

Research Article

Socio-Political Resistance in Sindh: From Ancient times to British India

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Abstract

If there is a discussion about the resistance in Sindh, it had played an important role in shaping its history. It helped Sindh on two fronts. One of the fronts is of external resistance that had helped Sindh preserve and maintain the age-old separate and distinct Identity from foreign aggression. Sindhi people have boldly stood against foreign invaders. It is another matter that like any other nation, Sindhi people sometimes succeeded in this regard to defend their motherland, and sometimes, they failed. But it is clear evidence that Sindh has staunchly opposed the foreign plunderers and attackers. The second important level of resistance is within the society. Sindhi people have initiated individual and collective levels movements against prevailing exploitation and injustice in the society. Sufis have played their part in this regard to curtail religious extremism and they strove hard to bring religious tolerance, harmony, and a peace-loving society. Besides the Sufis movement, Sindhi scholars, students, women, peasants have long struggled for the major contradictions and injustice in society. Like every other society, now there are various political parties and organizations working in Sindh. A variety of leftist political parties and innumerable rightist political parties are doing their politics. There exists civil society, women's organizations, and student organizations working for the downtrodden class of society. Nationalist politics with respect to the vested interests of Sindh is commonplace. This was the brief nature of resistance which had remained insignificant in shaping and preserving the separate and distinct identity of Sindh.

Key Words: Resistance, Socio-political, Sindh, Arabs, British India

Introduction

Resistance is one of the instincts of human nature which plays a very pivotal role in the existence of human beings. It helps man/woman to stand by firmly against the injustice for getting his / her rights in society. Resistance varied from individual collective actions and that evolves further into the movement for the change in the society. Revolutions are classic examples of organized and collective resistance. They have challenged the traditional and conservative structure of society. In history, thousands of examples are recorded which testify from individual to collective resistance. Every resistance has created a new scheme of its ideas in society. It cannot be overrated that behind every change there is some sort of resistance. Resistance challenges the existing structure of beliefs in society and it challenges to change the obsolete ideas and replace them with the new ones in their place. Rubina Saigol defines resistance as; Resistance can be called to such very thinking, action, behaviour, or method that stands by firmly against any form of injustice, tortuous, oppression, or barbarism. Resistance is meant to stop something, oppose the exploitation and refuse to accept the injustice, and to organize energetically and practically against injustice.¹

Saigol mentions two levels of resistance individual and collective. A collective level of resistance can be found in the form of a movement, which incorporates groups of people who identify the nature and form of

¹ Rubina Saigol, *Aurat aur Mazahimat: Mehnatkash Auraton se Makala* (Mashal: Lahore: 1999), p.23

operation which is incurred on them by the same authority. They collectively face situations and unite themselves against that injustice. It is very necessary that for such a movement to have a leadership that enlightens people about their exploitation and unites and leads them in the right direction². Major uprisings, revolts, wars of independence, and peasants' movements can be put into the collective form of resistance. No society in the world has spared itself from the resistance. Every state has faced various forms and levels of resistance at any stage of development. The problems in every state are different. Some states are facing racial resistance, some gender-based, and some others are facing national exploitation. However, class-based resistance is a matter of concern for every state due to the prevailing capitalist society. Resistance for achieving a viable democratic and egalitarian society is commonplace everywhere.

Ghafoor Memon analyses that man has always fought against those laws of nature which remained harmful for him/her. He / She had waged so many wars when he/she used to live in jungles to protect him from natural disasters like earthquakes, floods, fatal diseases, and dangerous animals. He had struggled in search of food. This was the resistance of humans for survival. This type of resistance was initiated in the past by humans was mostly concerned with nature and its disastrous impacts on the human and he/she resisted those challenges of nature. This resistance was the evolution that shaped society, framed laws, inculcated values, and established a class system. These innovations further opened more fronts for resistance. Human has three major fronts to resist, he has to resist against the calamities of nature, he has to resist for the protection of his existence, and he has to fight against prevailing injustice in the society.³

Howard Caygill has a great contribution to this subject. He has written a thought-provoking book on this subject, *On Resistance: A Philosophy of Defiance*. This book initiates philosophical debate on the ambivalent perspectives of resistance. He puts into consideration the thoughts from Kant to Nietzsche in his analysis. He defines resistance in one of his perspectives in this way with the themes of domination, consciousness, violence, and subjectivity. He quotes many references from the revolutionary statesmen such as Mao, Lenin, Luxemburg, Gandhi, and Fanon in relationship ship with resistance.⁴ Caygill writes that "resistance is an evolving practice Which appeals to the morality of resistance directly as a stance against operation? He underlines the examples mostly from radical and progressive politics.⁵

Caygill traces the roots of the term resistance in the 'stasis' which means 'state of standing' where he locates the origin of and possibility for politics about resistance. The situation lays in the place of blockage, inactivity, the state of equilibrium caused by opposing equal forces. This phenomenon brings the reciprocal dynamic of charge.⁶

Defining resistance in nutshell, it could be concluded that resistance has played a vital role in the evolution of society. It had evaluated the modern socio-political system with its dynamic role in the shaking old and exploitative social systems. Owing to the resistive nature of humans in society it is not static and stagnant but dynamic to replace the obsolete norms and culture with the improved, civilized and developed ones. It is a continuous and eternal process will never end until human exists.

Methodology

The method of qualitative research has been adopted in my research plan because it mainly suits my research design. Both primary and secondary sources have been put under study in this research. Although primary sources would be important and valuable to understand the nature of the politics of AT, however, secondary sources of research are also being used in this research to interpret primary sources. In this connection, I have visited various libraries. Analysis of documents, books, journals, magazines, newspapers, etc. has been made for this research.

² Ibid.

³ Ghafoor Memon, "Mazahimati Fikr", *Mahwar Mashal*, 2020, June, p22.

⁴ Claudia Firth, "Review on Resistance: A Philosophy of Defiance", by Howard Caygill, New York, Bloomsbury, 2013, Review, *Dandelion Postgraduate Arts Journal and Research Network*. Vol. 5, No. 1, Summer, 2014.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

Result and Discussions

Internal strife in Sindh has paved the way for the successful invasion of foreign recession in most cases. If one traces the roots of earlier raids on the territory of Sindh, history catches the attention of the Aryans who came from Central Asia and destroyed one of the oldest and great civilizations of Indus Valley, Moen-jodaro and Harrapa. After these inroads, Tanvir mentions the Persians. East Iranians began to take interest in the areas of the east of Indus in the first millennium B.C and they annexed those areas. Later on, Sakas, who were Iranian tribes, conquered Indus territory. Achaemenians of Iran annexed Sindh at the end of the 6th century BC.⁷ Tanvir gives two major causes for the success of Achaemenians. First was the internal conflict between two great and old religions: Hinduism and Buddhism. The second reason, the timidity of some rulers that helped invaders in their success.⁸

After the Persian wave, the Greek invasion begins. It started under the leadership of the so-called Alexander the Great. Even East people called him “the Great” though he conquered India and plundered resources. Mubarak Ali criticizes this historical approach to dedicate a title of “great” to a ruler by the Eastern writers, to a ruler who raided, annexed, and exploitive the resources of India. Mubarak Ali, therefore, suggests Indian people withdraw “great” from the name of Alexander.⁹ However, Alexander was welcomed by the Ambhi ruler of Taxila, but King Prussian, a Punjabi ruler, and Mausikano, Oxykanos, and Sambus, the rulers of Sindh, resisted the advance. Python, whom Alexander left as in charge of Sindh passed away his successors retained possession of Sindh till 317 B.C, and the authority of the Macedonians was brought to an end. The indigenous rulers got independence in the lower Sindh.¹⁰ In this way, one after another succeeded in the annexation of Sindh despite heavy resistance in Sindh. Mauryan conquered Sindh and after them, Demetrius, Menander, Kushans respectively ruled Sindh. The medieval period of Sindh invites another major phase of Sindh which left everlasting impacts that period is of the Arabs.

2.4 Arab Invasion

The irony with the history of India is that there was no culture of recording the political events of India. Therefore, it became a very difficult problem for historians to write about the earlier Indian political society. Sindh had not remained apart from this Indian impact of not recording the political events. This dearth and lack of writings on the history of India left numerous important questions unanswered. The lack of primary sources on the subject of history left the treasury of knowledge undiscovered. Mubarak Ali states this condition in this way that the historians writing on the Arab period in Sindh face monolithic challenges of unavailability of primary sources particularly before the Arabs in the Rai and Brahman dynasty. One can find some information from *Chachnama* about this era but this book was written from the Arabs point of view which presents the depressed condition of that period. The events about the Arab invasions have been exaggeratedly oriented to create a good impression in people for Arab conquerors. The conditions of Sindh are depicted badly in a way that it could be perceived that the conquest of Sindh by Arabs was blessing Sindh.¹¹

In this primary source *Chachnama*, a moral ground is prepared to do a character assassination of Raja Dahir by putting on him the immoral allegations. G.M Syed lists the allegations, he married his sister, plundered the Arab people and imprisoned them, and he oppressed the Buddhists and non-Brahmans. He was a despot and luxurious ruler.¹² G.M Syed defends Raja Dahir on alleged his despotic policy toward Buddhists in an argument that Dahir had two Buddhist governors during his rule and another proof regarding Dahir’s religious policy of tolerance is that he offered shelter to Arab Muslim Mohammad Alafia with his whole

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Mubarak Ali, *Gumshida Tarikh* (Lahore: Tarikh Publications, 2012), p. 56.

¹⁰ Mubarak Ali, *Sindh Khamoshi ki Awaz* (Lahore: Tarikh Publishers, 2017), p.53.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² G.M Syed, *Sindh ja Soorma* (Karachi: Naen Sind Publication, 1974), p. 14-13.

tribe who came to Sindh due to the cruelties of Ummayed rulers. On the question of despotism, *Chachanama* gives a very clear account of the Arabs who not only plundered the resources of Sindh but also enslaved thousands of Sindhi women and sold them in the markets. The *Chachnama* depicts vividly that the people of Arabs were more immoral than the Sindhi people¹³.

Mubarak Ali also rejects these causes which are mentioned in *Chachnama*. The story of plundering of Arab women seems to him preposterous. He opines that the intention of Arabs to conquer Sindh was much earlier but it was delayed due to the unfavourable conditions which Arabs faced in conquering Sindh. When the Arabs conquered Syria, Iraq, and Iran, Sindh was also in their plans. Its proof is that Mugheira attacked Debal in the period of Hazrat Umar, Hukam bin Jabla bin Abdi came to the eastern part of Sindh and Balochistan through the sea in the period of Hazrat Usman, he reported that it would not be beneficial in economics terms to conquered Sindh. Due to the same reason, the attack on Sindh was delayed even in the era of Hazrat Ali.¹⁴

As far as the resistance of Sindh to foreign invasion is concerned, Sindhi rulers made the fourteenth expedition of Arabs unsuccessful before the attack of Mohammad bin Qasim. Raja Dahar also fought bravely against the forces of Mohammad bin Qasim in a way that Mohammad Qasim's forces during the war remained scattered and he was isolated from his army. John Jahangir Bede describes the situation in this way from *Chachnama*:

Thus the infidels made a rush on the Arabs from all sides and fought so steadily and bravely that the army of Islam become irresolute, and their lines were broken up in great confusion. It was generally believed that the Arabs were defeated and put flight and men were struck dumb and overawed. Mohammad Kasim was then so much perplexed that he called out to his boy water-bearer, 'Give me a little water to drink'. He drank water and then returned and loudly shouted here am I your commander. Mohammad Kasim. Where are you running away?'¹⁵

After the five days' fierce battle and brave resistance on the part of Dahir, Qasim succeeded in defeating Dahir. Bede states the merciless behaviour of Qasim after the war. He made all captive prisoners to be put to death and their families sold into markets as a slave. Queen of Dahir shut herself in the fort of Roar. She put up a brave resistance. When she seemed it is now end, she burned herself along with other women to death. She said while dying. "It is creations that we cannot escape the clutches of these 'scandals and cow eaters.'¹⁶ Lastly, Arabs conquered Brahmanabad after six months of besieging. Here also the six thousand combatants were killed and their families were enslaved.¹⁷ Finally, Aloor and Multan came into the possession of Arabs by 715A.D.

Tanvir Ahmed is of the view that the early Arab invasion was resisted and stopped in 671 A.D by the Jats of Jhalawan. Later on Arabs under the leadership of Qasim succeeded to conquer Sindh in 712 A.D. Before this, Arabs failed two times. After Qasim's withdrawal from Sindh in 715 A.D, many chiefs and princes of Sindh revolted. Jaisya, the son of Dahir, succeeded in regaining the possession of Brahmanabad. It is calculated that after the Ummiyad rulers in Sindh, from the thirty-seven caliphs of the Abbasi dynasty, Sindh remained under the rule of twenty-one only. Vicegerents of Sindh became independent. They recognized the suzerains of the Arab rulers nominally.¹⁸

Najam Abbasi compares Arab imperialism with other imperialists especially the British. He understands the impacts of the Arab invasion as more disastrous and everlasting than any other invasion. Other imperialists

¹³ Ibid p.15.

¹⁴ Mubarak Ali, *Sindh Kamoshi ki Awaz*, p.76.

¹⁵ John Jahangir Bede, *The Arab in Sindh: 712-1026* Karachi: Endowment Fund Trust for Preservation of the Heritage of Sindh, 2017, P. 72-73.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 73.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 74.

¹⁸ Tanvir Ahmed, *Political Dynamics of Sindh*. Op. cit. p-44-45.

did exploit these resources and make political prisons but Arabs made us slaves in the name of religion and spirituality. That enslavement has everlasting impacts. After the thirteen centuries have been passed to Arab rule, still today we are spiritual slaves and could not be able to get rid of that mess.¹⁹

2.5 Internal Resistance from Sindh

Previously, I was writing about the resistance in Sindh from foreign invaders. I briefly cast a glance over the ancient period to the medieval. Still that time some so many rulers tried to violate the integrity of this motherland, Sindh. Some foreign aggressors remain successful and some failed in this regard. But now I would like to mention a form of resistance that prevailed in our internal society. The injustice, oppression, exploitation existed in Sindh. For bringing justice and to get rid of oppression, many great leaders have to get birth in Sindh to stand firmly with the oppressed, helpless and needy people. For this great cause, Sufi Shah Inayat got birth. Shah Inayat unfortunately was the contemporary to Aurangzeb, a Mughal emperor. Aurangzeb was an extremely religious-minded emperor and religious intolerance was displayed through his policies. Emperor has completely banned the music. This was a societal sketch in which Sufi Shah Inayat grew up. This was a challenging period, but men like Shah Inayat never feared death and stood for justice in extremely harsh conditions.

Sufi Shah Innayat's real name was Makhdoom Fazlullah. He had lineage with the famous Sufi family of Sindh, Makhdoom Sardr-ud-Din alias Shado Langah. Shah Inayat lived in Mirpur Bathori (near Jhoke Tehsil) near the village of Miranpur. However, about his birth, there is no available authentic source. Even though some information is found in the old books, such as *Tuhfat-ul-Karam*, and other unauthentic sources. He was the disciple of Makhdoom Abdul Malik who was the son of Shah Ubaid Ullah, Barhanpuri. This Sufi belonged to the Sufi Silsilah of Qadriya. Sufi Shah Inayat and Sahibdino faqeer of Daraza Shareef both were enlightened from some Sufi saints from whose offspring, Sachal Sarmast got birth.²⁰

Sufi Shah Inayat is known as the first socialist Sufi due to his innovative ideas about the equal distribution of wealth. He created a new basis for the distribution of property. Sibte Hassan has contributed very constructively to his ideas and movement. He elucidates his ideas that Shah Inayat disagrees with those religious fanatics and the so-called scholars who claim that distribution of wealth should be equal and this is according to the Sharia. Shah Inayat questioned this formula. He based his ideas on the source of production. He was of the view that it could be impossible to distribute property equally when the source of production such as land, factories, banks, etc is private property and are in a few hands. He was of the view that Mohammadan principle about the distribution of property equally is that land should be cultivated on a collective basis. So land shall be the property of a group, not an individual. All men should be equal participants in the process of production. The entire product should be equally distributed after the participation of all in the process of production. The disciples of Shah Inayat happily accepted the proposal and started to cultivate the land collectively.²¹

The experiment of collective land farming of Shah Inayat remained successful. The popularity of Shah Inayat increased further in other areas. His new experiment was lauded everywhere. The disciples of Sadat Bulri who were dependent on the feudal lords followed the principle of Shah Inayat and joined him. This influence did not limit to the Sadat family's disciples but also extended to Babu Poleja and other neighboring areas of peasants.²² Sufi Shah Innayat's peasant movement spread to many districts of Sindh. Owing to the patronage of Shah Inayat peasants were empowered to extent that the feudal could not dare to torture them physically. In this way, disciples of Shah increased day by day.²³

¹⁹ Najam Abbasi, *Tasuf ji Cheer Phaer*, (Hyderabad: Sindhi Saahat Ghar, 2000), p. 89.

²⁰ G.M. Syed, *Sindh Ja Soorma*, Op. cit. p. 39-40.

²¹ Syed Sibte Hassan, *Naveed-e- Fikr*, Karachi: Noorani Danial, 2002, P, 188-9.

²² Ibid, 190.

²³ Ibid, 190.

The popularity of Shah Inayat and his program challenged the vested interests of feudal lords as well as so-called religious scholars of that time. So these opportunist scholars along with landowners, such as Mian Abdul Wasiu, Shah Abdul Karim's disciple, and landlords included, Hamal Jal and Noor Mohammad Palijo misinformed Mughal Governor, Nawab Azam Khan, about Shah Inayat. Nawab Azam became statute opponent of Sufi Shah and asked the permission from Mughal emperor of Delhi Farukh Sigar. On that reporting, Mian Yar Mohammad Kathoro, Mian Shah Khan, and other neighboring landlords were asked to imprison him. It is said that the disciple of Shah resisted for about six months and many of them lost their lives while fighting. Finally, Sufi Shah to protect the lives of his disciples, agreed with the government servants on their proposed promises, to present him in the court of Sardar Abdul Aziz. Nawab called the traditional religious scholars to have a debate with Sufi Shah Inayat and during this debate; the so-called religious scholars issued verdicts for his killing. Sufi Shah Inayat was martyred on 17 Saffer, 1130 hijra.

2.6 Pre Partition Resistance

In the previous pages, I have discussed the resistance in Sindh before the advent of the British. In the following pages, an attempt has been made to highlight the level of resistance that the Sindhi people incurred to the invasion of English imperialists.

2.6.1 Establishment of British Rule in Sindh

Geographically Sindh was at a great distance from the annexed territories of the British. So it was not as much important for the British to conquer it. At the beginning of the 19th century, Napoleon Bonaparte embarked on a mission to conquer the world. So British became anxious about it. But Napoleon was defeated at the Battle of Waterloo in 1812. Now British wanted to curtail the Russian Czar, who was on better terms with Afghan rulers. In the first British- Afghan war (1839-41), the British got temporary success. In December 1941, there was a revolt against fifteen thousand British soldiers. This revolt became very fatal for the British who agreed on insulting terms with Afghan rulers. From 15,000 soldiers only Dr. Brydon succeeded to reach Jalalabad.²⁴ This fatal defeat of the British exposed the British soldier's weakness. Sindh was not much stronger militarily. Therefore, the British intended to conquer Sindh to hide its Afghan defeat.

The British rulers broke their promises and treaties and annexed Sindh after the battle of Miani in February 1943. In both battles Miani and Dabo, Baloch tribes of ruling Mirs fought bravely but the courage of Hosh Mohammad Shedi and Mir Sher Mohammad Khan and their compatriots could not change the outcome of the war. They were defeated and Sindh came under the control of the British East India Company. On the eve of the conquest of Sindh, Charles Napier sent a letter to Governor-General Ellenbrow of India and wrote in his letter about victory in this way, "I have sinned".²⁵

GM. Syed is of the view that after Charles Napier completed tenure in 1847, Sindh was put under the administration of Bombay's presidency with status as commission rate. This was the first time in the history of Sindh that the administration of Sindh was given in the hands of the Governor from another province. In the Mughal period, the Governor of Sindh was separate who directly belonged to the central government of Delhi.²⁶

Tanvir Ahmed writes that the roots of ethnic feelings among Sindh can be traced to the annexation of Sindh to the Bombay presidency. Sindhi people and the elite felt that Sindh was being dominated by outsiders. The argument for the demand for separation of Sindh was based on assumption that Sindh had a distinct cultural and geographical character.²⁷

²⁴ Malook, Lund. *Sindh Ji Khudmukhtari Aen Jagirdaran Ji Moqaparasti* (Karachi, Peacock, 2016), p. 48.

²⁵ M. Laiik, Zardari, *Tehreek Pakistan Mein Sindh Jo Hissso*, Hyderabad, Sindh Adabi Board, p. 30.

²⁶ GM, Syed, *Sindh Ji Bombay Khan Azadi*, Sann: GM Syed Academy, 1989, p. 12.

²⁷ Tanvir, *Political Dyanamics of Sindh*, Op. cit. p. 67.

2.6.2 Separation of Sindh from Bombay Presidency

It was an unnatural act to include Sindh in the administration of Bombay. Sindh was distinct from Bombay in an account of history, geography, culture, language, and administration. Geographically, Sindh was 800 km away from Bombay. In between both was a sea and deserted bare land. Albeit, Sindh Act 1868 was introduced which gave discretion power to the commissioner of Sindh. Those powers were in the authority of the Governor of Bombay. This Act deprived Sindh of even the little autonomy which Sindh used to enjoy. The powers of Commissioner of Sindh had autocratic as compared to Commissioner of Bombay.

The movement was launched to break the enforced union of Sindh with Bombay. Among the pioneers of the movement, Mohammed Ayub Khuhro's role is significant. He wrote the book on the conditions of Sindh namely the '*Story of the sufferings of Sindh*' with the annexation of Sindh. Other protagonists in the movement were Seth Dayaram Gidumal, Rais Ghulam Mohammed Bhurgri, Seth Harchand Rai Vishindas, and some others. Moreover, the issue of separation of Sindh was carried out on various platforms. In the session of the Indian National Congress in Karachi first time the issue of separation of Sindh was raised by the Central Mohammed Association Sindh branch when Secretary of State Edwin Montagu was on a visit to Karachi in 1917.

Al Waheed daily of Abdul Majeed Sindhi advocated the cause of separation. First time All India Muslim League in its session of Aligarh in 1925 favored the cause of separation. Moulvi Mohammed Ali presented a resolution about separation and it was passed. In 1927, Sindhi Hindu, Muslims and Parsi did agree and favored separation. Nehru Report also constituted the provision of separation of Sindh from Bombay. Later on, it became part of one of fourteen points of Jinnah. First Round Table Conference, which was held in 1931, also included in its agenda, whether Sindh is separated from Bombay or not.

It was the year of 1932, Peoples Movement was started to get Sindh separated from Bombay. As a result, Sindh Azad Conference was established under the presidentship of Yousaf Ali in Hyderabad. The resolution was passed in favour of the separation of Sindh. The day of 16th December 1932 was celebrated in the whole of Sindh as 'Freedom Day. In this way, the issue of the separation of Sindh became every Sindhi's concern except a few Hindus.

It was in 1933 when the British Parliament set up a parliamentary committee to put into consideration the Reform Bill of India. Ayoub Khuhro was nominated by the working committee of the Sindh Azad Conference to present the case of Sindh. Mohammed Ayub Khuhro presented his case of Sindh on the 20th of July, 1933²⁸. The British Government's apprehension was of self-sufficiency of Sindh after separation. Khuhro presented his argument that Sindh could afford its finances sufficiently if it was separated from Bombay's presidency. Parliamentary Committee was satisfied with his argument and statistics which he presented before the committee. Finally, the British Government introduced the Act of 1935. The Act of 1935 incorporated the provision of separation of Sindh from the Bombay Presidency. Finally, Sindh got the status of a separate province in April 1936 after the long struggle of the Sindhi people for that cause.

2.6.3 Hur Resistance Movement

This was a very strong movement against the British. This movement succeeded in creating an anti-British resistance movement. This was an armed resistance movement against the atrocities of the British. There are three waves of this movement. The background of anti-British feelings in Sindh was before the annexation of Sindh in 1843. Mirs of Sindh engaged in unequal terms with the British government due to the lingering threats from the Sikhs. They have consolidated their power and position in Punjab and they had planned to conquer N.W.F.P. They attacked northern areas of Sindh, Sukkur. Due to the weak position of Mirs, the British took advantage of the situation and pressurized to bind Sindh in a treaty that it would defend Sindh from Ranjit Singh in compensation of severe involvement of the British in the internal matters of Sindh.

²⁸ M. Laik Zardari, *Tehreek Pakistan*, Op. cit. p. 42.

2.6.4 First Hur Movement

Syed Ahmed Shaheed wanted to counter Ranjit in NWFP. He visited Sindh in January 1826 for his popular cause. He met Pir Pagaro to ask him for supporting the movement. Pir Pagaro sent with him the contingent of his followers to initiate jihad against the Sikhs. This group of the contingent was called HURS. This means in Arabic 'free'²⁹. Syed Ahmed Shaheed succeeded in his early phase and recaptured Peshawar on the 23rd of June, 1830. However, he failed to maintain the possession. Along with Sayed Ismael and his soldiers, he was defeated and killed in the battle of Balakot in 1831. The role of HURS in this freedom struggle is known as the First Hur Movement.

2.6.5 Second Hur Movement

The movement of Hur's resistance was the product of the British annexation of Sindh. They were in totality against British imperialism. They waged war against the British for freedom. Hurs started resistance against the British in 1895-96. That period of resistance is called the second Hur movement. Bacha Badshah announced freedom from India along with his compatriots. This revolt was led by 12 leaders.³⁰ They made Mukhi Belo their center of the revolt. This movement struggled to take cooperation from the landless peasants of that area and they succeeded in this regard. Along with them, small landholders also played an active role in this movement. This movement could not succeed in getting its objectives but continued for twelve years. Bacha Khaskheli was killed along with Pir Bakhsh who was another Hur compatriot. Hurs experienced harsh and severe operations by the British government. Thousands of Hurs were put into jails and their lands were confiscated and their leaders were banished.³¹

After the death of Syed Mardan Shah, Pir Pagaro in 1921, his son Sibghatullah Shah Sani succeeded at the age of only 14 years. Anti-British feelings were inherited by him from his father. He started to organize the movement. The British felt necessary to crush the movement for the cause of consolidating their power. It initiated propaganda against Hurs and imprisoned Pir Pagaro. Pir Pagaro came close to the Congress leaders in the prison and with them, his frequent meetings made him more radical and learned. Further, the harsh treatment of the British made him a more determined and staunch opponent of the British. He was released from jail on the 19th of November, 1936.³²

2.6.6 Third Hur Movement

The third Hur movement was actively organized after the release of Pir Pagaro from jail. A Ghazi Jamat has initiated a large scale. Pir Pagaro thought that this was a prime time to wage a guerrilla war when the British were tangled in the Second World War. Pir Pagaro was detained in July 1941 in Karachi as he waged the war. Martial Law and curfew were imposed in the upper Sindh. The major cities which came under the curfew were Sukkur, Khairpur, Nawabshah, and Sanghar. The British started even aerial bombing. Villages were destroyed. The Palace of Pir Pagaro was demolished. Pir Pagaro was tried in the Hyderabad Court and pronounced a death sentence on 20 March 1943. At that time, the age of Pir was 32. He was buried on an island in the Persian Gulf. After the execution of Pir Pagara, the Hur movement started to decline. The movement did not spread to the masses of Sindh and it could not be able to get support from the common people. It was limited to the disciples of Pir Pagaro. Therefore, it was more easily crushed.³³

2.6.7 Peasants Resistance in Sindh

The rise of the Sindh Hari Committee was due to the centuries-old system that benefited the feudal and exploited the peasants. The British Government strengthened the system that worsened the conditions of peasants. Land Alienation Act in Punjab was introduced in 1900 which prevented the allocation of lands to non-peasants. But the Act was not introduced in Sindh. After the construction of Sukkur Barrage, the land

²⁹ Tanvir Tahir, *Political Dynamics of Sindh*, Op. cit. p 16.

³⁰ Laiq Zardari, *Tahrik Pakistan*, p. 209-210.

³¹ Tanvir Tahir, Op. cit. p. 88.

³² Ibid, 89.

³³ Ibid. 90-91.

was allotted to the non-Sindhi peasants.³⁴ There was the Batai system (a division of produce) which exploited the peasants. These developments organized peasants to resist these obsolete laws and stand for their rights.

Sindh Hari Committee was formed in 1930 in the presence of the famous leader of the Indian National Congress, Jamshed A.R Mehta. Members from Sindh were Abdul Qadir, Jethmal Parsram, Haider Bux Jatoi, and Abdul Majeed Sindhi. The meeting was held in Mirpurkhas in 1930. Abdul Qadir was elected the Secretary-General of the Committee. However, another opinion was that the Committee was formed in Tando Jam.³⁵

Tanvir elucidates the objectives of the Hari Committee. The major objective of the committee was the allotment of state land as “harap” grants to peasants in the Sukkur Barrage area. Peasants demanded the improvement of the Batai system (a division of produce) and grant of permanent tenure to them if they were cultivating lands for some years³⁶. Sindh Hari Committee did struggle on many issues of peasants. It started from evictions of “mukadims” from jagir and they succeeded in getting hereditary rights during 1935-36. It was a major step of the committee that organized a “Kisan” (peasant) rally. It was participated by 2000 to 3000 peasants in Hyderabad. The rally succeeded in making the government a seventy member’s tenancy legislation committee. This Committee completed its work and presented its suggestions but the proposals of the Committee were not accepted by the government.

The seventh Hari Conference was held on 5 March 1947 at Sarhari District, Nawabshah. The slogan of the Conference ‘Adh-Adh’ (Half-Half) Batai was approved. This movement became popular among the masses. It was decided that Haris would get 50% of the total product and leave the other 50% for landowners in the fields. This open challenge led to unfortunate incidents of the arrest of Haris and their ejections. Half Batai principle was agreed between landlords and peasants in the conference of zamindars and haris which was held at Shahdadpur on June 1, 1947.³⁷ In this way, Sindh Hari Committee showed great resistance for the cause of peasants. The movement continued to raise the cause of peasants. Later on, Jinnah himself took the responsibility in his own hands to introduce the land reforms. But owing to his early demise, the land reforms could not be introduced. Land Reforms Scheme was introduced in the period of Ayoub Khan and Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto but could not be practically implemented in its true sense.

Conclusion

Defining resistance in nutshell, it could be concluded that resistance has played a vital role in the evolution of society. It had evaluated the modern socio-political system with its dynamic role in the shaking old and exploitative social systems. Owing to the resistive nature of humans in society it is not static and stagnant but dynamic to replace the obsolete norms and culture with the improved, civilized and developed ones. It is a continuous and eternal process will never end until human exists. Tanvir Ahmed Tahir writes in regard:

“Sindh has witnessed many times violation of its boundaries by different nations and tribes. However, it is also a noteworthy fact that Sindh has shown extraordinary resilience in retaining its sovereignty even in the most hostile and adverse circumstances.”³⁸

³⁴ M. Masood, Khadar Posh, *Haari Report: Kal Aur Aaj* (Lahore: Jang Publishers) p.15.

³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 15-16.

³⁶ *Ibid*.

³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 98-99.

³⁸ Tanvir Ahmed Tahir, *Political Dynamics of Sindh 1947-1977* (Karachi: Pakistan Study Centre, 2010), p. 35.