ABSTRACT

Sind in medieval India was one of the very few geographically distinct regions of Indian subcontinent comprising the lower Indus Basin, Baluchistan Hills and Thar Desert, in its east and west, and the Sukkur gorge providing practically the only opening from the north. Although sequestered in the extreme western corner of the South Asian subcontinent, and thus to some extent, enjoyed a peculiar aloofness from the developments, that were taking place in the neighboring regions. However, its position as junction of land and sea routes, made it accessible to the major changes that were taking place in Central and Western Asia.

The geographical features of Sind put it in the category of the great river-desert basins as of the Oxus, Helmund and Nile. Before the present canal system it had a fairly narrow agricultural zone, which resulted in an interaction throughout its history between sedentary population, and nomads of the desert and steppes, on its east and west. This aspect of Sind is very well covered in the seventeenth century gazetteer Mazhar-i-Shāhjahānī, written by Yūsūf Mīrāk in the year 1634.
The present thesis is divided into eight chapters, which deals with administration, society, economy, and culture. Introduction covers topography; which includes major physical features of the region of Sind. In this, the first part covers the physical division of Sind, including its main hills, desert, rivers, and doab, along with the description of its soil, main crops, mines, and minerals. It also covers the political boundaries of Sind, and major shifts within it under different regimes. The second part deals with the Arghun and Tarkhān regime, who ruled Sind prior to its annexation by the Mughal Emperor Akbar. The third part deals with the contemporary sources, which comprise official histories, or private accounts, and some private documents and numismatic evidence.

The Chapter I focuses mainly on the attempts for introducing the centralized Mughal Imperial administration in Sind. It also discuss the policies during the transitional phase immediately after the conquest, when the erstwhile ruler of Sind, on accepting the suzerainty of Akbar was given a mansāb, and taken into Mughal nobility, and was even made nominally the Governor of sūba Multan comprising Sind. But its ruler was not allowed to exercise real power,
and was not even allowed to visit Sind. He was practically was
detained at the court. The imposition of centralized administration,
with the appointment of Imperial officers in Sind, is dealt in part third
of the chapter. An attempt is been made to show that despite Sind
being a peripheral region, centralized Mughal administrative pattern
was fully in vogue here, with the presence of all the Imperial officers
as in other provinces of the Empire.

Chapter II deals with the fiscal system, which is divided into
two parts again. The first, deals with rural taxation and land revenue;
mode of assessment, magnitude of state demand, and its realization
through the intermediaries. The salaries and perquisites of the
intermediaries have also been discussed. Interestingly enough the
Mughal administrative machinery functioned in the same manner in
Sind, as in the other parts of Mughal Empire. The second part deals
with the urban taxation; which includes custom duties (dharat), town
tax (misri), taxes on merchants, and on trade as boat tax (chahal-yak),
and other taxes as zakat (toll tax), muhr (for fixing the seal), as well
as mariners’ share, and seigniorage at mints.
Chapter III covers the agrarian society of Sind under the Mughals, here zamīndārs and Peasants have been discussed separately. The first part deals with the landed potentates i.e. the zamīndārs and their relation with the Mughal State, their contribution in rural economy is been discussed in detail. The peasants, their stratification, and their relations with the zamīndārs, are discussed in second part. Agrarian society of Sind seems to have a unique feature, where the peasants and the zamīndārs often belonged to same clan, which sometimes created trouble for the Mughal administration. These problems have been dealt in detail.

Society of Sind during the period under study, had a population comprised of tribes, some of whom were nomads, and others sedentary. The tribes of Sind, their organization, territorial division, and their occupation have been dealt in Chapter IV. Their relations with the Imperial authorities and with the sedentary population have also been studied here.

Sind was an important trading centre and Chapter V, deals exclusively with the important towns and ports of Sind. It covers their strategic location, main products, and their contribution in the urban
economy, as Sind was an important trading centre. The emergence of the new towns and consequent decline of the old ones, and the factors responsible for it, has also been discussed.

Trade, commerce, currency and exchange mechanism is covered in Chapter VI. This Chapter has two parts; in first part trade, commerce, major export and import items, have been discussed. The establishment of the Mughal mints, and their share in the currency circulation, regional currency (of lower intrinsic value), and the exchange mechanism in Sind, has also been included in this part. The second part covers trading classes, and instruments of trade. It also discusses the inland and overland trade routes, and mode of transports. The rivalries between the Portuguese, English and Dutch have been discussed. The establishment of English Factories in different parts of Sind, the Portuguese monopoly prior to the English, and the Dutch attempt to establish Factory in Sind, is also covered.

Chapter VII covers the aspect of architecture of Sind, which has two major divisions. In section first, major buildings of Sind built during the Mughal Empire, has been covered. The second part is assigned to find the differences, and similarities between the classical
Mughal architecture, and the buildings of Sind built during the Mughal period. Here an attempt has been made to find the assimilation of Mughal architectural pattern on Sind buildings, and the extent to which these buildings had incorporated the Mughal Imperial features, or they remained regional in character.

The development of regional poetry, literature and high culture are major thrust areas in Chapter VIII. Royal patronage given to the men of erudition, skills during Arghuns, Tarkhāns, and Mughal period, famous academic institutions, have been discussed here. Besides this, contribution of previous rulers for the development of regional poetry, impact of Mughal court language, of bhakti, and sufi movements on it, along with the champions of regional poetry, have also been discussed in detail. The contributions of Sindhi calligraphers to Mughal buildings, and of writers to court histories and the regional histories, with the consequent growth of high culture in Sind has been studied here.