

Persian Historiography In Sindh During Muslim Period

Abstract

India during Timurids (932-1274 AH) was flourished and reached to its very high level in cultural and literary activities. The courts of Timurids rulers were the place to gather the writers and poets from Sub-continent and outside. During the noble rulers of this dynasty such as Humayoon (937-947 and 962-963 AH), King Akbar (963-1014 AH), Jehangir (1014-1037AH) and Shahjehan (1037-1067), India extended and got more powerful and glorious so that all cities became the safe place for growing culture and literature. Very soon, these safe places attracted artists, writers, poets, architectures, scientists as well as sufists and ulamas to migrate to India from Iran and other neighbour countries and from all parts of Indian sub-continent. They were accepted with warm and got good jobs. Especially during the last and greatest emperor of this dynasty who was known as patronized of literature and arts, means Ourangzib(1067-1118 AH), India reached to its highest glory.

One of the most remarkable techniques at the time of Timurids was historiography. It was prevailing hobby at the courts of kings and princes. Persian language and literature extended in Sub-continent because of social attendings and gradually developed. Kings and their ministers were found of the Iranian literary prose and loved it as well as historiography. Therefore historians began their great job to write History. On the other side, during medieval period, many renowned historiographers from western part of sub-continent, Sindh region, wrote a lot of historical texts in Persian. Some of those manuscripts edited and printed by scholars in the recent years. These are the most important sources for better understanding not only Sub-continent history during the Islamic period but also social and

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cultural status in the same period. Hence, very soon the best historic sources were prepared and written by the noble historiographers, Indian or Iranian, in Persian.

This article tries to discuss on 17 of these main and real sources and highlights their potential and preference.

Key words: India, Timurids, Persian Historiography, Sindh, Iran

Introduction

Historiography in Indian Sub-continent was considered by Indian courts, especially during medieval period and even in 12th. And 13th. Centuries. Muslim rulers patronized historians and some of them directly engaged themselves in that work.



(Humanyu's Tomb)

The court of Indian Timurids (932-1274 AH) was the place to gather the writers and poets from Sub-continent and outside. During the rulers of this dynasty such as Humayoon (937-947 and 962-963 AH), King Akbar (963-1014 AH), Jehangir (1014-1037 AH) and Shahjehan (1037-1067) India extended and got more powerful and glorious. Especially during the last and greatest emperor of this dynasty who was known as patronized of

literature and arts, means Ourangzib (1067-1118 AH) India reached to its highest glory (Tavassoli 1381: 102-104).

Historiography at the time of Timurids was prevailing hobby at the courts of kings and princes. Persian language and literature extended in Sub-continent because of social attendings and gradually developed. As the kings and their ministers were found of the Iranian literary prose and loved it, this developed throughout Sub-continent (Tavassoli 1381: 102-104). It was also in this period which their courts became the main place for gathering poets, writers, and artists so that the Iranian names such as Jehandar, Shahriar, Farokhseyar and etc. selected to name princes (Aftab Asghar 1364: 148-155).

During Timurids dynasty and the years after, the main historical sources on Indian Sub-continent were written. Renowned of Persian historiographers have left behind themselves many works which today are considered as the main remarkable sources for studies the Indo-Persian history and literature.

Here, as my article to this seminar, I name some of those famous historiographers in the western part of Indian Sub-continent, e.i. Sindh region, and introduce at least one of their most remarkable works as well.



Sindh heritage

During medieval period, many renowned historiographers from western part of sub-continent, Sindh region, wrote a lot of historical texts in Persian. Some of those manuscripts edited and printed by scholars in the recent years. These are the most important sources for better understanding not only Sub-continent history during the Islamic period but also social and cultural status in the same period. Among these historians, it must be referred to at least 17 eminent writers, in brief.

1. Mir Masoom Bhakri

His famous book is *Tarikh-e-Masoomi*. His knowledge on Indian Sub-continent was excellent. In his book, he has mentioned historical events during Omavid and Abbasid in Sindh, as well as biography of Sindhi rulers and then other rulers such as Arghoons and Tarkhans and such events after Akbar's expedition. This book has been translated into English and Sindhi, and is one of the most important sources on Saljuqid dynasty (Tavassoli 2009: 42-46).

2. Edraki Biglari

He is the author of *Biglar Nameh*, and written in 1001 A.H. Biglari belonged to Arghoon tribe and wrote his book to record the events and situations concerning to Sindh. He also wrote *Masnavi Cheniser Nameh* (Affan Seljuq 2008: 191).

3. Mir Tahir Muhammad Nisyani Thattavi

He wrote *Tarikh-e Taheri* in 1030 A.H. on Sindh history. It is still as manuscript and kept in Karachi Museum (Affan Seljuq 2008: 191).

4. Mirak Yousof ibn-e Mir Abulqasim Namkin

The Short history of Shah Jahani, is written by him. This book has two major parts, part one consists the code references of World keeping, Country politics, managing manners of Government according to the contemporary history of elaborating in writer's period (Affan Seljuq 2008: 192). Also it has explained in detail about the political, official, economical, geographical and social situation and the events of four different regions of the Sindh means Bhakr, Seywi, Thatta, Seywistan.

5. Seyed Muhammad bin Seyed Jalal Thattavi

His works is Tarkhan Nameh, the history of Arghoon and Tarkhan dynasty on the order of Mirza Saleh in the year 1065 AH. This book describes Arghoon and Tarkhan history in detail.

Pir Hussamuddin Rashidi, the contemporary Sindhi famous scholar has made critical point of view correction of the two manuscripts texts which are in Britain and also he has written a very detail and eruditely introduction in Persian.

This book published in 1965 under cooperation of Sindhi Adabi Board, Hyderabad, Pakistan (Tavassoli 2009: 42-46).

6. Shaikh Farid ibn-e Shaikh Maarooft Sadr-e Bhakri

His famous work is Zakhiratul Khavanin, written in 1060 AH (Affan Seljuq 2008: 192). He wrote the biography of famous scientists, poets, literarians, artists and writers from Sindh region. Dr. MoeinulHaq corrected this book and published in 1970-74 by the Historical Society of Pakistan, Karachi (Tavassoli 2009: 42-46).

7. Vaez ibn-e Sayed Muhmud Shah

He was originally from Sindh and has written History of Sindh in 13th century. The biography of eminent masters of Sindh are written there (Affan Seljuq 2008: 194).

Unfortunately, it has not been corrected and published yet.

8. Baaq Ali Khaef

His famous book is Nameh Naqz, written in 1155 AH, on Kalhora dynasty, in prose and emitated from Shah Nameh and Sikandar Nameh, in 1624 verses.

This book is a valuable source for Kalhora period. It has not been published yet (Affan Seljuq 2008: 195).

9. Monshi Abdul Raouf Seywistani (died in 1180 AH)

Goldasta Nouras-e Bahar was written by him. This book is full of historical corresponding concerning of two famous rulers of Kalhora dynasty, Mian Muhammad and Mian Noor Muhammad (Affan Seljuq 2008: 195).

10. Mian Noor Muhammad Abbas, the ruler of Kalhora

He was not only a ruler but also a good historian. He was the Governor of Sindh and was known as Khoda Yar Khan. He wrote Manshoor-ul-Wasiyat and Dastoor-ul-Hukumat. He wrote it for his children as a will.

This book is consist of short advices under various topic i.e. religion, morality and politics (Rashdi, Edt. 1964: 5-25 and Tavassoli 2009: 42-46).

Pir Hussamuddin Rashidi has made correction of the book and written a scholarly research introduction in Sindhi language. The book has been published in 1964 by the Sindhi Ababi Board, Hyderabad.

11. Mir Ali Sheer Qane,e Thattavi

He was the famouse historians and writers in Sindh and wrote many books which two of them are introducing here.

1) Makli Nameh, is one of the masterwork of him, written in Persian. It was written in 1174 AH and from the viewpoint of its subject, it includes the biography of important historical heritage Makli graveyard in Sindh.

Pir Hussamuddin Rashidi has made correction of this valuable masterwork and wrote a research introduction in Sindhi language. This book was printed in 1967 by Sindhi Adabi Board.

2)The next and more important of Mir Ali Sheer,s work is Tohfath-ul-Karaam, in three volumes. The third volume is on Sindh history. Tohfath-ul-Karaam is also a masterpiece of Mir Ali Sheer which is recorded in year 1181 AHm though up to year 1188 AH matters were increased in it (Tavassoli 2009: 43). This valuable book is consisting three volumes and each volume has been narrated as under:

- Volume 1: In this part, it covers the recital situation of prophets, executors of God, theologians, royals, Muslim caliphs and the sultans of Islam.
- Volume 2: It covers the recital situation of theologians, Rich & patricians, Saints and Sadaat, scholars and popular arts related personalities of the cities.
- Volume 3: It is in recital history and the situation of the Supremes personalities of the Sindh, from the period before Islam up to Kalhora period (1181-AH) and also covers the great theologians and personalities of the cities, towns, capital city Thatta and the graveyard of Makli (Thattavi 1979: 17). So, the scholarly corrector, has mentioned that, (Thattavi 1979: 19) this valuable manuscript was entrusted to the writer's grandson Late Seyed Hussain Ali Shah and he has sold it in 1935 to Late Molana Mohammed Shafi Lahori and now this script is holding with his son Ahmed Rabbani. Gentleman has paid the all obeisance and provides the copy and the original manuscript to the correction maker, through this and also with the help of the copy in Britain Museum (No. Add21589), (This derivation copy has been provided by the order of Mir Murad Ali

Khan Talpou, the ruler of Sindh in 1240 AH through the calligrapher Mehr Ali Hussaini from the original manuscript) and copy in correction maker's personal library (This copy has been written in Rajab 1267 AH) and copy belongs to the writer "Lobb-e-tarikh-e-Sindh, Khodadad Khan (This copy has been finished in Karachi in 12 Rabi-ul-awal 1288 by Abdul Karim Kashmiri on the instruction of Khuda-dad Khan).

Printed matter of this book has a detail margin notes and pedigrees, which consist 478 pages. A complete list with detail of issuances and references in alphabetical form and also more than hundred pictures of the manuscripts belongs to epigraphs and the tombs and the other historical heritage and starting phase of the Arab and Fars (Persia) has been mentioned and provided in the end of this book.

This book was printed in the year 1971 and published by the Sindhi Adabi Board in Hyderabad.

12. Muhammad Azam Thattavi

He wrote his book, Tohfah-ul-Taherin, in 1194 AH, on Ulamas and Fozalas of Thatta. It is full of historical knowledge about the historical city of Thatta and its eminent nobles (Affan Seljuq 2008: 198).

13. Muhammad Azimuddin Tatavi

He wrote Fath Nameh, in 1209 AH. It is on descriptions of battles between two powerful governors of Sindh, Kalhoras and Talpoorans. Although it is written in the form of verses, it is very famous among public. It was published in 1926 by Ghulam Mostfa Khan from Karachi (Affan Seljuq 2008: 193).

14. Muhammad Hossein Qaderi Seywestani

He has written the book of Fehrest-e Tarikh-e Sindh. It is a short history on Sindh rulers, but not published yet (Affan Seljuq 2008: 201-202).

15. Khan Bahador Khodadad Khan Bhakri

He is one of the famous historiographers of Sindh. His masterwork, Lobb-e-tarikh-e-Sindh, (This copy has been finished in Karachi in 12 Rabi-ul-awal 1288 by Abdul Karim Kashmiri on the instruction of Khuda-dad Khan) written in 1318 AH, is one of the best sources on Sindh History in Persian.

16. Khanzaman Khan Ghulam Hossein Khan

His famous book is *Gulzar-e Asefiya*, written in 12th century after Hijra, in Persian. It consists of biography of rulers, ministers, governors, tribes, during the rulers of Asafiye in Deccan. This book was published in shape of "stone-printed" in about 200 years ago, and in 1977, reprinted by Dr. Muhammad Mehdi Tavassoli as *Tarikh-e Asafjahan*, with scholarly introduction and some appendix, in Pakistan (Tavassoli, Edt.1377: intro.41).

17. Muhammad Nizamuddin Heravi

He was the Minister of Akbar Shah, and was with him in his many expenditures. He wrote one of the best historical sources on Indian sub-continent history covers from Ghanavid dynasty to the 37th of Akbar reign under the title of *Tabaghat-e Akbari*, in three volumes. He wrote this book in 1001-1002 AH and unfortunately before he finished this huge work, he passed away. His book consists of three volumes and one time was simply corrected by Hedayat Hosseini and published between 1913-1931 in Calcutta, India (Tavassoli 1381: 104). Dr. Muhammad Mehdi Tavassoli, has critically and scientifically corrected it according to 4 other manuscripts and stone-printed which will be published very soon (Heravi, manuscript).

Conclusion

Medieval period in Indian Sub-continent, even during Muslim period which is started from Mahmud Qznavid till the end of Indian Greater Timurids, emerged many eminent historiographers in this region. They wrote many valuable books under Indian patronized, which they are still the best and only sources for studying history, culture and society of Sub-continent for more than 6 centuries.

No doubt, without these main sources, it is very difficult to have a right judge in Indian history, even in region history, in general. Each interpretation and conclusion without referring to those sources, is still incomplete.

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