

## The Kalhora Dynasty: Rise, Rule, and Decline

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### *Abstract*

*Sindh has been governed by various local dynasties since the Arab conquest, including the Soomra, Sama, Arghuns, Turkhans, Kalhoras, and Talpurs. Among these, the Kalhora dynasty stands out for its significant contributions to the prosperity of the local inhabitants, the development of educational institutions, commerce, and the flourishing of Sindhi literature and poetry. The Kalhora dynasty, established as the first sovereign state by the indigenous people amidst the Mughal Empire's decline, marks a pivotal era in Sindh's history. This article investigates the effects of the Mughal Empire's political disintegration in Sindh and to examine how the local people advanced to power from this civil collapse. Furthermore, it analyses the transformation of the Kalhora family from spiritual leaders to sovereign rulers of an independent Sindh. The study also explores into the reasons behind the collapse of Kalhora rule and the subsequent rise of the Talpurs as the last local rulers of Sindh.*

**Keywords:** *Kalhora Family, Kalhora Dynasty, Mughal Decline, Regional History of Sindh.*

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### **Introduction**

The rise of the Kalhora Dynasty in Sindh marks a significant chapter in the history of the Indian subcontinent, particularly amidst the decline of the Mughal Empire. The early 18th century perceived the weakening of Mughal control after the demise of the last great Mughal King Aurangzeb Alamgir in 1707. Aurangzeb's reign, marked by intense political and religious conflicts, including his support for Shaikh Ahmed Serhindi's philosophy against his brother Dara Shikoh's embrace of Ibn-ul-Arabi's mysticism, set the stage for the disintegration of Mughal authority (Lodh, 2019). As Mughal power declining, local leaders like the Kalhora family in Sindh began to proclaim their independence. The Kalhoras, whose origins are debated, are believed to have descended from either the Jat tribe, the Channa clan, or even the Abbasid lineage, as various scholars suggest. Their rise to power in Sindh began under the leadership of Mian Yar Muhammad Kalhoro, who was initially appointed by the Mughal governor of Multan to govern Bakhar, upper Sindh (Kalhoro, 2024). Over time, the Kalhoras consolidated their power, extending their control over lower Sindh and reducing Mughal influence in the region.

This period of Sindh's history was marked by significant internal and external challenges. The Kalhoras faced invasions from Nadir Shah of Iran and later Ahmed Shah Abdali of Afghanistan, which disrupted the region's stability. Despite these challenges, Mian Noor Muhammad Kalhoro emerged as a pivotal figure, successfully uniting Sindh under his rule and establishing a sovereign state recognized by the Mughal court. The Kalhora dynasty also contributed to cultural and economic development in Sindh, fostering education, literature, architecture, and trade. Cities like Thatta became centres of learning and commerce, and the dynasty's patronage helped to flourish Sindhi literature and poetry (Mallah, 2021). However, the internal trouble and the rise of rival factions, particularly the Talpurs, consequently led to the decline of the Kalhora dynasty by the late 18th century. Thus, the history of the Kalhora Dynasty reflects the dynamic and

frequently turbulent past of the Indian subcontinent while additionally serving as an example of flexibility and determination in the consequences of the broader collapse of Mughal authority.

### **Research Questions**

- What were the key factors contributing to the decline of the Mughal Empire, and how did this decline influence the political landscape of Sindh?
- How did the Kalhora family transition from a spiritual leadership role to becoming sovereign political rulers of Sindh, and what factors enabled this shift?
- What were the major political, economic, and social developments in Sindh under the rule of the Kalhora Dynasty?
- What were the political, economic, and social repercussions of the foreign invasions by Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali on Sindh during the Kalhora dynasty's rule?

### **Research Methodology**

This study employs a qualitative research methodology, relying exclusively on secondary sources to analyze and interpret the research topic. Secondary sources include books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and relevant newspaper publications. These sources are carefully selected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the political, historical, and social dimensions of the Mughal decline and its impact on Sindh, the transition of the Kalhora dynasty, and foreign invasions. The analysis will synthesize insights from these materials to draw conclusions about the political and historical implications discussed in the paper.

### **Mughals Decline and its Repercussions in Sindh**

The Indian subcontinent has a colorful history of exploitation of the people based on religion. Thus, this tool of exploitation sometimes has succeeded and sometimes has failed. This tool has been exercised either by religious or political chieftains since the beginning. Although this instrument has either been used to unite or divide the masses to get the interest of political elites. Akbar the Great was the first king who tried to unite the whole India based on religion by introducing the "Deen-e-Illahi", a new kind of syncretic religion, in 1581 (Dr. Shabana Akhtar, 2023 ). However, Shaikh Ahmed Serhindi, Mujadid Al-Thani (d. 1624), did not accept the new religion and opposed him. Resultantly, Akbar could not get the enormous success to unite the Indian subcontinent.

It was Shaikh Ahmed Serhindi who introduced the new mystical thought called "Wahadat-ul-Shahood" on the contrary of Ibn-ul-Arabi's (d. 1240) "Wahadt-ul-Wajood" philosophy in the subcontinent. Therefore, there were two major philosophies revolving around the mystical thought at the time when the Kalhora family was flourishing in the soil of Sindh. Mughal's decline was started after the demise of Aurangzeb Alamgir in the early eighteenth century. Aurangzeb made his empire after the imprisonment of his father Shah Jahan (r. 1627-1658) and the assassination of his brother Dara Shikoh. However, the opposition between two brothers (Aurangzeb and Dara) was rather political than ideological, because Aurangzeb was the supporter of Shaikh Ahmed Serhindi's philosophy, whereas Dara Shikoh was the follower of Ibn-ul-Arabi's ideology. Dara Shikoh was a great scholar of his time, he wrote a pamphlet named '*Majma-ul-Bahreen*' in which he discoursed regarding the *Tauheed* (oneness of God). Moreover, he translated the renowned Hindu books, '*Gitta and Apanshidan*', into Persian to analyze the similarities between the Muslim and Hindu philosophies (Abbasi, 2000). Thus, Dara was overwhelmed by his brother and killed in 1659.

The formation of an empire needs to cooperate with the indigenous elites to resist the rebellion, and through these elites, the rulers can legitimize their governments. Similarly, the Mughals were not originally by Indian, therefore, they had to fabricate relations with native groups. There are two major groups from which the ruling class could benefit in which first is urban group, including the noble and landlord of the region,

and next is peasants who could be indirectly profited from the creation of empires. Therefore, the Mughals established the department of Mansabdari to administrate the local areas, and they ruled on the urban merchants who provided the revenue and goods to them (Leonard, 1979). In the same way, Mughals deemed only to the Centre and relied on the local elites to help in the administration of the empire. And these relationships would be carefully balanced to save from the downfall of the empire. Although the governors of Sindh during Aurangzeb's reign were dependent upon the local elites (Kalhora) to maintain the dealing with uncontrollable groups of the region (Verma, 2016).

Thereafter the enthronement of Aurangzeb, in the six decades of the seventeenth century. Firstly, he secured the throne from his family insurgencies, that was the tradition of empire to making the new emperors when the last king breathed his last. Afterward, he extended the throne by the annexation of neighboring independent states of India. Resultantly, he became the king of almost the whole of the subcontinent, as was done by his great grandfather, Akbar. It is an undeniable fact that Aurangzeb was a great emperor of not only the Mughal Empire but also in the history of the Indian subcontinent, who ruled the whole of India for half of a century.

In the last years of his reign, he could not stabilize the center, and his absence along with his faithful team from the center became the cause of the creation of distrust at the court of Delhi. Thus, the reliable friends, administrators, and even his sons were not ready to be concerned about the state affairs. In contrast, Aurangzeb reliantly trusted on his trustworthy courtiers and sons, whose intentions were opposed to Aurangzeb. Consequently, the law-and-order situation of the empire arose to become worse, and this situation went in favor of those who wanted to establish their own independent states, such as Marathas, Sikhs, and Pathans. Bhatti expresses that the least concern of Aurangzeb's trustworthiness and courtiers in state affairs and the lack of attention of the empire towards the Delhi administrations and his living in Deccan, away from the capital, became the causes of the decline of the great empire (Bhatti, 2002). Resultantly, Marathas rose the strongest group of rebellion against the central power to establish their own independent state. Moreover, Shivaji was the next one who started the insurgencies against Delhi's power and made the strong force to resist it. However, Aurangzeb commenced the campaign to crush these rebel groups, and this movement lasted for twenty-five years, but the Delhi authority could not control the rebellion groups (Naqvi, 1977).

There were so many causes behind the downfall of the great Mughal Empire, such as the religious policies of Aurangzeb that were fronted to humiliate the other religions, promoting the philosophy of Shaikh Ahmed Serhindi in India, and the rising of Shia-Suni conflict that was not seen before this in the subcontinent (Abbasi, 2000). Nevertheless, the other reasons for the decline are the Deccan policies of the Aurangzeb that resulted in the downfall of the economy, the large extension of the empire that was unable to be controlled by the weak descendants of the Aurangzeb, fighting among the native nobles for the enhancement of their Jagirs, rising of the local powers like Sikhs, Marathas, and Pathans, the invasions of the foreigners like Nadir Shah and Ahmed Shah Abdali, etc.

It was unfeasible that the disturbances at the center did not put their repercussions in the neighboring region, particularly in Sindh. During these turmoil, the administrative and political system of Sindh was badly affected, and Sindh was administratively governed from two parts, e.g., Bakhar (now Sukkur) was the capital of upper Sindh that was controlled by the governor of Multan, appointed by the Mughal empire. Thatta was the capital of lower Sindh that was ruled by Nawab of Thatta, appointed from the Delhi court. After the failure of the Deccan policy of Aurangzeb in 1679, no representative of the Mughal empire came to Bakhar to reoccupy the charge of upper Sindh. Therefore, the government of Bakhar was delegated to Mian Yar Muhammad Kalhoro, he was the spiritual master and feudal of upper Sindh. Whereas Thatta was controlled by the representative of the Delhi court for some time, but he did not have authority over the region, thus, it was just the nominee of the Delhi court to collect the revenue from lower Sindh. However, their (Mughals) merely control of Thatta was ended after the huge loss taken by Sadique Ali Khan, a ruler of lower Sindh, subsequently, the government of Thatta was entrusted to the ruler of Bakhar, Mian Noor

Muhammad Kalhoro, in 1736 (Bhatti, 2002). Thus, the Kalhoro family got the governance of Sindh without any struggle.

### **Rising of Kalhoro Power in Sindh**

There are several opinions of distinctive scholars regarding the origins of the Kalhoro family and their ancestors, who were the first to settle in Sindh. However, Verma argues that Kalhoras basically was the offshoot of the Jat tribe of Sindh (Verma, 2016), in contrast with Verma, Richard Burton, a renowned English officer of East India Company, wrote that Kalhoras were originally by Hindus and later converted to Islam, thus, they were from the Channa clan of Sindh (Burton, 1851). But Burton does not provide any accurate evidence that reveals that Kalhoro was the offshoot of the Channa family. However, most of the authors, like G.M. Sayyid, Rashid Bhatti, and Hakim Shah Bukhari, agreed that the Kalhoro family was derived from Hazrat Abbas (R.A.), the uncle of Prophet (PBUH), and due to being linked with Hazrat Abbas (R.A.), they also called themselves Abbasi. G.M. Sayyid expounds that the descendants of Kalhoro were Arabs. Ibrahim was one of the ancestors of Kalhoro who migrated to Sindh in the reign of Mautism-Billah Abbasi, 8th caliphate of the Abbasi Dynasty. Thus, he settled at the small village named Kalore near the hills of Neerun (now Hyderabad). The Kalhoro name basically came from their first home, "Kalore" (Sayyed, 1996). The clan of Kalhoro started to grow in the period of Adam Shah Kalhoro, who was a religiously pious and respected man among the locals and had a huge number of devotees. His hometown was Dokri, near the Larkana district, Sindh.

During this period, Abdul Rehman Khan-e-Khanna, a trusty general and guardian of the great Mughal King Akbar, did an invasion on upper Sindh and captured Bakhar (now Sukkur). After that, he moved to Thatta, in midway, he listened to the reputation of Adam Shah Kalhoro, so he intended to meet and pay homage to this God-loving man. While meeting Adam Shah, a fakeer (disciple) of Adam Shah supplicated to Khan-e-Khanna for issuing the land to sustain this monastery. The Mughal officialdom accepted the request and granted the land of Chandka in the name of Adam Shah Kalhoro. From here, Adam Shah's name and fame widely spread, and he became the strong religious and political figure of the region. His popularity and strongness enhanced the anxieties among the local rulers and landlords. Hence, these rulers and landlords expressed this distress to Multan's governor. Consequently, Adam Shah was arrested by the governor of Multan in 1592, and he died during his prisoning and was buried at Rohri Hills, now this hill is called Adam Shah's hill (Sindhi, 1998). Thereafter, Kalhoro's four generations were grown and prospered at Chandka and enhanced their popularity and influence in the region.

Mian Din Muhammad was the prominent personality of the Kalhoro family, he was from the fifth generation of Adam Shah. He became a strong religious power in the region based on his followers. Thus, the two local powers of upper Sindh were defeated by Din Muhammad, and resultantly his position had strengthened, which became the cause of consideration for the entity of Multan rulers. Hence, prince Moizuddin, a ruler of Multan and Lahore, moved to Sindh to overthrow the rebellions. Though Mian Din Muhammad sent his brother to prince, in advance, in the welcome of the prince and come down to his resentment. In this period, a devotee of Din Muhammad attacked Mirpur Mathelo, a northern city of Sindh, and looted it, when the prince heard about it, he again marched towards the force of Din Muhammad. Ultimately, Din Muhammad had no way to further escape from the prince and delivered himself to the prince at Sehwan, then the prince brought him along with himself to Multan, where he was executed in 1700. Mian Yar Muhammad, brother of Din Muhammad, could not bear this indignity, and he assembled the local forces and assaulted the prince (Bhatti, 2002). Subsequently, a battle was fought between the prince and Kalhoro in the year 1700 near Dadu district in Sindh, in which the prince was defeated by Kalhoro.

Thereafter, Mian Yar Muhammad was flown to Kalat for self-banishment. In the absence of Yar Muhammad, Bhaktia Barozai, a local landlord of Sindh, seized the land of Kalhoro. When Mian Yar Muhammad returned to his home after two years, he retook his property. Thus, Barozai went to Multan for

lamentations before the prince for recapturing the land from Kalhora. The prince again intended to assault and crush down the rebellions of Kalhora and dispatched to Sindh. However, Barozai resented the prince while marching to Sindh, and resultantly he was killed by the prince. On the other side, Mian Yar Muhammad entrusted his authority before the prince, and the prince conceded his ceding. Hence Mian Yar Muhammad was pardoned by the prince, and Aurangzeb Alamgir granted the title "Khuda Yar Khan" to Mian Yar Muhammad Kalhoro. The Mughal court entrusted the control of upper Sindh to Mian Yar Muhammad, and he ruled over Sindh till his death in 1718 (Sindhi, 1998). Afterward, the Mughal influence from Sindh slowly commenced to decrease, however, the Nawab of Thatta was appointed by the Mughal court till 1737.

Mian Noor Muhammad, the eldest son of Yar Muhammad, was enthroned over the religious as well as political head of the Kalhora family after the demise of his father. Though the religiosity and righteousness were terminated from Mian Noor Muhammad, and he entirely moved to politics. According to the tradition of Royal, whenever one member of a family is being posted as head of the state, then the other members rebel against him. Similarly, Mian Noor Muhammad faced the insurrection of his two brothers, Muhammad Daud and Ghulam Hussain, but after the intervention of the Sayyid brothers, influential men of upper Sindh, their disorder was resolved. Mian Noor Muhammad was also overwhelmed by the other insurgencies revived up by Daudpotas, who had controlled Shikarpur, and chiefs of Kalat, who were jealous because of handing over the region of Sibi to Mian Noor Muhammad by Mughal court. Thus, the territory of Shikarpur was handed over to Noor Muhammad by Mughal Emperor Muhammad Shah in 1722. With the passage of time, the political influence of Kalhora enhanced over Sindh, resultantly the power of Thatta, which was under the control of Mughal Nawabs, slowly reduced and had no effective rule in the region. Consequently, the territory of Thatta was also entrusted to Mian Noor Muhammad in the year 1737 (Bhatti, 2002). From here, the Kalhora family commenced to rule over the entire Sindh independently, and the influence of the Mughal court was swept away from Sindh.

When Mian Noor Muhammad was engaged to resolving the internal insurgencies of Sindh, an unforgettable merciless incident took place when Nadir Shah of Iran invaded Sindh in 1739. He captured the upper and western part of Sindh from the Kalhora dynasty and annexed Sindh to the Persian Kingdom. Therefore, Sindh was directly ruled by the Persian monarch after this invasion (Sorley, 1940). Mian Noor Muhammad was arrested by Nadir Shah, and his territories of Shikarpur, Sibi, and Kutchi were seized from him and committed to Daudpotas and Khan of Kalat, respectively. Thus, a treaty was signed between Noor Muhammad and Nadir Shah in 1740, in which Mian was released and handed over the power of Thatta on a stipulation in which Mian had to annually pay 20 lacs rupees to the Persian court. After the looting of Nadir Shah, the economical exigencies and chaos erupted in the soil of Sindh, consequently, the local chiefs and nobles started to rebel and repudiated paying the tax to the government (Bhatti, 2002). Hence, Mian disintegrated all the insurgencies and recaptured the areas that were entrusted to Balochi and Daudpota chiefs by Nadir Shah.

In 1747, Nadir Shah was assassinated through the conspiracies that were erupted in the Persian court. Ahmed Shah Abdali, a renowned trusty general of Nadir Shah, captured Iran, Afghanistan, and Sindh. He developed his own kingdom and made Kandahar his capital. He ceded the control of Sindh to Mian Noor Muhammad with the new title of "Shah Nawaz Khan". Sindh, then, was under the control of the Kandahar administration. When Mian Noor Muhammad's strength was enhanced and Abdali was engaged in his internal chaos, he refused to pay the tax that was assigned by Nadir Shah. Subsequently, Abdali began to march towards Sindh to collect his diwan (revenue) from the local rebellions, Mian Noor Muhammad in 1754. In response to Abdali's invasion, Mian escaped to Kutch, where he died in the same year (Sindhi, 1998). Mian Noor Muhammad (r. 1718-1754) was a sagacious ruler of the Kalhora dynasty who reigned the entire Sindh and united the whole people. He defeated all the internal chaos and overthrew all the insurgencies to consolidate his sovereignty. He was the first Sindhi ruler who established the sovereign state that was identified by the Mughal court. However, he faced the cruel invasions of foreign rulers, Nadir Shah of Iran, and Ahmed Shah Abdali of Afghanistan in 1739 and 1754, respectively.

Murad Yar Khan, the eldest son of Mian Yar Muhammad, was succeeded to the throne after his father's death. But Abdali confiscated the northern areas of Sindh from his control due to the escape of his father to the eastern border. However, Murad sent diwan (revenue) to Abdali for his recognition as the ruler of Sindh. Abdali identified him by giving him the title of "Sur Buland Khan" based on paying tribute to Kandahar and entrusted the northern areas of Sindh to Murad. Murad was not the praiseworthy ruler of Sindh, and his brothers and courtiers were annoyed due to his rude behavior. Consequently, Murad was dethroned by the conspiracies of his brothers, particularly Mian Ghulam Shah, and courtiers in 1756.

Mian Ghulam Shah was a great and commendable ruler of Sindh, he was enthroned after the downfall of his elder brother Murad Khan in 1757. He was born in the home of Mian Noor Muhammad by the blessing of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai, a renowned sufi poet of Sindh. At the beginning of his rule over Sindh, he was challenged by his two brothers, Attar Khan and Ahmed Yar Khan. Attar Khan got the assistance from Khan of Kalat to dethrone Ghulam Shah, thus, the army of Ghulam Shah was weak as compared to his brother. Subsequently, Ghulam Shah escaped towards Jaisalmer, and then he obtained asylum from Mubarak Khan of Bahawalpur (Bhatti, 2002). During the short span of Attar Khan, the political condition of Sindh was in utter confusion, and the people were distressed due to his rule, and they requested Ghulam Shah to reassume the charge of Sindh. However, Ghulam Shah collected the force with the help of Mubarak Khan and his supporters to overcome his brother. Resultantly, the two battles took place between Ghulam Shah and Attar Khan at the place of Ubaro and Rohri, respectively. Finally, Ghulam Shah overwhelmed Attar Khan and other insurgencies (Sindhi, 1998) and became the absolute power as well as the undisputed ruler of Sindh in 1759.

Ghulam Shah was the great admirer and founder of new cities in Sindh. After overcoming the internal crisis, he started to enhance his territory by annexing more areas of the eastern and northern parts of Sindh. In 1763, he marched towards Kutch and subjoined the Kot Lakhpat and Rahim ki Bazar in his territory, he also annexed the southern areas of Sindh in the Kalhora dynasty. Thus, the Kalhora dynasty was expanded to the large area from the southern sea to the northern areas of Derajat throughout the reign of Ghulam Shah Kalhoro. During his period, he had constructed the new port on the river Indus named "Shah Bunder", and he founded his new capital city Shahpur near Nawab Shah (now Shaheed Benazirabad) district. He was also the founder of Hyderabad and the tomb of Shah Latif Bhittai (Gurbakshani, 1993). He was not only deemed to construct the new cities and to expand his territory but also encouraged industrial development, as he permitted East India Company to establish their firms and trade at Thatta, which was the trade and industrial hub of Sindh under his regime. During the Kalhora dynasty, Thatta was the center of education, and according to Hamilton, there were approximately four hundred educational institutes only in Thatta (Sindhi, 1998).

The Kalhora dynasty was also known as the golden period of Sindhi literature, in which two most renowned poets of Sindh, Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai and Sachal Sarmast, flourished in this period. There were three major languages used in the soil of Sindh: Persian, Arabic, and the native Sindhi. Persian commenced to get importance in Argun's period, and it became the official language, which was continued till the Kalhora dynasty. Arabi was the educational language of Sindh that was brought up by the Arab rulers. Next was Sindhi that had been spoken by the native people of Sindh, as well as the first time Sindhi was commenced to write and teach in the educational institutions in this period. The Sindhi alphabet was first compiled by Abul Hasan Al Sindhi (d. 1724) during the Kalhora dynasty. By the demise of Ghulam Shah Kalhoro in 1772, the dignity of Kalhora began to decline.

### **The Downfall of the Kalhora Dynasty**

Mian Sarfraz Khan, the eldest son of Ghulam Shah, succeeded to the throne in 1772. In the early months of his reign, Ahmed Shah Abdali died in 1772, therefore, he was responsible for paying yearly tribute to Shah Timur, son of Abdali. Sarfraz was an incapable ruler of the Kalhora family, and due to his erratic dealings with the East India Company, the Company had withdrawn from his region in 1775 (Sorley, 1940). During

this period, the Talpurs, who were the members of the Kalhora army as well as the royal court, extended their influence in state affairs because of the indifference of Sarfraz Khan. However, the conspiracies originated among the Sindhis and Balochis (Talpurs), and their outcome brought up the assassination of Mir Bahram Khan, chief of Talpurs. In the revenge of their leader, the Talpurs were united and marched to Kalhora's capital, Khudabad. Subsequently, Sarfraz Khan escaped to Hyderabad, and the Talpurs controlled the fort of Hyderabad, and Mian Muhammad was nominated as the new ruler of the Kalhora Dynasty in 1775.

Thereafter these crises, Sarfraz Khan was imprisoned, and Mian Ghulam Nabi was enthroned by the unanimity of Sindhi and Balochi chiefs. Ghulam Nabi, like Sarfraz, was incompetent and feeble to run the dynasty. Although his close trustworthiness and loyalty provoked him to remove the Talpur chiefs from the army and court by creating different conspiracies at Kalhora capital. The outcomes of these conspiracies brought up a brutal war between Talpurs, led by Mir Bijar Khan, son of Bahram Kahn, and Kalhora. Consequently, Kalhoras were overthrown, and Ghulam Nabi was imprisoned. Afterward, Mian Abdul Nabi, son of Mian Noor Muhammad and last ruler of the Kalhora dynasty, was accomplished to the throne after the assassination of Ghulam Nabi in 1776. He was a very atrocious ruler and was killed by his four relatives, who were considering themselves the successors of Ghulam Nabi. Abdul Nabi was a hypocritic ruler who never compromised with the Talpurs and fought several battles against them by pursuing the throne, but unfortunately every time he faced disappointment. The tenure of Abdul Nabi was full of trouble and civil wars, although Madad Khan, a general of Ahmed Shah Abdali, plundered Sindh in the year 1780. Ultimately, a decisive battle was fought at the place of Halani near district Naushahro Feroz in 1783, in which the joint forces of Talpurs led by Mir Fateh Ali Khan and Kalhora forces led by Abdul Nabi. Thus, Talpurs became victorious of war, and Kalhoras were completely swept out from Sindh and never rose again.

The Kalhora dynasty is divided into five transition periods through which they ruled over Sindh. The first period was the appointment of the governor of Bakhar to Mian Yar Muhammad Kalhoro by the Mughal court that was commenced in 1701. It was the beginning of local rulers (Kalhora) in Sindh after the Sommora and Samma dynasties. The second period was the enlargement and merging of local chiefs and captured areas into the central government of Sindh. This extension of territory took place in the reign of Mian Yar Muhammad and Noor Muhammad up to 1736, and this period was also acknowledged as a semi-independent state by the Mughal Empire. The third period began after the incursion of Nadir Shah of Iran in 1739 over Sindh, and from here the political dominance was transmitted from the Mughal Court to the Persian Kingdom. This persisted up to the demise of Nadir Shah in 1747. The fourth period was dawned after the coming in power of Ahmed Shah Abdali of Afghanistan, therefore, the annexation of Sindh was shifted from the Persian Empire to the Afghan monarch, and this era lasted up to 1778. The fifth and last period was the striving to save the dynasty from local insurgencies of Talpurs that lasted till the end of the Kalhora Dynasty in 1782 (Sorley, 1940). The central object of Kalhora rulers from their beginning to end was to establish the Sindh as an independent state from the grasp of Mughals, Persians, and Afghans.

## **Conclusion**

The Kalhora Dynasty's rise in Sindh is a notable chapter in an extensive historical context of the Indian subcontinent, occurring as Mughal influence declined in the early 18th century. This period marked a significant transition from the centralized power of the Mughal Empire to the emergence of regional sovereignties. The Kalhora family benefited from this decline to establish a dynasty that played a pivotal role in the socio-political and cultural landscape of Sindh. The Kalhora Dynasty began with Mian Yar Muhammad Kalhoro, whose consolidation of power established the way for the dynasty's rise to prominence and control over Upper and Lower Sindh. Despite facing invasions by formidable opponents like Nadir Shah of Iran and Ahmed Shah Abdali of Afghanistan, the Kalhoras managed to retain their control, particularly under the clever leadership of Mian Noor Muhammad Kalhoro. He succeeded in

uniting Sindh, fostering a sense of regional identity, and establishing a sovereign state recognized by the Mughal court.

Culturally, the Kalhora period was marked by significant contributions to education, literature, and trade. Cities like Thatta flourished as centres of learning and commerce, with the dynasty's patronage leading to a renaissance in Sindhi literature and poetry. This era also saw infrastructural advancements, including the founding of new cities such as Hyderabad, which further fortified the Kalhoras' legacy. However, the decline of Kalhora dynasty was inevitable due to a combination of internal conflict and external pressures. Family conflicts and the emergence of other groups, particularly the Talpurs who, by the late 1700s had deposed the Kalhoras rule, were the main causes of the internal unrest. The dynasty's problems were made worse by the declining of Mughal hegemony, the ongoing threat of foreign invasions, and the rise in power of regional chieftains.

The Kalhora Dynasty's history underscores the dynamic and often turbulent nature of political power in the Indian subcontinent. It exemplifies the resilience and strategic approach required to maintain sovereignty in the face of declining central authority and external threats. The dynasty's ability to navigate these challenges and leave a lasting cultural and political inscription in Sindh is a testament to their significant role in the region's history. In conclusion, the Kalhora Dynasty represents a critical period of transition from Mughal hegemony to regional autonomy in Sindh. Their rise into power, cultural contributions, and eventual decline illustrate the complexities of governance and the interplay of religious, political, and military forces in shaping the history of the Indian subcontinent. Despite their fall, the legacy of the Kalhoras continues to influence Sindhi identity and history, marking their era as a crucial chapter in the regional history of Sindh.

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