

PLAYING THE MAP GAME

By
M.H. Panhwar

As a student, with a total of fifteen students in our Class V, I used to play a 'map game' whenever a teacher failed to turn up or came late walking the three miles to the school from the village.

There were six maps hung on the wall - maps of Dadu Taluka, Larkana district, Sindh, undivided India, (including Sri-Lanka (Ceylon) and Mayanmar (Burma), Asia and the world.

The game consisted of finding any geographical name, from any of the maps, within half a minute, which was calculated by one of the boys counting fifty. This developed in me a sense of geography.

Over the years I have involved myself in drawing about 188 historical maps of Sindh. Besides, I have in my possession over 3,000 historical maps. It is with this background that the recently published Atlas of Pakistan interests me. I have noted many discrepancies.

Karachi is missing from the map of Sindh on pages 36-37. Although district Karachi East is mentioned on the map, only the area on the left bank of the Malir river, below the confluence of Mol and Khadeji with it, is shown. The rest of Karachi is missing.

Hub River.

Map of South West Baluchistan shows Karachi districts. The Karachi district is shown on the left bank of Hub River and Southern Baluchistan on the right bank. The Hub river below Kand-Jhang is shown neither in Sindh nor in Baluchistan, as if it was disputed territory with both the provinces claiming the whole of it. In the maps on pages 24-25, 26-27, 50-51, 69, 84, 86 and 90, however, the border is shown in the centre of Hub river.

In the maps on pages 53, 62, 83 and 85, the above length of Hub River is shown in Baluchistan and not in Sindh, while in the maps on pages 55, 64, 71 and 91 it is shown in Sindh not in Baluchistan. In both cases it is about 8 miles inside the two respective provinces and not along the border. The Survey of Pakistan should have been the last organisation to commit such mistakes in the case of the borders of provinces.

In the map of Sindh on p. 3637 are shown the two towns Kotri Allah Rakhio Shah and Kakar as Tehsil headquarters. These are not headquarters of any

Tehsil or Taluka (as it is called in Sindh). the headquarters of Kakar Taluka is Khairpur Nathhan Shah. The same map also does not show many metalled roads constructed in the past 8-10 years. The position of some roads vis-à-vis the railway line too, is inaccurate.

Coming to the map of Karachi on page 48, one cannot help saying that the KDA has much better maps of Karachi on the same scale as the map in the atlas. No scale is assigned to this map, and it even not as detailed as Bartholomew's map of the Indian Subcontinent (1979), which gives a map of Karachi on scale 1:20:000.

Page 50 gives a geological map of Pakistan in the scale 1:5,000,000. This is over simplified. All rocks of Sindh are put in one category, "Tertiary". The Geological Survey's own map of Pakistan (scale 1:2,000,000) published in 60 colours in 1964 divides the geology of Sindh in some 28 classes. They could have reduced that map, instead of showing Sindh area in 6 colours only. This map does not show Kalinjar hills of Nagar Parkar, which are considered about 180 million years old by some authorities and 1200 million years old by others. Pithawalla put them down as 3.5 billion years old Pre-Cambrian hills. The map on page 87 dealing with minerals does not show granite and kaolin deposits in the Nagar Parkar hills.

The map on page 52, mentions the natural vegetation of Punjab and Sindh as 'thorny' except for the Thar and Sindh and the Thal of the Punjab. This may in general be true of rocky areas of Sindh but not of the Indus plains of Thar.

The climate and annual rainfall in this atlas fall into three categories. Page 54-55 classify Sindh's rainfall in 0-5 inches, 5-10 inches and 10-20 inches categories and also the climate into three groups. Maps based on meteorological department's information, give rainfall of 3-4", 4-5", 5-6", 6-7", 7-8", 8-9", 9-10", 10-11", 11-12", and over 12". Any information short of these 10 groups will not help in planning for Arid Zone development.

On page 56-57, mean daily temperatures, month-wise, have been worked at 5°C, interval. This puts Jacobabad and Karachi temperatures within the same bracker in April, i.e. over 25°C which is the temperature for the whole of Sindh for most months of the year.

On pages 58-59, monthly mean rainfall is given. But nowhere are given the probabilities of heavy rainfalls and their frequencies which is the most important information for any developmental planning.

The map on page 64 which refers to languages may create controversies, as Seraiki or Lahnada language spoken below Multan in the Punjab is not shown. The whole area is shown to be Punjabi speaking. In Sindh, districts Jacobabad, Larkana and Dadu have Baluchi speaking population of important significance. Only in Dera Bughti area Sindhi is the second language after

Baluchi. Las Bella which is 90 percent Sindhi speaking is shown as Baluchi speaking area. Sindhi is spoken in Eastern Khuzdar, Sibi, Kachi, Nasirabad, Kohlu, Eastern Kalat, as well as Rahim Yar Khan districts. This is not shown.

Brauhi is shown to cover the area between Kalat, Khuzdar, Panjgur and Kharan. The centre of Brauhi language is Eastern Khuzdar and not the area indicated.

In brief the language map makes no distinction between Seraiki and Punjabi and Seraiki speaking parts of D.I. Khan Division and Baluchistan are shown as Punjabi speaking.

Hindu population.

In the map on page 65 most of the Hindu population of Sindh is shown in Sukkur district (desert area), followed by Western Sanghar (not the eastern), Hyderabad, Dadu and lastly Thar Parkar. The actual position is the reverse, i.e. Thar Parkar has the largest Hindu population.

The Archaeological department has produced some very fine maps. The beauty of their maps is, that they give the position of various places, civilisation-wise or period-wise and are very detailed. The information in the map on page 69 is hardly meaningful.

The agricultural maps pages 70-71 are neither the latest nor very accurate. Provincial governments have better maps.

In case of the map on page 80, camels are not shown in the whole of the Thar desert, Kohistan and Kachho (the foot hills) of Sindh. the ship of the desert is absent in the desert in the map. A visit to these area will show that the camel is almost the only means of communication in areas outside the main towns.

We in Sindh know that Dadu district is hilly having comparatively less irrigated area and therefore has fewer tractors. Hyderabad district is well irrigated, rich and has the largest number of tractors. The map on page 82 puts 1500 tractors in Hyderabad district and 7500 tractors in Dadu districts. Consulting Johnson's book Pakistan (1975) could have been advantageous as his economic maps are remarkably accurate.

On page 89, the map on handicrafts ignores Kashmore, makes Larkana the centre of Ajrak instead of Tando Muhammad Khan and Thatta. Gambat is shown at the location of Mehar, Sehwan an Nasarpur are ignored. The Mithi centre of Sindhi dresses is shown as centre of Tobacco pipes and Thatta, instead of Bathoro, for carpets and so on.

We told that some universities were involved in the research toward collection of information for the areas. If true, we can only lament the standard of research in our universities.