

POLICING IN THE PAST IN SINDH A CASE STUDY OF 714-854 AND 1525-1700 COMPARED TO 854-1011 AND 1700-1738 AD

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This paper is not political motivated, though describes law and order situation during drought conditions in the 8th and 9th centuries and again 16th and 17th centuries, like the present drought. The article is extracted from the author's four articles names:

1. Chronological Dictionary of Arab conquest and rule of Sindh from 641-1011 AD, published in journal 'Sindh Quarterly', 1976
2. Sindh's Struggle against Feudalism 1525-1843 AD, published in Sindh Quarterly, 1977.
3. "Little Ice Age in Sindh", a chapter in History of Irrigation in Sindh, 1993 and Sindh Quarterly, 1994.
4. Climatic changes in Sindh and their Impact on its History (unpublished written in 1991).

For article No.1 Arabic and Persian sources have been used. For article No.2 Sindh's five Persian histories Tarikh-i-Masumi, Tarikh-i-Tahiri, Beglar Nama, Tarkhan Nama, Mazhar Shah Jehani, and two other Persian sources Ain-i-Akbari and Ruqa'at-i-Alamgiri have been used. Articles No.3 and 4 are based on a number of books on the Little Ice Age. All these source emphasis on rebellions caused by lack of irrigation water due to climatic factors, neglect of canals and low river discharges due to drought and recovery of taxes by force.

The law and order problem is directly connected with economy of the era and so is corruption. Studies in England show that corruption existed in England upto 1880 and once on sound footing corruption disappeared and with honesty, law and order situation became exemplary. A study on this subject was published in 1980's in a book "Corruption in the Third World including England up to 1880". This can be applied to any country in any era. Post World War-II depression in England lead to corruption in business dealing with foreigners and also cheating and frauds in U.K, but on comparatively small scales, not affecting law and order. This was not the case before world War-II.

America is different, where corruption is officially condoned by allowing 20% total income on business promotion locally and internationally. In early fifties for braking of traffic laws, Chicago police-men were bought for one dollar only, but sound economic conditions have in general made people honest and law abiding, though one comes across many cases of trials for evading taxes. Spying of American for foreign Government have lead to numerous trials and accused have done so to raise their living standards and be at part with some of the highly paid business executives.

In rural Sindh it is agriculture economy that determines law and order problems. It is recognized that under the British law and order, situation was such that an unescorted woman could safely go from Karachi to Kalkota (Calcutta) unescorted, by train, without family worrying about her, a journey that took 100-120 hours enroute. The reason was fair deal to the farmer repeated and affirmed again in the Royal Commission on Agriculture in 1928. Agriculture commodity prices were fixed at international market prices and import of goods from competitors of the British manufacturers was allowed. Before World War-II, cheap Japanese textiles had displaced Manchester cloth and buyers were rural farming community.

To strengthen rural economy in Sindh, the British increased area under cultivation from 0.9 million acres in 1843 to 3.0 millions in 1900, through population of Sindh then had increased by just 50% from that of 1.4 millions in 1843. Since then cultivation figure remained stagnant as they were waiting for commissioning of Sukkur Barrage. By 1947 Sindh had population of about 4.5 millions and area under cultivation about 5.0 million acres. Today rural population may be over 25 millions and area under annual cropping possibly not even 10 millions. This extra pressure of population on the land has created unemployment, migration to cities, crimes and suicides. Late Professor Ghulam Mustafa Shah once stated "You cannot live together and survive by slogans. You want to eat some thing and you cannot eat Islam."

The history of our food in Pakistan compared to 1947 is that in the fifty five years of our history, per capital production of milk, meat, ghee or oil, fish, fruits, vegetables, root crops, wild fruits and finally vitamins and minerals has decreased and production of only wheat and rice has increased. It is safe to assume that today we are eating almost fodder.

It would be interesting to narrate the british experiments at Nilgri India on rats given food consumed by Madrasi, Punjabi and the Pathan population of united India, consisting respectively of (i) rice, little fish occasional, vegetables usually in form of pulses and excessive spices of South India (ii) wheat, vegetables, small quantity of meat and milk of the Punjab (iii) wheat abundance of meat, small quantity of vegetables and some milk the food of Pathan. The results were astonishing. The Madrasi rats in 30 generation became dwarf and weak, noisy, quarrelsome and fighting each other physically and frequently. The Punjabi rats were medium size, quiet, usually in peace and quarrelling only occasionally, while the Pathan rats, with well built bodies, were very active cooperative and quarrelling was rare, but when it occurred it was extremely aggressive.

If the case of quality of food to rats applies to human beings, deterioration of law and order and consequent corruption the whole South-Asia can easily be understood. This British study has not been followed up in India or else where. In Sindh rural economy is controlled by irrigation water supply. My own studies of the past history of Sindh in my book "Six Thousand Years of Irrigation in Sindh" has concluded that it was mandatory for the governments of the day to build canals, carry out silt clearance at cost of the government, provided every farmer water with according to needs of summer crop in most Sindh and provided perennial water in some areas on the Western branch of the Indus, leading to the Manchar lake and the Aral drainage system and taxing the farmer about 1/4th of the produce for land. There was one villain in the whole scheme of the things. The river Indus course being unstable, river changed its course frequently. Minor changes lead to some shift of population, but major changes abandoning 20-25% of canals taking off from the Indus, changed the dynasties. A major changes in 1755-1758 AD, lead to replacement of Noor Muhammad Kalhora's sons one after other and finally civil war that replaced Kalhora's with Talpurs.

The other factor is climatic changes and the first example is drought in the Mediterranean countries, which coincided with rise of Islam and decline of Roman (Byzantine) Empire. It was also the time that along with drought, the river Indus changed its course South of present Tando Allahyar in about 700 AD, destroying about 25% area under canals, the present Southern Mirpurkhas and Badin districts got depopulated, famine conditions prevailed, the government lost control and possibly support of the masses and we witness that Arab armies

which had been repelled fourteen times not only found no resistance in Southern Sindh, which was vacated, but found many local governors and people welcoming and co-operating with them in toppling Raja Dahar and capturing whole Sindh up to Multan in next three years. People expected that new regime will build canals and settle them and therefore welcomed Muhammad Bin Qasim. It was neither bravery of conqueror or cowardice of the vanquished that lead to this great change. It was lack of water for the land, but soon tables turned against Arab governors of Umayyids and Abbasids as new comers unfamiliar with construction of canals, silt clearance and local agriculture, ignored it altogether. People rebelled soon after Muhammad Bin Qasim's recall in 714 AD, and a little known historical fact is that within year (715 AD) Jaisina son of Dahar captured Southern Sindh on the left bank of the river Indus, established himself at Brahmanabad (Mansura) and within next two years captured the whole left bank of the Indus. Realising that ultimately he has to bear onslaught of Arab Empire, in 717/18 AD, at invitation of Umayyid Khalifa Abdul Aziz, he accepted Islam and ruled for ten years, without up rising as he seems to have stuck to tradition of construction canals and desilting them.

The nine Umayyid governors (714-751 AD) and thirty Abbasid governors (751-854 AD), were unfamiliar with canals, desilting and irrigation and they also were to send fixed taxes to the Central Treasury at Damascus and Baghdad, so had to face local uprisings, in which about one fourth governors were killed, one fourth were dismissed, many were imprisoned and only one fourth returned honorably. Their average tenure was three and half years, during which they could not understand canal irrigation. Soon in local rebellion, local Arab-Sindhi settlers and zamindars, habaris established them-selves. They understood canal irrigation and definitely improved it. Their 157 rule was very prosperous and more than a dozen Arab travelers of the era have praise for the agriculture produce of Sindh, prosperous country and people, safety in traveling and no law and order problems. Habaris and their successor Soomras had good luck in having "Climatic Optimum" World over. With more rainfall and more water in the river Indus, many new branches of the river Indus shot up. It was the best climate for irrigated agriculture in the past 4,000 years, since 2000 BC.

Next unfortunate period of deteriorated law and order situation in Sindh was 1525-1700 AD. Prevalence of very arid and cold climate called "Little Ice Age" which struck the Central Asia in 1480 AD, reached Sindh around 1550, reached its worst in that century in 1575 when Akbar abandoned newly built capital Fatehpur Sikri to which water no longer could be lead from Jamuna river. This climate was to lead to down-fall of Mughal Empire. In 1665 AD when the Little Ice Age was at the peak, revenue of Thatta Sarkar reduced to 20% of revenue of 1600 AD. The Little Ice Age is not known to historians and unfortunately climatologists and meteorologists do not read history and interpret it. It would

be worth while to describe it in one paragraph before we discuss law and order problems of the era.

During the Little Ice Age, temperatures in South Asia dropped by 0.5°C in the plains and by 1°C in the Himalayas. Its effect in Sindh, as compared to 1930 (pre-barrage period) was: late melting of snow in the Himalayas by about 15-30 days, late arrival of water in the Sindh canals by 30 days and consequently late planting of summer crop specially rice. Snow melt will stop about 15 days earlier and canals will dry up to 15th September instead of 30th September, resulting into failure to mature rice crop in summer and therefore introduction of inferior varieties of rice maturing in 60-75 days instead of 90-120 days and consequently low yield. Winters will be longer by about 30-45 days and wheat crop yield would be 50 to 100% more, but there would be little or no water in the canals in winter and therefore no wheat crop.

Cropping pattern would change to sorghum, millet, short term rice varieties, and winter oil seeds, but their yield would be less than normal rice varieties maturing in 90-120 days. Agriculture will not be able to support the population. People will resort to grazing animals but due to low rainfall caused by low temperatures, the animal carrying capacity of non-cropped land of the Indus plains and Thar and Kohistan will reduce.

With low food production famine conditions will prevail and malnutrition will lead to diseases, deaths, discontentment, antigovernment feelings and rebellions.

This is what exactly happened under rule of Arghoon (1525-1555), Tarkhans (1555-1591) and Mughals (1575-1591) in upper Sindh and (1591-1700) whole Sindh. The following a few examples out of hundreds for Mughal period highlight, the rise of tribes and collapse of Mughals Governors rule.

- In 1575 AD, Governor of Bakhar fixed high rates of assessment of land and Mangecha tribe of Kakar (Dist. Dadu) killed many revenue officers and other employees.
- In 1580 AD, Dhareja tribe entrenched them-selves in Alore and fought against governor of Bakhar.
- 1585 AD, under governor of Bakhar, Shiruya Sultan, violence and cruelty exceeded limits.

- From 1591-1599 AD, Governor of Sehwan had to mobilize troops against Dadu district's hills tribes; namely Nahmardis, Nuhanis, Baloachis, Machis of Samtani, Samejas, Unars etc.
- Between 1591-1599 AD, Governor of Bakhar's local representatives were defeated by Chandias, who maintained large army and cavalry.
- In 1598 AD, Samejas of Bakhar and Sehwan attacked peaceful people who paid taxes and burnt their crops. Samejas had 6,000 troop and they were defeated by 5,000 mounted and foot soldiers of Kaorejas and Panhwars without government helping them or controlling Samejas.
- During this period Jam Muhammad son of Shaikh Musa gilani (Governor of Sehwan in absentia) could not leave Sehwan even for hunting, as the Sindh tribes would enter fort and massacre people.
- In 1599 AD, one Jam Muhammad of a Sindhi tribes killed Aaqa Muhammad the governor of Shewan, Arah Beg's nominee, broke fort wall and escaped.
- In 1607 Sardar Khan Subedar of Sehwan lost 500 troops in fight with Samejas.
- Mir Abdul Baqa governor of Sehwan and Shamshir Khan Subedar of Thatta had to fight, Chandias, Samejas, Thebas, Nahmardis, Unars and Shoras of Khasai, and after killing 200 Samejas their 2000-3000 cattle were slaughtered.
- Unars and Sayara tribes of Lakhpat maintained 1000 cavlry 4,000 foot soldiers and never paid tax.
- In 1624 AD Abras killed Dayal Das a relative of Man Singh Diwan of Bakhar and later on killed all 80 mounted soliders of Tahir Muhammad Shakdar of Takkar Parguna.

These are a few examples out of hundreds, that land tax recovery in 1665 reduced to 25-30% of that in 1600 AD, and the tribes in rebellion never paid the taxes. All this happened as the governors were granted the provinces as Jagirs for short time and they were unfamiliar with irrigation canals, silt clearance and providing water. Their tenure was short and for them investment in irrigation was a long term investment and not recoverable during their short tenure. By 1660 local tribes took over Sehwan Province and paid some limited taxes to Mughal Emperor.

By 1880 AD the Bakhar Province was occupied by local tribes and Kalhoras, who by 1700 became masters of Northern and Central Sindh. They were canal builders and based on 729 canals taking off from the river Indus in 1843, it is fair to conclude, that they probably had commissioned many more canal brought peace to the whole area ending the rebellion and setting nomadic Baluchi population on the land. They recovered taxes peacefully and people became prosperous.

In the Sindh conditions, the foremost duty of the government is to maintain canals and provide water for maintaining proper law and order. If pressure of population on land increases, employment opportunities out-side agriculture sector have to be created.