

INVASIONS OF ARABS IN SINDH

Dr. PREETI SHARMA

Guest Lecturer in University of Delhi, India

Abstract: After the downfall of mighty empire of Gupta and after the death of emperor Harsha, and then the decline of power of Gurjara pratiharas which partially succeeded in providing unity to North India and in creating powerful empire which could successfully check the invasion of foreigners in india. Of all the events, that had a singular bearing in the history of india, Harsha death in 647 AD is significant . It left a vaccum and unleashed centrifugal forces that marked the end of the ancient period in Indian history and ultimately paved the way for the Muslims rule in India. Sindh during the early years of 8th century was ruled by Dahir. Muhammad-bin-Qasim who was probably the first Islamic ruler to have invaded India in 712 and conquered Sind, which became the province of Omayyad Khilafat Qasim was invited by the Jats and Mets (Buddhists) to attack King of Dahir of Sind who had usurped the power from the previous Buddhist ruler. Qasim himself, however, was lured by the wealth of India.

Keywords: Invasion, Religious fanaticism, Centrifugal, Propogation, Lured, Sea-pirates, Usurped, Advent, Conquest, Expedition, Infantry, Plunder, Navigators.

I. INTRODUCTION

Upto 712, the Indo Arab relations were purely commercial. It is enormously believed that Islam entered in the 8th century whereas the Arabs had been carrying on trade and commerce with the Malabar coast for a long time prior to the conquest of Sindh. The Arabians didn't have strong religious ideas before the advent of Islam and they weren't even organized.

A good number of details are found regarding the history of sindh in the 7th century AD in Chachnama, a Persian translation of an old Arabic history of the conquest of Sindh by the Arabs. An expedition of the arabs was sent against Debel some time before 643AD. Badauni speaks of muslims victory but Chachnama says that the muslims were defeated.

The first attack of Arabs under Ubaidullah failed. He was defeated and killed, After this, a series of expeditions were sent to conquer an outpost of Sindh, which all ended in failure. Then Hajjaj made elaborate preparation for the attack on Sindh and sent a powerful army under the command of his nephew and son-in-law Muhammad bin Qasim in 711 AD with 6000 horses, 6000 camels, 3000 animals loaded with equipments and a large infantry. Muhammad bin Qasim proceded towards Sindh through Makarana and first conquered Debel where he received fresh reinforcement sent by Hjjaj through the sea.

II. CAUSES OF INVASION OF ARABS

The first and foremost reason of the Arabs invasion of Sindh was to plunder the wealth of india .prosperity. The traders and navigators who came to India went back from here with large amount of wealth and riches. The Arab rulers knew about India's wealth and were keen to invade India.

The Arabs had commercial relationship with India since long. Indian rulers had not only welcomed them but also provided several facilities to them. Gradually they begun to think of plundering the rich coast of India. With the growth of their military power their ambitions also grew and they started aspiring to capture territories of India. They made frequent attempts to get some footholes in India through sea and lands. After some unsuccessful attempts, Arabs ultimately succeeded in capturing Makrana in 8th century AD. Which paved the way for the conquest of Sindh.

International Journal of Novel Research in Humanity and Social Sciences

Vol. 2, Issue 4, pp: (28-30), Month: July - August 2015, Available at: www.noveltyjournals.com

It is also said that the religious fanaticism dominated in Arab and they want to spread Islam far and wide. One of the cause of the invasion of Arabs was the religious zeal. The propagation of Islam by force and conquest had been the aim of all Khalifas. The attack on Sindh was also a part of that policy. Kalifas were the head of the Islamic state. So, like all powerful rulers they also aspired to extend their empire.

The immediate cause was neither the desire for territorial expansion nor religion. The Arab rulers were desired to punish the sea-hawks of Debal who had plundered the eight ships which was sent by the ruler of Iraq named Alhijaj both the subedar and the caliph were excited over it they demanded reparation to be paid by the ruler of Sindh named Dahir. He refused saying that "he wasn't responsible for the above said event." this emerged Al-hijaj and he attacked Sindh. Hajjaj sent his nephew and son-in-law Muhammad-bin-Qasim to invade Sindh with a large army.

Different historians have different views on this incident. Some scholars had the view that the pirates looted the presents and women who were offered to the Khalifa by the king of ceylon. And according to some, Ceylon had embraced Islam and he sent some women and presents to the head of the Islamic faith and never looted by sea- pirates.

From Makran, Muhammad-bin-Qasim marched to Debel. The jats and mets joined him on the way as they were angry with Dahir. In winters he reached Debal and encircled it in 712 AD. The officers incharge of this city was king Dahir's nephew. He faced the Arab army very boldly but he was defeated. The Arabs looted and plundered the city. Qasim truly plundered and captured Brahmanabad. The subedar jai singh of this city was the son of Dahir. He too challenged Muhammad-bin-Qasim and he looted enormous wealth from Brahmanabad. This victory made Muhammad-bin-Qasim very famous all around. He then captured Aror. By this time, he had the possession of almost all major parts of Sindh. Only Multan remained to be conquered. It was such a wealthy region that it was called as the land of gold. So Qasim was attracted towards Multan and he conquered it. It is said that he thought to win the remaining parts of India.

III. DEATH OF MUHAMMAD-BIN-QASIM

The fall of Muhammad-bin-Qasim was as rapid as his rise. The Caliph ordered his death sentence after torturing him. Some historians believe that Muhammad-bin-Qasim was killed due to a political conspiracy. For about 150 years of Arab conquest by Muhammad-bin-Qasim the caliph's dominance over Sindh continued. In the time of Caliph Umar, some of its part came under jai Singh. He had accepted Islam. There was a rebellion in Damascus in 750 AD. And his strength shattered. As a result. The Subedar of Sindh declared his independence. About 781 AD the dominance of the caliph ended and Sindh was divided into two parts with two capitals Aror and Multan.

IV. EFFECTS OF THE CONQUEST OF SINDH

The impact of the conquest of Sindh by the Arabs was reciprocal .The Muslims brought with them the knowledge they derived from conquered nation with Persia and Byzantine. The Arab conquered Sindh but it was not a lasting victory. They had no permanent effect upon Sindh and they could not take any step to conquer India.

According to **Lanepool**, "though the Arabs conquered Sindh, it was just an event in Islamic history which had no remarkable effect."

Wolseley Haig considers that, "nothing more could be said regarding the Arab conquest of Sindh that it was just an episode that affected a very small portion of the fringes of a vast Country."

Yet the event left a deep mark upon Indian History. Among many effects some areas are -

Islam had been brought to India first by the Arabs only. Many Indians became the followers of the Arabian Muslims and Islam began to spread in India. Because of their short lived rule in Sindh they could not spread Islam very much but it cannot be denied that they sowed the seeds of the new religion of Islam in India which, because of its feeling of mutual brotherhood attracted the people of lower castes.

Toleration was shown by the Arab governor, of Sindh to their subjects irrespective of caste and creed. Some of the temples were no doubt destroyed during the days of war, but was a temporary phase. The destruction was not due to religious reasons, but to the fact that the temples were the repositories of Indias long accumulated wealth. When the people of Brahmanabad , for instance submitted to the conqueror, they were allowed to rebuild their temples which were destroyed during the time of war. The Arab believed on the policy of toleration, they have given complete religious freedom. They also given the permission to repair and construct the new temples.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Before the conquest of Sindh the Arabs were not only nomads but also bandits. The territory of Sindh became civilized after the invasion of Arabs. They got awareness of law and obedience and its importance. After the interaction of two different nations a new civilization came into existence, whose vivacious example “sindh language “ is still present today. The Arabs settled in many cities of Sind. They established matrimonial relations with Indians.

There is no doubt that Arab conquest was confined to Sindh and Multan only the major portion of northern India was not directly affected. It was proved from Muhammad-bin-Qasim’s invasion that people of sub continent could not unite against their enemy. They belong to different areas and thus could not help each other due to lack of strong leadership. thus the attack on Sindh reveled their political and military weakness which were helpful for the establishment of Muslim empire in sub-continent in the later period.

In the field of trade and commerce it gave fresh impetus to the Arab trade by caravan with India which reached its peak in 10th century AD. The Arabs were astonished at the literary superiority of the Indian civilization they were so influenced by Indian literature, philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, and fine arts.

The success and permanence of an invasion would vary in a direct proportion to the solidarity of the invaders. The Arabs didn’t had the missionary zeal to spread Islam in india. Mere passion for warfare and plunder was too week a foundation for any empire. The Arabs occupied Sindh, Multan and other important cities in northwest but could not permanently settle their because of the death of Qasim. It became difficult for them to expend and even maintain the kingdom because of rising resistance from the Rajputs and the Chalukya rulers. The Arabs had to leave India towards the end of the 9th century. After the Arabs the Turks invaded India. They were attracted mainly by the fabulous wealth lying in the garbhagriha of the temples.

REFERENCES

- [1] Jackson. Peter. 1999. The delhi sultanate: A political and Military History. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [2] Sharma R.S. 1969. Social Changes in Early Medieval India (circa A.D.500-1200).New Delhi.
- [3] Thapar Romila. 2002 Early India: From The Origins to AD 1300. New Delhi: Penguin Books.
- [4] IGNOU. (study material on Indian History). New Delhi