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Maharaja Ranjit Singh's cultural policies in the Sapt-Sindhu region: A Strategy for Unification

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Abstract

One of the most notable Sikh rulers in Indian history was Maharaja Ranjit Singh. From 1799 to 1839, he governed the Sapt-Sindhu area. Some parts of modern-day Pakistan, as well as Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, and Punjab, are included in the Sapt-Sindhu region. A strong and thriving Sikh empire was established in the Sapt-Sindhu region under the visionary leadership of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. An inclusive administrative structure, architectural sponsorship, religious tolerance, and the encouragement of cultural harmony were the hallmarks of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's cultural policy. The Sapt-Sindhu region saw a golden age of artistic growth and cultural integration under his direction. Maharaja Ranjit Singh's cultural policy is discussed in this study. He funded mosques, gurudwaras, educational institutions, and Hindu temples as part of the cultural coordination he founded. Hindus and some Muslims were also heavily involved in the administration under his rule, in addition to Sikh representatives serving as courtiers. Both politically and culturally, he brought the Sapt-Sindhu region together.

Keywords: Sapt-Sindhu, inclusiveness, pluralism, secularism

Introduction

The early 19th century in the Sapt-Sindhu (historically, the land of the seven rivers, predominantly defined by the Punjab region) was characterized by geopolitical volatility, the fragmentation of political authority under the competing Sikh Misals, and constant external threats from the Afghan powers. This landscape of political and religious heterogeneity presented an immense challenge to any nascent power seeking to establish a durable, unified state. Into this turbulent theatre rose Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1780-1839), the founder and undisputed sovereign of the Sikh Empire, often lauded as the *Sher-e-Punjab*, or the Lion of Punjab. His initial achievements the unification of the Misls, the modernization of the Khalsa Army, and the strategic capture of key cities such as Lahore and Multan are extensively documented as triumphs of military genius and diplomatic acumen.

However, reducing Ranjit Singh's reign merely to military expansion overlooks the more profound and perhaps more critical element of his success: his deliberate, pragmatic, and remarkably modern approach to statecraft through cultural policy. In a region populated by a diverse array of communities, including Sikhs, Muslims, and Hindus, as well as various linguistic and tribal groups, military dominance alone could not ensure the long-term loyalty and stability required for an empire to thrive. This essay argues that Maharaja Ranjit Singh's cultural policies were not incidental acts of benevolence but a carefully calibrated, secular, and strategic framework designed explicitly to foster a sense of shared citizenship and unified purpose across the diverse Sapt-Sindhu region. Ranjit Singh understood that true political power rests on legitimacy derived from the consent and inclusion of the ruled, not merely their coercion. His administration, therefore, was built on a calculated policy of meritocracy and religious pluralism. Unlike many contemporary rulers who leveraged religious identity for state consolidation, the Sikh Empire, under Ranjit Singh, actively transcended communal boundaries. This strategy manifested most clearly in the structure of his *Darbar* and military, where Hindus and Muslims were appointed to the highest administrative and military posts, often above their Sikh counterparts, based purely on their competence.

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Furthermore, his cultural initiatives extended beyond mere appointments. The Maharaja's strategic patronage of non-Sikh religious and cultural institutions, funding the renovation of Hindu temples, granting land to Sufi shrines and Muslim holy sites, and ensuring the religious liberty of all subjects, was central to his unification project. This deliberate policy of cultural synthesis sought to weave the distinct threads of the Sapt-Sindhu's rich heritage into a single imperial tapestry. Ultimately, this essay will demonstrate how these interwoven cultural policies, spanning administration, religious tolerance, and patronage of diverse traditions, functioned as the indispensable mortar that bound together a potentially fractious empire, serving as a powerful and enduring strategy for unification in the volatile Indian subcontinent of the nineteenth century.

Research Methodology

This study employs a descriptive research methodology. The study is descriptive and uses secondary data. Secondary data for this study came from books, journals, articles, newspapers, and websites. In addition, the researcher employed historical descriptive, comparative, and analytical approaches in this study.

Need of study

Maharaja Ranjit Singh has been the subject of numerous studies, but in this study, the researcher focuses on his cultural policy, which united the Sapt-Sindhu region both politically and culturally. He gave grants to integrate his kingdom culturally, gave people of all religions a place in the cabinet, and saw all religious sects as one. The majority of his court was Hindu, and even the Pandits of Kashmir felt respected there. The Maharaja also granted protection and grants to numerous Hindu temples. Maharaja Ranjit Singh's promotion of Sikh and Hindu cultures might be considered the foundation of this research. Maharaja Ranjit Singh's political side is the subject of the majority of the research. Given how little his cultural side has been emphasized, this research project may mark a turning point in the promotion of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's cultural side.

Literature review

Maharaja Ranjit Singh: The Lion of Punjab by Khushwant Singh: Khushwant Singh's *Maharaja Ranjit Singh: The Lion of Punjab* is a thorough biography of one of South Asia's most extraordinary leaders, examining his life, reign, and legacy. The book, published in 1956, examines Ranjit Singh's development from a youthful, ambitious leader to the strong Maharaja of the Sikh Empire, which he achieved by sheer drive, military brilliance, and political cunning. Khushwant Singh, noted for his captivating language, uses a narrative approach that combines historical facts with fiction. The biography is accessible to both experts and ordinary readers, providing a detailed and nuanced account of Ranjit Singh's life. Singh's writing is full of vivid descriptions of significant events and individuals, making the book both educational and entertaining. The book's framework is chronological, including thorough accounts of Ranjit Singh's early life, military operations, and administration. While the book concentrates mostly on the political and military elements of Ranjit Singh's reign, it also provides insight into his personal life, making the biography well-rounded.

History of the Sikhs: J.D. Cunningham: The *Sikhs* by

J.D. Cunningham offers a comprehensive overview of Sikh history, tracing the evolution of the Sikh community from its inception in the 15th century to contemporary times. Cunningham delves into the foundational principles established by Guru Nanak and examines the subsequent developments under successive Gurus, highlighting the transformation of the Sikh movement from a spiritual path to a community that embraced both spiritual and martial values. The narrative encompasses significant events such as the formation of the Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699 and the establishment of the Sikh Empire under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Cunningham's writing is noted for its fluidity and depth, providing readers with a detailed account of the trials, triumphs, and tribulations faced by the Sikh community over the centuries. However, some critiques have been raised regarding the author's historical accuracy. For instance, a review in *The Tribune* points out a misattribution of a verse to Guru Nanak that belongs to Guru Arjan, suggesting a reliance on translations rather than original texts.

The Secular Maharaja: Maharaja Ranjit Singh: By Rajinder Singh presents a detailed history of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, a notable leader who built a massive empire on the Indian subcontinent in the early nineteenth century. The 264-page paperback, published by Shri Ganesh Prakashan in 2024, intends to offer information on Ranjit Singh's life, military triumphs, and secular approach to rule. The book goes into Ranjit Singh's early years, chronicling his rise to power and efforts to unite numerous areas, including territories now part of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, and India. Singh's story stresses the Maharaja's military skill and strategic ability, as well as his success in repelling British colonial forces. The biography focuses heavily on Ranjit Singh's secular rule. Despite being a devout Sikh, he was noted for his inclusive policies, assigning people from many religious backgrounds Hindus, Muslims, Dogras, and Europeans to important administrative and military positions based on merit. This technique instilled a sense of solidarity and collaboration in his subjects.

The Sikh Empire: The Life and Legacy of Maharaja Ranjit Singh by Patwant Singh & Jyoti M Rai

In the Sikh Empire: The Life and Legacy of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Patwant Singh & Jyoti M. Rai offers a detailed account of Ranjit Singh's life, focusing on the legacy he left behind after his death. This book goes beyond a mere biography and places Ranjit Singh within the broader context of Sikh and South Asian history. Singh analyses his military campaigns, his role as a secular leader, and his cultural contributions, such as the promotion of Sikhism and his efforts to strengthen the infrastructure of the empire. The book also delves into Ranjit Singh's relationships with various communities, notably his inclusive governance style, which helped stabilize the region after years of turmoil. The relationship between Ranjit Singh and the British is also a focal point, especially his diplomatic negotiations with the East India Company.

Ranjit Singh: Maharaja of the Punjab by Gurcharan Singh

In this biography, Gurcharan Singh delves into the life of Ranjit Singh, exploring his military achievements, political strategy, and his ability to bring together a diverse set of

ethnic and religious groups. The book offers a balanced view, portraying Ranjit Singh as both a strong, visionary leader and a man of compassion who emphasized justice and fairness. One of the standout aspects of the book is its exploration of Ranjit Singh's relationships with the British, highlighting how the Maharaja skilfully maintained a delicate balance of power between the Sikh Empire and the growing influence of the British East India Company.

Ranjit Singh: The Maharaja of the Punjab by RK Gupta

R.K. Gupta's *Ranjit Singh: The Maharaja of the Punjab* is a more concise and straightforward biography of the Sikh ruler. It takes a more traditional approach, focusing on the chronological events of Ranjit Singh's life, from his early days to his consolidation of power and his governance. The book is written in a manner that is accessible for general readers, with a particular emphasis on his military campaigns, including his battles against the Afghans and his interactions with the British East India Company. Gupta also devotes sections to the administration and reforms under Ranjit Singh, focusing on his military genius, his diplomatic strategies, and his religious tolerance. One of the key themes of the book is how Ranjit Singh modernized his army, with the help of European officers, which was instrumental in his success.

The Last Maharaja: Ranjit Singh by DS Sarma

DS Sarma's *The Last Maharaja: Ranjit Singh* is a thorough exploration of Ranjit Singh's life and times, with particular focus on his legacy and how his empire evolved after his death. Sarma offers an in-depth analysis of Ranjit Singh's political acumen, his military strategies, and his ability to unite the diverse people of Punjab under his rule. The book also delves into Ranjit Singh's relationships with the British, examining how he skilfully navigated the complex geopolitics of the 19th century. While the book is primarily a biography, it also offers valuable insights into the cultural and religious dynamics of the region during Ranjit Singh's reign, and how he established a tolerant and inclusive state. Sarma also touches on the challenges Ranjit Singh faced, including internal dissension and external threats, which he handled with remarkable diplomatic skill.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh: The Warrior King of Punjab by RK Puri

R.K. Puri offers an engaging retelling of Ranjit Singh's rise to power and his reign. The book emphasizes Ranjit Singh's extraordinary military abilities and his leadership qualities. Puri focuses on the legendary conquests that helped Ranjit Singh carve out a unified Sikh Empire from a region fractured by invasions and internal strife. The book also explores his reign from a socio-political angle, illustrating how Ranjit Singh's policies shaped the future of Punjab, both during his lifetime and after his death. R.K. Puri's writing is vivid and accessible, making this book a good choice for those who want to understand the military history of Ranjit Singh, as well as his efforts to promote Sikhism while embracing diversity within his empire. The narrative is rich in battles, diplomatic negotiations, and the nuances of his empire-building.

The Camel Merchant of Philadelphia: Stories from the Court of Maharaja Ranjit Singh by Sarbpreet Singh

This collection of stories gives a fascinating peek into the intrigues and characters of Ranjit Singh's court, giving

readers a nuanced perspective of the period.

Ranjit Singh: Maharaja of the Punjab by Jean-Marie Lafont

Jean-Marie Lafont's *Ranjit Singh: Maharaja of the Punjab* is considered one of the most authoritative and thorough biographies of the Sikh ruler. Lafont, a French historian and scholar of Indian history, takes a deep dive into Ranjit Singh's rise from a small chief of a Sikh confederacy to the ruler of a vast empire. The book offers rich insights into Ranjit Singh's political astuteness, military prowess, and ability to unite a fractured region. Lafont skilfully blends historical facts with personal anecdotes, portraying Ranjit Singh as a pragmatic, forward-thinking leader who balanced the needs of his diverse subjects. The book also examines his contributions to modernizing the Sikh Empire, his policy of religious tolerance, and his efforts to create a harmonious state, where Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs coexisted peacefully.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Cultural Policies about the Sapt-Sindhu Region

Maharaja Ranjit Singh was one of the most fascinating and memorable figures in contemporary Indian history. With some of his distinguishing features, he became one of India's most potent kings throughout his lifetime. He was a people's leader known for his political insight and unwavering determination. Despite having no formal schooling, civil administration, or military battle training, he established a great Sikh kingdom in the Sapt-Sindhu region through mental fortitude, personal courage, endeavor, diplomacy, and inherent skill. Before Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Sapt-Sindhu region, today known as Punjab, was divided into smaller Misls. Each Misl has its own culture and administration. During the Misl period, there was no single power in the Sapt-Sindhu region capable of tying it all together. When Maharaja Ranjit Singh took over the reign, he politically united the Sapt-Sindhu region and achieved cultural unity.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh pursued a secular approach in matters of state. His attitude to the state was liberal and rooted in communal harmony. He respected all religions, regardless of color, creed, or race. Maharaja Ranjit Singh was a Sikh, yet Hindus and Muslims played key roles in keeping his realm functioning smoothly. In addition to the Sikh faith, he had close counselors from the Hindu community. Maharaja Ranjit Singh imposed no religious restrictions and never effectively spread his sect's creed. Maharaja Ranjit Singh demonstrated his compassion by funding education, literature, and literature. The Maharaja was very attached to Hindu culture. Hinduism had a significant influence on him. The Maharaja attended both Hindu and Sikh religious festivities. He had a high regard for Hindu temples. If he had the façade of the Harmandir Sahib plated with gold, he also had costly goldwork done at Banaras' Vishwanath Temple. He used gold to embellish the interior ceiling of Kangra's Jwala Mukhi temple. Ranjit Singh gave the famed Jwala Mukhi temple a gorgeous gold dome in 1815. In 1825, Maharaja Ranjit Singh visited Jwala Mukhi and presented the shrine with a gold parasol. Ranjit Singh paid Rs. 25,000 for the gold roof in 1826^[1].

Under Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Hindu temples of Sapt-Sindhu appear to have received more royal support than ever before. Hindu temples received 18 jagirs as endowments. Ranjit Singh made numerous religious grants

and endowments to institutions, including the Sri Jwala Mukhi temple. On June 21, 1839, the Maharaja approved Rs. 5,000 for the gilding of the roof of the Jwala Mukhi temple^[2]. He also ordered pure gold to be sent for the repair of the Vishwanath statue in Banaras, which Aurangzeb had transformed into a mosque^[3]. A shrine dedicated to Totla Maai in Multan received Rs. 1000. Ranjit Singh gave Rs. 125 to a Brahmin in 1825 to perform puja on his behalf at Triloknath Mahadev's temple for one month^[4]. In 1833, the Maharaja donated Rs. 2,000 to the Lahore temples. Pilgrims visiting the sacred Amarnath temple in Kashmir were offered free meals and cash to cover their expenses. Rs. 300 was given to offer Atka (an earthen pot offering to the deity) at Orissa's Jagannath temple^[5]. According to the available sources, Maharaja Ranjit Singh made countless grants to temples both within and outside of his dominion. He made large donations to the Hindu temples of Banaras, Haridwar, and Jawala Mukhi. According to known sources, the Maharaja donated 16 quintals of gold to Hindu temples. Sohan Lal Suri, Maharaja Ranjit Singh's lawyer and historian, claims that it was Maharaja Ranjit Singh's final wish to leave the valuable Koh-I-Noor diamond to the Jagannath Temple in Puri following his death. He also contributed to Sri Darbar Sahib, Akal Bunga, Tarn Taran Sahib, and numerous other gurudwaras. He was extremely farsighted, and with just one eye, he could see farther than most other men could with two.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh's army reflects his understanding of cultural policy. His army was well-trained and highly efficient. Maharaja Ranjit Singh had well-equipped and disciplined his army. The army was divided into two sections: infantry and cavalry. People were hired based on merit, regardless of caste, creed, or religion. The absence of communal rioting in any area of the empire, in stark contrast

to today's secular India, is the most compelling evidence of Ranjit Singh's secular mind-set. Maharaja Ranjit Singh was astute; he knew that, while valiant, the Sikhs were a minority in the entire population of the Sapta-Sindhu region, and so it was required to persuade the other communities of the Sapta-Sindhu region, particularly their landowning elite and religious classes. They must maintain a working balance between their opposing interests. The state completely recognized their religious views and customs, and they were free to worship as they saw fit. Cows slaughter and consumption of meat were forbidden. The ban on cow slaughter was driven by a desire to promote communal harmony rather than suppress the feelings of any specific segment of the population. Although Ranjit Singh was a Sikh by faith and practice, his rule was seen as the government of all inhabitants of the region, not just Sikhs. Ranjit Singh, a true believer in human values, had established a complaint box to take complaints from victims. He used to open it in his presence and address any complaints that arose. The Maharaja had outlawed the illegal trade of children and women, which was common at the time. Despite his illiteracy, Maharaja Ranjit Singh possessed all the characteristics of an intelligent individual. He used to discuss other countries' rules and regulations with every foreign visitor who came to his court. He used to debate Europe's military campaigns. His demeanor toward the visitors to his court was very cordial and kind. As a result, his reign attracted more travellers.

According to Chopra, Ranjit Singh could choose the 'right man for the right place' regardless of any consideration of creed, caste, colour, origin, or rank. Apart from Sikhs, Brahmins, Khatri, and Dogras were his trusted advisers. His officers included Afghans, Persians, Gurkhas, and Europeans of various nationalities^[6].

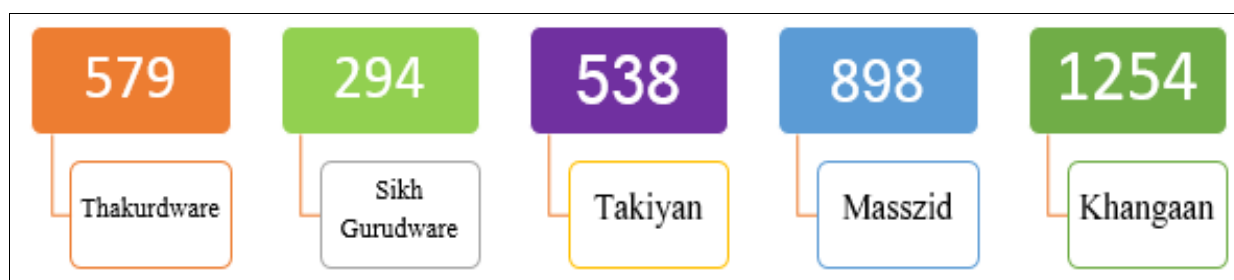


Fig 1: Grants given by Maharaja Ranjit Singh and the institutions receiving them^[7]

Grants given by Maharaja Ranjit Singh and the institutions receiving them^[7]

At Maharaja Ranjit Singh's court, both classical and vernacular languages were influential. Persian became the court language, while Sanskrit and Arabic gained the support of the emerging elite. Punjabi was the Maharaja's mother tongue. In his interactions with his subjects, and on most occasions, the Maharaja spoke Punjabi. Some of the courtiers who arrived from other regions, particularly Kashmiris and Easterners, spoke Hindustani. The Maharaja communicated with foreign visitors, interviewers, and ambassadors in Hindustani. Maharaja Ranjit Singh had documents made in Persian and Hindi and distributed them

to all corners of the realm. The Maharaja often discussed the affairs of the empire with his secretaries. Giving a glimpse of Ranjit Singh's court.

Jacquemont said in his letters, 'I have seen an almost inquisitive India, and her curiosity balances the whole country. He has asked me a million questions about the British, Europe, Bonaparte, this world and the next world, the Nether, heaven, the soul, God, the Devil, and others of the same kind. Then, he added, Ranjit Singh was getting information about population, the strength of taxes, the yield of each branch of public revenue, the principles of our civil and criminal law, and finally, the great application of our science to manufacturing^[8].

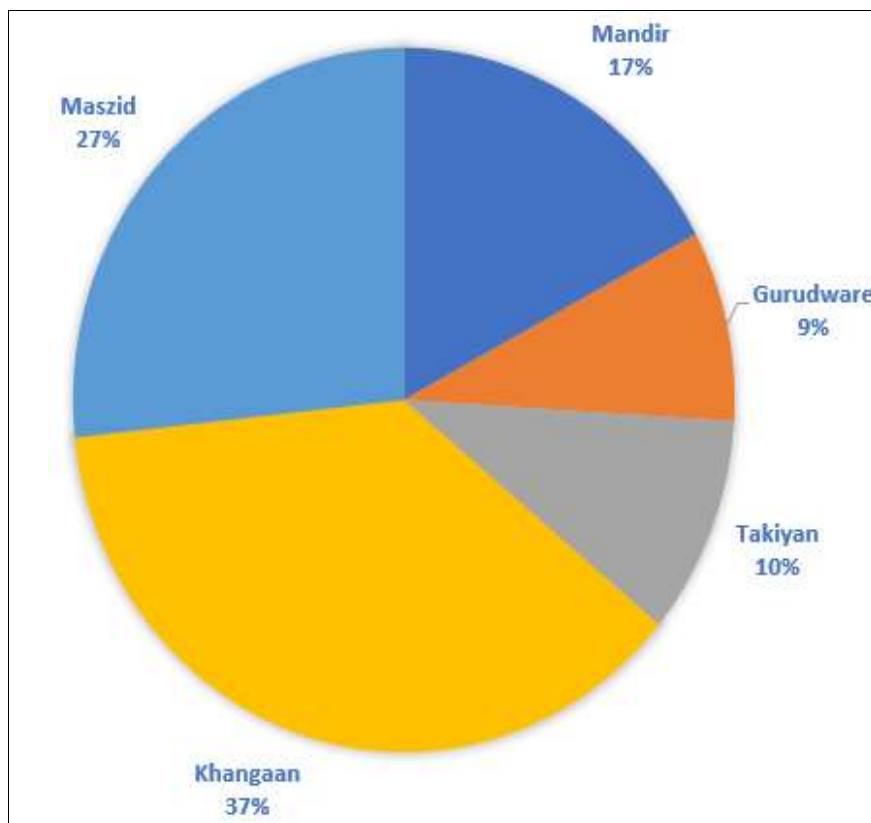


Fig 2: Institutions receiving grants from ranjit singh

Lawrence found Ranjit Singh endowed with 'great natural intelligence, wonderful, quick understanding, and memory. For his age and country, he may be called a truly benevolent despot and, in some respects, even a good king. His secretaries attended and read to him.

Lawrence writes, "He was surrounded by ministers, journalists, wazirs, scribes, home wares, and a large number of litigants and prisoners, all awaiting his attention and final orders"^[9].

Prinsep writes, 'All that was educated and refined had disappeared from Punjab before the birth of Ranjit Singh'^[10].

Ranjit Singh's goal in the sphere of justice was to establish a court where science and refinement from neighboring countries could be replicated or gathered throughout time. Some of his 'universal court' jewels were not just scholars but also outstanding administrators and educators. Scholars such as Bhai Desa Singh Majitha and his son Lehna Singh Majitha, Hari Singh Nalwa, Dewan Mohkam Chand, Dewan Chand, Fakir Aziz-ud-din, and others graced the court of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Ranjit Singh was uneducated, but he held a high regard for scholars and learning. During his first visit to Peshawar, an opportunity to demonstrate his literary aptitude presented itself, and he did not pass it up, issuing positive orders to preserve the huge library. Faqir Aziz-ud-din was an important figure in Maharaja Ranjit Singh's life. In the Maharaja's court, he served as a surgeon, linguist, diplomat, and foreign minister. He was a Muslim and one of the several non-Sikhs serving in the Khalsa Darbar's secular administration. He was not only a diplomat, mystic poet, and educator, but also a prolific novelist. He was an astronomy expert who published a doctorate in theology and the physics of healing. Miyan Qadir Bakhsh was another of Ranjit Singh's most prominent courtiers. He was a brilliant Arabic and Persian scholar, healer, and poet. At the behest of the Maharaja, he learned the art of Kunnari under the new

military officers and wrote a book in Persian on the subject called "Mifrah-u-Qila".

According to McGregor, 'He was so much engaged in court affairs that he would not allow Nis to devote any part of it to literary pursuits. Yet, he respected learning and learned persons. He always referred to them for such information as he should have'^[11].

There was no written law in the Sikh faith before Maharaja Ranjit Singh. As a result, Maharaja Ranjit Singh saw the need for a law book, the Penal Code, for his government, which could document the unique modifications he had made regarding the unlawful trade of women and children, the practice of Sati, the death penalty, and so on. He hired the writer Pandit Kishan for this purpose. For the Khalsa government, Pandit Kishan composed the Danaruma Shastra, often known as the book of law. The Maharaja compensated him with an additional salary for his efforts. This book was an attempt to create a code of law fit for the demands of a secular state run by Sikhs, Hindus, and Muslims. Sardar Lahna Singh Majitha was a mathematician, historian, astronomer, inventor, and engineer. Sohan Lal was the most distinguished of the Maharaja's courtiers. Sohan Lal Suri is the author of Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, a journal or record of dates and events. It provides a truthful and credible account of Ranjit Singh's eventful life. It is recognized as a historical document. Maharaja Ranjit Singh also had contacts with the Kashmiris. This is described in the literature of Kashmiri scholars. In Maharaja Ranjit Singh's court, Kashmiris were more esteemed than others, with Dewan Dina Nath standing out. Dewan Dina Nath was Privy Seal and Finance Minister in the Khalsa Darbar. Many Kashmiri Pandits attended Dewan Ganga Ram at the Maharaja's court at his invitation. Poets linked with his court were Hashim Shah, Shah Mohammad, Qadar Yar, and Shiv Dayal.

Qadar Yar served as Maharaja Ranjit Singh's imperial poet.

He wrote the well-known poem Puraan Bhagat. Hashim Shah also composed lyrical, romantic, and intellectual poetry. The Maharaja was so happy with his job that he gave him a vast jagir in perpetuity. Poet Ganesh Das used Hindi to narrate the battle of Multan and the achievements of Sadanu Singh and Phula Singh. Mishra Ram Das drew inspiration from the classics to set the Ramayana in verse in the Maharaja's court. These poets could write both lyrical and rhyming verse.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh provided generous contributions in the form of money or jagir for the maintenance of educational institutions housed in temples or mosques. For example, Faqir Aziz-ud-din was fluent in Persian and Arabic, and he drew Arabic academics from all across the area. Ranjit Singh selected Pandit Madhusudan, a Sanskrit scholar, to head the Khalsa court's charity department. According to Hindu tradition, Maharaja Ranjit Singh would perform Tula dan on the Sankranti and Amavasya of each month ^[12]. Pandit Madhusudan oversaw the Tula Dan procedures. Pandit Madhusudan was treated with extraordinary regard in the Khalsa court. The Maharaja also issued him a jagir with a yearly tax of ten thousand rupees. Pandit Madhusudan died in 1863, AD. Kashmiri Pandits constructed multiple schools, or pathshalas, in Lahore, to which Maharaja Ranjit Singh donated. The Maharaja paid special attention to Amritsar, the major seat of Sikhism and education. The Maharaja's extraordinary assistance, including religious and cultural activities at the Harmandir Sahib, continued indefinitely and without interruption. He donated generously to the Udisis, Nirmal Panths, and Brahmins. The Udisis erected their first Akhara thanks to his tremendous help. These are some exceptional examples of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's strong sense of cultural values. The Maharaja also granted educational subsidies. The Maharaja gave out two types of educational subsidies. Individual awards were first awarded to scholars or knowledgeable individuals. The goal of these was to allow them to keep their literary traditions. However, in many cases, it assisted them in running their schools or colleges, such as Faqir Aziz-ud-din and Pandit Madhusudan. Second, there were religious concessions. These donations were partially educational, as they were granted not for personal necessities and requirements but for the upkeep of their institutions, temples, dharmshalas, or mosques.

Conclusion

Ranjit Singh actively sought to implement a program of building a common culture to merge Punjab's numerous communities into a nation. To appreciate Maharaja Ranjit Singh's character, demeanour, and policymaking in the proper historical context, one must first examine his social background. Ranjit Singh came from a Sikh, Jat peasant family, which was typical at the time. Maharaja Ranjit Singh efficiently carried forward the cultural heritage he acquired from his family. The Maharaja is known for his kindness, adaptability, hardness, fierceness, open-mindedness, practicality, and hard work. Ranjit Singh absorbed a wide range of Punjabi cultural influences. He obtained these through inheritance from his family, the Sapta-Sindhu tribal peasant family, as well as his social environment. Ranjit Singh was a product not only of Punjabi culture but also of Sikh religious tradition, as he was a devout Sikh. However, the Maharaja's devotion to Sikhism did not transform him into a fanatic or a narrow-minded fundamentalist. This was due to the liberal nature of

Sikhism as taught by the Sikh Gurus. The Gurus never condemned any religion; rather, they saw various sects as different paths to God's realization. Whether fighting Mughal rulers or Durrani invaders, Sikh warriors never forgot the rule of religious tradition.

The Maharaja established an ecumenical court and a new class of Punjabi talents. He established a new secular government in which Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs collaborated as a unit. Maharaja Ranjit Singh championed secularism, religious arts, and industrial education.

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