

Sikh Rule and Economy of Kashmir (1819-1846.A.D)

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Abstract: -Kashmir in the words of Mughal emperor Jahangir a "paradise on earth" has remained a subject of attraction for invaders since ancient times. The valley remained under the Sikh Rule (1819-1846). The territory stretched over a vast area, with Tibet, Kashgar and Ladakh in the east, Punjab in the north, Badakshan and Khorasan in the south and Afghanistan in the west. The occupation of the Valley by the Sikhs shifted the bridle of reigns from Kabul to Lahore, which affected the destinies of the people badly. The Valley during the period experienced the rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his successors. The sources revealed that though they ruled with the prevalent administrative system, yet the people passed through suffering and pain. The peasants left the land uncultivated, *beggar* (forced labour) increased, revenue exactions were multiplied, trade declined, industries doomed and economic resources of the Valley were drained. The dwellers (peasants, traders, craftsmen etc.) faced fleecing, exaction of exorbitant taxes and tyranny of the revenue functionaries. The Valley presented a deserted look.

Key words

1. Asudahahwal (well to do)
2. Dagshawl (Department of shawl)
3. Shawlbaf (shawl weaver)
4. Kharif (Autumn crops)
5. Rabi (spring crops)
6. Khalisa (government land)
7. Khudkasht (legal ownership)
8. Dharmarth (charity grants)

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I. INTRODUCTION

The land (valley of Kashmir) constituted an integral part of Mauryan and Kushan empires in ancient and of Mughals from 1586-1753 in the medieval period of history. It experienced the rule of great rulers like Ashoka, Kanshika, Akbar Jahangir, Shah-i-Jahan etc. Unfortunately the concluding epoch of Mughal period witnessed a band of weak rulers, who were busy in marry-making so failed to administer the valley. The situation allured the invaders to annex the territory. Consequently Ahmad Shah Abdali, a strong invader of Afghanistan watched the whole scene at a distance. He sent an expedition to the valley in 1753, which resulted in a bloody battle between the Mughal and Afghan forces at Haripure (south Kashmir). The Afghans came out victorious and the territory passed into their hands. They governed the valley through their governors from 1753-1819 .A.D. They like East India Company were concerned more for their personal gains rather than of public welfare¹. The period appeared a dark page in the history of Kashmir. Owing to the callous approach of the Afghan rulers at the center (Kabul) the administration in the valley relapsed into tyranny and barbarism. Maharaja Ranjit Singh the ruler of Lahore Durbar (Punjab) was watching the whole scene eagerly. His mission of expansion towards east was locked by the *Treaty of Amritsar* of 1809, concluded between Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Punjab and Lord Minto 1 Governor-General of East India Company.² Due to the dissension among the claimants to the throne of Kabul and virtual suspension of the monarchy at the center offered an opportunity to Maharaja Ranjit Singh to embark upon his plan of expansion towards the west of his territory. But his mission of expansion was in a serious threat of Fateh Khan (prime minister of Shah Mahmud of Afghanistan) as he too dreamt of invading the valley to rule. The duo needed reconciliation, hence both met at Rohtas (Rawalpindi).³ In the meeting an alliance of joint expedition to Kashmir was formed. Subsequently, Ranjit Singh agreed to send 12000 troops for the event and in return would receive 1/3rd of the spoils and the territories of the valley. Further he would get Afghan support in the conquest of Multan. Accordingly Mukhan Chand with 12000 troops from Lahore Durbar and Fateh Khan with a large force marched towards Kashmir in 1813.A.D. However from PirPanjal range Fateh Khan left Mokhan chand behind and himself penetrated into the valley. Atta Mohammed Khan the Afghan Governor of Kashmir confronted the invader at Shergarhi (Srinagar) which ended in a brief fight. Atta Mohammed Khan fled away and Fateh Khan occupied the valley. Though Fateh Khan showed reluctance to fulfill the terms of Agreement with Maharaja Ranjit Singh concluded at Rohtas yet

hesucceeded in acquiring the topography of Kashmir and the representative of Shah Shuja from whom he extorted the famous *Kohi*Noor*.Ranjit Singh being aware of Fateh Khan's dishonesty, determined to conquer Kashmir solely so under the command of Diwan Ram Dayal despatched a separate expedition to Kashmir in 1814 A.D..The expedition met a sad failure as rain and snow obstructedtheir march at Mandi and Tosh- Maidan pass.⁴ The Afghan forces under the able guidance of Azam Khan pushed the Maharaja's forces out of the hills. Ranjit Singh abandoned the campaign and returned to his capital.However fortune turned the table in favor of Ranjit Singh,asBirbal Dhar a ministerof Afghan government at Kashmir had taken refuge with him. He supplied valuable information regarding strength of Afghans and routes toKashmir. Consequently, Maharaja Ranjit Singh organized an expedition force under the command of Diwan Chand, Hari Singh Nalwa and Prince Kharak Singh. On June18, 1819.A.D. the Sikh force of 12000,after crossing Dhimber and Pirpanjal passes reached Shopian⁵.Jabbar Khan the Afghan governor of Kashmirwith a force of 5000 met the invader. In spite of gallant resistance of the Afghans, victory kissed the feet of Sikhs. The Afghans lostable generals and Jabbar Khan was seriously wounded.He fled to Peshawar and left the land to victorious.⁶Prince Kharak Singh made his triumphant entry to Srinagar. The valley witnessed the Sikh rule from 1819-1846.A.D. During the period of (27) twenty seven years the territory experienced the administrative skills of (10) ten governors appointed by the Lahore Durbar who were:-

S.No	Name of the Governor	Tenure
1	Dewan Moti Ram	1819-1820
2	Sardar Hari singh Nalwa	1820-1822
3	Dewan Moti Ram (2 nd term)	1822-1825
4	Dewan Chuni Lal	1825-1827
5	Dewan Kripa Ram	1827-1831
6	Bhim singh Ardali	1831-1832
7	Prince Sher singh	1832-1834
8	Colnel Mian Singh	1834-1841
9	Shiekh Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din	1841-1845
10	Shiekh Imam-ud-Din	1845-1846.

Thus the Valley of Kashmir, after several centuries of Muslim Rule passed into the hands of non-Muslims. Their rule affected different walks of life in the society. However the paper emphasizedthe economy of Kashmir solely to aware the readers about the eventualities the society experienced during the period. The same has been discussed under the following heads.

Agriculture

Agriculture greatly contributed to the progress of human civilization. In Kashmir majority of the population lived in rural areas and agriculture formed a pivotal position of their economy. The fertile soil and abundance of water resources has made it a means of their sustenance. The land not only provided the basic foodstuffs to its dwellers but stabilized their economy by the production ofdifferent cash crops like cotton, oil seeds, saffron etc. The state exchequer too stood on the revenue realized from the agricultural sector. Thus increase in the state expenditure had a deepimpacton the existing land revenue demand and taxation system. The same affected the condition of the peasantry badly, who had groaned under exorbitant taxes and allied revenue exactions. The agrarian system of the period under discussion may be studied under the following heads.

Classification of land

The arable land was classified into four categories; *abi, syomb, nambal and khushk* ⁷.

A)*Abi*; The land which includes all irrigable alluvial soil of the valley floor.The same was further divided into two classes viz, *abi-shali and abi-sagzar*, both in total produce paddy(rice) vegetables, red chillies, tobacco, poppy and fenul.b)*Syomb*; The land generally situated near the banks of river Jhelum and in the vicinity of walur lake. It was flooded annually , hence retain plenty of moisture. As such the lands were capable of producing huge quantity of food products.c)*Nambal*; It included all wet lands from richest soil to marsh land. Paddy(rice) was the sole crop grown on it, however the swampy land did not produce any crop so was known as nambal- banjar.d)*Khushki*; The table lands unable to irrigate, so nature dependent crops like wheat, barely,rape,millet, maize and flax were grown over it. A good portion of the karewa land remained under thecultivation of saffron and horticulture as well.

In addition to these Zain-ul Abidin (Badshah) ruler of Kahmir(1420-70) had introduced floating gardens. These gardens around the Dal lake constituted a unique feature of the cultivation of crops in Kashmir. Green vegetables and fruits like melons and water melons were grown in abundance on these islands. To improve the quality of melons, seeds were imported from Baltistan and Tibet.Hence the total area under

cultivation of different crops was 443068 acres, out of which 275792 acres remained under paddy and the rest under rain watered crops⁸

The Valley was highly fertile and abundant in numerous agricultural crops. The plough driven by a pair of oxen was of immense use in breaking hard-clods. The crops such as paddy, maize, pea and millet sown in May-June and reaped in September-October are categorized as *kharif or autumn* crops. The crops sown in October-November and reaped in April-May are designated as *rabi or spring* crops, which generally comprised wheat, barely, pulses and mustard. In short each crop grew under a peculiar geo-physical condition. Vegetables grown all over the Valley such as lettuce, turnip, radish, carrot, Spanish, cucumber, potato, beans and chilly. The cultivators produced a variety of vegetables on a number of floating islands around Dal lake. Further in rural areas every cultivator possess a vegetable land called "Ver"(kitchen garden) attached to his residence or arable land.⁹ The description of agricultural production is incomplete without the mention of fruits for which Kashmir is known from earliest times. Accordingly different fruits like apples, pears, grapes, walnut, quince, plum, peach, melon, water melon and pomegranate were cultivated in the valley. The territory was famous for the production of (24) twenty four varieties of grapes like *hasaini, kishmishi, sohibi, maska, panfakir and kanhapn*. Moorcraft hold that four kinds of walnut such as *khanak, wantu, dunu and kaghzi* were prevalent. The first was wild and rest were cultivated. G. T. Veign epitomizes the fact and hold that the wheat of Shahabad, the turnip of Hariपुर, the rice of Nirpur, the ghee of Pampur, the hemp of Jehamu, the silk of Kothihar are the best in the valley. This made different parganas of the valley interdependent in terms of need.¹⁰ Further, cash crop saffron was extensively grown and cultivated on the karewa (plateau) of Pampore. The ensuing period had not witnessed any expansion in the arable land rather descending indicators appeared due to the scorched policies of the administrators, revenue collectors and other functionaries which had affected the economy of the Valley badly. The peasants were worst sufferers whose economic condition appeared most pitiable. They migrated to the plains of India and left the land uncultivated. Moorcroft(1819-25) wrote, "not more than 1/16th of the cultivable land was under cultivation." The Valley presented a deserted look. Jacquemont Victor(1828-31) a traveller noted that "Kashmir surpasses all imaginable poverty". It is horrifying to see such poverty.¹¹

Ownership of land

Ownership legally meant the power of total possession, use, disposal and enjoyment held by a person over a determinate thing. By applying the given definition to the source material available on the subject matter, one finds ample scope to establish that in Kashmir people enjoyed private ownership on various items of property during the period.¹² Since the arable land was concentrated in the rural areas, hence it was divided into *khalsa, jagir, dharmarth and khud-kasht*.

A) *Khalsa*; It was the state property which was under its direct control and management. The land was rented out for cultivation to the cultivators and the revenue derived from it went to the state exchequer.

B) *Jagir*; A portion of khalsa land divested by the Sikh rulers to the personages for serving the state either in civil or military capacity were known as *jagir*. The grantees were known as *jagirdars*. They were authorized to collect the revenue from the land assigned to them. These jagirdars managed their jagirs either personally or through their agents. The Sikhs granted these jagirs to their own favourites, whom they believed to prove props of their rule in Kashmir¹³.

C) *Dharmarth*; The term was used by the Sikhs for grants donated by way of charity to religious personages and institutions. It was in no way different from *madad-i-maash*. These grants were sanctioned either in cash or in terms of grains or by bestowing revenue free land grants. The land granted in *dharmarth* was *kharija's-jama*, as the revenue and other cesses due from it to the state went to the grantee not to the *khizana-i-amira* (royal treasury).

D) *Khudkasht*; The term khudkasht signifies the owning one's own land. It revealed the ownership of such lands vested with khudkasht peasantry who belonged to a superior class of cultivators (Asudahahwal). It is further substantiated by the fact that these property rights were sold, purchased and transferred freely. These rights were recognized by the government. The land transaction was legalized by the imposition of sales tax known as, "qabalat". It was charged from the purchaser of the land¹⁴. Though land was available to the peasants yet to enjoy its fruit remained a dream as fiscal exactions imposed on them led their embarrassment to cultivate the land. Evidently the peasants left the land uncultivated.

Industry

Kashmir is known in the annals of history for its artistic zeal. The Valley being land locked and the majority of its population lived in rural areas. Hence they remained busy in agricultural pursuit and agro-based industries like cloth weaving, smithy, carpentry, oil pressing and animal husbandry. The artisans received a share of the village produce in lieu of their services which in history has been designated the system of *client-patron* relationship.¹⁵ As such a village to a greater extent remained self-sufficient and surplus produce found its way to cities. The flow of village surplus in course of time changed the economic life of the urban dwellers,

which led the expansion of towns in general and city of Srinagar in particular. The urban centers turned into a hub of artisans. Consequently arts and crafts received great impetus in the Valley. It was during Mughals that shawls were manufactured in numerous ranges of price to suit the purse of different classes of the society. The skillful artisans were specialized in various techniques and designs. The mode of production, the system of monopolization of resources and market and concentration of surplus profit in the hands of mercantile community led to the emergence and growth of the capitalist class under whom the artisans manufactured the requisite shawls. This naturally reduced the artisans to a state of semi-bondage, perpetuated by social compulsions and lived in wretched plight with their meager wages. The misfortune was further accelerated by Afghans due to their cruel taxation policy which sucked the blood of shawl weavers and traders tied to it. They introduced *Daghshawl* (deft. of shawl) to regulate the activities of the *shawl-bafis* (shawl weavers) which proved heavy for them as indicated by the reduction of looms.¹⁶ During the period under discussion the Sikhs (Colonel Mahan Singh) had given a new lease of life to the sagging industry which increased the number of looms and artisans returned from plains of India to work in the Valley. Mr. Ventura an Italian military general of Maharaja Ranjit Singh boost the shawl trade of Kashmir with Italy. Though the industry reached to its glory both in quality and quantity yet it proved short lived. Unfortunately the non-availability of raw material and natural calamities gave serious setback to the industry. Further the government imposed exorbitant taxes on shawls at various stages of production and distribution. With the result the industry a major source of income to the government and means of subsistence to the bulk of population was weighed down. The shawl weavers under pressure left the profession they preferred death to the wretched craft. Thus the decline was inevitable.¹⁷ Similarly the carpet industry parallel to shawl flourished too. Though the industry owes its origin to Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin yet under the rule Jahangir (1605-1628) through the efforts of Ahmed Beg (governor) was revived. The pile carpets made in Kashmir attained greater perfection and were of floral design with mosques, gardens, wild animals, gliding fish etc. The carpets produced in the Valley were considered superior to those imported from Persia (Iran). Unfortunately it decayed under Afghan rule as they were least interested with the craft which fetch them a meager income. Colonel Mahan Singh of the Sikhs increased the design of the natural beauty of Kashmir to the trait and enhanced its material to pure shawl wool. The artisans produced small size carpets and embroidered with gold zari and colored silken threads. Though the Sikhs tried to boost the craft yet it had not achieved its place in the articles of export, which indicated its limited future. Francois Banier, a traveler noted that wood carving flourished at a rapid speed during the period (1826). The specimens of carpenter's art are still extent in the *Khatamband* ceilings, pinjira, as carving in mosques of Shah-i-Hamdan and Nakshband Sahib in Srinagar. There were state-owned *Karkhanas* apart from private *Karkhanas*. Besides galichas, dhurries, gabas and other floor coverings were also manufactured. Further a good deal of iron, silver, brass vessels and furniture of delicate nature and boats of different styles were manufactured in the Valley. Gorge Foster hold, "The Kashmiris fabricated the best writing paper of the east." The paper was peculiar which was re-used for writing after being washed off. The manufacture of paper had given birth to a famous art known as *papier-mache*, the skill shown by the *naqash* (designer) in sketching and designing was remarkable. The artists produced pen boxes, jewelry boxes, book ends, etc. which had become an important item of external trade. The Valley attracted the Europeans who had penetrated to the Indian sub-continent after the establishment of British rule there. The same opened a way to European travellers. Through their accounts and writings they introduced Kashmir with their novelties to the European World, which in the long run helped in the growth of tourist industry and foreign trade.¹⁸

Means of Communication

Though the Valley was encircled by lofty mountains yet was pierced by various passes to establish its link with the outside world. The Mughal occupation enhanced the importance of the territory by establishing a permanent link of the province with their empire. Abul Fazal in his *Ain-i-Akbari* noted that there were (26) routes which linked Kashmir with the rest of the world, out of which (6) were regularly used. These routes remained open in winter as well. The Mughals paid their due attention for the maintenance of roads, construction of bridges and establishment of inns, which boost the trade and commerce of the state. Some of these routes may be introduced in brief as:

- a) Mughal road:- This route connected Kashmir with Gujarat. It runs over the Pir-panjal pass via Hastivanj. The important stages on the road were Saidabad, Nousahra, Chings, Rajouri, Thane, Bahramgalla, Poshiana, Aliabad, Hirapure, Shopiyan, Khampure and Shadimarg where inns were established which turned these places into trade centres.
- b) Muzafferabad pakhli route:- This route connected Kashmir with Rawalpindi and Peshawar. The route remained open for the whole year.
- c) Poonch route:- the route linked Kashmir through Haji-pir pass and Tosamaidan pass. Further it linked Jammu via Rajouri.

d)Kishtwar route:-there are two routes leading to Kishtwar from Kashmir, one from Singhpur and another via Dasu. The route connected Kishtwar with Badarwah and Jammu through Ramban. The road was traversed on foot and ponies were also used due to uneven terrain.

e)Central Asian route:-the route passes through Ladakh from east to west. It was passable from March to November, but merchants often used the route due to its commercial importance. It connected Kashmir with Tibet, Kashgar, Yarkand and China. The trade between Kashmir and Bhutan, Nepal, British India etc. was also carried on by this route. No doubt the route functioned as an artery to the cottage industry of Kashmir as the entire raw shawl wool was imported through this route. Due to its high altitude and scarcity of fodder, the trade was carried on by the porters on their back, though horses, mules and yaks were also put into service.

f)Navigation:-it was the main source of transport in the Valley, but mules, camels and donkeys were used in hilly tracks and yak in Tibet. The bulk of commodities were carried on the back of porters as wheeled traffic was unknown. There were 7500 boats in practice during the period to carry goods from one place to another.¹⁹

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 porters 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.²⁰ The trade remained confined to imported commodities, agricultural products, livestock 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 Charar-i-Sharif in rural areas. Anantnag was the main center of saddle cloth and gabba manufacturing whileas Sopore for pattu cloth. The merchandise 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 paise) 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. Mookroft, 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.²¹

External Trade:

Despite the Valley being land locked, its trade relations with Persia, Central Asia, Russia, Bhutan, Nepal, Punjab and British India remained excellent. The route leading to Central Asia via Srinagar remained busy. The chief commodity of export was shawl. The merchants had monopolized the wool trade in wool producing regions of Ladakh, Gilgit and Tibet. They had deployed their agents throughout this region to advance loans and collect the shawl wool from the producers. They had established their warehouses in Chinese Turkistan, Central Asia, and embroidered sheets were also sold. Saffron grown in Pampore, Inderkot and Kishtwar was exported to Yarkand, Tibet, China and was purchased by the merchants of British as well. The merchants of the Valley also delivered the forest products like Saussurea, Lippa (costs), calamus, amberbeads, warmwood to Indian markets like Surat, Ahmadabad etc. Besides these articles various kinds of scent and flowers were also exported which yielded handsome profit to the traders. Further Kashmir remained famous in the production of fine paper. It was in great demand in India which was then exported to Persia. In addition Kashmir imported various articles like salt, shawl wool, cotton cloth, pepper, turmeric, ginger and sugar.²² The payment for external trade was made by the *Hundis*. Further all kinds of merchandise were subject to duty or tax e.g. Rs3/ were levied on each shawl exported from Kashmir and Rs4/ on each *Tarak* of shawl wool imported. During the period government established rest houses (khanas) at Banihal, Shahabad, Anantnag, Bijbehara, Shopian, Tral, Pampore, Hazratbal, Batmalu, Sopore, Sumbal, Patten, Kanihama, Charar-i-sharif and Kereri. In addition to these, two caravanserais of Mughals in Nagam and Batu parganas provided accommodation

to large parties of traders from Punjab and Amritsar.²³ Unfortunately the flow of trade descended by 1830's as the Sikhs created terror in the border areas of Punjab and Kashmir, which hindered the transaction of goods from one place to another. Further the severe sectarian riots during the governorship of Bhaman Singh (1831) compelled the foreign traders to leave with bag and baggage from the Valley. In addition to it the government imposed rapacious import and export duty. They established custom houses at different check posts like, Banihal, Shahabad, Tosmaidan, Haripure, Sedau, Firozpure, Baramulla, Gund-i-Sursingh, Lalkhol, Saulow, Ganderbal, Gagangir and Matrigam. Consequently the government collected one lakh and four thousand (104000) rupees as custom duty in 1846.²⁴ This revealed that goods imported and exported were taxed to supplement the economy which was fundamentally rooted in agriculture. Though it augmented the government income yet it had affected the external trade of the Valley badly.²⁵

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 anna.
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.
Morels	=	8 annas
Quince seed	=	Rs 2/ 1 annas
Costus root	=	6 annas
Hemp	6 seers	8 annas
Saffron	1 seer	4 annas
Woolen cloth	Per piece	4 annas
Apples	Per head load	4 annas
Miscellaneous	=	Rs 1 /1 anna.

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Weight and Measure

The units of weight and measurement during the period had not under gone to any major change. The prevalent system of Mughals and Afghans continued, which existed as:

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|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1) 16 Mashas = 1 Tola(11.76gm) | (2) 80Tolas = 1 seer (940gm) |
| 3) 7 ½ pols = 1 seer | (4) 5seer =1 Trakh(4.700gm) |
| 5) 16Trakh = 1 kharwar(76kg) | (6) 1Men(mound)= 40 seers. |
| 7) 1kharwar=80seers | (8) 1Gira= 2 ¼ inches(5.6cm) |
| 9) 16Gira= 1 Gazz(90cm) | |

Though the seer and its subdivisions were standard weights yet weighing in Kashmir was done in kharwars and Traks. Even the payment in cash was calculated in kharwars of paddy and the measurement of land in Traks, which was equal to ¼ of an acre of the present day. However, at present 80kg is considered a kharwar in Kashmir.²⁷

Coinage

The monetary system of Kashmir as prevailed during the Hindu, Sultanate, Mughal and Afghan periods remained in operation under Sikhs as well. The currency under the period consisted of Dinar, Bahagani, Puntsu, Hath, Sasun, Kakh and Crore. Their value stand as:

1	12 Dinars	1 Bahagani
2	2 Bahagani	1 Pantsu
3	4 Puntsu	1 Hath

4	10 Hath	1 Sasun
5	100 Sasun	1 lakh
6	100 lakh	1 Crore Dinars.

In addition to these there were other types of coins like Asharfis and Tankas. In Srinagar Saraf Mohalla in Zainkadal is said to have been the locality of mint in the city. Further Atta Mohammad Khan the Afghan Governor of Kashmir issued coins bearing the name of two sofi saints of Kashmir:

1. Sheikh Noor-ud-Din.
2. Sheikh Hamza Makhdoom. to win the hearts of Kashmiris who loved them. Besides these *Nanakshahi* rupees too were in circulation during the period.²⁸

Source of Revenue

In Kashmir land revenue remained the main source of income to the state ex-chequer. The revenue system evolved by the previous dynasties (Mughals and Afghans) continued with some modifications during the period. The state exacted ½ of the total produce as land revenue. The Sikhs enhanced the *traki system* as introduced by the Afghans from two to four *traks per Kharwar* as an additional cess.²⁹ In addition to it, the land revenue functionaries such as *Qanungo and Patwari* received three *seers (2850gms)* pre *Kharwar*, while as, *Sazawol, shiqdar, Muqaddam, Tarazdar and Harkar* received collectively five *Seers(4750 gms)* per *Kharwa* from the peasants. Over and above they paid extra taxes such as *nazrana, mandiri* (maintenance of temples), *tambul* (marriage of royal family), *rasum-i-daftari* (collected for clerical staff). *Daftar-i-diwani* was charged @ of Rs5 (five) per thousand *Kharwar* of a village. *Rusadat* a tax collected on fruit trees, willows and vegetables. *Kah-charai* (grazing tax), *Sar-i-deh* (pastoral levy) was charged @ of Rs 1(one) from small village and Rs 2(two) from large village. *Rusad-i-chungi* was exacted @ 4(four) *traks*, per 100 *kharwars*. *Thandari*, which was levied @ Rs 1/(one) from small village and Rs 2/(two) from a large village. It was collected for the thanadars who rendered their services to the peasants by protecting them from thieves. Besides, the peasants paid a portion of his produce to the village artisans and menials like carpenters, ironsmiths, potters, cobblers and barbers. After meeting all these and other items of village expenditure the peasants were left with less than 1/4th of the total produce, which made their life extreme miserable.³⁰ Further they were subjected to *begar* (forced labour) to carry loads of military contingent to mountainous tracks especially during harvesting period, which worsened their shattered economic condition.³¹ The peasantry doomed below the level of subsistence who were forced by the government to cultivate the land, as less than 1/16th of the total cultivable land was under cultivation. Consequently the population of the valley diminished, land went out of cultivation and agricultural prosperity of Kashmir became a thing of past. The agricultural produce fell down which revealed an indication of downward trend to the end of Sikh Rule. William Moorcroft expressed, “everywhere people are in abject condition, exorbitantly taxed by the Sikh government and subjected to every kind of extortion and oppression by its officers.”³²

II. CONCLUSION

The valley of course witnessed a change of rule after five centuries, as non-Muslims ruled over the Muslim domicile territory. The alien character of the rulers, who were deeply interested to acquire wealth by fair or foul means, let loose their governors, jagirdars and revenue functionaries in the territory for their selfish ends. They fleeced the people of their wealth, impoverished the peasants and sucked the blood of traders and craftsmen by imposition of exorbitant taxes. The Valley in the period passed through a tyrannical rule, where it experienced extreme suffering and pain. The peasants left the land uncultivated, trade declined, industries doomed and economic resources were drained, which collectively created an atmosphere of threaten the society, The Valley presented a deserted look. The same had a deep impact on the political scenario of Kashmir as well. Consequently the territory slipped away from their hands and fell in the lap of English East India Company through the *Treaty of Lahore 1846*, which concluded the First Anglo-Sikh War of 1845-46 AD. They (the Britishers) sold the territory to Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu worth Rs.7500000 by a separate agreement known as *Treaty of Amritsar 1846*, which was the offshoot of the *Treaty of Lahore 1846*,

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