



History of Sind From Ancient to its Annexation By Britishers

Naveen Sharma

Faculty, Indian History and Art and culture
gsgurunaveensharma@gmail.com

ARTICLE DETAILS

Research Paper

Accepted: 17-03-2025

Published: 15-04-2025

Keywords:

History of Sind, Ancient Era of Sind, Arab attack and its causes, Charles Napier, why Britishers Annexed Sind.

ABSTRACT

In history of India Sind had its own values, a place by whom Hind word originate. It faced first attack of Muslim invaders so this place known as door of Islam or Bab-ul-Islam in India. It was a place from where Persian, Greeks Arabs and other entered in India. It was link between India and Afghanistan so its annexation in 1843 was a crucial event in expansion of Britishers. This paper examines the geopolitical, historical, economic, and military factors behind the annexation of Sind. In Annexation of Sind there have great role of Charles Napier's desire to annexed it.

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15222532>

Introduction :- In this paper we firstly study about History of Sind, then we move towards mediaeval and modern phases of History of Sind. We also study why Britishers thought to Annexed it.

History of Sind: - Sind or Hind is basically part of lower and central Indus, Persian people called it Hind later become Sind, now this area is in Pakistan as its third largest province in area. This place sometime refers as Bab-ul-Islam means gateway of Islam (Islam spread in India from Sind). This place was ruled by Hindu rulers earlier we also got some contrast in Ramayana and Mahabharata, in period of Kanishka this place had big importance.

If we moves towards its history we get to know Firstly it become part of Persian empire in period of Darviha sometimes known as Dara first or Diarus then it faced the attack of Alexander in 326 B.C who



faced Sind ruler Poras or Puru, then it Conquered by Muhammad- Bin- Qasim, till then it continuously faced many attack of outsiders like as Turks, Arabs Afghan and many others. Later this area came under Talpur Amirs. Britishers had fear of Russia so they want to make friendly relations with Sind and Afghanistan. In 1630 Britishers got a Farman related with trade facilities such privileged in the ports of Sind which they enjoyed elsewhere. When Britishers fought with Amirs of Afganistan and they suffered heavy loss, so they put whole blame on Sind and decided to annexed it .

Here is brief introduction of History of Sind.

a. Ancient Era of Sindh:-

In Bronze Age :- Sind has great Harappan site Mohen Daro, this place also known as Mound of dead or Sindhu-Sauvira. Indus valley's Southern border was Indian Ocean and its northern border was Punjab near Multan. Capital of Sind was Roruka and Vitabhaya or Vitibhaya. Mohenjo Daro discovered by Rakhal Das Banerji in 1922. Mohen (fishery) name Given by John Marshal to it but soon it known as Mohenjo Daro (Mound of Dead). This area was famous for 1. The Sculpture of Priest King 2. The Pashupati seal 3. The dancing girl bronze statue 4. The Great Bath 5. Its Drainage system etc.

After Harappan era Achaemenids or Iranian or Persian conquered this region and established Satrapy of Hindus empire. They followed Zoroastrianism. Founder of this empire was Cyrus the Great in 550 B.C. He was first Achaemenids ruler who conducted two invasions in 535 B.C in area of Indus river but he was failed after Him Darius 1st who also known as Darviha or Dara has able to won this area of Sind and also established his dynasty, Around 518 BCE Persian army under Darius crossed the Himalayas and annexed some area of Jhelum (Punjab). Darius also wrote inscription for his public, Behistun inscription was his most famous inscription (Ashoka also took inspiration to write inscription from Darius the great). According to great Persian historian Herodotus Darius sent a naval expedition in 517 B.C to explore the Indus valley. According to many other Historians when Achaemenids army attacked on Greek ruler Xerxes many Indian soldiers were in his army. Other Greek Historian also presented many examples to proved this event. But soon Persian lost their control on Sind and this area came under Paurava kingdom ruled by Poras or Puru. In period of Darius 3rd Alexander the great son of Philips attacked on Persian areas defeated and destroyed the Achaemenes Empire, Alexander defeated the Iranian ruler Darius 3rd and he won area of today's Iran and Iraq.



After destroyed Persian Empire Alexander marched towards Khyber Pass When Alexander reached Sind He faced Sind ruler Porus or Puru This battle is known as “The Battle of Hydapes” also known as War of Jhelum or Vitasta War Which fought in 326 B.C. In this Battle according to great Historian Alexander won but many coinage we got from Sind saw one ruler who was on elephant carrying another ruler who was on Horse forcefully. But according to modern Historian after this battle Alexander’s army reached till Chenab river but later his army denied to cross it because they did not want to face army of Magadha empire ruled by Ghananand Or Dhanannand. Finally Alexander decided to moves back he was injured and tired so finally he died in Babylon. So his all empire divided by his all commanders. Area between Persia and India came under Selucus Nicator who later defeated by Chandragupta Maurya (Aandrocoptos/Sandrocottas in Greek texts). So Sind became part of Mauryan Empire. We got Ashokan inscription from this place.

Following a century of Mauryan rule which ended by 180 BC, the region came under the Indo-Greeks. According to Strabo, in Greek language this place Sind known as Sigerdis and they called whole land as India by name of River Indus.

The Kahu-Jo-Darro stupa was belongs between 319 to 467 CE, described that Sind came under the Gupta Empire, The Kahu-Jo-Darro stupa described it’s Bodh impact. Mirpur Khas terracotta images represent the Gupta idiom as it flourished in Sindh. The terracotta’s of Mirpur Khas, of which the Museum has a most representative collection, one may see the synthesis of Gandhara and Gupta traditions.

After Guptas (325–480 AD)

Sasanian rulers from the reign of Shapur got control on Sindh we get to know it by Shapur inscription of Narseh which mentions as "King of the Sakas" in the areas of Eastern Iran as far as Sindh. According to Sakastan and Turan inscriptions told us about Shapur II and his control of the regions of Sindh and nearby areas.

The Rai dynasty (A.D 489 – 632 AD)

It was one of the famous dynasty of Sind due to them power of Sind spread in Northwestern regions of the Indian subcontinent. The dynasty reigned for a period of 144 years. Devaditya, Harsha, and Sinhasena were famous ruler of this dynasty. In period of this dynasty Huna attack on north India, due to their continues attack Gupta became weak Huna attacked in period of Harshwardhan also. Aror is noted to be the capital of both Hind and Sindh.



Harshacharitta, a biography written by Banabhatta mentions King Harsha badly defeated the ruler of Sindh and took possession of his fortunes.

Last Sudra ruler of Sindh was Sahsi who defeated by Chacha.

Brahmin dynasty (A.D 632 – c. 724 AD)

it was last dynasty of Sindh before advent of Arabs. This dynasty founded by Chacha so this dynasty also known as the Chacha dynasty. Chacha was succeeded by Chandra who was succeeded by Dahir. On time of Arab conquest Dahir was ruler of Sindh.

b. Medieval era of Sindh

Arab Conquest:-

After the death of the Islamic prophet Muhammad, the Arab expansion towards the east reached the Sindh region beyond Persia. An initial expedition in the region launched because of the Sindhi pirate attacks on Arabs in 711–12, failed.

The conflict between Hindu kings of Sindh and Arab Caliph took place in 636, under Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab with the governor of Bahrain, Uthman ibn Abu-al-Aas, dispatching naval expeditions against Thane and Bharuch under the command of his brother, Hakam. Another brother of his, al-Mughira, was given the command of the expedition against Debal. The Chacha Nama described that the raid of Debal was defeated and its governor Al- Haris was killed in 662 A.D after got some success in Sistan and Makran.

Then in 664 A.D Al- Muhallab attacked on nearby area of Sind but soon Abdullah try to attacked on Sindh but he was killed. Ultimately the Arabs were able to capture Makran (Baluchistan).

Causes of Arab Invasion :-

- 1. Arab ship looted by the pirates in sea territory of Sind- king of Ceylon was sending a ship to Hajjaj a governor of Umayyad Caliphate this ship contained orphan daughters of Muslim merchants who had died in Ceylon, it also contain some gifts sent for Caliphate, but some Pirates Attacked on these ships in coast of Sindh, and Plundered them. So Hajjaj got a chance so he ordered Sindh ruler Dahir to return them back because this event held in his area so he was fully responsible for it, but ruler Dahir denied it because he said he had no control over Pirates.*



2. *To captured trade route: - Sindh was Major and so famous sea port if any power captured it, they can control whole trade from India to west.*
3. *Propagation of Islam. It was also key factor, In period of Ashok maximum people of Sindh accepted the Bodh religion, but in Gupta period again Brahmin religion spread here, after spread Islam in Egypt and Syria Caliph want to spread Islam in India, for this Sindh was first step.*
4. *Fabulous wealth of India: - India known for its fabulous wealth and high reserves of gold in Indian temples, Sindh also had many famous temple and Buddhist monasteries that got high donation by rulers so earning was also a reason of attack.*
5. *Political condition of India: - after Harshavardhan India divided in many small states who always fighting with each other to increase area. If local ruler had conflict so always outsider gets benefit of this situation.*

Events:

When Dahir denied his role in loot by pirates, Khalifa became angry and he sent new Expedition in leadership of Ubaindullah but he was defeated and killed, then Khalifa sent Buddai but he also failed. Finally Khalifa believed on his young commander Muhammad-bin-Qasim, Who was only 17 years old but he was very bold, courageous ambitious personality and finally he did his best. He started his march from Makran then he attacked on Debal many Jat and meds who were against Dahir joined him, in spring of 712 A.D he reached the port of Debal here nephew of Dahir fought with Qasim with help of local Brahmans, Brahmans made a Talisman and placed it near the great red flag which flew from temple, but soon one Brahman told the secret of talisman to Qasim and as soon red flag pulled down Brahmans lost the battle. Temples destroyed and mosques were made on their place and Khutbah is read. More than 700 females sent to Hajjaj as gift. People forcefully converted in Islam those denied they were killed.

After Debal Qasim attacked on Nerun it was in hand of Buddhist monk and sramanas without fight they surrendered. Many people were killed Then Qasim move to Sehwan here he defeat Bajhra cousin of Dahir.



In battle of Rawar Dahir was killed and his queen Ranibai did Jauhar (first evidence of Jauhar). Then Qasim attacked on Brahmanabad here son of Dahir Jai Singh fought against him here Qasim captured Rani Ladi and two daughters of Dahir Suryadevi and Parmal Devi (story were famous they both became the one of reason of death of Qasim).

Then Qasim won Aror capital city of Sind. Now Sindh fully conquered by him (then he captured Multan he also sent army of 10,000 soldiers in company of Abu Hakim to capture Kanauji but not succeed and he also died)

When Qasim died a new dynasty Habbari dynasty ruled over the most of the part of Sind. Founder of this dynasty was Umar bin Abdul Aziz-al – Habbari. It was established in 854 A.D. soon this region became semi-independent from the Abbasid caliphate in 861 A.D. Habbari dynasty ruled here till attack of Mahmud Ghazni in 1025 and he went to destroy the old Habbari capital of Mansura and annexed this in his Ghaznawids Empire so finally Arab rule was ended.

Soomra dynasty was dynasty created by local Sindhi Muslims which ruled between early 11th century to 14th century. Ali Ibn al- Athir and Ibn Khaldun were famous rulers. These rulers working under sultan of Delhi.

After Soomra Sammas ruled on that area. Sammas ruler Jam Tamachi build the Makli Funerary it is in Thatta largest funerary sites in the world. In 1351 A.D Muhammad bin Tuglaq attacked on Sindh but he died, again Sammas became independent so after him his cousin Firoz Tughlaq attacked two times on Sindh 1365 and 1367 but he was failed. Jam Unar was founder of Sammas dynasty he was described by Ibn Battuta in his book Rahela or safarnama. Sammas dynasty followed Indo- Islamic architecture Thatta was their capital. After Sammas many small dynasties worked here most famous were Arghuns (Turkic). It established by name of Arghun khan. Arghun ruler defeated by Babur.

Modern history of Sindh: -

After Babar Humayun tried to control this area but after losing from Sher Shah Suri he spent his most of the life outside India but by help of Safavid Shah he was able to capture area of Sind, Punjab and Delhi, but he died early so again this area became free. So finally Akbar



captured this whole area and declared Thatta as provincial capital of Sind. It was area of lower Sindh while upper Sindh was ruled by Kalhora dynasty its capital was Khudabad and founder of this dynasty was Mirza Ghazi Beg also known as Kalhora Nawabs . Soon in period of Aurangzeb 1701 Mian Yar Muhammad Kalhoro took the title of Khuda Yar Khan, he established Khudabad as his capital (1768 they shifted their capital to Hyderabad) and became independent ruler by Muhammad Shah in 1736. He also had known as Sufi saint of Kalhora dynasty.

When Nadir Shah attacked Mian Ghulam Shah Kalhoro was the ruler he reorganized his power but defeated. Mian Abdul Nabi Kalhoro was last ruler of Kalhora dynasty.

The Talpurs dynasty 1783 to 1843

This dynasty was divided in four branches they got power after the battle of Halani fought in 1783 in this battle Mir fateh Ali Khan Talpur defeated Mian Abdul Nabi Kalhoro. One of its branch ruled on lower Sindh and their capital was Hyderabad another ruled on upper Sindh and their capital was Khairpur, 3rd branch ruled on Mirpur Khas and last one based on Tando Muhammad Khan. Talpurs were subordinate of Durrani Empire. They ruled 1783 until 1843. When Russia and France sign a treaty so Britishers focused on Sind and Afghanistan they sent many delegates for sign a friendship treaty with Afghanistan and Sind. In Afghanistan

In 1809 Amir of Sindh signed the treaty of Friendship with Lord Ellenborough, and by this treaty local representative appointed by Britishers in city of Hyderabad. So know British influence increased in Sindh. British maintained differ policy with different Amir, so to get more weightage now negotiation was started. Soon Britishers create the conflict between Punjab and Sindh. If any Amir wants Protection so he had to pay all expenditure of British army deployed for him.

In 1838 Amirs of Sindh sign a political residency treaty, by this treaty involvement of Britishers increased and internal struggle between Amirs was the result of this. So as Amirs power start decreasing Britishers became stronger in that area. Its result arrived as

Battle of Miani was held on 17 Feb 1843 between Bombay army lead by Charles Napier and Talpur army lead by Mir Nasir Khan Talpur reason of this battle was ambition of Napier and east India Company to expend their possession in south Asia. Mir Sher Muhammad



Talpur who was also known as Lion of Sindh was failed to reached on battle ground on time so Talpur army lost (This event described in Janat ul Sindh written by Rahimdad Khan molai Shedal.)

Battle of Dubbo also known as Battle of Hyderabad fought on 24 March 1843. When Mir Sher Muhammad khan want to recaptured Hyderabad fort with help of 20,000 soliders but they defeated by 3000 Britishers by help of Artillery. It was turning point of life of Sher Muhammad khan. After this lost he went to Punjab to seek help from Maharaja Ranjeet Singh. But due to treaty with Britishers Maharaja Ranjeet Singh was unable to help him.

So now future of Sind arrived in hands of Britishers. After doing all kind of Friendly work by Char dost (Amirs of Sind) Britishers decided to merge this area in British Indian Empire

Reason of Annexation:-

1. *Difference in Approaches of Britishers and Amirs - Now all Amirs believed that Britishers were using their conflict to gain power so when Britishers announce to supporting Shah Shujah Durrani to take the throne of Afghanistan, all Amirs were against of this decision. So Charles Napier thought it was correct time to annexed it, because Maharaja Ranjeet Singh was supported Shah Shujah in this matter.*
2. *Condition of Sindh:- Sindh was not in unitary form it was ruled by three Amirs, Amir of Khairpur, the Amir of Hyderabad and the Amir of Mirpur. Therefore, it was not in a position to put up a united front against the English.*
3. *British Resident of Sind Mr. Outram put allegations on Amirs*
4. *Economic Reason: -. One another Famous viewpoint currently found in Sindh that Sindh was economically rich so British annexed it for the sack of controlling natural resources of Sindh.*
5. *Malwa Opium theory or theory of British trade benefits:- There is another opinion as well which suggests that the economic factor relating with Malwa opium which was exported China through routes of Sindh. Malwa opium was exporting via Bombay port and also via Karachi so British decided to annex Sindh in order to stop and ultimately annihilate exportation of Malwa opium via routes of Sindh.*
6. *Sir Charles Napier wanted to increase his prestige in front of British authorities*
7. *Sind is epic Centre of diplomacy :- Britishers had fear of Russia so for save their Indian benefits they focused a lot on Sind because the Amirs of Sindh had good relations with*



Afghanistan, and it was tragic for British who were defeated by Afghanistan in 1842. Therefore, British wanted to control over Sindh so that they might use this region strategically to wage a war against Afghanistan.

8. Hamida Khuhro writes in introduction of Sir William Napier's book titles 'The History of General Charles Napier's Conquest of Sindh' that "the fact was that the stage in Sindh had been set well before Napier's arrival on the scene.
9. When in 1798 Napoleon attacked on Egypt, the British had feared first a French invasion of India and then, after the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo in 1815, they had fear of Russia from the North-West Frontier of India. So to control any designs of Russia, the British had started to keep an eye on the countries of North West: Sindh and Kelat.

View of Historians :-

R. C. Majumdar writes: "The conquest of Sindh was not merely a sequence but a consequence of the Afghan War."

Charles Napier said on time of Annexation of Sindh "We have no right to seize Sind, yet we shall do so, and a very advantageous, useful and humane piece of rascality it will be."

Charles Napier said after Annexation of Sindh "If this was a piece of rascality, it was a noble piece of rascality!"

References :-

1. The History of Sindh – Mirza Kalich Beg
2. Janat ul Sindh by Rahimdad Khan molai Shedal
3. Sindh Revisited – Sir Richard Francis Burton
4. Sind: Past Glory, Present Nostalgia – M. H. Panhwar
5. The History and Culture of the Indian People: Volume 5 – The Struggle for Empire by R.C Majumdar
6. Sindh: Past Glory, Present Nostalgia by K. R. Malkani
7. NCERT by Makhan Lal and Romila Thappar