

## Downfall of Talpur dynasty and British annexation of Sindh: A critical review of British-Talpur treaties

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**Abstract:** The British rule in Indian sub-continent had been expanding. More and more Indian states were being conquered by them. The diversion of British imperialistic interest towards western boundaries moved them into Sindh (now a province of Pakistan), where various tribes lived. To mention the names of some, Kalhora, Talpur, Soomro, Bhutto, Laghari, Zardari, Jatoli etc. were some of the very famous tribes. This study is focused on one of the mighty ruling tribe, the Talpurs. The study is a critical analysis of the mutual agreements and treaties between the British East India Company and Talpur Rulers. The role of these agreements in British-Talpur relations and reasons for later annexation of Sindh by the British in 1843 is also studied. The mutual treaties proved to be unsuccessful in avoiding the annexation. The political instability, further division into independent territories, feeble economic condition and strategic importance of Sindh led it to the British annexation in 1843. The British tried to present betrayal of the treaties on the part of Talpurs as an excuse to annex Sindh. However, the British strategic and military policy in the Subcontinent required the control of Sindh. The British wanted to use Sindh as a military base to fight with Punjab and Afghanistan in continuation of their imperialist policies in the Indian Subcontinent. Unrestricted use of Indus river system for the transportation of military supply and trade goods was also essentially required by the British. Therefore, neither treaties nor their betrayal was a reason for British annexation of Sindh.

**Key words:** *British India; Sindh; Talpurs; Annexation of Sindh*

### 1. Introduction

The Muslims from Arab conquered the Sindh in the beginning of 8<sup>th</sup> century. They took over the Sindh from Hindu Rajput rulers. In the 11<sup>th</sup> century Mahmood Ghaznavi captured the Sindh and made it part of Ghaznavi Empire in 1026 AD. The Mughal Emperor Akber took over Sindh in 1591 and annexed it into Mughal Indian Empire. Nadir Shah attacked Sindh in 1740 and Sindh again became part of Afghan rule. Nadir Shah levied an annual tax of 2 million rupees on the local chieftains of the Sindh. The Durrani Dynasty of Afghanistan seized the control of Sindh after the assassination of Nadir Shah.

During the Ping-Pong game of power between Mughals and Afghans, the Kalhoras became rulers of the Sindh. Noor Muhammad was recognized as first ruler of Sindh, belonged to Kalhoras. Ghulam Shah, brother of Noor Muhammad succeeded him power. British East India Company made a trade agreement with Noor Muhammad. As a result of that agreement, in 1758, the Company established its factories (trading posts) in Shah Bandar and Thatta. An official order was issued by Ghulam Shah, legitimizing establishment of trading posts and authorizing some trading benefits to British East India Company. A revision of the order was issued in 1761. Sarfraz Khan became ruler of Sindh after his father Ghulam

Shah. The rivalry between Kalhoras and Talpurs peaked during his rule. The political circumstances, law and order situation and interference in trade became so intensive that in 1775, British East India Company was forced to shut down their factories in Sindh. (CIE, 1883)

The political situation in Sindh remain violent during the rule of Sarfraz Khan Kalhora, who ordered the assassination of three chieftains of Talpur tribe. The death of three Talpur tribal chiefs ultimately led to downfall of Kalhora Dynasty in Sindh. The Balouch tribe of Talpurs vowed to take revenge of the death of their leaders and revolted against Kalhoras. In 1786, the last ruler of Kalhora Dynasty AbdulNabi was overthrown by the Talpurs. Mir Fateh Ali Khan Talpur became the ruler of Sindh. The rule of Talpurs in Sindh was also full of internal conspiracies. Mir Sohrab Talpur and Mir Thora conspired against Mir Fateh Ali Khan, fled and established their own authorities in Khairpur and Shahbandar. The Sindh was divided into three parts, each led by Mir Sohrab, Mir Thora and Mir Fateh Ali. Lower Sindh with its capital in Hyderabad was ruled by Mir Fateh Ali, Upper Sindh with its capital in Khairpur by Mir Sohrab and Mirpur by Mir Thora Khan. Mir Fateh Ali Khan along with his three brothers shared the rule of Hyderabad. All four brothers are famous in Sindhi history and remembered as four friends due to their perceptible or ostensible unity.

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Mir Fateh Ali Khan of Hyderabad made an agreement with British East India Company, which led to revival of British trade in Sindh. In 1799, an order was issued by him to grant certain trade rights to the East India Company. However, annexation of Bengal and subsequent British advancement brought speculations and rumors about British in Sindh. The people and rulers of Sindh felt insecure which ultimately led to withdrawal of British representative from Sindh.

Mir Fateh Ali Khan died in 1801. According to his will, the lower Sindh was divided between his three brothers in a way that 50% of territory was left to Mir Ghulam Ali and remaining to Murad Ali and Karam Ali. The annual liability of 13 lacks to the Ruler of Kabul was also divided among his brothers in similar way. The son of Mir Ghulam Ali was not given any share in power, and after the death of Mir Ghulam Ali in 1811 his territory was divided between other two brothers. Mir Karam Ali died and had no children, so in this way Mir Murad Ali became sole ruler of lower Sindh in 1828. After the death of Mir Murad Ali in 1835, the rule was again divided in two sons of him along with their two cousins. The four sons of four brothers shared the power in lower Sindh till the annexation of Sindh by the British in 1843. (Lari, 1994)

In the meanwhile, the Upper Sindh (Khaipur) and Mirpur were ruled by and succeeded by single rulers. In Khaipur the power was transferred from Mir Soharab to his son Mir Rustum in 1830. Sher Muhammad son of Mir Thora Khan succeeded the throne in 1829. Both Sher Muhammad and Mir Rustum remained in power till the annexation of Sindh by the British in 1843.

## 2. Literature review

The available literary resources available on the history of Sindh during and before the British era can be classified mainly into two categories. British National Archives, documents from India office London and archives of Sindh Government are the factual data collected, drafted and preserved by the British administrative setup in the sub-continent. Second category comprises of the books and articles written by various English and local writers. The majority of the literature of second category is based upon the data collected by the documents of the first category. The British administrative services of India had developed a system of gazettes as source of feedback for the future administrative officers and from Indian Subcontinent for the policy makers at the top level.

The gazette of each district was compiled and updated on early basis. The gazettes also act as guide for new administrative beaurucrates of all districts. The gazettes comprises of topographical, geographical, economic and cultural information of a specific districts. They also contained detailed maps and photographic illustrations of every district under British administration. For the sake of research on history of Sindh, particularly during the

British era, the importance of gazettes cannot be overlooked. The present research also depends on those documents for the historical data part of the research. However, for the sake of analysis, viewpoints of both British and local writers have been considered.

The Gazetteer of Sindh, published in 1876 is a great source of information on Sindh consists of almost thousand pages. It includes the geographical data, boundaries, climate and soil conditions, crops produced, economic potential, roads and infrastructure, urban and rural sociology, casts and clans of Sindh. The history of Sindh along with brief introduction of previous rulers have been described in the first chapter. The Kalhora and Talpur dynasties have also been discussed in the context of historical events. The administrative services and fiscal data of every district is compiled from 1843 to 1875. The introduction of every district, tehsil and town is available in the cultural and social forms. Even the prominent people of every town have been discussed. (Hughes, 1876)

A great work titled as History of Sindh was written by Muhammad Masoom Namee in the Persian language at the end of 16<sup>th</sup> century. The manuscript was obtained from Mir Ali Murad Khan Talpur by the British Major George Grenville Malet, deployed at Khaipur and translated into English in 1846. The manuscript then became official part of the "Records of the Bombay Government No XIII". Chapter 1 narrates the era after the Arab Muslim conquest of the Sindh in 8<sup>th</sup> century. The second chapter is about rule of Indian emperors in Sindh like Soormah and Summah. The subsequent chapter discusses Urghooneeyuhs rule in India. The last chapter describes the rule of Ameers appointed by the Mughal emperors. The texts about Sindh, originated by the British also quote historical events from this book. It is the brief narration of the events of Indian history in general and History of Sindh in particular. It is also a chronicle of Muslim rise and fall in Sindh. (Masoom, 1846)

A book titled as "The Historical Background of Pakistan and its People" also presents a historical perspective about the land and people of Sindh. The writer name is Ahmed Abdullah and the book was published in 1973. The book generally describes brief historical background of all four provinces of Pakistan. However a specific chapter is designated for the brief account of history of Sindh. The rulers of Sindh are described in a chronological order starting from Muhammad Bin Qasim, Nasiruddin Qabacha, the Soormahs and the Summah to the dynasties of The Kalhoras and Talpurs. The rivalry between Kalhoras and Talpurs is also briefly described until the conquest of Sindh by the British. The era of British rule in Sindh is however not provided with much details. (Abdulla, 1973)

As for as the British policy towards Sindh before its annexation is concerned, a book written by P. N. Khera in 1941 is of great importance. The writer was a research scholar of the University of Punjab. The book has described the relationship between British

Indian Government and the rulers of Sindh (The Kalhoras and Talpurs). The time period specified is from 17<sup>th</sup> century to the British annexation of Sindh in 1843. The writer has not attempted to narrate detailed history of Sindh. He has analyzed the documents from the Letter Books of the Punjab Government's Records Office Lahore and British Parliamentary Papers pertaining to Sindh. The writer has tried greatly to explain the British policy towards Sindh, especially in the context of colonial economic interests of the British authorities. The treaties between British and Amirs of Sindh have also been analyzed from a perspective of native Indian. He has criticized the British policy towards Sindh but succeeded to keep intellectual impartiality. He has also highlighted the impotency of Ameers of Sindh. He also concluded that their rule was not beneficial for the people of Sindh. The annexation of Sindh was inevitable largely due to their own incompetency. (Khera, 1941)

A collection of treaties between British-Indian government and rulers of Sindh has been compiled by Sani Hussain Panhwar in form of a book and available online as an internet resource. It is a collection of various economic and political agreements, treaties, engagements, grants and *Sanads* took place from 1752 to 1842. The texts are in original form as well as in translations from local language. A short historical background of Sindh has been stated by the author. The treaties and other contracts are presented in chronological order in the footnotes of the historical narration of the events. The agreements are reproduced in their original text and format. The agreements are further classified according to their natures, either political or economic. The second part is designated for translations of various orders and permission letters of economic nature, issued by government of Sindh. Those orders and letters contain various trade, tariff and duties related matters dealing with British East India Company. (Panhwar)

Various other historians have also contributed to the history of Sindh, particularly in the context of British rule in India. Many contributions originated from British writers and veterans of British army and civil services. The works of M. Elphinstone (1815), A.W. Huges (1876) and J. Martineau (1895) are worth mentioning. Some notable native writers include K.M.S. Rahimdad (*Janatul Sindh* 1958), H. Mujtaba (*Rise and Fall of Hyderabad*, 1998) and Mir Atta Muhammad Talpur (*The Vanishing Glory of Hyderabad*). In the recent years, the work of Muhammad Hussain Panhwar cannot be overlooked. He has tried to compile various literary resources about Sindh in the form of rare books, articles, documents, photographs, maps and various other data. All the resources are easily available on a website dedicated to Muhammad Hussain Panhwar.

### 2.1. The beginning of British trade in Sindh

The quest for trade destinations, brought many European nations to Indian Sub-continent at the

beginning of 16<sup>th</sup> century. The Dutch, French and Portuguese were among the initial European naval powers, who landed on the shores of India for trade. The British joined them later in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The European trading companies competed for better trade opportunities in India, at many occasions they came face to face in conflicts and even wars. On 31st December 1600, the British Royal Order was declared through which trade with eastern countries was made legal and officially authorized. The Royal Order was promulgated accordingly through "The Governor and Merchants of London Trading to East India". Hence, the British tourist, Anthony Starr was officially sent to Sindh in 1612 A.D. to acquire information on the trading procedures and find out various opportunities of future trade. However, before accomplishing his task, Anthony Starr and his partners, including some Indian associates died. It was later disclosed that some Portuguese traders from Sindh had poisoned them.

During the reign of the Mughal Emperors in Dehli, Sindh was also under their rule. Thomas Roe was officially appointed as Ambassador in the Royal Palace of the Mughals in Agra. Through his efforts, in 1612 A.D. Thomas Roe succeeded in reaching an agreement with Mughal Emperor, Jahangir, for permission to carry on trade in Sindh. on 18th December 1635 British vessel 'Discovery' reached Lahari Bundar, Richard Moullay, John Seller and John Freeman came to India as representatives of British government. After staying there for some days, the members of the group recommended to buy clothes from Naseerpur. During the reign of Mughal Emperor, Aurangzeb Alamgir, a famine broke out in Sindh in 1658. It also had a negative impact on the Company's trading activities and it had to shut down its trading business in Sindh in the year 1662 A.D. (Masoom, 1846)

### 2.2. The British trade in Sindh during Kalhora period

The British seized an opportunity for revival of trade in Sindh when the Kalhora dynasty came into power. The British trading posts had been shut down since 1662. A representative of the East India Company, Robert Syten personally approached the ruler Ghulam Shah Kalhora and succeeded in reaching a trade agreement with him. The Kalhora ruler was himself interested to be in good terms with the British, as iron, copper, and brass was required by him to manufacture arms and ammunition for his army. Therefore, to facilitate international trade in Sindh, the Kalhora ruler constructed the port of Shah Bundar. In 1760, Robert Steyn was appointed as a Resident of British East India Company in Sindh. Meanwhile, the power struggle between Kalhoras and the Talpurs heightened in Sindh. The wars between two tribes not only burdened the economy of Sindh but law and order condition was also deteriorated. The economic losses became unbearable for East India Company and in 1775, the company

was forced to shut down its trading activities in Sindh. (Lari, 1994)

### 2.3. British relation with Talpurs dynasty of Sindh

In 1783 AD, the Talpurs defeated Kalhora after a decisive battle at the place of Halani and laid down the foundations of their rule in Sindh. During the Talpur rule the law and order situation was restored in Sindh. To avail another opportunity of trade in Sindh the British East India Company sent an ambassador to the Talpurs. (Postans, 1843) The British East India Company appointed Mr. Nathan Kru, a bureaucrat of Bombay Civil Service, as its representative to Government of Sindh. Mir Fateh Ali Talpur honoured the British representative and accorded permission to build first trade post in Karachi. In 1799, first British cargo shipped arrived in Karachi Mr. Nathan Kru sent a letter to the East India Company on the importance of Sindh.

He stated that British presence in Sindh would draw attention of Zaman Shah, the ruler of Kabul. Friendly relationship with Talpurs would benefit the British incase of war with the Kabul. The defeat of Kabul would also open the trade routes with central Asia. The rulers of Sindh, the Talpurs were annual tax payer of the Kabul Empire. The agreement between Talpurs and the British made them angry. They threatened the Talpurs to immediately remove British interests from Sindh. Mr. Nathan Kru had spent hardly a year in Sindh and Mir Fateh Ali Khan Talpur ordered him to leave the Sindh within 10 days on October 29, 1800. Apparently the pressure from Afghanistan and growing resentment about British imperialist designs had forced the Talpurs to step back. (Sorley H. T., 1938)

This unilateral violation of agreement casted a loss of Rs.196590 to the British East India Company. After being expelled from Sindh, Mr. Nathan Kru reached Bombay and presented his report. He was asked to present a plan to attack Sindh. He suggested that if British want to attack Sindh, they should land their forces along with small artillery 10 miles short of Karachi. The rout from Karachi to Thatta is good for transport of artillery. From Thatta, after crossing the river Indus, the British forces could attack Hyderabad. They could get help from two local tribes, the Jokhiya and the Nomriya. These tribes had resentments against Talpur rulers. The British were very upset with the expulsion of their representative from Sindh and the economic loss incurred by the violation of agreement. The British military engagement with the Marhattas in central part of India made them postpone the adventure in Sindh for the time being.

Mir Ghulam Ali Khan Talpur became the ruler of Sindh, who had served as a foreign minister with Mir Fateh Ali Khan. He wanted a friendly relationship with the British and get rid of economic burden imposed by the Afghan Empire. On the other hand, the British wanted the same keeping in view any hostility with the Kabul in future.

### 2.4. Treaties between Talpur rulers and the British

Mir Ghulam Ali Khan preferred his friendship to the British to rid himself of the ability of self-sufficient, because the British had filled the pro-government to rid the Afghan slavery.

Mir Ghulam Ali Khan Talpur wanted to get rid of liabilities imposed by Afghan rulers. He anticipated that British government is going to become ultimate ruler of India. Good relationship with the British would help him get rid of Afghan economic and political interference. International trade in Sindh would also promote the economic situation in the Sindh. He sent an ambassador to Bombay to officially apologize for the expulsion of British resident of Sindh. He also invited British East India Company to resume its trade activities in Sindh. The British accepted the invitation of Talpurs keeping in view French and Russian involvement in Iran and central Asia. The British agreed to send a representative of east India Company to Sindh very soon. (Panhwar)

### 2.5. Frist British-Talpur treaty

Captain David Stein arrived in Hyderabad as a representative of East India Company in 1808. An agreement was reached between British East India Company and Talpur rulers of Sindh on 18th July 1808. The agreement was signed between the parties on the terms as stated below:

- Both the governments would maintain friendly relationship with each other.
- Military cooperation would be provided to each other if required.
- Criminals of either side would not be given asylum.
- The military procurement from East India Company would also be allowed by the means of on-the-spot payment.
- A lawyer of the East India Company would be stationed in the Talpur palace to strengthen friendly relations.
- Expulsion of Nathan Kru from Sindh and financial loss caused by that event would not be compensated.
- The British factory of Thatta would also be reinstituted.

This first agreement between the British and the Talpurs does not seem to be a major loss to Talpur rulers. But question here is that when the East India Company's representative Nathan Crow was ordered to leave Sindh by Talpurs. In a short notice of ten days, the English traders closed the company and went back to Bombay. The British, who had suffered the loss, left that loss overlooked in the agreement. According to those time, almost a million rupees was a huge amount and according to the agreement, no question about that money from the British side would not be raised again. It clearly indicates that anticipating a bigger plan to counter Russia and

France the British rulers, the British wanted conclude an agreement at any cost, even unconditional from their side. The British wanted no hurdle in their access to Sindh for the sake of their business and broader agenda. But they had not forgotten their loss at all.

## 2.6. The second treaty/ agreement

After being stabilized in Sindh, they called back Captain David Stan to Bombay. Another delegation headed by Mr Nicholas Hankey Smith was sent to Sindh. As soon as the delegation reached Karachi, the head of the delegation received a letter from the Governor of Bombay. He was instructed to negotiate with Talpurs and make them feel that British had the power in subcontinent. The delegation arrived in Thatta on 10<sup>th</sup> June 1809. Mr. Smith gathered some necessary information about the Court of Talpurs and moved towards Hyderabad. He camped outside the Fort along with his delegation. The meeting was scheduled for next day, Mr Smith asked for chairs in the court for sitting. The gesture indicated that meeting would be held at equal level. On 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1809, second agreement was signed by the parties on following terms:

- East India Company will have friendly relations with Talpur rulers.
- No enmity would prevail between the parties.
- Permanent representatives of both parties would be stationed in each other's capitals.
- The Talpurs would not cooperate with French at any level.

Keeping in view the strategic importance of Sindh for the British, it was also being thought that British would not annex Sindh. The fourth condition of the agreement was evident of second point of view. Meanwhile the businessmen and intellectuals of Sindh were suspicious about British designs. The British imperialist strategy in India was no more a myth. The report presented by the delegation after concluding the treaty with the Talpurs was a clear evident of British ambitions about Sindh. The delegation reported to Bombay presidency that Sindh is settled territory and no more under the influence of Kabul. The representative of Sindh is stationed in Kabul just for a formality. The annexation of Sindh and after some reforms, the British could generate reasonable amount of revenue from here.

## 2.7. Third agreement/ treaty

After the death of Mir Ghulam Ali Khan Talpur in 1811, his brother Mir Karam Ali Khan become ruler of Sindh. At that time, some tribesmen used to spoil peace and harmony in the area, which included Khosa tribe. The Khosa tribes used to live like gipsy. They used to move along with their livestock in the barrens of Sindh. In addition, they were accustomed to looting. Once they looted the city of Luna, 50 miles

away from Bahusk area. This incident became an excellent reason for the British to attack Sindh. Bombay's administration talked with Talpur rulers on the issue of Khosa tribe.

In order to attack Sindh, they would require permission from the Supreme British Council stationed at Bengal. The council denied the permission and instructed for a new deal with the Talpurs. Keeping in view the decision of Supreme British Council, the British made the third agreement with the Talpur rulers on 9th November 1816, on the following conditions:

- Both the East India Company and the Talpurs would maintain friendly relationship.
- The matter of mutual interests would be resolved through resident representatives of each other.
- No American or any western citizen would be allowed to reside in Sindh. They would also be not allowed to interfere in the internal affairs of Sindh.
- The Talpurs would refrain Khosa tribes from interference in the British administrated territories.

The third agreement resembled its predecessors in terms and conditions. The British feared of any other colonial power's interference in Sindh. Every agreement tried to refrain Talpur rulers from cooperating any other international power. The strategic importance of the Sindh could not be underestimated by the British. The Sindh had the potential for best sea ports in the Indian subcontinent. Sindh used to be a gateway to India, central Asia and China since ancient times. Later the British built sea ports in Sindh and also constructed railway line from Karachi port to rest of Indian subcontinent. The Indus river system also had the potential for inter-city transportation from north to Sindh in south. The British also establish a company named as 'the Navigation of Indus'.

In 1840, the British wanted to test the Indus river transportations system. They wanted to deliver some horses as gift to the ruler of Punjab, Raja Ranjit Singh through Indus river system. The British resident Colonel Henry Pottininger was in charge of the expedition. He wrote a letter to the Talpurs asking permission for the expedition. The Talpurs were reluctant to permit free navigation of British vessels across the Sindh. It was like giving free pass to the British to reach any part of Sindh conveniently. The reluctance of Talpurs was dealt by the threats of British annexation of Sindh. Meanwhile, the ruler of Punjab also wanted to conquer Sindh, keeping in view feeble political condition of Talpur rulers and growing British-Talpur tensions. Raja Ranjit Singh moved his army near to border of Sindh. The Talpurs were bent to the dual pressure of British and Ranjit Singh. They permitted the British to freely navigate through Indus River. The British came one step closer to the annexation of Sindh.

## 2.8. Fourth treaty

The British naval vessels entered in Indus River through Thatta and traveled up north. The people of Sindh was disappointed with the British threats to get permission of Indus traveling. They considered it as violation of treaties. The Talpurs were also not happy with the developments in the Sindh. Meanwhile, keeping in view political requirements, the British tried to re-establish good relationship with the Talpurs. They made them agreed to conclude another mutual treaty. The British voyages of Indus also reported the potential financial benefits of Indus river system. Different Talpurs rulers were ruling different parts of Sindh. The British officially recognized each of them as sovereign leader of their respective territories. The British concluded different treaties with each rulers keeping in view their economic interests. Colonel Henry Pottininger was given responsibility to conclude an agreement with the Talpurs in Hyderabad. The agreement was reached in 1832 on the following terms:

- The British government requested permission to pass through the routes of the river Indus and Sindh's general roads and trade with the surrounding areas.
- No British military exercises or military gathering will be allowed.
- No English will be allowed to live in Sindh.
- No Combat or deadly weapons would be brought in Sindh or transported through Indus.

The fourth agreement clearly indicated the soft tone of British East India Company to gain permission of transportation through Indus river system. Indus river system is combination of five major and several small rivers, following from mountains of North into the Indian Ocean in South. The system had a potential to provide cheapest and fastest transportation of goods from Kabul to the shores of Sindh. The British agreed to the conditions of Talpurs to avail the opportunity to trade beyond the borders of Sindh.

The Sindh was further divided into several states after the death of four brothers. The Talpurs had lost their might due to these divisions. The British didn't want to lose the opportunity to rule the Sindh. Lord Auckland asked Talpurs to review the conditions of fourth treaty. According to him, the potential threats from Punjab and Kabul were dangerous for British interests in Sindh. The Talpurs should grant permission to use Indus river routes for military transportation. The condition of British military non-presence in Sindh was also to be reviewed. The Talpurs were not agreed to the demands of East India Company. The British want to construct military bases in Sindh to further move towards Kabul and Punjab. The Talpur ruler of Khairpur also agreed to hand over some fortresses to the British. The circumstances ultimately led to British conquest of Sindh in 1843. (Panhwar)

## 3. Conclusion

No single factor or reason led to the failure of treaties, fall of Talpur Dynasty and annexation of Sindh by the British Raj in 1843. The mutual agreements or treaties between Talpurs and British were also not able to save the Sindh. The British and Talpurs accused each other for the failure of treaties. However, a close analysis of historical events suggested a lack of will from both sides. The combination of political, strategic and economic conditions of that period led the Sindh to its destiny of British occupation.

## 4. Economic reasons

Sindh was conquered by the Afghans and ruled by the native Kalhora rulers. The Sindh was considered as a part of Kabul regime and the rulers of Sindh had to pay annual tribute of 1.5 million rupees to the Kabul. The Talpur rulers (successor to Kalhora Dynasty) divided the Sindh into three main and several small independent territories. No single part of Sindh was able to pay the burden of annual tribute. The annual tribute was no longer being paid properly to the Kabul. As a result, Kabul used to send incursion troops to warn the rulers of Sindh. Those frequent incursions had left devastating effects on the economy of Sindh. In addition to that, internal wars of succession between Kalhoras and Talpurs added misery to people of Sindh. The loss in the terms of human life also effected the productivity of Sindh. The population of cities were declined rapidly. Thatta was once a city of three hundred thousand (300000) people declined to twenty thousands (20000) in 1809 and seven thousands (7000) in 1851. (Sorley H., 1968)

Thatta was not only a gateway to India, a sea port situated at the intersection of Sindh River and Indian Ocean but also an economic hub of the Sindh. The decline of population indicates the economic downfall of Sindh. The city of Sukkar also met same fate. Another large trade center of the Sindh was Shikarpur was almost deserted by its population. The Gazteers of Sindh also indicated decline in annual income of Karachi from 0.6 Million rupees in 1793 to 0.1 Million in 1808. The economy of Sindh was mainly agriculture based. The export of commodities was main source of revenue generation. The agriculture sector in Sindh also met a similar fate, due to continuous incursions by Afghans, chaos caused by civil wars within Sindh, and exploitation by landlords. The devastation in agriculture can be anticipated by the fact that total area of cultivation was almost decreased to 50% within a century. The increasing military expenditure for the defence of Sindh along with burden of annual tribute to Kabul further increased the economic disparity. The economic downfall and political instability led the Sindh, ultimately to collapse of Talpur Dynasty and its annexation by the British.

## 5. Political and strategic reasons

The year of 1942 brought two major changes in the political administration of British East India Company, particularly in the context of Sindh. In January 1942, Sir Charles Napier had reached India and in March, Lord Ellenborough replaced Lord Auckland. The British strategic situation in India was overwhelmed by the failure of Afghan adventure. The Sindh and Punjab had received the news of British series of disasters in Afghanistan with obvious satisfaction. The misadventure in Afghanistan started by the Lord Auckland was being compared to French invasion of Spain by the Napoleon Bonapart. The morale was at lowest and reputation of British Army was at stake. The Kabul regime had also lost its control over various parts of Afghanistan and Balochistan. The Kakar, Kujjak and Murri Boloach tribes were at war against each other. The British political envoys in Quetta and Kellat were in critical situation. Moreover, the Bolan Pass, a gateway to Afghanistan was also not secure. Major Clibborn was sent to relieve the Kahun outpost from Muree tribes, he also met with serious resistance from the tribes.

The governor of Multan deputed by the Government of Lahore had also allegedly helped and instigated Dodi Khan to capture Bolan Pass. According to reports received to British, the Governor of Multan Dewan Saawan Mall also prompted Baloch Marri tribes against East India Company. Moreover, the Dewan had doubted correspondence for strengthening ties with Amirs of Hyderabad. Lord Ellenborough and Charles Napier decided not sit silent and demonstrate weakness to the enemies. After all the British had demonstrated undefeatable military power in the conflicts of Bengal and many other Indian states. They decided to carry out offensive strategic policy in case of Sindh in lieu of reconciliation and negotiations.

The British claimed that the Talpurs had betrayed them. The main allegations or reservations collected by Major Outram against Talpur rulers of Hyderabad were as under (Outram, 2012).

- The suspected correspondence between Governor of Multan and Talpurs was intercepted and considered as violation of mutual treaties which forbid them to communicate with enemies of each other.
- The Talpurs had allegedly called Brohi and Murri Baloch tribes for *Jihaad* against the British forces.
- The alleged communication between Talpurs and Sikhs of Punjab and Shah of Persia.
- Major Outram also reported suspected character of Fattah Muhammad Ghorri, who was minister of Mir Rustum Ali. He was an open critic of the British role in Sindh. However, Mir Sobdar and Mir Ali Murad of Khairpur were declared as faithful to their commitments with the British.

The offensive policy of Lord Ellenborough and Charles Napier had dual objectives. On the one had

they wanted to acquire military power on both sides of Indus River, while on the other hand they wished to occupy Bukkur and Sukkur for maintenance of effective military supply line from Indian Ocean to the banks of Satluj River and to Kandhar via Indus river. The policy could isolate Talpur rulers of Hyderabad from military point of view and economic benefits of free transportation through Indus could also be achieved.

According to the British the treaties, which were allegedly betrayed by the Talpurs had not been in fact a free expression of the will. On the contrary, the agreements seemed to be unwillingly signed by the Talpurs. The determination of Talpurs to go against the treaties was itself evident of their unwillingness to cooperate with the British. The changing strategic conditions after the British defeat in Afghanistan provided the Talpurs with the opportunity to free themselves from the pressure of both British and Afghans. The British occupation of eastern parts of India and their compulsion on the matters of using Indus River for military purposes had already alarmed the Talpurs about their future. The British demands of non-cooperation with the neighbors (as depicted in the Treaties) were also against the sovereignty of a state.

Keeping in view the imperialist British designs in India and policy executed by the Lord Ellenborough and Charles Napier for Sindh ultimately required its annexation. So the British allegations of betrayal by the Talpurs were no more than an excuse to justify annexation of Sindh. On the other hand, the Talpurs had no significant economic or military might to resist British annexation.

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