

# **HISTORY OF KALHORAS**

## **(Kalhora Daur Hukoomat)**

### ***Review by: M.H. Panhwar***

Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Lakho has written this book, which has been dedicated to (i) Mr. Mazharul Haq Siddiqui and (ii) me i.e., M.H. Panhwar. This book in itself is a classic, even the classic on the subject covering 102 years of Kalhora ascendancy up to their fall and is the first of its kind so far produced. With such important work, I ask myself: "do I deserve the importance that Dr. Lakho the author, has bestowed on me?" I wonder, wonder and re-wonder and then it reminds me of the Socrates who said: "People consider me wise because I know nothing". The book is actually a Ph.D thesis on approval of which the writer was awarded the Doctorate in 1999 by the University of Sindh. The thesis has been touched further as needful for rendering it press worthy. The book has seen the light of the day in 2004 as a publication of Anjuman Ithad-e-Abbasia Pakistan, Karachi. There is so much knowledge known now and also unknown, in each and every sphere of every subject that one can't fully master a single field or a few chapters or sub-chapters or even a part of a sub-paragraph of it during the whole life time. Research methods have changed. Field research is a new technology, to collect data statistically and draw conclusions. I get credit because research on Sindh is lacking.

My interest in Sindh goes back, when at age of six, a branch for "Separation of Sindh from Bombay" movement was formed in our village and I started wondering what Sindh was, is and will be? Since then I have read every thing about Sindh including history, with interest as well as concern, whether the original contemporary historians who wrote in Persian or English, had grasped the factual history, as times and environments had molded it and they had embarked to write

about. Most of them were either in employment of the government of the day or were favourites or at the best adventurers.

For Europeans it was curiosity at least up to middle of nineteenth century. Leaving aside this fact, it was expected that notes on translation from original Persian text would bring out new facts and truths, but the whole thing now has become disappointing. For example notes on translation of "Chach Nama" extracted from Raverty's "Mehran of Sindh" and Haig's "Indus Delta Country" are not acknowledged but claimed as original research. Their theories of courses of Indus and Sarsuti-Hakra were discredited within ten years of their writings and then were superseded by series of writings even before 1947 AD, and work is still continuing but no notice was taken of this. Dr. Daudpotta's excellent but short notes in his "Masumi" were not elaborated in translation. Though Dr. Mumtaz Pathan was able to refer to the original sources, from these notes, to write two volumes on Umayyad and Abbasid governors' and Habaris' rule of Sindh. Persian text of "Chach Nama" of Daudpotta was reprinted as original text with addition of versions in two new manuscripts and Daudpotta's name as original editor was dropped. Further to it, notes with same mistakes as committed in its Sindhi translation of 1954 AD, were repeated without revision, the only addition being the fact of its English translation.

The other histories like "Tarikh-i-Tahiri" has editors' notes which try to convert folk lore stories in sober history, by wrong interpretations of historical geography and other such fictitious claims. In them Saiful Maluk changes course of the river within a night, Brahmanabad is destroyed by an earth quake, thought it is not in seismic zones and a medallion is also claimed to have been witnessed proving existence of Dalu Rais' brother. Instead of scientific facts they try to make people superstitious.

In South Asia, Muslim historians have considered Umayyad, Abbasid, Delhi Sultanate and Mughal rule as Islamic, whereas local Muslim dynasties in various provinces are ignored and at the best depicted as un-important, degenerate and petty chiefs not worth mentioning. The Delhi sultanate and Mughals tolerated local Muslims only if they paid taxes, claimed no equality and accepted them-selves as second rate citizens. Some of our Sindh historians have towed the same line. There were rebellions against Umayyad and Abbasid governors for 140 years (712-850

AD) and a civil war against Arghoons, Turkhan and Mughal governors (1520-1700). One of our leading historian yet declared that as there was no case of theft and robbery reported during the above periods and there was no law and order problem, ignoring at the same time that out of 40 governors of Arabs in 140 years, 21 were killed in action in Sindh, 13 were dismissed and only 6 including Muhammad Bin Qasim returned back honorably. In case of Arghoons, Tarkhans and Mughals, there was a 175 years 'civil war' but it was suppressed, as local Muslims uprisings were acts of infidels and had to be stopped by use of force and sword. The collection of taxes under Mughals from Thatta Sarkar stood reduced to 20 percent in 1965 AD, as against that in 1600 AD, due to the long civil war started by local tribes all over Sindh.

We have to give credit to Pir Hussamuddin Rashdi for editing "Mazahar shah Jehani" and exposing myth of Mughal administration. His findings are based on original text of the above book by a Mughal nobleman, son of a Mughal governor and brother fo another Mughal governor. Pir Hussamuddin edited Persian text of "Tuhfatul-Kiram" with exhaustive notes from contemporary histories, biographies, poetical works, letters, Sanads, seals, etc., as he had done also for "Makli Namah". But the text still remains in Persian and has not been translated in 35 years. We have before us "Beglar Namah" virtually a biographical work of blown up exploits and exaggeration of a nobleman for fifty years of Arghoon and Tarkhan period. But it is all the same an excellent work on historical geography describing roads, routes, villages, towns lakes, ponds, canals, tribes and life styles. It has remained un-translated. This is pity that our three institute namely; Sindhi Adabi Board , Sindhology and Sindhi Language Authority have not done enough to project our history, as it deserves.

Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Lakho wrote history of "Samma Sultans" some 17 years back and its vevised and enlarged edition came out in 1996. I think among the Sindh's historians, he occupies the first position as Sindh's rational, unprejudiced, open minded scholar, who takes great pains to collect rare facts, to make historiography presentable to his local and foreign readers. In my opinion first and foremost thing in historiography is "Chronology" for which credit may also goes to Pir Hussamuddin Rashdi. The ingredients of historiography are:

1. Chronology.
2. Politics (With chronology).
3. Administration and administrative units, policing and justice.
4. Irrigation and agricultural production, and courses of the river Indus.
5. Taxes.
6. Trade, foreign and local.
7. Coins and currency.
8. Education.
9. Language and literature, local and foreign and contemporary historical documents.
10. Religions and religious movements.
11. Foreign relations.
12. Art, architecture and archaeology.
13. Traveler's accounts.
14. Biographies of people connected with administration and local and foreign relations.
15. Weaponry and war technology.
16. Science and technology.
17. Environments of the period and their impact on historical events.

Although Ghulam Rasool Mehar used many sources previously less known, but he did not cover all the ingredients of historiography and some times has failed to give correct analysis of events. Many new sources became available soon after Mehar's book "Tarikh Kalhora" was published, and therefore whole of his history needed to be revised and re-written. Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Lakho has successfully executed the task and thus deserves praise and congratulations of all Sindhis, He had touched all the 17 ingredients of historiography to various degrees, but all of it be covered in 400 odd pages of the book, though all guide lines have been given for any students to elaborate each of them. It is hoped that advantage of this basic text would be taken.

I feel one observation of mine may be looked into by the author for the future revised edition. This in brief is: "Whether Kalhora chiefs were genuine Sufis and were promoting socialism of twentieth century by taking away lands of other people by force"? A recent book of Dr. Raizul Islam on the fourteenth century Sufis, "Sufism in South Asia-Impact on 14<sup>th</sup> century Muslim society " proves beyond doubt that most of Sufi saints of that century lived on grants of the government and at time of need moulded their disciples in favour of their disciples in favour of the government. Kalhoras were not in good books of the government, from at least 1600 AD, but there was a factor in their favour that instead of seeking government assistance to feed their poor followers, they occupied the lands even of other people, usually the big land owners loyal to Mughal government and its tax payers, and settled their land-less disciples on those lands. Mughal government retaliated brutally. This attracted more people to become their disciples, get land and settle down and it was they who fought the Mughal administration. The whole thing then boils down to Kalhora's Sufism, having worldly interests of expropriating lands. However early Kalhora Mendicants may have been different, but not after they took to that fondness for land and put it in wrong hands.

In chapter 1, the author describes geographical background of the era, river Indus, and brief history of Sindh upto 1520 AD. Chapter 2 is devoted to socio-economic and political conditions from 1520 to 1737 AD, under Arghoon and Tarkhan, and their feuds and lastly Mughal governors under Akbar, Jehangir, Shah Jehani, Aurangzeb and later Mughals. The 60 governors of Thatta in 128 years cannot be expected to deliver goods and it became the worse period of civil resistance. Chapter 3 describes rise of Kalhoras. An interesting conclusion of Dr. Lakho is that Kalhoras were a Sindhi caste. He accepts 1600 AD. As the date of martyrdom of Mian Adam Shah Kalhoro. Mian Shahul Muhammad Kalhoro took over the lands of Abras and Sangis and in retaliation, was killed in local uprising, possibly supported by the Mughal governor of Bakhar in 1657 AD. Local tradition says that his body is buried without head, which his adversaries Abras and Sangis took away with them-selves. The impression given by Khan Khudad Khan of "Lub-e-Tarikh-i-Sindh" and accepted by Dr. Lakho that Ghar Wah was constructed by Mian

Shahul Muhammad is incorrect. It was one of the western branch of the Indus and was remodeled by Abras during Samma rule and was known as Abra Wah.

Dr. Lakho's comments on Mian Naseer Muhammad are correct, when he considers him as first Kalhora ruler starting from 1681 AD. His views cannot be questioned as the last half of seventeenth century was the climax of worst drought from 1550-1850 AD. And Mughals had only one fifth land revenues in 1665 compared to 1600 AD. At that time there were anti government rebellions all over India. Mian Naseer's strategy was to take over land of loyalist tribes, who paid taxes to Mughals, and occupied present Larkana district, Mehar and Khairpur Nathan Shah Talukas as author has detailed. It was a clever strategy, as contours of the area are such that it can easily be irrigated, even when river level was low. No other area of Sindh had this advantage, before opening of barrages from 1932 to 1962. In support of the weakening of Mughal power and native rebellions, Dr. Lakho has correctly quoted the case of civil resistance of Khattak and Yousif Zai tribes of Kabul, Hassan Abdal and Peshawar, of Marathas in South India, of Hindus all of India and of Sikhs in the Punjab. Aurangzeb in his own letters as governor of Multan to his father Shah Jehan, described rebellions in terms of Sindh's affairs. Dr. Lakho mentions about execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur at the orders of Aurangzeb, unsuccessful invasion of Shia Kingdom of Bijapur, Shivajis coronating himself as Shahanshah and on his death Sambhoji's becoming king of kings, and finally the rebellion of Aurangzeb's son Akbar-II against his father. Interesting story is that Aurangzeb's famous daughter, a poet in her own right, Zaibun Nisa, was the informant of her brother Akber-II, and Aurangzeb had sent her to Gawaliar fort virtually as a prisoner for the rest of her life. All such setbacks compelled Aurangzeb to release Mian Naseer Muhammad conditionally from jail, some five years (1675-1680/81) after his arrest. He is right in his arguments that Mian Naseer Muhammad did not escape the prison, but was released conditionally.

Author has quoted a rare collection of letters and materials by Riazul Islam "A Calendar of documents on Indo-Persian Relations" which gives conditions of acceptance of Yar Muhammad Kalhoro as ruler of Sindh, showing Mughal weakness against Safavids of Iran and Kalhoras help to watch the borders, as well as Iranian activities, hitherto not properly projected by historians of Sindh. The same

documents also show that Nadir Shah wanted to liquidate Noor Muhammad Kalhoro by suggesting to Mughal emperor Muhammad Shah was murdered.

Author has successfully described a series of capitals of Kalhoras from 1681 to 1722 AD. Abandoning of Khudabad is actually connected with change of the course of the branch of the river passing west of the Khudabad near Phaka around 1749 AD. It is known that in that century, 1740 AD, was the hottest year and 1760 AD., the coldest. These frequent cold years intercepted by warm years, causing changes in discharge of water in the river Indus. From 1754-1760 AD, due to these fluctuations, the river Indus started hydrological changes in its course. Even when it started flowing along the present alignment of it between Hyderabad and Kotri to Keti Bander and Shah Bander, it changed its courses every year in different lengths to stabilize and to fix final course, which process can take one or two decades. It is because of this that construction of new canal had to wait for 12-15 years and the first major canal was Sarfraz Wah constructed between 1772-1775 AD. The river took long to stabilize, and almost year after year changes in its course made Kalhoras to change sites of their capitals. Thus these are not true capitals but camp sites. The issue is controversial, but the author has successfully enumerated them chronologically. On the other hand claim that Hyderabad fort was constructed in 2 months in 1768 AD., is clarified by the author, that it took much longer and was occupied only in the last years of Ghulam Shah Kalhoro. This investigation of the author breaks this myth. There is another myth that Rani Kot fort was constructed by Mir Sher Muhammad or Nawab Wali Muhammad Leghari, almost overnight and Saiful Maluk had changed course of the river Indus in the darkness of one night or a first barrage across the Indus was constructed by Barmaki the governor of Sindh at Sukkur or the Persian wheel existed during Mohenjo Daro times, whereas History says it was invented 2000 years later by the Greek

He also throws new light on Muradyab's intention to abdicate and settle in Musqat as he had married a daughter of Imam o Masqat. The author has detailed wars of succession of Kalhoras after death of Noor Muhammad Kalhoro and Jagirdars playing role of king makers, creating chaotic situation for five years, but these five years also saw hydrological changes in the old course of the river from north of Hala to Kadhan and Lowari and Jagirdars' lands were being deserted and

they had to get new lands and thus sided with those who could deliver them the best advantages of new settlements. The divided loyalties of Jagirdars are fully described and looking to these incidents of 1754-1759 AD. One can judge what could become the shape of things from 1775-1759 AD, one can judge the emerging shape of things from 1775-1783 AD, which too he has detailed.

The author has also described Ghulam Shah's putting a Bund across eastern Puran to deprive Lakhpat in Kutch of irrigation water, based on report of Dr. James Burnes. The statement is correct, but reason for doing so was not vengeance as stated by Burnes, against Kutchis. The fact is that with change of course of river Indus and eastern Nara or Hakra not getting spill water from the river Indus and Sutlej during a few weeks of inundation in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, there was limited water in western Puran fed by Phulleli canal after 1758 AD, and Ghulam Shah had to stop whatever little water was flowing in the Puran to irrigate land of Sindh. Thus it was no vengeance. Almost every author including Dr. Lakho seems to have accepted Hyderabad as old Nerunkot, but with establishment of Hyderabad and its expansion since early British days, no pottery or artifacts or ruins of any kind have been located. This needs future research.

Author has detailed fall of Kalhoras, and also settled the borders, administrative set up and divisions for the purpose of administration. An interesting part is that for nearly a century 1657-1750 AD, concentration of Kalhora cities and settlements is in upper Dadu and Larkana districts and after 1750 AD. On the left bank but in Central Sindh. Author describes this in the capitals of Kalhora. He has also listed 60 administrative units. They also correspond nearly though not exactly with the present Talukas of Sindh and it seems Kalhora administrative divisions were inherited by the British in 1843 AD, and there is very little change in them. The administrative hierarchy is detailed. It seems, it was the copy of Mughal system with similar advantages and disadvantages, though Kalhoras made many changes in the system. An interesting observation is that the total financial system was in the hands of nationals, the Sindhi Hindu accountants and tax collectors, this monopoly continued upto early British rule. Author mentions that Hindus occupied special position since Mian Adam Shah's days. It is to be realized that syllabus used in the Madersahs included Persian and Arabic literary texts, while syllabus of Hindu

schools included many subjects separately for Brahmans (priests), Khattris (princes and army), Vaishas (businessmen) and Sudras (working class). Vaishas had to learn mathematics, due to this Sindhi accountants were well known for their work under Abbasids Caliphate. Taxation system is also detailed. Foreign relations with Kalat, Bahawalpur, Multan, Jodhpur, Jaisalmir, Kutch, Delhi, Afghanistan, Muscat, East India Company and Dutch are discussed in details.

A chapter has been assigned to biographical sketches covering important people (Amirs) officers, generals, civil administrations, both Hindus and Muslims and agents of dominating powers including diplomatic personalities.

The economic conditions depended on primary industry like agriculture, animal husbandry and fisheries. Minor industries also existed specially textiles, cotton goods, indigo, salt petre etc. Agriculture was supported by irrigation. Kalhoras created Jagirdars, who ultimately developed estranged relation with those, who thus allotted them the land. This state of things has been repeated in history every where and Sindh Jagirdars were no exception. Author has listed field crops as well as horticultural crops. The industrial centres too are listed. Trade articles, trade routes, sea and inland ports are mentioned along with articles of import and export. In terms of coins and currency, author mentions that during the period under study, coins were minted in Hyderabad, Thatta, Bakhar and Shikarpur.

Author lists tribes, castes, indigenous Sindhi and Balouchi tribes and Hindus and mentions that Sindhi tribes did not get special concessions from Kalhoras. This argument is valid because Kalhoras tried and succeeded in taking over lands of some Sindhi tribes of Dadu and Larkana districts, and distributed them to their disciples from Dera Ghazi Khan, Dera Ismail Khan, Sibi, Kachhi and the southern Punjab. The Sindhi tribes opposed it as they were regular tax payers and their complaints brought periodic Mughal expeditions. Dr. Lakho correctly divides immigrant tribes into groups are Jatts of southern Punjab. This is an important classification that all immigrants were not Balouchis of Sibi, Kachhi and others of Kalat etc. do not consider those from D.G. Khan etc as real Balouchs. Recently Nawab Akbar Bugti stated that they are not Balouchs, but Barochs.

Language literature and education system has been discussed in details along with syllabus. The author has shown that Sindhi language was also taught

along with Persian and Arabic. This disproves the claim that Sindhi was introduced in the primary schools by the British, though credit of standardization of alphabet goes to Bartley frere in 1853 AD. He gives names of prominent Madrasahs and well known teachers of Sindhi, Persian and Arabic and some of it is an addition to our knowledge. He also gives list of books written then in Sindhi and Persian and names of authors, and finally details of Sindhi literature.

A chapter describes architecture and archaeology, an important ingredient of any history indeed. Certain sites belonging to sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, now in ruins, can be excavated. I have listed 729 canals, as they existed in 1843 AD, and belong to Kalhora-Talpur period. They now are merged in new barrages. A field study can tell new tales.

In my opinion this book and the original thesis are "Labour of love". It is excellent price of research. In the western countries each of its nine chapters will be researched further within five years and a book produced on each chapter. However in Sindh, we lack people having such initiatives, mind, resources and books. There is another suggestion that field studies need to be undertaken in various areas of Sindh to collect information transmitted from mouth to mouth and generation after generation. This will lead to new information for scholars.

Bibliography has 176 references in Urdu, Sindhi, Persian and English and some of them are used for the writing of Kalhora History of Sindh for the first time.

**BOOK**                      **KALHORA SOVENIER**  
**PAGES**                    **3 TO 10**