

GLOBAL  
SINDHIS

*Inheritors of the  
Indus Valley Civilization*

*Author*

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*Dedicated to my beloved mother  
Kalawanti  
who remains in my heart forever,  
her words resonating  
“Keep distributing roses in life;  
surely some fragrance would remain in your hands.”*

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## A Book that you can turn again & again

Ram Jawhrani is a man endowed with many qualities of culture and character. He is a man of faith and courage, of devotion and dedication, of sincerity, sympathy and service. He is a man of vision and tremendous will-power.

Jawhrani, besides being a multi-faceted personality himself, has brought to us, through his book, the various eminent Sindhis who are like flowers of different hues and fragrances in a bouquet, giving inspiration to the community. Reading about them will not only inspire the community, but make them proud of their rich culture and heritage.

While reading this "Global Sindhis" book, I recall the words of Maeterlinck: "Yet more is to be found in me." It is a challenging thought and can prove fruitful when put into practice. It was Alexander Hamilton who said: "All the genius I have lies in this: when I have a subject in hand, I study it profoundly. Day and night it is before me. What people are pleased to call the fruit of genius is the fruit of endeavour and thought." Ram Jawhrani has proved this quote right with his unwavering determination and indomitable will.

Creative thinking is becoming increasingly difficult in the modern world. It may be challenging, but not impossible, which has been proved by this book.

Being a Sindhi is a matter of pride and gratitude, for we have been blessed with so much, not just materially, but with an innate drive and integrity, which can lead us to unscaled heights. Such is the glimpse that has been provided through this book by Ram Jawhrani.

It is a book that you can turn to again and again, each time finding something fresh and thoughtful. So make the most of it and make the most of your life.

J. P. Vaswani  
Pune.

## Sindhis have reached the zenith of success in every sphere

My relationship with the Sindhi community goes way back to the partition time. The partition affected three communities the most, the Sindhis, the Punjabis and the Bengalis, but I feel that the greatest sufferers were the Sindhis, who left behind all their ancestral land, material possessions, homes and hearth, faced yet another challenge, when they migrated to India, their homeland to live as refugees for many years. I know what they went through as I too came here as a refugee myself.

I recall an incident that changed my life when I went to seek admission in Jai Hind College. For some reason I was denied admission. Crest-fallen, as I was coming out of the college precincts, an elderly gentleman looked at me, held my hand and asked me "Young man, who are you and where have you come from?" I told him that I was a refugee from Punjab and had come to seek admission, but was denied despite being a first class student. He took me to the Head Clerk and asked him to give me admission and even waived 50% of my fees. What I didn't realise then was that the kind soul was none other than the principal of Jai Hind College, Prof T. M .Advani. I have no hesitation in saying that it was the first step that paved the way for progress in my life and I remain eternally grateful and indebted to Professor Advani and the Sindhi community at large, who in spite of having suffered the most, were ready to lend a helping hand to fellow refugees from other communities.

Whenever Ram Jawhrani, Chairman of the Sahyog Foundation, who is a very dear friend of mine, organizes a Sindhi program, I make sure that I am a part of it, as I have tremendous respect for this community. This gives me an opportunity to know more about the rich Sindhi tradition and culture. Sindhis

have not only survived through their most difficult times and hardships but also made a place for themselves in every field, be it education, science, technology, business, law, art and even armed forces. Some of Sindhis have reached the zenith of success, in politics we have the Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani and Law Minister Ram Jethmalani, both of whom hail from Sindh.

I am happy to share an interesting fact that the ownership of flats in Multi-Storey Buildings was the vision of G.P Sippy, an eminent Film Producer and Distributor and R.J Advani, the owner of Sun-N-Sand Hotel. The concept became a reality thanks to the untiring spade work put in by these two gentlemen.

I have known a lot of hardworking and honest Sindhi people, who smile even in adversities. Their contribution in the nation-building has been immense. In fact, I always feel that whatever praise I shower on the Sindhi community is not commensurate with the contribution of this great community! The Independence Day celebration each year is a silent reminder of the great sacrifices made by this great community and its contribution in the making of our beloved Nation.

Extracts of address made by  
Late Shri Sunil Dutt  
at the Sahyog Foundation function  
held on 23-04-2004.

## Sindhis are a great asset to Indian Nation

By far the most traumatic event in the history of India was its partitioning in 1947. Apart from the two States of Punjab and Bengal which were split into two halves, the State of Sindh was lost to India creating a huge diasporic community that had to leave the land of their forefathers forever. A whole community that lost their traditional homeland at one stroke. The nearest comparison can be that of the flight of Jews from Egypt in antiquity. One would imagine that this enormous displacement would have led to an immense tragedy.

It did not. On the contrary, the incredible resilience and enterprise of the community not only made it rise like Phoenix from the ashes, but found its place in peace and strength among all other communities of the Indian Nation. If you look at the community as a whole, you will notice that they are highly motivated to succeed in any endeavour of their choosing. Whether it is in the area of business and other forms of self employment or in the fields of academia, education and sciences; in defense services; politics; law; cinema and the arts - you find members of the Sindhi community everywhere, excelling and creating a reputation for themselves. There is no task too difficult or an environment too harsh and forbidding for them. I have seen Sindhi department stores on the main street of Manaus in the heart of Brazil's Amazonia. There are Sindhi establishments in the Canary Islands. There are hugely successful Sindhi enterprises in Madrid and Barcelona. Sindhis are to be found in North and West Africa, countries of Latin America and even in the Antarctic Circle - Tierra Del Fuego in the southernmost part of Chile.

There is a restless spirit in the community that is enviable. The dogged spirit and the ability to adopt has made the Sindhis feel at home in any part of India. They have even made the rest of the world their own.

For a displaced and uprooted community barely six decades ago, the Sindhi community is today one of the many strengths of Indian Society. An egalitarian and relatively casteless community enriched by a broad welcoming faith, the Sindhis are great asset to the Indian nation.

Mr. Ram Jawhrani has paid tribute to the 'never say die' spirit of the Sindhi community by putting together the stories of the most outstanding Sindhis of our time in this charming book Global Sindhis. A worthwhile addition to the literature on the diverse communities that inhabit our land.

Shyam Benegal  
Eminent Film Maker  
Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha)

## Ram has some magic wand.

Life has wonderful things to offer. One of the most wonderful things is to be blessed with a true friend like Ram; a good fellow-traveler can transform a tedious journey into an enlightened experience; an intelligent listener can lighten the burdens of a heavy heart; a visionary can inflame with his optimism and inspire one to achieve more. Such is the nature and power of the company you keep.

My friendship with Ram Jawhrani goes back over half a century. We met as classmates in school. Later, common interest of social issues brought us closer and we worked together in many organizations.

Today, thinking back, as I write this piece, I discover three aspects of my dear friend that are truly praiseworthy. One, he is a sincere, dedicated and committed worker. I know for sure that he doesn't even sleep during the times he is busy organizing or arranging some event. For days and nights together he works hard without any rest and despite this, one can see the tremendous joy on his face while executing all the details of the event. This capacity for totality and passion for work is amazing, and I respect him for that.

Two, he has a tremendous knack, talent and genius for making friends and maintaining them for a lifetime. Ram has, in the course of his social activities, been in touch with everyone from the masses to the most powerful and creamy layer of society. People love and respect him because he takes care and has a genuine concern for these great personalities. I wonder whether he has some magic wand, but I know that it is his utter sincerity, honesty and commitment to the cause that attracts people, very important people, to him. And third, is

his helping nature. Rendering help to downtrodden, handicapped, and orphans and always supporting and encouraging budding artists and writers and recognizing talents in various fields.

For a long time Ram had cherished the idea, of educating the younger generation about their historical background. The present volume of 'Global Sindhis' Book is the fruition of his one such dream.

I have minutely observed my dear brother Ram Jawhrani. Apart from his family responsibilities, (being the only son) he has strived hard in balancing his time and energies between family and public life equally, efficiently, and admirably which is quite difficult and a challenging task. He is a good orator, with a pleasing personality, kind hearted, with a caring nature and above all a man of dedication, devotion and sincerity.

All these positive fine qualities have made Ram Jawhrani what and where he is today. It makes me proud to have spent all these eventful years of life with him, and I have benefited immensely from this close association for over 50 springs together.

Chander M. Manghnani

## ‘Global Sindhis’ speaks about the vision of Ram.

Ram Jawhrani truly symbolizes a multi-faceted personality. Whether it is business, social work, philanthropy, journalism or literature, he has carved out a niche for himself in these areas.

I have known Ram Jawhrani over five decades, from the time we were school mates. He hails from a respectable, socially advanced family . While doing his graduation from Jai Hind College, Mumbai, he was also shouldering responsibilities of family business and has always been in the forefront of social activities right from college days.

Everyone admires him as not only a noted social crusader but also a good human being, cherishing the desire to serve the society at large and Sindhi community in particular.

Through his organization, Sahyog Foundation, he has taken up crusades against social evils such as Drug Abuse and Dowry Menace etc. With the active support of film thespian and Member of Parliament, Late Shri Sunil Dutt, Jawhrani had launched the ‘HUM EK HAIN’ movement in the early nineties to promote National Integration . For the unity of Sindhi community he had organized the 12th International Sindhi Sammelan in 2005. Qualities of tracking, twining and teaming are evidence of leadership qualities in Ram Jawhrani.

Conscious of the need to promote Art, Culture and Literature, Jawhrani edited periodical magazine ‘Sahyog Times’ in English for a decade in the nineties. As an Editor, Jawhrani has penned several articles and message oriented editorials.

'Sahyog Times' has brought awareness among the younger generation about the rich Indian Culture. Moreover, the publication served as a bridge between Sindhis and non Sindhis. Shri Ram Jethmalani, former Union Law Minister has appropriately described Ram Jawhrani as the 'Cultural Ambassador of Sindhi Community'.

The biggest achievement of Jawhrani for Sindhi community is the in-depth interviews of 50 eminent Sindhi personalities in 100 episodes on television which are being preserved in the archives of Doordarshan and I have seen Ram working tirelessly from the day he decided to record history of Sindhis by way of interviewing Sindhi stalwarts and living legends, narrating the journey of Sindhis from partition to participation in the success of modern India.

These interviews are now being put together in this book "Global Sindhis", which is a highly useful source of information pertaining to the history of partition, largest ever cross border human migration and the life of a refugee. This clearly speaks about the vision of Ram Jawhrani.

May God give him much more than good health and long life, so that he can continue to serve mankind with the same zeal and enthusiasm.

Hardas Makhija  
Former Mayor,  
Ulhasnagar Municipal Corporation.

# Foreword

The people who arguably have gone through most spectacular and true roller coaster situations in recent history after Jews, are Hindu Sindhis who inspite of being the inheritors of one of the most ancient civilizations of over 7000 years continue to be a landless lot in their own motherland, looking for a warehouse to store their heritage.

Recording history is a continuous process. Sindhis, scattered globally, indeed pose a herculean job for the few left freelance historians to update their writings. Their obvious priority to earn their livelihood, and indifference of the Power House of the country to encourage them monetarily, deny this ancient and enterprising community the luxury of getting their tales of tears and toil, courage and compassion, documented.

The Government of India and the State Governments have hardly shown any interest to preserve Sindhi culture, tradition, literature and heritage; denying archives to cater for future generations a vital spice to enrich their knowledge.

One of the leading Indian dailies, in its special supplement on Sindhis had mentioned that while other communities identify themselves with the state they belong to, the only people who identify themselves with the nation are Sindhis. They are freedom fighters in the true sense of the term. After fighting for freedom of the country they continue to struggle to preserve their identity, even after 60 years.

While other communities have their states to protect their identity and continue to create more states among them for the same reason, Sindhis still continue to plead for a meagre number of seats in law making bodies to take care of their landless constituency, lying in open grounds.

My friend, Ram Jawharani, a prominent Bombay businessman and ever active social crusader, always conspicuous in his dotless white, has indeed created a reliable volume of facts, with himself successfully playing the role of a clean anchor, interviewing worthy Sindhis from different walks of life, letting history seep directly out of the horses' mouth, on the Indian national TV Channel Doordarshan. These interviews were conducted in Sindhi language and are now being presented through this book 'Global Sindhis'. Ram Jawharani needs to be complimented for conceptualising the idea.

Jawharani's choice is truly admirable. It includes, the First Citizen of the community, Dada J.P. Vaswani, the true messiah of humanity, conveying to the world that Sindhis, known to be masters in money making, can also spread spiritualism in equal measure.

Included in the coveted list is also L.K. Advani, real Prime Minister material in the country, proving yet one more perspective of producing people with capability to lead the country at the highest level.

Among other equally rare pearls chosen for this book of jewels by Ram Jawharani is Ram Jethmalani, a legal luminary.

I am almost sure when I make this statement that Ram Jethmalani is the only lawyer in the country who has remained in active limelight for more than half a century. And in true Sindhi spirit of sharing and caring, he is on record having admitted that 70% of his practice is free. And as a devoted student of the discipline and in an attempt to leave the right legacy, even at 84, Ram Jethmalani teaches law in Indian colleges.

If a person of Ram Jethmalani's stature, who has enough vim to visualise dreams, leads Sindhi community full time, the way he does his profession, I am confident all the earlier errors of Sindhi leadership, of not having a separate state at the time of partition, could be very well addressed.

My head bowed with humility when I saw the name of the great medic of our times Dr. L. H. Hiranandani, in the list of interviewees. At 94, he is perhaps the senior most person in this volume.

Dr. Hiranandani has not only served people but also the powerhouse which rules them by being on the coveted list of medical advisors to the first citizen of the nation.

This amply testifies to the existence of natural diversity in the community, and

wherever they spread there is a fragrance of excellence.

There are Professors and Philanthropists, Leaders and Literateurs, Business Barons and Reputed Realtors. Hardly any vocation is left untouched.

Still it cannot be said that in this process of pearl fishing, Ram Jawhrani has conclusively explored all the oysters in the vast Sindhi ocean. I would rather say that by initiating this exercise, Ram has given himself the added responsibility of bringing to the world further volumes of Global Sindhis in order to bring comprehensiveness to the list.

For now, Ram Jawhrani has indeed created a bag of history for the community and has left readers with lessons to learn. These days, when mischief with history is so rampant, it requires brave effort to produce a clean record for the archives, so that future generations are benefitted. Ram has succeeded in that effort.

Global Sindhis is a book which every Sindhi and non-Sindhi who has some respect for history will be proud to possess. It is a document which should be kept as a valuable guide, by all libraries globally.

Dr Ram Buxani

Dubai.

## Preface

The origins of the Sindhi community can be traced back to the period of Mohan-Jo-Daro civilization, the oldest in the world. As such Sindhi culture with its deep roots has been a source of inspiration to the community. Sindhis, for long, have been well known for their business acumen and have played a dominant role in the financial, trading and agricultural sectors in pre-independence India. Unfortunately, the partition of 1947 dealt a cruel blow and the Sindhi community had to leave lock, stock and barrel from their motherland and disperse to various parts of the world. Suffering the pangs of partition, they had to struggle for survival and begin life afresh. The Sindhi community participated in the freedom struggle along with others. The name of freedom fighter Hemu Kalani, who laid down his life for the cause, immediately comes to our mind.

The first generation of Sindhis born after Independence of India heard stories about valor, success and suffering brought by the partition from their parents, who still longed for their motherland, Sindh. I was a toddler when my family shifted to India. However, as I grew up, the constant hearing about life in Sindh from my grand parents and parents left an indelible mark on my psyche, occasionally disturbing me with the thought that we were a community without a place to call our own. There is however no denying that, I have had the satisfaction that the community though spread far and wide in the country and elsewhere has assimilated exceedingly well in the political, social, economic and cultural milieu of the nation.

I got a great opportunity, when Doordarshan approached me with a proposal to think of an appropriate programme on Sindhis. Being a Sindhi, I decided to bring some of the illustrious Sindhis from various professions, from across the world, who have created a niche for themselves in their chosen fields. I wanted

them to share their stories of life so that not only the younger generation of Sindhis but also all Indians got a feel of our rich culture & heritage. "Sindhi Sarvech" a program based on this concept was thus born.

The program went on for two years between 2005-07, bringing immense response from Sindhis settled all over the world. In order, to reach out to the Marathi knowing viewers, the program also carried sub-titles in Marathi.

Later, at the insistence of many Sindhis and other friends, I decided to document the programs in the form of a book. This meant going through hours of program and translating the script ensuring that the essence was not lost. I am very happy to share that besides English, the book will soon have Hindi, Sindhi and Marathi versions.

The readers will find that each personality who has been interviewed has articulated not just his or her story, but the life and times of the community at large thus giving a sense of history. The book has vividly captured the culture and ethos of the Sindhi community, besides recording the struggle, angst and above all the indomitable will to move on in life and be a part of the pan-Indian culture at a macro level.

Bringing out a book of this kind could be possible only with the unreserved cooperation and help from numerous friends and well-wishers. The following deserve a special mention: Mukesh Sharma, Director of Doordarshan at the time the program was conceived and produced, was the moving spirit behind creating a special set that was reminiscent of Mohan-Jo Daro culture. Ram Jethmalani, Shyam Benegal, Dr. Ram Buxani, Chandru Gurbaxani and Prof. Baldev Matlani have been pillars of support and inspiration. Dr. Jaishri Jethwaney, Ranjit Butani and Harsha Jawhrani spent months on editing the manuscript, while ensuring that the essence of interviews was not lost. I am indebted to Dr. Kartar Lalvani from UK for the financial support to ensure this book could see the light of the day.

Last but not the least; my family remains the reason for all my efforts and success in my life. My wife Kavita and my children Rekha and Suresh Harwani, Asha and Manish Chugh, Poonam, Bhavna, Harsha, Drishti, Rishab and Khushi, I wish to thank you all for all your unstinted love and support .

I invite the readers to send me their views and reactions to the book.

Ram S. Jawhrani

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July 2009.

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*Special set created at the studios of Mumbai Doordarshan for “Sindhi Sarvech” an interview based programme.*

*This book “Global Sindhis” consists of English translations of these interviews hosted by me, giving a peep into the past, and illustrative of the march of the Sindhi community during the 20th century*

**Ram S. Jawhrani**  
Chairman  
Global Sindhi Council