

Kalhora Governance of Sindh - An Overview

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History of Sindh is as rich as its culture, its traditions, its language, its moral value, its social diversity and its civilization. With such obvious attractions it was destined to offer temptation not only to immediate neighbors but to far flung invaders like the Portuguese and the English.

Such political and cultural pressures resulted in local intellectual resistance which slowly and gradually attained its full strength by the advent of Islam in this part of the world.

This began a new era in the history of Sindh. From then onwards awareness of "Human Rights" in general were publicized and practiced unreservedly. A growing sense for the establishment of a "Just Society" which can offer: -

1. Equal opportunity to masses.
2. Respectable living to every citizen.
3. Protection against all kinds of 'Exploitation of Man by Man'.
4. Freedom of thought and speech.
5. Freedom to earn their living.
6. Protection against 'Forced Slavery' the remains of such Slavery are still being reported by our media today.
7. Right of 'Self Determination' of their social religious and political status.
8. Protection against 'Imperialistic Forces' existing at that time etc. was but a natural and well justified thinking.

Sindh was therefore looking for a radical change in social and political life structure. It had tasted the Hindu Imperialism, the Arab Dominance, the Turkish Monarchy, the Afghan Rule, Hegemony of Mughal India so on so forth.

The Kalhora dynasty was perhaps the first to represent the locals' aspirations.

The most probable reason which made them 'Revolutionary' and become Torch Bearers of 'Self Determination' in Sind was really the oppression and injustice they faced from the Mughal imperialism and the un-magnanimous attitude of 'Ulmas' of the time. Kalhoras had no political ambitions. They were basically 'Darwaish Sifat' Religious sect and followers of Syed Mohammad of Jaunpur who believed him to be 'Mehdi-e-Maud' whose grandfather Syed Osman Sherazi, an Aalim of high stature, came to Delhi along with King Taimoor in 801 A.D. After the departure of Taimoor, Syed Osman Sherazi stayed in Delhi and then shifted to Jaunpur which was the centre of Ilm-o-Adab and was commonly known as SHIRAZ of HIND.

Unfortunately, contemporary historians intentionally avoid to mention his name and give due credit to him or his followers who have been part and parcel of histories of Sindh, Baluchistan, Makran, Afghanistan, Masqat, Kirman, Southern Khurasan and

Central Punjab the whole of 'Seraiki' speaking area Gujarat, Mando, Palanpur, Ahmed Nagar, Jodhpur, Jaipur, Jalore, Nagore, Bijapur, Burhanpur, Bayana, Mysore, Berar, Marwar, Deccan, Madras etc. etc.

Our historians and journalists tend to forget the ethics and code of conduct as prescribed in the Holy Quran for every one of us.

"Confound not truth with falsehood, nor knowingly conceal the facts". (Al-Baqra-42).

The fact is that millions of Syed Mohammad's followers have contributed to the progress, welfare and prosperity of the countries wherever they lived .Their contribution is in every walk of national lives. How can we forget Qazi Qaden RZ, Shah Inyat Sofi, Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai, Sachhal Sarmast, Mir Shahdad Khan Talpur, Mir Chakar Khan Laghari, and Nawab Bahadur Yar Jung?

Kalhoras religious belief is an integral part of their glorious history. Any attempt to isolate them from their strong religious character which was the main source of their strength will simply mean 'Beating around the Bush' and hypocritically continuing the so called "Research" of history. People gathered around them in the time of their "poverty" and "Faquiree". They had a very large community of followers and Peerbhais comprising of multitude of nationalities.

With regard to their Peerbhais religious character Maulana Azad writes on page # 41 of "TAZKARA" (Urdu Published by Javaid Brothers, Lahore):

"These people had strange habits and living, peculiar enough to remind the living habits of Sahaba-e-Ikram".

On page 54 he writes and admires by saying:

"Much information is available in Tazkarat-ul-Wasileen in the chapter related to Shaikh Dawood and by reading these a strange and mind wondering feeling is experienced and one desires to leave everything aside and just keep on talking about those truthful and clean people"!

He continues:

"Centuries have passed by and yet if their reference is made even today it leaves us wondering and questioning what could have been the impact on our hearts if we were in their company?"

These people used to live outside the city in their own colonies, which they used to call 'Daira'. This word under the influence of local linguistic affects appears as 'Dero' or 'Dera' etc but some of them still exist in their original form like, 'Daire Langar Khan' in Lahore, 'Daire Deen Punnah' near Kot Addu in the Punjab, 'Daira Drazo' originally 'DARAZ' where Hazrat Sachal Sarmast Shrine stands in Sindh, or 'Diara Gurgi Balgator' in Turbat Baluchistan. Others are 'Nao Dero' near Larkana which is

'Naya Daira', 'Rajo Dero' near western border of Khanpur with Baluchistan, 'Daira Basti' outside Multan. Perhaps Dera Ghazi Khan and Dera Ismail Khan are also 'DAIRAS' because these towns are famous for Mehdavia Populations and these two Generals had been sent by King Aurangzeb from Gujarat to Punjab.

Expulsion and persecution of Mehdavis had been a very popular 'Sport' of many worldly Ulmas/Mullahs and at times even the Kings and provincial Governors were involved in this 'Cruel game'. Mian Adam Shah Kalhora, a very pious and saintly follower of Syed Mohammad Mehdi A.S. did not escape the wrath and crucifixion by Multan's Governor who imprisoned him and eventually martyred him for reasons more than what is generally being given in our histories.

He did not belong to 'Qabza Group' and occupied others land by force. History admits and recognizes him as a holy religious leader. He believed in Quranic inference: AL-ARZO LILLAH! He also believed in "APNA OGAO APNA KHAO".

The teachings of the Masluk certainly have stronger inclination towards 'Amar Bil Maroof wa Nahi Anil Munkir' and even greater emphases on 'Honesty', "Equality of Human Rights", "Social Justice", recognition of "Hoqooq Allah and Hoqooq-ul-Ibad" etc.

In those days Muslims had drifted from the real teachings of Islam and Shari'a was manipulated to cater individual needs. Practicing judiciary had double standards and Fatwas to suit the needs of people were available at a price, details can be read in 'TAZKARA' by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. There was a need to revive the true spirit of Islam.

Followers of the Masluk including Mian Adam Shah and his followers had undertaken revival of the spirit of Shari'a which involved re-introduction of the practice of: -

- I. Total submission to Allah and his Messenger (PBUH).
- II. Amar Bil Maroof (Practicing of Rightful actions and stopping of wrong acts).

Sawieth (equality of Human rights and equal distribution of resources).

Ijma (Democratic approach on matter of collective importance).

Usher (10 percent tax on income).

Tawakkal (Reliance on Allah).

Hijrat (Migration for Tableegh).

Sohbat-e-Sadiqeen (company of Truthfuls)

Tarak-e-Hubbe-Dunya (discarding the love of worldly charms).

Zikr Allah (Remembrance of Allah).

Uzlat (Loneliness for meditation and Tuzzakia).

Talab-e-Deedar-e-Ilahi (Urge to see and meet Allah Subhanah-wa-Taala in order to achieve real Ma'arefat).

The economic structure of the society was looked after by imposing 10% Tax on the income or productivity of the "Kasib" - a person who works outside the 'Daira'. This tax called 'USHER' along with the Zakat was collected from 'Sahib-e-Nisab'.

Another approach was that country's resources are created for all the human beings and a "just and fair distribution" based on the individual contribution and efforts, is the responsibility of the 'Ool-ul-amar'. On the other hand accumulation of wealth, hoarding of commodities or for that matter anything in excess of one's need was regarded as violation of tenants of the Masluk, which proved to be a stumbling block for the new generation. In-fact their practical system of Usher and distribution of community resource itself is a separate subject of research.

Mian Adam Shah Kalhora while practicing the above tenants happened to annoy lot of his neighboring feudal and land lords because the Haries were now getting equal share from the income of their cultivated crop in addition to humanly treatment, like brothers of one family and at the same time getting groomed as good practicing Muslims. Truth and social justice prevailed attracting the masses.

The friction between the powerful Feudal supported by the Government and helpless locals increased resulting in the growth of an "Opposition" which gained strength day by day. Leadership of the sect was imprisoned not only in Sindh but throughout India, some were tortured to death. Hundreds and thousands of families were driven out and forced to migrate. Armies were used to extinguish the sect and their 'Dairas' in Gujarat and Bayana. Judiciary and clergy were used and mobilized to justify state's action.

Dr. Ishtiaq Hussain Qureshi in his Book "BARRE SAGHIR PAK-O-HIND KI MILLAT-E-ISLAMIA" writes on page no. 173:-

"Religious beliefs are never suppressed in this manner. MAKHDUM-UL-MULK (ABDULLAH SULTANPURI) had to run a campaign in order to overcome the MehDavis which eventually destroyed them but the doctrine of 'Correct Believes' suffered an irreparable damage. At that time the only disagreement between true Muslims and MehDavis was that the latter mentioned had accepted Syed Mohammad as Mahdi and were strict observers of the Islamic statutes (FRAIZ-E-ISLAM).

In reality, a strange situation had emerged whereby those who were the leaders and fore-runners in adhering and following the Shari'a were being doubted as deviators from the Shari'a".

Thus, state and its cultivated religious machinery provided complementary services to each other. Their tyranny was unchecked as there was no "Human Rights Organization" or "International Courts of Justice" to reprimand the governments of that time. As a result a lot of its followers went underground.

Shaikh Mubarak Sindhi, father of Allama Faizi and Alma Abdul Fazal was forced to go into hiding. He lived a fugitive life for years together. Detail account is given by Mohammad Hussain Azad in his famous Darbar-e-Akbari.

Mian Mir Balapir of Lahore a maternal grandson of Hazrat Qazi R.A. had to take refuge in Lahore and live an anonymous life for almost forty years. He has been labeled as "Qadri" by his well wishers and followers who did not like to expose him as Mahdavi to the state authorities or 'Ulmas'. So also Mian Mir's Murshid Hazrat Sayed Kizr who lived an anonymous life in Sevestan. The history does not know who he was!

His real identity is - he was Syed Mohammad's great grandson! It goes like this - Syed Kizr bin Syed Ashraf bin Syed Yaqoob bin Syed Mehmood bin Syed Mohammad Mahdi A.S.

Such is the sad history of early Pirs and Pirbhais of Kalhoras of Sindh.

According to Tuhfatul Ikram in 995 A.H. on the expedition of conquest of Sindh, Abdul Rahim Khan-e-Khanan approached Mian Adam Shah Kalhora for his blessing and with a request to pray for his success in his mission. Khan-e-Khanan gifted some land at Chanduka as his "offering" for Fuqra's Mudad-e-Muash.

Mian Adam Shah's prayers were answered and Khan-e-Khanan conquered Sindh.

A similar case in history is about Sardar Khan who was blessed by Mian Naseer Mohammad to become ZARDAR KHAN whose progeny runs up to present Zardaries.

After the hanging of Hazrat Adam Shah Kalhora R.A., time passed by wounds was healing but the Ulmas and the land lords did not forget them. They again framed fictitious charges against his third Gaddi Nasheen. Mian Shah Mohammad who was killed in prison in 1657 A.D. by the authorities. He was succeeded by another very pious young man Mian Naseer Mohammad. He also was arrested in 1675 A.D. and handed over to King Aurangzeb who was famous for intolerance in the addition or alteration in Shari'a. The idea was that since the King himself was an Aalim and he would readily denounce Mian Naseer Mohammad a 'Kafir' and throws him into the gallows!

Here again, after few years of imprisonment the 'HAQ' prevailed. The King was pressurized by Ulmas and so he organized a Manazira between the Ulma-e-Waqat and the Mehdavi Ulmas to determine the truth about the faith and also to pass a decree for Mian's persecution. This Manazira is known as 'Mubahisa-e Alamgiri' and took place in the year 1095 A.H. (1678 A.D.) in Ahmed Nagar. Once again neither the Ulma nor the King could find anything seriously objectionable to enable them

pronounce a decree of 'Kufr'. It is believed that Mian Naseer Mohammad was released as a consequence of the MUNAZIRA. He was a great Sofi and Godly-man (A Wali). His place in spiritualism was like Mian Adam Shah, High and Lofty! A man with vision and wisdom highly respected among his mureeds and non-mureeds.

He was an Alim-ba-Amal and Murshid-e-Kamil. A perfect Mutawakkil who did not fear anyone but Allah!

It is worth mentioning here that Mian Naseer Mohammad was the first Kalhora Murshid who had fought a battle with the Government forces in around 1675 A.D. and defeated the royal army sent by Mir Yaqoob, Governor of Bakhar.

Due to such capabilities and his ever increasing number of followers, 'Delhi Darbar' decided to compromise and allow or ignore 'controlled self rule' in his area thus the foundation stone of Kalhora Dynasty was laid

Over the years Delhi's grip was getting weaker and weaker where as the 'Kalhora governance' was growing from strength to strength.

As reported in the last seminar by Professor. Dr. Liaq Ali Zardari, following chiefs and prominent members of various notable tribes had unanimously accepted Mian Naseer Mohammad as their Murshid.

Faujo Fakhir Somroo, Shah Punjo Sultan Dhot, Gulbeg Talpur, Sobedar Talpur, Jango Khan Jamali, Hasil Lashari, Murad Kaleri, Bagh Mohammad Chandio, Galo Khoso, Hyder Laghari, Shah Godrio Khoso, Yar Mohammad Rind, Kamal Khan Mashori, Meran Solangi, Gul Mohammad Laghari, Darya Khan Berhamni, Sohrab Jatoi, Belawal Zardari, Fatho Zardari, Dongar Magsi, Samito, Nizamani and Sittar tribes.

History is a witness that the brutality continued. Its third famous victim was from the same clergy. This time it was Mian Deen Mohammad A.R. who was imprisoned and Killed in Multan Jail by no other man than Prince Moizuddin, the grandson of King Aurangzeb in 1700 A.D. who was a Shia from his mother's side and had ordered mentioning of the names of Twelve Imams in the weekly KHUTBAS in the mosques. This obviously was an attempt to resist the spread of Mahdaviat.

After this brutal and un-civilized behavior of the rulers, the reaction took its course. Kalhoras gained new strength and vitality by their growing number of followers. Their popularity rose to new heights and the Government had to officially recognize the emerging reality.

Mian Yar Mohammad was officially contracted on certain terms to run some parts of the province of Northern Sindh. Details of the contract/agreement can be referred in Tareeq-e-Sind by Ghulam Rasool Mehar.

This agreement maintained Delhi's supremacy. Kalhoras did not foresee its repercussion. They had actually accepted King of Delhi as "Ool-ul-Amar". Being

strict followers of Quran and Sunnah - a fact which was always exploited by Delhi Darbar to their own advantage, the God Fearing Mian Yar had to fight against his own Pir-Bhai Hazrat Shah Enayat Sofi A.R. in obedience of Ool-ul-Amar which is the saddest part of Mian Yar Mohammad's career.

A truce/compromise was forced on Shah Enayat Sofi when Nobles and his very own trusted 'Mureed' Mir Shahdad Khan Talpur guaranteed his safety after Holy Quran was made a witness between Government forces and Shah's forces. Mir Shahdad and Mian Yar Mohammad also believed the Government commitment. But things changed in the office of Azam Khan the Governor of Thatta and Shah Enayat Sofi was imprisoned and finally martyred in 1130 A.H. (1718 A.D.) and his head was chopped off and sent to Delhi Darbar!

This was a successful conspiracy to weaken the strength of the followers of the same faith. It is obvious that "Obedience of Ool-ul-Amar" a Quranic Order was used cunningly to move Mian Yar Mohammad against Shah Enayat A.R. very cleverly and successfully by the Government. A number of notables of that time like Hazrat Janullah Shah Rizvi, Mir Moeen Thatvi, and Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai etc. etc. were angry on the incidence but an unforgettable chapter in the history was made to appear and lost forever.

In 1738 A.D. Nadir Shah invaded Sindh and Hind completely destroying and wrecking the economy of both earlier mentioned parties. He looted their wealth and divided Mian's Dominion into three parts and only one third was left with them. He also, either destroyed the books and libraries or taken away most valuable scripts of Holy Quran and many other important manuscripts. This was not the end of his loot! Mian Noor Mohammad Kalhora had to pay One Crore Rupees and a yearly ransom of Rs. 20 lakhs. He took away Mian's two sons Muradyab Khan and Ghulam Shah as 'security' to ensure timely payments by Mian Noor Mohammad. These two sons being of young age Hazrat Belawal Zardari was entrusted to accompany and look after them in Iran while in Nadir Shah's custody.

This important assignment signifies the diplomatic caliber, the royal dependency, the closeness and trust worthiness of Hazrat Belawal Zardari (1705 - 1754 A.D.) with Mian Noor Mohammad Kalhora.

It appears that younger generation of Kalhoras drifted away from the original teachings and desired the pomp and glory in this world and it was fulfilled by Allah Subhana-wa-Taala. In 1715 A.D. Mian Yar Mohammad was officially appointed by Delhi as official 'Ruler' of the province.

So, from hence forth with royal decree in their hands the young Kalhoras started collecting the land revenue, money started pouring in, reins of power was in their hands. Regular army was employed. Slowly and gradually a system of governing and running of the country was shaping up, demanding more time, more attention of the leadership who were basically of religious discipline and who preferred to opt for devotion to Allah, sit in isolation purifying their souls, Qalab and Nafas by Ziker-wo-Fiker and establishing Salat.

From the point of view of the Historians and the worldly people "Golden Period of the Dynasty" started. Their achievements in the introduction and development of: -

1. Human relations.
2. Provincial administration and economic structure.
3. Land management, Agriculture and Irrigation system of the country.
4. Education in masses.
5. Military training in Mosques along with religious education.
6. Literature and Poetry.
7. New architecture.
8. Maritime Logistics.

Including building of new Towns etc. etc. are an unforgettable chapters of Sind's history. Each topic itself had been a subject of research on their own.

I) Human Relations:

This is definitely one very important area where Kalhoras have concentrated and managed to improve relations between various ethnic and religious communities, particularly between Hindoos and Muslims. Hindoos were trusted and given very important position in the administration of the affairs of the country. Some famous Hindoo personalities which we find in Kalhora history are:

Barkhurdar Mehta Moto Mal, Diwan Mugo Mal, Diwan Chelaram, Diwan Ghunshamdas, Lala Amrat Rai, Diwan Tara Chand, SewakRam "ATTARD" etc. etc. Just to mention few of them.

The details of their contributions if described will spread over several pages in the history.

Contemporary History therefore will recognize Kalhoras as First Non Ethnic and secular Rulers of Sindh.

II) Canals and Irrigation System:

It is believed that following canals were built in Kalhoras time and constituted the irrigation system of the country. Lambrik has given account of the some of the below mentioned canals but an extensive study has been done by Dr. Professor M.H. Panwhar.

Nara Wah
Ghar Wah
Baghar Wah
Shahji Wah
Chandio Wah
Murad Wah
Nusrat Wah

Sarfaraz Wah
Noor Wah
Begari Wah
Bagh Wah

One can imagine with so many new canals how many more acres of barren land must have become productive and how much self sufficiency in agriculture produce must have been achieved and how many jobs must have been provided to jobless people.

III) Mosques and Schools:

Kalhoras have built a number of Mosques. Each Tomb they built had its own separate Mosque but most elegant and perhaps the largest one was built by Mian Yar Mohammad and it is known as "Jame Masjid Khuda Abad". It is believed that Mian Yar Mohammad did not complete it. Its construction was completed in Mian Noor Mohammad's period.

As mentioned earlier these Mosques were also serving the purpose of schools for educational purpose as was done in the early Islamic period. The only peculiarity was that they were also using them for imparting military training.

IV) Tombs:

- i. Mian Adam Shah Kalhora in Sukkhar
- ii. Mian Shahel Mohammad near Qamber.
- iii. Mian Ghulam Shah Kalhora in Hyderabad.
- iv. Mian Shah Bahara in Larkana
- v. Mian Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai near Hala.

Whereas Mian Naseer Mohammad's tomb had been built by Mian Yar Mohammad and Mian Noor Mohammad's tomb was built in the time of Mian Muradyab Khan.

V) Forts:

Among the mentionable forts made by Kalhoras are: -

- i. Hyderabad Fort which is under destruction now.
- ii. Badin Fort which is ruined.
- iii. Larkana Fort which does not exist anymore.
- iv. Shah Ghar near Kach.

VI) Sea Port:

Mian Ghulam Shah is also known to have built Shah Bunder a Port near Kach which he abandon after the power struggle, between his brother, Attar Khan and himself, was over.

VII) Cities and Townships:

Historians mention that following cities have come into being in the Kalhora period:

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Khuda Abad - which is believed to be spread over 50 Acres originally but now it is deserted and only the graveyard part is existing along with few buildings. It was built by Mian Yar Mohammad.

Mohammad Abad - this was built by Mian Noor Mohammad.

Murad Abad - this new city was built in 1754 A.D. and the coronation ceremony of Mian Muradyab Khan took place here.

It was situated on the bank of a river near Nasarpur and is now under its bed.

Allah Abad - Mian Ghulam Shah built this city following the destruction of Murad Abad and its present name is Shahpur.

Hyderabad - old city of Nairan Kot was modernized its boundaries extended, Pukka Qila was built and new name Hyderabad was given to it by Mian Ghulam Shah in 1182 A.D.

Khuda Abad - Mian Sarfaraz had built this city which is near Hala.

VIII) Some Notables of Kalhora Dynasty:

Perhaps by mentioning certain names of notables I may be able to condense the history whose contribution in various fields speaks volumes about the subject of their excellence.

Mir Ali Sher Qane.

Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai.

Makhdoom Jaffar Bobakai

Makhdoom Abul Qasim.

Makhdoom Moinuddin.

Makhdoom Mohammad Hashim.

Allama Mohammad Hayat Sindhi.

Makhdoom Abdur Raof.

Mohsin Thattavi.

Ruja Thattavi.

Sheikh Mohammad Mehfooz Sarkhosh.

Mir Najamuddin "Uzlat".

Mir Shahdad Khan Talpur.

Shah Behara.

Syed Jan Allah "Mir".

Mohammad Ali Aali.

Ghulam Ali "Muddah".

Shah Ali Raza "Darwaish".
Mir Lutfullah Mutaro.
Murad Kaleri.
Belawal Khan Naich.
Mussoo Faqeer Samito.
Hazrat Sachhal Sarmast.

With such strong credentials and commendable achievements in literature, poetry, architecture, land reclamation, agriculture development, irrigation system, revenue collection and administration system, military training and mass literacy programme, Kalhoras period of Governance from 1700-1784 A.D. can truly be labeled and identified as a period of progress and prosperity for the people of Sind regardless of their cast creed, colour, religious or ethnic identity. They have truly accomplished peace and tranquility for every citizen of the country which is really the "Ultimate Goal" of every Government of past or present times.

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