

LANGUAGE OF SIND

400 B.C: 1000 A.D.

By

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Greirson's famous report, the *Linguistic Survey of India*, was published in 1930; a real scientific work nationalist's movements in the Sub-Continent were heading towards climax. As would normally happen under the circumstances Grierson's statement that Sindi was derived from Sanskrit was cheerfully accepted by the Hindus of Sind and as a rebut Dr. Daudpota stated that if Sanskrit is the mother of Sindi language, Arabic is its father. As a consequence of this statement further controversy developed and the extremist attitudes were taken to prove or disprove the original theory without adding to the scientific facts and knowledge. Those who vehemently supported the Greirson's theory were Prof. Malkani and Bherwani. Latter had seen some trends of Dravidian languages in Sindi but did not probe deeper into it as had happened with trump in his Grammar of Sindi language published in 1868. The controversy did not end with the partition of the sub-continent and new theories were evolved both to marry Sanskrit with Arabic to bring birth of Sindi or completely deny any co-relation of Sindi with Sanskrit and consider it a purely Semitic language. Still another theory was evolved stating that Sindi language. Still another theory was evolved stating that Sindi was Dravidian language and any abnormalities into its grammar were due to corrupting influence of Sankrit on it. Another theory that Sindi was language of Indus Valley people and it spread from Sind in all directions, giving rise to various Indo-European languages including Sanskrit, was also put forward. This theory though attractive enough to some of the Sindi nationalists is without any archaeological evidence that people of Indus valley civilization migrated from here in all directions.

2. The present studies in USA, Europe and elsewhere have indicated that there may not be a co-relation between a language and a race. This is true in case of smaller tribes living in smaller groups speaking languages limited only to

those tribes. It may also apply to smaller tribes absorbed by bigger groups. In case of cultural groups, the inferior cultures have also adopted the languages of the people of superior groups though latter may be in a minority. However, in case of the sub-continent, and especially in times when the means of communication and expansion were poor this theory would hardly apply.

3. While considering Sind and Southern Punjab, our knowledge of the anthropology could hardly go 6,000 years before present. It is a puzzling question, which has remained unanswered and has baffled many scholars. Soan Valley in Northern Punjab has shown the existence of Middle Stone Age i.e., 100,000 to 40,000 years before present. The Southern Punjab and Sind have not shown existence of either Early or Middle or in fact late Stone Age. The last one of these in general is assigned a period of 40,000 to 7,500 years ago for most of the world. It is also surprising that Neolithic Revolution started in the Middle East at Jarmo, Jerich and Catal Huyuk about 8000 B.C. and reached Iran in 5100 B.C. This considerable time lag, between Neolithic (food producing) Revolution of Middle East, Iran, Baluchistan and Sind is not reconcilable. Recent studies on the changes in sea level in the last 20,000 years indicate why the Neolithic Revolution started in the Middle East earlier than in Pakistan. The sea level started rising about 100,000 years back and it was between 430 ft. and 400 ft. above its present level, between 50,000 to 20,000 years back, when it started receding and 10,000 years back the sea coast was near the present city of Larkana. In a situation like this the sea level must have been near Multan about 11,500 years back. During these 50,000 years (60,000 – 11,500 B.P) most of the Southern Punjab as well as Indo-Gangetic plains (Bangladesh, West Bengal, Bihar and most of Uttar Pradesh) must have been under sea. There is a possibility that the Eastern and Western Gulf of the sea may have joined together for many centuries making Deccan plateau, an Island and causing immigration of people from Northern India to Southern India. This situation lasting 50,000 years, caused amalgam of the people of the Sub-continent, producing a new race called Dravidian people. When the sea started receding, the people started migrating again. There are no signs of Neolithic Revolution in the Deccan Plateau earlier than in Pakistan. The People lived Mesolithic life i.e., depending mostly on hunting and fishing and gathering food from the wild plants

and also harvesting some wild cereals. Due to receding of the sea people from Deccan must have started migrating to Sind and Southern Punjab about 8,000 years back and in next 2,500 years they developed fishing hooks, harpoons, nets and traps for birds and animals. Cooking was done in lined roasting pits. The people engaged in this Mesolithic Revolution definitely were from Deccan Plateau and racially they were Dravadians, but they knew nothing of agriculture or Neolithic Revolution resulting into farming as a way of life, thereby producing economic life with planted agriculture and animal husbandry. Neolithic Revolution started in Syria and Israel first and from there it spread to upper Nile and Upper Euphrates valleys. It did not develop in the Indus Valley earlier because the latter was under the sea and so were the Lower Nile and Lower Euphrates. The main item of agriculture in the Neolithic Revolution was wheat. It developed in the Mediterranean climate earlier as a result of winter rains. Iran is also Mediterranean climate zone and so is Baluchistan. The natural movement of the Neolithic people therefore was from Mediterranean coast to Iran and from Iran to Baluchistan but the process took 2,000 years and during the period it was not the Semites who moved towards Sind but rather Proto Elamites from Susa who spread to Persian Makran and Siestan and broke up. This resulted in eastward migration of farmers through Siestan and Makran and finally to Sind bringing with them potters wheel and advanced Neolithic culture. These South Western Iranians (Ancient Synthians) moved to Sind via Makran. The early immigrants avoided high from Persian Makran to Pakistani Makran, and from there they first seem to have taken an easier route via Orangi and Landhi and from there along the sea coast (which touched Gujo then) to the Lower Sind and possibly to Amri. Subsequently another route was taken. This was from Pakistan, Makran to Panjgur, Khuzdar and from there through Mulla Pass Southwards, to the Manchar Lake and again from there via Aral stream to Amri. These developments took place in Sind around 3100 BC as per radio-carbon-dating of Amri. Around 2700 to 2600 BC, a second group migrated from same area via Mulla Pass to Kot Diji. The waves of migration continued, the population increased simply because the immigrants found that they could easily grow crops on the preserved moisture left by the River Indus in the flood plains after each annual inundation. Previously they had been growing such crops only along the rain-fed streams in Baluchistan and Iran but here they found a vast area which

could give support to huge population. This migration of so-called Amrians and Kot Dijians, continued for at least 700 years when around 2500 – 2300 BC another wave of migration came from South Western Iran showing the Harappan shreds along with Amrian shreds. It simply shows the merging of the new people in the old culture. This culture was not limited to Amri alone. It spreads to the whole of Sind, Southern Punjab (of both Pakistan and India), Kutch, Kathiawar, Bikaner and North Western Rajasthan. The Runn of Kutch was a sea creek and navigable by not only the River Indus but also by Sarswati, a river now lost but on the banks of which similar sites have been located in Bikaner, East Punjab and along Riani-Hakra-Nara system in Sind. Thus the uniformity of this culture extended up to a vast area all above provinces including Baluchistan (as far north as Quetta).

4. What language these people spoke is not certain. But it is certain that some Dravidian languages were spoken by the hunting tribes living closer to the bed of the river Indus and depending on fishing, hunting and gathering food from wild plants. The agricultural people who had settled in flood plains and who had been in these parts of the sub-continent for seven centuries, had all migrated from South West Iran and were associated with some early languages of that area.

5. From 2500 BC to 2300 BC we have a transitional period between purely Amrian culture and Harappan culture but definitely showing pre-Harappan shreds and possible merging of the two people and two cultures. There is an archaeological evidence that these people (hereafter called third wave of migration) also came from South East Iran. The Pre-Harappan Early period of Kot Diji which is dated as 2605 ± 145 to 2255 ± 140 BC is also pre-Harappan at the end of which, Kot Diji is destroyed and Harappan culture super-imposed on it but the two shreds pre-Harappan and Harappan continue, showing merging of the two cultures and the two people. Almost similar is the phenomenon in East Punjab, Kutch and Kathiawar though with some time lag.

6. It is also interesting to note that pre-Harappan (Amrian Kot Dijian-Sethian) cultures occupied almost the same area as Harappan (Indus Valley

cultures). It is fair to assume therefore that with uniform culture and ethnological background these people spoke if almost not the same language but at least dialects of similar language. Even today Kutch is totally Sindi-speaking and Kathiawar's language too is closely related to Sindi. Kalat, Lasbela, Kachhi, Sibbi too are Sindi-speaking; the Seraiki language spoken up to Multan is very close to Sindi languages and in Multan Sindi was a language in use 1,000 years back as reported by Arab travelers and geographers. On other side of the border of Pakistan too Sindi is a prevalent language in large parts of Rajisthan, Jesalmer, Ajmer and Bikhahr even to this day. Amri and Kot Diji were both burnt and destroyed by Harappan people but after their destruction the sites continued to be occupied and the Harappan shreds and pre-Harappan shreds survived side by side with Harappan showing merging of the two cultures. The Harappans too came from South West Iran but by the time they came though they had not understood the art of crossing of the medium sized ranges of mountains, but Bolan and Gomal Passes were most probably used for colonization of Southern Punjab. Sind continued to receive these immigrants via the two routes already described. Moen-jo-Daro was finally destroyed by a new and fourth wave of immigrants hitherto called Aryans but lately proved that they were no so-called Rig Vedic Aryans, but some South-Western Iranians, hereafter called Cemtry-H people. From 3100 BC to destruction of Harappan cities 1750 – 1600 BC, there were only two waves of trade relation with Semite population of Mesopotamia, the first with pre-Harappan, Amri second with Indus cities in 2100 – 1900 BC. There was no migration of people from the Semite areas.

7. The long awaited analysis of human skeleton, skulls and carnal indices of the Harappan, Hisar and Indus Valley people now published by Sarkar show Carnal Index which would be an extension of Tape Hissar (4000 BC) covering Kot Diji, Amri, Harappa and Jankar periods. This analysis opens up a new chapter and rejects the old theory that Harappan people were Dravadians (proto-Australoids). The whole of research work on the Indus script is based on the theory that the Indus Valley people were Dravadians and they spoke some kinds of Dravidian languages. Thinking on these lines scholars from USSR, Finland and Netherlands have tried various means including computers to decipher Indus

Script. If the Indus Valley people were not Dravadians, the whole exercise from Hunter to Polka is bound to give false results.

8. My own studies of the capacity of the Indus plains to support the late Stone Age and Neolithic population, shows that the Indus Valley south of Lyallpur and Harappa was capable of bearing a population, 80% of whom would have to depend on agriculture and 20% on hunting and fishing. The two communities therefore must have developed side by side, influenced each other and absorbed each other's languages and amalgam must have been formed which would have some contribution of Dravidian languages though statistically smaller. Coming back to the analysis of the human skeleton and skulls, the carnal index of 71 is similar to the skulls and skeletons of the Sikhs and Chuhras of the Punjab. There are further studies that Sikhs belonged to the Jatt population of the Punjab. There are recent studies of Dr. Sigrid Westphal Hell Busch which show that the Jatts number about 8 million people in Sind and the Punjab of present Pakistan. The numbers on the Indian sides are equally large as reported by Risley in 1915. The Jatts are both Hindus as well as Muslims in addition to Sikhs. Many studies including that of Guha and Pardhan have been done on the Jatts of Northern India. Jatts could be located in most of the areas covered by Indus civilization as well as Western Uttar Pradesh. 400 – 450 AD, Sind was centre of buffalo breeding under Jatts. We know from Arab source that Jatts helped Persian against Arabs in 636 AD and on the defeat of the Persians they joined Arab forces under acceptance of certain terms and conditions. These Jatts were from Sind and the Punjab. In 637 AD they were from settled in Basra. In 662 AD Jatts were occupying Kikan (Kalat) and they repulsed the Arab raids attempted separately under Haris Bin Abdul Kais (658 – 59 AD); Abdul Rehman Bin Samurah (662 AD); Muhlib Bin Abi Sufra (664 – 65) and Abdul-Al Abdi (664 – 65 AD). They fought Rashid Bin Umar Jadidi in 668 – 69 AD. In 694 – 95 AD, they were allowed to settle Kaskar (Iraq) by Hajjaj Bin Yusuf. In 712 AD. They fought Muhammad Bin Qasim at Sehwan and 4000 of them were taken as prisoners. In 836 AD. Imran Bin Musa Barmaki, Arab Governor of Sind had to fight Jatts and Meds of Kalat at Bolan Pass and establish a Cantonment to stop further uprisings. There was a Jatt uprising in 781 – 82 AD. In Sind and Khalif Mahdi had to send special troops from Baghdad to suppress them. Jatts looted

Mahmood Ghaznavi's baggage in early 1026 AD. While he was returning from Somnath. He came in winter 1026 AD. To avenge on them and sacked Upper Sind. Chach Nama describes many castes of Sind like Sahtas, Lohmas, Lakhas and Samas as Jatts. With this description of Jatts it is certain that the major portion of population of Sind and Southern Punjab belonged to the same group of skulls and as analyzed from Indus sites mentioned above and reported by Sarkar. From the foregoing it is clear that large portion of Sind's population is Jatts who are descendants of pre-Harappan and Harappan people of Indus Valley.

9. The Jatt tribes were associated with rising of buffaloes between 1800 and 1600 B.C. which is the period of end of Mohan-jo-Daro, Amri and Chanho Daro. Buffalo bones appeared at Mohan-jo-Daro. The buffalo rising is also associated with Jatts much before rise of Arab power in Sind and Multan.

10. The earliest approach of the tribes that finally settled at Mohan-jo-Daro comes from the axe discovered at Khurab in Persian Makran. These tribes moved to Shahi Tump in Kej (Kech) Valley of Makran around 2000 \pm 150 BC. Till recently these tribes were named as Aryans it was considered likely that they came from Caspian Zone. No matter where they came from, their route was always via Iranian Makran so as to avoid high mountain ranges. Their likely line of approach must have been Persian Makran to Orangi-Gujo or Panjgur – Mulla Pass. These tribes finally sacked the Indus cities and archaeologically they are now classified as Cemetery – H people and were followed by fifth wave of migration called Junker people. This was first and second migration in immediate post-Harappan period. Junker people settled at Junker-jo-Daro around 1650 BC. Next to Junker were Jhangar people who came between 1300 and 1200 BC. Until this time the Rig Vedic Aryans had not appeared on the scene.

11. Still next was a new migration of people of Iran of Caspian origin into the sub-continent classified as 8th migration since Amri and 4th wave since fall of Indus civilization. But, this time they migrated to Maharashtra.

12. Finally the Aryans migrated to the sub-continent from Caspians between 1050 – 750 BC. A treaty (1300 B.C.) of the Hittian King Subiluliuma and Mitannian King Mattiwaza mentions the names of Mitra, Veruna, Indra and Masatya, the gods of Rig-Vedic Aryans. The Hittian Emperor had kept melting of iron a secret for centuries. Indo-Caspians (Aryans) probably had some kind of cultural association with Hittians. It was only after break up of Hittian Empire by about 1200 B.C. That the iron working techniques spread to Western Asia, Caucasus, Eastern and Central Europe, but not to the Indian sub-Continent. It reached Iran by around 1100 B.C., and in Swat by about 1050 B.C. Its existence has been proved in Baluchistan by about 850 B.C. The iron was also connected with Grey-Ware and latter with Aryans and therefore it is fair to assume Rig-Vedic Aryans reached Indo-Pak Sub-Continent between 1050 B.C. to 750B.C. Thus Sanskrit language of Aryans in the sub-continent could not be older than this period and could not be the mother of languages of Northern sub-continent. Sanskrit was the language of nay Province in the Sub-Continent. In fact it did not have deep roots. With rise of Buddhism in the 6th century B.C. Pali was used as official language of this religion, but there is lack of evidence of its influence on Sindhi and even there is lack of evidence that Buddhism spread in Sind in its early days. There appears to be strong evidence that Brahmans were very powerful in Upper Sind in the 4th Century B.C. The pillar inscriptions of Ashoka nearest to Sind border are at Shah Baz Garhi and Mansehra. These inscriptions show that Pali had come under the influence of local languages and had absorbed a number of local words and was decapitating. Pali was a language spoken in Bihar and it was in the reign of Chandra Gupta Mauriya (321 to 298 B.C.) that it was introduced as official language in the Empire. The inscription at Gandhara shows that Pali had already developed some similarities with Kashmiri, Sindhi and Seraiki. By this time it had three different forms known in Northern-Western sub-continent, the first in Sindh and Rajputana, other in Gujrat and the third in Central India. It was not inter-action of Pali with local languages that Pali finally lost its shape and gave rise to Prakrit languages. A Grammar of Parkrit language was written in the 3rd century B.C. by Lakhshan in the court of Mouryan Ruler but it would be more appropriate to consider it the Grammar of Pali spoken in Bihar. Between the last half of the first century B.C. and first half of the first Century AD. Sangam poems were composed in Tamil. These have not been

studied by Sindhi Scholars yet to find Sindhi words and Sindhi Grammatical trends in it. Sind came under the heavy Buddhist influence only after Kishans (65 – 140 AD.). Though Synthian and Parthian had promoted it in Sind a hundred years earlier. Pali's influence on Sindhi therefore came only after first Century AD.

13. The above discussion shows Sanskrit had very little influence on the local languages. Achaemenian Persians conquered present Pakistan in 519 B.C. but did not introduce Pahlvi as official language; instead they adopted Aramaic is the language of their Empire. As an influence of this Kharoshti script was evolved and adopted for Indian scripts. By 375 B.C. Brahmi and Kharoshti scripts evolved from Aramaic and Phoenician script giving rise to many of the European scripts. These scripts had no vowels which were added later on due to Antolian influence.

14. From the foregoing it is clear that it was neither Semite languages nor Sanskrit which gave birth to Sindhi. Sindhi is a language which developed in the sub-continent due to migration from South Iran in eight waves from 3100 B.C. to 1100 B.C. by people now known as ancient Scythians. They were forefather of later Scythians who had conquered Pakistan and parts of India in 80 B.C. The features of Sindhis are similar to Scythians was recognized by British Anthropologists working in the sub-continent including Risley, Guha and Sorley, in whose opinion hordes of Scythians came to Sind during the period of their occupation in 80 B.C. to 46 AD. And therefore Sindhis look like Scythians. They were convinced that Indus and pre-Indus people were Dravadians who were thrown out by Aryans from Northern sub-continent to the South India and thereby only Indo-European race remained in Northern India. This theory has been completely rejected after the examination of skulls found from Mohan-jo-Daro, Cemetery-H, Junker and Jhangar sites. All these people were ancient Scythians who in turn were ancient Indo-Europeans and probably spoke one of a number of closely related languages which were ancient Indo-European-languages, and amalgam of these languages in Indus Civilization area formed a new language or a number of dialects of a common language. It does appear that these languages were also influenced by the original Mesolithic Dravidian

people whose population may have been 20 to 25% and absorbed many words and grammatical trends from their languages.

15. It is certain that Sanskrit came to the sub-continent much later, and it may have influenced the local languages to a limited extent as it remained a language of the priest class only. The extension of the Indus sites now located beyond the Punjab in Western Uttar Pradesh shows that this language also traveled with the immigrants to those areas, and influenced local Dravidian languages and from that evolved the Eastern Indian languages viz. Hindi, Bihari, Bangali and Asami which in turn were influenced by their own local Dravidian languages. The Pali became a religious language of Buddhist and Buddhism had remained a popular religion for a few centuries, in the whole of the sub-continent but this language was influenced by languages much more than it influenced the local languages. The Indo-European languages of the sub-continent called Parkrits are considered to be the result of the influences of Pali on the local languages. This appears to be doubtful as Indo-European language of the Indus culture, had already penetrated as far South as Kathiawar and must have helped in developing the Marahati language. The most misleading statements on evaluation of Sindhi from Parkrit are based on Hemachandra's Grammar of Parkrit languages. He lived in the 13th Century in the Court of Chaulkuyas Kings of Maharashtra and had very little contacts with Sindh. The Grammar of Parkrit language that he had written is in fact Grammar of Marahati language of his time. He wrote about language of Sind stating that it was known as Upbharnish a language of Abhira (those who raised cattle) who sang songs and composed poetry in that language. This statement has been used by most of the linguists of the sub-continent, stating that Sindhi evolved from Prakrit, after 12th century is totally incorrect. Sindhi was written and spoken language in the 9th century as is reported by a large number of Arab writings. There is no mention that a language known as Upbharnish was spoken in Sindh. The Arab writers clearly report that Sindhi was a language spoken and written in Sind.

16. The claim the Sindhi is a Semite language is equally without sound basis. There was no Semite influence in Sind prior to its Arab conquest in 712 AD. The Arab power in Sind was at its climax for 25 years only i.e. up to 738 AD. When

the decline started. It was in 737 – 38, AD., all Arabs were shifted from various towns in Sind and settled at Mahfuza and again shifted to adjoining city of Brahmanabad which was re-named as Mansura. It is reported that in the mid 10th century, only in the city of Mansura both Sindhi and Arabic were spoken, but outside the Capital Sindhi was in vogue. There were cultural exchanges specially from end of 8th century and 9th century, but these were really one-way, i.e., Scholars in various scientific fields went from Sind and sub-continent to Baghdad. Some religious preachers came from Arab world to Sind and must have added to the vocabulary of Sindhi language, but just as much as Pali another religious language had done 800 years earlier. It was not these preachers who had left any impact in Sind, but it was the ismaili preachers of late 12th, 13th and earlier 14th century who converted people on mass scale, by using local language as medium of religious propagation.

A large number of Arabic words were absorbed in Sindhi, but early Sindhi is conspicuous by lack of many Arabic words. The absorption of Arabic words was in direct result of Persian having remained as official language of Sind possible from Soomra period onwards. This limited influence of Arabic on Sindhi cannot justify derivation of later from the former.

17. In conclusion it can be said that Sindhi is neither derived from Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit or Arabic. It is language that evolved over a period of 2,400 years (3100 BC – 850 BC), from early Indo-European languages (from which also evolved Sanskrit and Pali) spoken in South Iran by Ancient Scythians, who migrated to Indus Valley civilization areas and came in touch with Dravadians and the interaction of these languages formed a new language. This language subsequently kept spreading eastwards up to Bengal and southwards up to Maharashtra, absorbing words and grammar of local languages and ultimately laying foundation of many Indo-European languages of the sub-continent. Pali exercised very little influence on it. Its identification with Prakrit language is no more than the latter having been derived from the former. Its relationship with Sanskrit is remote than with Prakrit, its similarities with Sanskrit are due to both having come from Iran, the latter from Northern Iran and Caspian Russia and Sindhi from South Iran, but with time lag of 2,000 years of their migration to the

sub-continent. Absorption of Arab and its application as such. After 1000 AD, Sindhi has been influenced by a number of socio-religious and socio-political movements like, Ismailism, Sufism and anti-feudalism. This period is outside the scope of present study.

(NOTE: - The years used in this text are Radio Carbon Dates, without M.A.S.C.A. Corrections. For all dates in this article further details and sources may be referred in author's "Chronological Dictionary of Sind from Geological Times to the Rise of Sammas" in 1352 AD.).