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RAVAGES OF RACISM AGAINST INDIGENOUS SINDHI PEOPLE OF INDUS CIVILIZATION

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INTRODUCTION

The indigenous Sindhi people are inhabitants of the greatest Himalayan River Sindhu (also known as Indus) which flows in the Indo-Pak subcontinent of South East Asia. The legendary River Indus brought into being an ancient civilization in the Third Millennium BC, (2,500 -1500 B.C) which stretched its democratic empire from Mohenjodaro and Harappa (in India of yesterdays and Pakistan of today) to Central Asia, Middle East and the South Asian subcontinent. Many archeologists of the world consider the great Indus Civilization as first experience of peace and democracy on the globe; moreover because no king's palace, religious center or war weaponry has so far been excavated from its ruins.

The people who, since times immemorial, have inhabited the banks of the Sindhu River are called SINDHI. By virtue of their glorious past history, the Sindhis are a highly civilized people with a peaceful culture free from evils of intolerance, violence and racism, etc. Their history stands witness that the Sindhi people have never attacked any other country beyond their boundaries. But, they have, of course, been subjected to foreign invasions by racist hordes, time and again, in their long history. It is besides the fact that the graves of their enemies have been subjected to public abuses while the last resting places of their heroes have become the places of pilgrimage in Sindh.

So the indigenous people of Indus having roots in the Third Millennium BC, are being subjected to racism in the Third Millennium AD while the so-called civilized and democratic world of

DISCRIMINATION, INTOLERANCE, BIAS

The indigenous Sindhis are discriminated against by the racist rulers of Pakistan in every sector of public life. The basis of such a bias is the very ideology of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan founded in the name of religion. The obscurantist and fundamentalist rulers of Pakistan look down upon Sindhis who happen to be the greatest exponents of Sufism (Islamic mysticism) which is liberal, tolerant and humanitarian in content and, therefore come in direct conflict with the Islamic fundamentalism of Pakistan's ruling elite.

The intolerance manifested by the racist elite of Pakistan towards indigenous Sindhis is mostly due to their liberal culture of accommodating people of other religions and minorities in their state of Sindh. It is therefore that the Sindhis are considered as "Half-Hindus" by the extremist Punjabi Muslims as well as Indian Muslims who migrated to Sindh at the time of the partition of the subcontinent. The first Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan, who was a migrant Muslim from India had once said that "Sindhis are merely donkey-keepers and wood-cutters." He was referring to the heirs of the great Indus Valley Civilization thus!

And, whenever there is any inter-state dispute between Pakistan and India even on the issue of Kashmir, the sword of Damocles hanging over the heads of Sindhis falls down ruthlessly; they are considered as agents of India then, and the prosecution of Sindhis begins unabated.

As a matter of fact, Sindh is the only state of Pakistan where considerable Hindu minority people reside. Their population could swing between 2.5 and 3 million (only in Sindh). The legendary desert of Thar adjoining Rajasthan of India is inhabited predominantly by the Hindus. Previously, out of 1.5 million population of Thar, the Hindus were .8 million. But due to repeated Indo-Pak wars which unleashed harassment against non-Muslims, the Hindus have been converted into a minority in Thar, thus in recent years their population has diminished to .7 million out of total 1.5 million in Thar.

The thinktank of the World Sindhi Institute believes that harassment of Sindhi Hindus in Sindh right from the time of partition of the subcontinent in 1947 was on the basis of religious hatred, ethnic bias, social discrimination, religious intolerance and racism by the Punjabi ruling elite ruling over Pakistan. This phenomenon gets worse when the kidnappings of the Sindhi Hindus becomes the order of the day whenever law and order situation of Sindh goes to the dogs.

The Sindhi Hindus of Sindh who are ethnically, linguistically and culturally the same human stuff as that of the Sindhi Muslims of Sindh follow the philosophy of Vedant and Sufism respectively. Both shades of the philosophy pursue the same path of religious tolerance, while the Talibanists among the hierarchy of Pakistan's ruling elite take the extremist path - to kill in the holy name of Allah.

What to talk of the Hindu minority of Pakistan, even the majority Sindhi Muslims of Sindh happen to be the target of the racist abuses by the bearded barbarics of Pakistan. The southern-most province of Sindh having its port city of Karachi as capital city earns more than 70 % revenue for Pakistan and gets less than 30 % financial grants from Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan.

All the natural resources of Sindh are in the hands of Pakistan. Even the sea coast of Sindh happens to be the territory of the federation of Pakistan while more than 70 % of the territory of the Karachi city is occupied by the military. And what remains of Karachi, excluding the seacoast and 70% of its territory, has been handed over to the non -Sindhi refugees in the name of City Government. We, the Sindhis do not deny rights of immigrants and refugees, but not at the cost of indigenous Sindhis. We believe that the fundamental right to rule in Sindh must lie with the indigenous Sindhis while all other linguistic, cultural and other groups can have proportional representation.

For the last five years, the water flow of Indus to Sindh was stopped by the racist Punjabi ruling elite of Pakistan. It caused severe drought which afterwards was converted into famine -like situation killing hundreds of thousands of livestock owned by the Sindhis, causing mass exodus of the Sindhi villagers, destroying their agriculture and ending up in human casualties. The ruling Punjabi elite of Pakistan has arbitrarily broken all water treaties with Sindh since the past 100 years and are now preparing clandestinely to build the Kalabagh Dam on the legendary River Indus despite clear opposition by the lower riparians.

We, the Sindhis believe that if this gigantic dam is built, the very life of the River Indus will be at stake. Already, the tail end of Indus has dried up completely since past three years resulting in horrible environmental disaster in the Indus Delta region stretching over 5,000 square miles with 200 miles mouth with the high sea. The world's fifth Mangrove forest is depleting, the Palo (Clupea Ilisha) fish which used to provide livelihood to the fisherfolk of Indus River has become extinct while the crop of Red Rice has also vanished from there.

The process of desertification has started from the tail end of the river as the sea has started hitting back in absence of the flow of fresh sweet water of Indus into the sea. The sweet water aquifers of Sindh land have been polluted and contaminated by the oceanic encroachments by the sea. According to the official figures 2 million acres of fertile agricultural lands in the tail end of Indus River have been rendered barren by the sea hitting the Sindh coast.

The indigenous Sindhis are witnessing gross violation of their human rights particularly the rights of women and children in Sindh. The door of progress has been closed on the women of Sindh and Pakistan and, instead they are being discriminated against in every field of social life. According to the latest figures about 1,000 women are being killed in cold blood every year in Sindh in the name of "honor." All enlightened social circles have raised their voice against the so-called "honor killings," but all such cries fall only on deaf ears of the racist rulers. The womenfolk, therefore, demand that their rights be recognized as human rights.

Actually, the denial of democracy has become the malaise of Pakistan. The military does not allow civilian politicians to rule the country. During past 54 years of Pakistan, the military has ruled for a total of 24 years directly. Indirectly, their rule has never ended in Pakistan. It is the main reason why there is no constitution, no rule of law and no democracy in Pakistan, and the violation of human rights continues unabated.