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POLITICAL CONTEST BETWEEN MUSLIMS OF SINDH AND THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT DURING THE HIJRAH MOVEMENT

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Abstract

The modern history of Sindh remains an extensive area of scholarly research, analyzing various dimensions of colonial rule, anti-imperial campaigns, and the complex political landscape in contemporary history. However, British power in colonial India spanned two centuries, empowering indigenous societies and reforming the education system. The influence of British colonialism was particularly significant among Muslim scholars. Colonizers tried to attract Muslim scholars to their needs. However, internal conflicts and ideological differences among Muslim scholars, especially in Sindh, have often been overlooked in mainstream historiography. The proposed research aims to highlight the British behavior towards Sindh and expose the British colonial benefits. This study examines the evolving divisions among Muslims in colonial Sindh, highlighting the First World War as a turning point in anti-colonial resistance. The era saw increasing opposition to British rule, challenging the long-standing notion that the sun would never set on the British Empire. The research explores political and ideological rifts within the Muslim community, analyzing colonial policies that shaped these divisions. The study relies on secondary sources, including academic journals, research papers, books, and historical reports, employing a qualitative approach. Through an in-depth analysis of political movements and historical events, it uncovers sectarian and political divergences among Muslims, contextualized within the broad context of colonial history in India, particularly Sindh.

Keywords: Hijrat, Movement, Sindh, History, British, Behavior.

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Introduction

The British imperial dawn cast its sleuth upon Sindh, subjugating the Talpur dynasty in the Dubbo Conquest, which resulted in a pivotal victory for imperialists following the collapse. The regional capital, Hyderabad, found itself encircled by colonial forces, and the once-powerful Talpurs were compelled to sign a treaty of amity, through which the British ultimately asserted dominance over all of Sindh. Despite enduring numerous invasions and conquests throughout different historical periods, Sindh had never assimilated into the voracious empires of the Indian subcontinent, instead maintaining its status as a distinct nation. This underscored the very beginning occasion in Sindh's history when British colonialists merged Sindh with Bombay as a part, erasing its socio-cultural distinctiveness, and imposing a new framework of administrative law upon a land previously autonomous in South Asia. In the broader narrative of British Indian history, this era bore witness to complex exchanges, conflicts, and transformations that significantly altered the sociopolitical and economic landscape of the subcontinent. Amidst these intricacies, Muslim resistance and opposition in colonial India hold substantial relevance. Focusing on the research of "Muslims against Muslims, the study endeavors to investigate a crucial underexplored dimension of Sindh's contemporary history. In this way, previous research on British Indian history has largely centred on widespread resistance to British rule and the Hindu-Muslim division, recurrently overlooking interplay dynamics and conflicts within Muslim communities. This study aims to address that scholarly gap by analyzing instances within Muslim discord and tensions that emerged in the colonial history of Sindh during. The proposed study directs its primary emphasis on the political contest of Muslims within Muslims and pro-colonial actions that shaped the scholars' experiences in India, drawing from a wide array of historical academic literature. This investigation aspires to contribute to a deeper and more nuanced understanding of Sindh's modern history, offering alternative interpretations and novel insights that challenge prevailing historical narratives. The research relies on secondary sources and historical methodology to formulate its analysis. Consequently, this study seeks to enrich the academic discourse surrounding British India, particularly concerning Sindh's historical trajectory, by offering original perspectives on the region's internal socio-political dynamics. While British Indian history has been the subject of extensive scholarly exploration, examining colonial governance, liberation struggles, and the complex political entanglements of the subcontinent—the internal frictions among Muslim scholars and Ulemas in British India, especially in Sindh, have been largely marginalized in mainstream historiography. The literature review delves into these neglected areas by identifying existing gaps, analyzing prior findings, and focusing on the theme of "Muslims against Muslims" throughout Sindh's colonial era. It systematically surveys relevant academic work to pinpoint the central issues and debates surrounding intra-Muslim conflict in the region. The present Sindh history tortuously interwoven to the wide yore of British colonialism in South Asia particularly Indian subcontinent. Although the socioeconomic, and cultural transformations of the era have received significant scholarly attention, the nuanced realities of intra-Muslim rivalries within Sindh's diverse Muslim society have often been overlooked or insufficiently examined.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The research investigation (Chatterjee, 1993) highlights the challenges in making similitude and underscores the fragmented nature of Muslim nationalistic scholars and ideologies within colonial world history. It also highlights the historical discourses for the

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Hijrat movement. The research shows that deviations in sociocultural, political, territorial, and doctrinal perspectives promoted divergent Muslim sects and identities during the Khilafat movement, which in turn stirred conflict within the broader Muslim masses. The segmentation evolves significantly when discussing the brawls and dissensions within Sindh under colonialism. The investigation highlighted (Soomro, 2017) sets utmost attention on Maulana Faizul Karim, a voiced analyst of both the Hijrat ambition and the Indian Khilafat Movement, considered as aligned with British colonial inheritances. It further argues that the British authority strategically aimed to balance the campaign's religious power by employing counterparts victimizing the Indian Khilafat Movement (IKM) and Hijrat Movement. For instance, colonial mouthpieces conscripted clerics by presenting powerful incentives, consequence in a religious decree (Fatwa) disseminated by pro-British scholars, with Maulana Faiz-ul-Karim at the vanguard. The Fatwa, supported by ninety-five Islamic judges, was executed against the Muslims who supported IKM and HM. Together, this permitted announcement endeavored to validate that the IKM turned from Islamic regulations, claiming that the Ottoman caliphs descended from Tatar lineage rather than the Quraysh family. In vain, the study (Khan, 2012) explores the northwestern parts of colonialism, luring attention to the essence of the resistance and political engagement against imperialism. The breakdown predominantly focuses on outward defiance and also indicates the internal separators within the Indian Muslim constituency, especially Sindh. The rosters of Sindh are categorized into various ages, including ancient, medieval, and modern timelines. The research accentuates the historical stage to discover emerging descriptions and examine the selected academic doctrine. The previous investigations frequently bypassed or circumvented the core focus offered in this inquiry. For instance, (Khatti *et al.,* 2022) discourse Sindh's past, but the trajectory spins around famous figurines who contributed to the historical legacy. It primarily examines the actions, works, and intellectual input of Mumtaz Pathan who was a legendary historian in shaping the noted Sindh's colonial history. In a similar content, (Rasool *et al.,* 2023) dive into an earlier illustration of modern outcomes by examining the secretive migration of Sindhi to Afghanistan during the collapse of Ottoman influences in Sindh. The study demonstrates the Hijrat movement was basically a mobilization of the needy, but unfortunately, it failed to perform its primary aims and goal. Nevertheless, it observed the onset of shots to reinstate the Ottoman Empire, with support from the IKM, regarding Afghanistan as a future sanctuary (Dar-ul-Islam).

Furthermore, (Rasool *et al.* 2023) examine the consequence of Pan-Islamism in Sindh which led to HM within the immense context of Muslim nationalism considered during the post-WWI. The research also considers the role of Pan-Islamic ideologies in reshaping political strategies, especially in Sindh with the Ottoman collapse, historically viewed as a religious sovereignty. Thus, manifold scholars present various performances of Sindh's historical development, using specific methods, data collection processes, and analytical procedures. The present research pursues to emphasize the existing literature as examined above in order to manage essential gaps and unresolved academic concerns, especially from a Sindh-specific lens. It will pose a new discourse and novel findings to address for the upcoming generation to dive deeper into research focus.

RESEARCH STATEMENT

Political contests within the Muslim race of colonial India have underscored a crucial role in various outlooks of history, opposing imperialist powers for the country or fighting the colonizers' cruel procedures. The revolt against Arab overruns, the mutiny of Marathas,

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the Bengali freedom resistance with outsides, and the Indian partition are well-known disasters, perspectives, and unforgotten affairs in modern history. However, this history is ultimately insightful for newcomer readers, scholars, and students. Likewise, many researchers have explored a range of extents of Muslims in Indian History, but the lack of Intra-contest in Muslim scholars (Kausar *et al.,* 2025). Similarly, the specific legacy of Sindh's yore has been ignored, flouted, and unacknowledged. Firstly, intellectuals mingled the historical perspective with a general sense of the Indian subcontinent (Rasool *et al.,* 2023). Secondly, investigators focused on diverse viewpoints of contemporary history (Khatti *et al*., 2023).

To address such lacunas in the literature, the proposed research as a novel dissertation of modern Sindh history, the scholar highlighted the conflict and political contest of Muslims in colonial history of India particularly Sindh. The findings would pose the existed body of literature, resulting in innovative outcomes in modern history.

THE STUDY AIMS

This study aims to highlight the proposed questions for the results based on the above literature in the following section.

1. What were the political contradictions within Muslims?
2. How did the British show attitude towards the Muslims?

RESEARCH METHOD

The appropriate method of performing proper research helps to remove the outdated framework, and data collection, explaining the accuracy of the proposed research (Rehana *et al.,* 2025). Similarly, the domain and subjects related to the methods of examination, investigation, discussion, and processes, underpin the research for being vital, stable, and vigorous. However, historical techniques uncover the breakdown by history (Rasool *et al*., 2024). The study subject connects to the chronological viewpoint of polarity within Muslims. The pivotal reason for picking the relevant subject is that the scholars concentrated on the different domains (Rasool *et al.,* 2023). Together, the field researchers described tending wide range of factors. Nevertheless, these gumshoes have similar sources of methods. In accordance with the proposed research, it would apply a historical code of conduct. Hence, to discuss and interpret the relevant literature.

Consequently, the study employed descriptive analysis involving published data based on the secondary sources. These sources discuss incongruities, contentions, and disagreements among Muslim scholars under the colonial legacy of the British. As an outcome, the methodological assistance would explain the effectiveness of nasty current discourses and narratives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results of the study discuss the internal contradictions and conflicts within Muslim Ulemas (Scholars). Mainly, it analyzed discoursing colonial attitude further to hovering fusses and disputes in the Muslims. These outcomes will pave a unique discussions for future narrative building to understand the scholarly discourses.

POLITICAL CONTEST OF MUSLIM SCHOLARS

Every imperial dominator subjugates nations characterized by internal disunity and societal fragmentation. It is a conventional modus operandi of imperial regimes to extend patronage in the guise of incentives, accolades, and a spectrum of privileges, which inadvertently engender dependency, indolence, and heightened discord within indigenous populations. In the Indian subcontinent, the British colonial establishment employed analogous strategies by selectively favoring particular communities, bestowing untaxed estates, monetary rewards, official appointments, and elevated ranks within the administrative hierarchy (Bhutto, 2008). Upon seizing control of India, the British authorities dispensed differentiated

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advantages to various ethnic and regional groups; notably, Punjab was exalted within the upper echelons of military institutions. Meanwhile, the Indian National Congress—dominated by Hindu intellectuals—maneuvered its political agenda through strategic pacifism, mirrored in parts by segments of the Muslim populace. Particularly, the notion of a "separate electorate" was vociferously advocated for Muslims as an apparent concession. Nevertheless, the aftermath of the First World War reconfigured the Indian political landscape, eliciting widespread political defiance among the native population (Rasool, 2022). Remarkably, the populace of Sindh emerged at the forefront of the campaign to reinstate the Ottoman Caliphate. Although the Hijrat movement paralleled the ideological underpinnings of the broader Khilafat movement in India, the Sindhi community actively and generously endorsed the initiative. This marked an unprecedented moment of Muslim solidarity in India, where a unified front was mobilized under the banner of the restoration effort, simultaneously representing a radical ideological departure and a bold anti-colonial assertion. Conversely, a faction of Sindh's religious scholars, particularly the Ulema, opposed the campaign, overtly aligning with colonial interests and repudiating the initiative. Initially, the Muslim clergy in Sindh resisted pan-Islamic fraternity by endorsing a religious edict (Fatwa) declaring the Hijrat initiative as un-Islamic and detrimental to local society. In response, the British colonial regime sought to quell pro-Ottoman sympathies among the Sindhi populace by mobilizing compliant religious figures to issue decrees legitimizing colonial narratives. Prominent among them was Maulana Faiz-ul-Karim, a known collaborator and beneficiary of British patronage, who authored a decree titled *Tahqiq-ul-Khilafat*, subsequently ratified by ninety-five clerics loyal to the colonial administration (Soomro, 2017). This Fatwa was disseminated widely across Sindh, aiming to dampen pro-Ottoman sentiment and foster allegiance to colonial authority. It epitomized a case of intra-Muslim conflict under colonial orchestration. The document was eventually translated into English as Facts about Khilafat. Simultaneously, the colonial administration established the "Peace and Stability Committees" (*Aman Sabah*) throughout British India as a counter-propaganda mechanism against the growing tide of Muslim unification. In Sindh, Maulana Faiz-ul-Karim was again elevated to a leadership position within this initiative. Other prominent British sympathizers who lent their support to the *Aman Sabah* initiative included Makhdoom Zaher-ul-Din of Hala (now Matiari), Pir Pagaro of Pir-jo-Goth, Pir Syed Shah Mardan, Shah Abu Muhammad Salih Qadri of Ranipur, Syed Khamiso Shah of Gambat (presently in Khairpur), and Syed Khush Muhammad Shah of Tharushah. In postcolonial historiography, such figures are often denounced as collaborators or traitors of Sindh (Ansari, 1992). In rebuttal, Maulana Din Muhammad Wafai authored a critical response titled *Izhar-ul-Karamat*, directly challenging the legitimacy of Maulana Karim's Fatwa. This historical episode represents a deliberate colonial strategy to incite internecine strife among Muslims, transforming political dissent into religious and ideological fragmentation (Wafai, 1985). In this orchestrated turmoil, colonial forces effectively undermined the Hijrat movement, particularly targeting Muslim émigrés (Muhajireen) who migrated to Afghanistan but suffered due to inadequate support and internal opposition within Sindh, coupled with the overwhelming dominance of the colonial apparatus.

In conclusion, this analytical narrative exposes the strategic subversions of imperial power, illustrating how British colonial authorities manipulated religious authority and community divisions to consolidate control. It offers a rigorous historical deconstruction, aimed at dismantling colonial mythologies and

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reaffirming indigenous resistance within the broader discourse of anti-imperial historiography.

EXPLORING COLONIAL ATTITUDE

The First World War served as a pivotal revelation against the dominion of British imperialism across the globe. It is frequently proclaimed that the sun would never set on the British Empire. However, Shashi Tharoor sarcastically retorted that such a claim only reveals divine disbelief in the British colonizers' morality within darkness (Tharoor, 2016). Concurrently, Europe was undergoing a cultural and political awakening—a renaissance—challenging the supremacy of British legal and political hegemony. Likewise, the Indian subcontinent began asserting its dissent in pursuit of fundamental liberties. Furthermore, the emergent solidarity between Muslims and Hindus posed a significant threat to colonial authorities, who remained apprehensive toward any form of intercommunal cohesion. In this context, the Hijrat movement directed toward Afghanistan emerged as a symbolic embodiment of Muslim-Hindu cooperation within British India. Its ideological foundation was to re-establish Muslim sovereignty under the Ottoman Caliphate, with Hindu support playing a crucial contributory role (Rasool et al., 2023). In response, the British colonial regime deliberately deployed infiltrators to disrupt, destabilize, and ultimately sabotage the migration initiative. Testimonies from participants (Muhajireen) revealed the presence of unidentified individuals who orchestrated the abandonment of the Hijrat endeavor (Itehad-e-Mashrique, 1920). This manipulative colonial strategy evolved into a coercive force that isolated and removed dissenting agents. The subversive actions of the empire were laid bare. These Muhajireen were neither consulted nor offered any platform for negotiation or resolution. Any individual displaying empathy or support for the emigrants was labeled a subversive agent or insurgent by colonial authorities.

Simultaneously, the British colonial administration in Sindh began detaining spiritual leaders (Pirs) for allegedly seditious rhetoric. Numerous Sindhi individuals were accused and threatened with imprisonment. A prominent example includes a revered Sirhandi Pir who vocalized support for the Hijrat campaign; he and his followers were apprehended and charged for endorsing civil resistance (Tejani, 2007)—an initiative that Gandhi had also publicly endorsed. Many political activists were incarcerated, and cases were tried in colonial courts that provided no avenue but imprisonment or enforced renunciation of anti-colonial activity. The oppressive behavior of British rule reached its zenith. The expression of liberty was systematically censored—journalism, print media, and public discourse were ruthlessly silenced. *Al-Amin*, a prominent newspaper advocating for the movement, was proscribed. Its editor, Shaikh Abdul-Majeed Sindhi from Hyderabad, along with fellow advocates Dr. Gidwani and Toteram Mansukhani, was apprehended (Panhwar, 1984). Although Mr. Sindhi was released without charges in March 1919, he resumed his literary resistance with renewed fervor. His essays passionately supported the Khilafat cause, the Hijrat campaign, and Gandhi's civil disobedience movement. The extent of colonial repression was further exemplified in the persecution of Hijrat leaders. Rais Jan Muhammad Junejo—a leading campaigner and Secretary-General of the movement—was subjected to torture and travel restrictions. He sought to lead a second caravan of emigrants to Afghanistan, which was intercepted on 15 January 1920 by the Peshawar administration under British directives (Ghanghro, 2008). A formal decree was issued for his house arrest and banishment, accompanied by the cessation of irrigation to his agricultural lands. Despite being a young barrister and esteemed

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intellectual of merely 33 years, he endured relentless harassment and ultimately passed away in Amritsar on 20 April 1920. Some scholars allege that he may have been fatally poisoned (Bhatti, 1998). His unwavering resilience and leadership were instrumental, though his demise marked the disintegration of the movement. No successor arose with equivalent determination or vigor to revive the campaign as Mr. Junejo had embodied. For his unwavering commitment to the restoration movement, he was bestowed the title *Raes-ul-Muhajireen* (Ansari, 1960).

In summation, the colonial machinery deliberately undermined the Hijrat movement, effectively derailing its foundational aspirations. The fate of the Sindhi emigrants who ventured toward Afghanistan remains veiled in historical obscurity. Even in the era of postcolonial sovereignty, the residual echoes of imperial dominance continue to resonate, reflecting an enduring colonial disposition in contemporary governance.

CONCLUSION

The paper highlighted the internal contradictions between Muslim Scholars of Sindh, political contestations, and clashes prevalent within the society. It explored the impartial perspective, problems of succession, and cooperative attitudes in the Indian subcontinent significantly Sindh. However, the results of the exploration presented deep disclosures. The research study revealed the complicated, multidimensional qualities of sectarian fragmentation produced under the colonial regime, freeing light on ideological conflict and sociocultural difficulties. This scholarly work presents novel viewpoints on Muslim experiences during the British period, examining established historiographical paradigms and familiarizing ingenious discourses within the framework of Sindh's modern history. The consequent results substantially improved the intellectual understanding of the issue, contextualizing it within the broader scope of British Indian historiography. Thus, the research prompts persistent academic exploration and critical discussion, enabling an expansive grasp of modern historical trajectories and the ramifications within the colonial Indian milieu.

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