

## Migration to Sindh: It's effects on Political Economy & Demography of Sindh

### Abstract:

This paper aims to trace a picture of Sindh after the construction of irrigation sources especially the construction of Sukkur and Guddu barrages which attracted Punjabi migrants. The major focus of this paper is the migration of Urdu speaking population from India after the partition of India, and to see how much indigenous Sindhi population was affected economically and demographically because of these refugees emigration. This paper shows, whether Punjabi and Urdu speaking migrants contributed for the progress of Sindh or they kept themselves aloof from the matter of prosperity of Sindh? This paper will also deal this issue opposite in Balouch emigrants' case that what were causes which restricted Urdu speaking emigrants to assimilate in Sindhi society?

### Introduction:

Migration from one area to other remained a main cause of ethnic conflicts in different countries of the World. The ethnic issues prevailing in Palestine, Burma, and Sindh of Pakistan are examples of these ethnic rifts. The main cause behind these ethnic conflicts is to achieve more and more economic benefits for a particular ethnic community or ethno-nationality. In this regard Tariq Rehman quoting Tahir Amin writes; "Amin used modern theories of ethnicity to explain that ethno-national movements are the products of the demand for a just share in goods and services in a modern state."<sup>(1)</sup>

In this regard, Sindh has been remaining a shining example, because it is Sindh which has been experiencing refugees' problem and ethnic rifts for a long time period. Sindh has been facing many invasions and attacks from outsiders like Arabs, Tarkhan, Mughal, Argoons, and British and before and also after the partition, influx from West Punjab and India.

Migration to Sindh before the partition of India

As mentioned in introduction that Sindh has been facing problems of outsiders/refugees for long time period. The history of Sindh dates back espe-

cially from 712 A.D when Arabs attacked on Sindh in order to control the economy of Sindh. Likewise, after this attack, history is witnessed of many occupants came in Sindh. However, if we avoid going through the long history of Sindh back, but just look over the history of Sindh before partition, we will also find Balouch and Punjabi migration to Sindh. Balouch migrated to Sindh in a huge number even latter they ruled Sindh, but there were no such ethnic conflicts between indigenous Sindhis and Baloch immigrants, because on one hand, they kept their own Baloch ethnic identity with them, and at the same time they also accepted Sindhi identity.<sup>(2)</sup>

Balouch constructed a new ethnicity as 'Sindhi Balouch' and started living with indigenous Sindhi population peacefully. But on the other hand, Punjabis did not assimilate themselves in Sindhi society. Balouch not only accepted and adopted Sindhi identity but they owned the interests of Sindh. But with the passage of time, they went beyond constructivist approach and proved themselves as sons and daughters of the soil. But on the other hand, the Punjabi migrants not only kept themselves aloof from Sindh cause, but a huge majority of emigrant Punjabis, served their economic interests only. This was a main reason which created a rift between indigenous Sindhi population and Punjabi immigrants.

The Punjabi immigration took place during British rule in Sindh. As Sarah Ansari writes; "Sindh's main assets, from the British point of view, were two folds: what it had offer in terms of communications and water supply. The British, concerned to make the province pay its own way, set about trying to increase both, expanding the amount of traffic, and trade, which crossed Sindh as well as the reliability of its irrigation resources. These twin objectives resulted in a spate of railway building and new irrigation initiatives from the end of nineteenth century."<sup>(3)</sup> Due to these developments new immigrants were attracted which results a great numbers of emigrants in Sindh.<sup>(4)</sup> British authorities also granted land to military pensioners from the Punjab.<sup>(5)</sup>

The British authorities were more inclined toward Punjabis than Sindhis, and they had own explanation in this regard. British opinion in this case can be perceived in Sarah Ansari's words; "Punjabis tended to be seen by the British as skilled and industrious workers, who would make efficient cultivators, in contrast to Sindhi zamindars and haris who were perceived, in British eyes, to be overwhelmingly 'lazy' and so essentially unproductive."<sup>(6)</sup> Like Sindhis, Punjabis were also dependent more on agriculture than business and

trade etc. this was a main reason which attracted Punjabis to settle in rural areas of Sindh after construction of irrigation facilities in the region. After the construction of new barrages in Sindh, Punjabis in numbers of thousands migrated to Sindh and the especially settled in districts of Nawabshah, Tharparkar, Hyderabad, Badin, Thatta and Sukkur.<sup>(7)</sup> The Punjabi influx was resisted before and after construction of Sukkur Barrage in 1930 by Sindhi landlords who feared an invasion of Punjabi peasant proprietors.<sup>(8)</sup>

### Refugee influx after the partition:

The refugee issues were not new for Sindh at the time of partition, but this migration was quite different from those took place earlier. First reservation on this migration is that there was no mention of migration from India to Pakistan vice versa other than between East and West Punjab, in any agreement or plan like 3rd June plan etc.

Despite without any agreement regarding migration, in the aftermath of Hindu-Muslim communal violence, the exodus of Muslim population from UP and Bihar (Mohajirs) was forced to migrate to West Pakistan and settle over the evacuee property of the Sindhi Hindus who were supposed to leave Sindh and settle in India. Although, the large number of migrants was settled in Punjab, and a smaller number as compare to settlers in Punjab settled in Sindh. But, this migration affected Sindh more than Punjab as Sarah Ansari argues that: "The number of refugees arriving in Sindh was certainly small than in the Punjab, but the total was large relative to existing population of the province."<sup>(9)</sup> Sindh because of availability of natural resources was economically rich. This was a main cause which had been attracted migrants from different areas. These migrants whether they are Punjabis, Pathans, Balouchs or Urdu speakers, all had been attracted by economic opportunities available in Sindh. As Charles H. Kenedy points out that "They have been attracted by economic opportunities, both the commercial lure of Karachi and the availability of relatively cheap land in newly irrigated areas bordering on Punjab and Balochistan."<sup>(10)</sup>

Refugees from India changed the demographic location of Sindh especially its urban centers like Karachi, Hyderabad, Sukkur and Mirpurkhas. We can see a sudden demographic change in Mohammad Waseem's analysis who writes: "63.9 percent of refugees in Sindh lived in urban areas, 86.16 percent

in Hyderabad district and 71 percent in Sakhar. In Karachi, there were only 14.28 percent speakers of Sindhi in 1951 as opposed to 58.7 percent who spoke Urdu as their mother tongue. Thus, Karachi overnight became a mohajir city."<sup>(11)</sup> In this regard also another argument can be traced from Tariq Rahman's point of view that; "In the whole of Pakistan, refugees formed 9.8 per cent of the population, but in Sindh and Khairpur state they formed 11.7 per cent of the population."<sup>(12)</sup>

Before and during partition period, there were riots on religious grounds going on but it was only Sindh where such kinds of riots were nominal. In spite of that after Punjab, the larger number of refugees was settled in Sindh, which created ethnic conflicts in Sindh.<sup>(13)</sup> The main reasons of these conflicts were complete alien-ness of two cultures. In Punjab the case was quite different where migrants came from East Punjab with same language, culture and norms. On the other hand, in Sindh, it was quite different than Punjab. There were clear cultural and social differences between immigrants and host Sindhis.<sup>(14)</sup> There was also a matter of superiority complex in the minds of new immigrants which also led conflicts between indigenous population and migrants.

In this regards S. Akbar Zaidi points out; "For the refugees, Sindh was always a backward underdeveloped part of the country, having nothing to do with the more sophisticated urban culture which they represented. The superior and haughty attitude of the refugees was (and still is) a persistent affront to the Sindhis."<sup>(15)</sup>

### The battle of resources on ethnic grounds:

The refugees were more benefited in Sindh as compare to Sindhis. There were multiple reasons behind this kind of deprivation of Sindhi population. The one and most important aspect is that; Mohajirs were more educated than indigenous Sindhis. This can be observed in the figures of literacy rate in earlier period of 1950s. The Urdu speaking migrants' literacy rate was 23.4 per cent, whereas the literary rate of whole Sindh on other hand was only 13.2 per cent.<sup>(16)</sup> As with some difference in numbers it is noted by Charles H. Kennedy that Mohajirs possessed several advantages because of their high literacy rate and also their previous administrative and entrepreneurship experience. He points out that the literacy rate of Muhajirs was 70% but on con-

trary Sindhis' literacy rate was only 10%.<sup>(17)</sup>

The battle over gaining more and more resources was going on especially between Sindhi landlords and immigrants. The powerful Sindhi landlords wanted to gain as much benefits of property left by Sindhi Hindus.<sup>(18)</sup> But on the other hand central government was taking efforts to rehabilitate these refugees and also allot that property left by Hindus to these migrants. The central government seemed not interested in resolving matters of Sindhi people, because it was not only case of Sindhi landlord only but Sindhi haris (peasants) and other oppressed classes as well. It can be analyzed after the construction of Gudu and Sukkur Barrages as Mohammad Waseem shows a clear picture of central government's unjust with indigenous population of Sindh.

He writes; "The land question was another major source of Sindhi nationalist sentiment. Out of the land brought under cultivation by Ghulam Mohammad, Guddu and Sakhar Barrages, 1.48 million, 0.64 million and 0.28 million acres respectively, ex-military officers and bureaucrats among others—mostly Punjabi but also mohajir-s were allotted .87 million, 0.32 million and 0.13 million acres in that order."<sup>(19)</sup>

Because of attractive literacy rate of Muhajirs, in 1950s, Sindhi educated class started to emerge. This condition created competition in jobs between Urdu speaking population and indigenous Sindhis.<sup>(20)</sup>

### Separation of Karachi from the Province:

In 1948, the central government of Pakistan proposed to make Karachi a permanent capital of the country. Karachi was an economic hub of Sindh even before the partition especially Karachi port was being used in export and import. Another importance of Karachi was Sindhi Hindus' interest in this city that established trading roots and made it a business hub of Sindh. Despite of Sindhi politicians' resistance over the matter of making Karachi the capital of Pakistan, on 22 May, it was announced by Jinnah who was in favour of greater centralization, to make Karachi a permanent capital of Pakistan.<sup>(21)</sup> Sarah Ansari highlights this issue, she writes: "Many Sindhis felt that they had been 'the ones who had given refuge to the central government... this child who had not legs {Sic} to stand on, no chair to sit and no papers to write', and here were the central authorities annexing their capital without any concern or

payment of compensation."<sup>(22)</sup>

It was because of central government's superiority that any government official, who spoke against the separation of Karachi from Sindh, was dismissed or faced serious consequences. The then Sindh Chief Minister Ayub Khuhro resisted against this plan, was overthrown, and was replaced by Pir Illahi Baksh who was fully inclined towards Jinnah. The then central government has been alleged yet that the main purpose behind making Karachi a capital of Pakistan was to settle influx and also to snatch the economic strength of the city from provincial government. After making Karachi the capital of Pakistan and declaration of state of emergency in Punjab on 27 August due to tensions created in Punjab camps, Pakistan government resettled refugees in Sindh doubled in number.<sup>(23)</sup> Now the government of Pakistan did not feel need to convince Sindh government before resettling refugees in Karachi because now Karachi was the capital of Pakistan.

### Conclusion:

In the light of above debate, it can be concluded that Sindh has been facing migrants' problems since Arab invasion of Sindh. But it is reality that many originally Arab, Mughal, Syed and Balouch population assimilated themselves in Sindhi society. But on the other hand, Punjabi, Pathan and especially Urdu speaking populations' assimilation seem far away to become a reality. As this paper mainly focused on Punjabi and Urdu speaking migration to Sindh, in this regard, Punjabi migration seems that was not concerned with permanent interests of Sindh. The military of British India mainly consisted of Punjabi soldiers, who were granted fertile lands of Sindh in British period and after the partition as well, they were just enjoying luxuries, but they did not try to assimilate themselves in Sindhi society.

The case of Urdu speaking migration from India was different. Although, no doubt in both sides i.e. India and Pakistan riots on religious grounds were going on, so migration was inevitable. But the problem arises here that no one plan or other document advocated the migration from both countries except East and West Punjab. The influx from India after partition did not contribute in betterment of Sindh, but on contrary it proved as economical and geographical threat for Sindhi population. On the one hand, Karachi was separated from Sindh, and on the other hand, Sindhis became a minority in their own city Karachi. Because of this battle over resources between Sindhis and

Urdu speakers, a clear cleavage was drawn between indigenous population and migrants.

No doubt, new migrants were mostly educated and experienced in bureaucracy but at the same time, they along with Punjabis were assured more benefits than other ethno-nationalities. The idea behind this was simply that Urdu speaking population played leading role in making of Pakistan so they were to be given more rights and benefits. In this case, we can take an example of Liaquat Ali Khan then Prime Minister of Pakistan who was also Urdu speaking. Even Liaquat Ali Khan had no electoral constituency, in spite of that, he was made a Prime Minister of Pakistan. Migration to Sindh especially its main city Karachi also seen in this context that Liaquat Ali Khan wanted to create an electoral constituency in Karachi where from he would have elected himself in future.

However, in both cases viz. Punjabi as well as Urdu speaking migration, not only caused demographic changes in Sindh especially its main urban centers, but at the same time, more importantly economic changes also took place. On the one hand, millions of acres of fertile lands of Sindh were given to retired military personnel of Punjab. On the other hand, industries and other properties left by indigenous Sindhi Hindus were occupied by migrants from India. Likewise, main urban centers of Sindh like Karachi, Hyderabad and Sukkur came under control of these migrants. These were main causes which resulted rifts and skirmishes between Sindhis and Urdu speaking migrants.

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