

Reply to admiral Gulab Hiranandani enquiry about Sindh and Sindhis

Recent survey in Pakistan shows that elite class in Karachi and Lahore speak in English in house, office or social gathering. Next social class mix English and Urdu, still next the lower classes of Pakistan province prefer to speak Urdu and consider them-selves a fashionable class to know and speak this imported language. However survey showed that Sindhis are different, they speak in Sindhi, in social gatherings, office and home. Whether good or bad, this is where Sindhis diff.

After partition of India, Sindhi were hit badly. Sindhi Muslims were rural and did not have enough educated candidates to replace Hindus, who left in the government jobs, private services in commerce and newly up coming industry. They did not have teachers to run schools or experience to run shops and business. Above all they had no capital. On the top of this Karachi was separated from Sindh with most of educational and other institutes lost to them. They then realised the truth that religion does not make nation. Immediately after August 14, 1947, people specially from UP flocked to Karachi for opportunities and Sindhi Muslim felt that Hindus must stay in Sindh at all costs and this was spontaneous and unanimous. Even other wise barring couple of roits in Larkana in 1927 and Sukkur in 1939.

What made Sindhis different is tolerance throughout the history and love for land. In my two article "Policing through Ages" and Struggle of Sindh against feudalism" you will find unity and love for land as nationalists, when there was tribalism throughout India. So called Aryan has not entered Sindh which extended upto Multan. You will find little of ritualistic religion in these areas. Buddhism, Jainism and some sects of Hinduism are abhorrent to eating meat. In Sindh where ground water is mostly brackish except 5-6% area, vegetables could not b raised except one summer crop ready form August to October, then how could people remain vegetarians? Heun Tswang a Chinese Buddhist monk laments that Buddhist of Sindh kill animals and eat them. In desert area what else should they eat except animal they graze on scanty natural vegetation.

From this came tolerance. Sindh hospitality was known all over India, but it had meaning. They would feed any stranger coming to their village, expecting that others in the same circumstances will reciprocate, if they per chance get into similar situation of hunger. I had seen that in all villages of Sindh, hardly 5-10% males visited mosque regularly but rest visited some holy-man's tomb. Sindhi Hindus visited tombs of Muslim saints. In one case near my village there was Amir Pir. Hindus would offer well decorated Pakha (vinjna or vinjno or vinjni) to his grave. Every time I passed nearby I would pick one or two from there and give them to my Hindu student friends in Mehar and Larkana and they were highly appreciated. My conclusion was that among Muslims praying five times a day, fasting in Ramzan, paying Zakat (2.5%, total wealth), pilgrimage to Mecca was not poor man's job. It needed money, which they did not have,

to go paradise, so they went to some Pir, who by his virtue was expected to take all of them to paradise. Many Hindus were visiting the Muslim Pirs too. Sindh's low class Hindus consisting of Bhils, Menghwars (Maheswaris) Kohis, Gurgalas, Oads etc., visit their Pir once a year to get salvation.

Sir John Jacob settled many ferocious Baloach tribesmen in Jacobabad from 1844-1859 and on his death he was buried there apposite to residency he had built and administered from there. Balochi considering him a benevolent Pir, light oil wick lamp on his grave every night to this day. Grave is simple compound wall about 10x12 feet and four feet high.

Some time back I asked a Baloach lady student, whether name of Jacobabad will be changed? She said "We will shed our blood, but not allow the name of Jacobabad be changed as my great grand father, my grand father and my father were born with blessings of Sir John Jacob of Jacobabad". This is just to tell you that in Sindh Pir need not be Muslim. He could have any religion or race, so long he serves people. "Soomra's book on religion can make this clear to you.

With regards to young Sindhis, I like to follow German settled in USA, who knew so much about Germany, that it was their voice which made Truman to rebuild Germany, within 10 years, economically richer than rest of Europe in next 20 years and competing with USA in exports in next 30 years. Japan had to be extended same treatment as Germany in principle, but then further help to make it a base to be used against China and USSR.

We could produce lot of literature for Sindhis and also in other languages specially English as future Sindhi may become ignorant of Sindhi alphabet. It is doubtful if by 2100 many books will be published in Sindhi and English will probably be most leading language, out of some 50 in which literature will be published. Another thing for future of Sindhis is excellence in science and technology. In Pakistan it has been totally destroyed, but I do not know about India. I went to USA for studies in 1950 and I wrote a letter to Mr; Kewalramani Principal NED Engineering College then, that our standards of Bombay and Sindh Universities were higher than American Universities and I had very little to study for getting MSc degree. Our text books were exactly the same as in Cambridge University and that produced competent engineers. Sukkur and Kotri barrage were designed by British engineer, but Guddu by Sindhi engineer. Future of Sindhis lies in science and technology. Your query is difficult to answer. I have only answered partially and may be not correctly.