

SINDHI RESETTLEMENT IN ULHASNAGAR

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ABSTRACT

One of the most civilized countries of the world is India. From Sind comes the name Hind. Both the Sindhudesh and river Sindhu have remained great since centuries. Not only the Vedas, Ramayana and Mahabharat have mentioned them with respect but the great poets and saints also have spoken and written very high about Sind. And historically it is a fact that Sindhi people are the inheritors of the great civilization-the Indus Valley Civilization. The excavations at Mohan-Jo-Daro are a vivid depiction of sindhudesh and and Sindhi people. The geographical position of Sind shaped the political history of Indian sub-continent. And from 712 A.D.to 1843 A.D. Sind

came to be ruled by various invaders and finally British conquered Sind in 1843.

Finally with independence of India and partition of the country in 1947 Sind became a part of newly created state of Pakistan. As a result of political and social strife that came in the wake of partition Sindhi community had to abandon their homes. This resulted in mass migration and spread of Sindhis over many countries. And out of these one of the important settlements of Sindhis is Ulhasnagar.

The article is about Sindhi resettlement in Ulhasnagar. Ulhasnagar has not only rehabilitated a community of traders but has proved to be prosperous Industrial Township. Ulhasnagar today has not only economically developed, but has also proved to be a nerve centre of the Sindhi society, culture and education. So the article attempts to examine the resettlement of Sindhis in Ulhasnagar.

Key Words:- Sind, Sindhis, Resettlement, Ulhasnagar

INTRODUCTION

India is one of the most ancient civilized countries of the world. From centuries, India has been a seat of learning and enlightenment. Unfolding the glorious past of Sind, poet and Gandhian freedom fighter Baldev T Gajra observes that Sind's culture is probably the oldest culture, Mohan-Jo-Daro bear testimony to that. He also pointed out that it was from Sind that the name 'Hind' was derived. The Vedas were revealed on the banks of the Sindhu. Sind's name occurs in Mahabharata too. Sind's frontiers extended to Multan, Kandahar and Kashmir on the North, and up to Kanauj in the East. 'Sind was the gateway to India for the foreigners, and Sindhis bravely faced the onslaught of these

foreigners from time to time.’ From the days of Vedas, Sindhudesh has been the cradle of human culture. K.R.Malkani remarks about the greatness of Sindhu River in these words, ‘When the Vedic seer invokes heaven and earth, he also invokes the Sindhu. The Veda refers to the Ganga only twice; but it makes as many as thirty references to the Sindhu.’

Not only Sindhu River is referred in Rig-Veda but all round prosperity and richness of Sindhudesh also is well mentioned in the Rigveda. In the Rig-Veda, it is said: ‘The Sind is rich in horses, rich in chariots, rich in cloths, rich in gold ornaments well made, rich in wood forever fresh, abounding in Silama plants, and the auspicious river wears honey growing flowers.’ The ancient Indian epic Ramayana also contains references about Sindhu River and Sindhudesh. Sindhudesh enjoyed the prominent position even in the days of Mahabharata. Coming to Bhagwat Gita, scholars are of the view that this great scripture and very valuable source of human knowledge and wisdom is based on an earlier sermon involving Sind.

Sindhudesh and river Sindhu both have remained great since centuries. Not only the Vedas, the ancient Epics-- the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, have also references to them with respect, For ages great poets and saints have also spoken and written very high about Sind. Sindhudesh has always been a place of Sufism, religion and spirituality. Its people have shown respect for all religions and faiths. It is evident from the remains that in ancient times Buddhism was the main religion and faith of people of Sind. It is a matter of pride for Sindhudesh and for Sindhi community that their culture has influenced outsiders who visited Sind from the days of remote past. A number of foreign visitors and tourist have recorded high appreciation for Sindhi culture and prosperity of the land. Prof. Popati Hiranandani remarks about Alexander the great who entered into Sind three centuries before Christ and said about ancient Sindhis: ‘Sindhis are healthy and temperate. They partake of community meals; they hate war and love medicines.’

Historically, it is fact that Sindhi people are the inheritors of great civilization known as Indus Valley Civilization. The excavations at Mohan-Jo-Daro are a vivid depiction of Sindhudesh and Sindhi people. The culture of Mohan-Jo-Daro reveals that people of Sind even 5000 years ago were the most civilized and their knowledge of town planning was astonishing. The social and economic life of the town presents a cosmopolitan character, the population was heterogeneous. The Buried cities in the Indus Valley at least 5000 years old thrill the modern city planners even today. Thus the civilization of Indus Valley is as rich and elaborate as those of Sumer and Egypt.

INVASIONS ON SIND

The geographical position of Sind to a greater extent has shaped the political history of the Indian sub-continent, as Sind was the gateway to India for foreigners in ancient times. Sind being a prosperous centre of trade and culture, the wealth, name and fame of Sind attracted foreigners. The Sindhis being civilized, peaceful but a minority community people did not resist the foreign invaders. Sind maintained its perpetual character. Sindhi people do not believe in extremism and feel happy and joyful in every political and social set-up. Geographically and commercially also Sind has always occupied an important position in the history of India. Sindhis are known from centuries for their international trade contacts with the rest of the world. From the excavations and evidences one can predict that Sind must have been a great centre of world culture and civilization.

From 712 to 1843 A.D. Sind was under Muslim rule. Describing the saddest day in Indian history, K.R.Malkani writes: ‘On 16 June, A.D. 712, after fifteen attempts by nine Khalifas over the period of 74 years, the Arabs had conquered Sind, when Raja Dahirsen was killed by Mohammed Bin-Qasim.’ Tracing the brief account of rulers who ruled over Sind, L.H. Ajwani wrote: ‘First Arab rule, then the rule

of two indigenous Sindhi tribes, the Sumras (1050-1350) and the Sammas (1350-1520), then the rule of Arghuns and Turkhans (1520-1590) and finally the rule of the Mogul emperors which lasted up to the death of Aurangzeb after which the Kalhoras ruled over Sind till 1783, followed by the sixty years rule of the Baloch Talpurs or Mirs until British conquered Sind in 1843.'

Politically, Sind suffered a lot at the hands of Muslim rulers, since all conquerors and invaders including indigenous rulers could not restore the ancient prosperity in Sind. British period to some extent brought a sigh of relief for Sindhis. Stressing this fact, L.H.Ajwani writes, "The British conquest of Sind, in 1843, was no doubt an act of aggression, but the Sindhis welcomed their rule as giving them relief from autocracy and barbarism. The province became a fertile, prosperous, and advanced region". He further mentions, "The Hindu minority, freed from autocratic tyranny, became one of the most enlightened peoples in India and built up a large number of educational institutions, hospitals and welfare centres".

During the governorship of Sir Bartle Frere in 1848, Sind was annexed to Bombay presidency. This was done in order to boost the economy of Sind through its linkage with the mainstream administration of India. Due to this by 1920's, Karachi in Sind became one of the most important trading centre in India with significant commercial assets. The Hindu Sindhis from Sind and Bombay occupied the centre stage in the commercial prosperity of Sind. This irked the Muslim Sindhis who began to organize to fight for the separation of Sind from Bombay presidency.

Many prominent Hindu Sindhis at the outset supported the separation of Sind, as they felt it would alleviate the impoverished state of masses and would be more beneficial for the province, given its growing commercial networks, to become autonomous. To take the load off their shoulders, the support also came from the Hindu leaders of the business community of Bombay who, despite the economic growth of Sind, knew that it would never become self-sufficient and, therefore, continue to be a burden on them. The Muslims of the Bombay presidency also supported the separation realizing that Sind would become a Muslim majority province. These ultimately brought victory to the Muslims, and Sind was separated from Bombay presidency on 1 April 1937. Along with this, communal partition between Hindus and Muslim Sindhis was also cemented. This led to 'rift between Muslims and Hindus'.

The political power of the Muslim league was further consolidated due to the Masjid Manzilgah conflict (1938). Manzilgah was the name of group of buildings on the banks of Indus. In Manzilgah one of the buildings was an out of use mosque that the Muslims demanded from the British government. This demand was then brought to the attention of the then chief minister Allah Baksh Soomoro. In July 1939 Manzilgah restoration committee was established. Later 'Manzilgah Day' was observed in August 1939, the mosque was occupied nonviolently by the Muslim worshippers. The response of Soomoro's government led to the arrest of many of the Muslims and their leaders. In response, Muslims also gave up their passive resistance. These Manzilgah riots ended the political career of Allah Baksh Soomoro. The new government that came to be formed in March 1942 passed the resolution in favour of creation of Pakistan.

The prosperity of the Hindu Sindhis through education and land reforms since the arrival of British in Sind, led the Muslim Sindhis struggle to separate Sind from the India. Thereafter, politics and religion was used as tools to take control from the Hindu Sindhis from Sind. Finally, it was the triumph of the Muslim League under the leadership of Mohammad Ali Jinnah (1876-1948), and the failure of the Congress party paved the way for the secession of Sind, a Muslim majority province from India in 1947. The separation of Sind from Bombay Presidency (1 April 1937) did not bring Sind peace. In the ten years from 1937 to 1948 Sindh suffered from frequent ethnic strife. Initially, the governments of Pakistan and Sind had advised Hindu Sindhis against abandoning their homes. Despite assurances given by

M.A.Jinnah of the safety of the minorities, many Sindhi Hindus decided to leave Sind. Dr. Choitram Gidwani, President of the Sind Provincial Congress Committee, cited examples of discriminatory treatment. The administration was slowly being purged of all the Hindu officers, in pursuance of a policy of communal representation in the services on a population basis. He pointed out that, 'the Sind administration is now manned by Muslims and Hindu officers have decided to leave Sind rather than serve under such humiliating conditions'. Further in the sphere of trade also a communal ratio had been fixed for the grant of licenses. The inevitable result of this was depriving the minorities (Sindhi Hindus) of their means of livelihood and creating opportunities for those, who had never been in trade i.e. for the majority Muslims to monopolize the trade.

The Karachi Municipal Corporation which consisted of Hindus became the next target and was reduced to a subordinate department. Its powers over land ownership and primary education were taken away. It was also denied of police assistance in demolishing the unauthorized structures of Muslim immigrants on municipal lands.

After these changes being done at the government level, soon the signs of social discrimination had started appearing. The Muslim cowherds were instructed not to lead out for grazing cows, buffaloes and goats belonging to Hindus. And the Muslim barbers, washer men should not serve the Hindus. The Muslim Haris (cultivators) were successfully instigated not to till lands for Hindu landlords (Zamindars). Upon this the Hindu Zamindars were criticized by Sind government for not tilling the land on purpose, so as to create drought conditions in Sind.

Social discrimination was then followed by the Quetta riots. In these riots the targets were minorities from the West Punjab. For the time being Sind minorities were spared. By the end of August 1947, at first a large number of Sikhs started leaving Sind. There were attacks on passenger trains in upper Sind. Tension among Hindu Sindhis was intensified due to the unrest at Nawabshah. The trouble started when a train with Hindu passengers from Punjab passing through Nawabshah to Mirpur Khas was attacked by the anti-social elements. In spite of instructions given by Khuhro, the Prime minister of Sind to the police that law and order must be maintained at any cost, the Hindu Sindhis suffered.

Nearly ten thousand people left Sind either by land, sea or air after the Quetta riots and the Nawabshah tension. Even at Karachi, the commercial city, there were several cases of illegal occupation of houses by the immigrant Muslims. The coming of Muslim immigrants from Ajmer to Hyderabad spread reports about their sufferings, led to riots on 17 December 1947. The governments of Sind and Pakistan continued to provide assurances to Hindu Sindhis for their safety and protection. But the hollowness of the promises made by government was seen, when it confiscated the land, terminated the services and subjected the minorities (Sindhi Hindus) to religious persecution.

It is a recorded fact that although Hindus were minority community, they owned sixty percent of the lands, eighty percent of constructed property and held ninety percent of jobs. But due to the sudden onslaught in the wake of the partition, the Sindhi Hindus knew not what would happen to them, what they should do and which way they must go. It was reported later that twenty nine acres of land had been abandoned by Hindus in those dark dingy days. This land was later declared as evacuee property by the Pakistan government.

India got independence on 15th August 1947. On 8 September 1947, the United Press of India reported that four thousand people were leaving Sind daily of whom about two thousand were leaving from Karachi by rail, sea and air. B.G.Kher, Chief Minister of Bombay state during this time visited transit camps that were installed; he heard the grievances of the displaced from West Pakistan, earnestly requesting them not to listen to rumours as that might disturb the peace of the city. Also the Bombay authorities had been careful. They segregated the displaced population, believing that the Muslims in

Sind and Punjab had been incited by the stories of the immigrants who settled amongst them.

EXODUS FROM WEST PAKISTAN

Finally the Karachi riots on 6 January 1948 led to spread of violence and Hindus and Sikhs decided to leave. There came the realization to the non-Muslims in Sind of utter impossibility of any reconciliatory solution that could bridge the ever widening gap of enmity, distrust and anger between Muslims and non-Muslims. The exodus of Hindus then started on a gigantic scale. Tragic and terrible happenings in the shape of arson, loot and murder accelerated the pace and swelled the volume of the migration. It became an irresistible flood of human beings. Millions of people fled with whatever they could salvage from the ruins of their homes. This flood of human beings created for the government of India unprecedented problem of relief and rehabilitation. The Bombay government had to prepare for the coming of more and more Hindu immigrants.

Evacuation of Hindus from Sind by airways and waterways had started. Trains being prone to attack, airlines such as Bombay Airlines, Tata Airlines (later Air India), Ambica Airlines, and Mistry Airways were pressed in to evacuation services. As the number of people wishing to migrate increased ships of the British India Navigation Company, the Bombay Steam Navigation Company, Scindia Shipping, Persian Gulf Line and others were diverted from their coastal passenger services and commissioned for the evacuees from Karachi. Over the next several months, the migrants landed at ports along the Western Coast of India at Okha, Navlakhi, Porbandar, Veraval and Bombay. A large majority of them arrived at Bombay and some others landed in Delhi, or the towns of Gujarat or Rajasthan.

The major part of evacuation occurred in the first three months i.e. between 1 January, 1948 and 15 February 1948 nearly 1, 80, 000 persons from Sind were evacuated. It has been estimated that out of 14,00,000 Hindus who lived in Sind in 1947, about a million and a quarter came over to India. According to yet another England-educated lawyer and First High Commissioner to Pakistan, Sri Prakash, 12,00,000 people had left Sind by the end of 1948. 4,52,800 were registered in refugee camps. And the 1951 census recorded 7,76,229 Sindhis in India. Nobody knew about the rest of Sindhis and their conditions. It was impossible to estimate how many were no more, and how many had left the country seeking their fortunes elsewhere. The Director of publicity wrote, 'Thousands of refugees poured in to the city and the Bombay government was faced with the problem of providing them with food, shelter, clothing, medical aid and also transport facilities to those who desired to go to places outside the city'. The government was also called upon to secure employment for the displaced persons, who desired or were forced to remain in Bombay.

The new government earnestly resolved to address all the problems with a series of Five Year Plans. Most of these government thinkers (Leaders) came from a privileged background. They were no doubt committed to develop the country and bring it out of poverty. The matter of Sind was not one they particularly put their minds to. That is why Sindhis who are considered good bargainers in business did not succeed in striking a political bargain. Unfortunately their plight was not considered at all. Jawaharlal Nehru wrote to Padmaja Naidu, 'I do not feel attracted to Sindh. I have nothing to say about it.' Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel remarked in his correspondence with the Journalist M.M.S. Sharma in the late 1940s, 'Sindh is a peculiar province, where principles hold no field, nor can anybody be trusted to keep his word or promise. It is a strange place'.

That left Choitram Gidwani, the President of Sind Provincial Congress, run from pillar to post trying to get a better deal for the Sindhis. The Sindhi Hindus were very disappointed as was seen from the survey report. They felt their leaders could have bargained for a separate area for them. As the Thar Parker District had a huge Hindu majority, the leaders could have claimed it. They were deeply

disappointed, uncertain and confused while they were made to leave their homeland. But one cannot blame one factor or one person or a series of events or one event for this tragedy (Partition). It was a combination of factors The Sindhi Hindus with the love of Sufism started towards their new abode and converted their dreams and goals into prosperity.

Transit Camps

The government spared no efforts, when deprived of their properties the tired migrants from West Pakistan (Sindhi Hindus) reached the Indian soil. They were received, dispersed or accommodated in the relief camps set up by the Directorate General of Evacuation of the Government of India at various receiving centres in Bombay Presidency, Central Provinces, Kathiawar and Rajasthan. The government improvised all the possible arrangements to cope with the demands of the situation. Refugee camps were established at Chembur, Powai, Virar, Mulund, Borivili and other places. Accommodation was available in these camps for approximately 15,000 refugees. In addition to these camps, the Punjab Frontier Association ran a camp at Koliwada and 2,100 refugees were accommodated there.

By 1948, in Bombay Presidency there about 1, 29,000 refugees in various camps. In addition to these, five military camps at Kalyan were made available to refugees, with the ultimate plan of developing a Sindhi township. Thus the Sindhi Hindu refugees dispersed throughout the Bombay state, Rajasthan, Central India and further afield. And among these, the most important settlement of Sindhis is Ulhasnagar.

The Historical Outline of Ulhasnagar

The township of Ulhasnagar is of quiet recent origin and has come into existence in 1942. Ulhasnagar was known as Kalyan military camp, as the city area of Ulhasnagar consists of nine villages of Kalyan Taluka. Its area admeasuring 3120 acres was acquired in the year 1942. By ordnance by defence ministry for the establishment of transit camp so as to be occupied by the troops (soldiers) of the Defense Department of India. Immediately after the land was acquired, the development of the site was undertaken and 2,126 barracks were constructed by the defense ministry so as to be used as residence by the soldiers. This transit camp was originally designed to accommodate 6000 soldiers and an overall population of 30,000. All this was proposed to be accommodated in five camps. These camps extended from Kalyan Murbad road on the North to the Hill ranges on the South. Basic amenities like electricity were provided by Ordinance Factory, Ambernath, while water came from barrage dam in Badlapur.

Development of camp in to Township

With the end of Second World War (1945) and shortly in 1947 with independence and partition of India, these military barracks were made available to the refugees from West Pakistan. The land and properties of the present day township of Ulhasnagar due to its proximity with Bombay were put together in compensation pool for the purpose of rehabilitation of displaced persons. Since 1948 up to 1971, the Central Government through its various departments and officers was in control of this area. The Relief and Rehabilitation Committee appointed by government (1948) through its Chief Commandant helped the refugees in various ways. In the year 1947-48 government and the welfare agencies concentrated on immediate relief. Until August 1949, all the camp residents were provided with free rations. Later on the government stopped the provision of the same, except for the destitute and the disabled.

Sixty five years ago on 8th August, 1949, his Excellency C.Rajagopalachari, the then Governor-General of India, declared the camp a township and called it "Ulhasnagar"- the City of Joy- mostly comprising of Sindhis. The word 'Ulhas' means enthusiasm. It was named so with the hope that those who had abandoned their all might would forget the unpleasant past and work for bright future with enthusiasm. Days passed by and no doubt with all the initial difficulties, the refugees soon realized that this was their new home and so decided to call it "Sindhunagar", a name reminiscent of their homeland. Early efforts of planning the Ulhasnagar Township

The township of Ulhasnagar was to grow on the site of the then existing transit camp, 36 miles from Bombay, between Kalyan and Ambarnath, along the Bombay-Poona railway line. The first layout of the transit camp itself was healthy and modern, meant for the occupation of the troops i.e. for housing the regimented society. Later on it was decided to build up a new society for the displaced persons from the Western part of the country. After the partition of the country (1947), the most urgent problem was to provide immediate shelter and livelihood to the displaced persons.

The structures that were built at that time (1942- for the soldiers) were barrack type, built for temporary use and therefore were unsuitable for permanent residence. In the early years (1947-1949), the camps also lacked many essential amenities. The layout of the transit camp had, therefore, to be recast, to meet the permanent housing needs of the thousands. This led to the drawing up of new map, for organizing the various activities of the new urban community and providing the climate for a homogenous society. The new map was therefore drawn up by the end of 1948. This new map was the first Master Plan of the township.

New Township

This new township of Ulhasnagar was eventually planned for an population of 2,00,000 and covered a area of little over 3,000 acres. This area was to be divided in to eight sections each measuring between 300 to 400 acres. Each section was to be developed as a self contained unit, providing the necessary amenities such as markets, schools, hospital, recreation ground, post office, a garden and a public hall etc. It was also proposed to reserve an area of 53 acres as a civic centre, where administrative, judicial and municipal offices were to be located. The lands to the West of the Bombay Igatpuri line were earmarked for the development of heavy industries. Also lands to the South of the Ordnance factory at Ambarnath measuring 150 acres were admirably suited for heavy industries. A special site measuring about 54 acres was reserved for the light industries.

As at that time, the water supply and drainage arrangements in the camp were good enough for a population of only 25,000, it was to be remodeled in a systematic manner. Electric energy for industries and domestic consumption was to be made available. There was to be a liberal network of roads and new railway stations. The master plan did considered the natural and strong orientation of Ulhasnagar town to Bombay.

The Economic Rehabilitation of the Refugees

A number of displaced persons who possessed initiative and enterprise were able to stand on their own legs from the beginning. But the problem of relief and rehabilitation of the remaining numbering about two lakhs had to be faced. Except for the brief period of four months in 1948, when the government of India assumed direct responsibility for relief and rehabilitation, the full brunt of the problem fell squarely on the shoulders of government of Bombay.

To encourage the displaced persons to stand on their own legs, the gratuitous relief, initially given in shape of free rations etc to the displaced persons had to be gradually terminated. The gradual

termination of gratuitous relief and liquidation of some of the relief camps was done by dispersing of the displaced persons to certain selected towns. The gratuitous relief came to be continued in case of unattached women, children, the aged and the infirm. The problem of the permanent rehabilitation of displaced persons was tackled by the Bombay government by way of:

- Making provision of permanent housing and setting up of displaced person's townships and colonies.
- Provision of vocational and technical training facilities
- Starting of work and production centers for providing employment to trained and skilled workers
- Grant of financial assistance by way of loans for business and starting small industries
- Provision of trading facilities by making commodities available at controlled rates and supply of electric power for starting small scale industries in urban areas.
- Assistance was also given to displaced students so as to pursue their studies.

The successful implementation of these measures accelerated the pace of rehabilitation. Due to all these measures displaced persons found a firm footing in the economy of the state.

The Vocation Training Centre (V.T.C)

The displaced agriculturists from Pakistan were settled on the land. And the large number of persons who were small time businessmen, traders, contractors etc., in Pakistan managed to do similar work when they came to India. But there were a very large number of urban dwellers, employed in various capacities before partition who found themselves unable to earn a living without some kind of specialized training. In order to deal with this category, it was felt necessary by the government to provide facilities for vocational and technical training. So early in October 1948, the small scale industries and the vocational training centre (V.T.C) were started at Ulhasnagar by the Bombay government. The Sindhi Hindus were mainly a trading and mercantile community. The vocational training centre thus provided an opportunity to the displaced persons to divert their business skill in to technical fields and also served the purpose of equipping the inhabitants with avenues of employment. In the beginning the government introduced 22 trades, to train 653 trainees. Subsequently the period of the courses was increased, to impart more knowledge and practice to the displaced persons and to make them fit for absorption in industries. The duration of courses at V.T.C. varied from six months to twelve months. By the end of end of March, 1950, as many as 19,500 displaced persons had been trained at the various training centers. In addition to the training, the displaced persons in V.T.C were given a stipend of Rs.30/- P.M. The V.T.C. also had skilled workers on its roll for training purposes and to undertake production by trainees as well as skilled workers.

The V.T.C. proved to be a useful instrument of rehabilitation, providing training in courses of short duration to unskilled personnel that helped them to secure employment outside the camp. A sum of Rs. 35,000 was disbursed to the displaced persons by way of wages, stipends and salaries per month. In addition to the V.T.C. a work centre was started with two sections i.e. carpentry and tin smithy. The expenditure of work centre during 1951-52 was Rs. 1,60,000. It employed ex-trainees of V.T.C. A provision was also made to give loans and license facilities to ex-trainees of V.T.C., for helping them to start small scale industries.

The Government Production Centre

In the year 1950, a production centre was started with a view to provide employment to the ex-trainees of the V.T.C. It consisted for five departments; namely the textile, carpentry, leather, hosiery (consisting of women workers only) and tailoring (consisting of both men and women workers). Here the maximum wage paid was Rs. 75/- and the minimum was Rs. 20/-. The government spent Rs.523

lakhs up March 1956 (According to the First Five year plan 1951-52 to 1955-56). The importance of the vocational and technical training had been recognized and so a sum of Rs.92 crores was to be provided in the Second Five Year Plan.

Besides the activities organized and managed by the government, attempts were made by philanthropic organizations and individuals. The Raney Karya Kendra, started by Raney and Sons, trained and employed both men and women. The Sind Seva Samiti organized classes for teaching tailoring and embroidery.

Maintenance Allowance

In the beginning of January, 1950, as a measure of interim relief maintenance allowance was also given to such displaced persons, who due to old age, infirmity, illness were unable to make a living for themselves. They were dependent on their urban immovable property in Pakistan and had no means of livelihood in India. This allowance was granted up to a certain scale of Rs.100/- P.M. A total amount of Rs.80, 000/- was disbursed from April 1952-53 and 230 families in Ulhasnagar Camp received this allowance.

Tenements Allocation and the Rent

The military barracks in the beginning were occupied by the displaced from West Pakistan according to their convenience. As the population in the camp increased, government was forced to introduce some restrictions. The 1,175 barracks in 1948 provided accommodation to 80,000 persons. Government decided to build new tenements and renovate the old ones, by converting them in to one room tenements, with attached bath and lavatory and water supply from a common tap. Up to August, 1948 the tenements were occupied rent free. Thereafter, a rent of Rs. 1/- to 6/- was charged for the old tenements and maximum rent of Rs. 29/- for the new tenements.

Day to Day Camp Life

The problem of overcrowding (1952) continued, the struggle for survival and the hardships broke all the social barriers and status consciousness. There was the problem of water supply. One tap served fifty families and one latrine served 16 to 20 families. The condition of water tanks was miserable, with lids being removed and the foul smell emanating.

Medical facilities

There was a Central Hospital in Camp No.2, with a capacity of 205 beds. There was a provision for maternity cases and special wards for T.B. patients. The T.B. wards with 90 beds used to be overcrowded. Advance cases of T.B., were sent to Government Sanatorium at Poona, since there was no T.B. specialist in the camp. All the emergency and surgical cases were sent to the District Hospital, Thane, which was 20 miles away.

Apart from the government maintained Central Hospital, several charitable dispensaries were started by benevolent Sindhis of Bombay. The Sindhi Seva Samiti maintained a homeopathic dispensary in Camp No.1. And in the Camp No.3, there were two more such dispensaries for the poor patients.

Education

Education is given a high priority by the Sindhis. In spite of various handicaps, many educational institutions cropped up in the camp. Some nursery schools came up within the barracks. Gradually the

primary schools grew into secondary schools and within a period of six years thirty-two and thirteen secondary schools were started in the camp. Under the Local Board, two schools, the B.G.Tilak schools and the Netaji High School were started. Due to the efforts of individuals like Parsram Masand Raisaheb ShetalDas Khemani, the Sindhu Education Society was started, under which started the girl's school.

Recreational Activities

Sindhis are accustomed to good food, jewellery and good clothes. But the camp life afforded very little good things of life. Though in those days, people were struggling, the camp had three cinemas and one public library in camp no.2. For the male members, the only recreation in those days was an hour or two of leisurely smoke in the company of their friends and the family members. The ladies went to a Gurudwara or a temple for katha, kirtan and bhajan. Commuting to Bombay was difficulty. There were only thirty-two buses owned and managed by the displaced persons themselves. The service of buses was irregular and the buses were in urgent need of repairs. The train service was such that trains ran at an interval of half an hour. Despite the odds, the Sindhi Hindus did not lose faith in themselves. Under normal circumstances, they would have broken down under the tension of bad living conditions. But the circumstances were not normal, this was accepted by the displaced persons and so they did not allow their willpower to breakdown. They emerged with more determination.

The Ulhasnagar Township thus flourished and showed the signs of maturity. It was then thought by the then government to establish a Municipality so that the citizens could rule for themselves and provide facilities of local self government for themselves. Then came to be established the first Municipal Council on 1 October 1960. In the beginning the members of the Council were nominated. Late Newandram Vishindas Gurbani, the then MLA was appointed as the first president of the Municipal Council

Taluka Head Quarters

As Ulhasnagar Township fulfilled all the conditions for the purpose of Taluka Headquarters, on 25 January 1969, the inauguration ceremony was performed at the hands of late Honorable Balasahib Desai, the then Revenue Minister of Government of Maharashtra and late Shri K.D.Bijlani was appointed as the first Tahasildar of Ulhasnagar Taluka. With the passing time Ulhasnagar was matured enough and now it fulfilled the conditions of being a Corporation. By the government's order Ulhasnagar Municipal Council was declared as Ulhasnagar Municipal Corporation on 20 October 1996. Shri Ganesh Chaudhary became the first Mayor of Corporation and Shri Kumar Ailani became the Deputy Mayor of the said Corporation.

Gradually, the displaced persons from West Pakistan decided to make Ulhasnagar their home and a proof of their intentions invested their compensation money in buying a house or starting a business. Ulhasnagar today is thus synonymous with industrial activity. The beginning was done with cottage industries operating from the homes of displaced persons. Later a large number of establishments and industrial centres cropped up due to the permanent settlement of displaced persons. The industrial development of Ulhasnagar was rapid and it soon came to be included under the realm of Bombay Metropolitan Regional Development Authority.

In drawing of the partition line between India and Pakistan great many of them suffered violence, many were killed or lost in the bitterness of hostility. The march of "teeming millions" in search of a new homeland constitutes the saddest chapter in the history of India, nay the world.

CONCLUSION

Disappointments in life have been compensated by a hope and faith in the future. The loyalty of the Sindhi Hindus to the motherland was never divided. They had been citizens of India, which was their motherland, and continues to be so even now. Only they needed to be pushed to a position of self support. They never expected charity, nor wanted it, but were anxious to stand on their own legs. They became pursharhi (self-help) and did not like to be called Sharanarhi (Refugees).

On their arrival in India, the Sindhi Hindus found that, as their share of fruits of freedom, they received poverty, suffering and starvation, disease and death. They, who had been the masters of money and riches, had become penniless. Herded like the cattle, they brought whatever belongings they could or were allowed to carry by the Pakistan authorities, who invariably seized most of their valuables. Landing in Bombay was the beginning of their long, hard road to settlement not knowing where they would go. Among those who had nowhere to go were dumped in to forsaken military barracks at Chembur and Kalyan. (Now Ulhasnagar). Kalyan later became one of the biggest settlements of the displaced Sindhi Hindus from West Pakistan. The Sindhis set up small shops in wooden sheds. Many sought employment in Bombay government establishments and commercial concerns. Women also prepared themselves to undertake the hard work, to earn. Sewing, embroidery and making papad, pickles became a source of income. Even children, especially young boys peddled sweets, plastic combs, key chains and other small items in Bombay's suburban trains. They preferred to earn a rupee or two rather than to beg. It is amazing that Sindhis though uprooted were never seen begging.

Yet sometimes, Ulhasnagar with its reputation for small enterprise has its counterpart in the notoriety of illegal business practices and conjures the image of counterfeit brands and goods. But such stereotyping is unfair. And this duplication of goods is seen by some as an example for business acumen of the Sindhi community. Also in those days, the Indian Government had banned all imports due to the shortage of foreign exchange and the government was trying to promote indigenous Indian manufacture. Due to all this the well off people in India were starved of the imported products that they were used to during the British rule. So to a proud but impoverished nation, a 'Made in U.S.A', label on a product indicated privilege and status. So the Sindhi manufacturers very creatively coined the expression 'Ulhasnagar Sindhi Association' and began using the acronym on their products. The fact thus is that sadly the Sindhis were busy struggling in their businesses.

Many minority immigrant communities have contributed to the success of Bombay. They all have their stories to tell, but the Sindhi community is often forgotten. It would be fair to say that modern Bombay would not have become the city it is without the input of Sindhi migrants. Commercial ties actually existed between Bombay and the Kathiawar-Sind region. But these ties grew stronger in the 1860s. As Sind as a part of Bombay presidency, led to direct connections between both Karachi and Hyderabad, and Bombay Sindhi traders were active all over the Indian Ocean, and they were beginning to dominate key market towns all over Western India even before partition. It was these ties formed during the period when Sind belonged to the Bombay presidency became very significant. This became especially true for the Hindu commercial, legal, academic communities. As consequently, during and after partition a large number of Sindhi entrepreneurs and academics migrated to Bombay and have spread throughout India as traders. Their spirit shows not only their self respect, but self reliance. Many as destitute ended up in Ulhasnagar. Rather than accepting the government's offer of farmland or salaried employment, many preferred to build up their capital through petty commerce. Thus the Sindhis have established themselves with remarkable resilience not only in Ulhasnagar but have become an important mercantile community investing heavily in the development of Bombay from the

1960s.

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