullahs and the continuous fabrication and distortion of the history of the

region by state-sponsored *Muhajir* writers and intellectuals, the Pakistani people are forced to live in a fool's paradise. Fed with absolute lies on national, international and religious issues, the majority of the new generation of the ruling elite in Pakistan is not in a position to see the world in a realistic frame of mind. The ruling Punjabis are neither prepared nor capable to take rectifying measures in order to rescue their empire from total collapse.

The success of any national liberation struggle depends on many favourable conditions. In one sense conditions are connected and interdependent. They are not created by subjective and ideological activity only. These conditions are developed by the long hard grind of the resistance movement. They depend on such factors as the response of the enemy, the strength and weaknesses of the enemy and the experience gained by the people themselves in actual struggle. The struggle of Sindhi people is taking place in the context of a new world political milieu, in which the fundamentalist and rogue states are increasingly under pressure. Majority of Sindhi intellectuals and writers and conscious leadership believe that time is ripe for a final thrust for the achievement of their long desired dream of regaining sovereignty. They believe that it is only to develop a program to be put into effect in the event of certain expectable and inevitable geopolitical upheavals in the region. They believe that in the eventual violent meltdown of the religious state, Sindhis will be among the beneficiaries.

Mahatma Gandhi once observed that freedom and slavery are mental states. The moment the slave resolves that he will no longer be a slave, his fetters fall. It appears that this generation of Sindhis is determined to get rid of their fetters. There is the reinforced feeling of confidence among them that the enemy is not invincible and its fortress is not impregnable

and unassailable. For the moment, apparently, they face what is by and large a united and confident adversary and all significant sections of the dominant nationality are in broad agreement on the question of defeating Sindhi and the Baloch struggle for national emancipation but the history of national liberation struggles has manifested that the material strength and resources of the enemy are by no means a decisive factor. National resistance is designed to cope with the situation in which the enemy is infinitely superior in relation to every conventional factor of warfare. A determined and protracted struggle is par excellence the weapon of the materially weak against the strong. In this respect, an increased participation of masses in their struggle is strengthening the faith of Sindhi nationalist leadership in their endeavours for national salvation. Encouraged with the unconditional support from masses, they are becoming more optimistic and they believe that given a population which increasingly sides with it, the survival and success of Sindhi national resistance are promising.

Postscript: Mother Sindhu is sad

From the ashes a fire shall be woken

A light from the shadows shall spring;

Renewed shall be blade that was broken,

The crownless again shall be king.

J. Tolkien

According to Rig-Veda, Sindhu was dug by god Varuna in the high Himalayas. This mighty river is fed by numerous smaller streams and rivers and while entering Sindhu Desh, it enjoys the fame of being one of the mightiest rivers in the world. In ancient historical accounts, the might of Sindhu and its seven branches before her final joining of Indian Ocean has been mentioned as "the giant with seven mouths".

Sindhu River brought the Himalayan water to a desert land and sustained it as one of the most fertile agricultural areas of the world, making it a land of abundance and wealth. For Sindhis, it became *Sindhu Mata,* a loving mother as she nourished them for millennia. She sustained the livelihood of her children who settled in townships and cities on both sides of the river. Like a concerned mother, Sindhu has been

connecting everything to everything in Sindh, the townships and the people throughout history.

With the passage of time, the children of Mother Sindhu became a multitude and the vast expanse of territory irrigated by her became their beloved homeland. Her children formed earliest civilized communities on this planet Earth, established mighty empires in which a multitude of people lived in harmony and prosperity. Their culture and civilization influenced other nations of the region. Today, on both of her banks, the silent ruins of countless cities and dwellings spoke stories of several vanishing nations and civilizations. These ruins not only tell the stories of redundant gods, goddesses and legends of mythological heroes but also manifest that Sindhu has been one of history's greatest creator.

The children of Sindhu were among the first to give the world the technique of spinning and weaving of cotton. They were among the first of trading nations and developed extensive trade relationships with other nations. They were among the first of human beings to become literate by developing their own form of a pictographic script. They were among the first to build a society that remained constant for thousands of year. Ruins of magnificent cities of Mohen-jo-Daro and Harappa are manifestations of the engineering skills of her children with which they solved everyday problems of urban dwellings in ancient times.

Two thousand years before Christian era, Sindhu Desh was invaded by a group of barbarian tribes from Central Asia, calling themselves the Aryans. Sindhu Mata adopted them as her own children. The civilized and the barbaric children of Sindhu absorbed each other's language, culture, mythological beliefs and social ethos. A society with new social ethos emerged. The values of this society were further augmented

with the encroachments of Greeks. Persians and Hephthalite Turks. A mighty empire emerged which comprised a vast region from Kashmir to Kerman and from Sistan to the Indian Ocean during the 7th and 8th century.

Mother Sindhu has been fascinating and mesmerising. When her children developed their mythological beliefs, in their texts, they were full of praise for her. In some texts, she was also referred to as Father Sindhu. In Reg-Veda, India's most ancient text, supposed to be composed some 2000 years before Christ, Sindhu has been praised as surpassing all the streams that flow.

> *"His roar is lifted up to heaven above the earth; he puts forth endless vigour with a flash of light.... Even as cows with the milk rush to their calves, so other rivers roar into Sindhu. As a warrior-king leads other warriors, so does Sindhu lead other rivers....Rich in good steeds is Sindhu, rich in gold, nobly fashioned, rich in ample wealth."*

However, in other hymns, Sindhu regained its feminist nature and was praised as unconquered, most efficacious of the efficacious, speckled like a mare and beautiful as a handsome woman. According to great Sindhi poet, Shah Latif Bhittai, each wave of Sindhu is filled with rubies, its water perfumed with musk, and from the river waft air of ambergris.

The land created by the annual flooding of mighty Sindhu was a world of ancient beauty. From the beginning of the first Millennium, it became the place of numerous Hindu and Buddhist temples of insurmountable beauty. Its forests with a multitude of trees, shrubs and herbs were sheltering a myriad of wild animals and birds including boar, tigers and leopards,

wolves. bears. peacock. geese. partridges and many others. Its waters were full of amazing varieties of fish and crocodiles.

The children of Sindhu Mata became a peace-loving nation and throughout their history. they have never committed an act of aggression. Instead. they faced invasions. plunders and bloodshed but as proud children of a proud mother. they have always resisted the hegemony of alien nations and defended their national sovereignty with dignity and honour.

Life was merry-full for the children who flourished with the abundance made available with the waters and fertilizers of Mother Sindhu. Happy were the days when everywhere in the land new flowers were forcing themselves out of the fertile land kissed by her annual flooding. Those were the days of the Golden Era. Those were the days of the mighty empire. Those were the days when Sindh was on equal footing with other powers of the region. Those were the days when the emperor of Sindh was ruling over a multitude of kings and territories. In those days. the children were happy and so was their mother. But this happiness was short lived. The land of Sindhu was invaded by a horde of Bedouins from Arabian Peninsula. The children of Sindhu fought valiant battles against the intruders but were overwhelmed.

The destroyers came out of the desert and targeted everything beautiful. Their invasion was the beginning of a sad story for her children. For hundreds of years. their land became a battleground and hunting place for adventurers. plunderers and marauders from the Middle East and Central Asia. Thousands of the noblest of Sindhis became victims of the waves of exterminations carried out by invaders and occupiers. Thousands were forced to flee their land and to wander in various countries of the world. Since then. the days of happiness for Sindhu and her children are gone.....

Mighty Sindhu, beautiful than a handsome woman, fastest than a mare, the creator of Sindh and mother of Sindhis have been sad for centuries. Happiness has gone from her body. She has been wailing for centuries in agony observing her perfection dropping away drip by drip. She has been lamenting in pain for seeing her children in perpetual slavery. She has been crying as her children and their land was overcast with dark clouds of oppression and subjugation.

Over centuries, Mother Sindhu has developed memories of grief and sadness. Many times, she shed tears of blood on the merciless murders of her children. It was heartbreaking to watch when plains and deserts of Sindh were swarmed by murderers and pillagers. For her, the memories of unhappy events began with the invasion of the Arabs who descended ferociously upon her children, committing the incomprehensibly malicious atrocities against them. It was a nightmare for her to watch the barbarians smoking out beautiful cities, putting them to torch, and destroying the historical monuments of the land. They took away everything precious from her children.

She cried when the time of glory ended for her children. Her heart bled when her children were not only defenestrated but also thousands of them were massacred, and their land was plundered. Sindhu cried when the triumphant and vengeful Arabs humiliated her brilliant sons by carrying out forced circumcision on them, crucified priests, burned temples of gods and goddesses along with valuable mythological and historical texts, and violated even the sweetest of virgins. She was tearful when daughters of royalty, priests, nobles and notables being taken, dressed in rags, put in chains and led away to Iraq and Syria for sale.

Mother Sindhu cried when she witnessed indescribable atrocities and excesses her children faced from many other invaders and plunderers. The heartbroken mother shed tears when Turks, Afghans and Persian plunderers robbed her children, killed them mercilessly in thousands and made them suppressed and poor. There was a time when she was left only with sweet memories of greatest of her children who once walked with pride and honour. For a long time, she lived only with the memories of those of her valiant sons who walked tall towards death in the struggle for upholding the dignity of their land. She wept alone during those dark hours after the indiscriminate massacre of her children as there were not many left even to mourn the death of beautiful and bravest among them.

Sindhu became sad when in 1843, a powerful nation from a faraway island overwhelmed her children, occupied their land, and changed the fabric of the society. She cried on the fate of her children when the conquerors after withdrawing from the region, put her children at the mercy of a group of their loyalists, in a country they created on a fallacious religious ideology. Since then, she is watching her children treading in a dark tunnel searching for a ray of bright light of salvation.

Mother Sindhu is sad because her children are being subjected to inhuman brutalities by soldiers of an artificially created state. She is saddened to witness the humiliation and dishonouring her children. Sindhu is sad because her children are forced to live in a state where human values and morality are fast collapsing. She is saddened to see that the very people who came as refugees and were welcomed by her children with open arms and settled them in their cities, overnight became their master. She is saddened because the language of her children is being replaced with the language of the refugees. She is saddened to watch the mutilation of the

history of her children and the disfiguring and desecration of their cherished cultural and societal norms in the name of Islamic brotherhood.

Mother Sindhu is sad observing that the new conquerors of Sindh cannot comprehend what is meant to be a Sindhi as they have not flourished on her meditating and tranquillizing waves. They are unable to comprehend the depth of Sindhi social values, religious traditions and cultural norms. She is sad because the enemies are unable to understand the dreams and feelings which have been accumulated in the hearts of her children through ages. They are unable to comprehend the love of her children to their deserts, fertile valleys, beautiful lakes and wonderful creatures.

Mother Sindhu is sad as, after centuries of subjugation, misfortune still besets her children and smiles from their lips have faded. The blood of the brave youths and elderly are being shed by their murderous adversaries. She is much tormented to see that the mutilated bodies of her children are thrown on roadsides and desolate areas and perpetrators of these heinous crimes are roaming with impunity. Sometimes. Mother Sindhu feels that old and new gods have abandoned her children. It makes her frustrated to see that her children are living in a long dark night, and sometimes she feels that there appears to be not a single star of hope in the skies.

Mother Sindhu is sad when she sees that once the wealthiest, now her children are poorer of the poorest but the plunderers and thieves who are ruling them are making themselves rich. She is saddened to foresee a future when the fertile lands which were created by her annual flooding would become thirsty and desolate as the conquerors have planned several dams and diversions on her way towards the ocean. She is sad foreseeing a future in which she would begin to feel like a

ghost of herself. feeling like an old useless woman whose flesh is not what it was. neither are the bones. On many occasions. in anguish. it appears that the mighty waves of Mother Sindhu instead of gushing water. release winds of a moan to mourn the fate of her children and their land.

It makes Mother Sindhu sad when she hears some submissive voices among her children advocating that nothing can be done. They say the enemy is so strong: there is no way to seek help in the fight for the restoration of their honour. and it would be better to admit defeat and join the enemy. She became sad when she hears that some of her children have forgotten the fact that there is little in common between them and that they are very distinct from their enemies: their origins. mindsets and destinies are different. It makes her saddened when she feels that some of her children have forgotten the fact that conquerors and conquered are the banks of a river which always run parallel and can't meet and they are like day and night which cannot dwell together.

Sindhu is sad because she is aware of the bitter truth that the enemies of her children are powerful while they are weak. resourceless and friendless. But for her. all is not over. She has observed such situations before. In her long life. on many occasions. she has witnessed her children facing extremely unfavourable circumstances. But they have been always resilient. Her brave sons and graceful daughters have always been ready to sacrifice their youth for their personal and national honour and for the attainment of a bright future for their coming generations. She is aware that her children are committed to offering profound resistance to the enemies. She is aware that there are known and unknown soldiers among her children who are selflessly struggling to save the dignity and honour of their land.

Despite having a broken heart by witnessing centuries of brutalities on her children, and despite the darkness of the hour, Mother Sindhu is not despaired and there are reasons for her to be optimistic. She has been encouraged to observe that the majority of her children have adopted an attitude of deafness towards the voices of cowardliness and capitulation. She is optimistic because the majority of her children are only listening to the battle cry and the call of sacrifice for a new dawn of dignity and liberation. She is optimistic that the devotion of her children to the national cause and their passionate and relentless struggle would cause the realization of the dream of salvation.

Mother Sindhu is sad but not despair because she has been watching the courage, bravery and the passion for selfless struggle on part of her children. She is aware of the fact that the struggle her children are between the stronger and the weak. Her spirit gains heights when she observes that they are offering the ultimate sacrifice for the national honour. It is encouraging to her to observe that the children have not abandoned the noble struggle in which their noble ancestors have been engaged throughout. She is firm in her belief that no matter how weak or disorganized. her children are not broken. She is proud that nor they have bowed their head neither lowered their eyes in front of their enemies and thousands of men and women are paying their debt to their land. She firmly believes that her children will fight to the end. She is witnessing the fact that this generation of her children is not only paying their own debt but in a way also paying homage to those who struggled and shed their blood for the dignity of their land and people in the past.

Mother Sindhu is sad but optimistic that her children are destined for greatness. She is optimistic that the day of Sindhis will eventually come and it will come very soon. The power

which is holding her children hostage will vanish in the dust of history as were the fates of various others who ventured to occupy this land and enslaved her children. Sindhu is hopeful that the villages, townships and cities which she has lovingly created will vibrate with happiness, love and life once again.

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TEARS OF SINDHU

Sindhis are among the few people who retained their national identity for five thousand years. Their journey from ancient times to present era is tortuous with episodes of glory and power, alternating with periods of occupation and subjugation. Sindh was the last Indian states which were occupied by the British in the background of increasing fear of a Russian advance on India. In 1947, the United Kingdom of Great Britain decided to withdraw from India but in order to safeguard it's vital economic, political and strategic interests in the region, created a client state of Pakistan. Islam was used as a tool in the division of India. Sindhis like many other nations were merged into the religious state of Pakistan. Since the merger, it is a tale of humiliations, insults and all kind of exploitative and subjugating mechanization which they are facing. Upholding the historic traditions of resisting alien rule, Sindhis have been struggling in various ways for regaining their sovereignty. The book is a historical narrative of Sindhi struggle for the achievement of a dignified and honourable existence.

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