CHAPTER VII

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF SIND

The economic conditions of the region are basically determined by geo-physical factors of the province. The physical divisions of Sind provided the base for the varying structures of economic activity of the region. The four natural divisions of Sind are: the fertile river valley, the eastern desert, the western Kohistan and the delta.

The most important region from the physical point of view is the fertile river valley. As the climate of the kohistan and delta region is very inclement during the hot season, the people of the region are forced to lead a nomadic life in search of their livelihood. They flocked to the regions of Thatta and Lahri Bander.

The fertile valley consisted of different sections. The regions of Bhakkar and the doab between the Western Nara and the Indus upto the Manchhar lake were very fertile. These fertile regions produced two crops a year. Similarly, the area of Siwistan was also very fertile.¹

The river banks were the most fertile and densely populated regions of Sind. Most of the towns and the cities of Sind were situated along the banks of the river or were within its easy reach. These regions were the nucleus of the economic life of Sind from agricultural point of view.

¹ Yusuf Mirak, pp. 63-80.
The desert region, however, was arid and inhospitable during most of the year. But a little rain in this area used to turn it into a vast bed of green vegetation. Though the life of this kind of vegetation was not very long still its value for the desert people was enormous. This seasonal vegetation was the main support of their cattle and livestock. As can be expected, the inhabitants of the region were nomads, goatherds and herdsmen mainly dealing in milk, cheese, ghee, hides and skin. Their other occupations were tanning and woollen textiles. The life in these regions used to be very hard. They lived in huts which were built in the shape of beehives and these were easily dismantled and rebuilt entailing no cost.¹

The desert people, of course, had to turn to the cities for securing their supplies. Cattle wealth, however, was the mainstay of the nomadic economy. During the times of famine and draught they moved to the valley along with the vast hoards of their cattle and flooded the market. This sent down the prices of the commodities in which they dealt. Their arrival also made available a surplus of unskilled labourers. Arrival of such a large number of people along with their cattle and households used to disrupt the normal life of the valley and put an extra burden on its resources.

The conditions of the kohistan people were also quite similar to that of the desert people. Here also the

rainfall was scanty. The region was filled with small shrub and grass which sustained a huge number of horses, camels, sheep and goats. The banks of the hill streams were cultivated if the rain fell on time. A majority of the inhabitants were nomads and lived in temporary residences called thanahas or ghedans. In the southern region, the people reared sheep, goats and cattle and in Cutch they bred camels.

The Sind plains provided good opportunities for livelihood of these tribes specially when they moved with their cattles and belonging to the higher grounds near the hills at the time of floods. The enormous wealth in livestock possessed by them can be gauged from the fact that at such time they used to bring with them about 45,000 heads of cattle. However, these tribes depended upon the valley for their supplies and provisions, which they procured on barter basis in exchange of the produce of the hills. They flocked to Siwistan in caravans consisting of four to five thousand Camels carrying produce of the hills. In times of scarcity the valley could give them succour by absorbing their surplus cattle.

AGRARIAN ECONOMY:

IRRIGATION:

The economic scene of Sind was dominated either by agriculture or cattle raising but these were not exclusive with
any particular region. The agriculturists maintained considerable number of livestock while the cattle breeders of the desert and the Kohistan also resorted to forming though on a much smaller scale to support themselves. The 300 miles of the Indus course through the province was the main source of irrigation in the region. Besides this, the region had different types of irrigated land like *rizani* (flooded by river), the *Kajah* (flooded by rain water coming down the hills) and the *barani*¹ (irrigated by rain). The system of storing water for the purpose was not unknown. One such dam was nala Sawah in Siwistan which was built in the reign of Jam Nanda².

Canals were another important means of irrigations in the region. Due to the raised bed of the river, it was easier to dig canals. Canal irrigation was quite popular in Sind. During Firoz Shah's reign a number of smaller canals in Multan are said to have been dug by the local population. Ainul Mulk asserts in one of his letters that the excavation and the maintenance of public canals was the responsibility of the local people and landholders³. In Thatta region, Darya Khan built a canal known as Khanwah⁴. The lower surface of the lands allowed the water to flow from the canals or a distributory. It was

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1. Yusuf Mirak, pp. 203-06.
2. Ibid., p. 207.
3. Mahru, pp. 204-5.
4. Masumī, p.113; Tahiri, fol. 48.
called noki (flow) irrigation and when the water was drawn with
the help of wheels, it was known as Charkhi (lift) irrigation.
Two types of wheel irrigation were familiar in the region. The
larger one driven by camels were called nor (Arabic naura
water-mill) and the lower one driven by bullocks was known
hurlo.\textsuperscript{1} The nor mode of irrigation was found to be more efficient
and mostly it was adopted by the people. Better irrigation
facilities led to comparative prosperity and better economic
conditions. In other regions where river water was not avail­
able for irrigation purposes: the well irrigation was used but
it was not possible in arid regions where water level used to
be very low. It was practised on a limited scale in the areas
where the water level was not very deep.

The nature of crops sown in particular regions mainly
depended on the kind of irrigation facilities available in that
region. In flow irrigated region paddy crops were possible.
The dry crops like millet, shorgum, cotton, sugarcane etc.
could be grown\textsuperscript{2} in the lift irrigated areas. In fact, the
Arabs were the first to develop an irrigation system in the
region and dug some canals for the purpose\textsuperscript{3}. This was further
developed during the Sultanate period.

\textsuperscript{1} Idrisi, p.44, S.P. Chablani, \textit{The Economic Conditions in Sind},
\textsuperscript{2} Yusuf Mirak, pp. 205; see also Chabalnai, p. 26.
\textsuperscript{3} Balāzuri, p. 431.
CROPS:

Due to shortfall of rain the region depended upon the limited irrigation facilities which could be developed there. Generally two crops were grown in a year i.e. *kharif* and *rabi*. According to the Arab travellers visiting the region during that time the main crops of Sind were rice, wheat, indigo, sugarcane etc.¹

The *kharif* crop was sown after the first floods (May-July). It included rice, sugarcane, rape seed, indigo, ginger, cotton and a number of vegetables, while the *rabi* crop was grown in October-November and produced wheat, barley gram, mustard, millet, pulses, opium, tobacco etc.

Cotton was a dry crop and grew in areas where lift irrigation was practiced. Cotton clothes produced in the city of Thatta were in great demand. Two varieties of cotton were used in the region i.e. *nairi* (annual) and *muredi* (perennial). But the production of the cotton in the adjoining regions was not enough to meet the demands of the local industry. Mir Masum records that the cotton plants grown in the region of Zaminkur and Chahtar were so tall that people had to climb them for plucking cotton. While the cotton trees were full of small snakes one to two span (*balisht*) in length. They had to be shaken off before it was plucked.²

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¹ Ibn Faqih, p.16.
In some of the regions the land was quite fertile and the climate suited the raising of gardens and orchards and people took to the horticulture in a big way. Different regions were known for various kind of fruits. The region of Mansura was known for apple, grapes, walnut, mango, lemon and dates. Multan and Qannauj were famous for its gardens. The main fruits were dates, bananas and coconut. The Arab travellers also record that these cities were surrounded by gardens. Abundance of the gardens had made the climate healthy. Firoz Shah is known to have taken keen interest in the development of horticulture in Sind and laid several gardens in the region. The Sammah rulers of Sind further developed this tradition and one of their parganas bore the name Baghbanan on account of large number of its gardens. It is said that nearly one thousand camels were used on the water wheels of these gardens. Due to these all round interest in the development of the region, it came to be known for the excellent quality of its fruits, specially melons, water melons, apples, grapes and guava etc.

1. Istakhri, 103, Hauqal, p.320, Idrisi, p.30.

2. Maqadasi, p.480; See also Idrisi, pp. 29-30.

3. 'Afif, p.295.


5. Hauqal, p. 324.
CATTLE BREEDING:

In Sind cattle breeding was the most important profession, particularly in Kohistan and desert regions as also in the fertile plains. Different regions produced various categories of livestock. The Kohistan region generally provided large number of goats, sheep and camels. The desert was famous for its camels. The region of Al-Nudah was known for its special type of camels which had two humps and was called "Jamal al-Fālīj." This type of camel was considered as very costly and specially used by the rulers, princes and the nobles. This variety was exported specially for breeding purposes to Khurasan and Iran. Apart from the camel breeding, Arabs also took deep interest in horse-breeding. Banu Muhallab exported the buffaloes from Sind to Basra. After the death of Yazid b. Muhallab these buffaloes were shifted to the territory of Syria by the order of the Caliph Yazid b. 'Abdul Malik. According to Masudi, once there was a serious famine in Sind, which led many Jats to migrate to Basra and then to Syria. They took their buffaloes with them and introduced these beasts in Syria. However, the Arabs also liked to have some of the Sindi birds like Peacock, hen, parrot etc. as pets.

2. Istakhri, p.105, Zakariya Qazwini, Asārul-Bilād wa Akhbarul Ṣubūd, Beirut, 1960, p.127; See also Hauqal, II, p.323; See also Idrisi, p.46.
5. Ibn Faqih, p.16.
FISHING:

The fact that fish-sign are found on the Indus seals may be taken to indicate that fishing has been one of the oldest professions of the people of Sind. According to Ibn Hauqal, chief diet of the Jats of Mansura living the bank of the river was fish and aquatic birds. The region was full of lakes and there existed ideal conditions for fishing. Fish like Pallau (Palla) and crap were known for their delicacy as also for their huge size as it weighed as much as 20 lbs. The people living on the coast took in a big way to fishing and carried this business on quite a large scale. As the large quantities of the fish taken out of the rivers and lakes could not be immediately consumed, some of these were dried and smoked to be used later on. Fish oil was also extracted and it was mainly used in insulating the boats against water.

For some important tribes fishing was the main profession. Most prominent among these tribes were the Mahigirs, the Mallahs and the Machhi. They were mostly settled on the banks of the rivers, lakes and sea shore. However, these tribes had been found at the time of the Arab conquest and were confined to the north of Sind and in the hills of Siwistan.

1. Hauqal, II, p.328; See also Istakhri, p.107.
INDUSTRIES:

Besides agriculture, animal husbandry and fishing people of the province were engaged in several other professions such as handicrafts, textiles, leather work and wood work etc.

The handicrafts have been popular in Sind from earliest times and its remains have been found in the Indus Valley Culture. There is also evidence to show that woolen and cotton textiles were very common among the people of Sind much before the arrival of Arabs. These industries which were carried on a limited scale for the local consumption received a great impetus because of the possibility of large export of finished goods when Sind became a part of the Islamic Commonwealth. Keen interest exhibited by the Delhi Sultans in the local handicrafts further extended its base. Under the benign rule of the local dynasties, the traditional industries of the region received much patronage and encouragement.

TEXTILES:

The textile was one of the most established industries of Sind and its tradition goes as back as to the pre-historic times. Various cities and towns of the valley were known for this industry like Nasrpur and Thatta. These were big centres

1. Abu Zafar Nadavi, p. 368.
with a considerable population of weavers. For example Siwistan had 1,000 families of weavers while Thatta had 2000 looms.

It was an established tradition that the yarn was produced by women folk. Spinning was a common practice of the village women and occupied an important place in their daily life. According to English factory report the merchants used to collect the yarn bolls from the houses and paid the price according to their weights. This may well have been the situation even earlier.

DYING

A flourishing industry of textiles ensured a flourishing trade. Quite large number of the local people were engaged in this profession but the members of the Sumirah tribe were mainly involved in it. Indigo produced at Siwistan was used by the dyers of Thatta.

The main agent of dyeing was indigo. So it was considered one of the most important cash crops of Sind. Besides sugarcane and some other items of agricultural produce it was exported to different countries. The local dyers also used a considerable quality of the locally produced indigo in the textile industry and hence they were the major consumers of this commodity. Its manufacturing process was similar to that

of the Bayana indigo but following the Gujarat practice they
made cakes with the help of sand.

LEATHER PRODUCTS:

As has been already noticed that due to the peculiar
climatic conditions of Sind many people in Sind specially those
living in the desert and Kohistan regions used to tend large
number of animals and hence skins and hides were available in
abundance.\(^1\) It was used for different purposes such as the use
of hides for making dabhas, big globe like jars for containing
liquids and butter oil.\(^1\) The leather shields from Sind were
famous for their superior craftsmanship. Leather bags of large
size were manufactured in Sind which were used for the storage
of costus (Medicine).\(^2\) Shoes were also exported.\(^3\)

SWORDS:

The sword of Belman in Sind was famous for its sharp­
ness and special quality. A large number of the swords were
exported to the Arab countries and the Arabs called it Belmaniah.

BOAT AND SHIP-BUILDING:

The boats were the main source of transport in Sind.
Since the transport charges were cheap, therefore the bulk of

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1. Maqadasi, p.481.
2. \('Ajaib-ul-Hind, pp. 103-104.\)
goods were transported by boats. An idea of the cheapness of the transport charges may be had from the fact that transport charges from Thatta to Multan was only one rupee per maund. Tall and heavy logs were also transported by the river. Mostly goods were exported from the port of Debal by ship to the foreign countries. The Arabs came to Sind and transported their goods with the help of the boats. Arabs took keen interest in the development of this industry.

TRADE AND COMMERCE:

Trade relations between Arabia and India date back to the pre-Islamic period. But this trade was mainly confined to the coastal cities of India such as Kathiawar, Malabar, Gujarat, Madras and Bengal and it did not extend much beyond the cities. After the Arab conquest of the region, however, the situation underwent enormous change as Sind became backyard of the vast Muslim empire. Both the nature and volume of the trade was favourably affected and trade relations with outside world became much more intimate and firmly established.

STATE PATRONAGE OF THE TRADE

Even before the rise of Islam, the Arabs carried extensive trade with different parts of the world and occupied a very

1. Ibn Batuta, p.401.
important place on the trade map of the world during those days. When Islam came and Arabs spread over many countries and established their commonwealth their trade interests also increased and similarly increased the possibilities for further extension. The fact that Islam looked upon trade as a very good means of livelihood became greatly instrumental in promoting interest in trade and commerce among the Muslims and they took to it in a very big way. As the trade not only ensured uninterrupted supply of essential commodities but also brought prosperity, the Muslim states have always encouraged trade and commerce and protected the interests of the traders. This went a long way in promoting the trade among the Muslims. However, for the Pre-Sultanate period much information is not available on the subject. But with the establishment of the sultanate more information is available.

The Sultans of Delhi took keen interest in the trade and commerce and made every effort to ensure the interests of the traders and extend facilities to them to carry on their profession smoothly. For this purpose they constructed inns, sunk wells and built bridges. Sultan Balban paid much attention to the safety of the roads. He crushed robbers like Meos who used to plunder the caravans of the traders. Sultan Balban reconstructed many frontier forts to check the Mongol attacks.

and suppress the recalcitrant elements such as the Khokhars of the Jud hills.¹

Sultan Alauddin took keen interest in the promotion of trade and the safety of merchants and the traders. His harsh treatment of the robbers is well-known so much so that they undertook to protect the routes.² The Mugaddams and Khots were charged with the responsibility to guard the highways and protect the merchants.³ As a result of these measures, the entire region was cleared of the robbers and according to Amir Khusrau the entire region from the banks of the sea to the sea shore of the sea was totally cleaned.⁴

During the reign of Sultan Muhammad Tughluq special measures were taken to provide better facilities of trade and security of routes. Ibn Batuta had reported the exceptional treatment of travellers in the hospice at Bhakkar which was constructed by Bahram Aiba, governor of the province. The highways were marked by minaretes spaced at set distances.⁵ The travellers were also provided with the food. Walis, Muqties and other officers were instructed to behave properly with the

¹ Barani, I, pp. 59, 61.
² Ibid., p. 340.
³ Ibid., p. 324.
⁴ Khazain-ul-Futuh, p. 18; Eng. tr. p. 11.
⁵ Ibn Batuta, p. 402.
merchants. At the distance of four manzils inns were constructed. Mir Masum records an anecdote of fourteen century that a caravan of Gujarat was plundered while passing through the territory of Sind. After seven years of the incident, Jam Khairuddin, the then ruler of Sind, came to know of it. He ordered the recovery of the articles and other provisions to the successors of the ill-fated caravan and ordered to execute the culprits. This clearly shows that the traders were accorded much respect and they were able to lead a peaceful life. They were found all over the country and carried their business fearlessly. They were no longer exploited by the ruling class and no excess was reported against them. This decent treatment, generated much goodwill in this class for the Sultan so much so that they at times even volunteered crucial information to the Sultan as happened at the time of Mongol attacks.

INTERNAL TRADE:

The main centres of the internal trade were, of course, the towns where goods were brought from various places specially the neighbouring areas. Debal was a populous town but the immediate region

4. Barani, p.89.
5. Hauqal, II,p.324; Istakhri,p.107; See also Idrisi, p.28.
around it was not fertile but it was a centre of trade and commerce and this ensured its prosperity and well-being. As it was a harbour of some significance it was possible for the people to have access to the foreign goods as well as the various commodities produced in the region. Besides Debal, Multan, Mansura and Alor were also important centres of trade in the region. Ibn Khurdabzbih has described a road which ran from Makran to Mansura and which was inhabited by the Jats. These Jats were responsible for the security of the roads and the protection of the traders. Even then the roads were not always as secure and safe as one could desire and some of the unruly tribes living in the region infested the roads and looted the caravans. For example, Tarikh-i-Guzidah has recorded instances of caravans going from Ghaznin to India being plundered by the Baluch robbers. It has also described the destruction of these robbers by Mahmud of Ghaznin. While Idrisi records the punishment meted out to the theives by the rulers of India and China.

After the foundation of the Delhi Sultanate, the Sultans took special care to guard the highways, paths, roads

1. Ibid., p.226; Maqadasi, p.480.
3. Ibn Khurdabzbih, p.56.
4. Tarikh-i-Guzidah, pp. 399-400.
5. Idrisi, p.20.
and bridges. The Sultans instructed their governors to construct inns and encourage the traders. This impression is supported by the evidence contained in Tarikh Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah. During the reign of Sultan Qutub-uddin Aibak, the highways were safe from the dangers of the robbers and thieves. Sultan Iltutmish and his descendants also provided the same protection to the traders. Shahnas and Gumastas were appointed to look after the routes, so that the merchants could move freely to different places. All these measures were bound to give boost to the internal trade.

EXTERNAL TRADE ROUTES:

The region of Sind was connected with the foreign countries not only by the marine routes but also by the land routes. During the early Muslim rule the region had a regular connection with the rest of the Islamic world. Balazuri describes the route of Sind followed by Muhammad bin Qasim from Shiraz via Makran to Qannazbaore Armail, Qandabil and Debal. According to Ibn Khurdazbih the Jews and Russians came to Sind with the

1. Tarikh-i-Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah, p.17.
3. Ibid., fols. 274b, 322b.
caravans via Iran and Kirman. This evidence strengthens the impression that caravans were constantly coming from China, Russia, Europe and other places of Africa.¹

But the region was connected with the West mainly by two important sea routes i.e. the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea. The sailors preferred the Persian Gulf route over the Red Sea route because the Red Sea route was very dangerous and it was not possible to navigate it during the night due to its sharp edges, rocks, thick fogs and violent gales of wind. Due to these difficulties the Persian Gulf route was considered more suitable and so it was preferred.²

Sind was connected mainly from Qays island, Hurmuz, Tiz and the onward to Debal, Mansurah and other parts of Sind.³ Ibn Faqih mentions the route of Sind from Faras to Siraf and then to Sind.⁴ Idrisi reports that the ships came from 'Umman and the vessels of China and India came to Debal.⁵ However, for long time the ships were not safe due to the nefarious activities of the Meds who were engaged in piracy from Debal down to the Somnath. The area of their piracy was from the

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5. Idrisi, pp. 28-29.
Indian Ocean as far as the mouth of Tigris and the Southern parts of the Red Sea and the coast of Cylon. The merchant ships were forced to maintain the marine trained soldiers in sufficient numbers to meet out any contingency that may arise so much so that sometimes these soldiers numbered as many as five hundred. Besides, soldiers they also kept other necessary arrangement for their defence. For example they kept charcoal in substantial quantities. When attacked by the pirates they threw Greek fire and melted charcoal on the attackers to ward them off.

In order to protect the sailors some lighting arrangements were also made. According to Masudi, a mark of wood was erected in the middle of the water. During the night fire was lighted upon these wood marks to serve as signals to the sailors in the Persian Gulf. Similarly, Idrisi records the 'pile work' on which there were cabins occupied by coast guards.

1. See for details Ibn Khurdazbih, p.60; Istakhri, pp. 30, 140-41, Masudi, I, pp. 240-41; III, pp. 36-37; Maqadasi, p.12; Balazuri, p.435; Al-Beruni, p.102 and Ibn Batuta, p.608.

2. Yaqut, III, p.38. In Qais Island, the ruler maintained an army for the protection and safety of the ships. The soldiers were always watching the ships and were well trained in the marine fighting with the swords.


From this account it is clear that various parts of Sind were well connected with the outer world by the natural water ways as well as the overland routes, ensuring a quicker and cheaper transport and thereby attracting trade from far-off places. The economy of Sind basically self-sufficient and thus required very little imports. The commodities required for the daily life were easily available and cheap. However, in the light of very meagre and scanty information available in sources, a brief description is attempted here.

During the Arab and the Sultanate periods the main items of import from outside world were horses, slaves, arms, and weapons, silk, dry fruits, clothes and gold etc. Sugar was imported from Makran and dates from Basrah. These various items were in much demand not only Sind but other parts of the country as well.

8. Istakhri, p.107; Hauqal, p.325; See also Idrisi, p.40.
However, the region exported several commodities to different countries. Most of the goods were exported from the port of Debal. These included not only the produce of the regions but also those of other parts of the country which were brought there in large quantities for onward shipment. Sugar candy was one of the major item of export. Ibn Faqih records that costus, campher, water, indigo, bamboos and civet-cat were exported from Sind. He further reports that the region of Sind was rich in fauna and flora and it may be expected that some of these were exported to other countries. According to Masudi hair-dye was exported to the Arabian world which was used to give a natural shine to the hair. Some other items of export included rhinoceros, peacock, parrot, poultry and various perfumes and herbs. Shoes and ivory were produced in Khambayat and exported from Mansura.

CUSTOM DUTY:

No direct information is available about the custom duty on the imported and exported goods in the period under discussion. Magadasi provides very scanty information about the custom duty. The custom duty was fixed on either import or export amounted to only six dirhams for a camel load. However,

1. Ibn Faqih, pp. 11,16.
3. Yaqubi, p.16.
the custom on flour was twelve dirhams for single camel load. If the flour was imported from India, the custom duty was increased from 12 to 20 dirhams. Moreover, the custom duty was levied on the Sindi goods only on the assessment of the custom officer. On the fine leather the merchants paid one dirham as a custom duty. One can spend one hundred fifty dirhams excluding the transport charges of the goods for Multan. The total amount collected in one year as custom duty was ten thousand dirhams.

According to Ibn Batuta the custom duty in Sind was seven silver tankas for each horse. The custom duty on import was one fourth of the total value of the commodity before Muhammad Tughluq but during the reign of Muhammad Tughluq this tax was abolished and it was decreed that the Muslim merchants be made subject to the payment of Zakāt and the non-Muslims to that of 'Ushūr.

MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION:

Different means were used for the transportation of goods from one place to the other. The province of Sind was placed in a unique position as regards the transportation because it had the facility of transporting the goods both over land and by river routes. The manufactured goods were first transported

1. Maqadasi, pp. 485-86.
2. Ibn Batuta, p. 403.
to sea coast or the harbour through camels, oxen, asses and horses. For some items there was an interesting method of transportation by sea. For example, costus was put in a leather bag and put into the water and through the help of waves it reached its destination. Ibn Batūṭa also informs us about the use of ox and ass for the transportation of goods. The cart was also used for this purpose mainly by the Multanis for bringing wood. Buzurg b. Shahriyar reported in his book *Ajā'ib-ul-Hind* about the use of boat for carrying goods from Hind to Sind. Boats were used for the transportation of the armies and the provisions of war as well.

However, camels were one of the most important means of transportation. During the war time camels were used for the supply of water. Other beasts of the burden were used for carrying grain, salt, *misri*, sugar and other provisions from one place to the other.

1. *Ajā'ib-ul-Hind*, p. 103. Buzurg b. Shahriyar records that the traders also boarded the bag.
2. Ibn Batūṭa, p. 527.
The main centres of trade and commerce in Sind during the pre-Mughal period were Multan, Thatta, Mansurah, Debal, Alor and Uchh. It may however be kept in mind that the fortunes of these towns fluctuated due to various factors such as the continuous Mongol raids, the shifting course of the river and the decline of particular rulers. During the Arab rule Debal, Multan, Alor and Mansurah were the main centres of trade and commerce. These towns were connected with the outside world by the sea as well as the land routes. The town of Debal was one of the most important port of Sind. It was a big market of various kinds of goods and flourished due to its roaring trade. The next in importance as a centre of trade was Mansura having a flourishing trade with a crowded market full of cheap goods. The city of Multan was a famous centre of trade and commerce and it was also an important place of pilgrimage for the Hindus who came from different parts of the country to offer abundant riches as offerings to the deity. The Sun temple was situated at the centre of the market place and enormous of offerings were made to it. The large market had separate places for different commodities and merchandise. The bazars of

2. Idrisi, pp. 30-31.
3. Idrisi, p.44, see also Hudud-al-‘Alam, p.89; Al-Beruni, I, p.116; Barani (p.348) records that the Khanqah of Rukn-‘Alam was equally established and people used to visit from long distance.
ivory and copper goods were full of customers and the prices of these commodities were low.\(^1\) Trade was in a flourishing condition and fairly lucrative.\(^2\)

During the sultanate period, Multan maintained its position as a premier centre of trade and commerce specially in the reign of Firoz Shah Tughluq\(^3\). The large inland trade was run by Multani traders community of merchants. They were generally Hindus but Muslims were also found undertaking this profession. A great merchant Qazi Hamiduddin was a trader as well as the chief Qazi, appointed by 'Ala'uddin Khalji.\(^4\) Barani called him Multani Bachcha.\(^5\) However, it would appear from the account of Barani that most of the Multanis were Hindus who were engaged in the practice of usury.\(^6\)

**PRICES AND WAGES:**

During the Arab rule the prices seem to have been quite low so much so that three maunds of bread and the same amount of sugar were available just for one dirham in the market of Multan and Mansura.\(^7\) The price of wheat was 8 kizi (Multani measurement of weight) for one to four dirham.\(^8\) From these samples

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1. Maqadasi, p.481.
6. Ibid., pp. 120, 164.
8. Ibid., pp. 47, 482.
some idea can be had about the prices in Pre-Sultanate period.

During the Sultanate period the prices in Sind were recorded by 'Ainul-Mulk in his various letters. The information contained in these letters would suggest that the prices of different commodities were quite low during the reign of 'Alauddin Khalji in Multan and Uchh. According to the same source in the earlier part of Sultan Firoz Shah's reign, the price of Jawari was 80 jital per maund during the scarcity season in Multan. But after that as the scarcity disappeared, the price of Jawari fell to the level of 8 jital, per maund a price still higher than that of wheat at Delhi during 'Alauddin Khalji's reign.

'Ainul Mulk further records that in the reign of Alauddin Khalji the wage of an artisan was 2 or 3 jital a day, a weaver wove a sheet for a jital in a day. The stitching charges of a tailor were 4 jital for stitching a robe. But it would appear from the information contained in the Khairul Majalis that it varied from 4 to 6 jitals. In another letter Mahru reports that the wages of the artisans in Multan and Uchh had increased $7\frac{1}{2}$ and 15 times more than the rates of the tailors and weavers.

during the reign of 'Alauddin Khalji.

CURRENCY:

Due to trade relations with the outside world different kinds of currencies were in circulation in Sind which were used only as the medium of exchange. Tatariva dirham was used during the Arab rule. This tatariva dirham of the ruler of Samantra had become the standard currency in a number of countries. The tatariva was equal to 2/3 and 1/8 of Iraqi dirham. The Ghandhari dirham was equal to the five Iraqi dirham.

The Ismailis struck another coin known as Qahiriva. It was equal to five Iraqi dirhams. During the Arab rule the coins were issued locally. During the Sultanate period silver tankas and the jital came into use in Sind as also the other parts of the sub-continent. Dinar was the golden coin and it was equal to three dinar of India.

1. 'Ainul Mulk records now the weavers charged 30 jitalis for weaving a sheet in comparison with 2 jitalis under 'Alauddin Khalji and the tailors also charged 30 jitalis for stitching a robe whereas they collected 4 jitalis under Sultan 'Alauddin.

2. Istakhri, p.103.

