

Brief Introduction

HISTORY OF SINDH

Mohan Gehani

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This English version is dedicated to my future.....

IPSA

ANSH

DHAIRYA

JIYA

MY GRAND CHILDREN.....

And all future generations of Sindhis.

Publisher's Note

For the past two decades, there has been a great demand from many quarters, that Indian Institute of Sindhology should undertake to get an authentic "History of Sindh" written and published. The new generation of Sindhis born in India after partition, is keen to know their roots, the rich and varied traditions of their forefathers and rich heritage of one of the earliest civilization – Mohen - jo -Daro the Indus Valley Civilization, to which they belong.

We are delighted to present here the book "History of Sindh" written by Mr. Mohan Gehani, an eminent writer and scholar, after painstaking and tireless research over the years. He has referred to hundred of books on the subject and penned a short but well researched document of our glorious past in his simple and lucid style.

It is hoped that this book will prove to be of immense value for students, scholars, and general readers alike.

We are sure it will meet the expectations of one and all, who are interested to know about Sindh and its people.

We welcome your suggestions.

Lakshmi Khilani

Director

Indian Institute of Sindhology

Dedication- (Sindhi Edition)

Dedicated to,

Proud sons of Sindhi soil,

Saeen GM Sayed

&

Hashu Kewalramani.

From me For this English translation

This Book was originally published in Sindhi in the year 1998. The Hindi translation of this Book was Published in 2004. The Hindi translation was rendered by Mr. Khiman U. Mulani. There has been demand from my friends that this book should be published in English also to cater to larger section of readers particularly Sindhi Diaspora across the globe. Needless to say that both the original and Hindi translations have received overwhelming response. In fact this book was awarded by National Council for promotion of Sindhi language in the year 2001. As I have already mentioned in my original Sindhi version that I have no pretensions to being a historian . All I can say that I have culled the information from various sources and arranged the same in time line. There are histories of Sindh relating to various periods but I could not lay my hand on a concise out line of the history of Sindh for the people who would like to approach the subject for the first time. It is meant only to ignite the interest of the readers some of whom I have reason to believe will be prompted to go for further research for which the material is available in abundance in Sindh. Now is a time when a brief account of the history is provided for future generations which comes handy for them to start their journey for exploration of their roots.

As a value addition I have added the coloured photographs of various aspects of Sindhi life and some Sindhi legends. The photographs were downloaded by Mr. Jairam Rupani who added invaluable paintings from the talented artists like Mr. Talreja and Mr. Bhojwani and after being selected by my dear friend, Mr. Nari Sawlani, who is deeply committed and devoted to the cause of Sindhyat were

put on the Net by him alongwith explanatory notes written by me. I do confess this section is tilted in favour of those Sindhis who migrated to India in the aftermath of the tragedy of partion and in the due course to all parts of the globe. This tilt has occurred because the availability of visual material from the other side of the border has been rather scarce. This situation, I am sure, will improve in coming days and balance in this section will be restored. As stated earlier all these about 50 photographs will add to the aesthetic value of the book apart from the informative value that the text bears.

In this venture I am indebted to numerous persons and to name only some would be doing injustice to all others and I will say I am grateful to all of them including YOU my dear readers. It will be no exaggeration to say but from the help from my daughter Shilpi for long hours spent on the computer this book would not have seen light of the day. I owe my thanks to Mr. Arune Goenka of Box Prints for all his co-operation. My friends Mr. Ram Buxani and Mr. Nari Sawlani have also equally contributed for the cost of Publication of this book. Such a spirit of friendship is beyond the word of 'Thanks' therefore I felt it would be redundant to use such a word in relation to them. They have always stood by me in all that I have been able to accomplish. I have dedicated this translated version to my future generations. We all live in future through our future generations. Is it not so?

Mohan Gehani

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Note. The years shown have been taken from ‘Chronological dictionary of Sindh’ written by Mr. M. H Panhwar. Needless to say there are some overlaps and some yawning gaps which I feel is inevitable in such an endeavor.

From my pen.....(Sindhi Edition)

I do not claim to be a historian, whatever I have given is culled from other sources. I have only made an attempt. For quite some time I felt it strange that inspite of half a century of movement of Sindhyaat there was not a single book available for the young generation who would like to explore their roots so a first step had to be provided.

It goes without saying that for the serious student of history many controversies stare him in the face I have skirted them all and have adopted mostly accepted version. This book is meant for the beginners and is not aimed at scholars in Sindh who have dedicated their entire life in pursuit of this subject. Further, I have not divided history on religious basis but have taken care to see that the best traditions of composite culture and history find their proper place.

In all humility I own all the deficiencies of this book but if any thing positive has emerged it is due to efforts of the scholars who have preceded me. I shall always bow my head in reverence before the enchanting Sindhu soil.

But for the urgings of Mr. Kirat Babani in Bombay and Mrs. Kala Prakash in Dubai this book would not have been written. Let me record that fact with gratitude.

Dubai. 1st January 1998.

Mohan Gehani

Preface to Sindhi Edition By Kirat Babani.

Carlyle has described history as narration of life and times of big and powerful people. This is contrasted by Marx's view that history is process of evaluation of past in social context. Infact, Marx has cleared many cobwebs connected at conceptual level about the purpose and role of history. Actually history seeks to explore the collective and multifaceted pulse of any class or country in the context of particular time frame. Thus it holds mirror to its past identity which may help that particular country to chart its future course and forge a sense of continuity in the historical perspective to find its proper bearings in the present time.

Following the description of Carlyle the histories that have been written contain the description of the wars waged by various kings and emperors and peans in praise of their valourous ancestary, or it records the court intrigues for securing power with all its mechanizations be it vile or vulgar. Masses do not find any mention in such histories because they are treated as sub human existence only to be exploited for the creation of grandeur and sustain the edifice of the state or simply as a cannon fodder for its innumerable wars. They were only meant to pull the chariot of history.

There is nothing to be surprised about it as all the means of writing the history were in the hands of ruling elite. They used this power for self glorification to the maximum. Thus the history witing was confined to the individual rulers or for the purpose of eugolising their dynasty. Such books as Aain-e-Akbari, Turkhan Nama, Jahangir Nama, Babur Nama and Shah Nama find their 'proud' place among the historical literature. They very well document their justice, their qualities of head and hearts and episodes depicting their unmatched

valorous deeds and their charitable and liberal heart.

It is true that the role of the individual cannot be denied in the historical process. It is necessary to remember that no man is an island—a self-contained entity. Individual is only a part of this universe, however important he may be, whereas those who are considered as uneducated uncouth masses comprise a large section of the society, they are also an important part contributing in large measure and a source of tremendous energy which when unleashed can change the entire course of history. Let us leave aside this issue and examine other aspect.

The human being had appeared on this earth millions of years ago. After the period of living existence akin to animals in search of food he was advanced enough to the position of being semi-civilized about thirty thousand years ago. Ancient human civilizations came into being in Egypt, Mesopotamia, China and India (in Sindh), out of four ancient civilizations 3 sprung in Asia and fourth one Egyptian being in the neighborhood of Asia. Only about 80 years ago the civilisation of India was reckoned to be of latter period than those of other three places. Only in the year 1922, when Sir John Marshall Shore excavated the mound of dead (Mohen Jo Daro), did the shroud of secrecy surrounding ancient civilization of India could be removed. Still it is a matter of debate among the historians as to exact significance of Mohen Jo Daro vis a vis other ancient civilisations. The excavations of Indus valley civilization are of recent nature and the process of its exploration is ongoing one and with emergence of new sites its importance is on the rise. The Indus Valley Civilization is reckoned to be of about 3000 years BC. Taking into consideration the time taken to evolve to such degree being about two thousand years the civilization can be said to date back to about 8000- 7000 years.

One fact on which all historians are agreed that the oldest literature

of mankind Rig Veda was created at the banks of river Indus. There are various theories about the time and origin of Vedas, some scholars put it around 2500 years while some take an extreme position of their being divine creation therefore as time less as the creation itself. It would be futile to enter into this debate which defies all reason.

It is fact that the recorded history can be said to be a recent phenomenon as 'father of the history', Herodotus wrote only about 500 BC. Indians have remained quite indifferent to record historical events instead there is sizable material in the form of Puranas, ancient stories in which history seems to have been enmeshed. The first document of history concerning India is "Chach Nama" or "Fatehnama" which describes the period of Sindh from sixth century to Arab invasion of Sindh i.e. 712 AD. It mainly concerns itself with 'Arab conquest'. This is compounded by fact that actual book was written in Arabic one and half century after the actual event. This Arabic book was translated into Persian in 1216 by Ali Bin Hamid Bin Abi Bkar-Al Koffi. Original Arabic version is now extinct. The above sequence of events renders even this document suspect as for its authenticity is concerned. It has many passages which have been simply incorporated to make it more spicy or readable. It does not withstand the scrutiny of historical verification. In this context Nabi Bux Khan Baloch has drawn attention to the following inaccuracies.

1. The fact about the death and purchase of his queen Laadi by Mohmed bin Qasim and his eventual marriage is figment of imagination.
2. Wherever women folk are involved an element of story telling has been introduced to make it more spicy.
3. The folk tradition refers to the fact that the queen Laadi after the death of Dahir led his army to fight Arab forces. This has

been described in Chachnama as unreliable. It means whatever is not acceptable to Arabic reading public has been discarded as 'Unreliable'.

4. It is unthinkable that the brave and proud king who increased the territory of his kingdom and whose princesses avenged the death of their father would readily marry an invader. This book does not stand the test of veracity of historical truth therefore, this cannot be accepted as authentic or historical account.

In spite of all that is said it remains the fact that notwithstanding its faults, this is the only book we have about those times. After Chachnama only handful books of history have been written in Persian. (Persian being court language at that time.) Tarikh Massomi was written about 450 years after Chachnama saw light of the day, and Tahafa al Karam in eighteenth century.

Pir Hissamudin Rashdi in recent times devoted his considerable time and skill to unearth the hidden documents of history of Sindh and he has found 74 and mentioned them in his paper in Mahran Quarterly Journal in 1955. All these are in Persian and remain to be scutnised by experts. But it can be guessed that most of them being of court writers the content must be a sort of eulogy for its rulers and they did not have any relation with the common folk of Sindh who were considered to be uncouth and devoid of any cultural sophistication as such were looked down upon with contempt.

It is only after the British annexed Sindh and made Sindhi as a language of administration and in order to understand Sindh they initiated efforts at reconstruction of history of Sindh. Their writings are objective and pioneering efforts. This encouraged Sindhi scholars also to delve into their history and thus historical literature was written

in Sindhi also. One cannot but mention the laudable efforts of Shri Behrimal Meherchand in this area. One fact that contributed to Sindhis awakening to their history was that Sindhi script was standardized and with other literature, historical literature also came into vogue. During freedom struggle the communal element from politics crept even in the interpretation of history. Hindu minded glorified Hindu period whereas Muslims painted rosy picture of Muslim period often to ridicule or belittle other side. Among them could be counted Fatehmohmed Sehwan and Mohmed Usman Diplai among Muslims and among Hindus, Maharaj Dwarka Prasad Sharma, Chetan Dev Verma and Gangaram Samrat. Initial writers like Mirza Kalich Beg, Jethmal Parsram, and GM Syed were free from this communal virus.

After leaving Sindh we have not forgotten Sindh. I cannot vouch for dim witted (Anaasa), but the fact remains that we have been rather indifferent to the extent of oblivion of the history of Sindh. Otherwise how could one explain that inspite of the fact that thousands of books are published in India in Sindhi after partition of the country but not a single book on the history of Sindh is published which may even give glimpses of the rich history of the Sindhi people! Two generations have since partition passed by us who are not conversant with the history of their mother land. This is gross injustice to our future generations that they are kept ignorant of their rich heritage and glorious past.

Mohan Gehani is an outstanding scholar and intellectual in the Sindhi community. He has historical sense and consciousness. He, for a long time, cherished the idea that to deprive the new generation from their historical background would tantamount to dry up their roots, which would prove to be suicidal for the future of Sindhi

community. For years together he kept on reading various books on the history of Sindh. Last year, he was able to complete a small book which gives glimpses of history of Sindh and places various episodes and dynasties in their proper time line. This way he has fulfilled a historical need in his own humble way.

I know that in order to write a book of such a nature he must have burnt midnight oil and must have come across many controversies. In a place like Dubai where there is no Sindhi Education or any Sindhi library for reference work neither any research centre from where references could be obtained he has done an incredulous job indeed!

In spite of all the odds staked against such a venture he has managed to read all the basic relevant books and has kept himself abreast of the recent developments on the subject. The purpose of this book is only to introduce new generation of Sindhis to their historical heritage and ignite interest in them to pursue this subject further.

He has tried to encompass a very big scope from Indus Valley Civilization to partition and that too in 125 pages. He has been quite successful in accomplishing such an impossible feat. This he has been able to achieve creditably by assigning each episode a balanced place. He has been able to do justice to his subject because of his honest commitment to his soil combined with historical sense. Sindh had produced many heroes in its chequered history in every period who deserve to be saluted and remembered. Be it King Sambhas who dared Alexander or King Saharas who fought the mighty army of Nimros and Samrat Dahir who died defending his soil while fighting Arab invasion or his daughters who skillfully avenged the death of their father, or Dodo who faced the army of one million of Allaudin Khilji., Doulah Darya Khan, Shah Bilawal, Shah Inayat Sufi who was murdered by deception, or Hoshu who raised a war cry 'Marsson

Marsson Sindh Na desoon.' One cannot forget Hemu Kalani who sacrificed his young life at gallows for the freedom of India as late as 1944.

I do agree that due to limitation of pages Mohan has not been able to portray the image that they evoke and deserve-because they are larger than life. Let us not despair at what is not given, let us instead welcome what had been provided. I have been cherishing a dream that I should be able to write an epic about Samrat Dahir which has all the ingredients of Epic like Ulysis.

Mohan Gehani has kept his vision clean and clear while writing this book. He has freed himself from all external influences, personal / ideological preferences or prejudices which may betray his partisan attitude. He has himself declared, "I have not divided the book on religious lines. I have endeavored that Sindhi Hindus as well as Muslims should be able to glimpse their inclusive history. Keeping the Suffistic and Humanistic traditions alive he has identified himself with those traditions and approached history of Sindh from that point of view. Inclusiveness is at the soul of Sindhi Soil. Many tribes across the span of time have invaded and settled in Sindh and adopted Sindh as its own home, in the process all that was positive in the culture of those tribes got assimilated in the core of mainstream culture and all that was retrograde or negative was discarded as a natural process. This inclusiveness has lent Sindhi culture its distinctiveness of peace and tolerance which enmeshed with Sufi ethos has contributed to its uniqueness. This culture has helped us to face many a natural as well as man made calamities and recent blow of partition and bearing a great trauma of uprootment can be contributed to this great culture.

Mohan Gehani has drawn our attention to the fact that the riches of the Sindh and fame of its rich culture attracted many foreign invaders

for plunder and loot. Some of them seeing its bounty were fascinated and were assimilated into Sindhi Soil. The Prophet of Islam is said to have observed 'From where these fresh winds blow it is heaven like country Sindh!'. Thirteen centuries have elapsed since Arabs invaded Sindh and hundreds of generations have gone by since, those who chose to adopt Sindh as their motherland have loved Sindh with all their heart. They do not hesitate to call Mohmed Bin Qasim as an invader and consider King Dahir as their hero who paid the supreme price of his life while defending his mother land.

Another equally sad fact that emerges is that at every crucial moment in history Sindh has not lacked traitors who have colluded with invaders for their petty gains. These are fascinating 'ifs' and 'buts' of history. One cannot but bemoan the fact of ignoble betrayal of Buddhist courtiers of King Dahir and that of Chanesar in guiding the forces of Allaudin Khilji to invade Sindh. History is replete with the names of such people.

History is not merely dry facts and figures. It is movement, it is a process to which man's identity is closely linked. It is mirror of the achievements and failures of any nation. One has to peep into the past in order to march ahead. It is fountainhead for resurgence of any nation. In the present context and the situation of crisis from which the Sindhi community in India and even in Sindh is passing to retain and define its identity the history will prove to be a great source of strength. Those heroic people who stand as a light house shall not fail to provide a beacon of light. It is all the more necessary to explore our past and seek our roots. We shall have to write a complete history of Sindh. Without history we shall become historical orphans. I very much wish that such a day does not dawn.

Kirat Babani