

Sindh under the Mughals: Some Glimpses from *Tarikh-i-Masumi* and *Mazhar-i-Shahjahani*

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Abstract

The Mughal period (1592-1737 CE) rightly claims to produce an abundant amount of literature on history and culture of Sindh. This article aims to highlight impacts of Mughal rule on politics, administration and society of Sindh. There were a number of official writers emerged, who endeavored for drawing a plausibly adequate picture of the Mughal administration. Their narrations have been qualified by the quality and expanse of available information. Studies of the Mughal administration in Sindh are, for the most part, relied upon notable works significantly include some indigenous historical sources. This article fundamentally based upon the two such masterpieces titled *Tarikh-i-Sindh* alias *Tarikh-i-Masumi* (c. 1593 CE) and the *Mazhar-i-Shahjahani* (c. 1634 CE). Both of these compilations offer an overview of the dynamics of the Mughal politics concerning different administrative units and offices. Besides the political history, some new aspects in terms of socio-economic conditions are also evident on the basis of the first hand record. I anticipate that this endeavor would reveal some extent the true perception about the politics and society in Sindh under the Mughals.

Political history of Sindh is overshadowed with continuous conflicts between the regional and the central powers. The Sultan of Delhi (r. 1206-1526 CE) always desired to maintain their political authority over the region. However, from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries, native dynasties of Sindh such as the Soomras (r. 1024 CE - 1351 CE) and the Sammas (r. 1351 CE - 1520 CE) successfully established their sole authority over the region. Afterwards, Sultan Feroz Shah Tughluq (r. 1351 CE - 1388 CE) sent an expedition to Sindh in 1364 CE. Consequently, the Sammas were forced to recognize over-lordship of the Sultan. However, Riaz-ul-Islam remarks: 'even after the imperial victory over the Samma dynasty the control of the Central Government over

Sindh was slight. Probably it did not go beyond a formal recognition of the suzerainty of the Sultan of Delhi and payment of an annual tribute to him by the Samma rulers who, in effect, continued to rule Sind'.¹ Riaz-ul-Islam concludes that the reason behind the successful tenure of two hundred year of the Samma rule was partially hidden under their popular support among the public masses. Though, the Sammas were further succeeded by the foreign dynasties namely the Arghuns and the Tarkans. The emergence of the Uzbek and Safavid powers in Central Asia and Iran led to the liquidation of the Timurid Empire during the latter half of the fifteenth and in the early sixteenth century held by his various descendants. The scions of the great house of Timur were asserting a world fame empire of their ancestors, and the Sultans of Delhi were endeavoring for the survival of their authority and power. At this time, the Arghuns, a Turko-Afghan tribe established its rule in Sindh in 1520 CE. Shah Beg, founder of the Arghun dynasty in Sindh, left Qandhar due to the growing pressure of Babur from the north-east.² Emerging political turmoil gave him an opportunity to establish his rule in Sindh.

The Arghuns strived hard to keep cordial relations with the Mughals by claiming common ancestry. Though, Akbar (r. 1556-1605 CE) denied any matrimonial alliances with them but made efforts in order to bring them under his control and authority. This could be a result of growing Portuguese influence in the region or Akbar's plans to take over Qandahar. In 1586 CE, Nawab Muhammad Sadiq Khan, the Mughal governor of Bakhar advanced into the territory ruled by the Tarkhans and laid siege to Sehwan. After a hotly contested battle, the both parties came to a negotiated settlement.³ Consequently, the Mughal army retreated. Jani Beg used his flotilla to help his besieged troops in Sehwa. He used the river to move to the rear of the Mughal army, and to harass and cut its lines of communication which forced the Nawab to lift the siege and return Bakhar. However, Mirza Jani Beg took measures to Akbar through various ways and means.

The successful defiance of the Mughal governor of Bakhar led the Emperor Akbar to bestow the revenue of Multan and Bakhar on his chief noble, Abd al-Rahim Khan-i-Khanan with order to proceed on the

¹ Riaz ul Islam. 'The Rise of the Sammas in Sind' in *Islamic Culture*, Vol. 22, 1948, 359.

² Zahir al-Din Muhammad Babur, *The Babur Nama*, Trans. (Urdu) Mirza Hassan Beg (Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, 2008), 178.

³ Mir Masum, *Tarikh-i-Sindh* alias *Tarikh-i-Masumi*, Urdu Trans. Akhtar Rizvi (Jamshoro: Sindhi Adabi Board, 1959), 343-344; Mir Ali Sher Qani, *Tuhfat al-Kiram*, Urdu trans. Akhtar Rizvi, 235-8.

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conquest of Qandhar in 1589-90 CE. When Khan-i-Khanan arrived in northern Sindh with the imperial army, Jani Beg alarmed. He created an army of local tribesmen to reinforce his land defence and had invited European mercenaries to help him build a flotilla which could reach the rear of the Mughal army, and cut its supply line.⁴ He skillfully defended his kingdom against the imperial army for two years. He lost his father, Muhammad Paynda who was the nominal ruler and his son Abu'l Fath in 1591 CE during the hostilities.

Finally, the protracted war of attrition titled in favor of the invading army, backed by the immense resources of the mighty Mughal Empire, Jani Beg was forced to negotiate a peace that ended independent Tarkhan rule in Sindh. In November 1592 CE, Jani Beg met Khan-i-Khanan to surrender the charge of his realm to the Mughal general. Emperor Akbar promoted Jani Beg to the rank of three thousand *zat* and *sawar* in 1595-1596 CE and to the rank of three thousand five hundred *zat* and *sawar* in 1596-1597 CE. After the death of Jani Beg in 1600 CE in Asirgarh, his seventeen-year-old son Ghazi Beg took over the reins of government at Thatta. Emperor Akbar carved up Sindh for making it a *suba* (administrative unit) with five *sarkars* (districts) and appointed their *mansabdars*, among them few were relatives of Mirza Jani Beg. After Akbar's death, Thatta was ruled over by different *subedars* (governors) till 1737 A.D.

Emperor Jahangir sent a Mughal officer to Thatta with the instructions to bring Ghazi Beg to the Mughal court. He also bestowed him the province of Multan including Bakhar. However, when the Persian governor of Herat invaded Qandhar in 1605-1606 CE, Emperor Jahangir appointed Ghazi Beg, the head of the imperial army, to relieve Qandhar.⁵ After the death of Ghazi Beg in 1612 CE, Khusro Charkas made attempt to hold the territory of Thatta but Emperor Jahangir sent a number of Mughal *mansabdars* consecutively, who took over Thatta. Mirza Rustam Safavi was appointed as the first Mughal governor of Thatta, who finally abolished the Arghun-Tarkhan rule in Sindh.

There were a number of official writers who endeavored for drawing a plausibly adequate picture of the Mughal administration. Their narrations have been qualified by the quality and expanse of available information. Studies of the Mughal administration in Sindh are for the most part relied upon this notable work supplemented by some indigenous historical sources. The *Siyasat Nama* (Book on Politics) of Nizam al-Mulk Tusi is considered as the foremost among all the post-

⁴ *Tuhfat al-Kiram*, 238-43.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 265.

Muslim Persian works produced on this topic. Later on, *Akhlaq-i-Humayun* (The Virtues of Emperor Humayun) written by Qadi Ikhtiyar Al-Din Harwi in 1506-07 CE for Babur, is regarded as the leading compilation of this genre in the Mughal India.⁶ *Tarikh-i-Masumi* and *Mazhar-i-Shahjahani* are two of the unique works of this kind. This paper looks at both of these sources, as contemporaneous from the region, and examines sources of disorder in the region as well as the response of the peasant communities.

Tarikh-i-Masumi

Beside these two sources, *Tarikh-i-Sindh* (History of Sindh) commonly known as the *Tarikh-i-Masumi* (History by Mir Masum) is considered as one of the earliest and valuable general histories written in Sindh. It holds great significance among all the regional histories of Medieval India. This book was written by Mir Muhammad Masum during the reign of Akbar when the author was in Khandesh.⁷ Mir Masum was an eminent historian, poet, traveler, physician, soldier, diplomat, and epistolographer of his era. He joined the imperial services after the fall of Bakhar to the Mughals, it seems that he compiled this book in order to provide the authentic records of the conquest of Sindh by his new patrons, the Mughals in 1591 CE, as well as to record the exploits of the previous rulers such as the Arghuns, Tarkhans and Sultan Mahmud Khan.⁸ As the author himself participated in the final operation against Jani Beg at Thatta, to record the final story of passing the country of Sindh to the Mughals is supposed to be a part of his service.

After the occupation of Thatta in 1520 CE, Sindh fell in the hands of the Arghuns (r. 1520-1555 CE), the Tarkhans (r. 1555-1592 CE), and the great Mughals (r. 1592-1700 CE) respectively, who were the foreigners, migrated from Central Asia and settled in Sindh. Likewise, the other medieval powers such as the Safavids and the Ottomans, the Mughals were also exposed to similar political and economic unrest of the era. The Mughal empire was in dire need of generating revenue which could be channeled as funds for armies and other war-expedition related expenses. To seek loyalty of the landed

⁶ Dr. M. Saleem Akhtar, *Sindh under the Mughals: An Introduction to, Translation of and Commentary on the Mazhar-i-Shahjahani of Yusuf Mirak* (1044/1634), (Islamabad: NIHCR, 1990), 133.

⁷ Dr. Zahuruddin Ahmad, *Pakistan mein Farsi Adab* (Persian Literature in Pakistan), vol. I (Lahore: Majlis-e Taraqqi-ye Adab, 1974), 252-4.

⁸ Dr. M. H. Siddiqi, 'Tarikh-i-Masumi: Date of its Compilation', *Journal of Pakistan Historical Society*, Vol. xiv, No. 3, July 1966, 205.

elites it was inevitable to compliment loyal officials for government services as well as local appointed authorities. As part of social progress, it had to ensure a standard of living for the cultivators, along with safeguard from rebels, bandits and predatory elites. Most importantly it was imperative to improve financial stability and resilience for enabling the working and cultivating population to pay their taxes and other obligations and also for saving them from become fodder at the hands of rival factions in rebellions.

The accounts about the campaign of Shah Hasan Arghun against the Langah rulers of Multan and the struggle of the natives are unique and worth-mentioning. It is evident that agriculture and commerce were main occupations of the people of Sindh during the Samma rule (r. 1351-1524 CE). The rulers took keen interest and made great efforts for the progress of agricultural activities. During the reign of Jam Nizam al-Din alias Jam Nanda, the commander-in-chief of his forces, Darya Khan and Chagla, a Hindu minister was deputed to Sehwan for excavation work of a canal named *Saavi*, which irrigated lands of Gaha tribe. The peasants of Bubak also constructed a huge Dam in the south of Manchar Lake under the supervision of Darya Khan, which irrigated the land of Kaacho in Sehwan province.⁹

However, the prosperity and peace prevailed in Sindh under the native rule of the Sammas was affected due to the Arghun invasions of Thatta, Sehwan and Bakhar. Meanwhile, Samma, Sehta and Sodha tribesmen of Sehwan made an alliance under Darya Khan's three sons namely, Mahmud Khan, Mithan Khan and Sarang Khan and chief of Sodha tribe named Ranmal Sodha and met at the Fort of Talti to oppose the Arghun army. In fact, this resistance movement was launched by Makhdoom Bilawal and some other religious leaders of Sehwan *Sarkar*. They took a pledge that they would not withdraw from the struggle and will fight till death.¹⁰

Consequently, the resistance movement against the invaders became deeply rooted throughout Sindh. Finally, the two armies met at Talti where Sindhian forces fought bravely with spirit and enthusiasm but unfortunately could not survive. A large number of the Sammas were slain, paying tribute to the common people. Mir Masum writes; 'In this encounter, the Sodha tribesmen demonstrated great fighting skills and

⁹ Yousuf Mirak, *Mazhar-i-Shahjahani*, ed. Pir Hussamuddin Rashdi (Hyderabad: Sindhi Adabi Board, 1962), 283-4.

¹⁰ Mir Masum, *Tarikh-i Sindh* alias *Tarikh-i Masumi*, English Trans. Mahmood-ul-Hassan Siddiqui (Jamshoro: Institute of Sindhology, 1972), 26.

showed great gallantry in the battlefield. Some of them stood firm, and were killed along with Ranmal Sodha'.¹¹ He further writes; 'Shah Beg then encamped for three days at Talti, consigned the harvest of the existence of the inhabitants of that village to the wind of destruction'.¹² As a result, the entire agricultural land and small fortress along with its inhabitants was razed to the ground. The Machhis also refused to acknowledge the over-lordship of the Arghuns. Thus, the latter killed all the Machhi tribesmen who raised the standard of rebellion, plundered their property and cattle and razed their houses and cattle to the ground.¹³ The people of Bakhar *Sarkar* also showed their enmity against this act of brutality of the Arghuns and came in direct confrontation with them.

The detailed accounts of the Mughal campaign against Sultan Mahmud Khan of Bakhar and its subsequent administration by the imperial functionaries offer a rare insight into the matter.¹⁴ Sultan Mahmud was an independent ruler (r. 1555-1574 CE), after the death of Shah Beg Arghun. He ruled the area which was called Bakhar *Sarkar*; then he came to Sindh with Shah Beg at the age of fourteen. He had been the Governor of Siwi (part of Bakhar *Sarkar*), where he was engaged in a mass killing of the Baloch tribes. When the historic city of Thatta was plundered and set to fire by the Portuguese in 1557 CE, Sultan Mahmud Khan was busy in destroying the ready crops of Sehwan Province on both sides of the River Indus. The ruthless exploitation, injustice and excesses of administration, and frequent destruction of agricultural land disturbed the peaceful rural pattern and everyday life of the common people. Consequently, annoyed peasantry refused to pay land-tax and other tributes to the rulers of Bakhar *Sarkar*. Not only, had they forced the official revenue collectors to return back with disgrace and humiliation, they further prepared themselves for an encounter with the Mughal forces near Rohri.¹⁵

On the request of Sultan Mahmud, his daughter was married to Emperor Akbar. In return, Sultan Mahmud was conferred with the royal robe of honor and he received many presents including four elephants. Sultan Mahmud made arrangements for the royal dowry and provided a large variety of precious materials, several kinds of jewels, gold ornaments and other precious gifts in cash and kind. Thus, Sultan

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*, 32.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 242-54.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 34.

Mahmud lived lavishly, with such extravagances that were a proof of misuse of public money. Mir Masum has portrayed his character as: 'From his early days till the time of his death, he lived in prosperity and contentment. The violence of his temper was over-powering. When he was in rage, he couldn't control himself in any way. He has no scruples in shedding blood. He would destroy the houses and the families of the people on slightest suspicion. He always practiced tyranny. He had read the Holy Quran a thousand and one times'.¹⁶

After the death of Sultan Mahmud in 1574 CE, Bakhar was annexed to the Mughal Empire. It was included in Multan province as Gesu Khan was the first Mughal governor of Bakhar appointed in 1574 CE. Mir Masum's accounts about the Mughal commander and Governor of Bakhar, Mir Gesu Khan are worthy of acclamation. Mir Masum calls him مرد تند مزاج و بدخوی (ill-tempered and malicious person).¹⁷ Gesu Khan messed up the affairs and failed to extirpate the rebels in Bakhar. He was hated by the Mughals and the Sindhis alike due to his atrocities and misconduct. This act infuriated Akbar, who replaced him by Tarsun Muhammad Khan as the *Fawjdar*¹⁸ of Bakhar in April 1575 CE. The new governor of Bakhar allocated nearly 50,000 acres cultivated land as grant to the Sayyids of Bakhar and Rohri, the *Ulema*, the *Shaykhs*, their dependents and others, according to their needs.¹⁹

As a result, thousands of farmers were directly affected or either ejected, and immediately unrest was created among the peasant class of different *parganas* of Bakhar especially of Kakri *pargana* (present-day district of Khairpur). The huge land grants were distributed among the bureaucrats, clergy, relatives of the Mughals, sycophant courtiers and supporters of the Mughal Empire, who were already well-to-do. Besides confiscation of land, Mughal officials adopted other methods to oppress peasantry. For example, *Mir-i-Adl* (a justiciary, appointed by the executive authority, to carry out the Qazi's finding) enforced rigorous rates for assessment of and assessing the produce of *kankun* (a surveyor). The revenue was fixed at five *maunds* per *bega*. He then appointed supervisors all over the cultivated land. These Mughal officials misbehaved with the local cultivators. Thus, the peasants of the Kakri *sarkar* revolted against injustices and exploitation of the Mughals and came in direct confrontation with the Bakhar *sarkar* in 1576 CE. This

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 176.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 243.

¹⁸ The *fawjdar* performed military, police and judicial *functions* and also helped in revenue administration.

¹⁹ *Tarikh-i-Masumi*, 182.

was the first peasant revolt of Kakri. In this encounter, many soldiers and people of Mir-i-Adl were killed. Their corpses were thrown into a well which lay inside the fort and surfaced up later.²⁰

However, Mir-i-Adl assessing the strength behind the Kakri revolt, summoned troops from the fort of Siwi and under the command of Sayyid Abu-al-Fazl the Mughal forces marched to unleash vengeance on the people of Kakri, but had to retreat due to sudden demise of the Mughal governor. In the following year (1577), the peasantry of Kakri repeatedly refused to pay revenue taxes and challenged the authority of Bakhar *Sarkar*. This was the second revolt in which fierce fighting took place between the two parties with heavy losses on both sides. A large number of peasants were captured and put into prisons and their leaders were trampled to death under elephants' feet.²¹ In fact, this quality of offering substantial real picture of Mughal administration distinguishes *Tarikh-i-Masumi* from all other contemporary sources.

Mazhar-i-Shahjahani

With the commencement of Shahjahan's rule in 1628 CE, offers a very good deal of the regional history of Sindh, explaining the conduct of the Mughal officials and response of the native masses to it. This book is written by Yousuf Mirak s/o Mir Abu al-Qasim Namkin of Bakhar in 1634 CE. It is evident that the author intended to send his compilation to Emperor Shahjahan for apprising him of maladministration, tyranny and corruption of Mughal governors in Sindh, but it could not reach him as it was probably intercepted. *Mazhar-i-Shahjahani* is also regarded as a 'Mirror for Princes',²² the term that is commonly used for those ethico-political tracts which are primarily 'designated to present the latter with a picture of ideal ruler and his officials'.²³ The text of this book suggests that the author borrowed some references from *Tarikh-i-Sindh* of Mir Muhammad Masum for the chapters related to Bakhar and Sehwan.

When Shahjahan ascended the Mughal throne in 1628 CE, he immediately appointed Ahmad Beg Khan as the governor of Sehwan. Due to atrocities and misrule led by Ahmad Beg's brother Mirza Yousuf, the *de facto* ruler of Sehwan, Yousuf Mirak left Sehwan and reached

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 182-3.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 184.

²² Dr. M. Saleem Akhtar, *Sindh under the Mughals: An Introduction to, Translation of and Commentary on the Mazhar-i-Shahjahani of Yusuf Mirak (1044/1634)* (Islamabad: NIHCR, 1990), 133.

²³ See Felix Tauer, in Jan Rypka, *History of Iranian Literature* (Holland: D. Reidel, 1968), 426.

Multan to his elder brother Mir Abu al-Baqa, the then Governor. Later on, he went to Thatta in 1629 CE with Abu al-Baqa when the latter was transferred there as the governor. Yousuf Mirak stayed at Thatta as long as Mir Abu al-Baqa remained the governor, but in May 1632 CE, he returned to Sehwan when the latter was transferred to Junagardh.²⁴ In Sehwan, he rose to a high status due to the support of the new Mughal *jagirdar*, Dindar Khan, who won favor of the author because of his 'leniency, the piety and the humanitarian attitude, but lashed out at the weak rule and the misconduct of his officials'.²⁵

As mentioned above, Ahmad Beg Khan, the nephew of Asaf Khan was appointed as the *jagirdar* of Sehwan by Emperor Shahjahan just after his accession in 1628 CE. Ahmad Beg was a debauch and pleasure-seeking person who spent most of his time in rejoices and making merry in the *harem*. He showed very little interest in the statecraft and entrusted all his responsibilities to his brother, Mirza Yousuf who exercised sole authority. Mirza Yousuf was an enraged and vindictive man who drew sadistic enjoyment from imposing physical and mental torture on the public masses.²⁶ He endeavored to maximize his own affluence in more or less unethical and disrespectful manner. On the basis of this trait of brutality and ruthlessness, the author of the *Mazhar-i-Shahjahani* calls him as Hajjaj bin Yousuf, the second.²⁷

Thus, due to the exploitative and oppressive rule of Mirza Yousuf, the administration of the province deprived to such extent that some native tribes rose into rebellion against their disruptive and hostile conduct. Mirza Yousuf's employed some criminals who overtly committed street robbery, exacted excessive and unjustified taxes and duties from the traders and peasants forcibly.²⁸ This was the extreme situation in which Yousuf Mirak left Sehwan and reached Multan which had been governed by his brother Mir Abu al-Baqa as proxy of Nawab Asaf Khan. At this time, Yousuf Mirak planned to undertake a visit to Agra for informing the Emperor of the miserable conditions to which Ahmad Beg and his wicked brother had reduced the people of Sehwan.²⁹ Meanwhile, Mir Abu al-Baqa received the imperial orders to join his new assignment as the governor of Thatta and Ahmad Beg was sent to Multan to replace him. Abu al-Baqa took Yousuf Mirak with him to

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 100.

²⁵ *Sindh under the Mughals*, 92.

²⁶ *Mazhar-i-Shahjahani*, 156.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 154.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 158.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 160-1.

Thatta. Mir Abu al-Baqa was an expert in diplomatic affairs and court etiquette. Being a practical person, he felt the gravity of situation, so did not allow Mirak to go on with his naive task. Shortly after his arrival at Thatta, Yousuf Mirak fell ill. His illnesses as well as the appointment of such an incompetent person like Ahmad Beg as the governor of Multan, which was far more important a fertile region than Sehwan, demoralized Yousuf Mirak from further pursuing his intention. Furthermore, he was sure that he would be intercepted while passing through Multan to reach Agra. His doubts lowered his zeal, so he subsequently decided to write a book about the matter and present it to the emperor.³⁰

It is evident that Yousuf Mirak had a deep insight into the affairs of administration of Sindh and its problems. He possessed considerable individual audacity, determination and self-determined viewpoint, so the Mughal administrators of Sindh frequently sought his guidance and recommendations. Particularly Shamshir Khan never took any decision without prior approval and suggestions of Yousuf Mirak. No matter what Shamshir Khan took his advice for, it proved to be a successful attempt. An account of the affairs of the region of Bakhar including the details of its all eight *parganas*³¹ such as the Mathela, Alor, Ladha-Gagan, Kakari, Darbela, Jato'i, Chandukah and Takar have been mentioned. The author not only discusses the evils crept into the administrative set up particularly the economic hindrances but also suggests its remedies.

Tarikh Mazhar-i-Shahjahani is a significant source particularly for being an eye-witness accounts of the period after the conquest of Sindh by the hands of the Mughals in 1591 CE. It reveals that Akbar only seized the *sarkars* of Bakhar and Sewistan including Lahiri Bandar while rest of the territory was entrusted to Mirza Jani Beg as *jagir*. It particularly offers substantial information about the affairs of the region of Sewistan for which we found no other source. It provides factual details of the unruly tribes who had permeated the nearby regions.³² It is significant for providing author's personal analysis about the virtues and evils caused by the successive Mughal administrations and their pros and cons on the development of the region.³³ The author suggests some administrative measures for the improvement of administration such as the division of duties and responsibilities among different functionaries like the *bakhshi* (Military pay-master and intelligence officer) and the

³⁰ *Ibid.* 161-2.

³¹ The provinces under the Mughals were sub-divided into *sarkars* which were further divided into a number of *parganas* or districts.

³² *Mazhar-i-Shahjahani*, 242.

³³ *Ibid.*, 180-81.

waqa'i nawis (secret news-writer).³⁴ He recommends that the judicial and religious matters should be freed from the influence of the civil authorities.³⁵ The book explicitly traces the origin of different native tribes and clans that makes this source unrivaled among all its contemporaries.

Besides the working of the Mughal administrative machinery in Sindh, Yusuf Mirak also gives eye-witness accounts about the atrocities, negligence from the duties and misrule led by Mughal aristocrats for instance Mirza Rustam, Mirza Muzaffar, Ahmad Beg Khan and his brother Mirza Yousuf. The latter was appointed the *jagirdar* of Sehwan by Shahjahan.³⁶ It infers that the Mughal Emperors had failed in controlling the tyrannical tendencies of some of the nobles. In this regard, the author also discusses the corruption crept into the system of land grants due to administrative bankruptcy of those Mughal nobles. Likewise, Mirak provides strong evidences about the authority and dominating powers of Noor Jahan and her family over the state affairs during the last phase of Jahangir's weak rule.

The issue of sectarian enmity between the Sunnis and the Shi'as during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which was marked at the highest degree, has also been dealt by the author. Thus, the issue can be understood and needs to be examined critically without any biases and prejudices.³⁷ Though there is no direct evidence but some other contemporary sources also reveal extreme sectarian tension between these two major sects of the Muslims.³⁸ Such volatile situation resulted in armed conflicts among the followers of the both sects. In one of such incidents occurred in 1642 CE, author's nephew Abdul Razzaq lost his life.³⁹ As far as the issue of proselytization in Sindh is concerned, *Mazhar-i-Shahjahani* is the earliest work which implicitly refers to the reason behind this matter. The author states that majority of such people belonged to the Muslim peasant class, who proselytized due to their deplorable economic conditions.⁴⁰ In this regard, the author sheds light

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 190.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 193.

³⁶ Samsam al-Dawla Shahnawaz Khan, *Ma'athir al-Umara*, Urdu Trans. M. Ayub Qadri, Vol. I (Lahore: Markazi Urdu Board, 1968), 195.

³⁷ *Mazhar-i-Shahjahani*, 156.

³⁸ Shaykh Farid al-Din Bakhari, *Dhakhirat al-Khawarin*, ed. S. Moin ul Haque, Vol. II (Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, 1968), 369-70.

³⁹ Pir Hussamuddin Rashdi, *Tadhkirah-i-Amir Khani* (Jamshoro: Sindhi Adabi Board, 1961), 177.

⁴⁰ *Mazhar-i-Shahjahani*, 242.

on religious deterioration in Sindh which caused the social and economic decline.

In the *Mazhar-i-Shahjahani*, which comprises history of four regions of Sindh under the Mughals, the author pursues his interest in giving topography of the region, the origin and culture of different native tribes and more significantly revenue yields of each *sarkar* and *pargana*.⁴¹ Individual personalities, generally relating to the ruling aristocracy have not been treated as vividly as in the other contemporary historical works. Since the ruling aristocracy mainly comprised the outsiders of Persian and Turanian origin, they showed little sympathy and consideration for the local populace of their *jagirs*. In this regard, the author states that rent-farming and extortionist demands of *amil*s (revenue collectors) and *arbabs*⁴² were two more customs that caused a great deal of hardship to the peasants which harmed the country.⁴³

Even Mir Masum and Mir Abu al-Qasim Namkin, who had been generously praised by Mirak for their concern for welfare of the peasantry, have been alleged of immoderation from other historians as Shaykh Farid Bakhari.⁴⁴ Mirak gives eyewitness accounts of the dreadful socioeconomic conditions of Sehwan on the whole writing that the street crimes were so common and people were openly robbed in the streets, the traders were hard-pressed by the burden of excessive duties, and the people were bound to pay taxes at higher rates as per the officials' wishes. No one can travel around without the *dastak* (written permission) of Mirza Yousuf, for which they had to pay. The life and honor of the native people were publicly threatened and violated under his tyrant rule.⁴⁵

On the other side, the author enthusiastically displays the feelings of patriotism.⁴⁶ He realizing genuine problems of the era, drawing upon his utmost concern with Sindh, and having his knowledge of every part of the region, endeavors to propose realistic solutions for them. There is a reference that due to the oppressive manners of Ahmad Beg Khan (the *jagirdar* of Sewistan), some Sindhi scholars deserted their homes and settled in the other regions of India. Regarding the law and

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 183-5.

⁴² The officers who dealt with the amount spent in household. They dealt with the accounts of the people who had sums of money in their custody for meeting contingent expenditures, of which they had to render account.

⁴³ *Sindh under the Mughals*, 17-20.

⁴⁴ *Dhakhirat al-Khawarin*, 198-9, 204-5.

⁴⁵ *Mazhar-i-Shahjahani*, 154-9.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 158.

order violation by the turbulent tribes Yousuf Mirak recommends that they should be decimated by the armed force. In order to support his standpoint, the author gives examples from past and then existing circumstances in Sindh. He also generously quotes from the aphorism, legends and anecdotes of ancient rulers for the future generations to take benefit from them.

There is, however, another side of the picture regarding the insurrections of turbulent local tribes in Sindh during this era. Like the other contemporary historians, Mirak Yousuf being a member of alien aristocracy hailing from Central Asia, scrupulously expresses his views against the native tribes while the local people considered these resistance activities as a struggle for their emancipation from the occupation of the foreign rulers. He also uses abusive and disgraceful remarks for the native tribes of Sindh such as the Shoros, Samijahs and Baloch, calls them malefactors.⁴⁷ On the other hand, he praises the Palijas, Korijahs, Linjars and Narijas for their obedient and submissive manner towards their feudal lords. He writes: ‘... the Palijas, Korijas, Lanjars, Narejas; all these four tribes have always been under the submission of the feudal-lords. And this government was prosperous and thriving during the days of the Tarkhans. But control of the Tarkhans was weak over the three above-mentioned tribes up until the raged people executed Rustam, the eldest son of Khusro Beg—the ruler of Thatta. He gathered an army against the stubborn and turbulent masses’.⁴⁸

Undoubtedly, *Mazhar-i-Shahjahani* constitutes the most life-like depiction of the Mughal administration in a crucial trading and political center of the empire like Sindh. It also features the incredible kind of control and governance ran in the region during the reigns of Akbar and Jahangir. However, the seventeenth century turned out harsh for Sindh as it unfolded decline in military presence, the rise in burdensome taxes and recalcitrant *jagirdars* caused the criminal elements in the society to wreak havoc. The Mughals got carried away while the influx of international trade was growing in the region; that too in the presence of the Safavid Empire of Persia. Emperor Aurangzeb failed to anticipate the deteriorating conditions of the region due to his continuous engagement in Deccan affairs. Thus, towards the end of the seventeenth century, the Mughals conceded most of the control of Sindh to the Kalhoras who further continued their rule in Sindh for almost a century.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 41.