

Hinduism in Pakistan

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Introduction

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan is a Muslim majority country in western South Asia. In addition to Hindus, other non-Muslim groups in Pakistan include Christians, Baha'i, Sikhs, Parsis, and Buddhists. (The Ahmadiyya community, an Islamic sect originating in the 19th century around Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, is also considered a non-Muslim minority in Pakistan.) Hindus comprise around 1.6%–2.9% of Pakistan's overall population and 90% of them live in the province of Sindh. The study of Hinduism in Pakistan, therefore, needs to take the socio-political and economic particularities of Sindh into account. Both in Sindh and Pakistan, Hinduism is as complex as in other parts of the world. Hindus, especially in rural areas, follow local Sufi *pīrs* (Urd. spiritual guides) and adhere to the 14th-century saint Ramdevji, whose main temple is in the Sindhi city of Thando Allah Yar. Many Hindu urban youths in Pakistan participate in the westernized ISKCON society. Some Hindus worship Mother Goddesses as clan or family patrons, whom, at times, they appease with animal blood sacrifices. Others (e.g., Nanakpanthis), follow the teachings of the Guru Granth Sahib or the holy book of the Sikhs. This diversity challenges the taxonomies that separate Hinduism, Sikhism, and Islam as distinct religions. It also complicates the relationship between Hinduism in Pakistan and the Islamic Republic's nationalism. This relationship has its roots in the two-nation theory (Urd. *do qaumī nazariyah*), which claims that Muslims and Hindus are two distinct nations that can only thrive through geopolitical separation—an idea that arguably led to Partition in 1947. Pakistani historiography often represents the two-nation theory as a necessary Muslim reaction to Hindu suppression and dominance during the British period. After Pakistan's creation in 1947 (and especially after wars with India in 1965 and 1971), Hindus became increasingly perceived and portrayed as a national threat. While frequently free to practice their faith, the historical predicament of the two nation-theory impacts the everyday lives of Hindus in Pakistan on many different levels.

Population

According to the 2017 census, the Pakistani Bureau of Statistics estimates that 1.6% of Pakistan's 217 million people are Hindus. However, people contest the official numbers. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, an independent non-profit organization, estimates that 7 million Hindus live in Pakistan (HRCP 2017, 90). The Pakistan Hindu Council, a non-governmental organization that represents Hindus, estimates that Pakistan is home to, at least, 8 million Hindus. Discrepancies in population numbers originate from the large number of landless Hindu peasants and scheduled castes who work for Sindh's landowning elite. These groups (e.g., Meghwar, Bhil, and Kohli) comprise over 90% of Pakistan's Hindus and frequently do not have state forms of identification (e.g., passports or Computerized National Identity Cards [CNIC]). This lack of documentation excludes them from participating in elections and state-sponsored statistical surveys. A small minority of Hindus in Pakistan have made a comfortable living through trade and other professions. These upper-class Hindus greatly

influence the rest of the community since they are usually the authors, politicians, and temple committee members who claim to speak for the whole community.

Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. 2017. **State of Human Rights in 2017* [<http://hrcp-web.org/publication/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/State-of-Human-Rights-in-2017.pdf>]*.

Lahore: Latiffi Printers.

The annually published reports by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan provide important documentation on the general state of Pakistan's religious minorities. They also document the, at times, precarious situation of Pakistan's Hindus

General Overview

There is little academic attention directed toward Hinduism in Pakistan and no comprehensive overview. Aside from general introductions into Pakistan's religious minorities such as Ispahani's 2016 book, there are, however, also a variety of publications that touch upon the issue. These works fall into five categories: Hindu culture and traditions, Hindus and the Pakistani nation-state, history of pre-Partition Sindh, vernacular literature on Sindh, and Hindu rituals at Hinglaj Devi. These categories are not hard and fast but aim to structure the available research heuristically. The bibliographies that accompany these categories mainly consist of printed works but, in cases without published materials, I cite manuscripts.

Ispahani, Farahnaz 2016. *Purifying the Land of the Pure*. New Delhi: Harper Collins.

This book is a historical analysis of Pakistan's minorities. While Ispahani's book does not provide a separate chapter on the country's Hindus it, nevertheless, offers essential information for understanding the community's legal, political, and cultural challenges today.

Hindu Culture and Traditions in Pakistan

Publications about Hinduism in Pakistan are not widespread. Feudalism in Sindh, political volatility, and the difficulties of researching Hinduism in an Islamic republic all negatively impact scholarship on Hinduism in Pakistan. Nonetheless, there are useful studies. Khalid 2015, for example, provides anecdotes and narratives of Hindu folk traditions. Abbasi and Aijaz 2015 photographically represent Hindu temples (both active and inactive) and describe their histories. Because Hindu practices frequently question religious distinctions between communities, the analysis of Hinduism in Pakistan is methodologically challenging. In Sindh and Baluchistan, both Hindus and Muslims visit sites associated with Udero Lal, Lahut la Makan, and Sehwan Sharif. This is exemplified in Boivin and Rajpal 2018 when they address local and diasporic traditions around the figure of Udero Lal. Boivin 2010 is an ethnographic and historical account of another religious site shared by Hindus and Muslims. However, there remains no thorough analysis of how the socio-religious practices at these sites generate tensions between orthodox interpretations of Hinduism and Islam. There is also a tendency in

the literature not to focus on shared traditions. Hussain 2014 provides an ethnographic account of Hindus in Pakistan focusing on the Kohli community of lower Sindh. Additional sources on Hinduism in Pakistan address diaspora Sindhis. Falzon 2004 is an exploration of the history of the Sindhi diaspora and Ramey 2008 demonstrates how Sindhi Hinduism challenges conventional notions of Islam, Hinduism, and Sikhism to illuminate how spiritual ambiguity poses problems for the community in post-Partition India. Khan 2007 and Parwani 2010 explain how the deity Jhule Lal developed into an important (many say the most important) symbol for Sindhi integration into India and global Hinduism. There are a handful of Ph.D. scholars currently researching Pakistan's Hindu community and their work, once completed, will further expand the study of Hinduism in Pakistan.

Abbasi, Reema, and Madiha Aijaz. 2015. *Historic Temples in Pakistan: A Call to Conscience*. Karachi: Niyogi Books.

This book is a non-scholarly photobook that visually portrays Pakistan's many Hindu and Jain temples and provides them with short descriptions.

Boivin, Michel. 2010. "Sufism, Hinduism, and Social Organization in Sindh: The Forgotten Tradition of Pithoro Pir" In *Interpreting the Sindhi World: Essays on Society and History*, edited by Michel Boivin and Matthew A. Cook, 133–168. Karachi: Oxford University Press.

This article deals with the history and current organization of the Pithoro Pir shrine in the desert of Thar in Sindh. It reveals the site's importance to the Meghwar community and shows how its rituals and narratives unite a variety of casts and religious groups, thus questioning categories such as 'Hindu' or 'Muslim.'

Boivin, Michel, and Bhavana Rajpal. 2018. "From Udero Lal in Sindh to Ulhasnagar in Maharashtra: Partition and Memories Across Borders in the Tradition of Jhule Lal." In *Partition and the Practice of Memory*, edited by Churnjeet Mahn and Anne Murphey, 43–62. New York: Palgrave Macmillan

This book chapter concerns the socio-religious practices performed in honor of Jhule Lal, a local Sindhi deity. It focuses on the different ways in which Jhule Lal is portrayed and worshipped on both sides of the border, in Udero Lal (Pakistan) and Ulhasnagar (India).

Falzon, Mark Antony. 2004. *Cosmopolitan Connections. The Sindhi Diaspora, 1860–2000*. Leiden: Brill.

This book is a detailed study of the Sindhi diaspora's past and present. It analyzes global Sindhi trading networks and shows how Sindhi-Hindu businesspeople successfully catered to foreign markets interested in products from Sindh. Besides describing Sindhi culture, Chapter 2, is an introduction to the Hindus of Sindh.

Hussain, Ghulam. 2014. **Kohli-Peasant Activism in Naon Dumbālo, Lower Sindh*[https://www.academia.edu/13684482/The_Rise_of_Ethnic_Peasant_in_Sindh_Book_Title_]*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis submitted to the Department of Anthropology at Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

A study on the Kohli community in lower Sindh. The author analyses how the Kohlis negotiate their identity between narratives of local belonging, as indigenous people of Sindh, and global Dalit movements.

Khalid, Haroon. 2015. *Shiva. A Study of Folk Religious Practices in Pakistan*. New Delhi: Rupa Publications.

This book is non-scholarly but describes local Hindu folk traditions in Pakistan.

Khan, Dominique-Sila. 2007. "Jhulelal and the Identity of Indian Sindhis." In *Sindh through History and Representations: French Contributions to Sindhi Studies*, edited by Michel Boivin, 72-81. Karachi: Oxford University Press.

The chapter portrays the Sindhi-Hindu community's search for an identity following the partition of the subcontinent. Khan argues that Jhule Lal, a local Sindhi deity, played a significant role in post-Partition identity discourses amongst non-Muslim Sindhis in India. The text provides the historical background to the development of Sindhi Hinduism in India and introduces Hindu traditions from pre-Partition Sindh.

Parwani, Lata 2010. "Myths of Jhule Lal: Deconstructing a Sindhi Cultural Icon." In *Interpreting the Sindhi World: Essays on Society and History*, edited by Michel Boivin and Matthew A. Cook, 1-27. Karachi: Oxford University Press.

This book chapter describes how Jhule Lal, the Sindhi river deity, became the main point of reference for 'Sindhiness' or '*sindhayat*.' Parwani argues that images of Jhule Lal are firmly rooted in orientalist discourses.

Ramey, Steven. 2008. *Hindu, Sufi, or Sikh. Contested Practices and Identifications of Sindhi Hindus in India and Beyond*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

This book illustrates how Sindhi-Hinduism questions traditional religious boundaries. Building on fieldwork from Lucknow, the author reveals how the Sindhi-Hindu community harnesses Sikh and Sufi elements in their weekly rituals and thus struggles to find their place within modern interpretations of Hinduism.

Hindus and the Pakistani Nation-State

Studies about the socio-political conditions of Pakistani religious minorities usually address Hindus. Hussain 2010, for example, focuses on non-Muslim communities in the southern provinces of Sindh and Baluchistan. Rais 2007 gives a somewhat outdated, albeit concise, socio-political overview of religious minorities in Pakistan. Khalid 2013 discusses the Hindu community in a stand-alone section in his journalistic and anecdotal account. Pinault 2008 is an ethnography on religious pluralism in Pakistan and contains a chapter on the perils of being a Hindu in an Islamic republic. Scholars wanting a deeper understanding of the subtler forms of discrimination against minorities in Pakistan will benefit from research on government education. Nayyar and Salim 2005, Rahman 2011, and Saigol 2005 reveal biases in government textbooks against Hinduism and India. Schaflechner 2016 furthers this type of research by addressing Hindu marginalization in Pakistan studying stereotypes found in Urdu pulp fiction.

The issue of “forced conversions” of Hindu women to Islam is increasingly part of public debate in Pakistan. Schaflechner 2017 analyses the complexities surrounding “conversions” and how groups politically harness them. Raheja’s 2018 article deals with Pakistani Hindu refugees in India and their entanglement in matters of citizenship and religious-cultural identity. Social media and other new forms of connectivity also increasingly play a role in Pakistani Hindu consciousness. South Asian and international media frequently portray Pakistani Hindus as victims, while Hindu nationalists often turn toward this minority group to further their anti-Pakistan stances.

Hussain, Ishtiaq 2010. “Religious Minorities in Pakistan: Mapping Sind and Baluchistan” In *States in Conflict with their Minorities. Challenges to Minority Rights in South Asia*, edited by Rita Manchanda. New Delhi: Sage.

A concise book chapter that addresses the history and the current political situation of non-Muslim minorities in the southern provinces of Sindh and Baluchistan.

Khalid, Haroon. 2013. *A White Trail*. New Delhi: Westland

A non-scholarly and anecdote-based book on Pakistan's minorities. It provides a separate chapter on the Hindu festivals in Pakistan and also lays out some historical background on the Hindu community.

Nayyar, Abdul H. and Ahmed Salim. 2005. *The Subtle Subversion: The State of Curricula and Textbooks in Pakistan. Urdu, English, Social Studies and Civics*. Islamabad: Sustainable Development Policy Institute.

This study addressed the curriculum and textbooks in Pakistan’s government schools. The authors show how school books undermine Pakistan's religious diversity and incite hate against Hindus and India.

Rahman, Tariq. 2011. “Images of the Other in School Textbooks and Islamic Reading Material in Pakistan.” In *World Yearbook of Education 2011: Curriculum in Today’s World: Configuring Knowledge, Identities, Work and Politics*, edited by Lyn Yates and Madeleine Grumet, 177–194. New York: Taylor & Francis.

Analyzes images of ‘the Other’ in textbooks from Pakistan’s government schools and religious seminars. The article does not only focus on Hindus but also Christians and ‘Westerners’ and shows how stereotypically they are portrayed.

Rais, Rasul B. 2007. “Identity Politics and Minorities in Pakistan.” *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 30 (1): 111–125.

This article is a concise overview of the history of religious minorities in Pakistan and their current political, and legal predicaments. It discusses the separate electorates, the blasphemy laws, and the link between religious intolerance and violence against Christians and the Ahmadiyya. Available

online[<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00856400701264050?journalCode=csas20>] by subscription.

Pinault, David. 2008. *Notes from the Fortune Telling Parrot: Islam and the Struggle for Religious Pluralism in Pakistan*. London: Equinox.

This book is an ethnographical study of religious pluralism in everyday Pakistan. Besides writing on Shia, Christian, and Sikh religious traditions, the author also provides a chapter on the perils of being Hindu in Pakistan today.

Raheja, Natasha. 2018. "Neither here nor there: Pakistani Hindu Refugee Claims at the Interface of the International and South Asian Refugee Regimes." *Journal of Refugee Studies*. 1–19.

Raheja's article deals with Pakistani-Hindu refugees in India. The author discusses the problems asylum-seekers face as they navigate between international and regional South-Asian refugee regimes. Available *online[<https://academic.oup.com/jrs/advance-article-abstract/doi/10.1093/jrs/fey013/4922733>]* by subscription.

Saigol, Rubina. 2005. "Enemies Within and Enemies Without: The Besieged Self in Pakistani Textbooks." *Futures* 37 (9): 1005–1035.

This journal article analyses the Islamic Republic's national narrative as found in the country's school books. The author claims that without the Hindu enemy no coherent Pakistani Muslim identity would be possible. Saigol furthermore writes that this narrative is insidious and dangerous, as it constructs a one-dimensional image of Hindus, Christians, Jews, and Sikhs as enemies of Islam and Pakistan.

Schaflechner, Jürgen 2016. "'The Hindu in Recent Urdu Horror Stories from Pakistan" in *Zeitschrift für Indologie und Südasiastudien*. (32) 323–351. Bremen: Hempen Verlag.

This article builds on research on images of 'the Other' in Pakistani textbooks and asks which other literary expressions carry ideologies that implicitly demonize Hindus. Focusing on horror stories taken from Urdu pulp fiction in Pakistan today, the author shows how supposedly innocent horror tales perpetuate images of Hindus and India as evil and untrustworthy.

Schaflechner, Jürgen 2017. "Forced Conversion and (Hindu) Women's Agency in Sindh" in *South Asia Chronicle*. 7. 275–317. Berlin. Available online [[https://edoc.hu-berlin.de/bitstream/handle/18452/19498/12%20-%20Forum%20-%20Schaflechner%20-%20Forced%20Conversion%20and%20\(Hindu\)%20Women%20s%20Agency%20in%20Sindh.pdf?sequence=1](https://edoc.hu-berlin.de/bitstream/handle/18452/19498/12%20-%20Forum%20-%20Schaflechner%20-%20Forced%20Conversion%20and%20(Hindu)%20Women%20s%20Agency%20in%20Sindh.pdf?sequence=1)]

This article disentangles the complex and contentious phenomenon of "forced conversion" of Hindu women to Islam in today's Pakistan. Based on three case studies, the author shows how "forced conversion" has multi-layered roots, often originating from a nexus of religion, politics, and honour. It argues that this complexity gets ignored when cases gain national or international media attention.

History of Pre-Partition Sindh and its Hindu Communities

A way to make up for the lack of literature on Hindus in contemporary Pakistan is to examine historical accounts of the provinces integrated into it at its formation in 1947. While analyses

need to approach colonial sources critically, some works, such as the writings of Burton 1851, are indispensable accounts of Hindu culture in 19th century Sindh. Of the literature in this category published after Partition, Thakur's 1951 work is seminal. The author gives a detailed account of Hindu castes and contemporary socio-religious traditions from the perspective of an exiled diaspora Sindhi. However, Thakur's book is also characteristic of a body of literature that marries historical research with Sindhi nationalism. Such writings, which includes Malkani 1997, needs to be critically questioned. In addition to already cited books, a comprehensive ethnological and historical study of Sindh, including its Hindu past, is Berrenberger 2007. Historical analyses of Sufism also shed light on understanding Hinduism in Pakistan today. Boivin 2007 documents a continuum between Shivaite centres and Sufi holy sites visited by Hindus in Sindh. Studies in the history of trade also help reveal power dynamics (past and present) among Hindu communities in Sindh. Lachaier 2008 illustrates how the Lohana community became one of the most influential Hindu groups in current Pakistan. A wide-ranging historical analysis of the global networks of Sindhi merchants (which include Khatri, Bhatias, and Lohanas) is Markovitz 2000. A work that examines the relationship between the British East Indian Company and Sindh's merchant communities is Cook 2016. Cook 2010 also deals with Sindhi merchants and their mobility before Partition.

Berrenberger, Jeanne. 2007. *Sufis, Rebellen, Untertanen. Geschichte(n) aus dem Sindh/Pakistan in einer ethnologischen Lesart*. Berlin: Weißensee Verlag.

This book analyses the shift from tribal regimes of power towards more governmental forms of authority in Sindh. While the text does not provide a separate section on Hindu traditions, it nevertheless gives crucial background information on the Sindhi province and its Hindu heritage.

Boivin, Michel. 2007. "Shivaite Cults and Sufi Centres: A Reappraisal of the Medieval Legacy in Sindh." In *Sindh through History and Representations: French Contributions to Sindhi Studies*, edited by Michel Boivin, 22–41. Karachi: Oxford University Press.

The book chapter is a historical analysis of religious sites in Sindh. Boivin maintains that there is continuity from Shivaite to Sufi ascetic practices based on mytho-historic narratives, rituals, and their shared rejection of orthodoxy. The article reveals how many Sufi centers, especially in southern Sindh, have historical roots in Shaivism.

Burton, Richard F. 1851. *Sind and Races that Inhabit the Valley of the Indus*. London: Allen & Unwin.

Burton was an officer and translator for the East India Company in Sindh. His 19th-century account of Sindh is a compelling portrayal of the province during colonial times and addresses a variety of topics (e.g., the province's history, its languages, poetry, tribes, customs, and legends). Burton's proto-ethnological study also provides chapters on Hindu castes and their traditions.

Cook, Matthew A. 2010. "Getting Ahead or Keeping your Head? The "Sindhi" Migration of Eighteenth Century India." In *Interpreting the Sindhi World: Essays on Society and History*, edited by Michel Boivin and Matthew A. Cook, 133–168. Karachi: Oxford University Press.

In this chapter Cook shows that a history of migration marks Hindu merchant communities. Khatri communities, for example, had fled Punjab due to the lack of economic opportunities and were later absorbed by the Lohana caste. According to Cook, this example shows how migration transformed merchant communities in Sindh as early as the 18th century.

Cook, Matthew A. 2016. *Annexation and the Unhappy Valley: The Historical Anthropology of Sindh's Colonization*. Leiden: Brill.

Cook's 2016 book analyzes the British annexation of Sindh, once called the 'unhappy valley' by Richard Burton. One chapter of this book is a study of the relationship between the East India Company and the Sindhi Lohana community. Cook argues that instead of political and economic reasons, tensions within the Lohana community were an important factor for why Hindu merchants supported the East India Company's annexation of Sindh in 1843.

Lachaier, Pierre. 2008. "Lohana and Sindhi Networks." In *Sindh through History and Representations: French Contributions to Sindhi Studies*, edited by Michel Boivin, 82–89. Karachi: Oxford University Press.

This book chapter is an in-depth study of the Hindu Lohana community. It addresses the community's mytho-historic origin and the dynamics that shaped their identity politics before and after the Partition.

Malkani, K. R. 1997. *The Sindh Story*. Delhi: Sindhi Academy.

This book is characteristic of pan-Sindhi nationalist writings: the author rants against Pakistan and everything associated with it. Sindh, on the other hand, emerges as an ancient, refined, and tolerant culture that rejects petty religious skirmishes. Differences between Hinduism and Islam are transcended by another identity: 'Sindhiness.' Such nationalist texts are crucial since they help better understanding Sindhi-Hindu identity politics in Pakistan today.

Markovits, Claude 2000. *The Global World of Indian Merchants, 1750-1947: Traders of Sind from Bukhara to Panama*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Markovits's writes on the trading and banking networks of Indian merchants. His analyses also reveals the tensions between the urban Hindu administrative elite and the growing middle-class Muslim population in pre-Partition Sindh. Markovits argues that, instead of religious differences, the quotas for government jobs hindered alliances between Hindus and Muslims in urban centres.

Thakur, Upendra. 1997. *Sindhi Culture*. New Delhi: Sindhi Academy.

Originally published in 1951 after the migration of thousands of Sindhi Hindus from Pakistan, Thakur's book is an excellent guide through the complex and unique forms of Sindhi-Hinduism. His tendency to organize the community into rigid patterns and his, at times, open nationalism, call for a critical approach toward the work.

Vernacular Literature on Sindh

Sindhi has long been the language of influential and prolific merchants in Pakistan, as well as scheduled castes. Vernacular Sindhi texts about Hinduism need to be evaluated cautiously since they frequently blend historical analysis with the discourses of Sindhi nationalism. Nevertheless, these texts are indispensable for understanding local traditions and Hindu self-perceptions in today's Pakistan. Motyani 2011 presents insights into local customs alongside a general introduction into Hinduism. Abro 1991 gives an overview of the history and the traditions of Lahut la Makan (the site of the Sufi saint Shah Noorani) and Hinglaj Devi. Both places are in Baluchistan and visited by Hindu pilgrims. Ansari 2001 is a study regarding ancient goddess traditions and their relationship to Sindhi culture. Urdu is less rich with texts that address Hinduism in Pakistan. There are Urdu translations of introductions to Hinduism (e.g., Jagannathan 2008) and its religious texts (frequently associated with the ISKCON community [e.g., Prabhupada 2009]). However, only some works touch on Hindu customs indigenous to Pakistan. In contrast, Jethamalani 1994 is a mytho-historic narrative and ritual manual for the Hinglaj pilgrimage and Rathi 2010 addresses mythologies and prayers given to the Goddess. Ali 2004 draws attention to the history of Dalit literature in South Asia. Written in Urdu, this text and others like it are interesting since they imply a 'Pakistani Hindu' readership. While Sindhi texts mainly cater to local Hindu communities and their traditions, the utilization of Urdu points toward an intentional attempt to address the community as part of the nation. Additionally, there are Urdu texts written by Muslim scholars who aim to illustrate the superiority of Islam over Hinduism. This genre extensively describes Hindu life-worlds to criticize and delegitimize them. Hamzah 1998 is but one example in this regard.

Abro, Badar. 1991. *Hinglāj ai Lāhūt*. Karachi: Sangam Publications.

This book is an introduction to Hinglaj and Lahut la Makan through the lens of Sindhi nationalist history. The author portrays both locations as related to the ancient human history, which profoundly connects Sindh and its people. Notwithstanding its nationalist orientation, the book provides a comprehensive overview of mythology and ritual at both places.

Ali, Mubarak. 2004. *Achūt Logom kā Adab*. Lahore: Fiksan Hāūs

This book is a history of Dalit communities in South Asia, including their role in the Mughal empire and during the British colonization. Ali particularity focuses on the importance of literature and provides some writings by Dalit authors.

Ansari, Ishtiaq. 2001. *Dhartī Mātā*. Karachi: Sindhica Academy.

Ansari's book is a history of Goddess worship. Inspired by Sindhi nationalist G.M. Syed, Ansari draws a direct connection between the ancient Mohenjo-Daro civilization and Sindhi culture today. The author claims that Goddess worship predates the coming of the Aryans and is essentially Sindhi. Although such claims are difficult to sustain, this book provides an essential insight into Goddess veneration in Sindh and links between Hinduism and Sindhi nationalism.

Hamzah, Amir. 1998. *Insāniyat kā Qātal. Hindū Dharm*. Lahore: Dār-al-Safar Publīkeśanz

Hamza introduces the customs and traditions of the Hindus living in today's Thar desert. He argues that upper-caste Hindus deprive the scheduled castes of their rights and aims to convince the reader that the only solution to this predicament is for Pakistan's scheduled castes is to convert to Islam.

Jagannathan, Shakuntala 2009. *Hindūmat*. Translated by Hafiz Muzafar Muhsin. Lahore: 'Alim-o 'Irfān Publīśaz

This book is an Urdu translation of Shakuntala Jagannath's introduction to Hinduism.

Jethamalani, Ashok P. 1994. *Hinglāj Tīrth*. Karachi: Raḥīm Ārṭs Pres.

Jethamalani's book is both a handbook for pilgrims wanting to go to the shrine of Hinglaj and a collection of Devi's mytho-historic narratives.

Motyani, Narayandas. 2011. *Sanātām Dharm*. Sehwan Sharif: Sabzvari

This Sindhi book aims to introduce Hinduism as the *sanātām dharm*, or the eternal order. While the work gives a rather broad picture of Hindu faith, it also touches on particularities of Pakistani Hinduism such as the pilgrimage site of Hinglaj.

Prabhupada, Bhaktivedanta Swami. 2009. *Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā. Aṣṭī Sūrat Mem*. Translated by Guruna Sandhu Das. London: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust.

This book is the Urdu translation of the Bhagavad Gita as it was translated and interpreted by Swami Prabhupada.

Rathi, Jagdish 2010. *Devī Ārādhnā*. Karachi: Private Publication.

Rathi's book provides a collection of prayers and ritual manuals for the temple of Hinglaj Devi.

Hindu Rituals at Hinglaj Devi

Hinglaj Devi is a pilgrimage site in the desert of Baluchistan. It is about 250 kilometers from Karachi, Pakistan's coastal economic hub. Due to the construction of the Makran Coastal Highway between Karachi and Gwadar, the formerly distant shrine now functions as a unifying socio-religious space for Pakistan's Hindu communities. Hindus and local Muslim communities both venerate Hinglaj (also called Bibi Nani). While Muslims from the Zikri community still visit the shrine for boons, Hinglaj is increasingly 'Hinduized.' It hosts, according to its temple committee, Pakistan's largest Hindu festival. Westphal and Westphal-Hellbusch 1976 state that the ritual journey to Hinglaj existed since the 14th century. David Gordon White 1996 suggests that the shrine can be found in Ctesia's *Indica*, dating to the fourth century B.C. While the precise age of the shrine remains unknown, it is the case that Hinglaj draws pilgrims from all over the subcontinent and has done so for several centuries. The experiences of past pilgrims live in the oral traditions of bards from Rajasthan, the writings of colonial authors—an example for these are Hart 1839 and Cunningham 1875—, 20th century vernacular literature such as Abadhut 1957 and Shastri 1977, and recent travel accounts by Indians able to cross the border into Pakistan (e.g., Jasol 2008). Because these sources are from different times and in different

languages, they do not provide a coherent narrative of the Hinglaj tradition. With the shrine's (re)institutionalization in the mid-1980s, individuals and organizations (e.g., the Hinglaj Sheva Mandal) organized and unified the shrine's myths and traditions. Schaflechner 2018 shows how elite groups among Hindus in Pakistan (e.g., the Lohana) 'solidify' traditions around Hinglaj Devi. A paramount ritual conducted at the shrine centers around the *garbh* (Hin. womb), a U-shaped tunnel underneath Hinglaj's *sanctum sanctorum*. Despite contradicting explanations, devotees believe this tunnel to be the womb of the Goddess. Exiting the tunnel is a powerful spiritual rebirth which washes away the devotee's most wicked sins. However, pilgrims lament a deterioration of spiritual energy at Hinglaj and state that easier access and increased visitor numbers are the main reasons. Brighenti 2016 is a concise overview of the shrine's history. The most comprehensive introduction to Hinglaj's traditions in Hindi is Lakhavat 2010.

Abadhut 1955: *Marutirtha Himlāg*. Kalkutta: Mitra & Gosh Publications.

Abadhut's famous Bengali novel *Marutirtha Himglāj*. The story has also been made into a film starring Uttam Kumar in 1959 and helped Hinglaj to gain popularity outside her traditional circle of followers. The novel describes the many stops on the ritual journey and is one of the most valuable vernacular texts on the pilgrimage of Hinglaj.

Brighenti, Francesco. 2016. "A 'Sulphurous' Śakti: The worship of Goddess Hingulā in Baluchistan." In *Soulless Matter, Seats of Energy: Metals, Gems and Minerals in South Asian Traditions*, edited by Fabrizio Ferrari and Thomas Dähnhardt, 28–50. Sheffield: Equinox.

Brighenti draws from a variety of Sanskrit and colonial sources to give a concise overview of Devi Hinglaj's history. The author questions possible links between the Baluchistan site and the ancient cult of the Goddess Nana.

Cunningham, Alexander 1975. *The Ancient Geography of India*. London: Trübner and Co.

Cunningham was employed in the East India Company and founded the Archeological Survey of India. His work briefly mentions the Hinglaj pilgrimage.

Hart, S. V. W. 1839. "A Pilgrimage to Hinglaj." *Proceedings of the Bombay Geographical Society* 3: 77–105.

A colonial officer wrote this travel account. The text meticulously documents the various stops and rituals on the way and provides oral narratives as told to Hart by his guide.

Jasol, Nahar S. 2008: *Ādi Śakti Himglāj Kī Aitihāsik Yātrā*. Jodhpur: Maharaja Mansingh Pustak Prakash Research Centre.

Jasol's work is an autobiographical account of a 2006 pilgrimage to Hinglaj. The author was a member of Jaswant Singh's entourage, a former Indian minister, who gained permission from the Pakistani Government to visit Hinglaj. The book not only describes the Goddess's tradition from the perspective of an Indian devotee but also reveals how access to the site has become highly regulated for Indian pilgrims today.

Lakhavat, Omkar. 2010. *Himglāj Śaktipīṭh*. Pushkar: Tīrth Pailes Prakāśan.

This book is a comprehensive introduction to the various traditions of Hinglaj Devi. The author collected a large variety of oral and textual sources on the Goddess.

Schaflechner, Jürgen 2018. *Hinglaj Devi: Identity, Change, and Solidification at a Hindu Temple in Pakistan*. New York: Oxford University Press.

This book researches the mytho-historical narratives and ritual journeys to the shrine of Hinglaj Devi in Baluchistan. It shows how the construction of a road—the Makran Coastal Highway—in the beginning of the millennium linked the former distant and hidden shrine with urban Pakistan. The resulting new accessibility and the establishment of an annual festival in the 1980s caused various different narratives to collide. Today influential actors aim to ‘solidify’ these heterogeneous accounts into one coherent history.

Shastri, Devadatta. 1977. *Agneya Tirtha Hinglāj*. Bombay: Loklok Prakashan.

This book provides a detailed account of the ritual journey to Hinglaj. A first-person narrative, the story gives essential information on how people conducted the pilgrimage to the desert shrine in Baluchistan before the construction of the Makran Coastal Highway.

Westphal und Westphal-Helbusch 1974. *Hinduistische Viehzüchter im nord-westlichen Indien*. Berlin: Dunckner und Humblot.

An ethnographic account of pastoral groups from North-West India. The authors address the Charan community and its unique relationship to Hinglaj since they believe that the Goddess was born into their caste.

White, David G. 1996. *The Alchemical Body: Siddha Traditions in Medieval India*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal.

White provides an alchemical interpretation of Hinglaj and her ritual journey. The author claims that the shrine and especially Chandrakup, the mud volcano on the way to Hinglaj, were once essential sites for the Nath Siddha tradition.