

## **CC-5:HISTORY OF INDIA(CE 750-1206)**

### **II. POLITICAL STRUCTURES:**

#### **(C). ARAB CONQUEST OF SINDH: NATURE AND IMPACT OF THE NEW SET-UP; ISMAILI DAWAH**

The period from 1000-1200CE witnessed many changes both in West and Central Asia and in Northern India as well. The continuous incursion of the Turkish tribesmen from Central Asia, the mercenary character of the Turkish soldiers who were prepared to switch loyalties and abandon an unsuccessful ruler without much thought, the strife between different Muslim sects, and between different regions made the period a restless one.

As a part of expansion policy of the Umayyad Caliphate, the invasions started as early as 8<sup>th</sup> century in India. In 712 CE, Arabs invaded India from the north-west region (Sindh), under Muhammad bin Qasim, who was a general of the Umayyad Caliphate. Sindh was then ruled by Dahir, son of Chach, who usurped power from the previous Buddhist rulers. Muhammad bin Qasim defeated Dahir in a fierce battle near Brahmanabad. Subsequently Alor, Brahmanabad and Multan were taken. Though his rule lasted for only two years. Yet it greatly disturbed the economic life of Sindh and a large number of people and merchants fled from Sindh. However many Arab's settled down in Sindh and Sindh continued to be under Muslim occupation. But the Arabs were unable to penetrate further into India in the eighth century due to the presence of the formidable Pratihara kingdom in Western India. The military conquest and the administrative regulations of Muhammad bin Qasim are mentioned in the Chachnama.

#### **Causes of Arab Conquest of Sindh**

The Arabs having trade contact with India from ancient times knew that India was rich in terms of various resources and promised enormous wealth. This was the foremost cause that made the Arabs interested in invading India. Makran Coast in the Sindh region played an important part in the overseas trade since the ancient times and hence it became the first target of their attack. Another reason of Arab invasion of Sindh was territorial expansion as well as spread of Islamic faith.

The immediate cause of Arab invasion was however the capture of certain Arab ships by the sea pirates of Sindh. The ships were captured by the pirates of Debal, a sea-port of Sindh. When king Dahir of Sindh refused to punish the pirates, Hajjaj the Governor of Iraq despatched an army under his nephew and son-in-law Muhammad bin Qasim. He arrived in Sindh in 712 CE and the sea-port of Debal was besieged. After Debal, Nerun and Siwistan were also captured. This was followed by the battle between Muhammad bin Qasim and king Dahir in which the latter was defeated.

Following the death of king Dahir, Jaisingha, the crown prince offered some resistance at the fort of Brahmanabad but was overpowered by the Arabs shortly. Muhammad also captured Alor and few other forts which completed the Arab conquest of Sindh after which in the following year the Arabs turned towards the conquest of Multan. In 714 CE Hajjaj the Governor of Iraq died and Muhammad bin Qasim was subsequently recalled and executed. This event gave Jaisingha an opportunity to reoccupy Brahmanabad. But the new Governor of Sindh defeated and executed Jaisingha.

Following which he sent several expeditions to different parts of India but all of them proved to be unsuccessful. The Indian kings specially the Pratiharas and the Chalukyas put up tough resistance. By the end of 9<sup>th</sup> century the Abbasid Caliphate was in decline and thus it failed to keep in control its distant provinces.

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ARAB CONQUEST OF SINDH**

The Arab conquest of Sindh had very limited effect on the politics of India. The Arabs failed to penetrate deep into India and thus could not break the military strength of India. A section of people of Sindh were called Zimmis (protected subjects) by the newly established Arab rule and had to pay the religious tax called Jizya. When Muhammad bin Qasim conquered Sindh he brought the Hindus under the category of Zimmis because he thought it to be inappropriate to convert all Hindus to Islam or even killing them for not converting. Thus the Arab conquest of India led to exchange of culture between the two places. The Arabs also profited from astrology and science of medicine of the Indians.

Lastly it is important to mention that the Arabs in Sindh failed to remain united and their kingdom was divided into two parts-lower and upper Sindh with Mansura and Multan as their capitals respectively. The scenario remained like this till the invasion of Mahmud of Ghazni.

