

## RESHAPING SOCIO-POLITICAL HISTORY: AN EXAMINATION OF WOMEN'S INFLUENCE IN THE HUR MOVEMENT OF SINDH

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### **Abstract**

This research paper delves into the overlooked roles of women in the Hur Movement during British colonialism in Sindh. In this period, Sindh, under the leadership of Pir Pagara, fiercely opposed British policies, advocating for autonomy within the Indian subcontinent. The findings detail women's diverse roles as spies, healthcare providers, messengers, and influential figures, reshaping historical understanding. The study acknowledges its limitations but broadens its scope to enrich historical discourse. Using a historical mode of inquiry, the researcher primarily relies on secondary data sources, including scholarly articles, historical publications, newspapers, and different established narratives. It suggests further exploration into the diverse and multifaceted roles of women in other historical movements to enrich and broaden historical discourse. This study aims to maintain historical accuracy, promote social justice, and preserve collective memory. It seeks to honor the resilience and unwavering dedication of Hur women in their pursuit of freedom for their homeland.

**Keywords:** : *Hur Movement, Role of Women, Socio-political History, British Colonialism & Sindh.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

*The British Raj, spanning nearly nine decades from 1858 to 1947, represented colonial rule over the Indian subcontinent. Sindh, the last region to succumb to British colonialism, witnessed various resistance movements, notably the Hur movement. Beginning in 1831 and persisting until 1895, the Hur movement symbolized fervent opposition to colonial governance in Sindh<sup>1</sup>. Pir Syed Sibghatullah Shah-II, also known as Sooreh Badshah, was pivotal in leading the fourth phase of the Hur Movement. Born in 1909, he assumed the role of the sixth Pir Pagara on Gadi at the age of twelve and held no sympathy for the British colonial regime<sup>2</sup>. A crucial but often underestimated aspect of the Hur movement was the significant role played by women. They not only displayed courage alongside men but also served as espionage agents, healthcare providers, and vital supporters of guerilla fighters, showcasing unwavering patriotism<sup>3</sup>. This research paper utilizes a historical research methodology, drawing data from diverse secondary resources such as books, biographies, newspapers, and magazines. Its primary aim is to highlight the overlooked Sindhi national heroes and emphasize the significant contributions of women in defending their homeland. In conclusion, the study aims to illuminate the influential role of the Hur movement within Sindh's history during the British colonial period. Uncovering narratives of indigenous individuals who sacrificed for liberation, aims to provide valuable insights for researchers and academia. This study seeks to reframe the narrative of heroism and enrich documented Sindh history. Its outcomes are anticipated to significantly contribute to existing literature, offering a deeper understanding of the socio-political landscape during the British colonial era.*

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

*The Hur resistance movement in Sindh holds a profound intrinsic significance. The women of Sindh, in particular, are elegantly enmeshed as bellicose warriors in the tough tapestry of the movement. The role ascribed to Sindh, elucidated by myriad erudite scholars, hails deep reverence. The nuanced and intricate layers of Sindh's historical narrative reveal an ethos of unwavering determination and valor with the portrayal of women. This courageous dimension, edified through scholarly lenses, accentuates the abyss of respect awarded in the annals of history. Meanwhile, the study (Khaskheli, 1961) develops a historical narrative entwined with characters and events central to the Hur Movement in Sindh. It discloses the socio-political context of the time through meticulous storytelling, furnishing a lens into the multifaceted facets that shaped the movement<sup>4</sup>. Moreover, Lambrick's discourse (1992) not only eternalizes a pro-colonial description but, regrettably, vests upon the Hurs the mischaracterization*

of 'terrorists.' This study reminisce a tendency towards framing the valiant freedom fighters of the Hur campaign as mere terrorists<sup>5</sup>, highlighting a biased and skewed perspective. Similarly, the dialectics between colonial state power, the centrality of Pirs in Sindh during the period 1843-1947, and the influence of Sufi saints constitute the thematic focal point of the research (Ansari, 1992). It analyses understanding the dynamics particularly how Sufi saints influenced state power and contributed to the socio-political history of Sindh<sup>6</sup>. Henceforth, the research of Chand (1999) contributes to the interpretation of specific events or themes within the context of the Hur resistance drive. The study delves into historical or socio-political characteristics<sup>7</sup>, presenting insights and philosophies that augment the overall narrative. Apart from this, the findings focus on how translation (Bhambhero, 2000) enriches perspicuity into historical events and pertinence to the annals of history. It shares the understanding of socio-political circumstances<sup>8</sup>, potentially including characteristics related to the Hur drive. In vain, the movement presented spotting and understandings that contributed to the understanding of revolutionary history. Henceforth to this, the study of Nabi (2008) likely offers a critical investigation of the methods employed by authorities to suppress the Hurs' insurgency, equipping insights into the wider socio-political terrain<sup>9</sup>. Also, it delves into the complexities of policing insurgency during the Hur Movement in Sindh. The investigation of Lighari (2015) unveils the symbiotic affinity between geographical features and socio-political stirs, shedding light on how the Makhi Forest has played a pivotal role in shaping the dynamics of the Hur Movement in Sindh<sup>10</sup>. It examined the intricate tie between the Makhi Forest and the Hur Drive. Nevertheless, (Sodhar et al., 2019) highlight women's participation delving into the transformative consequences had on societal structures. The analysis of the study interests emptying the nuanced rituals in which women contributed to the Hur Resistance Movement. By examining the conclusions, the erudite researched a deeper acquaintance of the mechanism and convincing exerted by women. In a dissimilar context, the autobiography of Behan (2019) nourishes a distinctive lens into the writer's experiences, assumedly caging personal thoughts on socio-political occurrences and the broader historical context, contributing to a slight understanding of the era<sup>11</sup>. The study also shows a firsthand account of a significant life journey. In vain, the investigation of Nabi (2020) intricately examines the court martial execution of Pir Sibghatullah Shah, also known as Soreh Badshah<sup>12</sup>. It introduces a poignant narrative of resistance against British colonial strengths, proposing insights into the challenges fronted by Hurs, who fought the predominant state power. Moreover, the research analysis (Khatti et al., 2022) proposes a thorough investigation of regional nuances in Pak-China ties<sup>13</sup>. It explores historical conventions, geopolitical shifts, and diplomatic complexities, providing a nuanced perspective on the evolution of this crucial bilateral relationship.

Uncovering the historical evolution of Pakistan-China relations, the study identifies key nuances that have influenced this diplomatic nexus, delving into historical events and geopolitical dynamics. The research enriches the understanding of the present study by employing a historical lens. Meanwhile, the discussion (Khatti et al., 2022) uplifts reflection on the lasting relevance and enduring impact on the cultural and intellectual fabric of Sindh. In the broader discourse, this research stimulates debates about the symbiotic connection between individuals of scholarly eminence, such as Dr. Mumtaz Hussain Pathan<sup>14</sup>, and the historical trajectory of regions like Sindh. It underscores the importance of acknowledging and celebrating intellectual luminaries whose efforts shape the narrative of a locality. To date, the bastion of British colonialism has encountered numerous resilient uprisings in Sindh. In an analogous manner, the Hijrat action, directed against British colonialism, captured the attention of scholarly work (Rasool et al., 2023). This study accentuates the movement's profound historical importance as the inaugural political case in the modern annals of Sindh<sup>15</sup>. The analysis encompasses the succinct encapsulation of pivotal findings about the movement, coupled with a judicious evaluation of its transformative influence on the socio-political terrain of Sindh. In accordance with research, the spotlight rests on the Concentration Camp of the British Period in Dadu as delineated (Kingrani, 2023)<sup>16</sup>. It argues the heinous brutality and inhumane practices pervasive in the concentration camps of Dadu, thereby nourishing profound insights into the multifaceted challenges and consequential implications wrought by the dominion of British colonialism. This study is an invaluable reservoir, delving into a distinct historical era under the umbrella of British colonialism. In reshaping the discourse, the research (Rasool et al., 2023) orients a reenergized perspective on Sindh's modern history<sup>17</sup>. The intra-Muslim disputes provoke arguments on colonial policy influences, religious identity's role, and the community's resilience. The study uncovers complex intra-Muslim dynamics in British India, illuminating historical records and unveiling nuanced conflicts within the Muslim community during the colonial era. Nevertheless, the study (Adeel et al., 2023) meticulously focuses on the intricate international relations between Pakistan and Russia<sup>18</sup>. It spotlights the myriad opportunities and challenges intrinsic in these tactful ties, engaging a discerning historical approach that enriches the studious merit of the envisaged investigation.<sup>19</sup> The study (Rasool et al., 2023) propels a nuanced discourse, reframing the historical narrative of Sindh during the Ottoman Empire's collapse. It encircles the symbiotic connection between Sindh's socio-political milieu and the global currents of Pan-Islamism<sup>20</sup>. The research examines the dynamics, disclosing intricate lines that incorporate Sindh's socio-political landscape with the global currents of Pan-Islamism during a pivotal historical juncture. This cues introspection on the unremitting legacies, shedding light on how this historical

interplay shapes concurrent perceptions and echoes in the region.

Consequently, the preceding studies expound upon the diverse historical dimensions of the Hur movement during British colonialism, covering aspects such as the involvement of women, harsh conditions in concentration camps, the role of the peasantry, acts of resistance, and the courage displayed by the Hurs. The extant literature emphasizes the necessity for a comprehensive viewpoint to fully grasp the intricate fabric of the historical narrative within the Hur movement.

## **GAP IN THE STUDY**

The Hur Movement entrenched in the political history of Sindh with its roots evolved an insignia of indigenous defiance and resilience against colonialism<sup>21</sup>. It not only oppugned the political domination foisted by the British but also encapsulated a resonant bond between the struggle for freedom of Sindh and the distinct contemporary features that define the political scenario of India in the face of colonial encroachment<sup>22</sup>. However, it emerged as a resistance of peasantry people against British colonialism in Sindh, intricately woven into the sentiments of the populace. The movement strategically evolved against the backdrop of Sindh's multifarious landscapes expressed by its fervent opposition to colonial rule. The above literature described the socio-political scenario, and the Hur Movement during the colonial era exhibits notable gaps that warrant additional exploration. While prior studies have acknowledged the significance of the Hur Movement (4: 5: 6: 7: and 8), there is a distinct lack of fetish for the slight role of women within the stir context. Similarly, the present situation of the country is explored by highlighting the different dimensions of Pakistan and regional order have been the concentration of these erudites (9: 10: 11: 12: 13 and 14). Ultimately, the examination of colonial Sindh and its subsequent ramifications, with a particular emphasis on specific narratives, has been the central focus of these (15: 17: and 19)

Elevating women to the forefront of the investigation, the study endeavors to explore the influence and key role in the Hur Movement, providing a reshaped understanding of Sindh's history. Through this approach, the research aims to contribute to a narrative of the Hur Movement that is both inclusive and nuanced.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS/OBJECTIVES**

The rationale for the present research pinpoints deficiencies in the proposed literature above as the problems and gaps, bolstering the investigation and findings while highlighting research questions/objectives leveled in articulated. The research study objectives are as follows:

1. *What were the main contributions of women leaders and workers in the Hur Movement?*
2. *How do the influences of HRM manifest in the political history of Sindh?*
3. *How does the attraction of HRM values in the social history of Sindh?*

## **Applied Methodology**

Historical methodology is adopted, delving into the intricacies of the selected issue through the lens of historical inquiry in hovering research. The methodology develops by meticulously determining and analyzing secondary data sources, comprising historical documents, scholarly publications, and materials relevant to the Hur Movement. This methodological choice permits a thorough exploration of the socio-political terrain, fostering a nuanced interpretation of the historical context and the multifaceted roles of women within the campaign. Making a robust research method depends on the strategic planning and technical approach tackled by a researcher to align the objectives and intended outcomes of the study (Khatti et al., 2022 <sup>A</sup> and Khatti et al., 2023 <sup>B</sup>). The researcher has adopted a historical mode of inquiry in this particular exploration. This method applies the investigation of past events, connecting eras through ancient records and equipping a valuable footing to scoop ethical norms of antiquity and fundamental principles of the movement. Similarly, it examines the findings of bygone stints in the literature (Rasool et al., 2023 <sup>A</sup> and Rasool et al., 2023 <sup>B</sup>), delving into recorded incidents to capture the intricate nuances and uncover data that reflect historical repeats (Adeel et al., 2023). This technique not only fuels contemporary creativity but also highlights the value of apprehending present perspectives through the lens of conducted studies (Rasool et al., 2023) <sup>C</sup>.

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Political history holds practical insights into societal aspects, providing a deeper understanding of past circumstances and addressing prospective research questions. Within Social and Political History, historical research is integral to understanding the societies, cultures, and political terrains that have shaped regional and global orders (Rasool et al., 2023). This study aims to delve into these discussions, shedding light on subtle nuances to unravel a deeper acquaintance with the proposed research of the Hur movement. During British Colonialism, Sindh emerged as a pivotal commodity in opposing imperial control. It was the era that the drive, led by Pir Pagara, attained prominence sentiments. This campaign, endorsing the liberation of Sindh while staunchly opposing British policies, made influential contributions to Sindh's involvement in the enormous struggle for sovereignty in the Indian subcontinent (Keerio, 2023). Henceforth, focusing on the role of women aligns with the broader discourse on colonialism and its profound consequences on social and political history. The research pursues to unveil the sacrifices made by women Hur activists by meticulously examining the events of the rebellious movement, highlighting their crucial contributions during the resistance against colonial powers. The exploration is vital for a comprehensive understanding of the sufferings and sacrifices endured by women in their pursuit of homeland emancipation. Women played pivotal roles in

supporting freedom fighters, not merely confronting colonial powers but also serving as healthcare workers and espionage agents. This study endeavors to conduct a thorough and concentrated investigation into this significant historical event, holding implications for academia and society. However, this research has the potential to enrich curricula by providing a more accurate and holistic portrayal of women's roles in the Hur movement from an educational standpoint. It also contributes significantly to the global discourse on colonialism, fostering opportunities for comparative analyses with other women freedom fighters.

Ultimately, it aligns with historical realism, social justice, and preservation. It serves as a conduit for remembering past injustices, celebrating the endeavors of freedom and bravery, and ensuring that the stories of these women stood as steadfast companions to their male counterparts.

## **DISCUSSIONS ON FINDINGS**

The findings of the study thoroughly discuss women's diverse contributions to the Hur Movement, delineating their roles as spies, health workers, message conveyors, and pivotal figures. This examination delves into the multifarious roles, shedding light on their significant influence on the socio-political history of Sindh, actively reshaping the present arena in research. Similarly, it analyzes how these roles have not only exploited historical movements but also continue to resonate in contemporary periods, highlighting the long-lasting legacy of women's involvement in shaping the region's annals. Developing on these conclusions would offer deeper perspicuity into the far-reaching outcomes of their contributions, navigating future research toward a more nuanced interpretation of women's agency in historical trends like the Hurs' drive.

## **Major Contributions of Women Leaders and Workers**

The contribution of women extended far beyond mere combat alongside the male counterparts in the Hur Movement. The contributions were diverse, encompassing critical responsibilities that bolstered the insurgency. Women played a pivotal role in establishing a formidable intelligence network for the Hurs, leveraging a unique capacity to seamlessly navigate various regions and engage with a diverse array of individuals<sup>23</sup>. This adeptness enabled the dissemination of crucial information, including messages between different groups and intelligence regarding the movements of British military forces. During confrontations between the Hurs and the British, women selflessly served as volunteer healthcare providers, tending to the wounded. Furthermore, Hur Women assumed the responsibility of providing sustenance to actively engaged Hurs in operations against the British<sup>24</sup>. This unwavering commitment showcased their bravery as they fearlessly stood alongside their male counterparts, united in the pursuit of freedom from British colonial rule. Their contributions extended beyond direct combat and military operations. Women emerged as inspirational leaders, guiding insurgent groups from the front lines. This leadership

role often led to significant confrontations with the British, resulting in a substantial blow to their presence in the region. After an exhaustive analysis of secondary investigation in the literature with participants from this era, the researcher identified the main points regarding the invaluable contributions of women in the Hur Movement below:

### **Women as Secret Agents in the Hur Guerrilla War**

The dynamic involvement of women emerged as profoundly consequential throughout the Hur Guerrilla war, as they assumed a pivotal role in mitigating the communication divide among various Hur factions. They clandestinely served as intermediaries, adept at transmitting critical messages and intelligence from one location to another<sup>25</sup>.

### **FOOD PROVISION TO THE GUERILLAS**

Women assumed an indispensable contribution throughout the Gorilla moves. As Hurs embarked on missions or took refuge within the impenetrable forests, it was the women who provisioned sustenance and essential supplies to the Hur fighters.<sup>26</sup> This remarkable commitment and service by women remains indelibly etched in memory, leaving an enduring imprint on the socio-political landscape, particularly in terms of the status and agency of women<sup>27</sup>.

### **HEALTH WORKERS**

Amidst the tumultuous clashes, as Hurs sustained injuries, women selflessly undertook the role of nurses and healthcare providers, offering essential medications for immediate convalescence<sup>28</sup>.

### **PATRIOTISM OF WOMEN**

Due to the emotional bond the Hur community women had for Sindh, they exhibited an unwavering commitment and were prepared to stake their lives. For this noble cause, they made the ultimate sacrifice, even parting with their dearest kin. Their dedication knew no bounds, for their sole preoccupation was the pursuit of freedom from British colonial rule. They confronted the police and endured their brutalities with unyielding determination, persisting in their unwavering patriotic.

### **Influences of HRM in Political History of Sindh**

History as politics encompasses the narratives and different discourses of significant political drives, circumstances, and sentiments. Pir Pagara reconciled with the government, cooperating in surrendering any wanted criminals among the Hurs after the creation of Pakistan. The political group of Pagara gained significance due to its substantial voter base. However, the political landscape shifted with the establishment of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP). Henceforth, the leadership of Bhutto eroded the eminence of Pagara's faction, yet following Bhutto's execution, he ascended to an iconic stature<sup>29</sup>. The Hur Movement played a pivotal role in undermining British

political authority, offering the people of Sindh renewed hope for liberation from British colonial rule. Their unwavering resistance proved indispensable in preventing the British from extending their presence for additional years. Compared to Congress and the Muslim League, Pir Pagara displayed remarkable astuteness in his decisions. If he had not been executed, the political landscape of 1947 might have evolved differently. Politically, the HM had consequences for both the Muslim League and Congress. Pir Sahib Pagara initiated a resistance and a violent movement, which ran contrary to the ideologies of major political parties. While Gandhi advocated nonviolent politics, and others believed that freedom could be achieved through negotiations and reconciliation with the British, the Hurs adopted a different approach, one marked by struggle and suffering. Despite their political efforts, the Hurs did not achieve significant political gains during British rule or after the partition in Pakistan. This period raised awareness of colonial rule and fostered political consciousness in Sindh. Throughout the resistance, the British attempted to suppress the Hurs, but they remained engaged in political conflict. The HRM effectively weakened British colonial rule in entire Sindh. Following the creation of Pakistan, Shah Mardan Shah and Nadir Shah had a choice: continue the struggle for Sindh's freedom or reconcile with the Pakistan government. They chose the latter, recognizing the immense sacrifices and losses the Hurs had endured during their prolonged struggle (Keerio, 2023). Pir Sahib Pagara brokered agreements with the government sought amnesty for opponents, and embarked on efforts to uplift the Hur community politically.

### **Attraction of HRM in Social History of Sindh**

The partition of the Indian subcontinent and the arrival of migrants from India to Hur areas led to the resettlement of these migrants. However, the Hurs did not regain their old lands and property. The social history of Sindh changed when the properties of Hurs were occupied after independence in 1947. The British confiscated the agricultural lands of the local people, replacing them with Bugti Balochi and Punjabi settlers<sup>30</sup>. This alteration devastated agricultural land, resulting in unemployment for those dependent on farming. People were detained and imprisoned in Lorhas, causing widespread displacement, homelessness, and the loss of loved ones. When released from Lorhas, they faced a challenging process of starting anew, as their homes and lands had been seized by the Bugti and Punjabi tribes.

The natural forests and lakes of the Makhi Forest were significantly damaged, negatively impacting the region's natural beauty and disrupting the indigenous people's social life<sup>31</sup>. After Pakistan's establishment, the Muslim League held political power and was seen as pro-British. Consequently, they did not share any sympathy with the Hurs. However, for many educated nationalists in Sindh, this movement was viewed as a pure Sindhi nationalist movement, holding significant worth. The Hurs were left landless and homeless after the establishment of Pakistan and the departure of

the British colonizers from the subcontinent<sup>32</sup>. Resettling the Hurs without official aid presented a significant hurdle. They collaborated with the estate of Pakistan to ensure the Hurs' existence. In this endeavor, Suriah Badshah also worked closely with General Ayub to resettle and provide relief to their community. When Ayub Khan announced local government elections, Pir Sahib Pagara participated and aimed to incorporate the Hur community into Pakistan's political system to improve their social status<sup>33</sup>.

The politicians in the government of Pakistan after its establishment were largely those who had facilitated the British against Pir Syed Sibghullah Shah (Pir Pagara) and had passed a bill in the Sindh Assembly for Pir Pagaro's execution. This untidy circumstance made it difficult for them to support the Hurs, who were viewed as a potential threat<sup>34</sup>. They feared retaliatory actions from the Hurs against those who had supported the British, leading to a political distancing. Therefore, the Gadi was restored with Shah Mardan Shah's return to Pakistan, who ascended to the throne and was entitled to Pir Pagara, adopting a reconciliatory strategy by pardoning foes and initiating the progress and reconstruction of the Hurs<sup>35</sup>. Shah Mardan Shah signed an agreement with Pakistan's military administration to foster the integration of the Hur community into the Pakistan Army, hence enhancing their socio-economic conditions. The British colonial administration in India against Hurs introduced the Criminal Tribes Act following the movement's conclusion in 1896, in spite of the Hurs not constituting a single tribe but rather a collection of diverse castes<sup>36</sup>. The act was involved for political motives and subjected the Hurs to its unjust regulations, resulting in an unparalleled phase of inhumane antidote.

The dissolution of Concentration camps (Lorhas) in 1952 and the emancipation of Hurs marked the destiny of the Hur movement in accepting Pakistan<sup>37</sup>. Upon their release, the incidence of criminalities diminished significantly, indicating a return to peaceful coexistence. The Hur Movement vamoosed a lasting imprint on the social history of Sindh, enduring witness to the tribulations of the Hurs, who suffered as a marginalized and dispossessed community. Shah Mardan Shah, through agreement and cooperation with the Pakistani state, sought to boost the Hur community, incorporating its members into the political landscape of Pakistan and various public sector roles.

## **LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The proposed study focuses solely on examining women's involvement in the Hur Movement, contributing to reshaping Sindh's socio-political history. Future erudite would delve into additional gaps within this domain for further exploration. This research, centering on women's roles within the Hur Movement and its influence on Sindh's socio-political history, highlights the need for broader investigations into novel aspects. It is recommended that further research vastly explores the multifaceted roles of women to increase historical discourses within socio-political exercises like the

*Hur Movement. Besides, integrating these findings into scholastic and academic curricula fosters a more inclusive acquaintance of history, conceding and heightening the often-underemphasized roles of women in shaping historical circumstances and annals.*

## **CONCLUSION**

*This study delves into the multifaceted and intricate roles women undertook within the Hur Movement, highlighting their vital contributions as spies, health workers, message conveyors, and significant figures. Examining these roles reveals their profound impact on reshaping Sindh's socio-political history, both in historical times and in shaping the current landscape. Acknowledging and emphasizing women's often overlooked roles in shaping historical movements, this research advocates for a more inclusive representation of the Hur Movement. The findings stress the necessity for further exploration and acknowledgment of women's agency within historical movements, encouraging more scholarly endeavors to uncover the nuanced complexities of their contributions. Ultimately, this study emphasizes the lasting legacy of women's involvement, urging future research to delve deeper into these historical narratives for a more comprehensive understanding of Sindh's socio-political dynamics.*



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