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To evaluate the socio-economic and political conditions of Kashmir under Sikh Rule

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Abstract

Kashmir, described by Mughal ruler Jahangir as a "heaven on earth," has been a magnet for conquerors from ancient times. The valley remained under Sikh control (1819-1846). Tibet, Kashgar, and Ladakh were in the east, Punjab was in the north, Badakshan and Khorasan were in the south, and Afghanistan was in the west. The Sikh takeover of the Valley changed the bridle of reigns from Kabul to Lahore, which had a negative impact on the people's fates. During this time, the Valley was ruled by Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his successors. According to the reports, even though they controlled within the current administrative structure, the people endured anguish and sorrow. The peasants abandoned the land uncultivated, beggar (forced labour) rose, revenue exactions escalated, commerce fell, industry failed, and the Valley's economic resources were depleted. The inhabitants (peasants, traders, craftsmen, etc.) were subjected to extortion, the imposition of excessive taxes, and the tyranny of the revenue authorities. The Valley appeared to be desolate.

Keywords: Territory, Dagshawls, khudkasht, import and export trade, revenue.

Introduction

The valley of Kashmir was a vital component of the Mauryan and Kushan empires in ancient times, and the Mughals from 1586 to 1753 in the mediaeval era. It was ruled by renowned monarchs like as Ashoka, Kanshika, Akbar Jahangir, Shah-i-Jahan, and others. Unfortunately, the latter phase of the Mughal dynasty saw a band of weak kings who were preoccupied with marrying and so failed to control the valley. The scenario enticed the invaders to take control of the region. As a result, Ahmad Shah Abdali, a powerful conqueror of Afghanistan, stood back and witnessed the entire action. In 1753, Shah dispatched an expedition to the valley, which culminated in a terrible combat between Mughal and Afghan soldiers at Haripure (south Kashmir). The Afghans were successful, and the land was transferred to them. From 1753 to 1819, they ruled over the valley through governors. A.D. They, like the East India Company, were more concerned with personal riches than with public benefit. The time looked to be a gloomy chapter in Kashmir's history. The governance in the valley degenerated into tyranny and savagery as a result of the callous approach of the Afghan authorities in the centre (Kabul). Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the ruler of Lahore Durbar (Punjab), was intently watching the entire scenario. The Treaty of Amritsar of 1809, signed by Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Punjab and Lord Minto1 Governor-General of the East India Company, sealed his objective of expansion to the east. The discord among Kabul's claims to the throne, as well as the virtual suspension of the monarchy in the centre, provided a chance for Maharaja Ranjit Singh to begin his plan of expansion to the west of his realm. However, his objective of expansion was seriously jeopardised by Fateh Khan (prime minister of Shah Mahmud of Afghanistan), who, like him, dreamed of conquering the valley to dominate. The two needed to reconcile, so they met in Rohtas (Rawlpindi). During the conference, a combined mission to Kashmir was organised. As a result, Ranjit Singh promised to deploy 12000 men to the event in exchange for a third of the prizes and the valley's lands. He would also gain Afghan backing in his capture of Multan. As a result, in 1813.A.D., Mukhan Chand, with 12000 men from Lahore Durbar, and Fateh Khan, with a strong army, marched towards Kashmir. Fateh Khan, however, left Mokhan Chand behind and entered the valley from the Pir Panjal Mountain. The Afghan Governor of Kashmir, Atta Mohammed Khan, faced the invader in Shergarhi (Srinagar), which resulted in a short combat. Fateh Khan took over the valley when Atta Mohammed Khan departed. Despite his unwillingness to meet the requirements of the agreement signed at Rohtas with Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Fateh Khan was

successful in capturing the topography of Kashmir as well as the representative of Shah Shuja from whom he extorted the famed Kohi Noor. Ranjit Singh, aware of Fateh Khan's deception, vowed to capture Kashmir on his own, and despatched a second expedition to Kashmir in 1814 A.D. under the command of Diwan Ram Dayal. Rain and snow hampered the expedition's progress at Mandi and Tosh-Maidan passes, causing it to fail. The Afghan soldiers, led by Azam Khan, drove the Maharaja's men out of the highlands. Ranjit Singh called it quits on the campaign and returned to his capital. However, fate was on Ranjit Singh's side, since Birbal Dhar, an Afghan government minister in Kashmir, had taken refuge with him. He provided useful information about Afghan troop numbers and routes to Kashmir. As a result, Maharaja Ranjit Singh assembled an expedition army led by Diwan Chand, Hari Singh Nalwa, and Prince Kharak Singh. After crossing the Dhimber and Pir Panjal passes, a Sikh army of 12000 arrived at Shopian on June 18, 1819. The invader was greeted by Jabbar Khan, the Afghan ruler of Kashmir, who led an army of 5000 men. Despite the Afghans' valiant resistance, victory kissed the Sikhs' feet. Afghan generals were defeated, and Jabbar Khan was severely wounded. He escaped to Peshawar, leaving the territory to the conquerors. Prince Kharak Singh triumphantly entered Srinagar. From 1819 to 1846, the valley was ruled by Sikhs. A.D.

Political conditions of Kashmir under Sikh rule

In 1819, Maharaja Ranjit Singh captured Kashmir, thereby ending Afghan sovereignty. For the first time in 500 years, a non-Islamic authority ruled Kashmir. The government of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was made up of Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims. This study will attempt to assess the political realities in Kashmir during Sikh rule by evaluating the many governors chosen throughout the course of the rule's 27-year tenure.

1) Diwan Moti Ram (1819-20)

- He was the son of the well-known Diwan Mohkam Chand, a Hindu Khatri who served both Maha Singh and his son Ranjit Singh. Lepen Griffin refers to him as "the best governor," describing him as "kind-hearted and well-liked by the people." He enacted a lot of initiatives.
- Cow slaughter was prohibited, as it was in all of Sarkar Khalsa's territory; • the call for public Azan was discontinued; and
- Congregational prayers on Fridays at Srinagar's Jama Masjid were halted.
- Afghan troops used to capture beautiful women for their ever-expanding harems. This practise was discontinued.
- The fear of the Sikh name put a halt to theft and robbery.

Muslims were permitted complete religious freedom in all other areas. They might pray and celebrate their festivals at any other mosque. Many of them were government employees. The first three measures, however, were sufficient for 'Muslim' writers and historians to label the reign as 'exploitative' and 'oppressive.' Cows had religious and sentimental importance for the minority Hindu community (Muslims made up the majority in Sarkar Khalsa's domain), hence they were prohibited. Azan is a

public call to prayer in Islam. It is done five times every day. Perhaps it was prohibited because the state was governed on the basis of secularism. The Friday congregation prayer at the major mosque was prohibited because it drew a large crowd and may be used to promote or provoke an uprising against the government. In retrospect, that was a poor decision. This, however, did not exclude anybody from doing 'namaz.' Several Muslims served in Ranjit Singh's administration and military. The Muslims controlled the vast bulk of the artillery.

2) Hari Singh Nalwa (1820)

Hari Singh Nalwa was possibly Maharaja Ranjit Singh's best military commander. He implemented a number of steps.

- All limitations imposed on Kashmiri Pandits during Afghan administration regarding worship, dress, and other traditions were lifted; and Hindus who had been forced to convert to Islam were permitted to return to their original religion.
- The term 'Begar,' which refers to forced unpaid servitude by villages to government officials, was abolished.
- Reduced the government's portion in saffron production, encouraging its cultivation.
- Insisted on the proper type of weight and measurement.
- Built Gurdwaras in Kathi Darwaza, Srinagar, Matan, and Baramula to commemorate the visits of the Sikhs' first and sixth Gurus, Guru Nanak and Guru Hargobind.

Nalwa being military personnel was a strict disciplinarian and sometimes people who made mistakes were treated harshly. DC Sharma based on unpublished manuscript by William Moorcroft who travelled to Kashmir one year after Nalwa's departure alleges that Nalwa forcibly collected 25 lakh rupees for himself. One needs to read other historians to understand the highly moral character and ethics of the great General. It a wrong accusation and not backed by any other source. In addition to being a strict disciplinarian, Nalwa may well have become unpopular with the majority community due to some of the above measures. When this was reported to the Maharaja, he diplomatically transferred Hari Singh and reappointed Diwan Moti Ram.

3) Diwan Moti Ram's Second Governship (1821-26)

Moti Ram convinced the Maharaja to lower the Kashmir contribution from 52 lakhs to 26 lakhs. He fought corruption in government, and he expanded agriculture, manufacturing, and trade (both internal and external).

Raja Dhian Singh Dogra, the Lahore Prime Minister, was opposed to the presence of other strong families at the Lahore Durbar. He had a strong effect on Maharaja, and his son, Hira Singh, was the Maharaja's favourite. During Ranjit Singh's rule, only the three Dogra brothers (Gulab Singh, Dhian Singh, and Suchet Singh) and Hira Singh Dogra were given the title of 'Raja.' Dhian Singh desired to have his own people in all of the state's crucial posts. He poisoned the Maharaja's ears against Moti Ram, who was fired in June 1826. To soothe him, the Maharaja sent Moti Ram to the Shimla mission in 1827. Law and order in Kashmir were excellent during the Sarkar Khalsa. The Sikh army consisted of barely 3,000 infantry and 1,000 cavalry. During the former regime, the Afghan governors kept a force of 16,000 to 20,000 soldiers.

4) Chuni Lal (1826-27)

Chuni Lal, a Dhian Singh Dogra protégé and 'pliant tool,' was named Governor of Kashmir. His true goal was to put Kashmir under the control of Jammu and Kashmir (Gulab Singh had internal autonomy over Jammu). The Maharaja despised hearing complaints about his Prime Minister and often stated that any complaints against Dhian Singh should be sent solely to the everlasting God!

Chuni Lal lacked administrative skills. The culprits in a cow slaughter case were hung and their bodies were carried through Srinagar's main bazaars. This caused a considerable deal of uproar, and he was recalled in November 1827.

5) Diwan Kirpa Ram (1827-31):

Diwan Moti Ram's second son, Diwan Kirpa Ram, was appointed governor of Kashmir by Maharaja in December 1827. Previously, he was in charge of Hazara and the Jalandhar Doab. Both father and son, according to Lepen Griffin, were the finest administrators of Kashmir. Kirpa Ram, like his father and grandfather, was highly honest and incorruptible, according to HR Gupta. In Srinagar, he built several beautiful structures and gardens.

Earthquake, Cholera & Jihad

During his administration, the great earthquake of 1828 occurred, and many buildings and residences fell. It was followed by a cholera outbreak. To make matters worse, at the suggestion of Syed Ahmad Barelvi, the Bambas and Kakkas community rose in revolt. Surprisingly, the Syed, a Wahabi from Uttar Pradesh who declared Jihad against Ranjit Singh, had little backing among Punjabi Muslims. The Maharaja was able to assimilate Punjabis, but the main society in Kashmir considered his authority as foreign.

Dhian Singh Dogra convinced the Maharaja to dismiss Kirpa Ram on spurious grounds, and he was dismissed in February 1831. Later, in December 1831, the Maharaja handed him the jagir of Kunjah, valued 3 lakhs per year, but the Diwan felt humiliated and crossed into British territory, never to return to the Punjab. Dhian Singh "admirably succeeded in removing one great and important family at the Court," writes HR Gupta.

6) Bhama Singh Ardali (1831)

The Maharaja was too preoccupied with the decisive struggle with Syed Ahmed Barelvi to send anybody to Kashmir. In January 1831, Bhama Singh Ardali, who was already in Kashmir, seized command. He was a terrible administrator. Sunni-Shia riots erupted during his presidency. Ardali was unable to keep them under control. There was a significant loss of life and property. It is said that some 300 Irani Shia merchants who had permanently established in the valley returned to Iran. Ardali was called back in November of 1831.

7) Prince Sher Singh (1832-34)

Kunwar Sher Singh, son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh who had crushed Barelvi's Jihad (he was killed as well) was given the governorship of Kashmir. He was also very close to the Dogras. Sher Singh was a very good military commander but had little interest in civil duties. Realising this, Maharaja had send Wasakha Singh to look after the revenue but he forcibly collected from the traders over 7 lakhs (for himself) and remitted another 2 lakhs to the Lahore treasury. The Maharaja's intelligence informed him and Wasakha Singh

was brought to Lahore in chains and a hefty fine was realized from him.

The Maharaja tried a balancing act, a trio - two Sikhs and one Muslim, were appointed to look after the revenue. They were Jamadar Khushhal Singh (Brahmin from Meerut who became Sikh), Gurmukh Singh and Sheikh Ghulam Mohiuddin. Regrettably, they came to an understanding to share the loot in common. Jamadar was later on censured, while Ghulam Mohiuddin's property was confiscated.

Famine

In 1833, a severe famine erupted in Kashmir. A high number of individuals perished as a result of famine. Many people moved to Punjab and British India.

The Maharaja dispatched massive amounts of food on thousands of donkeys. Grain was given in communities via mosques and shrines. Troops gathered people in open locations in Kashmir's major towns and cities in rows, and each was handed two kilogrammes of grain everyday for their families.

Mihan Singh (1834-41)

Mohan Lal Kashmiri wrote in his journal on February 14, 1832, "Mihan Singh is the bravest leader in Ranjit Singh's army, and has fought a great many battles, in which he has received numerous wounds."

Colonel Mihan Singh assumed command of his new post in October 1834, appointing Pandit Ganesh Dar as Chief Minister. They took the following steps:

- Duties on grain and other necessities of everyday life were abolished.
- Imported a big amount of grain and poultry from Punjab.
- Strict penalties were imposed on black marketers.
- To stimulate agriculture, he reduced land revenue and generously awarded 'taqavi' loans to growers.
- He encouraged commerce by lowering tariffs. Loans were made available to shawl manufacturer owners in order to enhance output. Imports and exports were established with Ladakh, Punjab, British India, Afghanistan, and Central Asia.
- Serais were erected at strategic locations for traders and travellers.
- Credit and communication services were made available through the state postal service.
- Suppressed a well-organized gang known as the Galwans. They ran around, committed heinous crimes, and kidnapped beautiful women. Their leader was Khaira Galwan. Mihan Singh tracked them down (Vigne).
- He designed 'Basant Bagh' and planted exquisite chinar trees, which are still present in the garden. The tribal uprisings were repressed with a heavy hand.
- Completed 'Tarikh I Kashmir,' a record of great historical and economic significance.

7) The Trade between Mihan Singh and Dogras-Shawl

Jia Lal Kalam has provided an accurate summary of this disagreement. Shias were the shawl weavers and merchants, and as a result of Shia-Sunni clashes, the Shias were fleeing the valley for Amritsar, Ludhiana, and Jammu. Natural disasters exacerbated the situation. Meanwhile, in Jammu, Raja Gulab Singh Dogra was encouraging weavers.

Following the capture of Kishtwar, a shorter, albeit more arduous, path to Ladakh, where the wool for the shawls arrived, was opened. Gulab Singh successfully diverted the wool to Jammu via his recently acquired territory of Kishtwar. This caused significant harm to Kashmir's shawl industry, resulting in unemployment and poverty. Mihan Singh attempted to alert the Maharaja of the situation, but due to the presence of Dhian Singh Dogra, the Prime Minister at the time in Lahore, the information was withheld from the Maharaja. Finally, a letter was despatched through a trustworthy servant with the instruction that it be delivered straight to the Maharaja's hand. The Maharaja conveyed his displeasure, and some raw wool began to arrive in Kashmir. Mihan Singh and the Dogras have a history. According to Brigadier Gurbachan Singh Bal, as the situation in Ladakh improved, Mihan Singh expressed a wish to lead a campaign to the province, but Dhian Singh Dogra was able to persuade the Maharaja to let Gulab Singh Dogra to do it, and Zorawar Singh was assigned to carry out the mission. Mihan Singh was requested to work with Jammu and Kashmir. When Ladakhi rebelled afterwards, Dogras blamed Mihan Singh for encouraging it. Unfortunately, after the demise of the Maharaja, the intrigues in Lahore had an influence on Kashmir. Soon after Maharaja Sher Singh's arrival, two battalions of the Sikh army in Kashmir revolted and killed Mihan Singh at his home in Srinagar in April 1841. Within a fortnight following Mihan Singh's death, Pandit Ganesh Dar, who had been personally recognised by the Maharaja in Lahore, died as well.

8) Sheikh Ghulam Mohiuddin (1841–1864)

Ghulam Mohiuddin had previously been summoned from Kashmir for being harsh and corrupt, but he had matured. In 1841, he became Governor of Kashmir and nominated Pandit Tilak Chand Munshi as Chief Minister. They carried on the good work of Mihan Singh and Pandit Ganesh Dar by implementing the following initiatives.

- The Jama Masjid, which had been closed to public prayers since 1819, is now open for prayers.
- Having gained favour, he subdued the border Muslim hill chieftains who had taken advantage of the existing unrest and had become semi-independent.
- Simplified administration
- Created two gardens that bear their names to this day, Sheikh Bagh and Munshi Bagh.

Sheikh Ghulam Mohiuddin died in 1845 and was buried at Srinagar's Hari Parbat Khanaqah of Shaikh Hamza Makkhum. His son, Sheikh Imamuddin, succeeded him.

9) Sheikh Imamuddin (1845-46)

Pandit Tilak Chand Munshi remained as the younger Sheikh's Chief Minister. He implemented a number of initiatives to develop the shawl trade. • Paddy was provided to weavers from state granaries at a price that was two annas in a rupee cheaper. The shawl makers were told to offer the weavers a three percent bonus on their revenues.

- For the weavers, ordered increments.

This raised the economic position of weavers and lessened their reliance on their employers for minor advances, which had previously reduced them to the condition of slaves. He had to depart despite his superb efforts. After defeating Sarkar Khalsa in the first Anglo-Sikh war, Raja Gulab Singh

Dogra was given the title of Maharaja and permitted to acquire Kashmir for 75 lakh rupees in March 1846.

Raja Lal Singh (a Brahmin from Jhelum who turned a Sikh) despised the agreement since he had collaborated with the British throughout the conflict. In a secret correspondence, he urged Shaikh Imamuddin to impede Gulab Singh's handover. Major Henry Lawrence had to intercede in the end, to whom he surrendered. Imamuddin was prosecuted by the British at Lahore but was acquitted after producing actual letters sent by Raja Lal Singh. His property in Lahore, which had previously been confiscated, was returned to him. He died in March 1859, at the age of 40, and was buried near the grave of the famed Sufi Data Ganj Bakhsh in Lahore.

Kashmir's socioeconomic conditions under Sikh rule

This report also stressed evaluating Kashmir's socioeconomic situation purely to inform readers about the events that occurred throughout the era. The subject has been addressed under the following headings.

Agriculture

Agriculture made a significant contribution to the advancement of human civilisation. The bulk of Kashmir's people resided in rural regions, and agriculture was essential to the region's economy. Because of the lush soil and plenty of water supplies, it has become a source of nourishment for them. The land not only provided essential supplies to its inhabitants, but it also stabilised their economy by producing various income crops like as cotton, oil seeds, saffron, and so on. The money generated by the agriculture industry was very important to the state exchequer. Thus, a rise in state spending had a significant influence on the current land revenue demand and taxation structure. The same had a negative impact on the peasantry, who had been subjected to high taxes and other revenue exactions. The agrarian system of the time period under consideration can be explored as follows:

Land ownership

Ownership was defined legally as a person's entire possession, use, disposal, and enjoyment of a certain object. By applying the proposed definition to the available source material on the issue, one finds adequate opportunity to prove that during the era, individuals in Kashmir had private ownership on numerous types of property. Because arable land was concentrated in rural regions, it was classified as khalsa, jagir, dharmarth, and khud-kasht.

- A) **Khalsa;** It was state property that was directly under its ownership and supervision. The property was rented out to farmers for cultivation, and the income generated went to the state exchequer.
- B) **Jagir;** A section of khalsa land granted by the Sikh rulers to individuals for the purpose of serving the state in either a civil or military capacity was known as a jagir. The grantees were referred to as jagirdars. They were given the authority to collect the revenue from the land that had been allotted to them. These jagirdars ran their jagirs either directly or through agents. The Sikhs bestowed these jagirs on their favourites, whom they felt would serve as props for their reign in Kashmir.
- C) **Dharmarth;** The Sikhs used this term to refer to charitable donations made to religious figures and institutions. It has nothing in do with madad-i-maash.

These donations were sanctioned in cash, cereals, or by awarding revenue-free land grants. The land awarded at Dharmarth was kharija's-jama, as the revenue and other cesses owed to the state were paid to the grantee rather than the khizana-iamira (royal treasury).

D) Khudkasht; The term khudkasht denotes ownership of one's own land. It indicated that such lands were owned by the khudkasht peasants, a better class of cultivators (Asudahahwal). It is further supported by the fact that these property rights were openly sold, acquired, and transferred. The government acknowledged these rights. The implementation of a sales tax called as "qabalat" authorised the land purchase.

Industry

Kashmir is famous throughout history for its creative fervour. The Valley was landlocked, and the vast majority of its residents resided in rural regions. As a result, they remained engaged in agricultural pursuits and agro-based enterprises such as textile weaving, smithy, carpentry, oil pressing, and animal husbandry. The craftsmen were given a portion of the village's produce in exchange for their services, which became known as the client-patron relationship system throughout history. As a result, a hamlet remained self-sufficient to a larger extent, while surplus produce found its way to cities. The influx of rural excess affected the economic lives of urban people throughout time, resulting in the growth of cities in general and the city of Srinagar in particular. The urban areas became a hotspot for craftspeople. As a result, arts and crafts flourished throughout the Valley. The mode of production, the system of monopolisation of resources and markets, and the concentration of surplus profit in the hands of the merchant community resulted in the establishment and rise of the capitalist class, under which the craftsmen produced the necessary shawls. The artisans were inevitably reduced to a state of semi-bondage, reinforced by societal compulsions, and lived in dismal affliction with their paltry income. The disaster was hastened by Afghans' merciless taxing policy, which drained the blood of shawl weavers and traders who were linked to it. They established Daghsawl (department of shawl) to regulate the operations of shawl-bafs (shawl weavers), which proved difficult for them as seen by the decline of looms. During the time under review, the Sikhs (Colonel Mahan Singh) breathed fresh life into the ailing industry, increasing the number of looms and bringing craftsmen back from the plains of India to work in the Valley. Mr. Ventura, an Italian military officer of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, promotes Kashmir's shawl trade with Italy. Though the industry rose to prominence in terms of both quality and quantity, it was short-lived. Unfortunately, the sector suffered a significant setback due to a lack of raw materials and natural disasters. Additionally, the government levied high taxes on shawls at all stages of manufacture and distribution. As a result, the industry, which was a significant source of revenue for the government and a means of livelihood for the majority of the population, suffered. Under duress, the shawl weavers abandoned their trade; they preferred death to the dreadful skill. As a result, the fall was unavoidable. Similarly, the carpet business thrived with the shawl industry. Though Sultan Zainul-Abidin founded the business, it was revitalised during the reign of Jahangir (1605-1628) via the efforts of Ahmed Beg (governor). The pile carpets

manufactured in Kashmir were more flawless, with floral designs, mosques, gardens, wild creatures, gliding fish, and so on. The Valley's carpets were thought to be better than those brought from Persia (Iran). Unfortunately, it deteriorated under Afghan authority because they were uninterested in the art that provided them with a minimal wage. Colonel Mahan Singh of the Sikhs added the pattern of Kashmir's natural beauty to the trait and upgraded the material to pure shawl wool. The artists created small-scale carpets that were embroidered with gold zari and colourful silken threads. Despite the Sikhs' efforts, the craft had not acquired a place among the articles of export, indicating its limited potential. Traveler Francois Banier observed that wood carving flourished at a quick pace throughout the time (1826). Carpenter's work may still be found in the Khatamband ceilings, pinjira, and carvings in the mosques of Shah-i-Hamdan and Nakshband Sahib in Srinagar. Apart from private Karkhanas, there were state-owned Karkhanas. Aside from galichas, dhurries, gabas, and other floor coverings were also produced. In addition, the Valley produced a large number of fine iron, silver, and brass objects and furnishings, as well as boats of various kinds. "The Kashmir is created the greatest writing paper of the east," according to Gorge Foster. The paper was unusual, and it was re-used for writing after being washed. The fabrication of paper had given rise to a well-known craft known as papier-mache, and the naqash's (designer's) ability in sketching and creating was impressive. The artisans created pen boxes, jewellery boxes, book ends, and other items that had become popular in the marketplace. The Valley drew Europeans who had arrived in the Indian subcontinent following the advent of British authority. The same thing made it possible for Europeans to travel. Through their experiences and writings, they brought Kashmir's novelties to the European World, which aided in the establishment of the tourist industry and foreign trade in the long term.

Trade

Trade and commerce played an important role in the economy of Kashmir. It remained a great source of economy to the state which stimulated manufacturers and gave employment to reasonable portion of the population. The same poured wealth in the state by its merchants whose commercial activities were connected with British India, Punjab, Nepal, Delhi, Bombay, Tibet, Central Asia, Tehran, etc. The sources revealed that the traders were engaged both in internal and external trade which stabilized the economy of the land.

Inland Trade

The domestic trade of the province was carried on both by land and water ways. The territory being mountainous and due to the absence of fair-weather roads, the traders utilized the services of potters and ponies to carry goods from one place to another, consequently during winter and rainy seasons the inland trade through land routes got halted. Hence water transport was the pivot upon which whole internal trade progressed. There were (94) ninety four jetties on the banks of river Jehlum, Nalla Mar and Dal Lake. The trade remained confined to imported commodities, agricultural products, live stock and craft production. The boats laden with paddy, salt, vegetables, fruits, tobacco, snuff, paper, earthenware, grass, bricks, stones and forest

products were unloaded at the ghats of the Jehlum and Dal lake. The chief markets of domestic trade were, Shergarh, Zainkadal, Tankipora, Chattabal, Bazaar-i-Salatin and Habba kadal in the capital city of Srinagar. Similarly, Shahabad, Anantnag, Bijbehara, Shopian, Tral, Pampore, Pattan, Baramulla, Sopore, Kanihama, Kereri and Chrar-i-Sharif in rural areas. Anantnag was the main center of saddle cloth and gabba manufacturing while as Sopore for pattu cloth. The merchandize were subjected to octroi at various places. To regulate the system, octroi posts were established at Anantnag, Sonawar, Maisuma, Batmalu, Chattabal, Haftchinar, Daderhama, Shahabudinapura, Sopore and Baramulla. The octroi was charged as per value of the commodity @ of an anna (six paisa) per rupee. It embraced all local and imported articles. The captioned trade was controlled both by the state and private businessmen. The paddy trade remained the monopoly of the state government. Moocroft, stated that the revenue exacted by the government in kind was sold in the market on high price. No individual was allowed to dispose of his produce till the government stock has been exhausted. These steps had prevented the growth of local trade and grain merchants.

External Trade

Despite being landlocked, the Valley maintained great economic links with Persia, Central Asia, Russia, Bhutan, Nepal, Punjab, and British India. The path to Central Asia via Srinagar remained congested. Shawls were the most important export item. In the wool-producing regions of Ladakh, Gilgit, and Tibet, the merchants enjoyed a monopoly on the wool trade. They had sent agents all across the region to arrange loans and collect shawl wool from the farmers. They had constructed warehouses in Chinese Turkistan and Central Asia, and they also sold embroidered bedding. Saffron growing in Pampore, Inderkot, and Kishtwar was shipped to Yarkand, Tibet, China, and was also purchased by British traders. The Valley's merchants also brought forest items such as Saussursa, Lippa (costs), calamus, amber beads, and warm wood to Indian marketplaces such as Surat and Ahmadabad. Aside from these items, numerous scents and flowers were also shipped, resulting in a considerable profit for the dealers. Furthermore, Kashmir is well-known for its quality paper manufacture. It was in high demand in India and was later brought to Persia. In addition, Kashmir imported salt, shawl wool, cotton fabric, pepper, turmeric, ginger, and sugar. The Hundus made the payment for exterior commerce. Furthermore, all types of merchandise were subject to duty or taxation, such as Rs3/ for each shawl exported from Kashmir and Rs4/ for each Tarak of shawl wool imported. The government built rest homes (khanas) in Banihal, Shahabad, Anantnag, Bijbehara, Shopian, Tral, Pampore, Hazratbal, Batmalu, Sopore, Sumbal, Patten, Kanihama, Charar-i-sharif, and Keri during this time. In addition to this, two Mughal caravanserais in Nagam and Batu Parganas housed huge groups of traders from Punjab and Amritsar. Unfortunately, by the 1830s, the flow of trade had slowed as the Sikhs instilled fear in the border territories of Punjab and Kashmir, impeding the movement of products from one location to another. Furthermore, terrible sectarian riots during Bhaman Singh's administration (1831) forced foreign businessmen to flee the Valley with their bags and goods. In addition, the government levied extortionate import and

export duties. They set up customs buildings at several checkpoints, including Banihal, Shahabad, Tosmaidan, Haripure, Sedau, Firozpure, Baramulla, Gund-i-Sursingh, Lalkhol, Saulow, Ganderbal, Gagangir, and Matrigam. As a result, in 1846.24, the government collected one lakh and four thousand (104000) rupees in customs tax. This indicated that imported and exported commodities were taxed in order to bolster the economy, which was mostly based on agriculture. Though it increased government revenue, it had a negative impact on the Valley's foreign commerce.

Table: The following custom duty was levied on the commodities imported from and exported to Punjab and other trade states during the period. Imports

Name of the articles	Quantity	Rate of the customs duty in Rs. And annas
Cloth of every kind including silks and Kemkhab (brocade)	1 kharwar	Rs. 4 /1 annas
Cloth of every kind including silks and grocery.	=	Rs.1/ 8 annas to Rs.3/ 4 annas.
Cloth of every kind including silks and raw sugar	=	Rs. 1/ 8 annas
Salt	=	Rs. 1 /4 annas
Miscellaneous	=	Rs. 1 /4 annas

Exports

Inkstands and white paper	1 kharwar	Rs.2/ 1 anna.
Silk	=	Rs 6/ 1 anna
Clarified butter	=	Rs 1/ 1 anna
Black zirah		Rs.1/ 2 annas
Saffron	1 seers	4 annas
Woolen cloth	Per piece	4 annas
Apples	Per head load	4 annas
Miscellaneous	=	Rs 1 /1 anna.

Source of revenue

Land revenue remained the primary source of revenue for the state exchequer in Kashmir. The income system developed by earlier dynasties (Mughals and Afghans) was maintained with few alterations throughout the time. As land revenue, the state took a quarter of the overall production. As an extra cess, the Sikhs expanded the Afghan-introduced traki system from two to four traks each Kharwar. Furthermore, land revenue functionaries such as Qanungo and Patwari received three seers (2850 gms) prior to Kharwar, whilst Sazawol, Shiqdar, Muqaddam, Tarazdar, and Harkar earned five seers (4750 gms) every Kharwa from the peasants. They also paid other taxes such as nazrana, mandiri (temple maintenance), tambul (royal family marriage), and rasum-i-daftari (collected for clerical staff). Daftar-i-diwani was taxed at a rate of Rs5 (five) every thousand Kharwar in a hamlet. Rusadat is a tax on fruit trees, willows, and vegetables. Kah-charai (grazing tax), Sar-i-deh (pastoral levy) were levied at a rate of Rs 1 (one) from small villages and Rs 2 (two) from big villages. Rusad-i-chungi was calculated at 4 traks per 100 kharwars. Thandari, collected at Rs 1/(one) from a small village and Rs 2/(two) from a large village. It was gathered for the thanadars, who served the peasants by defending them from robbers. Furthermore, the peasants paid a share of his harvest to local artisans and labourers such as carpenters, ironsmiths, potters, cobblers, and barbers. After paying for all of these and other communal expenses, the peasants were

left with less than a quarter of the whole output, making their lives extremely unpleasant. Furthermore, they were subjected to beggar (forced labour) to carry cargo of military contingent along hilly trails, particularly during harvesting season, worsening their already dire economic situation. The peasantry were forced by the government to cultivate the land, despite the fact that less than one-sixteenth of the entire cultivable area was under cultivation. As a result, the valley's population declined, land became uncultivated, and Kashmir's agricultural wealth faded. The agricultural production declined, indicating a decreasing trend toward the end of Sikh rule. "Everywhere people are in deplorable condition, exorbitantly taxed by the Sikh government and exposed to every type of extortion and tyranny by its officers," William Moorcroft stated.

Conclusion

After five centuries, the valley saw a change of control, with non-Muslims ruling over the Muslim domicile region. The monarchs' foreign nature, who were profoundly interested in acquiring money by fair or foul methods, let their governors, jagirdars, and revenue functionaries to roam the realm for their own selfish objectives. Through the imposition of high taxes, they robbed the people of their money, impoverished the peasants, and drank the blood of traders and artisans. During that time, the Valley was subjected to totalitarian tyranny, resulting in immense anguish and pain. The peasants abandoned the land uncultivated, commerce collapsed, industries were doomed, and economic resources were depleted, all of which contributed to a sense of menace in society, and The Valley took on a deserted appearance. This has a significant influence on the political landscape of Kashmir as well. As a result, the country slipped from their grasp and fell into the hands of the English East India Company via the Treaty of Lahore 1846, which ended the First Anglo-Sikh War of 1845-46 AD. They (the British) surrendered the land to Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu in a separate accord known as the Treaty of Amritsar 1846, which was an outgrowth of the Treaty of Lahore (1846).

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