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# Kashmir Journal of Social Sciences

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We are also highly thankful to all the peer reviewers.

## Editor's Note

It gives me immense pleasure to place Vol. 10 (2022) of the *Journal of Social Science* in the hands of readers. The papers published here underline the different aspects of Kashmir's past and present and enhance our understanding of the society, culture and history of the region. It has been our endeavour to engage with issues of importance in the region critically and dispassionately. Due emphasis has been given to adherence to ethical standards in research. The authors have employed recent methods of social science research and have taken insights from path breaking theories from different disciplines of social science.

Paper first *Crafting Objects in Clay: A Study of the Ceramic Traditions of Early Kashmir* by Abdul Rashid Lone focuses on the evolution of potter's craft in the valley of Kashmir. It is based on the material culture recovered from various archeological sites. The main thrust of the paper is on the skill of potter in producing various types of potteries in different periods of ancient Kashmir. Second paper *Islamic Calligraphy: A Forgotten Art of Medieval Kashmir* by Bashir Ahmad Maliyar underlines the features of the calligraphy during the Sultanate period in Kashmir that formed an important aspect of the Islamic architecture. It also highlights that how after the end of Sultanate, calligraphy was patronized by the Mughal emperors like Akbar, Jahangir and Shahjahan. Paper third *'Culture' in the Making of Class-consciousness: E.P. Thompson's idea of Social History* by Idrees Kanth explores the role of cultural experiences in shaping a particular consciousness. The paper attempts to analyse Thompson's ideas around 'Culture' and its role in shaping class-consciousness and his predisposition as a historian in attempting to recover the plebeian culture. Fourth paper *Rural Society of Kashmir: Amusements, Recreation and Transformation* by Shiraz Ahmad Dar and Audil Umar Lone, provides an account about the traditional amusements and recreation in rural Kashmir. It also deals with the modernization of sports facilitating the introduction of various European games like football, volleyball and cricket, etc. Fifth paper *Protection and Conservation of Water Bodies in Kashmir: Role of State and Society* by Mehraj-ud-Din

examines the role played by the State and society in the protection and conservation of the water bodies. It endeavors to trace out the policies and methods followed by the traditional and modern State and society for the protection and conservation of water bodies. Sixth paper *Agrarian Reforms and the Settlement of Villages: A Study of Agrarian Crisis in Kashmir (1846-1947)* by Tawseef Mushtaq deals with the extreme agrarian crisis that the valley of Kashmir witnessed during the early Dogra period as a result of the loss of proprietary rights in land and the exorbitant taxation policy. Besides, it deliberates upon that how as a result of the intervention of the British Government of India in the affairs of the Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir facilitated land reforms culminating into the famous land settlement report of Sir Walter Lawrence (1889-1895). The author opines that even if the recommendations of this report were not implemented completely, but still it was a historic development in the agrarian sector that relieved the famished peasantry considerably and resulted into the end of mass migrations in rural Kashmir. Paper seventh *Establishment, Reorganization and the Working of Police Department in Jammu and Kashmir (1846-1947)* by Zahid Gowhar traces the history of the origin of Police department in the Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir. Moreover, it underlines that how with the passage of time the department underwent modernization leading to its reorganization. Paper eight *Trajectory of Tourism in Jammu and Kashmir (1885-1989)* by Zameerah Yusuf discuss the modernization of tourism during the pre and post 1947 till 1989. It also deliberates upon the potential of tourism sector in the fragile economy of the State. The author opines that in case the State would take concrete measures for the development of this sector tourism industry would emerge as the most vibrant source of income both for the government as well as for the common people. Paper nine *From Traditional to Modern: A Study of Educational System in Kashmir (1846-1947)* by Rizwan Ur Rehman deals with the transition of education system from traditional to modern. The focus of the paper is that how education system in the Valley shifted from *Pathshala* and *Maktab* to modern schools established by the Christian missionaries and the State government. Besides, it mentions that how the traditional



system of education stressed upon moral building and religiosity while the Western education promoted modernity. Paper ten *Traditional Moorings of Rural Kashmir: A Historical Perspective* by Mohsin Yousuf underlines the significance of traditional arts and crafts in rural Kashmir. The author rightly claims that if the present generation would not record about these traditions and their role in rural economy and society, which under the tide of modernization are dying fast, the future generations would be unable to understand them. Paper eleventh *Heritage of Pargan-i-Phakh* by Faheem Farooq traces the rich heritage of the said area which is situated close to the capital city of Srinagar. After discussing the origin and significance of various heritage cites from remote past to recent past the author has provided thought provoking information about the rich heritage of the *Phakh* valley. The last paper *Agrarian Landscape of Kashmir: Structure, Elite and Social Cleavage (1846-1947)* by Mohammad Shafi explains the different facets of agrarian structure, social cleavage and peasant stratification that emerged in Kashmir as a result of the establishment of Dogra regime. The paper attempts to discuss various policies of the State that buttressed the interests of the agrarian elite with an avowed purpose of maintaining its hegemony in the countryside.

**M Y Ganai**

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## **Crafting Objects in Clay: A Study of the Ceramic Traditions of Early Kashmir**

*Abdul Rashid Lone*

**Abstract:** *This paper focuses on the evolution of potter's craft in the valley of Kashmir. The material culture recovered from many archaeological sites reflects the production of a wide range of objects by the potter in the bygone era. The manifestation of the potter's skill is demonstrated in various terracotta objects including pottery, miniature figurines, seals, tiles, amulets, wheels, balls, skin rubber, etc. Additionally, the diversity of the craft across temporal and spatial aspects are also undertaken. Besides, the impact of such endeavors on the socio-economic and cultural aspects of early Kashmir is objectively looked on. The main thrust of the paper is on the skill of potter in producing various types of potteries in different time periods of early Kashmir before the advent of the Muslim rule in the region.*

With the growth of civilization from pre-history to history Kashmir underwent serious changes in almost all aspects of human life. These changes were particularly visible in its ecology when water got drained from the Valley basin. There was a gradual downward movement of the human habitations from mountain tops and hills towards the Valley basin or floor. This downward movement of humans was facilitated by a number of historical processes which helped human survival. One of the most significant developments that happened during this time was the complete drainage of the Valley and the exposition of the lacustrine deposits, first in the southern part of Kashmir and subsequently in north. The exposed karewas, rich in nutrients and minerals, ideal spaces for farmers, provided many opportunities to the humans to practice extensive farming and cultivation of crops like wheat and barley, initially, and later on rice also. Thanks to the availability of iron tools like plough etc. The wet rice cultivation and transplantation led to the production of surplus which facilitated the growth of urban centres.

The proliferation of craft activities was another manifestation of this network of changes including potter's

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craft. The dawn of the early historic period in Kashmir region saw the dexterity of the potter exhibiting his/her craft in variants including the production of primarily pottery of various fabrics and styles, which subsequently lead to the production of large number of terracotta figurines of humans, animals, toys, terracotta jewellery including bangles, rings, beads, flowers etc., and more importantly and outnumbering pottery and terracotta figurines was the production of terracotta tiles throughout the length and breadth of the Kashmir Valley.

In the following paragraphs an attempt has been made to underline the importance of the potter's craft in the temporal and spatial aspects of early Kashmir. Sources inform us that the potter of early Kashmir was versatile in making a number of objects besides pottery. I will focus on pottery of the neolithic period first, as is evidenced from many archaeological settlements. Subsequently, the pottery of the early historic and early medieval period shall be considered for some observations in addition to the manufacturing of other objects like terracotta figurines and tiles etc.

**Neolithic Period:** Moving to temporal aspects, this paper intends to explore many aspects of craft production in the Valley of Kashmir during ancient times. We have clear signs or evidences for the manufacturing of stone tools by the Palaeolithic and Neolithic humans in this segment of the Himalaya. Tools were also manufactured out of bone and antler. But the most important craft which was widespread during neolithic period in the Valley, and which outnumbered other crafts was the production of pottery of various types and shapes in enormous quantities. These ceramic traditions were widely retrieved from almost all neolithic sites carrying ceramic levels like Burzahom, Gufkral and Kanispora etc.

The neolithic period in Kashmir is represented by a dozen of sites. Majority of them are salvaged. Three were excavated. Burzahom, Gufkral and Kanispora ceramics are discussed to some extent. Neolithic sites are represented by aceramic and ceramic phases in the Valley.

The pottery at Burzahom, Period I consisted of ill-fired, hand-made and coarse fabric of grey, red and brown colours. These are represented by rimless bowls and bottle shapes with flared rims. The pottery was manufactured on mats, the pot bases bearing mat impressions.<sup>1</sup>In Period II of occupation, handmade pottery continued to be used with an addition of black burnished ware represented by dish with hollow stand, globular pots, jars and funnel-shaped vase.<sup>2</sup>Black burnished ware was represented by a high necked jar with a flaring rim, globular body, with oblique notches incised on lower part of the neck. A wheel made vase of orange slipped ware, painted in black with a horned figure panelled between the neck and shoulder bands is significant. A comparison of this has been sought with some wares of pre-Harappan phase at KotDiji, hinting an import from a nearest site of Sarai Khola. A wheel-made red-ware pot containing 950 beads made of agate and carnelian was also recovered from the same level suggesting an indisputable contact with outside cultures.<sup>3</sup>

Phase IA at Gufkral is devoid of any ceramics, however its character as a neolithic level was established by the presence of the neolithic stone tools. Phase IB of Neolithic occupation was a continuation of the previous level. For the first time pottery was used at the site. Pottery industry comprised of handmade specimens of thick coarse grey ware, fine grey ware and gritty red ware represented by shapes—globular jars and basins with mat impressions on their bases.<sup>4</sup> IC, The ceramic assemblage of the previous periods continued with addition of burnished grey ware represented by high necked globular jars, bowls, basins, etc.<sup>5</sup>

At Kanisapur, the ceramic industry of Period II was represented by both handmade and wheel turned pottery.

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<sup>1</sup> Singh, Upinder. (2008). *A History of Ancient and Early Medieval India*. Delhi: Pearson, p. 111.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.113.

<sup>3</sup> Thapar, B.K. (1987). 'Fresh Light on the Neolithic Cultures of India', in *Archaeology and History: Essays in memory of Shri A Ghosh*, (eds.), B.M. Pande & B.D. Chattopadhyaya, Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan, pp. 247-54.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 248.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

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The fabrics of the wares include fine grey ware, coarse grey ware, red, dull red and black wares (both burnished and plain). The designs on the pottery include the brushing on the wet surface of the pots, mat impression on disc bases, pinched designs on appliqué bands and oblique decorations on the neck and rims of handmade vases. These wares are represented by bowls, shallow bowls, or dishes on stand, jars, vases and long-necked vases.

**I. Early Historic Period:** With the advent of the early historical period, the potter's craft witnessed enormous expansion. In addition to various types of clay pots, the potter of the early historic period in Kashmir produced large quantities of terracotta figurines of humans—both male and female, of animals including cow, bull, ram, elephant, horse, birds etc., toys, jewellery including beads and bangles, terracotta balls, wheels, skin rubber and dozens of unidentified figurines. Some of them were recovered from proper stratigraphical levels of Indo-Greek and Kushana period, however, major portion of them is labelled as surface collections from various archaeological sites mentioned in different reports and writings. Still there is another group of figurines which were reported from private collections maintained by some art lovers and antique dealers across the Valley. The potter of early historic period went a step further by showing his/her dexterity in manufacturing a series of wedge-shaped terracotta tiles which appeared to be a flourishing industry during Kushan period in the Valley. There are also instances of manufacturing terracotta pipes for carrying water from one place to another place from Ahan excavations.

The early historical beginnings in the Kashmir region can be gleaned from the archaeological findings at a very important settlement in south Kashmir i.e., Semthan. The first three occupation levels at the site are tremendously significant because they are not available from the archaeological horizons of Kashmir from any other site except Semthan. The period I at the site is labeled as 'pre-NBP' which

ranges from 700-500 BCE. Besides beads made of terracotta,<sup>6</sup> the significant discovery of this period is the pottery which has been classified into five fabrics by the excavators.<sup>7</sup> These ceramics range from wheel made sturdy red ware<sup>8</sup> represented by vases, vessels, carinated cooking vessels, flask, a short stem with a club base, a knobbed lid and jars; a fine thin red ware, mostly slipped and burnished represented by shapes include vessels, vases, a variety of bowls, flasks, carinated cooking vessels having untreated and sooth marked lower body; thick ocherous red ware represented by mouthed vessels, small vases<sup>9</sup> and pots with globular bodies;<sup>10</sup> thick grey ware characterized by two distinct wares, viz, burnished grey ware thick in section than the other one which is ordinary grey ware, represented by small sized vases, bowls and rimless dishes; and lastly a group of potsherds is a handmade, ill fired and crude fabric ware in texture which is made of poor clay containing stone grits<sup>11</sup> and is represented by jars, bowls without-curved rims and internally hollow lids. This type of ceramics was encountered in association with the NBPW in the two top layers of Period I.<sup>12</sup>

The NBPW phase at Semthan which date from 500-200 BCE is a much celebrated one as this hints towards the cross cultural relations with the neighbouring south Asian territories, which is considered as the home to this ware. This period is marked by the presence of Northern Black Polished Ware in association with red and grey wares. The grey ware

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<sup>6</sup> Gaur, G. S. (1987). Semthan Excavation: A Step towards bridging the gap between the Neolithic and the Kushan Period in Kashmir. In B. D. Chattopadhyaya, & B. M. Pande (Eds.), *Archaeology and History; Essays in memory of shri A Ghosh*. (Vol. 1), Delhi: Agam Kala Prakshan, p. 328.

<sup>7</sup> *Indian Archaeology 1980-81 A Review*. (1983), Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, p. 21.

<sup>8</sup> Shali, S. L. (1993). *Kashmir: History and Archaeology through the Ages*. Delhi: Indus Publishing Company, p. 111.

<sup>9</sup> *Indian Archaeology 1980-81 A Review*, p. 21.

<sup>10</sup> Shali, S. L. (1993). *Kashmir: History and Archaeology through the Ages*, p. 112.

<sup>11</sup> *Indian Archaeology 1980-81 A Review*, p. 21.

<sup>12</sup> Shali, S. L. (1993). *Kashmir: History and Archaeology through the Ages*, p. 112.



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found here is different from that generally found in association with NBPW elsewhere. This could be the local series of the grey ware. The prominent shapes include miniature bowls, dishes, 'Ahichchatra 10A' type pottery, carinated handi, rimless handis,<sup>13</sup> vases and cooking pots.<sup>14</sup>

After the NBPW layers, Semthan excavations provide some unique evidences of the coming of Indo-Greeks (c.200 BCE–1 CE) at the settlement. This period revealed well developed and sophisticated pottery unknown to Period I and Period II. This is a distinguished pottery of very thin fabric having a slip ranging from bright red to orange<sup>15</sup> and pink<sup>16</sup> in colour. It was characterized by the frequent use of functional devices like pinched lip, spout, handle and ring or pedestal base.<sup>17</sup> The prominent shapes include goblets, earthen thali (pans),<sup>18</sup> bowls,<sup>19</sup> vases with out-turned and internally thickened rims and vessels with high necks.<sup>20</sup> The most significant discovery of this period is a potsherd with an inscription in five letters engraved below the rim portion or the neck of the pot on the external side.<sup>21</sup> This inscription was deciphered by Shali who claims that it reads as 'dhamorai' or 'dharmo (rajai)', which he meant refers to a king probably Menander who visited Kashmir during this period.<sup>22</sup> He dated

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<sup>13</sup> Gaur, G. S. (1987). Semthan Excavation, p. 331.

<sup>14</sup> Shali, S. L. (1993). *Kashmir: History and Archaeology through the Ages*, p. 112.

<sup>15</sup> *Indian Archaeology 1980-81 A Review*, p. 21.

<sup>16</sup> Shali, S. L. (2001). *Settlement Pattern in Relation to Climatic Changes in Kashmir*. Delhi: Om Publications. P.128; Gaur, 1987, Op. Cit. P. 331.

<sup>17</sup> Shali, S. L. (2001). *Settlement Pattern in Relation to Climatic Changes in Kashmir*, p. 128.

<sup>18</sup> *Indian Archaeology 1980-81 A Review*. Delhi, P.21; Agrawal, R. C. (1998). *Kashmir and its Monumental Glory*. New Delhi: Aryan Books International, p. 80.

<sup>19</sup> Agrawal, R. C. (1998). *Kashmir and its Monumental Glory*, p. 80.

<sup>20</sup> Shali, S. L. (1993). *Kashmir: History and Archaeology through the Ages*, p. 120.

<sup>21</sup> *Indian Archaeology 1980-81 A Review*, Pl.XIII (A).

<sup>22</sup> Shali, S. L. (1993). *Kashmir: History and Archaeology through the Ages*. Delhi, p. 120.

this inscription to the first century BCE. However, Lahiri<sup>23</sup> believes that it belongs to 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE.

By the beginning of the Christian era Kashmir entered into a glorious period. This was the time when Kushanas made Kashmir as their seat of power. Their rule is evidenced from Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* as also from dozens of archaeological sites. At Semthan, Period IV of occupation was of Kushana-Hunas ranging from 1<sup>st</sup> CE- 5<sup>th</sup> century CE. The evidence of the Kushana pottery is strikingly significant in this phase. The fabric of this lot ranges from coarse to fine red ware and a distinct coarse grey ware.<sup>24</sup> The ingredients of the pottery are profusely used in the medium or coarse wares.<sup>25</sup> The fine red ware is coated with red slip.<sup>26</sup> The shapes encountered are bowls with incurved rims, vases with long vertical neck, inkpot like lids,<sup>27</sup> lid-cum-dish internally hollow and out turned rims, jars of dull red ware with out-curved horizontally splayed out rims with a deep profile, pots with spherical body<sup>28</sup> and round base, wide mouthed incense burners and small wine cups.<sup>29</sup> The decorations of some of the sherds are simple and varied from applique, incised to stamped designs.<sup>30</sup>

Besides pottery many terracotta and clay objects were recovered from this level at Semthan which include: beads,<sup>31</sup> balls and wheels, clay seals and sealings bearing legends in Brahmi and Kharosthi scripts and a large number of

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<sup>23</sup> Lahiri, N. (1992). *The Archaeology of Indian Trade Routes Upto c. 200 B.C.* Delhi: Oxford University Press, p. 270.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Shali, S. L. (1993). *Kashmir: History and Archaeology through the Ages*, p. 121.

<sup>26</sup> Shali, S. L. (2001). *Settlement Pattern in Relation to Climatic Changes in Kashmir*, p. 149.

<sup>27</sup> Gaur, G. S. (1987). *Semthan Excavation*, p. 331.

<sup>28</sup> Shali, S. L. (1993). *Kashmir: History and Archaeology through the Ages*, pp. 121-22.

<sup>29</sup> Shali, S. L. (2001). *Settlement Pattern in Relation to Climatic Changes in Kashmir*, p. 149.

<sup>30</sup> Shali, S. L. (1993). *Kashmir: History and Archaeology through the Ages*, p. 122.

<sup>31</sup> *Indian Archaeology 1980-81 A Review*, Delhi, p. 23.

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terracotta figurines<sup>32</sup> of humans, animals and many other miscellaneous objects, usually made out of single mould. Another major discovery related to the settlement patterning of this period is the terracotta brick tiles having faint motifs of a cross within a circle.

The ceramic industry at Kanispur, of the Kushana period, consisted mainly of red ware with and without slip. Prominent among them was a goblet, eight centimetres high, of fine red ware, with deep flared mouth, constricted neck and convex reed flutings or horizontal ribbing round the body between shoulder and base.<sup>33</sup> Mani traced the lineage of this goblet to the fine red ware, silver, copper and bronze goblets from Saka-Parthian stratum at Sirkap, Taxila dating to Kushana period.<sup>34</sup>

Additionally, spouts, vases, cooking pots, goblets, button knobbed lids, plain lids, handle of a pot, plates with central knob, disc bases of bowls, shallow to deep bowls, nail headed basins, miniature pots, platelet of a lid, a perforated sherd and dishes or pans similar to ones found from Semthan were also part of the cultural repertoire. These dishes had incised decorations of flying birds round the rim. They looked like the stamped figures of three varieties of a series of standing human figurines, two of the variants having conical hills below the human figurines. The ornamentations on the pottery include stamped decorations of flower with central spoked discs and group of lozenges on a bowl.<sup>35</sup>

**II. Post Kushana Period:** There was a continuation of the ceramic tradition as witnessed at Semthan and Kanispur. The ceramics of the post Kushana phase at Semthan are different to the previous phase of activity at the site. The pottery is represented by bright red slipped ware.<sup>36</sup> The main shapes encountered are bowls having tapering sides and footed

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<sup>32</sup> *Indian Archaeology 1980-81 A Review*, p. 21, pl. XII.

<sup>33</sup> Mani, B. R., (2000). *Excavations at Kanispura: 1998-99. Pragdhara* 10, pp. 1-22.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> Gaur, G. S. (1987). *Semthan Excavation*, p. 331.

bases, variety of goblets with round bases,<sup>37</sup> water vessels, basins with out-turned, internally thickened and sharpened rims,<sup>38</sup> miniature and huge storage pots having spherical body and round bases and some moulded pottery.<sup>39</sup> This phase also yielded some terracotta figurines both of animals and humans.<sup>40</sup> The prominent one is a terracotta human face which has some parallels in its style to the sculptures of the Gupta period of north Indian plains.<sup>41</sup>

At Kanispor the pottery of the post-Kushana phase is dominated by the usual red ware of the previous periods of occupation at the site represented by large sized lids and bases, goblets, elongated button knobbed lids, cooking pots, incurved bowls, miniature pots and basins. A black bowl with slightly out-turned rim and black slip was also found. The ornamentations on some sherds include that of incised wavy lines, grooving and vertically dotted lines and stamped decorations of flower designs.<sup>42</sup>

**III. Early Medieval Developments:** With the advent of the Karkota dynasty in the middle of the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE, Kashmir entered into an era of development, fame and progress in almost every sector of human advancement due to the onset of political stability in the region. This led to the integration of the smaller kingdoms in addition to the advancement of the agricultural sector. As Lalitaditya was bent on making Kashmir a world class empire or political power by subjugating vast amounts of territorial units ruled by small chiefs or kings around Kashmir, he also took some bold steps in controlling the recalcitrant damaras, who caused a serious hindrance and hampered growth of royal power. Measures were also undertaken to provide best ever irrigation facilities

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<sup>37</sup> Shali, S. L. (2001). *Settlement Pattern in Relation to Climatic Changes in Kashmir*, p. 150.

<sup>38</sup> Shali, S. L. (1993). *Kashmir: History and Archaeology through the Ages*, p. 122.

<sup>39</sup> Gaur, G. S. (1987). *Semthan Excavation*, p. 331.

<sup>40</sup> Shali, S. L. (1993). *Kashmir: History and Archaeology through the Ages*, p. 122.

<sup>41</sup> Gaur, G. S. (1987). *Semthan Excavation*, p. 331.

<sup>42</sup> Mani, B. R., (2000). *Excavations at Kanispora: 1998-99. Pragdhara* 10, pp. 1-22.

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to the farmers for the production of various crops and subsequent surplus, which facilitated his day-to-day courtly tasks and financed large scale political conquests. The first ever literary reference for using water wheels to provide irrigation facilities to the lacustrine karewas of Kashmir is in context of Lalitaditya, who used them at Chakradhara, the present-day archaeological site of Semthan in south Kashmir.

By the beginning of the early medieval period the potter community moved a step further by producing huge terracotta storage jars, elongated and oval in shape, for storing grain. These were recovered during the salvage operations mostly in and around the temple complexes of Martand, Anantnag. A few specimens were found within proper stratigraphical contexts of early medieval period at Martand and Avantipora. Another addition to the potters' craft was the making of small terracotta bowls and stamping Mithuna couples in the inner surface of the bowl bases which were recovered from the surface explorations at Semthan also.

Period V at Semthan have cultural habitation ranging in chronology from 5<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> century CE. This occupational deposit has revealed two different phases of cultural activity at the site during this period, based on the difference in the structural activity and ceramic production. The early phase of activity yielded a red ware pottery which is very fine grained, thin in fabric having lustrous red slip. This pottery is also known as paper-thin ware and has been found at some more sites other than Semthan during the surface survey by the present author. This is represented by a variety of shapes including bowls, dishes, small vases with everted and externally cut rims and slightly vertical necks, jars and goblets.<sup>43</sup> In the next phase, i.e., the upper levels of this period of occupation, the ceramic industry is represented by medium to thick ware having prominent shapes like 'long but narrow necked vases with globular body, lid-cum-dishes with everted and beveled rims, carinated vases with externally thickened rims, storage jars with out-turned and internally thickened rims and round based red ware pots with out-turned rims.' The decorations on some of the sherds include geometric

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<sup>43</sup> Gaur, G. S. (1987), *Semthan Excavation*, p. 335.

designs like finger tip patterns, irregular wavy lines and oblique strokes.<sup>44</sup>

Red ware dominated the cultural repertoire at Kanispor during this phase of occupation. Seven large sized pots and jars were recovered full in shape and form from layer (2A) of occupation at the site belonging to late historical period. These pots were covered with roughly circular stone lids. They probably represent granaries for storing grains.<sup>45</sup> Terracotta handmade large thick bases with slightly raised rims and a rough surface were also found at the site. They were used probably to cover these big jars and pots.

Small, medium and large sized vases, button knobbed lids, hollow and plain lids, bowls of various types, cooking pots, lamp, basins, miniature pots and bases of goblets were also found from this layer of occupation. A broken sherd of a lid in black was also found. The ornamentations include stamped decorations on shoulder and necks of pots representing circular or semi-circular flowers, circles and notched designs.<sup>46</sup> The artefacts or antiquities include a terracotta sling ball, a broken terracotta animal figurine with applique ornamentation on its back, three biconical terracotta beads (two having notched ends and perforated dots) etc.

**V. Post 13<sup>th</sup> Century scenario:** It has yielded typical late medieval pottery demarcated by rough and scarcely fine red ware of thick to medium fabric, however devoid of any glazed ware pottery. Glazed ware pottery is a significant and typical ceramic assemblage of medieval Indian archaeological sites<sup>47</sup> found also at other medieval period sites in Kashmir. The

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<sup>44</sup> Shali, S. L. (1993). *Kashmir: History and Archaeology through the Ages*, p. 143.

<sup>45</sup> *Indian Archaeology 1998-99 A Review*. New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India. p. 40.

<sup>46</sup> Mani, B. R., (2000). *Excavations at Kanispora: 1998-99*. *Pragdhara* 10, p. 17.

<sup>47</sup> Singh, Upinder. (2008), *A History of Ancient and Early Medieval India*. Delhi: Pearson, p. 36.

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main shapes encountered were 'knife edged bowl, handis, jars, flat plates etc.'<sup>48</sup>

**Conclusion:** The description of the ceramic traditions, in the above paragraphs, clearly hints towards the flourishing state of the pottery industry in early Kashmir. The evolution of the pottery traditions in the Valley is evidenced by the fabrication of various pottery types like red and grey during the neolithic times which saw enormous growth during the early historic times. The potters of Kashmir were not only master craftsmen in making potteries of various fabrics, shapes and designs, but they also demonstrated their dexterity and skill on wheel by fabricating large number of other terracotta objects including figurines of animals and plants in addition to terracotta tiles. The production of craft items had not only sustained craft specialists from the economic point of view providing them livelihood, but these had been also cultural signifiers of great civilizations. Moreover, short distance and long-distance trading patterns across cultural zones were also shaped by the proliferation of craft activities by producing merchandise which facilitated the exchange, imports and exports of various goods produced by the craftsmen.

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<sup>48</sup> Gaur, G. S. (1987). *Semthan Excavation*, p. 335.

# Islamic Calligraphy: A Forgotten Art of Medieval Kashmir

Bashir Ahmad Maliyar

**Abstract:** Calligraphy for Muslims is a visible expression of the art of the spiritual world. It represented the aesthetics and divine manifestation of Islam. It formed an important feature of Islamic architecture. With the establishment of Muslim rule in Kashmir, the art of Islamic calligraphy developed. Among the Sultans of Kashmir, Zain-ul-Abidin patronized this art in the Valley. With the Mughal annexation of Kashmir, many Kashmiri calligraphers joined the imperial courts of Akbar, Jahangir, and Shahjahan and were supported and given honorary epithets. The master artists from Kashmir, who were patronized by the Mughal rulers, were Muhammad Hussain Kashmiri (*zarrinqalam*-the golden pen), Ali Chaman Kashmiri, and Muhammad Murad Kashmiri (*shiringqalam*-the sweet pen). These Kashmiri artists mastered different styles of this art and became very famous. This paper aims at exploring the art of calligraphy in Kashmir from the time of the Sultanate to Mughal rule.

**Introduction:** Islamic calligraphy, also known as Arabic calligraphy, is the artistic activity of handwriting that has been used in architecture and book making in countries that share a common Islamic cultural background. It is based on the Arabic script, which was for a long time universally used by Muslims regardless of language.<sup>1</sup> They used it to represent God since they were opposed to using pictures to depict God. Calligraphy is particularly respected among Islamic arts since it was the primary means of preserving the Quran.<sup>2</sup> As a result of the Quran's importance, Arabic was elevated from a local dialect to the *lingua franca* of an empire.<sup>3</sup> Since the Quran was revealed in

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<sup>1</sup> Danish Yousuf, *Encyclopedia of Islamic Art and architecture* (Delhi: Random Publications, 2012), 3.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Sheila S. Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy* (Edinburgh University Press, 2020), 5.



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Arabic, many other languages spoken in the regions where Islam flourished adopted the script employed to write the holy book. These additional languages include Kurdish, Pashto, Sindhi, Kashmiri, Ottoman Turkish, Chahatay, Malay, and in addition to Persian. Arabic script is the second-most used segmental script worldwide after the Roman System.<sup>4</sup>

What makes Islamic art different is that writing became the main and sometimes only way to decorate. One of the important reasons for this major change was that the word is so important in the religion of Islam. Its importance is clear from the verses of Quran Chapter 96 (*Iqra or al-Alaq*), which are usually believed to be the first words revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH):

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful,  
Read! In the name of my Lord who has created (all that exists),  
He has created Man from a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood).  
Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous  
Who has taught (writing) by the Pen,  
He has taught man that which he knew not.<sup>5</sup>

In other words, the ability to write distinguishes man apart from the rest of God's creations.

Annemarie Schimmel attributes Islamic calligraphic art to mystic aesthetic in large part to its "the tendency to equate human figures to letters," a mystical symbolism that connects humans to the divine by the act of writing.<sup>6</sup> Many references to writing and the pen can be found in the Qur'an

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., xxvii.

<sup>5</sup> The importance of writing runs throughout the Quran. Chapter 68 (*Surat al-Qalam*) and chapter 50 (*Surat al-Qaf*) highlight its significance. *The Noble Quran*, English translation and commentary by Dr. Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din Al-Hilali and Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan, (Madina, K.S.A: King Fahd Complex for the Printing of the Holy Quran), Chapter 96, 842, 703, 774.

<sup>6</sup> Annemarie Schimmel, *Calligraphy and Islamic Culture* (New York University Press, 1984), 82.

itself, usually in verses that highlight the importance of the written word in spreading God's word to humanity. Due to the relatively limited number of words per page, the early Qur'an's were written in big letters on parchment in the austere, yet graceful Kufic style, giving the impression of a visual symbol rather than a book. Muslim religious experience seems to have been concentrated on recitation from the holy book from an early period, suggesting that seeing the real shape of the Arabic letters in the Qur'an played an essential role.<sup>7</sup> As Anthony Welch states, "The written form of the Qur'an is the visual equivalent of the eternal Qur'an and is humanity's perceptual glimpse of the divine."<sup>8</sup> Visual concentration on the Qur'an as the word of God was the closest manifestation of God on earth.

The *Adab al-Mashq*, a classic Persian book on the *nasta'liq* calligraphic style, written by the eminent Iranian calligrapher Baba Shah Isfahani in the seventeenth century, offers an extraordinary comprehensive account of the writer's techniques and methods of instruction. It concentrates on the calligrapher's inner meditative component, which Baba Shah describes using sufi mysticism.<sup>9</sup> The initial invocation makes it clear that he is concerned on the symbolic component of the penman's craft. God gave humans the ability to read and write through Adam in this instance. However, understanding the divine message takes more than just the intellect; it also includes the heart.<sup>10</sup> The greatest lovers in history have been motivated by the smallest reflection of God's writing on Adam's heart:

Recollection and praise be to the lord who created the  
simples and compounds of the world and chose

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<sup>7</sup> Carl W. Ernst, "The Spirit of Islamic Calligraphy: Baba Shah Isfahani's *Adab al-Mashq*" *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (1992):285.

<sup>8</sup> Anthony Welch, *Calligraphy in the Arts of the Muslim World* (Folkestone, Kent: Dawson, 1979), 22.

<sup>9</sup> Carl W. Ernst, *The Spirit of Islamic Calligraphy: Baba Shah Isfahani's Adab al-Mashq*, 279, 285.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 282.

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Adam out of all beings for the nobility of his capacity for knowledge, and who inscribed some letters with the pen of might on the page of his fortunate mind. The gleam of the sparks of that writing's light cast a glimmer of the sun of Joseph's beauty into the heart of Zulaykha, and made her famous throughout the world as a lover. And a scent from the bower of that writing found its way from the rose of Layla's face and was scented by Majnun, so that he fled in amazement to the desert of disgrace. And a letter from the notebook of that writing's beauty came from Shirin's lip to the ear of Farhad, who tore the clothes of life in the mountains of madness<sup>11</sup>

Seyyed Hossein Nasr, a well-known Iranian philosopher, approaches the study of Islamic calligraphy from a Sufi or mystic perspective. For him, all Islamic art has a spiritual message that encourages reflection on God. According to him, calligraphy is the visual manifestations of how the spiritual realities (al-haqā'iq) found in the Islamic revelation have been crystallized.<sup>12</sup> Calligraphy would clearly state the aesthetic language of Islamic art and the purpose of the whole thing it decorates, giving it a sense of the highest level, as if it were giving it life.<sup>13</sup>

**Islamic Calligraphy in Kashmir:** In the Muslim world, calligraphy has a significant place among the three main branches of Fine Arts: architecture, painting, and calligraphy.<sup>14</sup> Almost every important Muslim building is freely decorated with texts from the Quran, or other inscriptions arranged decoratively to form part of the architectural design and often signed as the work of calligraphists, since the Arabic alphabet in its various forms,

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<sup>11</sup> Carl W. Ernst, *The Spirit of Islamic Calligraphy: Baba Shah Isfahani's Adab al-Mashq*, 279, 285.

<sup>12</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Art and Spirituality* (Sate University of New York Press, 1987), ix, 17-37.

<sup>13</sup> Valerie Gonzalez, *Beauty and Islam: Aesthetics in Islamic Art and Architecture* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2001), 98, 110.

<sup>14</sup> P.I.S. Mustafizur Rahman, Mughal Calligraphy, *Islamic Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (Autumn 1987), 237.

as used for writing both the Arabic and Persian languages, is so well suited for decorative purposes. An example of this is the angular *kufi* script.<sup>15</sup> Calligraphy was ranked higher in Kashmir than painting, sculpture, and architecture.<sup>16</sup> With the advent of Islam in the fourteenth century, the art of Islamic calligraphy developed in Kashmir.<sup>17</sup> Under Sultans, the art of calligraphy developed significantly. The art of calligraphy was of great interest to Zain-ul-Abidin. He dispatched calligraphists from Samarkand and Balkhand provided them with lands in the Pargana of *Phag* for their well being.<sup>18</sup> He gave jagirs to his court calligraphists.<sup>19</sup> *Baharistan-i-Shahi* mentions the Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin's interest in this art:

When the Sultan learnt from haj pilgrims that the original manuscript of Jarullah Allama's Kashshaf in his own hand was in the possession of the learned men of holy Mecca, he [immediately] summoned an excellent calligraphist and placing more than adequate funds at his disposal, dispatched him to Mecca where he stayed for some years and succeeded in making for him a true copy of this work... On seeing the manuscript, Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin once again bestowed upon the scribe gifts and robes of honour.<sup>20</sup>

However, inscriptions on the Zaina lank stone slab, the doorway of Madani's mosque, and the graves of Zain-ul-

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<sup>15</sup> G.M.D Sufi, *Kashir: Being a History of Kashmir from the Earliest Times to Our Own*. Vol. II (Light & Life Publishers, 1974), 557-558.

<sup>16</sup> G.M.D Sufi, *Kashir*, Vol.II, 558.

<sup>17</sup> The missionaries who came to Kashmir in the fourteenth century included people from different backgrounds. They were not just religious scholars. Men of science and craftsmen, artists, calligraphers, and book binders were among them. *Tarikh-i-Syyed Ali*, Translated by Dr. Zubaida Jan, *History of Kashmir* (1374-1570), (Srinagar: Jay Kay Books, 2009), 23.

<sup>18</sup> N. K Zutshi, *Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin of Kashmir*, 196.

<sup>19</sup> G.M.D Sufi, *Kashir*, Vol.II, 558.

<sup>20</sup> Anonymous, *Baharistan-i-Shahi: A Chronicle of Medieval Kashmir*, trans. by K.N. Pandit (Calcutta: Firma KLM Private Limited, 1989), 11-47.

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Abidin's queen, Makhurnah Khatun, and others have survived a few specimens of calligraphy.<sup>21</sup>



**Figure I:** Original carved inscription of Madina Sahib Mosque, from the time of its foundation. This inscription is in nastaliq style of calligraphy.

**Source:** Pratapaditya Pal, *The Arts of Kashmir* (Asia Society and Museum New York, 2007), 167, 169.

However, a large stone stele from the time of Zain-ul-Abidin shows the expertise of Kashmiri artists in sculpture making (figure II). The writing on the stele about the foundation of Zainalanka, is a strong example of the bold thuluth script in high relief, just like the stele itself. With wide plan bands dividing the surface into four horizontal registers, the letters twist and intertwine across the surface to make a complex arabesque-like shape.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> N.K Zutshi, *Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin of Kashmir*, 196.

<sup>22</sup> Pratapaditya Pal, *The Arts of Kashmir*, 169.



**Figure II:** Stele with Persian inscription in Arabic script including the name of Zain-ul-Abidin, about 1475. SPS Museum, Srinagar.

Under the Chak rule, the art of calligraphy reached a high level of excellence in Kashmir. Before them, only the *Nasq* calligraphic style was common, but a new and sophisticated style known as '*Nastliq*' came to be cultivated in learned works and building as an architectural feature.<sup>23</sup> Mir Ali, a

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<sup>23</sup> Nizam-Ud-Din Wani, *Muslim Rule in Kashmir (1554 A.D-1586 A.D)* (Jammu: Jay Kay Book House, 1987), 249.

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famous Persian calligraphist who came to Kashmir during the reign of Hussain Shah Chak and worked under the generous patronage of all the Chak rulers, introduced a new calligraphic style of *Nastatliq* to Kashmir. He entered the service of Akbar after the collapse of Chak regime in Kashmir.<sup>24</sup>



**Figure III:** Calligraphy by Mir Ali, c.1500. Rubai number 103 by Omar Khayyam written by Mir Ali during his umrah (pilgrimage to Mecca) for his student, his dearest son, the poet and calligrapher Sultan Bayazid (d.1579). Signed: 'The poor guilty Mir Ali the calligrapher. May God forgive him.'

**Source:** <https://www.rct.uk/collection/1005068calligraphy-by-mir-ali-and-a-mughal-painting-of-a-lady-at-a-jhar-okha-balcony>.

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 249.



**Figure IV:** Fascinating tomb inscription in Arabic and Sharda script, is carved on a grave in a cemetery surrounding the ziarat of Bahauddin at Hariparbat in Srinagar. Its hijri date corresponds to 1484 Ce and records the death of one Seda Khan son of Ibrahim-who died in battle in the reign of Muhammad Shah (1484-157). Apart from its interesting contents, it presents fine specimens of both the scripts and may have been carved by the same engraver. Source: Pratapaditya Pal, *The Arts of Kashmir*, 168-169.

During the Mughal rule, the art of calligraphy developed tremendously. Abul Fazl gives a lucid and traditional description of calligraphy, revealing its significance to the Mughal court. This perspective is backed up by other evidence showing that the Mughals were connoisseurs of the writing and the book art. Librarians and even emperors themselves were responsible for assessing the valuable manuscripts.<sup>25</sup> The works produced in Hindi, Persian,

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<sup>25</sup> Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol-I, English, trans. H. Bloachmann (G.H. Rouse, At The Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, 1873), 102-106; Sheila S. Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy*. Edinburgh University Press, 2020, 536.



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Greek, Kashmiri, and Arabic were organized in their own sections of the Mughal library. Among the many translations into Persian and other new works commissioned by the emperor, the books covered a wide variety of disciplines, from philosophy and history to science and literature. Even if not as often as is commonly believed, the imprints of seals, comments, and glosses show that these texts were reviewed and evaluated.<sup>26</sup> Books manufactured for the Mughals, like those made for the Timurid and Safavid dynasties before them, were some of the finest ever made, with meticulous attention paid to every detail from the paper to the text to the pictures to the illuminations to the binding.<sup>27</sup> According to Abul Fazl, both calligraphy and painting received considerable attention and patronage under Emperor Akbar, but the former “was more significant of the two arts.”<sup>28</sup> He further remarks: “His Majesty [Akbar] shows much regards for the art, and takes a great interest in different styles of writing; hence the great number of calligraphists. *Nasta’liq* has especially received a new impetus.” The Kashmiri artist also excelled in this art. The art of calligraphy was considered a noble profession.<sup>29</sup>

**Kashmir as the Centre of Calligraphy:** Kashmir became a new centre for the creation of excellent manuscripts in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with the most of them being written in *nakash*. After Akbar annexed the region in 1586, many Kashmiri calligraphers joined the Mughal court.<sup>30</sup> In the sixteenth century the art of calligraphy flourished in Kashmir, as the Mughal rulers had a great aesthetic taste for this art. According to the French traveller Victor Jaquement, a few hundred to seven hundred copyists worked there in 1831, fulfilling orders for copies of

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 103-106.

<sup>27</sup> Sheila S. Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy*, 537.

<sup>28</sup> Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol-1, 97.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 96-102.

<sup>30</sup> Sheila S. Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy*, 550.

the *Quran*, the *Shahnama*, and a few other works.<sup>31</sup> Many of them have survived, although it is challenging to place them in chronological order or as a group by a single hand because many illustrated codicescolophons have dates that have been changed, and the majority of *Quran* manuscripts remain unsigned.

The most important piece of evidence for the *Quran* codices made in Kashmir (Figure V) is a copy in Tehran that says it was written in Kashmir in 1173/1759-1760.<sup>32</sup> It is written in a neat, bold *naskh* script, and each verse is marked by a gold disk with a black outline. Text on the first and last pages is set in cloud bands. *Sura* headings are done in blue *riqa* 'over gold, with *alif* often linked to lam and a distinctive knot like Solomon's seal in place of a finer letter, such as the *ta'marbuta of makkiyya* at the end of the heading for Surat Nissa (Chapter 114). In red *nastaliq*, there is a Persian translation between each line of the *Quran*. In the margins, there is commentary written in Persian. It is written in diagonal lines that look like cloud bands. The Arabic phrase that needs to be translated is written in red *naskh*, and then a long explanation is written in black *nastaliq*. All of this fits on a small page that is only 23 cm × 14 cm.

From time to time various manuscripts were canonized by the calligraphers of Kashmir, such as Akbar Nama by Mulla Hamid-ul-lah Shahabadi, Yousuf and Zulykha of Jami, Faras Nama, Ilm-ul-Aklat and many others. Most of these manuscripts were copied in *nastaliq* style.

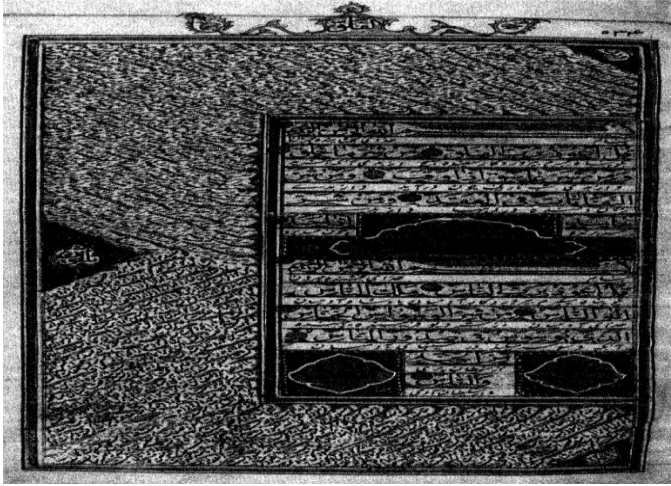
The art of calligraphy in Kashmir was not only used in architecture and manuscripts but it was also used in metal

<sup>31</sup> V. Jacquemenot's report .C.f. R.K. Parmu, *A History of Muslim Rule in Kashmir, 1320-1819* (Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1969), 415-416

<sup>32</sup> Gulistan Library, Tehran, 949; Badri Atabay, *Fihrist-i-quranha-yikhatti-yikitabhkhana-yisalatanati* (Tehran, 1351/1981), No 37. C.f. Sheila S. Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy*, 550-551.

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works, which provided an elegant look to these pieces of craftsmanship. The larger part of early medieval metal work



**Figure V:** Final page of Quran with interlinear Persian translation and marginal Persian Commentary, transcribed in Kashmir 1759-60. Source: Gulistan Library, Tehran, 949; Badri Atabay, *Fihrist-i-quranha-yikhattiyikitabhana-yisalatanati* (Tehran, 1351/1981), No 37. C.f. Sheila S. Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy*, 550-551

was decorated with a simple engraved design, with the rest of the metal left plain. The common designs engraved on vessels were arabesque representations of animals and calligraphy texts. Later, the inlay was used to create a more sophisticated style of decoration.<sup>33</sup> Perhaps the most attractive and the best items produced in copper include

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<sup>33</sup> J.L Bhan, "Metalware, Pottery and Stonework," in *Crafts of Jammu, Kashmir & Ladakh*, ed. Jaya Jaitly (Ahmedabad: Mapin Publishing Pvt. Ltd., 1990), 184.

the *surrahis*, *jugs*, *tramies* (rice-eating plates), *degchee* (big rice cooking pot). *Tashtaries* (mobile hand washing basins), *tore* (rice-eating bowls), *sarposh* (lids for tramies), *samavars* (kettle for preparing tea), ladles, *lotas* (water tumbler) and *huqqas* (hubble-bubble) are the things common use produced by copper smiths.<sup>34</sup> These vessels are decorated with Persian calligraphy, interspersed with bands of chinar leaf patterns, ferns and cypress leaves. Craftsmen employ simple instruments and frequently work in darkly lit areas to create wonderful pieces of art.<sup>35</sup>

**The Kashmiri Calligraphers and Mughal Court:** One of the greatest calligraphers of the age was Muhammad Hussain Kashmiri. Abul Fazl writes about him as:

The artist who, in the shadow of the throne of His Majesty (Akbar), has become a master of calligraphy is Muhammad Husain of Kashmir. He has been honoured with the title *Zarrinqalam*, the golden pen. He surpassed his master, Maulana Abdul Aziz; his *maddat* (extensions) and *dawair* (curvatures) show every where a proper proportion to each other, and the art critics consider him equal to Mulla Mir Ali.<sup>36</sup>

Muhammad Hussain Kashmiri was the pupil of Maulana Abdal Aziz of Kashmir and both may have been patronized by Mirza Haider Dughlat, who might have introduced

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<sup>34</sup> D.N Dhar, *Artisan of the Paradise: A Study of Art and Artisans of Kashmir: From Ancient to Modern Times* (New Delhi: Himalayan Research and Cultural Foundation & Bhavana Books and Prints, 1999), 177.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 62; J.L Bhan, "Metalware, Pottery and Stonework," in *Crafts of Jammu, Kashmir & Ladakh*, ed. Jaya Jaitly, 184, 186.

<sup>36</sup> Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol-I, 96-102; Mir' Ali was a great painter who invented the feminine and dancing script known as *Nastali*. See D. Barrett, "The Islamic Art of Persia" in *The Legacy of Persia*, 138-39.

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Muhammad Hussain to Humayun's court.<sup>37</sup> Akbar called Muhammad Hussain Kashmiri as *Jadu-raqam* (the writer whose penmanship has the effect of magic).<sup>38</sup> As being the renowned calligrapher of the times Akbar rewarded him with the sum of one thousand gold *mohur*.<sup>39</sup> As a mark of his great respect for Muhammad Husain's abilities, Jahangir presented him with an elephant, referring to him as "the chiefs of the elegant writers of the day."<sup>40</sup> Muhammad Husain was the most famous *nastaliq* calligrapher at the court of Akbar. He had a long career that lasted to Akbar and Jahangir's reign. He developed a bewildering variety of *Nastaliq* calligraphies during his long active career. Many people could mistake the work from the same hand for specimens from different hands because he could write so effectively and openly in so many different ways in the same style. He was a 'restless genius' who could never be happy with only one form of writing. His experiments seemed infinite, just as the beauty of his art was unassailable.<sup>41</sup> Muhammad Hussain Kashmiri copied *Gulistan* of Sadi at Ftehpur Sikri near Agra in 1581 and the Amir Khuraw's *Khamsa* at Lahore, completed in 1597.<sup>42</sup> Towards the end of his active career, he succeeded in producing calligraphic specimen's that seemed to defy the ravages of time and proclaim the everlasting youth of artistic existence. Specimens of his calligraphy are now on display at the

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<sup>37</sup> Pratapaditya Pal, "Painting and Calligraphy (1200-1900)" in *The Arts of Kashmir*, ed. Pratapaditya Pal, 169.

<sup>38</sup> G.M.D Sufi, *Kashir*, II, 559, vide *Tazkira-i-Khushnavisan* by Maulana Ghulam Muhammad, *Haft Qalam* of Delhi, edited by Maulavi Hidayat Husain, and published by the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 79.

<sup>39</sup> Sheila S. Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy*, 534, 535.

<sup>40</sup> *Tuzuk*, Vol-I, 97.

<sup>41</sup> P.I. SMustafizur Rahman, *Mughal Calligraphy*, *Islamic Studies*, 242.

<sup>42</sup> Pratapaditya Pal, "Painting and Calligraphy (1200-1900)" in *The Arts of Kashmir*, ed. Pratapaditya Pal, 169; Sheila S. Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy*, 537, 540

British Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, and Bankipore's Oriental Public Library.<sup>43</sup> He died in 1611.<sup>44</sup>

Another Kashmiri calligrapher was Ali Chaman Kashmiri, who was attached to Akbar's court and was very famous.<sup>45</sup> Haji Bahram was also a noted calligrapher. His scribed Quran could bring a huge sum of 10,000 tankas.<sup>46</sup>



<sup>43</sup> P.I.S Mustafizur Rahman, Mughal Calligraphy, *Islamic Studies*, 242

<sup>44</sup> G.M.D Sufi, *Kashir*, II, 559

<sup>45</sup> *Ain*, Vol-I, 103.

<sup>46</sup> A.M. Mattoo, *Kashmir Under Mughals*, 190.

## 28 | Islamic Calligraphy

**Figure VI:** Colophon page of *Gulistan* of Sadi copied by Muhammad Hussain Kashmiri, 1581. Portriat of the calligrapher and self by Manohar. Royal Asiatic Society .Cat. No 258. C.f. Pratapaditya Pal, *The Arts of Kashmir*, 169.

Shah Jahan's court calligraphist was Muhammad Murad Kashmiri. Shah Jahan bestowed the title of *Shirin Qalam* (the sweet pen) upon him. His influence on contemporary calligraphers was enormous. The big calligraphers of the age were fond of his majestic style. His letters were widely lauded for their excellent curvature. His art of calligraphy is mature and graceful.<sup>47</sup> He was a pupil of Mulla Mir Hussain *Zarrin Qalam* and followed the *Shalgami* style, despite his teacher excelling in the *Badami* style. He scribed the inscriptions in various imperial buildings.<sup>48</sup> Not only the art of calligraphy encouraged by the Mughal emperors but calligraphists for their excellence often receive awards and other prizes indicating there by rulers association with this art to serve their mundane as well as spiritual aspects of life.

Muhammad Muhsin, Muhammad Murad's younger brother, was also a well-known calligraphist.<sup>49</sup> Mulla Baqir Kashmiri, who served Shah Jahan and was a master of *Nastaliq*, *Ta'liq Nask*, and *shikast*, was also in his service.<sup>50</sup> In Kashmir, the scripts used for calligraphy generally were as: in Persian - *Nasta'liq* (is used to write the Perso-Arabic script in the Persian and Urdu languages, often used also for Turkish poetry, rarely for Arabic), *Shikast* (or *Shekasteh*

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<sup>47</sup> Mulla Muhammad Salih, *Amal-i-Saleh or Shahjahannama*, trans. Mumtaz Liyaqat (New Delhi: AlHasanat Books Pvt. Ltd, 2008), 583; *Tuzuk*, Vol-I, 97.

<sup>48</sup> A.M. Matoo, *Kashmir Under Mughals*, 190.

<sup>49</sup> Sufi, *Kashir*, II, 559; Ali Azzari, *Arabic Calligraphy: Elements and Featutres*:  
124([https://www.researchgate.net/publication/345977856\\_ARABIC\\_CALLIGRAPHY\\_ELEMENTS\\_AND\\_FEATURES](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/345977856_ARABIC_CALLIGRAPHY_ELEMENTS_AND_FEATURES));<https://iranicaonline.org/articles/calligraphy>; [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nastaliq#Shekasteh\\_Nastaliq](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nastaliq#Shekasteh_Nastaliq)(Accessed on 12/7/2020)

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

*Nastaliq*-cursive *Nastali* or literally ‘broken *Nastaliq*’) style is a ‘streamlined’ form of *Nastaliq*. In this style, some of the letters were shrunk (*shekasta*, lit. ‘broken’) and de-tached letters and words were sometimes joined. These unauthorized connections mean that calligraphers can write *shikasta* faster than any other script), *Nakhun* (a Persian calligraphywritten with the nail of a thumb), *Gulzar* (decorative style of script, filled with various motifs,is called *gulzar*, which literally means ‘rose garden’ or ‘full of flowers’), *Shikast-amiz*, and *Shifa*. In Arabic-*Kufi* (earliest extant Islamic style of hand written alphabet that was used byearly Muslims to record the Quran.), *Naskh* (is a smaller, round script of Islamic calligraphy.It is one of the first scripts of Islamic calligraphy to develop, commonly used in writing administrative documents and for transcribing books, including the Quran, because of its easy legibility. This script at first stood on a par with *Kufic*. *Nask* is a sans-serif script, meaning characters lack ‘hooks’ on the ends of ascending and descending strokes), *Suls* (solemn letterswith curved and rectilinear elements, which are correlated in proportions), *Makramat*, *Riqā* (cursivefont), and *Raihan* (exquisite letters like basil flower).<sup>51</sup>

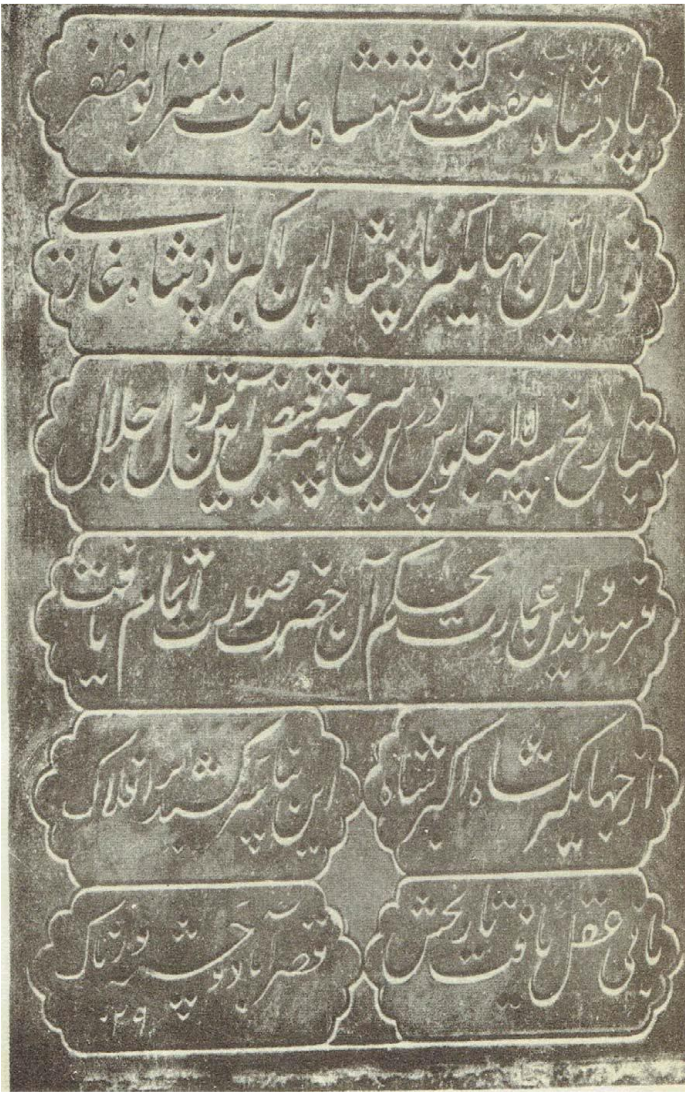
Mughal rulers encouraged the calligraphy art in Kashmir. Among the different stylesof calligraphy, they promoted *Nastaliq* in round Persian features. Its examples can be seen on number of copper, silver and gold coins of Mughal rulers and at arcade of Verinag spring, Kathi Darwaza at Hariparbat forteand in other Mughal buildings.<sup>52</sup>

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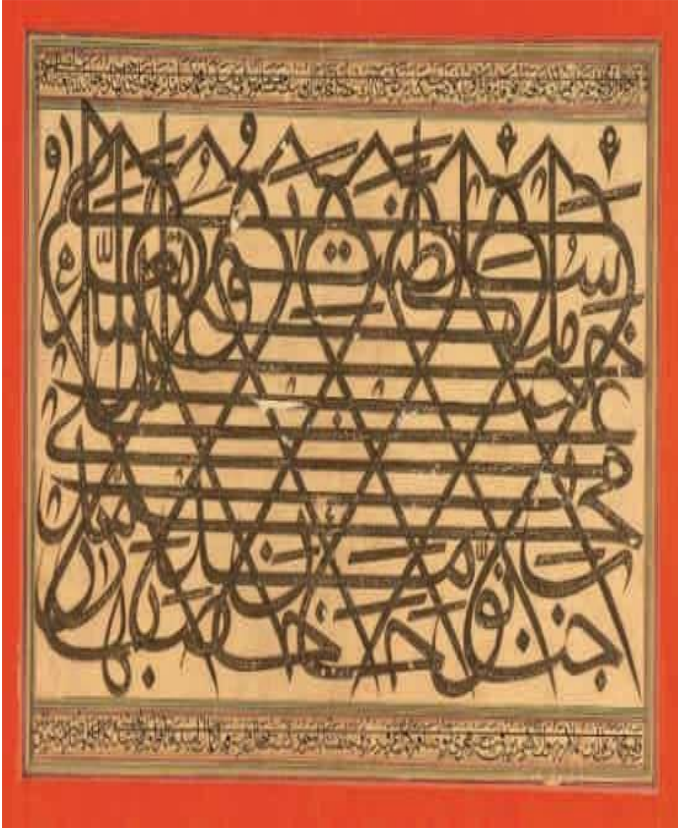
<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 560.

<sup>52</sup> <https://www.greaterkashmir.com/todays-paper/editorial-page/exploring-the-mughalepigraph>(Accessedon20 March2022)

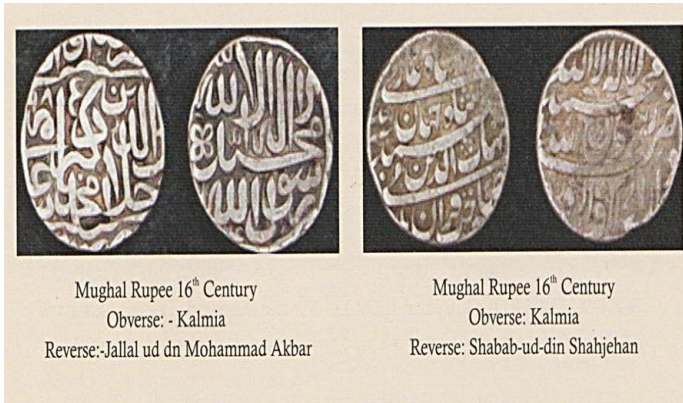




**Figure VII:** Emperor Jahangir's inscription calligraphed in *Nastaliq* style in Persian at Verinag Spring. Source: G.M.D Sufi, *Kashir*, Vol. II, 54.



**Figure VIII:** Different styles of calligraphy, *Nasq*, *Thuluth*, *Thuluth Tai'm*, *Tughra Thuluth Matarakib*, *Nastaliq Vamumy*, *Tughra Rumi* illustrated by Kashmiri artists associated with Rampur region, these were Ghulam Rasool Kashmiri, Mohd Ali Kashmiri (1894), Mohd Ali Kashmiri (1904), Mirza Mohd Ali (1339), Mohd Ali Kashmiri (1319), Mohd Ali Kashmiri (1310), Agha Mohd Bakir Kashmiri (1904), Mohd Hassan Kashmiri (1310), Mohd Lutufullah Kashmiri (1302), Hussain Bin Mohd Ali (1273) etc. Source: Catalogue of Calligraphy Manuscripts, Rampur Raza Library, 10, 41.



**Figure IX:** Mughal Rupee 16<sup>th</sup> in Kashmir with *Nastaliq* script. Courtesy: J & K Museum Speaks History, Culture and Ethos, Department of Archives, Archaeology and Museums J & K Govt. (Srinagar: 2017), 35.

**Conclusion:** Writing thus became one of the main vehicles to signify power, belief, legitimacy and many other ideas and ideologies for which images are used elsewhere. Islamic culture is, in the words of Eric Dodd ‘the image of the word.’ The Islamic art of calligraphy in Kashmir symbolizes and represents the divine and aesthetic language of Islam. Though the writing was legitimized by the rulers from time to time to signify their balance of power among regions of the empire. If we take the case of Mughal rulers in Kashmir, many calligraphers of the valley joined the imperial court after its conquest. It showed, on the one hand, the decline of the regional art, but, on the other hand, more opportunities for the artists opened up, as the region was connected to the mighty empire. Moreover, the native master calligraphers of Kashmir lost their independent spirit and local aesthetic belongingness, as they no longer served the kings of Kashmir but obeyed the orders of the Mughal rulers.

## **‘Culture’ in the making of Class-consciousness: E.P. Thompson’s idea of Social History**

*Idrees Kanth*

**Abstract:** *In any given society, we cannot understand the parts unless we understand their function and roles in relation to each other and in relation to the whole. The ‘truth’ or success of such a holistic description can only be discovered in the test of historical practice.<sup>1</sup>*

*I think that an immense amount of historiography, certainly in Britain had seen society within the expectations, the self-image and the apologetics of a ruling class: ‘the propaganda of the victors.’ Hence, to recover an alternative history often involves a polemic against an established ideology.<sup>2</sup>*

**Preface:** The two quotes above define the intellectual orientation and polemics of Edward Palmer Thompson, one of the most prominent British historians of the twentieth century. His foremost intellectual writings, which have been on eighteenth century English social history, have had a profound influence on Marxist historiography and historical practice in general. Thompson was also an accomplished political activist all his life. His breakup from the Communist party in 1950s became the basis for an experiential or cultural turn and a rethinking of Marxist theory that eventually inspired the rise of British New Left in the 1960s.

Cultural considerations were crucial for Thompson to class formation, and this was one of his contributions to Marxist historiography. The fact that he espoused certain notions about the “Peculiarities of English”, as I elaborate in the paper ahead, would mean that he gave primacy to cultural experiences in shaping a particular consciousness. Or it could even be that his writing was itself intervened by the

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<sup>1</sup> E. P. Thompson, “Eighteenth Century English Society: Class struggle without class?” *Social History*, Vol. 3, No. 2, May 1978, pp. 133-165, p 133.

<sup>2</sup> In an interview to Mike Merrill, coordinator of the *Institute for Labour education* in New York City, in March 1976 for *MARHO* (The Radical Historians Organization), published in Henry Abelove et.al, *Visions of History*, Manchester University Press, 1983, p. 8, henceforth, *Visions of History*.

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inescapable and deeply penetrative cultural experiences, with all its peculiarities and biases. The present paper attempts to analyse Thompson's ideas around 'culture' and its role in shaping class-consciousness, and his predisposition as an historian in attempting to recover the plebeian culture.

**Defining 'class':** In the preface to his book *The Making of the English Working Class*, E. P. Thompson defines class not "as a 'structure', nor even as a 'category', but as something which in fact happens (and can be shown to have happened) in human relationships."<sup>3</sup> He further qualifies the statement by saying that "class is defined by men as they live their own history, and in the end, this is its only definition."<sup>4</sup>

Elsewhere he says "we continue to employ the heuristic category of class (despite this ever-present difficulty) not from its perfection as a concept but from the fact that no alternative category is available to analyse a manifest and universal historical process."<sup>5</sup> And yet he says, "We know about class because people have repeatedly behaved in class ways; these historical events disclose regularities of response to analogous situations, and at a certain stage (the 'mature' formation of class) we observe the creation of institutions, and a culture with class notations, which admits of trans-national comparisons."<sup>6</sup>

It seems he situates himself somewhere between the idea that a class and class-consciousness automatically develops due to a certain relationship to the means of production, and the opposing viewpoint that class is false and arbitrarily defined. Thus he sees class formation as an intricate development with progressions and failures. As Thompson puts it:

It is easy to suppose that class takes place, not as a historical process, but inside our heads....and from this

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<sup>3</sup> E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, New York: Vintage Books, 1966, p. 9, henceforth, *Making of the English Working Class*.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>5</sup> E.P. Thompson, "Eighteenth Century English Society", p. 148.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 147.

(false) reasoning there arises the alternative notion of class as a *static*...In my view too much of theoretical attention (much of it plainly a-historical) has been paid to 'class', and far too little to class struggle. All this squalid mess around us (whether sociological positivism or Marxist-structural idealism) is the consequence of the prior error: that classes exist, independent of historical relationship and struggle, and that they struggle *because* they exist, rather than coming into existence out of that struggle.<sup>7</sup>

For Thompson, class is a historical phenomenon that is derived from the observation of social process over time, unifying a number of disparate and seemingly unconnected events, both in the raw material of experience and in consciousness.<sup>8</sup> Emphasising its historicity he says that classes do not exist as separate entities, look around to find the enemy and then start a struggle, but on the contrary:

People find themselves in a society structured in determined ways, they identify points of antagonistic interest, they commence to struggle around these issues and in the process of struggling they discover themselves as classes, they come to know this discovery as class consciousness. Class and class-consciousness are always the last, and not the first, stage in the real historical process.<sup>9</sup>

By emphasising on 'experience', Thompson wanted to convey that culture mediated class-consciousness, and that the working class itself would not have existed as a self-conscious independent agent without the determined political activity of many thousands of people. Was it in that sense of 'becoming', that Thompson wrote of *Eighteenth century English society: class struggle without class*, especially because he maintained that class (the end product) in its modern usage only became available to the cognitive system

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., pp. 147- 149.

<sup>8</sup> E. P. Thompson, *Making of the English Working Class*, p. 9.

<sup>9</sup> E. P. Thompson, "Eighteenth Century English Society", p. 149.

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of people living in the nineteenth century industrial capitalist society?

Thompson's focus on class as a dynamic phenomenon and his stress on human agency inevitably meant his critique of the economic determinism and structural Marxism model. It also meant that Marx and Marxism could be interpreted variously. He saw within structural Marxism a silence as to cultural and moral mediations: the way material experiences were handled by human beings culturally; the way in which there were certain value systems that were consonant with certain modes of production and certain modes of production and productive relations that were inconceivable without consonant value systems. As he wrote:

This became a major theoretical problem for me: when some of my comrades were re-examining the entire history of communism and of Stalinism in search of theoretical, strategic, or even tactical clues to its degeneration, I remained transfixed by the problem of the degeneration of the theoretical vocabulary of mainstream orthodox Marxism – the impoverishment of its sensibility, the primacy of categories that denied the effective existence (in history or in the present) of the moral consciousness... but it did not entail opposition to Marxism; rather, it entailed rehabilitating lost categories and a lost vocabulary in the Marxist tradition.<sup>10</sup>

**Writing social history:** What concerned E. P. Thompson foremost was how non-economic sanctions and invisible rules govern behaviour quite as powerfully as military force, or economic domination. That made him to search and examine morality and value systems as in the 'moral economy' of the food-rioting crowd, but not in the supposedly classic liberal way — as areas of free choice divorced from economics — nor yet in one classic sociological or anthropological way, in which societies and economies are seen as dependent upon value systems, but as the dialectic of interaction, the dialectic between economics and values.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *Visions of History*, p. 21.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

It was within this framework that he read eighteenth century social history and the making of the working class in England. *The Making of the English Working Class*, a history of the English labouring poor between 1790 and 1832, written in 1963, began by announcing that it is a study in a active process, which owes as much to agency as to conditioning.<sup>12</sup> The work arose from a two-sided theoretical polemic. On the one hand it was a critique of the tradition of economic history and the orthodox political economists, which was largely contaminated with capitalist ideology. On the other hand it was a polemic against abbreviated economistic notations of Marxism. In this tradition the very simplified notion of the creation of the working class was that of a determined process. As Thompson put it, rather disapprovingly: “Steam power plus the factory system equals the working class; some kind of a raw material, like peasants flocking to factories.”<sup>13</sup> Thompson was polemicising against this notion in order to show that the existing plebeian consciousness was refracted by new experiences in social being, thus giving rise to a transformed consciousness.

Thompson seems to have had the view that there was a transformative period falling roughly within the years 1789 and 1832. He argued that a significant part of the British experience in these years was the formation of the structures, oppositions and contradictory cultures of class. In his essay, *Patrician Society, Plebeian Culture*, Thompson directed attention to the actual erosion of paternalist forms of control through the expansion of free, master-less labour, and the growth of employment opportunities outside gentry control.<sup>14</sup> But as he said:

Although this change was substantial, and had significant consequences for the political and cultural life of the nation, it did not present any ‘crisis’ to the older order. It was contained within the older

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<sup>12</sup> E. P. Thompson, *Making of the English Working Class*, p. 9.

<sup>13</sup> *Visions of History*, p. 7.

<sup>14</sup> E. P. Thompson, “Patrician Society, Plebeian Culture”, *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 7, Issue 4, Summer 1974, pp. 382–405. See also, E. P. Thompson, “Eighteenth Century English Society”, p. 144.



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structures of power, and the cultural hegemony of the gentry was not threatened, *provided that* the gentry met certain expectations and performed certain (partly theatrical) roles. There was, however, a *reciprocity* in gentry-plebs relations. The weakness of the spiritual authority of the Church made possible the resurgence of a most vigorous plebian culture removed from external controls.<sup>15</sup>

Cumulatively what it meant was that a society which was defined by customary agrarian practices, customary forms of initiation to skills (apprenticeship), customary expectations as to roles (domestic and social), customary modes of work and customary expectations and 'wants' or 'needs',<sup>16</sup> saw a loosening of customary or traditional forms of control. Thompson emphasised that in examining the forms of control in the eighteenth century, he had himself been increasingly using the notion of theatre. "In all societies of course" theatre is, as Thompson observed "an essential component both of political control and of protest or even rebellion. In eighteenth-century England, the law provides the most formidable theatre of control."<sup>17</sup>

So in Thompson's analysis, the basis of eighteenth century social relations was negotiation not subordination, conflict not consensus, structural reciprocity not pyramids of status and power.<sup>18</sup> At the same time, he specified that with growing class-consciousness, a resistance, which was emerging even if less articulate, was often very specific, direct and turbulent. It was for us therefore, as Thompson pointed out:

To supply the articulation, in part by de-coding the evidence of behaviour and in part by turning over the bland concepts of the ruling authorities and looking at

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<sup>15</sup> E. P. Thompson, "Eighteenth Century English Society", p. 145

<sup>16</sup> E. P. Thompson, *Making History: Writings on History and Culture*, New York: Times Press, 1994, p. 202.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 208-9.

<sup>18</sup> Peter King, "Edward Thompson's contribution to eighteenth-century studies. The patrician-plebeian model re-examined", *Social History*, Vol. 2, No. 2, May 1996, pp. 215-228, p. 218.

their undersides. If we do not do this we are in danger of becoming prisoners of the assumptions and self-image of the rulers: free labourers are seen as the 'loose and the disorderly sort', riot is seen as spontaneous and blind; and important kinds of social protest become lost in the category of crime.<sup>19</sup>

Eventually Thompson's decoding project became an inspiration for the growing number of bottom up studies of people whose history had been previously ignored. It also anticipated the emergence of subaltern studies in the latter half of twentieth century, especially in the South Asian region, where the *Subaltern Studies* collective attempted to formulate a new narrative of the history of India and South Asia with its essential focus on recovering the voices of masses at the base levels of society.

**Giving voice to the marginal:** But how far was Thompson successful in giving voice to the marginals in history? Returning back to *The Making of the English Working Class*, Thompson writes that:

I am seeking to rescue the poor stockinger, the Luddite cropper, the 'obsolete' hand-loom weaver, the 'utopian' artisan, and even the *deluded* follower of Joanna Southcott, from the enormous condescension of posterity. Their crafts and traditions may have been dying. Their hostility to the new industrialism may have been backward-looking. Their communitarian ideals may have been fantasies.....But they lived through these times of acute social disturbance, and we did not. Their aspirations were valid in terms of their own experience; and, if they were casualties of history, they remain, condemned in their own lives, as casualties.<sup>20</sup>

For Thompson, as a product of a different class, and of a time after industrialisation, he needed to be ever vigilant about his own inability to understand these people whose perspectives he was rescuing. But the question remains how effectively can

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<sup>19</sup> E. P. Thompson, "Eighteenth Century English Society", p. 150.

<sup>20</sup> E. P. Thompson, *Making of the English Working Class*, pp. 12-13.

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one recover the past and the experience of a different set of people? Every historian is inevitably biased, but to what extent do they impose their own values and writing styles into the meaning of history? In that sense Thompson retained assumptions about where that bottom lay that would shape his analysis of those who needed to be rescued. But the rescue attempt remained abortive. The very fact that Thompson described this follower as 'deluded' showed that there was some distance between his perspective and the follower's aspirations that were valid in terms of their own experience.

We should place alongside these considerations, the absence of gender in *The Making of the English Working Class*. Thompson's work has been critiqued for its lack of engagement with gender issues. Joan Scott has rightly claimed that in *The Making of the English Working Class*, the master codes that structure the narrative are gendered in such a way as to confirm rather than challenge the masculine representation of class.<sup>21</sup>

Not just women, but non-artisanal labourers and any non-English workers received little attention. In the chapter, 'Artisans and Others', quoting Henry Mayhew, E. P. Thompson makes a distinction between the artisan and the labourer thus: "In passing from the skilled operative of the west-end to the unskilled workman of the eastern quarter of London, the moral and intellectual change is so great, that it seems as if we were in a new land, and among another race."<sup>22</sup> The point is that Thompson perhaps retained assumptions about worthy, artisanal working class culture which needed to be valorised as against the 'deluded' culture thrown by the labourers. Even the Scots were also neglected in the *Making of the English Working Class*. While he apologised to his Scottish and Welsh readers, he however maintained that:

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<sup>21</sup> See, Joan Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1988. Also quoted in Madhavi Kale, Robert Gregg, "The Empire and Mr Thompson —The Making of Indian Princes and English Working Class", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 32, No. 36, Sept. 6, 1997, p. 2287.

<sup>22</sup> E. P. Thompson, *Making of the English Working Class*, pp. 240-41.

I have neglected these histories, not out of chauvinism, but out of respect. It is because class is a cultural as much as an economic formation that I have been cautious as to generalizing beyond English experience... We had no peasantry in England comparable to the Highland migrants. And the popular culture was very different. It is possible at least until the 1820's to regard the English and Scottish experience as distinct.<sup>23</sup>

In many ways thus E. P. Thompson fell back on many stereotypes in describing labourers. Talking about the industrial work discipline of the English labourers as against the Irish immigrants, he writes:

This discipline as we have seen requires steady methodical application, inner motivations of sobriety, forethought, and punctilious observation of contracts; in short, the controlled paying-out of energies in skilled or semi-skilled employments. By contrast, the heavy manual occupations at the base of industrial society [which were held by the Irish] required a spendthrift expense of sheer physical labour – an alternation of intensive labour and boisterous relaxation which belongs to pre-industrial labour rhythms and for which the English artisan or weaver was unsuited both by reason of his weakened physique and his Puritan temperament.<sup>24</sup>

Further, as Thompson argues:

Dr. Kay, who made enquires as to the value of Irish labour among Lancashire employers in 1835 found that English labourers were preferred in all skilled occupations, having “that steady perseverance which factory employment peculiarly requires”. “The English are more steady, cleanly, skilful labourers, and are more *faithful* in the fulfilment of contracts made between master and servant.”<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., pp. 432-33.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 433.

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Pronouncing his judgment on the weakness among the Irish and trying to be generous to them, Thompson concludes that the laziness was the consequence of want of application rather than any natural incapacity; it was a moral and not an intellectual defect.<sup>26</sup> At the same time, Thompson believed that immigration to England had helped the Irish labourer learn work and discipline for there was something 'peculiar to England'. As he put it: "In his own country, he is notoriously lazy and negligent in the extreme; after crossing the channel he became a model of laboriousness and enterprise."<sup>27</sup>

And yet Thompson would talk about his anti-imperialist upbringing with pride: "My father – both my parents, but my father in particular – was a tough liberal. He was a continuous critic of British imperialism, a friend of Nehru's and other national leaders. So I grew up expecting governments to be mendacious and imperialist and expecting that one's stance ought to be hostile to government."<sup>28</sup>

So how and where does one situate E. P. Thompson? When he describes working-class agency he does so mainly in opposition to capitalism. Besides he seems to give significance to the 'peculiarities of English' and retain notions of 'little Englandism' to class-consciousness. If that is really so, then class consciousness begins to seem like no more than one of England's 'peculiarities', otherwise it prompts the same question again: To what extent can one escape one's cultural baggage while thinking or writing history?

There is clearly a problem delineating a working class when certain groups are not taken into consideration. As Dipesh Chakrabarty remarks, Thompson's use of culture that leads to an accentuation of the 'Englishness' is bound to have important implications for the history of the working class formations outside of Britain. Chakrabarty notes:

Consider the wider problem that arises from the way he [Thompson] poses the question of culture. If the particular notions of a "free-born Englishman", of "equality before the law", and so on were the most

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 435.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 434.

<sup>28</sup> *Visions of History*, p. 11.

crucial heritages of the English working class in respect for developing class consciousness, what about the working classes - for instance, the Indian one - whose heritages did not include such baggage? Are the latter condemned then forever to a state of "low class-ness" unless they develop some kind of cultural resemblance to the English? <sup>29</sup>

We can also talk about other problems of Thompson's model. One obvious area of contention, the bipolar nature of his model (patrician-plebeian) and its tendency to marginalise 'the middling sort' clearly requires discussion.<sup>30</sup> At the same time, the title of his book reads 'English Working Class' and not 'classes' and that seems problematic. But Thompson could perhaps vindicate himself by saying that his history is about the English artisans and not about other working classes, and that is the reason they have been left out.<sup>31</sup> Eric Hobsbawm and others have also questioned the periodisation of *The Making of English Working Class* and have suggested that the 'making' may have occurred at a later time.<sup>32</sup> Though it is beyond the scope of this paper, a cursory mention can also be made of Thompson's employing the category of class outside the paradigm of empire, and if the category of class does not work with the empire in mind, it possibly does not work itself adequately.

**Conclusion:** All said and done, one needs to acknowledge that E. P. Thompson's brand of cultural history proved a very healthy intervention in historical scholarship. In many ways by highlighting human agency he restored human element to history which otherwise had been paralysed and pushed into oblivion in the quest to rescue 'The essential Marx'. He showed Marx could be read differently and that Marxism itself needed to 'become', and one perhaps could say that he

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<sup>29</sup> Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Rethinking Working Class History: Bengal, 1890-1940*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989, p. 222.

<sup>30</sup> Peter King, "Edward Thompson's contribution to eighteenth - century studies", p. 219.

<sup>31</sup> E. P. Thompson, *Making of the English Working Class*, p. 9.

<sup>32</sup> See, Eric Hobsbawm, *Workers: Worlds of Labour*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1984.

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became the agency for that, through his work and through his politics. By highlighting human intervention his work provided impetus to the new genre of history from below.

I conclude by quoting from a lecture of his, delivered at the Indian History Congress, in December 1976, which sums up the essential E. P. Thompson for us:

So what we have to do, in England, is to re-examine old, long collected material, asking new questions of it, and seeking to recover lost customs and the beliefs which informed them. These questions, when we examine a customary culture, may often be concerned less with processes and logic of change than with recovery of past states of consciousness and the texturing of social and domestic relationships.... As some of the leading actors of history recede from our attention – the politicians, the thinkers, the entrepreneurs, the generals – so an immense supporting cast, whom we supposed to be mere attendants upon this process, press themselves forward.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> E. P. Thompson, *Making History: Writings on History and Culture*, pp. 204-5

## **Rural Society of Kashmir: Amusements, Recreation and Transformation**

*Shiraz Ahmad Dar, Audil Umar Lone*

**Abstract:** *One of the primary concerns of this paper is to capture the process of changes in amusements and recreation that occurred in rural Kashmir since 1947 following the changes in governance, economy, education, communication and more recent modernization and globalization. In this paper, an attempt has been made to study the impact of these developments on amusements and recreation. It begins with a discussion on traditional amusements and recreation and thereupon other changes have been documented systematically. The paper is based on both conventional and non-conventional sources. Census reports, vernacular literature and oral information has been used for a holistic understanding of the theme under reference.*

Change is a universal phenomenon. No society remains static. The rural society of Kashmir over the period also changed. Although the process of change started during the Dogra rule from the 1890s onwards as a result of the role of Christian missionaries, the spread of modern education, the establishment of modern health care institutions, certain tenancy reforms and the establishment of communication links in the form of various roads with the outside world. However, it accelerated only after 1947, when the fetters of autocratic rule were thrown away. Measures initiated by the popular government in the post-1947 era set the track for the spread of education, awareness, growth in income and employment of the inhabitants in a more vibrant form. Waves of this change got manifested in the overall living conditions of the people. The status of women, dress, food habits, amusements and recreation of the people did not remain immune to all these developments and as such registered a significant change.

The historical accounts written so far about Kashmir are mostly silent on this subject and there is no mention of games that were usually played by people during their leisure



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time. Walter R. Lawrence, the keen observer of Kashmiri society, is also of the same view. He writes that, 'there are no games for young or old, and in the villages, there is no leisure for games. Life is earnest, and the child who can walk can work'.<sup>1</sup> Even Earnest F. Neve, (1861–1946) a British Christian surgeon, who was on a medical mission to Kashmir during Dogra times, wrote:<sup>2</sup>

With the village people, however, life is too serious for games; and children, beginning as early as their fourth and fifth year, fetch water, go into the jungle for firewood, supplement their scanty vegetable diet by digging up edible plants, and tend the cattle, taking them or the village flocks daily, in the early morning, up to the nearest pastures, and returning with them in the evening.

There was a paucity of games for the grownups, old men and women, but it nevertheless means that people do not possess the sense of games. Needless to mention, that Kashmiris until trecent past were living a life of servitude. They had borne the atrocities and exploitation of several feudal regimes from times immemorial. During the Dogra times, they were supposed to work from dawn to dusk either as bonded agricultural labourers or as petty workers in *Karkhanas* (small scale industries). Given this busy schedule and paupers lifestyle a Kashmiri, of course, could not develop the taste of costly games, but he played less expensive and simple games. Those games, however, failed to catch the attention of foreign travelers, and they as such ignored them to be mentioned in their travel accounts. However, after consulting the non-conventional sources like folklore and other oral traditions following description of traditional games and recreation can be made.

Several games were played by children during leisure. Some of the children's games were *chep-chour*, *kaneh marven*, *zang tarr*, *guti* etc. The *chep chour*, also called hide and seek,

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<sup>1</sup> Walter R. Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, London: Oxford University Press, 1895, p. 255.

<sup>2</sup> Ernest F. Neve, *Things Seen in Kashmir*, London: Seely Service and Co. 1931, p. 157.

was played in the late evening particularly on moonlit nights. Several boys were participating in this game. The game used to start with closing the eyes of one of the boys by another boy with his hands. In the meantime, others were required to run away and hide at different places so that they may not be easily traceable. After this, the boy was let off to seek out the other players. If he succeeded to get any one of them, the latter was required to function as the next searcher. If he failed, he was to repeat the process and search absentees for the second time.<sup>3</sup>

Another game played was called *kaneh marven* or stone striking. Only two participants, each holding a small stone, in his hand were required to play this game. One of the participants used to throw his stone over a distance of 4 to 5 yards and the other was required to make it a target by striking it with the stone in his hand. If he successfully stroked it then the first player was required to lift him bodily on his shoulders and carry him to the place where the striking stone was lying. If he failed in this target chasing, then it was his turn to throw the stone and of the first player to chase and strike it.<sup>4</sup>

*Zang tarr* was played by about a dozen of children, who by majority select one of them whose eyes were closed by another boy, sitting at his back, with his hands. He was required to spread his legs on the ground and the remaining boys were required to cross over them. Every boy who used to cross was touching the leg thereby indicating that someone has crossed over his legs. In case he quoted or uttered the incorrect name the practice was repeated and continued on the same boy till he used to quote the names correctly.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The game has been documented in the census report of 1961 as well. For details see *Census of India 1961: Aishmuqam a Village Survey*, New Delhi: Manager of Publications, 1969, pp. 51-52.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. Although it has been reported from Aishmuqam, a village in south Kashmir's Anantnag District, it would have been played in other rural areas as well.

<sup>5</sup> This game has been documented in, *Census of India 1961, Vol. VI Part VI. No. 2, Village Survey Monograph of Mattan*, New Delhi: Manager of Publications, 1969, pp. 40-41.

The game of *gutti* was played by any number of children with nuts or pice.<sup>6</sup> *Leth kig loth, tulay loungun, okus bokus, ate sawary istambaray, eny katar, kath shahey bam, saza long, gieer bachan, aaro barov.*<sup>7</sup> *Kerkich mohul, garm, tenchen gindun, dad dab* (wrestling), were other games played by children.<sup>8</sup> *Kabbaddi* was also played in leisure by young and comperately old together.

During winters neighbours would gather in a house after dinner and listen to a man called *Daleel-e-Gour* and *Kitab Paran Voul*. The former generally belonged to the shepherd community and the later a local villager knowing Persian, Urdu and Kashmiri. The popular romantic *masnavies*, romantic and war epics like *Gulrez, Laila Muijnoon, Gule Bakawali, Dastan-e-Amir Hamza, Sheeran Farhad, Shama-Poanpoor* were recited especially during the long winter nights. These tales were translated from Persian literature into Kashmiri. The local tales like *akanandun, hemal naigray* were also enjoyed. Besides, some other religious epics like that of *karballah* were also recited. *Kehwa* or *noonhay* was served at the occasion. This would last till late at night or for several nights till the whole story was completed. Some of the well-known epic or masnavi reciters of Kashmir were Wali Agur from Kulgam, Aziz Shah from Nambal, Mukhtar Mir from Chevdera, Subhan Shah from Darigan, Aziz Lone from Nanil, Nabi Thoker from Aung Matipora, Khalil Dar and Ghulam Usman from Sopore.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> In this game a hole of about 3 inch diameter and 2 inch depth was sunk in the soil which was called *guti*. For a detailed description of this game see, *Village Survey Monograph of Mattan*, p. 40.

<sup>7</sup> Nazir Gh Nabi, (Kash.) *Kashri Ginden Trai*, Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Language, 1972. The author has compiled several games *Shure Gindne* played by children in Kashmir since immemorial times. According to him, there were some fifty games *Gindne* of male children, twelve games *Gindne* of female children and nineteen games *Gindne* were played by both the sexes.

<sup>8</sup> Mohammad Ahmad Indrabi, "Sein Ginden", in Mohammad Yousuf Taing, (ed.) *Kashir: Sun Adab*, Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art culture and Languages, 1978, p. 330.

<sup>9</sup> Atash Ghulam Nabi, *Intangible Cultural Heritage of Kashmir*, Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir, Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, 2018, p. 78.

Listening to music and watching *Bande Pather* and *Dambali* was also a favorite pastime. *Band Pather* served as an appealing and exciting source of entertainment and recreation. "Their orchestra' [group]", writes Walter R. Lawrence, "usually consists of four fiddles with a drum in the center, or of clarionets and drums, but the company often contains twenty members or more...Their acting is excellent and their songs are often very pretty...The *Bhaggats* are very pleasant people and their mirth and good humour form a cheerful contrast to the gloom of the Kashmiri peasant... They relieve the sadness of the village life in Kashmir".<sup>10</sup> Another group was that of *Dhamal fakir* who used to present dance called locally as *dhamel* at the shrines of Rishis and Saints at the time of their anniversaries, urs, and fairs.<sup>11</sup> *Dhameil* is performed at shrines located at Darigam, Chadoora, Wathora, Zolar, Aushmuqam, Bijbehara and Lalbab Sahib, Zakoora, Hazratbal.<sup>12</sup>

*Ladishah* was another folk entertainer who used to recite humorous and satiric poetic compositions in a peculiar tune. With all astonishment and humor he used to criticize modern social changes, tensions of joint family, the *khanadamadi* institution, unusual events and even aggressive revenue officials, anti-social elements and religious exploiters.<sup>13</sup>

*Rov* also called *rouf* was a popular traditional folk songs-cum-dance of women and a source of entertainment. While performing *rov*, women used to sing melodious songs particularly on festive occasions of *idd*, *shabi qader*, *shabi mehraj* etc. After completing their routine work, women would assemble in any courtyard called *angun* of the village after *magrib* prayers and would perform the *rov*. During the month of Ramadan it was performed during evening hours. Another important entertainment was *hikat*. It was performed by young girls by singing folk songs and holding hands firmly in a circle dance. It would last for few minutes.

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<sup>10</sup> Walter R. Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, pp. 312-313.

<sup>11</sup> Atash Ghulam Nabi, *Intangible Cultural Heritage of Kashmir*, p. 95.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

At times young men would encourage bullfighting, ram fighting and even chicken fighting called locally as *koker jang jang*. Besides, people would attend festivals called *Melas* usually held on the anniversaries of *Sofi* and *Reshi* Saints in different villages across the Valley.

From the eighties of the nineteenth century, new games like football, volleyball, cricket, hockey, boxing, golf, polo-vault, tennis, regatta and skiing were introduced by the Europeans with the establishment of Mission schools in the Valley.<sup>14</sup> With the passage of time, these games formed an integral part of the curriculum of the Christian missionary schools and became very popular among the Kashmiris. Moreover, various kinds of games, debates, lectures and occasional picnics were also encouraged.<sup>15</sup> This made school life attractive, besides strengthening the bond between the students and their school. Apart from the matches played by the schools, we also find matches organised by the State as public entertainment.<sup>16</sup> For instance, Maharaja Hari Singh organised various football matches in the newly opened playgrounds where hundreds of spectators witnessed the game.<sup>17</sup> Football, thus, became the *hashish* of the city people.<sup>18</sup>

There were golf clubs and polo grounds both in Srinagar and at famous health resort Gulmarg. Swimming and boating received a fresh fillip at the hands of the Europeans who organised competitions in this regard. Initially, Hindus showed reluctance in participating in these matches, but with the passage of time they discarded the old notions opposed to the playing of such games.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *Administrative Report of Jammu and Kashmir (1901-1904)*, p. 554; *Administration Report of J&K (1913-1914)*, p. 108; Biscoe, *Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade*, London: Seeley, Service & Co. Limited, 1922, pp. 280, pp. 296-297.

<sup>15</sup> Khan, Muhammad Ishaq, *History of Srinagar, (1846-1947): A Study of Socio-Cultural Change*, Srinagar: Aamir Publications, 1978, p. 95.

<sup>16</sup> *The Ranbir*, Sep., 16, 1924, Sep., 30, 1924; Sep., 07, 1926; Aug., 30, 1927; Sep., 20, 1927.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Khan, Muhammad Ishaq, *History of Srinagar*, p. 95.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 88 and 102.

Clubs, which provided another facility of recreation of the rich class, were also an European legacy. The Srinagar Club was the centre of amusements, and recreation for European visitors and permanent residents. It had six excellent tennis courts as well as a good 18-hole golf course laid out near Nedou's Hotel. Tennis tournaments and many golf competitions were held every year by the Club. The Amar Singh Club consisted mostly of Government officers, but it also included a limited number of visitors as temporary members every season.<sup>20</sup> Amar Singh, the father of the last Maharaja, Hari Singh was very fond of cricket. Therefore, Amar Singh Club, which was the best cricket ground in Kashmir, was named after him.<sup>21</sup> Maharaja Hari Singh was a lover of polo and he used to play this game twice or thrice a week on the polo-ground. A large number of people in Srinagar would come to watch Maharaja Hari Singh while playing polo.<sup>22</sup>

By 1947, there were three Cinema Halls in the city, one of which catered chiefly for Europeans and educated Indians.<sup>23</sup> Various *Anjumans* and *Sabhas* are said to have expressed their concern at the growing popularity of the cinema among the public. Resolutions were passed against the new means of entertainment.<sup>24</sup> The local press also referred to what they termed "moral degradation" caused by the cinema.<sup>25</sup>

It was on 1 July 1948, Sheikh Abdullah, the then Prime Minister of Jammu & Kashmir, inaugurated the Radio Kashmir Srinagar station near the Tourist Reception Centre in Srinagar. Its broadcasting station is still located in Srinagar near Zero or Abdullah Bridge. In addition to its routine programmes, it also broadcasted the programmes that could be called the entertainment programmes meant for the people at large. Some of the affluent families in Srinagar

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<sup>20</sup> *A Handbook of Jammu and Kashmir State*, Jammu: Ranbir Government Press, 1947, p. 5.

<sup>21</sup> Khan, Muhammad Ishaq, *History of Srinagar*, p. 95.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> *A Handbook of Jammu and Kashmir State*, p. 5.

<sup>24</sup> Khan, Muhammad Ishaq, *History of Srinagar*, p. 95.

<sup>25</sup> *The Ranbir*, Sep. 21, 1936.

possessed radio sets in the late nineteen thirties.<sup>26</sup> But the most important addition to the existing avenues of amusement and recreation was the introduction of the theatre.

Music remained the most popular form of entertainment for the listeners. *Chhaker teh Rouf*, *Sofiyana Kalam*, *Ladishah*, *Dramas*, *Dastans*, used to entertain the listeners. Ismal Mir, the famous *Dastan go* (storyteller) was a household name in Kashmir. Besides, reciting the *Dastans* on radio for wider audiences he along with his associates would recite *Dastans* in different villages as well. Different shows were held under shady trees and the large gatherings of people assembled to watch his performance.

Such was the attachment with the modern means of entertainment that villagers began to take the radio sets along with them to their fields. Radio Kashmir produced several Dramas in Kashmiri and Urdu, and the popular ones which are being still remembered by the people are Pushaker Bahan's *machama*, Farooq Nazki's *haba khatoon*, Sofi Ghulam Mohammad's *beech kath*, Shankar Raina's *bikus chi kus* etc.<sup>27</sup> In the early 1970s, one of the famous programmes broadcasted from Radio Kashmir Srinagar was *Zoondab* produced by Somnath Sadhu. *Zoon Dab* was aired for more than 19 years from Radio Kashmir, Srinagar.<sup>28</sup> This programme was both informative as well as a comedy. Radio Kashmir, Srinagar was also running a special drama every Monday at 9:30 PM. During January there used to be a Drama Festival in which popular plays of great content and value were aired. People, in general, used to love and enjoy listening to such dramas.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> *Census of India*, 1931, p. 141.

<sup>27</sup> Interview with Ghulam Nabi Atash, 2017.

<sup>28</sup> Such was the popularity of the programme that three of its characters namely Somnath Sadhu, Pushkar Bhan and Maryam Begum received *Padhma Shree* for their outstanding performance in the programme.

<sup>29</sup> Radio Kashmir, Srinagar also broadcasted programmes for the entertainment of children and women. Besides entertainment, education and moral lessons were also communicated to the radio listeners.

One of the important developments in the 1970's was the establishment of a television station in Srinagar. Though this Station used to broadcast its programmes only for a few hours and its audiences were minimal as compared to that of the radio listeners, primarily because the cost of the television set was so high that it was a luxurious item and choice of well-to-do households alone. Later on, Community Television sets were provided to villagers by the government. A television set was kept in the *Panchayat Ghar* where most of the villagers would assemble and watch the telecast. Gradually television emerged as the most important medium of entertainment and enjoyment. Different programmes with a variety of themes were telecasted from television. Folk songs, Hindi films of Bollywood, songs, serials, dramas, etc; were included in routine telecasts. Television emerged as an important medium that influenced the lifestyle of villagers in a significant way. That is why the conservative section of Kashmiri rural society often resented the installation of television sets, which, according to them were promoting immorality. Even some *molvis* issued *fatwa's* against those who installed television sets and various other recreational instruments like tape recorder, videocassette player, (V.C.P.) and videocassette recorder, (V.C.R.). A new trend that started in the early 70's was that youngsters in the rural populace used to bring V.C.P. and V.C.R. on rent from the nearby towns along with cassettes of Hindi featured films and enjoyed their watching.

Due to the growth of the education, a new literate public emerged from the so-called listening public. This group of people started to read novels, magazines, papers and other periodicals and books for the sake of entertainment. Modern games like football, cricket, volleyball, badminton, carom board, snake and ladder, chess, *kho kho*, hockey and tense assumed much popularity during the later period of our study. Although these games were introduced by Europeans during Dogra times in different schools of Srinagar, these games assumed much popularity only from the 1970s and 1980s onwards. Besides, being expensive such games were time-consuming as well. The government played a special



role in the building of different sports stadiums across the Valley.

Erstwhile *shure gindune* (child amusement) has almost disappeared by now. *Hikt* and *rov* are now the things of bygone times. The invasion of television, the internet and cinema overtook the tradition of *daleel gor* (storyteller) and now the treasure of Kashmiri folktales is only a material for the study of our rich cultural heritage.<sup>30</sup>

**Conclusion:** In conclusion, it may be mentioned that during the course of our study, people with ordinary and scanty income did not get attracted to amusements, and recreation. Leisure and recreation were monopolistic deeds of the British administrators, adventures, Maharajas and other elite sections of the urban society. The Western cultures like leisure and recreation could not touch the rural populace. Therefore, the recreational activities of the **rural** people were very simple and limited.

With the establishment of popular government and subsequent abolition of landlordism, introduction of economic planning and greater emphasis on the educational development generated new forces which marked the beginning of a new era in the history of Kashmir. Increase in literacy, spread of primary, secondary, technical and adult education, skill development of youth, introduction of modern means of communication, mass media, press, radio and TV, business and industry, boost in agricultural production and availability of diversified occupational structure changed the life of a common Kashmiri. With increase in income, the standard of the living of the common man became better. Customs, beliefs and traditions generally began to be tested on the basis of reason and scientific validity. Traditional dress began to be replaced by modern one. Diets of more nutritious value began to be taken. With increase in income new means of amusement and recreation began to be used. For example the tradition of story tellers who used to sit in the light of an earthen oil lamp was replaced by multichannel dish and Cable networks. Among

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<sup>30</sup> Atash Ghulam Nabi, *Intangible Cultural Heritage of Kashmir*, p. 117.

the most important aspects of life which got highly enriched by the Western influence were those related to amusement and recreation. Many new means of entertainment were introduced in Kashmir. Games like football, volleyball, cricket, hockey, boxing, golf, polo, tennis, regatta and skiing were introduced by the Europeans. With the passage of time, most of the games became popular in rural Kashmir also.

## Protection and Conservation of Water Bodies in Kashmir: Role of State and Society

Mehraj-ud-Din Dar

**Abstract:** *Conservation and Protection of Water bodies is a subject of serious and wider scholarly concern. However, in the context of Kashmir the absence of any significant documentation of the subject in the textual tradition makes it difficult to explore and understand the processes that aimed at the protection of water bodies. This paper attempts to piece together the available evidences for examining the role played by State and society in promoting protection and conservation processes through the ages. Based on varied category of sources which include archival material, ethnography and oral history this paper tries to situate the preservation-conservation ideas and practices in Kashmir in context of such similar developments in its neighbouring world. An attempt is made to trace out the policies and ways followed by traditional and modern state and society in dealing with the problems of protection and conservation of water resources in Kashmir.*

**Introduction:** The need for conservation of water bodies was felt by our predecessors and in Kashmir there was a tradition of respecting and preserving the nature and Water bodies. Water bodies such as springs were dedicated by the ancient Kashmiris to their deities and ancestral spirits.<sup>1</sup> Polluting waters of springs and other human interferences were strictly prohibited. The practice of worshipping springs and lakes was wide spread particularly in South and Central Kashmir<sup>2</sup> and it resulted in the protection of a large number of springs and Lakes in past. Similarly, several water bodies, e.g., Sodara Nag in Anantnag was declared sacred by people,<sup>3</sup> thus, protecting aquatic flora and fauna. Worshipping certain springs and rivers such as Verinag, Malaknag, Vitasta, and Sind etc., has

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<sup>1</sup> Pandit Kalhana, *Rajtarangni*, Vol II, Eng. Trans by M.A. Stein, ( Delhi: Motilal Banarasidas, 1900), p. 114.

<sup>2</sup> Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol II, Eng. Tr. H.S. Jarrett, (Calcutta: Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1949), p. 349.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

not only preserved them but also prompted the people for their preservation. History recalls numerous instances where people have conserved water bodies through different ways.

Kalhana speaks about how in Ancient times kings used to conserve the water by constructing dams and dykes.<sup>4</sup> It is said that the town of *Damodara-suda* was entirely in scarcity of water and an artificial dam named *Gudda-setu* was constructed for the conservation of water.<sup>5</sup> Dam, in this respect was an important artificial measure of preserving river water which was used for the irrigation and domestic purposes during the time of scarcity. No doubt State and people constructed number of canals for irrigation purposes but as far as construction of dams on large scale is concerned we don't get enough information during ancient times. But one can presume that protection of water bodies was the priority of the people in Kashmir. Surface water resources were considered the abode of Goddess in ancient Kashmir. So, in this context, Religion became another way through which water bodies remained preserved.

Historically, religion has been used as a powerful tool for conservation of nature. In this context, the belief and worshipping the Nagas (the serpent deities believed to be residing in the lakes and springs)<sup>6</sup> not only gave a sacred place to the water bodies in Kashmir but also created a strong belief that water bodies are inhabited by the fearful creatures. Nagas were considered as the guardians of the water bodies, one example as mentioned in Nilmatpurana is that of Mahapadma Nag—believed to be the guardian of Mahapadmasar. It is said that he drowned the residents of the *Chandrapur* city, Bandipura.<sup>7</sup> It was perhaps because of such beliefs that water bodies were highly revered by the people<sup>8</sup> in Kashmir even during medieval times. Pir Hassan says that

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<sup>4</sup> Kalhana, *Rajtarangni*, Vol I, p. 114.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p. 113

<sup>7</sup> Sayyed Ali, *Tarikh-i-Sayyed*, Eng. Tr. Dr.Zubida Jan,(Srinagar: Jay Kay Books, 2009), p. 53.

<sup>8</sup> Shonaleeka Koul, *The Making of Early Kashmir: Landscape and Identity in the Rajtarangni*, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 75-77.

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the water springs (Nag) were believed to be inhabited by demons. In one case he says that in *Ruzlu* spring it was believed that there were demons of wood, who during the period of calamities, would fight war against each other.<sup>9</sup> It is believed that locals heard such noises many times therefore, restricted themselves in using its water.<sup>10</sup> Reverence of water bodies can also be presumed from the writings of European missionary Tyndale Biscoe, who mentions in his book that the people of Kashmir were not aware about swimming and were drowned by the water.<sup>11</sup> Mentioning about the cause of the said problem he says that this was the result of their belief that water bodies are inhabited by some fearful creatures.<sup>12</sup> The same kind of stories about the water spirits particularly related to springs can be heard even in modern times at many places. The belief that stagnant water is dangerous and is inhabited by fearful creatures kept lakes particularly away from any anthropogenic pressure for a long period. Similarly, in order to avoid any kind of pollution in water people particularly children were asked that if they pee in the water body they have to pull their eyelashes as a mark of apology. These notions, for a long period played an important role in keeping water bodies alive in Kashmir. It was because of such religious beliefs that conservation emerged an important part of the cultural life of the people in the Valley of Kashmir.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ghulam Hassan, *Tariekh-i-Hassan*, vol. I, Eng. Tr. by A.R. Khan, (Srinagar: City Book Centre, 2014), p.99.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Tyndale Biscoe, *Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade*, (Srinagar: Gulshan Books 2005), p. 142.

<sup>12</sup> Shafi Ahmad Qadri., *Biscoe in Kashmir*, (Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, Kashmir, 1998), pp. 156-157.

The Naga tradition which was very popular up to the medieval times acts as law which protected our water bodies since ancient. It was because of such beliefs that the lakes like Wullar and Manasbal and all the other springs in Kashmir remained protected for a long period of time. As wullar was considered as the home of Mahapadma who used to take lives in the lake and springs called as Nag in Kashmiri are believed to be the home various goddesses. See Kalhana, *Rajtarangni*, vol II, pp. 114-119, AbulFazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, p. 522, Sonalikhakoul., *The Making of Early Kashmir: Landscape and Identity in the Rajtarangni*. p. 53.

Religion also forced rulers of ancient Kashmir to protect water bodies and their aquatic life. This is reflected from the fact that Kalhana, in one of his references says that after Suyya constructed an embankment around Wullar Lake, he banned the catching of fish from the lake.<sup>14</sup> The reason of banning the hunting of fish in the Lake is not mentioned by Kalhana. But many scholars believed that it was the Buddhist influence upon the Suyya. The Buddhist policy of *ahinsa* forced him to take such kind of steps. This step of banning of catching fish in Wullar Lake might have proved very much beneficial for the protection of Wullar. Modern scientific theories clearly mention the value of fish as the natural purifying agents of water bodies which further supported our argument that banning of catching fish in lakes was a novel method adopted by Suyya for the preservation of water bodies. After Suyya till the times of Zain-ul-Abidin, there is hardly any reference with regard to the conservation or to the management of the water bodies in Kashmir.

Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin paid much attention towards the beautification of the water bodies. From the writings of Jonaraja, it can be said that Zain-ul-Abidin was very much interested in the process of managing the water bodies. Jonaraja and Srivaramake it clear that construction of floating gardens in the Dal was started during Zain-ul-Aabidin's period. Economically, the floating gardens, as per the accounts of author of *Bahiristan-i-shahi* was a novel method of meeting the food crisis in Kashmir, but environmentally these gardens were very much harmful for the Lake. Realizing the issue of encroachment of Dal it is said that he issued a royal decree prohibiting farmers from converting shallow water area of the lake into new floating gardens. The impact of this concern was that the laying of the floating gardens remained only confined to a small part of the lake along the western bank.<sup>15</sup> Apart from the protection of the Dal Lake, the Sultan not only raised embankments and constructed islands in the lakes of Kashmir, but also constructed new

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., Vol I, V, p. 201.

<sup>15</sup> Srivara, *Zainataragni*, Eng. tr. J.C. Dutt, (Srinagar City Book Centre, 2007), p. 119.

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lakes and ponds. The lakes and ponds he constructed not only supplied water for agricultural fields, but also beautified the Kashmiri landscape. One such type of water body which Sultan constructed was the lake of *Zainasara*. Srivara mentions that Sultan beautified the town of *Padmapura* with the construction of an artificial lake called *Zainasara*.<sup>16</sup> This lake is still alive in Pulwama district, but in a shabby manner. In the same way Srivara mentions that Sultan also got two ponds built in *Jiapedpore* (modern Inderkot).<sup>17</sup> He mentions that one pond remained filled with milk and another contained one or other syrup or drink. In these statements, Srivara may be speaking about the pond containing the fresh water. It is said that in several tanks made by Sultan he prohibited the killing of birds and fish there.<sup>18</sup> This kind of care to the aquatic life was undoubtedly for the beautification of the water bodies which to the Sultan was a sign of prosperity of Kashmir. Thus, we can say Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin, took various important measures for conserving the water resources in a manner which the modern state unfortunately is not capable of.

Conservation of water resources received impetus with the establishment of the Mughal rule in Kashmir. Mughal emperors being the lovers of nature shared a common taste with Kashmiris that was the reverence for water. Much has been discussed by the chroniclers of the Mughal period about the quality, taste, and coldness of the water bodies of Kashmir.<sup>19</sup> Mughals perhaps were the first rulers in the Indian sub-continent who lavishly spent their money and paid attention towards the protection of the water bodies. This can be understood from the fact that many springs and lakes adjacent to Delhi were beautified and boundaries were constructed along the water bodies for keeping them fresh. After occupying Kashmir, all Mughal rulers found Kashmir

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p.124.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 126.

<sup>18</sup> Jonaraja, *Rajtarangni*, Eng. tr. J.C. Dutt, (Srinagar: City Book Centre), 2007, p. 69.

<sup>19</sup> Gordon Patterson., *Land and Water Iran, North India and Kashmir Measured drawings*, in ed. *The Gardens of Mughal India*, (Srinagar: Jay Kay books, 2006), p. 38.

very interesting for spending the hot days of summer in the cool climate of Kashmir. It was their pleasure loving nature and the natural beauty of Kashmir that encouraged them to construct gardens and for that purpose they chose spring and lake sites in Kashmir. Water bodies according to Bernier were fresh and charming and these sites remained highly attractive to them in Kashmir.<sup>20</sup> This can also be seen that large number of beautiful gardens was constructed on the banks of the prominent water bodies of Kashmir. Some of them worth mentioning are *Naseembagh*, *Shalimar garden*, *Nishatgarden* on Dal Lake and *Baghi-i-Safa* on Manasbal Lake. These gardens provided pleasure to the Mughal rulers and it directly paved way for the preservation and maintenance of the water bodies. Moreover, water fountains and the running water channels in the gardens constitute an important feature of the Mughal gardens, therefore, the water sources were preserved with great care. This can best be explained in connection with the construction of the Verinag Garden. Jahangir in his memories mentions how the spring of Verinag attracted the attention of the Emperor. He says that that when he visited this place during the time of his father, it was a common folk that there was once a great serpent and the importance of the place is that river *Behit* starts from here<sup>21</sup> and this probably was the cause that attracted Jahangir to visit this spot. It is said that in the ancient times, its water shot forth from several places. It was, after the accession of the Jahangir that Hider Malik on the orders of Jahangir brought its water together in one place through canals built a hexagon tank by using stone in its construction. He then built around it high buildings and twenty four arches in the surrounding wall.<sup>22</sup> In order to add beauty to it, a garden was constructed around it. Thus, a place was created which according to many travellers preserved the water and it was because of this activity that the water of the canals was

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<sup>20</sup> Francois Bernier, *Travels in Mogul Empire*, (Delhi: S. Chand & Co, 1968), p. 398.

<sup>21</sup> Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, vol I, Eng. Tr. Alexander Rogers, (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 1985), p. 173.

<sup>22</sup> Ghulam Hassan, *Tarikh-i-Hassan*, vol I, Eng. Tr. A.R. Khan, (Srinagar: City Book Centre, 2014), p. 96.



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considered as the best among all the things they came across in the area. The best thing which later on the travellers observed was the idea of emperor for planting plain trees on the both sides of the canal. According to them the trees were planted on both sides of the canal to protect the water from impurities which shows how much concern there was in the minds of Mughals for the preservation of water bodies. The importance of water was realized by them as being the only thing that can make any land paradisiacal. This is reflected from the memoirs of Jahangir, in which he mentioned that how water was carried to Shalimar garden by the orders of his son Khurram for the beautification of the garden besides that special care was taken in the management of water canals.<sup>23</sup> Gardens which they constructed no doubt were for their own pleasure, but the care of springs and canals which supplied water to the gardens was taken effectively and is even noticed today. Since spring water during medieval times was considered an important source for irrigation, communities are said to have taken great care of them. Abul Fazl mentions that local people in *Bringi* Paragana used to offer the lives of sheep or goat at the spring and in consequence of it water used to flow from the spring.<sup>24</sup> In this way, we can say this spring was highly taken care of.

No effort was made by Afghan governors to check the siltation and growing settlements in the Dal Lake. However, during Sikh rule in Kashmir the Sikh governors worked for the management of water bodies. The contemporary author Birbal Kachru informs us that Sheaikh Ghulam Mohi-u-Din repaired *LachamaKul* for the drinking purpose of the city people.<sup>25</sup> He also repaired *Chasmi-shahi* spring for drinking purposes and kept it in great care.<sup>26</sup> We are informed by the contemporary sources that during the Dogra rule, many laws were enacted to protect aquatic ecosystems and other natural resources of the State. As from the economic point of view

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<sup>23</sup> Mushtaq Ahmad Kaw, *The Agrarian System of Kashmir (1586-1819 AD)*, (Srinagar Aiman Publication, 1984), p. 58.

<sup>24</sup> Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol.II, p. 357.

<sup>25</sup> Birbal Kachru, *Majma-ut-Tawarikh*, Ms Jammu and Kashmir Government Research Department, Srinagar, ff-311-312.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, f. 320.

the water bodies had emerged an important field of revenue extraction. It was for the same reason that demarcation of some water bodies was considered very important and settlement officers from British India were employed by the State to demarcate their boundaries. Wingate was first employed to demarcate the Dal Lake. The data prepared by Wingate was believed to have some limitation. Rivett argued that the data was not based on field survey therefore, Rivett in 1897 was asked to prepare a new data of the Dal area. Rivett took a careful study of the Dal area and demarcated the different types of areas of the Lake. Open water designated as a category and was kept under government control. Regarding this category orders were issued that no one was allowed to raise the floating gardens. This was first step taken by the State against the encroachment of the Lake. In the context of legislative efforts of saving water bodies, the first important effort was made by the Dogra government that came in the form of *Jammu and Kashmir State Fisheries Act 1903*.<sup>27</sup> This act mainly dealt with the protection of the natural resources of the State. Under the said act, water bodies such as rivers, lakes, ponds, wetlands and streams were classified as reserved waters, sanctuaries and prohibited waters. The law prevented the people of the State from fishing in areas selected as sanctuaries because of the revered nature of the place.<sup>28</sup> Even before the passing of the law of 1903, some steps taken by the State which indirectly contributed to the protection of water bodies particularly the Jhelum River. Among these steps, one included the ban on catching fish in the Jhelum. After the death of Gulab Singh, the palace astrologer believed to have told the royal family that the Maharaja had reincarnated as a fish after which fishing in the Jhelum was officially banned.<sup>29</sup> Taylor in his dairy mentions that after the ban on catching fish in Jhelum very few people used to visit the river,<sup>30</sup> this indirectly speaks

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<sup>27</sup> JK Annual Administrative Report of the Year 1904, State Archives Srinagar, p. 17.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Khalid Bashir, *Jhelum- The River Through my Backyard*, ( Srinagar: Bookman Publishers 2001). p. 72

<sup>30</sup> Taylor, *Dairy*, National Archives of India, New Delhi, 1899, p. 14.

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of the decline of anthropogenic pressure on river Jhelum. In case of other water bodies fishing in the areas which were categorized as protected areas was allowed only under specified conditions issued by the concerned Fishery Department. The method of fishing in these waters was also clearly defined by the State government. The categorization of reserved waters included water bodies that were used for the development of trout fishery. A note that was added to the Fisheries Act stated the creation of dams for water mills etc., was permitted but with a provision that in all the cases a free channel must be left open for the passage of fish up and down the river.<sup>31</sup>

The Act also strictly prohibited night fishing in trout streams and in reserved waters. Uses of poison, dynamite and fixed engines were also strictly prohibited in water bodies and violators of such regulations were ruthlessly dealt with. Moreover, the law also prohibited commercial fishing in certain months because of the onset of spawning.<sup>32</sup> Under the rule 17 (g) of the Act, not only fishing but the extraction of *hakreza*, *waternuts*, aquatic plants and sand etc., was also prohibited during the spawning season of fish in reserved and protected waters, i.e. March to June and in trout waters from October to February.<sup>33</sup> The impact of this act on water bodies was that these remained undisturbed as no one was allowed to throw any kind of unwanted substances in the water bodies. Modifications of the *Fisheries Act of 1903* were introduced in 1939, which allowed engagement of fisheries officers, fixation of the license fee, distribution of powers for the implementation of the Act, and fixing the time of fishing especially in water stocked with the trout fish.<sup>34</sup> According to the *Fisheries Project Report of 1973*, these activities of the State restricted the movement of people towards the water bodies to a great extent and because of this very effort water

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<sup>31</sup> JK. Pol. File No. 324/1903, State Archives Jammu.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> JK Annual Administrative Report of the year 1939, State Archives Srinagar, pp.23-25.

bodies remained protected for a long period of time from the anthropogenic pressure.<sup>35</sup>

Fisheries Act was not the only effort made by the State in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but what is interesting is that State also took serious initiative of spending money on the preservation of the water bodies in Kashmir. This kind of intention towards the protection and preservation of water bodies increased only because of the rising threat of the water borne disease in Kashmir. It is because of such threat that protection of water became the prime priority of the government. The first step in this context was taken during the 1903 floods when government sanctioned Rs. 125000 for the cleaning of *Nallah Mar* and *KutKul*.<sup>36</sup> To avoid the rise and spread of disease that may have caused by the filthy stagnant water. But a serious effort to clean the water bodies was made for the first time in summer 1919 when the Maharaja stayed in Srinagar and watched over the situation himself.<sup>37</sup> During this time there was an increasing threat of cholera and the government ordered the cleaning of Dal Lake, *Mar canal* and *Kati Kul* in Srinagar.<sup>38</sup> Besides a notification was circulated in which officers were ordered to see that people must not use the embankments of River Jhelum for drying of cow dung. The cleaning process was completed within a year.<sup>39</sup> This was perhaps for the first time that an extensive work was carried for cleaning of the water bodies in Kashmir.

Water bodies became the focal point of discussion during the times of Maharaja Hari Singh also. For the protection of water bodies a separate chapter was added to the *Ranbir Panel Code* in 1932, which dealt with the protection of the

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<sup>35</sup> Annual Reports of Fishery Department, year 1978, Department of Fisheries, Sher-i-Kashmir University of Agriculture, Science and Technology, Srinagar, p. 33.

<sup>36</sup> JK Annual Administrative Report, Year 1904, State Archives Jammu p. 27.

<sup>37</sup> JK, Pol. file no 199/1-9, year 1919, State Archives Kashmir.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

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water bodies.<sup>40</sup> The law stated that who so ever voluntarily corrupts or fouls the water of any public spring or reservoir, so as to render it less fit for the purpose for which it is ordinarily used will be punished with imprisonment or with fine or with both.<sup>41</sup> The local Hanjis of Bijbhera fell victim to this law. A petition was filed against 6 Hanjis who according to the petition file no 417/1941 were seen as throwing the dead animals in the Jhelum River at Bijbhera.<sup>42</sup> The local court charged 250 from each Hanji as a penalty of violating the law.<sup>43</sup> The State took a great care in the management of river Jhelum. No one was allowed to travel on the bunds of river Jhelum. A note was circulated in 1935 that who so ever will be seen as cycling or playing on the bunds of river Jhelum will be severely punished.<sup>44</sup> As a consequence of this river Jhelum and its Bunds remained safe.<sup>45</sup>

To avoid any further encroachment on the water bodies, the State government passed a new Act in 1939. Under clause 133(B) of this Act:

- (a) No person was permitted to convert any water surface, water field or floating field into land by filling them.
- (b) Fill with earth, rubble, stones or any other substance or fence or enclose in any manner whatsoever, any waters for creating a water field or floating field or expanding the area of any authorized water field or floating field.
- (c) Use of any water field (Radh), water surface thereon within such limits as may be specified by the government in any lake in Valley. For the purpose of the Act, the water bodies identified were Nagin Lake, Dal Lake (Bod Dal and Hazratbal), Gagribal Lake, Manasbal, Anchar Lake, Lake, Hokersar and such

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<sup>40</sup> JK Foreign Department, file no, 312/75, State Archives Jammu. See also Rohit Gupta, Jammu and Kashmir Ranbir Panel Code, S. 1989 (1932), Kashmir Law House, Srinagar, 2012, p. 206.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> JK Pol/Gen. file no 320/1941. State Archives, Srinagar.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> JK/ Form. File no 111/1936. State Archives, Srinagar.

<sup>45</sup> Ganga Nath, *Commission Report on Administration of Jammu and Kashmir State*, State Archives Srinagar, 1944, p. 532.

other lakes as may be notified by the government from time to time. The Act also warned the people that anybody contravening the provisions of the Act was liable to restore the water surface to its original condition or alternatively the collector could use force to remove such illegal contravention.<sup>46</sup>

After the independence of Indian subcontinent, enforcement of these laws in Kashmir mostly fell in disuse and as a result the water bodies in Kashmir were gradually converted into build up areas. The Grow More Food Scheme launched in 1950's led to the reclamation of 21000 Kanals of land from the water bodies.<sup>47</sup> Besides this other factors also contributed to deterioration of water bodies viz use of fertilizers for the increase in the agricultural production, construction of hotels and commercial structures on the margins of water bodies facilitated by the government went against the protection of water bodies. However, we get references that Pandit community took important steps for the preservation of water bodies. For instance under the leadership Sushil Chandra Koul, a local resident of Tulmulla fenced many springs in Lar area of Srinagar District.<sup>48</sup> In the same way some local Pandits also repaired the springs at *Theed* and *Ishbar*.<sup>49</sup>

The rising issue of conversion of water surface into build up areas caused a great threat to the life of the water bodies. Up to the 1970 government in the State mostly remained busy in the promotion of agriculture and other developmental activities. Although the Master Plan for Srinagar drawn in 1971, inter alia recommended a complete moratorium on reclamation of open water area of Dal Lake by local cultivators however, nothing much was done to stop this activity.<sup>50</sup> But it was only in the mid 1970s that government

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<sup>46</sup> Jammu and Kashmir Archival Reports, Pol.no 647/44, State Archives Srinagar.

<sup>47</sup> JK, Home Dept. file 412/1955, State Archives Srinagar.

<sup>48</sup> Samsar Chandra Koul, *Holy Springs of Kashmir*, (Srinagar: Utpal Publications, 1971), p. 17

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. p. 32.

<sup>50</sup> Anonymous, *Master Plan for Srinagar City*, prepared by Government of Jammu and Kashmir, 1971, p. 82.

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took a big leap towards the preservation of the water bodies. The reason being that in 1972, United Nations Organization convened a conference in Stockholm on the Human environment. The government of India realized that the country required well defined laws to protect its environment against rapid industrial growth, expanding human settlements especially in urban areas.

The government went for the restoration of the water bodies which was very much necessary for the promotion of tourism in Kashmir. For conservation and protection of the water bodies *The Water Prevention and Control of Pollution Act* was passed by the Indian Parliament in 1974.<sup>51</sup> It was because of this act that pollution control boards at the Centre and in the States were established. The basic objective of this Act was to maintain and restore the wholesomeness of natural aquatic resource by prevention and control of pollution.<sup>52</sup> This was an important step towards monitoring and control of water pollution.

It was the influence of the above mentioned law that State government realized the importance of the Dal Lake after coming to power in 1975 Sheikh Abdullah initiated bureaucratic intervention to “Save Dal Lake”. He instituted numerous measures to prevent human encroachments on the lake.<sup>53</sup> The first such intervention came in the name of Dal

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<sup>51</sup> D.P. Zutshi, and A.R. Yousuf., *Lakes and Wetlands of Kashmir Himalaya: Ecology, Conservation and Management*, ( New Delhi Heritage Publishers,2014), p. 302

<sup>52</sup> Mona Bhan, Nishita Trisal., *Fluid Landscape, Sovereign Nature: Conservation and Counter insurgency in Indian controlled Kashmir*, (Sage, critique of Anthropology, 2017, Vol. 37(i) 67-92), p. 73.

<sup>53</sup> B.L Chaku., *The Dal of Srinagar (Kashmir Valley)-An Environmental Degradation*, In S. K. Chadha., (ed), *Himalayas: Environmental Problems*, (Delhi Ashish Publishing House, 1990), pp. 37-43.

Development Project.<sup>54</sup> The major recommendations of the projects were:<sup>55</sup>

- A) Plantation of the Catchment area of the Lake
- B) Creation of an earthen bund (embankment) to separate floating garden area from the open water area of the lake.
- C) Provision of sewage system based on high density polyethylene pipe lines to be laid on the lake bed. Sewage to be transported by pumping and treated in oxidation ponds.
- D) Construction of a Northern Foreshore Road (NFR) to arrest further encroachment.

The last recommendation which State implemented in 1978 was designed to facilitate vehicular traffic around the lake and also created a promenade for recreational and commercial purposes.<sup>56</sup> From the very beginning Dal Lake's conservation was deeply contested, mostly by the dwellers of the Dal who bore the brunt of such efforts. For instance, infrastructural and city development projects carried in the name of conservation, led to the eviction of at least 2600 Hanji households from the Dal Lake in the 1970s and early 1980s. Hanjis were very critical of this decision to construct foreshore roads that encouraged hoteliers and other businessmen to mushroom along the lakeshore.<sup>57</sup> Fishermen claimed that Sheikh's efforts established the precedent for differentiated legality in Kashmir, mostly along ethnic and occupational lines as the dwellers of the lake mostly belonged to Shia community and are professionally considered inferior

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<sup>54</sup> The Dal Development Project was implemented in 1977 in consultation with New Zealand under the Commonwealth Technical Assistant Programme. See B.L. Chaku., *The Dal Lake of Srinagar (Kashmir Valley)-An Environmental Degradation*, in: S.K. Chada (edt), *Himalayas: Environmental problems*, (New Delhi Ashish Publishing house, 1990), pp. 37-43

<sup>55</sup> Anonymous, *Master Plan for Srinagar City*, prepared by Government of Jammu and Kashmir, 1971, p. 71

<sup>56</sup> B.L. Chaku, *The Dal of Srinagar (Kashmir Valley)-An Environmental Degradation*, p. 40.

<sup>57</sup> Mona Bhan, *Fluid Landscape, Sovereign Nature*, p. 73.



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in Kashmir.<sup>58</sup> However, the fact remains that Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah was above from such considerations.

Protection policies at the local level were hard to contest, however, since they were the outcome of growing emphasis on international environmentalism as well as good governance initiatives of the World Bank in the 1970's, with money from multilateral institutions pouring into India for environmental and conservation projects, the State governments across the country enhanced their "efficiency" and institutional capacities by forging connections with private and public sectors. To review the environmental implications of the then on-going Dal Lake Development Project, the Overseas Development Administration (OAD) in London and the Government of India invited Prof. R. Riddell of the Cambridge University, U.K, in 1982. In his report submitted to the Government in 1983 Prof. Riddell observed that there was no evidence to show that any pre-project evaluation, project ranking or any progress monitoring was undertaken.<sup>59</sup> The funds spent on capital works (Northern foreshore road, siltation tank) had limited beneficial effect upon the all important land usages and water purity problem, which dominated the south-western lake area. Riddell stated that it was the major failing of the ENEX proposal that considerations of low cost managerial order took second place to issues of a high cost technical kind.<sup>60</sup> It was highly desirable that limited expenditure on more purposeful and less costly measures was undertaken. The important recommendations of the Riddell reports were:<sup>61</sup>

- A) Creation of Dal Development Authority with legal, administrative, technical and financial powers
- B) Forestation, soil conservation, water conservation, etc., in the catchment.

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<sup>58</sup> Dr. Shanta Sanyal, *Boats and Boatmen of Kashmir*, (Srinagar, Light and Life Publishers), 1978, p. 10.

<sup>59</sup> K.N. Dhar, *Dal Lake Through the Ages: A Historical Resume*, Paper presented at the workshop on Dal Lake, Kashmir, Centre of Research for Development, University of Kashmir, pp. 1-7.

<sup>60</sup> D.P. Zutshi, *Lakes and Wetlands of Kashmir*, p. 307.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid. p. 308.

- C) Environmental Education
- D) Total removal of floating gardens is not going to be beneficial to the overall ecological state of the lake.
- E) Tight control in the floating garden area over rebuilding and new construction
- F) A strict moratorium on houseboats, Dunga boats, buildings and lakeside m

It was very unfortunate that the UEED did not take into consideration any of the recommendations put forth by Riddell. The report was not even discussed by the high power committee of the government. No decision regarding the creation of Dal Development Authority for the lake was taken.<sup>62</sup>

However, by the 1980's new alliances emerged in Kashmir and beyond formal spheres of government (the executive, legislature, judiciary), NGOs, and other civil and commercial bodies such as local banks and corporations collaborated on projects of environmental or biodiversity conservation. In this field it was Centre of Research for Development, University of Kashmir in collaboration with MOEF (Government of India), UEED and Soil Conservation Department of the State government who organized a workshop in 1984.<sup>63</sup> But unfortunately the recommendation of this workshop included the creation of a Regional Development Authority for Dal Lake, which was based on the unique concept of "state within the state". Unfortunately there was no follow up by the State government on these recommendations. However, State government imported a couple of mechanical harvesters from abroad and introduced them for harvesting weeds from the lake.<sup>64</sup>

For the cleaning of the lake in 1985, the Ministry of Works and Government of India appointed another consultant firm, Babbie Shaw and Morton of Glasgow, U.K., under ODA to

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<sup>62</sup> Anonymous, Study of the Pollution of Dal Lake, Kashmir (India), Prepared for the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation, ENEX of New Zealand, Inc, 1978, pp. 14-18

<sup>63</sup> D.P. Zutshi, *Lakes and Wetlands of Kashmir*, p. 308.

<sup>64</sup> K.N. Dhar, *Dal Lake Through the Ages: A Historical Resume*, pp-1-7.

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prepare yet another report on Dal Lake. The report made by this firm observed the following cases:

- i) The report opposed the relocation of lake dwellers
- ii) The creation of Dal Development Authority and called for a revised development plan of the Northern part of the Lake
- iii) The other recommendations included strict regulations of the new developments within and outside the lake.
- iv) Moratorium on expansion of floating gardens and construction of new houseboats.
- v) The most important recommendation was regarding the indigenous population living within the lake. The report stated that the “resettlement of people from floating gardens need not to be implemented as it is ineffective and impracticable as a solution to the problem of lake pollution and would involve considerable social and economic disruption.”

These recommendations were not taken in consideration by the State government due to the lack of funds at that time. Besides, the government was not satisfied with the recommendations that speak in favour of people living within the lake. As it was during this time that people started talking about the State's attitude of involving machinery in cleaning the lake as against the services of the people who used to clean it by using their boats and traditional methods of extracting unwanted weeds since ancient times.

Mid eighties of the twentieth century saw the increasing number of the tourists in the Valley that forced the State to work on the water bodies like that of Dal and Nagin lake as these were prime visiting destination of the tourists. The new revised project on the Integrated Development of Dal and Nagin Lake was jointly prepared by ENEX, Baptie Shaw and Morton. This report was submitted to Central Government of

India in 1987.<sup>65</sup> In addition to the earlier recommendations, few new suggestions were also made in the reports which include the improvement in the Nallah Amir Khan water outflow channel, construction of a subsurface outflow channel from Brari Nambal to Jhelum River for improvement of Lake Hydrology.<sup>66</sup> Regarding the presence of floating gardens in the Lake a proposal was made that the floating gardens should be taken over by the State government and the agricultural department should be given the job of engaging vegetable growers to arrest further encroachment on the vacated floating gardens. But according to Zutshi it was unrealistic as it would have been an additional source of pollution to the lake.<sup>67</sup> Moreover, some of the suggestions that the report contained were very useful for the lake that include demarcation of lake area and water flow improvement measures.<sup>68</sup> These agencies like ODA further prepared plans and projects, but the changing political scenario of the State forced them to abandon the projects in 1989.

From 1990 to 1996, the lake environment suffered heavily due to the absence of any effective regulatory authority to arrest illegal encroachments on the lake. As a result, encroachment reached at its peak. The outbreak of armed rebellion in 1989 leading to the imposition of Presidential rule in Kashmir shifted the attention from conservation of water bodies and the rehabilitation of Hanjis remained on paper only.<sup>69</sup> This is reflected from the fact that the number of household in Dal Lake increased from 12000 in 1986 to 22000 in the year 1996.<sup>70</sup> After 1996 the State government like other states created a SPV under the Jammu and Kashmir Development Act of 1970. One such SPV, called the Lakes and

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<sup>65</sup> ENEX Report, *Study of the Pollution of Dal Lake, Kashmir*, A report prepared for the commonwealth fund for technical corporation, ENEX New Zealand, 1987, p. 14.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> D.P. Zutshi, *Lakes and Wetlands of Kashmir*, p. 310.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Mona Bhan, *Fluid Landscape, Sovereign Nature*, p. 80.

<sup>70</sup> JK LAWDA official Survey Report, prepared by JK LAWDA, Srinagar, 1996.

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Waterways Development Authority (LAWDA), was established in Kashmir in 1997. LAWDA was set up to consolidate and centralize desperate conservation- based initiatives of the State government and align the lake's conservation with ongoing environmental and conservation projects in India.<sup>71</sup> Soon after its formation, LAWDA took immediate steps to "Save the Lake". It removed, "Weeds from the interiors of the Dal lake on [a] war footing basis; it built pavements and ramparts around the Dal Lake; it procured top-of-the-line machinery to extend and deepen the lake's water expanse; and it ensured that "pollution levels in different portions of the water body [were frequently] assessed."<sup>72</sup>

LAWDA was also vested with sweeping powers to evict Hanjis, demolish their homes, and prevent Hanji farmers, or, zamindars, from indiscriminately converting portions of the lake into cultivable *radhs* or floating gardens. An obvious outcome of LAWDA's wide-ranging interventions in the post 1996 election period was that Kashmir's water bodies came under the strict purview of the newly established National Conference government.

In a sense, LAWDA's mandate was to reinvent Kashmir once again as an idyllic space of spectacular land and waterscapes so that it could revive the tourist industry after a violent and prolonged insurgency. In addition to government agencies devoted to the task of conservation, NGOs like HOPE and Global Green Peace also worked collaboratively with LAWDA to manage and treat the solid waste generated inside the lake through human activities. Various schools, colleges, and other civic organizations in the city organized rallies to highlight the continued ruin of the lake. In one such rally organized by a local kindergarten in collaboration with Aircel, an Indian mobile network operator, young kids marched on with their placards urging people to "stop polluting the lake" in order to save Kashmir's beautiful

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<sup>71</sup> M.S. Reddy, and NVV Char, Management of Lakes in India, In Lakes and Reservoirs: Research and Management, No 11, 2006, pp. 227-237

<sup>72</sup> See Greater Kashmir (online) Available at : <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Dec/27/tara-direct-lawda-to-extrac-weedss-from-dal-lake-interiors-47.asp> (accessed 18/6/2018).

heritage.<sup>73</sup> Looking such kinds of developments that was going there for nature's conservation in Kashmir has been argued by Guha that it had become now a wide ranging social and political program.<sup>74</sup>

By 2000, only three years after its formation, LAWDA came under intense public scrutiny for its dismal progress to stem out encroachments, curb pollution, and restore the Dal Lake's water expanse. Civic bodies blamed LAWDA officials for misappropriating government funds in the name of conservation and filed a charge sheet against the organization, leading to fifty official suspensions in a year.<sup>75</sup> Predictably, LAWDA lost considerable legitimacy and was widely criticised as the "Lakes and Waterways Destruction Agency." LAWDA's failure to curb Dal encroachments was criticized on several public stages. For example the media broad casted a show entitled "April Fool," that portrayed dismal attitude of people's responsibility to save the water bodies, using strands of humor and sarcasm to conjure a scenario where the waters of the Dal lake had completely dried up and the government was issuing permits for the construction of a residential colony.<sup>76</sup> The self-interested greedy people, including government officials and Hanjis, were shown investing in real estate to claim a portion of the Dal Lake with an utter disregard for the fate of the environment. Such public portrayals of LAWDA's mismanagement were common and the suspicion of top LAWDA officials as corrupt individuals who were unmoved by the Dal Lake's deterioration.<sup>77</sup>

Also PIL was filed which asserted that the lake was an integral element of "people's common heritage" and that the judiciary should play an important part in its conservation and restoration. Many environmentalist and scholars argued and recommended that in a region that had long suffered

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<sup>73</sup> Mona Bhan, *Fluid Landscape, Sovereign Nature*, p. 75.

<sup>74</sup> Ramachandra Guha, *How Much Should a Person Consume?: Environmentalism in India and the United States*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), p. 6.

<sup>75</sup> G.H Kaloo, *Kashmir in Mirror Reflection*, Vol. I, p. 29.

<sup>76</sup> Mona Bhan, *Fluid Landscape, Sovereign Nature*, p. 75.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

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from ineffective governance and violence due to protracted conflict, “only the court could play an effective role to salvage the Dal.”<sup>78</sup> In legal directives of the High Court LAWDA was instructed to “actively speed up their conservation measures,” to ensure that Hanji demolitions were successfully undertaken, and to prevent Zamindar Hanjis from converting large portions of water into *radhs* or floating gardens.<sup>79</sup> By giving its verdict court for the environmental conservation secured LAWDA’s “trusteeship” and regulatory powers over the region’s water resources.<sup>80</sup> That according to the court would protect the lake and its resources.

With the intervention of judiciary, strict vigil was being exercised by LAWDA to stop further degradation of the lake. According to well placed sources, the LAWDA paid compensation for 1106 structures and the evictees were rehabilitated properly in the colonies identified by the said authority.<sup>81</sup> However, there are many Dal dwellers who contested against these activities of LAWDA. As per the LAWDA reports, the eviction of those is necessary who are not the actual residents of the Dal as per 1986 census survey.<sup>82</sup> In order to clear the Dal, LAWDA soon started

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<sup>78</sup> Riyaz Wani, *Dry and Dal? No More*, Indian Express Online, 2006, available at: <http://www.indianexpress.com/oldstory/86803> (accessed 18/7/2018).

<sup>79</sup> Mona Bhan, *Fluid Landscape, Sovereign Nature*, p. 76.

<sup>80</sup> L Rajamani., Public Interest Environmental Litigation in India: Exploring Issues of Access, Participation, equity, effectiveness and sustainability, in *Journal of Environmental Law*, vol 2, No 20, pp. 334-336.

<sup>81</sup> There are eight colonies namely BotaKadel, DavidiBagh, Habibullah Nowshari Colony, Agro Bagh, JKPC Colony, Panch Kharwani, Bemina Colony and Chandipora developed by the LAWDA for the rehabilitation of dislocated personnel. See G.H. Kaloo, *Kashmir in Mirror Reflection*, p. 37.

<sup>82</sup> In 1986, a census survey of Hanji households was conducted to assess the nature and extent of Hanji settlements and to devise plans for their rehabilitation. According to a senior LAWDA official, the survey was so “liberal” that it legalized all forms of settlements on the lake – from “Hanji houses to their cowsheds.” Consequently, when the NC government constituted LAWDA in 1997 to oversee the Dal Lake’s conservation, there were many Hanji families or household members whose names did not appear in the 1986 survey. For details See Mohan Bhan, *Fluid Landscape, Sovereign Nature*, p. 80.

demolishing drive in the Dal Lake. Nearly 125 illegal structures have been reportedly demolished in 2007.<sup>83</sup> But nothing more was done because of the intervention of some leaders who were very active in Legislative Assembly.

After the year 2002 Kashmir witnessed normalcy and peace for a limited time and it was in these years that there emerged an extensive campaign to save the Dal, in which politicians, bureaucrats and NGO's participated actively and demanded that the actions need, to be taken in its care and restoration. It was in these circumstances of peace that for improving the condition of the lake and the people living in it Central government sanctioned an additional grant of Rs 356 Crore for the rehabilitation of about 10,000 families who were living within the Dal Lake.<sup>84</sup> Since then almost 6 years had gone, no such effort had been yet taken by the government apart from terrorizing the dwellers of the Dal who have not been allowed to renovate their houses which were destroyed by the floods in 2014. Despite the fact that the lake conservation project has been in operation right from mid 1970 and huge sums of money have been already spent on various restoration works, the general perception is that the lake environment instead of improving has deteriorated. No scientific evidence has been put forth by LAWDA to show any positive improvement in the lake environment.

Interacting with the CEO of LAWDA about failing of rehabilitating the locals, he said 'thatsince governments sanctioned a huge amount which was invested on the new machines working for extracting the unwanted weeds from the lake'. More than 5 years these machineries are working and we are witnessing no improvement as for as quality of water in Dal lake. This is because as has been mentioned by Barry Commoner that 'technology cannot work for the conservation'.<sup>85</sup> By using technology we are benefitting capitalists rather than nature.

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<sup>83</sup> Kaloo, *Kashmir in Mirror Reflection*, Vol. I, p. 37.

<sup>84</sup> D.P Zutshi, *Fluid Landscape, Sovereign Nature*, p. 316.

<sup>85</sup> Rachel Curson., *Silent Springs*, (London Penguin Books, 1962), p. 169.



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While for the restoration of the river Jhelum, J&K Lakes and Waterways Development Authority prepared Rs 284.42 crore project under National River conservation Plan. The Project envisages treating the sewage water at various places and several pollution abatement schemes for the four major towns along the banks of the river viz. Anantnag, Srinagar, Sopore and Baramulla. It also includes interception and diversion of the Municipal waste water, sewage treatment, low cost sanitation, solid waste management, improvement of Ghats and afforestation along the Banks. Under this plan sewage treatment plants were also recommended to be set up at Anantnag, Sopore and Baramulla towns located on the Jhelum.<sup>86</sup>

A twenty year project for the treatment of river Jhelum has been prepared by UNDP and was forwarded to the Central Government of India which involves 18 crores of rupees. The main suggestions included the strengthening of bunds, beautification of the bunds, afforestation of the catchment areas etc. The government of India has declared Jhelum river as the national river of the State and has also announced the Jhelum Action Plan for the protection of the river. The main recommendations of the plan include the following:

- i) Taking care of the catchment areas by protecting natural forests
- ii) Devising means to stop effluents to the river
- iii) Ensuring treatment where these have penetrated into the Jhelum
- iv) And taking steps to improve physical and biological condition of the river.

Like Dal lake conservation, many cooperatives and NGO's also took steps for the protection of the river Jhelum after 2007. Even before that S.P. Collage Srinagar in collaboration with the University Grants Commission had prepared a report for the conservation and protection of the river. However, the State government sanctioned a research project

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<sup>86</sup> Ashiq Hussain, *Lakes of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh*, (Srinagar: Gulshan Books, 2014) p. 275.

of the Eco Monitoring Laboratory of LAWDA, EML made a systematic study of the river and prepared and released the first technical report in 1999. But these measures remained only on paper and no further step was taken to reduce the pollution in the river. All the funds were spent on the strengthening of the bunds along the Srinagar city and dredging Jhelum. No effort was made by the State to check the soil erosion and the expansion of the city towards the main area of the river Jhelum and its tributaries especially Dodh-ganga.<sup>87</sup>

For the protection of other water bodies of the State, the government of Jammu and Kashmir remained apathetic to Wullar, Manasbal and Anchar lakes. It was only after the International Conservation and Protection of Wetlands Conference held in Iran in 1971 declared Wullar as the Ramsar site that State took keen interest for its restoration. The State government setup a team of experts regarding protection and problems of the lake. Experts after discussing the major issues of the lake came to the conclusion that the life of the lake can be lengthened if effective and speedy measures were adopted for afforestation and soil conservation in the upper reaches of the valley. In response to the expert advice “Erin Watershed Restoration Project for Conservation of Wullar Lake” was launched by the State government in 1988.<sup>88</sup> For this project, center sponsored Rs 1.80 crore for soil conservation scheme. The scheme was meant to prevent the choking of the Jhelum beyond the lake, to increase its discharge capacity and thus reduce the general rise in the river bed and the lake.<sup>89</sup> However, the major emphasis has been on the catchment conservation of the Wullar Lake with an allocation of 53% of the project fund. Interestingly, the annual plan for Baramulla District for 2006-07 also included some identical restoration measures for Wullar Lake. But it can be seen that these measures and approaches not only have strong sector bias

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<sup>87</sup> The DodhgangaNallah was known for its unstable nature. It used to inundate many newly developed colonies like Bagh-e-Mehtab, Channapora, Natipora, Rambagh, Barzulla and Rawalpura. See G.H. Kaloo., *Kashmir in Mirror Reflection*, p. 56.

<sup>88</sup> D.P. Zutshi, *Fluid Landscape, Sovereign Nature*, p. 320.

<sup>89</sup> Prof. G.M Rabbani, *Ancient Kashmir in Historical Perspective*, p. 49.

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but are also contradictory.<sup>90</sup> It may be pointed out that since 1924 the State Forest Department invested heavily in the Willow Plantation along the southern fringes of the lake under the grab of conservation measures, while the State Agriculture Department supported intensive agricultural activities on the reclaimed lake areas. This resulted the shrinking of lakes size from 160km<sup>2</sup> in 1911 to 85km<sup>2</sup> in 2007.<sup>91</sup>

As the condition of the lake deteriorated, the lake resources also declined. There was a marked impact on the livelihood of communities dependent on the lake produce. Taking a serious view of these developments, the Government of Jammu and Kashmir invited Wetland International-South Asia, New Delhi in 2007 to prepare a Comprehensive Management Action Plan for Wullar Lake.<sup>92</sup> It submitted a report in 2007 and highlighted the following problems which the lake was facing at that time:

- I) Drastic reduction in the capacity of the lake to regulate flows due to reclamation and siltation as also due to interventions to enhance drainage of water for upstream flood mitigation.
- II) Degradation of water quality due to direct discharge of solid wastes.
- III) Decline in lake produce
- IV) Lack of well defined policy for regulatory mechanisms for integrated management led to cross-sectoral conflicts and overall degradation of wetland and its resources.<sup>93</sup>

The agency suggested a detailed Action Plan for the Management of the Lake with a budget outlay of Rs 386.39 crore. The recommendation made in the Action Plan included:

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<sup>90</sup> D.P. Zutshi, *Fluid Landscape, Sovereign Nature*, pp. 321-322.

<sup>91</sup> Final Report-*Comprehensive Management Action Plan For Wullar Lake, Kashmir*, Report prepared for the Department of Wildlife Protection, Government of Jammu and Kashmir, prepared by Wetland International-South Asia, New Delhi, 2007, p. 23

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., pp. 1-31.

1. The establishment of Wullar Development Authority for the Management of the Lake and Enhancing water holding capacity by removing willow plantation.
2. Establishment of wildlife/ bird sanctuaries in the Wullar catchment.
3. Livelihood improvement through fisheries department.
4. Environmental flow assessment at basin level vis-à-vis hydrological regime.
5. Water quality improvement through the implementation of River Jhelum Conservation Plan already approved in principle by the Ministry of environment and forest.<sup>94</sup>

It was only after a long period of 4 years that in 2011 government initiated the implementation of this project under the newly created Wullar Development Authority with Chief Minister as its chairman. The Authority is working hard for the restoration of the lake but they are following the same strategy as that of Dal Lake. Wullar Lake needs more care because this lake is still alive as per its water quality is concerned. The success of Wullar Lake project will depend on the regular ecological monitoring so that mid-course connections are made possible on a regular basis during the implementation phase of the Project.

Wullar and Manasbal Development Authority (WMDA), set up in 2006 also took the task of the restoration of the Manasbal Lake with a mandate to improve the surroundings of the Manasbal Lake for the development of the tourism. WMDA took following measures for the restoration and to improve the general environment of the lake.

1. Removing of illegal construction.
2. Manual de-weeding, dredging and demarcation of the lake

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<sup>94</sup> For details see Final Report-*Comprehensive Management Report for Wullar Lake*, p. 37.

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3. Afforestation of mountains to restore lake's glory.<sup>95</sup>

The CEO of WAMDA said that in future the lake authority is going to undertake solid waste management, construction of STP to treat sewage from village households, laying of a walkway along the entire lake periphery to stop any ingress and execute plans for the resettlement of people of Kundabal village away from the lake site.<sup>96</sup>

Hokersar is also a Ramsar site and has been under the jurisdiction of State Wildlife Department. The department has initiated some scientific measures to reduce the silt flowing into the wetland from the three inflowing channels and also from the urbanized catchment. But there seems no control of siltation in the wetland and this ecosystem is continuously getting filled in its area. This wetland is also home of many migratory birds, but because of the reduction in its size had an adverse impact on the food availability to migratory birds.<sup>97</sup> It was in 1980's that a bund was constructed along the southern part of the wetland in order to store more water in the wetland, but it remained less helpful for the hydrology of the wetland.

Looking to the condition of the water bodies we came to the conclusion that the State government, has no will for the conservation and management of lakes, springs and wetlands, especially which are present along the both banks of Jhelum River especially in Ganderbal and Sumbal area. However, the efforts made by the State for the restoration of the water bodies generated a question that crores of rupees are spent by the government on the restoration of the water bodies, but the condition of these water bodies is going from bad to worse. To answer this question we may have to fill another PIL and to seek help of Judiciary by filing a simple complain under the law of Right to Information. It is high time for the government to realize the importance of water bodies as an invaluable resource and immediately draw plans for their

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<sup>95</sup> Interview with *Nazir Ahmad*, Director of the Wullar-Manasbal Development Authority, Manasbal. Dated 24 March, 2014.

<sup>96</sup> Interview with *Nazir Ahmad*, CEO WAMDA, Dated 11/03/17.

<sup>97</sup> D.P. Zutshi, *Fluid Landscape, Sovereign Nature*, p. 323.

restoration and conservation before the times runs out. The local bodies in the form of local Panchayats have also to be involved in the protection of water bodies. Besides, imparting environmental education to the local communities is imperative for bringing environmental consciousness among the people.

**Agrarian Reforms and the Settlement of Villages:  
A Study of Agrarian Crisis in Kashmir  
(1846-1947)**

*Tawseef Mushtaq*

**Abstract:** *In the annals of Kashmir history, the second half of the nineteenth century has captured attention of wide scholarship around the globe. The Treaty of Amritsar (1846) and the appointment of the British Residency (1885) were the two major events that had changed the political and economic setup of erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir in general and rural Kashmir in particular. But historians have given least attention to the changes witnessed by rural Kashmir during the period under study. This article scrutinizes prominent events like the Treaty of Amritsar and its repercussions on the rural life. The introduction of first land settlement (1889-1895) that shaped and restructured rural Kashmir and ensured rural transformation in the first half of the twentieth century is also discussed in detail. Emergence of settled villages following the historic land settlement in the short run and the bunch of agrarian problems that arose in the long run also forms an important analytical discussion of the article.*

The Treaty of Amritsar on the one hand provided a disjuncture in several ways in the political functioning of the pre-colonial state system and on the other resulted into the imposition of an indifferent government on the people of Kashmir in general and rural population in particular. The people in the countryside got psychologically disheartened on learning that they were sold all along with their fields, crops, streams and cattle and did their best to detest it.<sup>1</sup> The matter whether Maharaja Gulab Singh paid the said amount or not

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<sup>1</sup> Famous contemporary writer and poet Dr. Sheikh Muhammad Iqbal lamented over the Treaty of Amritsar in these verses:

O breeze , if thy happen to go Geneva way,  
Carry a word to the nations of the world,  
Their fields, their crops, their streams,  
Even the peasants in the vale,  
They sold, they sold all, alas!  
How cheap was the sale. M.Y. Ganai, *Kashmir's Struggle for Independence 1931-39*. Srinagar: Gulshan Books, 2003, p. 10.

continues to be a case of debate among the historians of modern Kashmir but it is generally believed that this policy was aimed at justifying the rack-renting. While gazing on the Valley from a hilltop Gulab Singh lamented that one part was mountainous, another submerged under water while the remaining was in the hands of the *Jagirdars*. He couldn't believe that he would be able to make good and earn the profits from his investment and was much obsessed with the payment of seventy-five lakh rupees.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, when he took over the reins of Kashmir everything except 'air and water' was highly taxed. The working classes were made to pay numerous taxes and such a type of taxation was unprecedented in the history of Kashmir. He imposed a capitation tax on every individual practicing any labour, trade, profession or employment collected on regular basis.<sup>3</sup> Theoretically, *shali* (paddy) producers had to pay 50 per cent of their harvest<sup>4</sup> but the taxes and cesses actually realized were far in excess that led it to  $2/3^{\text{rd}}$ .<sup>5</sup> In addition, peasants had to concede a share of their fruit, ghee, fowls, honey and sheep or goat to the government.<sup>6</sup> John B. Ireland, who visited Kashmir in 1850s, exclaimed in wonder that the owner

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<sup>2</sup> Walter Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, 1895; repr., Srinagar: Gulshan Books, 2011, p. 201.

<sup>3</sup> Mridu Rai, *Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects*, New-Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004, p. 63.

<sup>4</sup> H.M. Lawrence, *Transfer of Government to Maharaja Gulab Singh*, 28 January, 1846, Section C. File No. 33-34, Jammu Archive; Bawa Satinder Singh, *The Jammu Fox*, p. 169.

<sup>5</sup> In addition to the half of the produce as land revenue, peasants had to pay *Trakee* (4 *trak* of paddy per *kharwar*) *Nazarana* (levied four times a year), *Sathrashahi* (marriage tax), *Mandri* (meant for the maintenance of temples), *Ashgal* (meant for support of Hindu priests). Moreover, *Patwari* and *Qanungo* were paid  $\frac{1}{2}$  *trak* per *kharwar* and feed the *shakdar* (state-watchers of the grain). Moreover, all trades of importance from firewood to taking two-third ( $2/3^{\text{rd}}$ ) of the *singhara* (water chestnuts) were monopolized by the State. Mirza Saifuddin, a British spy in the Maharaja Gulab Singhs' court, classified the charges on the peasants into four categories: State share of the revenue, *rasum*, additional State collections and taxes freely paid by the cultivator himself, see, Chitralekha Zutshi. *Language of Belongings*. New-Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003, p. 64.

<sup>6</sup> Thrope, Robert. *Kashmir Misgovernment*. 1980; repr., Srinagar: Gulshan Books, 2011, p. 28-29.



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must pay one *anna* (12 *annas* were equal to one *chilke* rupee) on the birth of every lamb and four *annas* on every calf. For marriage one rupee and on a fishing boat four *annas* a day were charged. Ten *annas* were charged on walnut trees and if the crop failed the claim was made in ghee.<sup>7</sup> Wahab Parray Hajani, a contemporary poet, in his work *Darveshi* wailed against harsh taxation in the following words:

*That was an era of cruelties, how many of them can I count?  
The mediocre were ruling and the country was engulfed in  
darkness  
Every man of skill and art had to pay undue tax  
To the department which had a big name but was meant  
only for loot  
Carpenter, cobbler, shop-keeper, copper-smith, butcher,  
bread-maker, tailor and black-smith  
All of them, regardless of their craft, had to pay innumerable  
taxes  
How many oppressions of that era can I count  
Each lion was accompanied by countless scavenging dogs.*<sup>8</sup>

Evidently, such a regressive taxation kept peasants in *baki* (*arrears*), subsequently of which the peasants throughout the year were visited by Dogra officials to claim these arrears. If a peasant failed to satisfy the officials with a gift, that included anything, he had to face harassment and violence in the form of using nettle scourge in the summer and plunging recusant tax payers into cold water in the chilly winter.<sup>9</sup> At times the State used some clandestine and covert methods to extract arrears. For instance, in 1852, the revenue in arrears was assigned to army as salary. Despite using harsh means of collection and denuding the famished peasantry they could not collect more than 8,000 rupees.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Johnm B. Ireland, *From Wall Street to Cashmere, Five Years in Asia, Africa and Europe*. New-York: Roplo Publishers, 1859, p. 397.

<sup>8</sup> Munawar, Naji and Shafi Shouq. *Kashiri Adbuk Tawarikh*. Srinagar: Kashmiri Department University of Kashmir, 1992, p. 247.

<sup>9</sup> Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 430.

<sup>10</sup> Hangloo, Ratan Lal. "The Magnitude of Land Revenue Demand in Kashmir- 1846-1900," *Social Scientist* Vol. 12, no. 6, 1984, p. 53.

The villagers suffered more severely from another form of misadministration that was harsher than the extortion of the tax-collectors.<sup>11</sup> This notorious act was called *kar-i-begar* (*corvee*), reserved only for rural population while city people were exempted from it.<sup>12</sup> It existed in many forms but the savagely violent form of it that brought shivering down the spine of villagers was *Gilgit-begar*. In the absence of any transportation facility, the villagers were forcibly pressed into the service of transportation of supplies to the army garrisons at *Gilgit*, which was at a distance of about 300 miles from Srinagar.<sup>13</sup> Villagers who fell sick on the way were usually sold to the chiefs of frontier districts like *Hunza*, *Yasin* etc, who carried them to Central-Asia via Yarkhand for human sale.<sup>14</sup> As such, *Gilgit* to villager was a constant terror, and when it was rumored that men are being collected to carry baggage of troops going or coming from *Gilgit*, there was a general mad dash among the villagers.<sup>15</sup>

**Weapons of the Weak:** Such indifferent regime caused the enormous harassment of peasantry and the means adopted by them to keep their body and soul together was to steal a portion of their own produce by concealing it in pitchers underground somewhere that would go unnoticed.<sup>16</sup> Other

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<sup>11</sup> Though the tax collector leaves him a bare subsistence but *kar-i-begar* separates him from family, his rice fields and in many cases made him victim of torture and even death: Knight, *Where Three Empires Meet*, 68.

<sup>12</sup> Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 412.

<sup>13</sup> These *begaries* were paid only a *seer* of rice per day; this they had to carry, plus the straw for making their straw shoes, plus their load of food for the garrison. No provision was made for them as they crossed the snow passes, so that many die on the road: Biscoe, Tyndale. *Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade*. 1922; repr., Srinagar: Gulshan Books, 2015, p. 210; Thrope, *Cashmere Misgovernment*, p. 45.

<sup>14</sup> Foreign and Political Department, (Secret -F), Pros. August 1887, Nos. 325-332, 1887, National Archives of India.

<sup>15</sup> Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 413; Knight, *Where Three Empires Meet*, p. 68.

<sup>16</sup> Muhammad Ashraf Wani, "Pooshukh Ti Nai Tsulukh Ti Na: An Aphorism towards Understanding Social Protest," in *Aspects of Folklore with Special Reference to Kashmir*, ed. Gulshan Majeed (Srinagar: Center of Central Asian Studies, 1997), p. 60.

times revenue officials like *Shaqdar* (State Watchman), *Sazawol* (State agent meant for penalizing) or *Tarazudar* (weight-man) was bribed (called *peshkash*) to keep extra portion of the produce in the cultivators share. At times peasants categorically refused to cultivate land but instead of lenient treatment, the revenue officers forced them to till the land and remained present within villages on commencement of sowing and harvesting. This picture is graphically borne out by Walter Lawrence:

The Tehsildar rarely moved out, except at the time of ploughing for the autumn crops, when it was necessary to urge the villager to cultivate... When the harvest time came a regiment known as the *Nizamati Paltan* moved out into the villages to enforce the States claim and this regiment was always supplemented by sepoys from the regular army.<sup>17</sup>

The peasantry was conscious of the fact that if the oppression of the State agents was brought in the notice of higher authorities there wouldn't be any substantial action owing to the surreptitious nexus of the officials from top to bottom. Above all there was an enormous fear of the intermediaries and no one was in a position to make any complaint. Therefore, in these circumstances, the logical passive reaction of the peasant was *poshuk nai teh tsuluk teh na* (if you couldn't face the situation, why you didn't flee?) and *dazneh teh dazes yim girah teh daznes* (If all is burnt, let this little portion also burn). Such proverbs, in favour of flights, had gained wide concurrence as the last method of resistance. Desertion of land was found as an only safeguard to survive the annihilatory policy of the ruthless State and its privileged land holders. At the same time, it was aimed at bringing the economic downfall of the system, because agriculture was the mainstay of economy and there was a big gap between the land-man ratios.<sup>18</sup> This act of making flights by the peasants as a last and desperate measure was not a novel form of

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<sup>17</sup> Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 420.

<sup>18</sup> Foreign and Political Department, *Report on Position of the Cultivating Classes in Kashmir*, K.W. No. 3, Confidential, 1889, NAI.

resistance but was common during Afghan (1753-1819) and Sikh rule (1819-1846) as well.<sup>19</sup> However, during the course of our study things went from bad to worse.

In order to combat *Gilgit-begar*, every means was employed by the peasants to purchase exemption, sometimes by bribing the officials individually and other times whole villages would prefer to be purchased for a small amount to a privileged landed magnet like Jagirdar or Chakdar in order to seek exemption from *begar* (corvee).<sup>20</sup> Also, at times on occasion of the requisition of *begar*, when officials move to the villages, those who could not grease their palms had no choice except to run away and hide from the wrath of officials while others migrated deep into the forests and got settled there permanently.<sup>21</sup> Making flights to cities, and the *chak* and *jagir* villages and to the mountainous areas further resulted into the desertification of the villages.

It seemed that the revenue policy, mode of collection and the inhuman *begar* had aggravated the Kashmiri peasant's condition to such an unbearable degree that if the passes of exit from Kashmir to Punjab were not vigilantly guarded, as it were, the number of emigrants would have been so

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<sup>19</sup> See for example, William Moorcraft, who visited the valley towards the beginning of the Sikh rule comments "Everywhere people are in the most abject condition exorbitantly taxed by the government . . . the consequences of this system are gradual depopulation of the country; not more than about one-sixteenth (1/16<sup>th</sup>) of the surface is in cultivation, and the inhabitants starving at home are driven in great numbers to the plains of Hindustan. The village where we stopped was half deserted and the few inhabitants that remained wore the semblance of extreme wretchedness; without some relief or change of system, it seems probable that this part of the country will soon be without inhabitants"; Moorcraft and George Trebeck, *Travels in the Himalayas Provinces of Hindustan and the Punjab in Ladakh and Kashmir in Peshwar, Kabul, Kunduz and Bokhara*, Vol. II, Lahore: Farhan Academy, 1841, pp. 123-25, 235.

<sup>20</sup> *Jagir* and *Chak* villages were exempted from *begar*, as a result, in 1888 three villages were sold to a Pandit for a sum of money ranging between Rs. 50 and 63. Fourth village was sold to a Hindu priest for Rs. 50. The fifth village was bought by a Tehsildar for Rs. 300; Foreign and Political Department, *Report on Position of the Cultivating Classes in Kashmir*, K.W. No. 3, Confidential, 1889, NAI.

<sup>21</sup> An interview with Naji Munawar Lone, Age 82, R/O, Kapran Shopian, Dated, 27/01/2019.

overpowering that the province would have been entirely depopulated in the course of a year or two.<sup>22</sup> When a British Official asked peasants the reason behind frequent migrations, they accused the faulty revenue mechanism carried by the Maharajas' Government.<sup>23</sup>

However, to stop mass flights, various legislations were passed, fines and punishments were imposed and novel methods were adopted to dissuade villagers from quitting their fields.<sup>24</sup> Army was placed to guard the frontiers and no one was allowed to leave the Valley without *Parvanai rahdari* (a document authorizing someone to cross the borders of the State). Though flights made by the peasants outside Valley was checked by passing tough legislations, but internal migrations from *khalisa* villages to that of *jagir* and *chak* villages remained uncurbed.<sup>25</sup> It is pertinent to mention that villagers did not possess any worthy items except cloth and cattle and their possession of little household items made their flight easier.<sup>26</sup>

It was under these circumstances that if any natural calamity hit the Valley, the villagers found themselves in a great trouble. For instance, the famine of 1877-79 proved so devastating that major parts of the rural Kashmir got depopulated either due to starvation or mass migrations to the neighboring areas especially Punjab. It should be remembered that it was owing to the unprecedented scarcity

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<sup>22</sup> Guards were posted at the passes with strict injunctions to turn back all who were not provided with a *Rahdari* (written permission) to leave the country: F. Henvey, Report on *The Famine in Kashmir During 1877-80*, (Confidential), May, 1880, NAI.

<sup>23</sup> Foreign and Political Deptt, *Report on Position of the Cultivating Classes in Kashmir*, NAI.

<sup>24</sup> Fee on the transfer of land was raised so high that it was made equal to the amount for which it was sold: Satinder Singh Bawa, *The Jammu Fox, A Biography of Maharaja Gulab Singh of Kashmir, 1792-1857*. New-Delhi: Heritage Publishers, 1988, p. 169; Mridu Rai, *Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects*, p. 63.

<sup>25</sup> Villagers were too glad to part with their land, as the purchasers had given them a written order exempting them from all kinds of *begar*: Walter Lawrence, *The valley of Kashmir*, p. 414.

<sup>26</sup> R. K. Parmu, *A History of Muslim Rule in Kashmir 1320-1819*. New-Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1969, p. 442; Lawrence. *The valley of Kashmir*, p. 420.

of food in Kashmir that emigration was allowed during the disastrous famine of 1877-79.<sup>27</sup> The depopulation of the Valley by famine of 1877-79 is summed by F. Henvey, Officer on Special Duty in Kashmir in 1880, in the following words:

A number of the chief Valleys to the North were entirely deserted; whole villages lay in ruins; some suburbs of the city were tenantless; the city itself half destroyed; the graveyards were filled to overflowing; the villages had been full of corpses thrown into it. It is not likely that more than two-fifth (2/5<sup>th</sup>) of the people of the Valley now survive.<sup>28</sup>

Exorbitant taxation, defective assessments, and above all *begar* kept villagers continuously on move. Such continuous movements lead us to the conclusion that there were no sedentary villages in rural Kashmir. In 1887, before the land settlement commenced out of total 11,95,555 acres of arable land only 412,069 acres (34%) were under cultivation and that too was confined to the wet zones.<sup>29</sup> There were large tracts of cultivable waste lands and to bring it under plough might have boosted the economy of the State. But it was possible in case of an efficient State and bureaucracy that could have carved a space for a progressive and prosperous peasantry by overhauling the decadent agrarian system.

**British Intervention and the Settlement of Villages:** For a peasant everything was in mess. There were no land records, no maps or solid revenue documents to indicate what an individual holding in land amounted. Neither a villager was sure what his revenue liabilities were nor revenue officials were aware how much to fetch from him.<sup>30</sup> Every year Tehsildar was given charge to cultivate an estate which he did by arranging *nafre* (adult men and women).<sup>31</sup> Cultivators were

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<sup>27</sup> Henvey, Report on *The Famine in Kashmir during 1877-80*, (Confidential), May, 1880, NAI.

<sup>28</sup> Henvey, *The Famine in Kashmir during*, 1880.

<sup>29</sup> Lawrence, *The valley of Kashmir*, pp. 240-41.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 399.

<sup>31</sup> *Nafre* consisted of man, his wife and one adult son. Every *nafre* was given four acres of irrigated land. *Nim-nafre* (man and his wife)

not sure whether, next year, they would be cultivating same piece of land or somewhere else. More problematic was that the area of holding was not measured by a scale but was calculated by the amount of seed required.<sup>32</sup> A plot of land that absorbed one *manwat* ( $2\frac{3}{4}$  lbs.) of seed was declared one *manwat* of land, four *manwat*, a *trak* and sixteen *traks* of seed would determine one *kharwar* (ass load of grain) of land. Not only the individual holdings were in confusion but in many cases, tehsils were not demarcated by clear boundaries.<sup>33</sup> As a result, cultivators were neither knowable nor controllable; their lands were neither surveyed nor assessed and taxed justly.<sup>34</sup> The need was to remove the flaws in the existing revenue structure and settle villagers permanently and fix them to a portion of land within a delimited space.

The year 1885 was fateful in the history of Kashmir in general and the rural Kashmir in particular. It was during this year that the British government of India made direct intervention in the affairs of Kashmir and appointed a Permanent Residency in Srinagar. It was owing to the intervention of the Resident that Maharaja Pratap Singh took over the land settlement in the Valley in 1887 under the A. Wingates. But the attempt proved abortive due to *Pandit* bureaucracy opposition and thus remained limited only to the paragana Phag. In 1889, State Council, under the control of British Resident, sought the service of Walter Roper Lawrence from the British India for taking over the settlement.<sup>35</sup> The land settlement framed by Walter Lawrence and his team proved to be a first formidable move to restore the peasantry to the cultivation of land which went a long way towards the settlement of villages in Kashmir.

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received only two acre and *pao-nafre* (a bachelor) received only one-and-half acres of land: Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 402.

<sup>32</sup> Dhar, *Socio-Economic History of Kashmir Peasantry*, p. 140.

<sup>33</sup> Often villages of one tehsil were scattered within the limits of another and sometimes it turned into fierce official dispute between Tehsildars, one declaring that a particular village fall within his jurisdiction while other declining it: Lawrence, *The valley of Kashmir*, pp. 419- 420.

<sup>34</sup> A. Wingates, *Preliminary Report*, p. 39.

<sup>35</sup> First Commission was appointed under the supervision of A. Wingates in 1887, whose settlement remained confined to only one province i.e., *Phag*.

Alike in Punjab, the team started by observing and interviewing the villagers and after utilizing *patwari* records, they set-up villages as entities with specific boundaries, peoples, soils, fields, rights and obligations.<sup>36</sup> Each village and villager was to be endowed with a record related to his holding. The basic records of the village were prepared in a  *khasra*  (field-register) with an abstract *khatooni* (statement of holdings) that specified the land held by each *assami* (occupant) and the revenue he was expected to pay.<sup>37</sup> Interior detail of each village was captured on the basis of systematic chaining<sup>38</sup> and entered in the field books.<sup>39</sup> Separate listing of *Jagir* and *Chak* holdings were enlisted and rights on common lands, waste lands and forests were mapped and recorded.<sup>40</sup> The first official census of Kashmir was drafted and published in 1891, which clearly provided information regarding rural and urban Kashmir. The fact reveals that village demarcation was successful by 1891.<sup>41</sup> At the same time, gazetteers were published (which documented names and details of villages in an alphabetical order).<sup>42</sup> Topographical and Revenue maps were framed that captured the general features of the ground, the position of the principal towns and villages and the course of canals and rivers.<sup>43</sup>

The settlement under the prominent Settlement Commissioner Walter Roper Lawrence started in January,

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<sup>36</sup> A. Wingates, *Preliminary Report*, 39; Neeladri Bhattacharya, *The Great Agrarian Conquest*, New-Delhi: Permanent Black, 2018, p. 73.

<sup>37</sup> *Socio-Economic History of Kashmir Peasantry*, Srinagar: Center for Kashmir Studies, 1989, p. 141

<sup>38</sup> The length of the chain was 55 feet divided into 10 *karms*, each 5<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> feet long;

<sup>39</sup> A. Wingates, *Preliminary Report*, p 40.

<sup>40</sup> The maps were drawn on a paper with five-inch squares on it which could match with the demarcation of squares on the land; Ibid

<sup>41</sup> The Census of 1891 clearly shows the total population of the Valley as 814,241. Out of which 695,281 constituted rural population. It further states that the Valley consisted of 2870 villages; Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 225.

<sup>42</sup> *Gazetteer of Kashmir and Ladakh* was compiled by Charles Bates in 1872 and another *Gazetteer of Kashmir and Ladakh* in 1890 under the supervision and guidance of colonial officers.

<sup>43</sup> Foreign & Political Department, Internal-A, January 1904, Nos. 30-31, NAI.



1887 and lasted till 1893 did a revolutionary work in the history of rural Kashmir. It not only led to the emergence of the settled villages but turned villager into a fiscal subject as well. The most important decision taken by the settlement department was granting of permanent hereditary occupancy rights to the villagers, who agreed to pay fixed amount on their holdings. The occupancy rights were made conditional that the peasant had to settle in a village, and not to leave the village during the period of settlement {that was ten years}.<sup>44</sup> In order to make the villages stable, the excessive taxation like *rasum*, *kaul*, *nazrana*, *giriftani* were abolished and revenue that was demanded separately on walnut trees, forests and livestock were included in the aggregate land revenue.<sup>45</sup> Waste and fallow lands were entered as *khalisa* and thrown open to the villagers and all previous arrears were remitted. Collective occupancy rights were granted to the villagers in graveyards, threshing floors, ponds and other similar lands entered into revenue documents as *shamilat-i-deh*.<sup>46</sup> The Punjab Land Alienation Act of 1900, passed in Punjab with an intention to stop passing of lands into the hands of non-agricultural classes, excluded Kashmiris from those castes which could buy land from the land owner castes in Punjab.<sup>47</sup> It also compelled Kashmiri immigrants to return to the Valley and register themselves as *assamis*. The occupancy rights conferred upon the villagers proved as erosion in the *Bainamai Amritsar* (Sale deed of Amritsar) as the treaty of Amritsar was critically referred to,<sup>48</sup> and it was sufficient to inspire confidence among villagers. Moreover, the settlement did not remain confined to the *Khalisa* villages, but the peasants of the *Jagir* and *Darmarth* (religious land grants) villages, later on, received similar treatment.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 429.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 449.

<sup>46</sup> Dhar, *Socio-Economic History of Kashmir Peasantry*, p. 143.

<sup>47</sup> Foreign and political, Deposit-Int. Pros. June 1919, Nos. 78; *Letter From Abdul Qayoom Khan on the Ground Situation in Kashmir Especially Muslims*, NAI.

<sup>48</sup> Under the Treaty of Amritsar, Maharaja was claiming sole proprietary rights over Kashmir but the Settlement gave villagers hereditary and permanent occupancy rights.

<sup>49</sup> Zutshi, *Language of Belongings*, p. 97.

The settlement operation in such villages was done successfully by 1896-97 under the supervision of Capt. J. L. Kaye.<sup>50</sup> As a result, the villagers who used to wander from one corner to another, in quest for mere survival and security, got settled on their lands permanently that resulted into permanent of villages in the Valley.

**Villages after Settlement:** The land settlement conferred permanent and hereditary occupancy rights on the peasantry and prevented them from ejection until they would pay revenue regularly. Settling peasantry to a permanent holding of land in a particular village normatively curbed the flights of the peasantry and the deserting of the villages. Making a peasant responsible for the payment of the land revenue developed a strong grip of the State on the peasant and, as such, turned him into a fiscal subject with a guaranteed punctuality of revenues.

Despite of positive side, there were certain features within this settlement that, in the long run, turned to be its dark side. One of the important recommendations of the settlement was fixing revenue both in kind and cash. Moreover, the kind portion was delimited to be taken only in two important and dearest food staples of the villagers, viz paddy and maize, and claiming revenues in cotton, oilseeds and pulses was declined.<sup>51</sup>

As is true about any feudal State and society there was least use of cash in the villages since daily transactions were carried in *bartar*.<sup>52</sup> After land settlement, it turned to be a

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<sup>50</sup> Alike in *Khalisa* villages, *Sanads* were prepared for each *Jagir* that specified its precise area, value and the terms under which the grant had been made. Accordingly, *Jagir* peasantry was granted occupancy rights (*hak-assami*) and *Jagirdar* was declared mere revenue collector of the village. The settlement report also denied *Jagirdars* any right to the wastelands that was thrown open to the villagers: J. L. Kaye, *Note on the Assessment Report on the Minor Jagir Villages Situated in the Valley of Kashmir*, p. 14-17, NAI; Also see, File No: 161/G-43 of 1907, Jammu Archive.

<sup>51</sup> Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 440.

<sup>52</sup> Villagers needed cash on special occasions like marriages, deaths and religious festivals. On such occasions, money was lend from the village shopkeeper (*won*) and was promised to be paid in the form of blanket,

necessity to pay land revenue in cash in order to save portion of staple grain (paddy and maize) for the winter use. But due to large scale demand of cash, there was no alternative except to take money on credit after signing a proper *hujat* (bond) from a moneylender locally known as *Waddar* or *Sahukar*. The bond contained many demands like rate of interest, time of payment and more importantly repayment was demanded in kind. Thus, the usurer used to enhance his gains by fixing the rate of commutation of his choice that used to be very low as compared to the market rates.<sup>53</sup>

Providing money on interest became a profitable profession of a small section of rural people who as mentioned above came to be known as *waddars*.<sup>54</sup> These *waddars* purchased the crop long before it was harvested and advanced cash against the future delivery of the crop. They charged high rates of interest on these loans that counted around 50 to 100 per cent.<sup>55</sup> On receiving huge amount of grain, these *waddars* hoarded bulk of the grain and sell it back to the villagers usually double the rate they had sold. As a result, the peasants went on paying something every year, both in cash and kind, and yet the debt of the trifling sum of Rs. 30 to 40 was not paid in full during their lifetime.<sup>56</sup> Eventually, within a short period, it developed very deep roots in rural Kashmir that it remained the most complex and chronic problem till the end of Dogra rule. The proverb

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ghee, apples, grain, etc. No *hujat* (bond) was signed between the parties and the only record of the transaction was an entry in the daily ledger of the *wani*; Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 5.

<sup>53</sup> An Interview with Gulam Muhammad Bhat, Age 75, R/O, Laroo Kulgam, dated 05/02/2018.

<sup>54</sup> *Won* (shopkeeper), *Sahukar* (Hindu merchant) and upper peasantry like *Muqqdam* and *Khojas* started lending money on interest. In local parlance they were known *Waddar*: Prem Nath Bazaz, *Inside Kashmir*. 1941; repr., Srinagar: Gulshan Books, 2011, p. 253.

<sup>55</sup> In case the debtor failed to repay the loan in due time, the *waddar* would calculate the price of undelivered grain, according to the market rates, and next harvesting season was fixed to waive of the debt. However, by that time the peasant needed further credit. Eventually, on the harvest time he was not able to waive-off the principal amount; File No. 2/C.S./73, 1920, Jammu Archives.

<sup>56</sup> Bazaz, *Inside Kashmir*, 253; *Kashmir Valley Food Control*, Jammu and Kashmir Information, Vol. I, No. 4, September-October, 1944, p. 28.

“*marith sheh reth bakaya*” (six months pending even after death) substantiates the fact that a peasant was born in debt, lived in debt and died in debt.

Another important recommendation of Land Settlement was to abolish the monopoly of the State over grain trade so that the city people would make certain arrangements to approach the producer himself and buy grain in an open market.<sup>57</sup> It was expected that by selling surplus grain in an open market peasants would make benefits and result into the emergence of rural capitalism. But as stated above, *waddars* swept the grain of the villages much before it was taken to the threshing-floor and supply it to the *galladar* (grain-dealer).<sup>58</sup> Within a short period, nexus between *waddar* and *galladar* (grain-dealer) turned to be a profitable business carried on regular basis.<sup>59</sup> *Waddars* often sold bulk of grain to *galladars*, with whom it became a practice to hoard it and sell it to town population at high rates.<sup>60</sup> Thus, immediately after land settlement both rural and urban Kashmir began to witness shortage of grain that culminated into food crisis. Grain prices began touching skies, for instance, before land settlement one *kharwar* (66 *seers*) of paddy was sold for ten *annas* (16 *annas* make a rupee) while

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<sup>57</sup> Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 483.

<sup>58</sup> With the abolishment of old system by which large part of State grain, 80,000 *kharwar*, was set apart for the consumption of the small towns and staging-places in the Valley, there emerged a class of private trader known as *galladars*: Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 443.

<sup>59</sup> These *galladars* were mostly the shawl traders whose business received its death-blow after Franco-German War (1870) and never really revived. In 1892 Settlement Commissioner, Walter Lawrence, invited some leading merchants in Srinagar to discuss the grain question and pointed out to them that in the place of their old shawl trade a fine business in grain was before them: *Letter from Col. W.F. Fridfaux, 7 July 1892, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, Oct. 1892, No. 149-60, NAI.*

<sup>60</sup> The prices of best rice had risen from 16 *seers* per rupee to 11 *seers*, that of white rice from 21 *seers* to 14 *seers*, and that of ordinary rice from 33 *seers* to 16 *seers*: *Letter from Col. W. F. Fridfaux, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, July 1892, NAI; Jalali, The Economics of Food Grains in Kashmir*, p. 55.

in 1901 one rupee fetched 18 seers and by 1911 not more than 13 seers.<sup>61</sup>

In addition, misery to the villagers was added by the First World War (1914-1918) because Kashmir could not remain unaffected by the general rise in prices. In 1918, *galladars* were purchasing paddy at Rs 4 per *kharwar* and in turn sold it at double price.<sup>62</sup> By 1921, the situation had went out of control and *Waddars* in villages sold grain at Rs 16 per *kharwar* and *galladars* in cities sold at the rate of Rs.18 per *kharwar*.<sup>63</sup> High market prices did not benefit peasants any way but *waddars* and *galladars*, while peasants went further under their clutches. To waive off debts, there was no other alternative except to sell part of their land for which *waddars*, and other rural elites like *chakdars* were desperately waiting.<sup>64</sup> Such sale deeds were facilitated especially by the grant of proprietary rights in *khalsa* lands provided to the famished peasantry under the recommendations of Glancy commission (1931-32) in 1933.

Though the crisis hit both rural and urban Kashmir, the State government intervened when hue and cry was raised by the city population. To the surprise of rural people, State demanded revenue of two *kharwars* of paddy or maize from every acre of land at very nominal rates in order to feed the vocal town people.<sup>65</sup> And villagers were left at the mercy of *waddars* from whom they purchased grain at very high rates in contrast to the rates paid to wave of their debts. In 1922, Food Control Department was established to maintain the equilibrium of food grain and prices, and to make policies to

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<sup>61</sup> *Census of India, 1911, Vol. XX, Kashmir, Part 1, Report, 55; Zutshi, Language of Belongings, p. 104.*

<sup>62</sup> Political Department 123/1921, Jammu Archives.

<sup>63</sup> Political Department 123/1921, Jammu Archives; File No. 406 of 1935-36 (Revenue), Srinagar Archive.

<sup>64</sup> Transfer of land was permitted within the municipal limits of *Srinagar* and in *Anantnag, Shopian, Bijbihara, Pampore, Sopore, Baramulla and Muzaffarabad* towns. See *A Handbook of Jammu and Kashmir State, 1944*, p. 13; Moreover, the Sate formulated certain Acts that allowed peasants to sell part of their land to waive of their debt like Land Alienation Act of 1926.

<sup>65</sup> Foreign and Political Deptt, Secret- Internal, Proceedings, June 1919, Nos. 31-33; Zutshi, *Language of Belongings*, p. 110-111

avert food crises.<sup>66</sup> The Department issued ration tickets in Srinagar and major towns of the Valley that guaranteed every city dweller, rich and poor above two years of age, a monthly ration of eight *traks* of paddy throughout the year.<sup>67</sup> In rural Kashmir, it banned the export of paddy to the city and purchased paddy at a very low rates. Against such injustice, the agriculturists submitted petitions stating that the existence of the Food Control Department had proved curse for the agriculturists.<sup>68</sup>

To pacify the villagers, the government came with a regulation, called Agriculturalists' Relief Regulation in July 1925. It promised to restrain the unbridled moneylenders and gave relief to the agriculturists of the Valley.<sup>69</sup> Nevertheless, it was very difficult and confusing for an illiterate villager to make signatures on a document which he was unable to read. Moreover, the moneylenders had already developed a kind of fear among the peasants by exploiting them while taking

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<sup>66</sup> *Kashmir Valley Food Control*, Jammu and Kashmir Information, Vol. I, No. 4: Sep-Oct., 1944.

<sup>67</sup> There were seven ration *ghats* (stores) in the city for cheap sale of grain on both the banks of the river. Four at the right bank at *Habba-Kadal*, *Badshah*, *Bulbul Lankar* and *Khankhah Sokhta* and the three on the left bank at *Pathar Masjid*, *Jamal Lalla*, and *Chattabal*: Foreign and Political Deptt, Secret- Internal, Proceedings, June 1919, Nos. 31-33, Srinagar Archive.

<sup>68</sup> As the Food Control Department purchased only paddy from the agriculturists, it was requested that the ban imposed on the import of paddy into the city be removed or else all sorts of crops produced from the soil should be accepted or the department be suspended for sometime so that the Government will be convinced that its non-existence is better than for its existence; *File No. 406 of 1935-36(Revenue)*, *Application from the Agriculturists of Kulgam Tehsil through Kh Addur Rehman Dar of Nasnoor, on the various points pertaining to their amelioration*, Srinagar Archive.

<sup>69</sup> Bazaz, *Inside Kashmir*, p. 254; According to the regulation, a debtor could bring his creditor to the court for settlement of accounts. Second, interest on loans was prescribed not to exceed fifty percent. Third, the court also fixed the installments to be paid according to the paying capacity of the debtor. An ordinance was passed declaring agricultural tools, livestock and seeds as non-attachable for redemption of loans. In case the money-lender goes against the law, peasants were given right to knock the doors of court and file case against money-lender: *A Hand Book of Jammu and Kashmir State, 1944*, p. 41, Srinagar Archive.

signatures on the *hujat*; and those who approached courts got discordantly disappointed soon because of its lengthy and time consuming procedure. Eventually, money-lending continued unchecked and culminated into the land alienations, due to frequent transfer of land from peasant to moneylender. As a result, the two inter-linked problems remained the major grievances of the rural people to be addressed.

Money-lending that resulted into the escalation of land alienation was further intensified by unequal distribution of land during the Land Settlement. In fact, one may say, there was enough scope within land settlement for land grabbing that created tenancy problems throughout countryside. Among the serious loopholes, the major problem with the settlement was that *Chakdars*,<sup>70</sup> alike common peasants, were recognized as legal occupants of the land.<sup>71</sup> Being privileged land holders, it was declared that special rates in their case would continue for the term of 10 years and would be subject to reassessment thereafter as per normal rates.<sup>72</sup> However, the ten year limitation was ignored and majority of the *chakdars* continued to enjoy beneficial treatment on their lands, reduction of 12<sup>1/2</sup> per cent, till late 1948.<sup>73</sup> In addition, if some occupants were incompetent to pay land revenue of a particular year, they lost their occupancy rights under the system of *dustbardari*<sup>74</sup> (voluntary relinquishment) and the land was handed over to another *assami* who would agree to

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<sup>70</sup> *Chakdars* emerged as a group of landlords on *khalisa* lands in 1862, when Maharaja Ranbir Singh took an initiative to bring waste land under cultivation. On such lands, they were entitled to special rates for first ten years: A. Wingates, *Preliminary Report*, p. 28.

<sup>71</sup> Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 426.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Mirza Afzal Beg, *On the Way to Golden Harvests, Agricultural Reforms in Kashmir*. Srinagar: Archives Reference Library, 1963, pp. 7- 9, 18.

<sup>74</sup> Like sun-set laws in Permanent Settlement of Bengal, if a peasant was incompetent to pay land revenue of a particular year, he lost his occupancy rights under the system of *dustbardari*. Such lands were handed over to another peasant who would agree to pay the arrears. This provision was also fully exploited by *chakdars* in amassing huge landed estates; U.K. Zutshi, *Emergence of Political Awakening in Kashmir*. Delhi: Manahor Publishing House, 1986, p. 141; Rai, *Hindu Rulers Muslim Subjects*, p. 173.

pay the arrears. Reduction of  $12^{1/2}$  per cent on hundreds of acres of land was enough to pay the arrears of 5 to 8 acres.<sup>75</sup> This provision was fully exploited by *Chakdars* in amassing huge landed estates. The process resulted into continuous flow of land from *poor-assami* to the privileged one's and finally culminated into the emergence of absentee landlordism, a major problem engulfing rural Kashmir in the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>76</sup> When Tenancy Act of 1923 was passed, it accepted land transfers made after the Land Settlement<sup>77</sup> and heightened it further because landholder was given the powers to evict tenants if they declare land unfit for cultivation or failed to pay the rent.<sup>78</sup> As a result, peasants lost occupancy on their lands and turned tenants-at-will while the platform for landlordism became strong without any check.

In order to put stop on the large scale transfer of land, the State came with the Land Alienation Act of 1926<sup>79</sup> which allowed peasants to sell land, not more than 25 per cent, in order to liquidate their debt. The peasants exercised this right willingly or unwillingly by selling  $1/4^{\text{th}}$  of their holding to

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<sup>75</sup> An average peasant had occupancy over 5 to 8 acres of land while a *Chakdar* had possession of 10 to 20 villages: W.S.Talbot, *Review of the Assessment Reports of the Kulgam, Anantnag, Awantipur, Part of Sahr Khas, Baramulla and Uttarmachipura Tehsils of the Kashmir Valley, File No; 246 of 1906*, Jammu Archive.

<sup>76</sup> Beg, *On the Way to Golden Harvests, Agricultural Reforms in Kashmir*, pp. 7-11

<sup>77</sup> The land occupied by peasants under the settlement was declared not alienable either by sale or mortgage, because the settlement Commissioner, Walter Lawrence, declared that the peasants in Kashmir do not yet understand the value of land. Therefore, bestowing right to sell or mortgage land would be the signal for extensive alienation: Walter Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 431; The Tenancy Act of 1923 divided the occupancy tenants into four categories: First, those having possession of land before or in the year 1880 (before Land Settlement), second, those having possession of land between 1880 and 1894 (occupancy rights recognized by Land Settlement), third, those having possession of land between 1894 and 1906 (occupied land during the first tenure (10 years) of the Settlement) and fourth, those having possession of land after 1906 (after the first tenure of Settlement).

<sup>78</sup> Dhar, *Socio-Economic History of Kashmir Peasantry*, p. 164.

<sup>79</sup> Zutshi, *Language of Belongings*, p. 213.



their creditors. After receiving *malikana* rights in case of *khalsa* lands in 1933, like Land Alienation Act of 1926, peasants were again given choice to sell 1/4<sup>th</sup> of their land. As a result, in the first year land alienated by the sales, mortgages and gifts aggregated to 46,673 acres in the Valley.<sup>80</sup> It was anticipated that, had there been not a ban forbidding sale of land more than 25 per cent, the peasants would have sold all their holdings to repay their debts. Noticeably, the fact indicates that from 1926 to 1933 peasants lost around 50 per cent of their land to the greedy and rapacious landlord class. Eventually, during 1930s, there was widespread chaos among the peasantry regarding loss of rights over land. Few people in countryside had emerged who had amassed huge portions of land and these renters and usurer, termed by B. R. Tomlinson as rural predators, fastened on the villagers like leeches to any red bloodied example of growth.<sup>81</sup> The countryside scenario in 1938-39 can be gauged from the fact that out of the total cultivable area of 9,46,000 acres,<sup>82</sup> not less than 2,91,689 acres were under Jagirdars, 6,54,311 acres under the *chakdars* while a small portion of cultivable land was under the ownership of the actual cultivators.<sup>83</sup>

It is clear that the prevailing situation in rural Kashmir during 1930s had made peasantry frustrated and disillusioned. The system of indebtedness had culminated into the landlessness on the one hand and landlordism on the other hand. The system aggravated agrarian crises in rural Kashmir where *Jagirdars* in the *jagir* villages and *waddars* and *chakdars* in the *khalsa* villages had gained control over the villagers and their lands. The suppressed peasantry no doubt tried to seek justice from the State but the initiative taken by the State in this direction were not enough to cut the roots of the grave problem.

The first political organization of the state, All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, from its inception began to

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<sup>80</sup> Bazaz, *Inside Kashmir*, p. 229.

<sup>81</sup> B. R. Tomlinson, *The Economy of Modern India 1860-1970*. Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 33.

<sup>82</sup> Administrative Report of the Jammu and Kashmir State for the year, 1938-39, Jammu Archive.

<sup>83</sup> Bazaz, *Inside Kashmir*, pp. 229-30.

show pro-peasantry attitude and raised the voice of the unheard.<sup>84</sup> Despite the urban leadership of the party with its headquarters at Srinagar, it was able to gain mass support from the rural Kashmir within a few years. The party held its annual sessions in the major towns of the Valley where it addressed the major agrarian problems like landlordism and money-lending, as such, rural population in general and peasantry in particular supported it wholeheartedly. Shaikh Muhammad Abdullah in the introduction of New Kashmir Manifesto (issued as its agenda by National conference in 1944) against the pampering policy of State towards privileged landlord class remarked, “freedom and privilege are two sides of a pair of scales: As privilege gets lighter, freedom gets heavier.”<sup>85</sup> He further declared:

So long as a privileged class exists, itself doing nothing, but living on the labour of others, there can be no equitable distribution of the products of the soil...Abolition of the landlordism is necessary and only then it will be possible for the first time to satisfy the land hunger of the landless peasant, and ensure the efficient working of the land.<sup>86</sup>

Regarding the problem of rural indebtedness he proclaimed, “Rural indebtedness has ruined the peasantry of the State. The peasant must be made completely debt-free. Wherever the borrower has paid off the original amount, there shall be no future payment of interest.”<sup>87</sup> Thus by promising Land to tiller, abolition of landlordism and remission of debt, nationalist leadership was able to address the grievances of peasantry to a great extent.

**Conclusion:** The Treaty of Amritsar resulted into the imposition of a feudal government on the people of Kashmir

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<sup>84</sup> The inaugural session was held on 14, 15 and 16<sup>th</sup> October 1932 at the Pather Masjid, Srinagar, under the president-ship of Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah: Ganai, *Kashmir's Struggle for Independence*, p. 113.

<sup>85</sup> *New Kashmir Manifesto*, p. 7.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

in general and the rural population in particular. Since the Treaty doesn't mention anything about the internal administration and it is evident that Gulab Singh was left free in case of governance. As a result Kashmir witnessed such a type of taxation that it was unprecedented in its history. Besides regressive taxation, the forced labour had broken the back of rural people. In such circumstances the only method to sustain was to desert a village and make flights. Making flights though only means of survival for peasants was problematic for the smooth functioning of the agrarian system. Therefore, the need was to come up with a permanent solution and that was achieved with the appointment of British Residency in 1885.

It is true that the appointment of the Residency had certain political and economic motives, but it acted as a blessing for the people of Valley in general and rural people in particular. Signs of change started manifesting the moment permanent British Residency was established. The important development that changed the rural scenario was the introduction of land settlement. The team, led by Sir Walter Roper Lawrence, moved from village to village for surveying, mapping, exploring and listening to the villagers. Accordingly, topographical and revenue maps were framed that captured general features of the ground, position of towns and villages and the course of rivers. Village boundaries were drawn to plot the limits of each field and interior detail of each village was captured and entered into the field registers that highlighted the land holdings held by each *assami* (account holder). Census reports and gazetteers were published that documented names and details of villages in alphabetical order. As a result, State developed a strong grip over the villages by turning villagers into responsible fiscal subjects. The settlement that took about six years to complete granted occupancy rights to peasantry, lessened the burden of excessive revenue claims, stopped the flights of the peasants and ultimately resulted into the emergence of sedentary or settled villages in Kashmir.

Though, the land settlement proved beneficial for both the State and the cultivators in the short-run, but in the long-run it created multifarious problems in rural Kashmir. The

foremost problem was created by introducing monetization of revenue, because villagers began to take money on interest to pay revenue in cash. It affected the peasantry to such an extent that peasants born in debt, living in debt and dying in debt became common phenomena in rural Kashmir. Second crucial problem was the emergence of landlordism that was the result of the State's decision to accept privileged land holders as *assamis*. Eventually, it created tenancy problems and the security of the tenancy became an uncertain phenomenon throughout rural Kashmir. And third problem was abolition of State's monopoly over grain trade. Eventually grain trade remained monopoly of few rural-elites like *waddars* (money-lenders) who developed strong connections with the city *galladars* (grain dealers). The nexus of *waddar* and urban *galladar* proved very fatal for the stability of the grain prices that began to rise very fast during the first and second decade of twentieth century. These three interconnected problems created an environment of frustration in the countryside. Therefore, the issues like abolition of landlordism, land to tiller and remission of debt created serious agrarian crisis and thus became slogans of the nationalist leadership who grabbed the opportunity in order to mobilize the rural population.

# **Establishment, Reorganization and the Working of Police Department in Jammu and Kashmir (1846-1947)**

Gowar Zahid Dar

**Abstract:** *In the good old times, the police in Jammu and Kashmir, according to Sir Roper Walter Lawrence the renowned land settlement Commissioner of the Valley, constituted of 1000 village watchmen or "Chowkidars" who were known for their vigilant and inquisitorial abilities. They were mostly drawn from the "Doom" caste of the population and were known for their excellent detection and transmission of intelligence. It was in the year 1873 A.D. that formal police force came into existence with one police officer known as Kotwal and 14 Thanedars for Srinagar city. This nuclear force would control crime and take care of law and order situations with the help of Chowkidars and Harkars, who were paid by the population out of their annual agricultural produce on a voluntary basis. However, with the passage of time the Police Department was re-organized and firmly established. Several new police stations were established and these were put under the charge of newly appointed Station House Officers (S.H.O) with defined powers. The State's primary consideration was to safeguard and maintain police department and it came under the category of essential services which was considered important for the maintenance of law and order on which rested the system of the government. As no serious work has been done till date on the history and working of Jammu and Kashmir police, therefore, this article is an attempt to record the history, challenges and working of Jammu and Kashmir Police since its inception up to the end of the Dogra rule in Jammu and Kashmir. This paper is mostly based upon the primary sources. Optimum benefit has been taken from the National Archives, New Delhi and State Archives of Jammu and Kashmir.*

**Introduction:** Society is a highly regulated system of human association for largescale community living that normally furnishes protection, continuity, security and national identity to its members. The order of this system is

established and maintained through social control. Harry Emerson Fosdick, noted Minister and Counsellor observes that, it is when a man is free to do as he pleases that his troubles begin. According to Paul H. Landis an American sociologist, if Fosdick's observation is correct, it is good for the individual never to find that time and place in life where he is completely free to do as he pleases. Further, he opines, that no society can exist without a framework of social regulation. This framework provides an order by which men live in groups and individuals are regulated. Hence, he concludes that social control is necessary to protect the individual against himself and to save society from chaos and that, it is a process by which social order is established and maintained. In other words, he points out that social control is the cause, and the effect is social order in a society.<sup>1</sup>

According to P.H. Landis, man is born with capacities for social experience and for acquiring culture, but without the established patterns for functioning effectively in society. Society is strictly a man-made affair and not necessarily a part of the law of nature. It is artificial and is maintained only by the constant surveillance of social control. Man's nature becomes human only because of the disciplinary influences of social regulation. In other words, Landis opines that society is the product of social control.<sup>2</sup> Bernard L.L. is of the opinion that with the increased complexity of modern society due to the growth of inventions and spread of industrialization during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, social control has become the problem of the modern world. This means that, the primary group controls of the past were no longer adequate to control groups in urban industrialized societies.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, building effective control mechanism was one of the major problems faced by modern society. Further, Emile Durkheim states that, inventions and technologies have become the chief agencies of social change in societies. These, not only bring about change in habits but also make an impact on moral and

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<sup>1</sup> Landis Paul, *Police, human rights and Community relationship*, Highland Publications, 1997, p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Bernard L L, *Social Control in its Sociological Aspects*, Macmillan Company New York, 1939, p. 17.

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religious values and on the entire system of social control. The disintegration of the old controls required new approaches to social control. Hence, law with its prohibitions and penalties has become an important instrument of social control in modern society. Thus, it is evident that social control is one of fundamental subjects of sociological discussions. Its significance lies in its universality. A comparison of small and simple societies with large and complex societies throws light on the difference between the nature and agencies of social control. In the past, simple and informal methods were followed. But with the increase in size and complexity of societies, the existing mechanisms of ensuring order in societies, though not defunct, gradually weakened. Thus, there was the need to formalize the mechanisms of social control. This led to the emergence of laws, legislations, and law enforcing agencies such as government, police, military, courts and prisons. According to the observations of Gautam in his book *The Indian Police - A study in Fundamentals* law does not discriminate and applies to all in a like manner.<sup>4</sup> But, he argues, the real problem is that everybody will not treat law in a like manner. So, there has to be an agent of law, to see that there is a rule of law and one of the agencies to do this is the police.

The history of the development of police department is associated with the history of modernization of the Indian states. In old days, little more than half a century ago when the will of ruler was supreme and in certain cases only law in the land, there was no regular civil police. The nearest approach to the police officer being the *Kotwal*.<sup>5</sup> In the times of emergency such as on the occasions of riots, either the military were termed out to quell or the riot was left to end

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<sup>4</sup> Guatama D.N, *The Indian Police*, Mittal Publications, 1993, p. 24.

<sup>5</sup> His main duties were to maintain law and order, to apprehend criminals and to commit them to a criminal court for trial and punishment. He was also vested with executive powers, which enabled him to function as a police magistrate. In the towns and cities, the responsibility of policing was vested in the *Kotwal*. The *Kotwal* correspond to the present-day Inspectors. Their duties were to prevent and detect crime, maintain peace and protect the property of the people. Ibid.

itself without any interference from the Government. There used to be subordinate officers known as *Harkars* or *Agyaparvarkatas* or the messengers who acted as spies and carried out the less important duties in connection with the *Kotwal*. The *Kotwal* possessed magisterial powers also and was thus besides being prosecutor and the Judge also. His dispensation of Justice was rough and ready, and he was not burdened by the scruples of the law and procedure. His methods of investigation were equally simple and effective, being nothing more or less than extraction of confession by torture from a man suspected of having committed a crime. Thus, even if a man were ultimately proved to be innocent, he had to suffer the torture, if he had the misfortune of being suspected by a *Kotwal* or his minions. For his suffering he received no compensation. However, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century a meticulous reorganization was witnessed in policing in many states of India including Jammu and Kashmir. It is the striking amendment in the nature of policing that prompted me to choose the subject under discussion. The study is meant to address few important questions. These important questions are what steps were taken for the re-organization of the police department? How much funds were appropriated annually by the police department? To what extent it suppressed the voices that sprang against the Dogra state? And was there any direct confrontation between the police and the public? These questions are addressed in the foregoing discussion.

**Re-organization:** Till 1885, the police system in Jammu and Kashmir was disarrayed and un-organized. The masses were harassed and powers were used to grab the opportunities. The police was scarcely found in capital cities and towns, while as in villages the robbers and highway men moved freely.<sup>6</sup> Robert Thorp who visited the State before 1885 was highly critical of this police system and said it resembled with

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<sup>6</sup> Report prepared by colonel Nisbet on the administration of the state, Foreign Department, Feb. 1891, Nos. 295-326 (Sec F), National Archives of India, New Delhi, (hereafter referred as NAI).



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that of defunct land tax system.<sup>7</sup> There were two sections of the State police in 1885 viz., the Jammu section and the Kashmir section. Both of these sections were put under the control of superintendent of police (S.P.). The S.P. was himself under the supervision of the Senior General of Police who was directly answerable to the *Darbar* (Ruler and his top officials). The following table will exhibit the total strength of the police before 1885:<sup>8</sup>

	Jammu	Kashmir	Total
General of Police	1	----	1
Superintendent of Police	1	1	2
Deputy Superintendent	4	2	6
Inspectors	8	6	14
Deputy Inspectors	18	60	78
Sergeants	137	49	186
Constables	1051	176	1277
Mounted Sepoys	6	----	6
Other Staff	102	29	131
Total	1328	323	1651

**Source:** *Report Majmovi, 1882-83 by Dewan Anant Ram*).

The table depicts that the Jammu province got major share of the state police, 80 % police force was posted in Jammu and only 20% in the Valley. This was because Kashmir was crime free and Jammu full of crimes.<sup>9</sup> The frontier districts of Ladakh and Gilgit lack facilities of police system and law and order was in the hands of *wazir-i-wazarats* (*present day deputy commissioners*). In 1890 post of Senior General of Police was abolished and in his place contract of police department was placed in the hands of Commander-in-chief

<sup>7</sup> Robert Thorp who criticised the land revenue administration of the Dogra state said “The system of city police resembles that of the land tax system in the valley, there existed number of different grades of the officials and consequent facilities for the bribery and intimidation were created. Thorp Robert, *Cashmere Misgovernment*, 1870, London, p. 78.

<sup>8</sup> *Majmovi Report Jammu and Kashmir State*, State Archives Jammu, 1882-83, p. 78.

<sup>9</sup> In 1882-83, the total crimes committed in Jammu were 1420 and in Kashmir only 182. Khan Saleem, *The History of Jammu and Kashmir (1885-1925)*, Gulshan Publishers Srinagar, 2002, pp. 330-331.

of Jammu and Kashmir State. Sub-divisions were put under the charge of Assistant Superintendent of police which consisted of several inspectors, deputy inspectors, sergeants, foot and mounted constables.<sup>10</sup>

The State reorganized the police department by introducing several reforms. There was establishment of several new police stations and these were put under the charge of newly appointed Station House Officers (S.H.O) with defined powers. Srinagar city was divided into 4 circles and each circle was put under the supervision of Deputy Inspectors. The State Council laid down rules regarding recovery, refund, proper accounting of fines<sup>11</sup> and extortion of confession was prevented by issuing a circular against it.<sup>12</sup> The police department was ordered to prepare and submit details of criminals monthly to higher courts.<sup>13</sup> Regarding the transfer State Council formed a rule according to which the officials in charge of police stations were transferred every third year.<sup>14</sup> The robbery on Jhelum Valley Road was also checked by forming a social squadron of police which gave a sigh of relief to the traders and stall owners.<sup>15</sup> The constables and sergeants of lower grades were trained at the preliminary schools at Jammu and Srinagar.<sup>16</sup> Punjab police training school at Phillauri was meant for training of the sergeants of higher grades, deputy inspectors and inspectors.<sup>17</sup> Although several reforms were introduced, but one fails to see any considerable improvement in police department till the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. The reason behind this was that it

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<sup>10</sup> *Annual Administrative Report of Jammu and Kashmir*, 1904-05, p. 38

<sup>11</sup> *Annual Administrative Report of Jammu and Kashmir*, 1889-90, p.81.

<sup>12</sup> *Political Department, No III/N-80 of 1912*, Jammu and Kashmir State Archives.

<sup>13</sup> *Jammu and Kashmir Police Deptt. Report, 1889-90*, Jammu and Kashmir State Archives, P.84

<sup>14</sup> *Jammu and Kashmir Police Deptt. Report, 1896-97*, p. 25.

<sup>15</sup> There were frequent incidents of loot on the Jhelum Valley road. Many traders were robbed of their goods which became a constant hurdle in the progress of trade and commerce. *Foreign and Political Deptt.*, 1894-95, p. 16. NAI.

<sup>16</sup> Khan Saleem, *The History of Jammu and Kashmir (1885-1925)*, Gulshan Publishers, Residency Road Srinagar, 2002, p. 322.

<sup>17</sup> *Annual Administrative Report Jammu and Kashmir*, 1904-05, p. 38.

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was not possible to reform a system which had for so many decades exploited common people.<sup>18</sup> Most of the policemen were remnants of the Ranbir Singh era (Ranbir Singh was the second ruler of Dogra dynasty and ruled Kashmir from 1857-1885) and they were not ready to change their method of working.<sup>19</sup> Another reason which hampered considerable improvement in police department was the low rates of pay.<sup>20</sup> Even no pay was given to *chowkidars* and village headman who assisted police and were instrumental in suppressing crimes in the rural areas.<sup>21</sup> Thus, bribery proved to be an alternative for the police officers and efforts of Council proved to be meaningless for a common man. Besides, this police officers were unqualified and State also didn't increase police stations with the increase in crimes.<sup>22</sup> The State didn't possess any detective police and treasure guards were deficient in strength.<sup>23</sup> Police lines lacked proper strength and superintendent of police had not a suitable office.<sup>24</sup> The *thanas* in every part of State were wretched and unhygienic and criminals were mainly from the communities of low caste

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<sup>18</sup> For, many decades they acted as a source of extra oppression on the common man. Though they were meant to mitigate the sufferings of the masses but in collaboration with the oppressors i.e. middleman and other officials they aggravated the sufferings of the people. Thorp Robert, *Cashmere Misgovernment*, London, 1870, p. 87.

<sup>19</sup> Pandit Bhang Ram, the Judicial member of the state council declared in 1892 "the country is not yet free from the police oppression, *Annual Administrative Report of Jammu and Kashmir*, 1891-92, p. 114.

<sup>20</sup> The government didn't fix the pay of the policeman, instead they were left free to extract illegally from the peasant whatever they want. On the one hand they never considered their services seriously as no pay was fixed for them and on the other hand the state didn't interfere when policemen looted the peasant. Ibid

<sup>21</sup> The village *Chowkidar* and the headman assisted the police officials in the suppression of the crimes by keeping a close vigil on the criminals. The *chowkidars* used to awake whole night so that no thief can runways from their clutches. Sometimes the *chowkidars* and the village headmen were held responsible for the crime that happened in the village. *Annual Administrative Report of Jammu and Kashmir*, 1896-97, p. 24.

<sup>22</sup> *Annual Administrative Report of Jammu and Kashmir*, 1892-93, p. 4.

<sup>23</sup> *Annual Administrative Report of Jammu and Kashmir*, 1901-04.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

origins.<sup>25</sup> The Council ordered police department to revise the list of criminals annually and a clear watch should be kept on them. Since 1892, names of all those persons who were registered for the cognizable offences were entered in the register. Yet law and order was not maintained in rural areas because of the absence of cooperation from the villagers and *lamberdars* (village Headmen). These *Lambardars* and villagers never cooperated because of the fear or otherwise.<sup>26</sup> The result of all this was that crimes increased to a large extent. The failure and incompetence of the police department came to notice in 1901-02, when loss of property under burglary cases amounted to Rs. 38,985, out of which the department was able to recover only 26 % of total loss.<sup>27</sup> Thus, till the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century reasons like the low rates of pay, old habits of policemen and appointment of illiterates hindered development and efficiency of the police department.

With the beginning of 20th century, certain changes were introduced in the police department. The Council appointed

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<sup>25</sup> Among them mention may be made of *Sansis, Bhattis, Machis* and the *Galwans*. The *Galbans* or the *Galwans* were more dangerous and were known for the loot and plunder etc. The thugs of Kashmir called *Galwan* bear a resemblance to the thug of upper and central India. These thugs created great social problem as they looted and murdered the travellers especially the traders and merchants. During the Afghans and Sikhs, they were mostly Muslims and acted as a gang of highway robbers and it became quite impossible to travel in reclusiveness, especially during the chaotic phase of the Afghan rule but under Sikh rule it assumed a hazardous turn and became a severe administrative problem, as they raided and robbed the lonely wayfarers, horse-keepers and shepherds in the day light. They took away not only the piles of un thrashed corn of the agriculturists but also their thrashed one from their storehouse. Apart from this, the marriage processions were robbed of their possessions and sometimes brides too were snatched from them. Khanday Abdur Rashid, *Some aspects of the Administrative Socio-Economic and Cultural Life of the People of Kashmir under the Sikhs 1819-1947*, Ph. D thesis Submitted to the dept. of History university of Kashmir Srinagar, 1985p.213

<sup>26</sup> There occurred many incidents where the headman helped police in the identification of criminals and in response his life and property was attacked. Many times crops and houses were set on fire. *Annual Administrative Report of Jammu and Kashmir*, 1901-04.

<sup>27</sup> *Annual Administrative Report of Jammu and Kashmir*, 1901-02.

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a Commission under the chairmanship of Raja Amar Singh in the year 1902. The Commission made the following recommendation:<sup>28</sup>

- 1) Two subdivisions for the Jammu province because rate of crimes was increasing day by day there. These two subdivisions should be put under the charge of an Assistant Sub-inspector of police and they should be provided suitable offices.
- 2) The police stations should be re-organized and proper infrastructure should be arranged for them.
- 3) The number of treasure guards should be increased.
- 4) Creation of detective branch in the department is pre-requisite for its proper functioning.
- 5) Salaries of the Deputy Inspectors and inspectors should be increased to stop the bribery.

These recommendations were put before the Resident who gave his approval with certain modifications and the Resident remarked “department will become efficient only if higher grades are strengthened by providing them a compact and well trained force to train them, to employ a large number of constables who couldn’t be efficiently trained and supervised will prove a disaster.”<sup>29</sup> The State Council took help from Punjab police in the suppression of crimes. The services of Superintendent of Police of Lahore, Rawalpindi and Sialkot were employed for the guidance of police forces.<sup>30</sup> In the year 1907, government ordered and authorized district magistrates and police to keep a close watch on the law breakers and other seditious forces.<sup>31</sup> The government passed State Motor Vehicles Regulation Act in 1918 after the completion of Jhelum Valley Cart Road and Motor Vehicles which arrived from British India were registered by the police.

Another attempt in the re-organisation of department was made in 1915, when government created the post of Inspector General of Police which was under administrative

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<sup>28</sup> *Annual Administrative Report of Jammu and Kashmir, 1902-03.*

<sup>29</sup> *Recommendations of Resident to the State Council, Jammu and Kashmir State Archives.*

<sup>30</sup> *Note on the Administration of the Jammu and Kashmir, 1901-04, p.34.*

<sup>31</sup> *Political Department, No. 24/24 N-118 of 1907, J&K State Archives.*

control of Home Minister.<sup>32</sup> Subsequently government appointed G.D. Farquhar who became first I.G.P of the State.<sup>33</sup> There was an increase in the pay as well as numerical strength of forces. The S.P of Jammu and Srinagar received a handsome salary of Rs. 400 and Rs. 300 respectively, Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) received Rs. 150 and inspectors received a salary of Rs. 70-90 monthly. However, inspector of *Kothibagh* Police Station was given a salary of Rs.180 which was almost double than the inspectors of other stations of the State. This was because *Kothibagh* police station was important in the city of Srinagar and its inspectors had the reputation of maintaining law and order in the whole city of Srinagar. The grade of Rs. 60 to 50 was fixed for the 47 Deputy Inspectors, numerical strength of mounted and foot sergeants was increased up to 263 with grades of Rs. 20 and 10 respectively. In the year 1915, strength of police officers was 328 and it was increased to 367 in 1917. The strength of low grade policemen swelled up to 2135 in 1916.<sup>34</sup>

During the world war of 1914-18, most of the constables left their jobs because of the meagre salaries. They left for Punjab where they received better wages because their services were needed in the war.<sup>35</sup> After the end of world war 1st a separate post of police member and finance was created which controlled the police department. Mr. B. J. Gallancy who was a newly appointed finance and police member along with Mr. D.S. Hadow inspected the police department and introduced some reforms for its better re-organisation. These reforms included increment in the pay of all ranks, more police stations in countryside and making further changes in the strength of forces which reached to 2409 men in 1925. However, despite reforms that were introduced from time to time, considerable development in the police department was

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<sup>32</sup> *Annual Administrative Report of Jammu and Kashmir*, 1914-15, p.22

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> *Annual Administrative Report of Jammu and Kashmir*, 1915-16.

<sup>35</sup> The several units of the Kashmir army took part in the Africa and middle east campaigns against the German and Turkish Forces. The state force has distinguished themselves in the battles of Keran(Eretrea) and Damascus(Syria). *Political department No. 122/H-84 of 1920-21*, NIA.

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far away. Revised pay scale which was generally quite adequate didn't solve the problem. This is visible from the fact that in 1925-26 there were 3520 offences and cases of theft and burglaries increased in large numbers. In 1925-26 the police could recover only 26% of total property lost.<sup>36</sup>

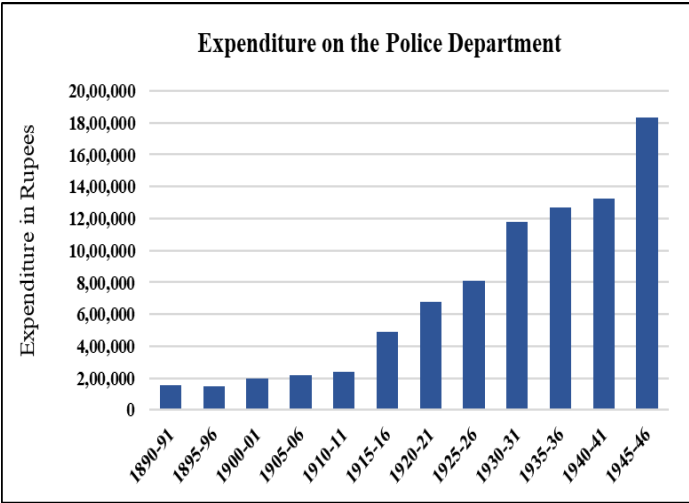
After 1925 Maharaja Hari Singh took keen interest in the affairs of the Police department because he understood the essence of law and order for a strong economy. He frequently visited London where he toured many military and police schools and imbibed the zeal for the establishment of a strong police force. He entered into an agreement with the Punjab Bureau of Police for the education and training of the young minds. His primary consideration was to safeguard and maintain what is termed as the essential services that is the military and the police which he considered important for the maintenance of the law and order on which rests the system of the government. The annual budgets allowed the great bulk of the revenues to be absorbed by the so called essential services" leaving a very small percentage of total income to be spent on the public welfare such as Education, Public Health, Agriculture and Industry. Generous expenditure on the Army and the Police contrasted sharply with the niggardly grants of the education. The following table shows the amount spent on the police department from 1885 to 1947:

Year	Revenue in Rupees
1885-86	-----
1890-91	1,54,137
1895-96	1,48,365
1900-01	1,97,376
1905-06	2,20,293
1910-11	2,37,085
1915-16	4,92,000
1920-21	6,75,592
1925-26	8,11,218

<sup>36</sup> Annual Administrative Report of Jammu and Kashmir, 1925-26, p. 20.

1930-31	11,76000
1935-36	12,67764
1940-41	13,21,000
1945-46	18,30,900

**Source:** *The table has been prepared after consulting administrative reports from 1885 to 1947*



**Working:** During the times of Maharaja Hari Singh, State police was put to real test during several riots and movements that proved calamitous for the State. In 1924 when the workers of the Silk factory protested against their exploitation the police were used to repress them. The workers and their leaders took out a large procession demanding increase in their wages. Due to the gravity of the situation the government stationed police forces in the factory, and when workers assembled in the premises of the factory, an open confrontation took place between workers and the police. The police opened fire on protestors killing seven and injuring forty.<sup>37</sup> The official version records that the troops were provoked by the protestors when latter began to attack

<sup>37</sup> *Administrative Report of Jammu and Kashmir Stale, Sambat 1981 (1924 A.D.), p. 9.*



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the officials. The government considered the agitation to have been engineered by some external elements and to bring the disorder under control Dogra police arrested 25 leaders of the working class.<sup>38</sup> Although the workers protested against the arrest of their leaders and demanded their immediate release, fifteen of them were awarded six months imprisonment.<sup>39</sup>

The most distinguished was the event of 1931 in which maintenance of law and order became most difficult job for the Jammu and Kashmir Police. Thousands of people came on streets to protest during the 1931<sup>40</sup> event and people demanded punishment for the culprits. There was much chaos and confusion in the State. The Jammu and Kashmir police showed great courage and determination in the maintenance of law and order. During this period many policemen were injured including a Deputy Superintendent of *Miasuma Thana* in Srinagar who latter on succumbed to his injuries.<sup>41</sup> In an another incident On 24 September 1931, Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah, head cleric of Jamai Masjid who had gained popularity among the masses during the ongoing agitation, attempted to launch an armed struggle against the State. People armed with crude weapons like axes, spades, hoes and sticks paraded the streets and assembled at Khanyar, close to the Martyrs' graveyard.<sup>42</sup> At this time, the

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<sup>38</sup> *Foreign and Political Department, SAJ, 1924, File No. 19(2)-P.*

<sup>39</sup> G.H. Khan, *Freedom Movement*, Light and Life Publishers, New Dehli, 1980, p. 9. Another agitation, influenced by the silk factory unrest, simultaneously took place in Anantnag which, according to Ghaush Lai Kaul, a writer and an eye witness to the agitation, was put down by the government in a month by use of Police who resorted to the show of a machine gun and by dismissing a Tehsildar and exiling the 'anonymous' leader of the protestors.

<sup>40</sup> On the 13<sup>th</sup> July 1931, disturbances occurred in Srinagar at the Jail followed by use of force for the suppression. This event provided an abrupt goad to the resistance movement. The economic and religious grievances were behind the invigoration and not the political incident. Khan, *Freedom Movement in Kashmir, 1931-1940*, 129

<sup>41</sup> *Jammu and Kashmir Police Deptt. Report, 1931-34, SAJ.*

<sup>42</sup> *Telegram from Resident in Kashmir to the Home Department', No 60-C, dated September 24, 1931, Home/Political (Secret), NAI, File No. 423 (2), 1931. Also Ganai Muhammad Yusuf, Kashmir's Struggle for Independence 1931-1939, Mohsin Publications Srinagar, 2003, p.112-113.*

State passed an Ordinance, known as Notification 19-L<sup>43</sup>, which was reminiscent of the Rowlatt Acts. The Ordinance, enacted on 24 September, imposed Martial Law in Srinagar and surrounding areas. Under the Ordinance, police and military officers were given complete freedom to arrest any person on the basis of mere suspicion. The military or police were authorized to take possession of any land, buildings, movable and immovable property, means of transport, telegraphs and such other things that seemed necessary to them. The punishment for a person - of course, without a trial - not cooperating with the authorities ranged from an imprisonment of six months to three years, or flogging not exceeding thirty stripes or fine extending to Rs. 1000.<sup>44</sup> By making dozens of arrests, not surprisingly, the State crushed the attempt of upheaval in no time.

However, the available records show that armed groups were formed in several other areas as well. Anantnag, situated at a distance of 51 km from Srinagar was the scene of one such violent attempt on the same day. A mob of angry people attacked a military picket and killed one personnel and wounded a dozen. In retaliation the troops opened fire and killed 19 persons on the spot. In another incident, in Shopian, angry armed protestors attacked a police station on 25 September, one police constable got killed there. Incidents of similar nature were reported from Baramulla, Sopore and Handwara areas of north Kashmir.<sup>45</sup> Besides, the enactment of the Ordinance, what might have proved a boon for the State here was its age-old policy of depriving Kashmiris of possessing firearms. There were strong chances of revolutionary extremism among the people but the absence of firearms and quick reaction of the police probably acted as the greatest hurdle towards such a development.

The State police showed great determination and courage during the civil disobedience procession that was launched against the State under the leadership of Allaha

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<sup>43</sup> Bazaz Prem Nath, *History for freedom in Kashmir*, Gulshan Publishers, Srinagar, 2003, p.151.

<sup>44</sup> Notification No. 19-L, dated September 24, 1931, Appendix B, All India States' People's Conference, Kashmir, pp. 40-7.

<sup>45</sup> *Times of India*, September 29, 1931.

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Rakha Sagar in the Mirpur Tehsil of Jammu. After Sagar's arrest lead was taken by Sardar Rahman who in his speech asked the people "to boycott Glancy Commission and resort to non-payment of revenue". He pledged not to budge an inch unless and until grievances of the people are addressed. Movement also spread to Bhimber and Mirpur Tehsils witnessing much disorder. The Inspector General of police along with his team reached Mirpur with the purpose of recovering land revenue from village chak Rehan.<sup>46</sup> The people refused to pay and large mob followed the officials attacked them and pelted stones. The situation went out of order with mob having upper hand than the police and troops. The violence erupted in the neighbouring Kotli and Rajori where incendiarism occurred in the five villages. The police and troops opened fire on mob for dispersing them that resulted into killing of two. The situation turned anxious in the village Kotli Sohlan where houses of non-Muslims were damaged by the rioters on 26 January.

The Jammu province turned into a hot turf of communal rioting between 1931 and 1934 much due to the mobilization of Ahrar Jathas. The Muslim cultivators engaged in no revenue-campaign directed their ire towards the revenue officials and money-lenders who were mostly Hindus.<sup>47</sup> In Srinagar on 5<sup>th</sup> February a mob attacked police and were dispersed only after making massive arrests.<sup>48</sup> On the same day similar attacks were made on the police in Uri and Handwara and for dispersing them the police resorted to firing resulting in the death of two persons.<sup>49</sup>

State in 1930 declared the *Bakarwals* (nomads) as the criminal tribe. These people as their name suggests were goatherds by profession and nomads by habits and

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<sup>46</sup> "Extract from a D.O. Letter from C.V. Salisbury, OSD Mirpur, 5 February 1932," For. & Pol. Dept., Political, File no. 100(1)-P (Secret), 1932, NAI

<sup>47</sup> Abbas, Kashmakash, 103-04; Report by L.W. Jardine on the Measures adopted for the Restoration of Law & Order in the Mirpur Wazara and Rajauri tehsil (Jammu: RGP, 1933), 6.

<sup>48</sup> Finlayson, "Report of Inspection and Enquiry," 9-13, NAI.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

temperament.<sup>50</sup> Their goats used to commit heavy damage to the State forests for which the government imposed a gradually increasing sale of taxation on importation of these animals. These men were fierce and always shed blood on a sight of provocation.<sup>51</sup> They were engaged in the illegal felling and theft of timber. The *Kuth*(Saussure Lappa) a forest product which was a great source of the revenue for the state also attracted attention of these smugglers creating a huge loss.<sup>52</sup> In the Kishenganga valley the gangs of armed Kuth smugglers with the aid of some nomads raided State who entered from the Hazara District Frontier and on this occasion no less than 26 persons were arrested by Kashmir police. With the passage of time the intensity of the raids increased to such a level that it became difficult for the local protective establishment to cope with. The Darbar sent double company of infantry to patrol the frontiers. At many times there were encounters between the smugglers and the protective establishment. In 1925-26, about 5 persons got killed and this killing had a deterrent effect.

Realizing importance of strong police force for the maintenance of law and order Maharaja Hari Singh ordered for further re-organisation of the department and thus appointed a committee to bring out and deliver the pros and cons of the department. As a result, a number of reforms were introduced. All the officers were sent outside State for gaining highest police training. The entire police system was to be based upon the British Model So that they will be equal in efficiency and discipline to their confreres of British India.

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid .

<sup>51</sup> These men always indulged in violence whenever the state guards halted their movement. In an incident of 1938 from the forests of the Lolab a fierce battle erupted Bakarwals and the guards in which 2 policemen and many Bakarwals got injured. *Political Deptt. File No.247, Jammu and Kashmir Forest services*, p.18, NAI

<sup>52</sup> Khan Saleem, op.cit., p. 188. It is the root of a plant and has a scent like oars with a slight blend of violets. The main market of the Kashmiri Kuth were China and India where people used it in religious festivals and for making medicine and perfume. Lawrence Roper Walter, *The Valley of Kashmir*, Gulshan Books, Srinagar, 2005, p.77 Kashmiri people applied it on ulcers, used it as a hair wash and some used it as a medicine against cholera.

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In addition to the regularly constituted staff of investigating officers who form part of ordinary strength of police force, the criminal investigating department used to assist in the detection of crime. The State police department remained in touch with the Finger Print Bureau at Phillauri Punjab in which fingerprints of criminals and the bad characters were registered and then crosschecked with persons suspected of being connected with the crime. The number of identifications made with the aid of finger prints was 1400 in 1940.<sup>53</sup> In carrying out difficult tasks the police enlisted the sympathy and cooperation of the public in recognition of which they paid special rewards to those who rendered assistance. In 1940s, the assistance grew up in magnitude and gratitude of police department of which visible symbol was that the amount of rewards also increased in proportion.

The State established first fire brigade in 1893 as a branch of the Srinagar police force in 1893. It consisted of few men, who's only firefighting equipment were buckets for carrying water and axes for hewing planks and the rafters of the burning buildings. Gradually it improved but till 1925-26 its condition was unsatisfactory as it had to manhandle heavy unmanageable steam pump over the long distance to the scene of action, where it took considerable time to get them under steam while the fire blazed.

On the orders of Maharaja Hari Sing in 1930s the brigade had been re-organized and its efficiency was increased. The equipment of Srinagar Fire Brigade consisted of one motor wagon with a pump, one motor tender, four Merry Weather Hatfield trailer fire pumps, two Leyland fire pumps and one Merry Weather Steam Fire Engine. These machines were distributed over five stations. All the stations were equipped with the telephones. During 1940s the fire brigades were

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<sup>53</sup> Punjab already had adopted British Model Policing and a well-organized training centre was also established there. Several north Indian states sent their forces during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century there for the well-organized training. Criminal courses were taught, physical drills were conducted and great emphasis was laid on the self-defence and how to uphold the rights of the common people. *Jammu and Kashmir Police Department Report, 1940-41, p.13*

started in all the *Mofussil* towns.<sup>54</sup> They frolicked a colossal part in saving the life and the property of the people. In 1942 a part of Srinagar around the historic Jamia Masjid was caught on fire, the fire brigade came to the rescue and more than dozen people and property worth lakhs was rescued. A total of 12 incidents of fire were witnessed in 1940-41 in the Srinagar city and an estimated property damage of more than one lakh rupees. Kashmir was frequently engulfed by the fires as the buildings were constructed of highly inflammable materials. The framework ceilings, roofs, doors and the windows were made entirely of the resinous timber. Even the partition walls were frequently made of the timber and more importantly the houses of the poorer classes were entirely built of the lath and the plaster, roofed over with the thatch or equally inflammable birch bark covered with a layer of earth. In 1928 a fire broke out in the Zaina-Kadal which was one of the busiest commercial marts of the city, the damage done was estimated nearly 30 lakh of rupees.<sup>55</sup> In a city so constructed, the vital need of having an efficient and mobile system of fire service was obvious.

**Conclusion:** Police administration in Jammu and Kashmir was a phenomenon characterizing change and growth, which was purposive and meaningful. From a wider perspective it was a goal, an objective and an end process. In the early years of Dogra rule, the police was defective and not well organised and suffered from several lacunae. The State reorganized the police department in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century by introducing several reforms. The reforms proved beneficial in checking the criminal activities but the actual re-organization started in 20<sup>th</sup> century when State grasped the importance of policing. Out of the annual budget hefty amount was spent

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<sup>54</sup> The regular fire services in India first came up in Bombay and Kolkata during the British period. The great fire of the Bombay occurred in the 1803 and the first nucleus of the fire services in India took Shape. In the 1855, the Bombay fire brigade was officially formed and formally placed under the police. *Annual British India Police Services report, 1847 Old English NAI*

<sup>55</sup> *Annual Administrative Report Jammu and Kashmir State. 1931, State Archives Jammu p.31*

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on the police department because it was an essential service and instrumental in maintaining peace. They as an organization were part and parcel of political and administrative structures, social processes, public life and were imperative for keeping the Dogra rule intact. At many times there was direct confrontation between the police and public in which farmer suffered the most. Honesty, capacity, differentiation, efficiency and goal-orientation was the new mantra for police administration in whole India as well as in Jammu and Kashmir during 20<sup>th</sup> century, but the need, speed and professionalism were critical which were missing in most of the cases and as a result it acted as a great hindrance in the better police public relations.



Recruits for the State Police under training.



Constable.



Head Constable.



Inspector of Police.



Gazetted Police Officer.



Sub-Inspector of Police.

The photographs of Jammu and Kashmir Policemen and fire Brigade with a rescue operation in 1924. **Source:** - *Jammu and Kashmir Administrative Report 1931, Jammu State Archives*)



# Trajectory of Tourism in Jammu and Kashmir (1885-1989)

Zameerah Yusuf

**Abstract:** *Jammu and Kashmir with minimal or no industrial sector naturally lend heavily on various other sectors like agriculture, horticulture, livestock and handicrafts for sustaining and augmenting its economy. Seen in this perspective, tourism emerged as the fastest growing industry in the post-independence period and according to an estimate, 20% of the State's population was directly or indirectly connected with it and thereby contributed around 16% of the State's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).<sup>1</sup> In view of its scenic beauty, the State of Jammu and Kashmir has won substantial recognition in the tourist map across the continents of the world. In addition to acquiring economic benefits tourism also served as a nucleus for promoting national integration, communal harmony and connectivity with the outside world. Moreover, the tourist spots dotted in the State paved a way for the main regions to get themselves acquainted with different socio-cultural settings in the interior of the countryside, besides narrowing down the gulf between various parts of the State. The development of infrastructure and superstructure including the means of transport, communication and accommodation available in the far-flung tourist destinations thus became instrumental in removing regional imbalances.<sup>2</sup> In view of the above facts the present paper would endeavour to sum up the history of tourism in Jammu and Kashmir.*

**Rise and Growth of Tourism Industry:** In ancient and medieval times, tourism industry did not exist in the region under discussion yet the area was thronged by a number of

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<sup>1</sup> Based on the data provided by the Directorate of Tourism Jammu and Kashmir Government, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> For details see Jammu and Kashmir State Archives, *Annual Administrative Report of Visitors Bureau and Tourism*, Jammu 1941, File No. 02/Adm/41, p.2; Jammu and Kashmir State Archives, Rules for Visitors to Gulmarg and Reservation of Huts by the Darbar, Jammu, 1894, File No. 41, p.1.

sages, seers, missionaries, traders, pilgrims and adventurers.<sup>3</sup> In view of the nature and small number of visitors to the region, one cannot consider the presence of any tourism industry, as it did not affect the economy, because the activities of most of such visitors remained confined to their places of accommodation and pilgrimage destinations.<sup>4</sup>

With the formation of the Jammu and Kashmir State by virtue of the Treaty of Amritsar on 16 March 1846 A.D.,<sup>5</sup> a journey towards the modernization of the State commenced. That is why historians place the period around 1846 A.D. and onwards in the annals of the modern period.<sup>6</sup> The Treaty between the Maharaja Gulab Singh of Jammu and the East India Company facilitated the entry of British tourists in the State making the Maharaja to appoint an Officer on Special Duty to take care of the interests of the Europeans in the State under the directions of the British Government of India.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, till 1885 there was no considerable effort towards the development of tourism in the State.<sup>8</sup> There was no special budgetary provision to boost tourism. The Government was only concerned with generating its revenue by way of taxation like houseboat tax, shikhara tax, camping

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<sup>3</sup> M. A. Itoo, *History of Tourism in Kashmir*, (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis submitted to the P.G. Deptt. of History Kashmir University in 2015), p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> For details about the Treaty of Amritsar between the representatives of the East India Company and the Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu on 16<sup>th</sup> March 1846, see K.M.Pannikar, *Gulab Singh (1792-1858), Founder of Kashmir*, Gulshan Publishers, Srinagar, 1989, pp.111-125.

<sup>6</sup> According to the periodization, the historians of the 20<sup>th</sup> century consider the beginning of modern times in Jammu and Kashmir from 1846 onwards because it was from this year that the said region came under the indirect rule of the British. Therefore, we come across the entry of British and other European nationals to the Valley in the capacity of adventures, missionaries and officers in considerable numbers that facilitated the modernization of Kashmir.

<sup>7</sup> In order to take care of the interests of the European tourists, the British Government of India decided to appoint an officer to stay at Srinagar during summer. Major MacGregor was formally appointed to this post on January 14, 1852, and the Maharaja was asked to gladly accept this arrangement. Information sought from Jammu and Kashmir State Archives, *File No. 515 (P. R) KGR*.

<sup>8</sup> M. A. Itoo, *Op.cit*, p.1.

tax, etc.<sup>9</sup> It was least concerned with extending its help for the promotion of tourism. There is no denying the fact that at times under the pressure of colonial authorities the State created certain facilities for the European tourists like the building of Dak Banglows, guest houses and hotels, etc.<sup>10</sup> However, there was no long-term and farsighted policy towards tourism promotion. Such facilities were basically created for European visitors, but the benefits of it also trickled down to other ordinary tourists and the common people of the State.<sup>11</sup>

It was basically colonial intervention over period that marked the beginnings of the modern tourism industry in the State. With the establishment of the Residency in 1885, the British government garnered sufficient powers to make direct intervention in the policies of the local Government. Therefore, tourism witnessed many developments in the form of transport and communication such as the construction of pathways between Rawalpindi and Baramullah, Jammu ad Srinagar, railway line between Sialkot and Jammu and the establishment of telephone line.<sup>12</sup> It was by dint of all such developments that tourism industry in the State attained a modern status. In the absence of any concrete State policy, there were, however, certain rules which were obligatory for all the tourists while visiting tourist destinations of the State. These rules, however, could not be applied to military and

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<sup>9</sup> It is evident from the fact that 390 houseboats that were plying for hire were registered by the Government in 1946, Jammu and Kashmir State Archives, *Annual Administrative Report of the Director Visitors Bureau*, Jammu, 1946, File No. 18/ Adm/41, p. 4.

<sup>10</sup> Jammu and Kashmir State Archives, *Annual Administrative Report of the Director Visitors Bureau and Tourism*, Jammu, 1941, File No. 2/Adm/41, p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> Due to the construction of roads in the early 1890s and by creating some avenues of accommodation by the Government the tourist figure in the State increased from 2000 in the year 1920 to around 12000 in 1930. Naturally, some economic benefits percolated to the ordinary people as well, *Annual Administrative Report of the Jammu and Kashmir State for the year 1931*, p. 84.

<sup>12</sup> In 1927-28, an under-ground telephone cable was laid between Srinagar and Gufkar. Amar Singh Chohan, *Communication and Transport in the Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir (1849-1947)*, Jammu, Radha Krishan Anand & Co., Jammu, 1998, pp 110.

civil officers of the British Indian Government. For instance, the tourists were debarred from visiting the hills of Shimla but for the intervention of the Maharaja.<sup>13</sup> The prescribed rules and regulations had to be abided in letter and spirit by general tourists while visiting camping sites and gardens etc.

Before the construction of the Jhelum Valley Cart Road in 1890 and the Banihal Cart Road in 1922, no tourist could think of visiting Kashmir unless he had at least two to three months at his disposal. Prior to this, any potential tourist who desired to visit Srinagar had first to undertake a long journey to Rawalpindi, and from there one had to make transport arrangements for his onward journey to Srinagar.<sup>14</sup> All these impediments made the travel from Jammu to Srinagar and back weary and cumbersome. Therefore, the construction of roads under the patronage of Residency and the orders of Maharaja Pratap Singh gave an impetus to tourism destinations hitherto unknown to the outsiders, especially the Europeans.<sup>15</sup>

The three regions of the erstwhile State had their own pull factors for tourism. Kashmir was known throughout for its pleasure, recreation, and sports tourism; Jammu 'the city of temples' was famous for its pilgrim tourism; and Ladakh for its cultural and adventure tourism in the form of mountaineering, trekking and rafting.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Jammu and Kashmir State Archives, *Rules for the Guidance of and Observance by Visitors and Residents in the Territories of the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir*, Jammu, 1888, File No. 85-E, pp. 1-6.

<sup>14</sup> M. A. Itoo, *Op.cit*, pp. 166-167.

<sup>15</sup> The construction of Jhelum Valley Cart Road in 1890, Srinagar- Gilgit Road in 1893, Banihal Cart Road in 1922 went a long way in boosting the tourist traffic in the Valley.

<sup>16</sup> The major sites of Kashmir that attracted tourists were/are: (a) Mughal gardens such as Shalimar Bagh, Nishat Bagh, Chashma Shahi, Naseem Bagh, Achabal, and Verinag. (b) Lakes such as Dal Lake, Nigeen Lake, Manasbal Lake, and Walur Lake. (c) Valleys such as Lidder valley including Pahalgam, Gulmarg and Sonmarg. (d) Heritage sites like Amarnath, Chattipadshahi, Hariparbat fort, Hazratbal shrine, Jamia Masjid, Sun temple (Martand), Makhdoom Sahib, Naranag, Shankaracharya temple, Avantipora temples, Chrar-i-Sharif, Khir Bhawani, Bunair temple, Budshah tomb, and temples of Pattan. In case of Jammu, the most prominent sites were/are: (a) Heritage sites like Akhnoor fort, Amar Mahal Museum, Dogra Art Gallery, Bahu Fort, etc.

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It is worthwhile to mention that the ban on the Europeans to settle permanently in the State or to acquire private property led to the development of the modern houseboats, which later on became a unique institution in Kashmir. As a matter of fact houseboat is a European introduction. The first houseboat along modern lines was constructed by Rev. Lennard. He built the famous two-storied houseboat called Victory in 1919.<sup>17</sup> Strangely enough, the first Kashmiri to construct a houseboat was a Kashmiri Pandit Naraiandas, who realized that houseboat building was a better business than running a European store that he possessed, as the Europeans had a fancy for it.<sup>18</sup> These European houseboats contained all the facilities of a Thames houseboat. They were decorated in Western-style and provided all the necessary comfort. It possessed a drawing-room, a dressing room, a bedroom with comfortable beds and an upper deck.<sup>19</sup>

Besides, the positive contribution it made to the State economy by way of taxation and foreign exchange income, the tourism industry through houseboats, shikharas, hotels, restaurants, gardens, parks, travel agencies, golf clubs, tourist guiding, etc. provided employment to a large number of people both directly and indirectly. It was also instrumental in the promotion of the local handicraft industry. The cottage industries of the State such as carpet-weaving, shawl-weaving, leather and embroidery work, paper mache and wood-carving got a major boost because the main clientele for their finished

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(b) Pilgrim centers like Vishnodevi temple, Raghunath temple, Shadhra Sharief, Baba Gulam Shah Shrine and Asrar-ud-din Shrine. (c) Lakes like Mansar and Surinsar. (d) Hill stations such as Kud, Batote and the scenic spots of the Chenab Valley such as Patnitop, Baderwah and Kishtwar. In case of Ladakh region, the prominent sites were/are: Alchi Monastery, Hemis Gompa, Lamayuru Monastery, Lekir Monastery, Mulbek, Matho Gompa, Phyang Gompa, Sanskar Gompa, Spituk Gompa, Thiksey Gompa and the lakes and valleys like Pangong Tso (lake), Indus Valley, Nubra Valley, Mushkoh Valley, Suru Valley and Zaskar Valley.

<sup>17</sup> S. Sanyal, *Boats and Boatmen of Kashmir*, pp. 27-28.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Milne, *The Roads of Kashmir*, p. 109; Neve, Arthur, *Picturesque Kashmir*, p. 116.

goods were the foreign tourists.<sup>20</sup> Neither the Government nor private individuals were in possession of any transport company. Therefore, it became imperative to seek the services of outside transport companies like the Government Motor Mail Services, Northern Railways Out Agency, Nanda Bus Service, Haji Chirag-ud-Din, and Dhanjibhog and Sons, etc.<sup>21</sup>

The game licensing to hunt animals that was one of the major pull factors for tourism during the pre-1947 period also contributed to the State economy. But at the same time, it affected the animal life in the State and consequently many species of animals such as markhor, deer, Tibetan antelope, black-necked crane, etc. became endangered.<sup>22</sup>

In order to register the tourists and to publicize tourist products, a Visitors Bureau was created.<sup>23</sup> Booklets and tourist guides highlighting the various features of the three regions of the State were printed from the Kashmir Mercantile Press and distributed free of charge to the main travel agencies and various Railway Publicity and Advertising agencies throughout India.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, the said bureau provided up-to-date information for the tourists regarding transport, weather, forest rest-houses, Dak Bungalows, shooting grounds and fishing sports, etc.<sup>25</sup>

In addition to it, the Government passed the Jammu and Kashmir Registration of Tourist Trade Act in 1978. It enabled the tourism department to punish those who violated the rules of this Act and thus cause discomfort to the tourists. It

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<sup>20</sup> It is evident from the fixation of rent under rules. For details see Jammu and Kashmir State Archives, *Rules for visitors to Gulmarg and Reservation of Huts by the Darbar*, Jammu, 1894, File No. 41, p.1.

<sup>21</sup> To have detailed information about the growth of indigenous cottage industries in the post-independence era as a result of increasing tourism see, *The Business Review*, Vol. 04, No.1 and 2, 1998. Also see, Mirza N. A. , *Management of Tourism in Jammu and Kashmir*, Dilpreet Publishing House, New-Delhi, 2000, p. 49.

<sup>22</sup> Jammu and Kashmir State Archives, *Transport Arrangement for Gulmarg*, Jammu, 1900, File No. 53, p. 28.

<sup>23</sup> Jammu and Kashmir State Archives, *Correspondence with Directors Visitors Bureau Regarding Visitors to Kashmir*, Jammu, 1935, File No. Corps-2, p. 2.

<sup>24</sup> *Annual Administrative Report of the Jammu and Kashmir State for the year (1936-1937)*, p. 77.

<sup>25</sup> M. A. Itoo, *Op.cit*; p. 124.

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also fixed rates for hotels, houseboats, lodges, taxi drivers, handicrafts and various other art-related shops. But in reality this act was never implemented in letter and spirit.<sup>26</sup>

The occasional political unrest from 1953 onwards together with the border conflicts between India and Pakistan at times created unfavourable conditions for tourism in the State. For instance, the arrival of tourists to Ladakh was stopped owing to the Indo-Pak conflict followed by the Chinese War in 1962. It was only in the year 1974 that after a long ban of 27 years it was thrown open to tourists.<sup>27</sup> Till then even Kashmiris required a special permit to visit the land of Gompas and the roof of the world.<sup>28</sup>

As a result of various initiatives taken by the State Government the overall bed capacity at the end of the year 1978-79 was 14,268 which quickly increased to 24000 in the following year.<sup>29</sup> The city of Srinagar alone accounted for about 4500 beds followed by 3500 beds at Katra. In the year 1987-88 the total bed capacity both in public and private sectors rose to 36440.<sup>30</sup> More than 272 registered hotels were constructed in Kashmir between 1947 and 1989 that provided employment to about 3844 people both directly and indirectly.<sup>31</sup>

With the increase of visitors to the State private sector also got involved in the tourism business. Both Europeans, as well as Kashmiris, began to set up travel agencies and stores for the convenience of visitors. The two prominent travel agencies that are particularly mentioned by several travellers in their travel diaries and books were Samad Shah and Bahar Shah. These agencies did not operate in the State alone, but had their office in Calcutta which was the seat of the British

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p. 170; Also see:

[www.jandkplanning.com/economicsurveytourism](http://www.jandkplanning.com/economicsurveytourism)

<sup>27</sup> M. Ashraf, *Travels in Ladakh*, Gulshan Books, Srinagar, 2012, p. iv

<sup>28</sup> M. A. Itoo, *Op.cit*, p. 120

<sup>29</sup> Desh Bandhu, *Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh (Tourist Attractions and Tourism)*, Akashdeep Publishing House, New-Delhi, 2005, p. 61

<sup>30</sup> M. A. Itoo, *Op.cit*, p. 149.

<sup>31</sup> P. N. K. Bamzai, *Socio-Economic History of Kashmir (1846-1925)*, Gulshan Books, Srinagar, 2007, pp. 284-85.

Government then, and had their commercial relations with various European travel agencies also.<sup>32</sup>

These travel agencies provided information to potential tourists about various tourist destinations and advised them of available holiday packages to suit their tastes and budget and also charted their travel plans. Serving as bankers these agencies also operated cash accounts for the European tourists and remitted money to their headquarters. Also, their role was commendable so far as the promotion and marketing of tourism products and services was concerned.<sup>33</sup> Ordinary rents of huts charged for a season by these agencies varied from Rs. 600 to Rs. 1600 according to the facility of accommodation and the standard of infrastructure. They were also providing tents, furniture, stores and houseboats for visitors.<sup>34</sup>

It is pertinent to mention that the role of the private sector in the development of infrastructural facilities like the construction of hotels, guest houses, and houseboats was somewhat ahead of the public sector facilities. To boost tourism, these agencies had devised a well-thought-out plan to operate across the landscape of India particularly in the metropolitan cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Calcutta and Madras to acquaint the public about the tourist potential of Jammu and Kashmir.<sup>35</sup> The following tables depict the trajectory of tourist traffic in the valley of Kashmir— the main tourist destination of the State- during the colonial and post-colonial times.

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>33</sup> Jammu and Kashmir State Archives, *Correspondence with Director Visitors Bureau regarding visitors to Kashmir, Jammu, 1935*, File No. Corres-2.

<sup>34</sup> M. A. Itoo, *Op.cit*, p. 134

<sup>35</sup> For minute details about the modernization of Kashmir and Kashmiris in case of housing, food habits, dress, transport, and amusements see, Zameerah, *Kashmir Towards Modernization*, *The Journal of Kashmir Studies*, Vol. VII (2019-2020), pp. 70-82. It is pertinent to mention that in case of language a number of words have crept from English to Kashmiri. Some words of the English language are used even by the illiterate Kashmiris.



**Table 1: Number of Tourist Arrivals in the Valley of Kashmir before Independence (1935-46)**

Year	Domestic Tourists	%age of domestic Tourists	Foreign Tourists	%age of Foreign Tourists	Total No. Tourists	%age change over prvious year
1935	10457	65.86	5420	34.13	15877	—
1936	18342	83.97	3499	16.02	21841	37.56
1937	19274	77.97	5444	22.02	24718	13.17
1938	18694	77.52	5421	22.47	24115	-2.43
1939	22675	81.55	5128	18.44	27803	15.29
1940	20925	71.43	8367	28.56	29292	05.35
1941	21275	71.87	8327	28.12	29602	.1.05
1942	8005	42.87	10666	57.12	18671	-36.92
1943	14525	52.86	12953	47.13	27478	47.10
1944	15101	44.84	18575	55.16	33676	22.55
1945	18407	49.35	18890	50.64	37297	10.75
1946	20606	75.59	6625	24.40	27258	-26.91

**Sources:** (i) Annual Administrative Report of the Jammu and Kashmir State for the Years (1934-1941), (ii) Directorate of Tourism, Govt. of Jammu and Kashmir, 2012

**Table 2: Year wise stastistics of tourist arrival to the Valley of Kashmir (1969-89)**

Domestic Tourists			Foreign Tourists		Total Number of Tourists			
Year	No. of arrivals	%age change over previous year	No. of arrivals	%age change over Previous year	No. of arrivals	%age change over prvious year	%age of Domestic Tourists	% age of Foreign Tourists
					10579	—	88.22	11.77
1952	11630	24.61	1470	17.97	13100	23.83	88.77	11.22
1953	19319	66.11	2062	40.27	21381	63.21	90.35	09.64
1954	32885	70.22	1760	-14.64	34645	62.03	94.91	05.08
1955	48195	46.55	2830	60.79	51025	47.27	94.45	05.54
1956	57341	18.98	7012	147.77	64353	26.12	89.10	10.90
1957	37172	-35.17	5846	-16.63	43018	-33.15	86.41	13.59
1958	54017	45.31	6540	11.87	60557	40.77	89.20	10.80
1959	60354	11.73	10866	66.15	71220	17.61	84.74	15.26
1960	63373	05.00	11187	02.95	74560	4.69	85.00	15.00
1961	79241	25.03	13214	18.12	92455	24.00	85.71	14.29
1962	80334	01.38	12681	-4.03	93015	0.61	86.37	13.63

1963	72137	-10.21	11551	-8.90	83688	-10.03	86.20	13.80
1964	48538	-32.71	8182	-29.17	56720	-32.22	85.57	14.43
1965	37521	-22.70	8020	-1.98	45541	-19.71	82.39	17.61
1966	112117	198.81	7149	-10.86	119276	161.91	94.00	06.00
1967	135653	20.98	10428	45.87	146081	22.47	92.86	07.13
1968	129750	-4.35	10945	04.95	140695	-3.69	92.22	07.78
1969	93552	-27.89	13007	18.83	106959	-23.98	87.46	12.53
1970	105420	12.69	15737	20.99	121157	13.27	87.01	12.99
1971	79612	-24.48	15240	-3.16	94852	-21.71	83.93	16.07
1972	108445	36.22	17841	17.07	126286	33.14	85.87	14.13
1973	175829	62.14	20017	12.20	195846	55.08	89.08	10.22
1974	148320	-15.64	19299	-3.58	167619	-14.41	88.48	11.51
1975	162576	09.61	22214	15.10	184790	10.24	87.98	12.02
1976	284412	74.94	38078	17.41	322490	-74.51	88.19	11.80
1977	387817	36.35	54223	42.40	442040	37.07	87.73	12.27
1978	443342	14.31	59323	09.40	502665	13.71	88.20	11.08
1979	498060	12.34	55680	-6.14	553740	10.16	89.94	10.06
1980	548591	10.14	46026	-17.33	594617	07.38	92.25	07.75
1981	598555	09.10	43745	-4.59	642300	08.01	93.18	06.82
1982	560987	-6.27	42851	-2.04	603838	-5.98	92.90	07.10
1983	398428	-28.98	41101	-4.08	439529	-27.21	90.64	09.36
1984	192684	-51.64	36458	-11.29	229142	-47.86	84.08	15.92
1985	465599	141.63	38015	04.27	503614	119.78	92.45	07.55
1986	536598	15.24	53573	40.92	590171	17.18	90.92	09.08
1987	664681	23.86	57573	07.46	722254	22.38	92.02	07.98
1988	662093	-0.38	59938	04.10	722031	-0.03	91.70	08.30
1989	490215	-25.96	67762	13.05	557977	22.72	87.86	12.14

**Source:** - Data provided by Directorate of Tourism,  
J&K Government, 2012

**Impact of Tourism:** In addition to economic growth, tourism promoted the cultural heritage of the State. Both material and non-material symbols of culture were preserved by successive governments because they generated revenue. The cultural destinations that include various Muslim and Hindu shrines, heritage sites like ancient and medieval monuments and Mughal gardens are the main tourism destinations of the State. Moreover, tourism went a long way towards the modernization of the State. It changed the lifestyle considerably. Dress pattern, food habits and the

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language of the locals was immensely influenced.<sup>36</sup> Not only this, but the construction of residential houses and government buildings was made along European patterns. The cultural interaction no doubt enriched the indigenous culture of the three regions of the State.<sup>37</sup>

Nevertheless tourism also resulted in the cultural degradation of the State as some tourists were addicted to narcotic drugs, alcohol, gambling and other immoral practices that directly affected the people associated with this industry. Some tourists also introduced obscene films and morally disgusting literature which was in total contrast and contravention to the age-old cultural heritage of the State.<sup>38</sup>

Tourism also affected the physical environment of the region. In this field, it had more adverse than positive effects because tourism in the State was always unplanned and unregulated. The negative impact of tourism also occurred due to the imbalance between the tourist demand and the carrying capacity of the tourism products. Under such conditions, enormous pressures were laid on the health resorts that led to the degradation of water bodies, scenic spots, the alpine pastures, the natural springs and the snow-clad fields.<sup>39</sup>

Speaking in the context of the pre-independence period, tourism paved a way for the institution of *beggar* (forced labour), especially in Kashmir and Chenab Valleys and the Ladakh region. Some officials and tourists who had to go to Gilgit via Srinagar-Gilgit route were facilitated by Government by employing the Kashmiri peasantry on *beggar*.<sup>40</sup> The said route till the construction of the Gilgit road

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<sup>36</sup> The cultural interaction between the locals and the national and international tourists enriched the indigenous culture of Kashmir, Jammu and Ladakh.

<sup>37</sup> S. A. Farid, *Tourism in Kashmir*, Rajesh Publications, New-Delhi, 2003, p. 179.

<sup>38</sup> For the lax morality of *Hanjis* (boatmen and women) who had an intimate association with national and foreign tourists owing to their accommodation in houseboats see, Walter Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, Chinari Publishing House, Srinagar, 1992, p. 314.

<sup>39</sup> M. A. Itoo, *Op.cit*, p. 160

<sup>40</sup> For details about the Gilgit *beggar* (corvee) and Gilgit Road see, Walter Lawrence, *Op.cit*, p. 4

in 1893 was not suited even for the beasts of burden. Consequently, a large number of peasants carrying loads and crossing the snow-clad mountains used to die during their to and fro journey as a result of cold, snow storm and starvation. With the construction of the Srinagar-Gilgit road in 1893, the intensity of the Gilgit horror decreased considerably.<sup>41</sup> But that does not mean that the tradition of *beggar* ended altogether. In fact it continued until 1947 (for tourism and other purposes) although with the passage of time it became less pronounced.<sup>42</sup>

It is also worthwhile to note that during the pre-independence period, State achieved profitability through scale economics (mass tourism).<sup>43</sup> After 1947 no mechanism was ever evolved by the State to know the exact number of domestic tourists rather it leaned heavily on random sampling. It is pertinent to mention here that earlier there used to be registration of tourists and travellers were required to obtain permit before entering the State. However, the formality of the registration was subsequently done away with during the times of Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad, the Prime Minister of the State. Consequently, tourism authorities at times counted even labourers as tourists and thereby provided wrong figure related to tourism statistics.<sup>44</sup>

### Issues and Impediments

**Absence of Alternative Roads:** The only road connecting the Valley with the Indian plains after the closure of the Baramullah-Rawalpindi Road in 1947 was Srinagar-Jammu or Banihal Cart Road. It also remained frequently blocked on account of landslides, snowfall and occasional heavy rainfall mostly during the winter and spring season. As a result, the

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<sup>41</sup> For details about the horror of the Gilgit *beggar* see, Walter Lawrence, *Op.cit*, p. 413.

<sup>42</sup> An interview of the author with his grandfather Abdul Ghani Ganai, R/O: Audsoo, Achabal, Anantnag, Kashmir, age 80 years, February 2013. Ganai revealed that even during his childhood i.e., the mid-1930s and 1940s, the privileged landholders and revenue officials like *Patwaris*, *Girdawars*, *Naib-Tehsildars* and *Tehsildars* exacted various types of *beggar* from the peasantry.

<sup>43</sup> M. A. Itoo, *Op.cit*, p. 171

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*.

valley of Kashmir remained cut off from other parts of the country which affected the entry of tourists badly.<sup>45</sup> Similarly, Ladakh was not connected properly with the rest of the country. The only two roads i.e., Srinagar- Leh, and Leh-Manali were seasonal in character and were closed throughout the winter.<sup>46</sup> The net result of it was that potential tourists often changed the schedule of their sojourn. Instead of Kashmir and Ladakh, they opted for Shimla, Nanital, Dehradun and other hill stations of northern India.<sup>47</sup> Therefore, the absence of alternate highways and railways affected the growth of tourism badly.

**Inadequate Publicity:** Poor publicity was another cause responsible for the stagnant growth of tourism in Jammu and Kashmir. It is evident from the fact that coordination between media and tourism authorities was missing in the State that otherwise could have played a vital role in introducing and highlighting the enormous scenic beauty of the State on the tourist map of the world.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, advertisements on large scale in foreign journals, magazines, newspapers and the translation of the tourist literature in different foreign languages through different agencies could have promoted tourism in the State. No doubt the department of tourism had some tourist offices at a few places in India but the officials associated with these offices did little to project the glamour and grandeur of tourist destinations of the State.<sup>49</sup> Naturally, the paradisaical tourist resorts became little known to potential

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<sup>45</sup> It is worthwhile to mention that after the freedom and partition, Baramullah-Rawalpindi Road was closed and the Valley including Ladakh remained dependent on Srinagar-Jammu Road exclusively. Even at present times this road frequently remains closed that not only hampers the tourist traffic but at times causes a shortage of food and various other supplies to Kashmir as well as Ladakh region. However, the air traffic has compensated the tourist entry considerably.

<sup>46</sup> The Manali-Leh Road similarly remains closed during the whole winter period.

<sup>47</sup> In case of road blockage, the national and foreign tourists preferred the other health resorts in northern India. It is evident from the tour diaries of various adventurers also.

<sup>48</sup> M. A. Itoo, *Op.ci.t.*, p. 172

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

tourists of foreign countries and even to the people of south India who for want of information did not include Jammu and Kashmir in their itinerary.<sup>50</sup>

**Deficient Accommodation and Transport:** Accommodation is essential to any tourist destination. The term is loosely used to cover food and lodging and includes all facilities used for the sojourn of a tourist such as bungalows, motels, hotels, guest houses, tents and huts, etc. During the course of our study, the tourists continued to register their complaints against inadequate arrangements mainly in terms of accommodation. The existing facilities did not meet the varying tastes and changing modes of the tourists. The expensive accommodation with unhygienic conditions, poor services and poor sanitation caused them much inconvenience.<sup>51</sup>

**Absence of Professionalism:** The tourists are often unfamiliar with the local culture and the historical significance of the tourist resorts and monuments. Therefore, they required well-trained, experienced, and honest guides. However, they faced great inconveniences due to the unprofessional staff engaged in hotels, restaurants, and travel agencies.<sup>52</sup> There was not even a single institute in the State that could have imparted training in tourism in order to produce professionals to deal with the industry.<sup>53</sup>

**Cheating and Thuggery:** Cheating, taunting, and thuggery from local stakeholders (hoteliers, restaurant owners, houseboat owners, drivers, travel agents, shopkeepers, handicraft dealers, *shikarawalas*, *ponywalas* and tour guides) caused a negative impact on tourism thereby leading to decrease in the flow of tourist traffic.<sup>54</sup> The government did not take steps to control this offense, and the Tourist Trade Act of 1978 was not implemented properly. Also, there were

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 173

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 174

no checks and balances from the government for the tariff of various tourism products. The stakeholders at times in nexus with the official machinery greased their palms at the expense of the tourism industry.<sup>55</sup>

**Wanting Planning and Organisation:** The tourism industry if planned and managed in an efficient manner keeping in consideration the norms of international tourism could prove a blessing. In case of Jammu and Kashmir, it was always unplanned and thus led to the degradation of the physical environment. While developing the prominent cities, the erstwhile State planners, architects, economists and engineers have not been consulted resulting in a haphazard growth of the cities. It has also contributed to the poor performance of the tourist industry in the State.<sup>56</sup>

**Conclusion:** Until 1885, the State of Jammu and Kashmir continued to rely upon agriculture and small-scale industries in the form of various arts and crafts. No doubt being the ancient seat of learning, the valley of Kashmir was visited by various seers and sages for the sake of knowledge. Besides, for its scenic beauty Kashmir was an additional attraction for nature lovers and adventurers. But one cannot claim that the State of Jammu and Kashmir had an organised tourism industry till the State was laid on modern lines during the latter phase of the Dogra rule by virtue of the construction of roads and the development of infrastructure in the form of Dakbanglows, houseboats, guest houses and hotels. All such measures led to the birth of tourism industry in the State. From the mid-1920s, we come across considerable tourist traffic in the State. Therefore, tourism industry emerged as an additional source of income for the State as well as its subjects. With the passage of time, private players especially in the form of various travel agencies came forward and made a significant contribution to the rise and growth of tourism in the State. The nationalist governments after 1947 also took various steps in order to promote the tourism industry. All these measures went a long way in the proper establishment

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

of a tourism department that generated substantial revenue for the State. Besides, the benefits of tourism industry percolated to common people by way of employment and business opportunities. It also helped in the maintenance and preservation of the heritage sites in the State. Tourism also helped in the modernization of the State and its people. There was a noticeable influence on the lifestyle of the elite as well as common people. The construction of modern houseboats, the introduction of various types of dresses, habits of table dining, and the construction of modern residential houses are no doubt the legacy of Kashmir's response to European culture. However, one cannot rule out the negative impact of tourism. Some tourists addicted to various vices transmitted bad habits to the locals who happened to be in their contact causing an immense loss to the cultural heritage of the State. Besides, the government did not take appropriate measures to promote and regulate the tourism industry according to national and international standards. No doubt it passed various acts in this connection. But, the laws enacted in this connection were not implemented properly. There was no serious and well-thought-out policy towards the organization and promotion of tourism. The net result of it was that it caused immense damage to the physical environment of the State. Above all an efficient tourism industry requires the availability of professionals for its maintenance. No training institution was established for this purpose. Besides, for want of proper publicity, during the colonial as well as post-colonial times there was a lingering growth of tourism industry in the State. Jammu and Kashmir, gifted by the bounties of nature and a rich composite culture has immense potential of tourism and in case the State and its subjects would take efficient and honest measures to develop and organize it, there is enough scope for its economic prosperity.



## From Traditional to Modern: A Study of Educational System in Kashmir (1846-1947)

Rizwan Ur Rehman

**Abstract:** *The writings on education have generally focused on the history of modern education in Kashmir with particular focus on the role played by Christian missionaries and the contribution of the government in this regard. However, the transition of traditional education to modern education is a critical missing link within these works. By using archival documents, personal memoirs, and other records of the period, this paper intends to understand the transformation of education from traditional to modern in the context of Kashmir.*

How did educational system develop in the past, and what caused it to change? These matters are central to the history of education, and critical to anyone interested in educational reform. Known as the centre of Sanskrit learning, Kashmir stood as a beacon of enlightenment to the surrounding territories. Students and scholars from all parts of subcontinent flocked in the Valley for higher studies. The scholars of Kashmir made significant contribution both to Sanskrit language as well as to Sanskrit literature. It is, therefore, not surprising, that Kashmir became favourite destination for pan-Indian intellectual community and also scholars from other parts of the world, who assembled here and interacted on subjects pertaining to different disciplines and fields of knowledge.<sup>1</sup> In order to understand the evolution of modern educational system in Kashmir, probably a good point to begin with is to outline the broad features of the pre-modern educational system.

Prior to the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, education in Kashmir was traditional in character and this education took place in a variety of settings. Akin to the other parts of India the main focus of traditional education in Kashmir was on

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<sup>1</sup> S.S. Toshkhani, *Kashmir's Role in the Development of Indian Cultural Traditions: An Overview*, in G. L. Badam and K. K. Chakravarty, (eds.), *Heritage of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh*, New Delhi: Research India Press, 2010, p. 47.

religion and morality.<sup>2</sup> One very important striking feature of this educational system was that it was dominated by elite, and was almost exclusively male oriented. Religion and reverence for antiquity had been the dominant influences in shaping the course of education.<sup>3</sup> Education, as whole was interlinked with the structures and functions of caste groups, religious sects, and localities. Highlighting the religious purpose and content of education in pre-modern England, Hellan M. Jewell describes it as a process “to produce men who could perform the eight services of the divine office, and those in priests’ orders had to celebrate daily mass and perform other sacraments, such as baptism as required.”<sup>4</sup> In the context of Kashmir, both the communities of Hindus and Muslims wanted their children to learn about their religion and culture so that they would be true heirs of the religion and culture of their ancestors. Education was imparted to local Hindu and Muslim boys by *pundits* and *movlis* in *pathshalas* and *madrasas* respectively. So, it seems unsurprising that the goals, curriculum, organisation, and practises of education all expressed religious concerns. The education was also meant to build a moral society. That is why books like *Karima-Nam’i-Haq*, *Gulistan Bostan*, and *Pand-Nama* were always taught to the upper standards, along with religious lessons.<sup>5</sup> In the *pathshalas* the study of four *Vedas*, *Vyakaran* (grammar), *Mimamsa* (system of philosophy), *Nyay* (logic), *Dharamshastras* and *Mantarshastra*, formed the courses of study.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Shamla Mufti, Myeān Kath: *A Kashmiri Womens’s Struggle for Empowerment* (1925-2008), Tr., Shafi Shauq, Srinagar, K.P.H, Srinagar, p.39.

<sup>3</sup> Nita Kumar, *Lessons from Schools: The History of Education in Banaras*, Sage Publications, New Delhi 2000, p.14.

<sup>4</sup> Helen M. Jewell, *Education in Early Modern England*, Macmillan Press, London, 1998, p. 45.

<sup>5</sup> Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, *The blazing Chinar: Autobiography*, Tr. M. Amin, Srinagar, Gulshan Books, 2016, p.28.

<sup>6</sup> Amar Singh Chohan, *Development of Education in Jammu and Kashmir State: 1846-1947*, Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi, 1998, p.2.

Teaching was considered a specialized activity. It was something rather different from what came to be recognized as a means of employment or 'service' towards the middle of nineteenth century. The teacher was not the 'meek subordinate of administrative officers', as Krishna Kumar calls him, of the colonial times.<sup>7</sup> As a sole authority on the selection of the knowledge, the teacher himself shaped the curriculum. He decided on his own or on the basis of convention what to teach and how to teach. Often, the teacher was just the most religious and knowledgeable person in the community who was allowed to do religious tasks. Some of these jobs were to lead prayers, oversee weddings, circumcisions, funerals, trials, and so on.<sup>8</sup> Education by and large discussed religion, morality, and language. Many of the myths and superstitions that made up the intellectual world were taught to students by the less experienced teachers. This included undue respects for saints and the belief that "the saints will aid if men will call imputing of man-made and natural disasters to the curse of the saint, and other similar notions".<sup>9</sup>

The whole process of learning was a teacher-dominated one, with memory preceding understanding. As William D. Arnold, who was appointed Director of Public instruction in Punjab in 1858, in his second report found that pupils in indigenous schools were capable of reading but unable to drive any meaning out of it.<sup>10</sup> A similar picture emerges out from Kashmir, if a common man here was educated at all he at best was able to read religious texts without grasping their

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<sup>7</sup> Krishna Kumar, *Political Agenda of Education: A Study of Colonialist and Nationalist Ideas*, Sage publication, New Delhi, 2005, p.76.

<sup>8</sup> Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, *The blazing Chinari Autobiography*, p.28.

<sup>9</sup> Walter Roper Lawrence, *The valley of Kashmir*, Srinagar, Chinari Publications, 1992, pp, 286, 293-294.

<sup>10</sup> Krishna Kumar, *Political Agenda of Education: A study of colonialist and nationalist ideas*, Sage publication, New Delhi, 2005, p.53.

precise contents.<sup>11</sup> It seems that the prevailing perceptions of the reading were that of a process of sounding out the text without relating to it. The minds of the students thus were 'passive receptacles' as Helen M. Jewell in his study on the education of early Modern England terms them. The education that was desirable was pre censored and the 'wholesome' knowledge was selected from the drip feed.<sup>12</sup> The traditional society was predominantly an illiterate society, with only a relatively small portion of the educated population belonging to the religious elite, who, due to custom and the existing economic, social, and political atmosphere, had monopolised education. The ecclesiastical elite viewed education primarily as a means to an end—making money and maintaining their hereditary social distinctions and gentility—while the common folk looked on it as *ach gash* (light of the eyes). Though the term *ach gash* signifies the ability to discriminate between right and wrong; however, in the popular phraseology of Kashmir it refers to an ability to read and write especially for keeping domestic accounts, reading and writing of applications or letters and monitoring the frauds committed by various intermediaries against the illiterate masses.<sup>13</sup>

Education was not the part of the State responsibility and the State did not invest in education as such. No doubt, the State endowed land grants to those who imparted education to the children, but these were out of pure philanthropy.<sup>14</sup> The economic support for the teacher came from various sources but presumably a straight explicit cash nexus had not

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<sup>11</sup> C.E .Tyandale Biscoe, *Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade*, London, Seeley Service & Co Limited, 1925, p253

<sup>12</sup> Helen M. Jewell, *Education in Early Modern England*, C&B, London, 1993, p.14.

<sup>13</sup> Shirin Bakshi, *Social Change in Kashmir with Special Reference to the European Impact (1846-1947)*, unpublished thesis, Department of history, University of Kashmir, p.128.

<sup>14</sup> During the period of the Muslims such grants were known as *madad-i-ma'ash* grants, the Sikhs and the Dogras named them as Dharmath. For details about Dharamath grants on the eve of foundation of the Jammu and Kashmir State see, *Dastur-ul-Amal- Kashmir*, (Anonymous), pp.189-208.

yet got established. The majority of the teachers, therefore, were supported by local community and the teachers themselves charged fee over the students. Being entirely a private affair, both the lower schools (*maktabs*) and higher schools (*madrasas*) were attached to the mosques and *Khanqahas*.<sup>15</sup> The social composition of the schools, particularly of the *madrasas*, was the function of both location and wealth. Families who lived in the cities could easily afford the luxury of education than the agrarian population.<sup>16</sup> This education as a whole, favoured the male gender and the girls were educationally a disadvantaged group. There were few *maktabs* or *madrasas* for girls and a few *ulema* taught their daughters to read the Quran.<sup>17</sup> No wonder therefore, that the majority of Muslim women in Kashmir didn't even know how to pray, let alone to have a fundamental understanding of the religion that pre-modern schooling centred around.<sup>18</sup>

The traditional education saw basic training in the rudiments of the faith as the essential for souls of the individual students. This training in basic tenets of the religion, however, did not necessarily extent to literacy, and could remain compartmentalised, so that an individual learned very little from religion to apply to other aspects of experience. In the *maktab*, the student learned how to read the Quran and get some basic training in religious rituals, such as how to lead the prayers in the village mosques.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> G.M.D Sufi, *Kashir: A History of Kashmir*, II, Lahore, University of Punjab, 1949, p.349. C. E. Tyandale Biscoe, *Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade*, p.253.

<sup>16</sup> The madrassas, it should be noted were mainly located in Srinagar. For instance, in 1872, there were five madrassas and all of them were located in Srinagar, For Details see, Muhammad Yusuf Ganai, *Kashmiri's Struggle for Independence* (1931-1939), Srinagar, Gulshan Books, 2003, p.66.

<sup>17</sup> Matin-Uz-Zaman Khan, *Census of India, 1911, Vol. XX, Kashmir Part-I*, Nuwul Kishore Press, Lucknow, 1912, p.213.

<sup>18</sup> Shamla Mufti, Myeān Kath: *A Kashmiri Womens's Struggle for Empowerment* (1925-2008), p 39.

<sup>19</sup> Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, *The Blazing Chinar*, Autobiography, p.28.

However, at the *madrassa* level, theology and law, mostly *tafsir* (commentaries on the Quran), the Hadith (quotes from the Prophet), the *Fiqh* (the study of religious laws and customs), the language (mostly Arabic and Persian), grammar and syntax (*sarfva Nahv*), and worldly science mostly logic (*mantaq*), were taught. Books contained moral lessons through stories like *Gulistan Bostan*, *Masnavi* of Maulana Rumi and the poetry of great Persian poets like Hafiz, Saidi, and Jami also formed part of school curriculum.<sup>20</sup>

**Early Dogra State and Education:** On 16 March 1846, the treaty of Amritsar<sup>21</sup> was signed between the British East India Company and Gulab Singh and the different territories stripped by the English from the Sikh kingdom of Punjab were drawn together to bring into existence the Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir.<sup>22</sup> Unlike the Princely rulers of Mysore and Baroda, who set up institutions of higher education, the early Dogra rulers placed at the apex of the newly established State of Jammu and Kashmir, for a long time followed the policy of non-intervention in educational matters.<sup>23</sup> Gulab Singh (1846-57), the first Dogra Maharaja, was too busy in consolidating his territories to pay any attention to educational status of his subjects and no noteworthy progress in the field of education is noticed in his reign.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Charles Girdlestone, *Memorandum on Cashmere and Adjacent Territories*, Foreign Department Press, Calcutta, 1874, See also Shamla Mufti, *Myeān Kath: A Kashmiri Womens's Struggle for Empowerment (1925-2008)*, pp. 80-81

<sup>21</sup> For details of the Treaty of Amritsar See, K.M. Pannikar, *Gulab Singh- 1792-1858- Founder of Kashmir*, Martin Hopkinson Limited, London, 1930, p.112.

<sup>22</sup> M.L. Kapur, *Kashmir Sold and Snatched*, Jay Kay Books, Srinagar, 2014, p.15.

<sup>23</sup> For details regarding the nature of Dogra State, See Muhammad Yusuf Ganai, *Kashmir's Struggle for Independence*, pp.7-19.

<sup>24</sup> Chitralekha Zutshi, *Languages of Belonging" Islam, Regional Identity, and the Making of Kashmir*, New Delhi, Permanent Black, 2003, p.172.

The son and successor of Gulab Singh, Maharaja Ranbir Singh (1857-85) was the first to take an active interest in education. He was gifted with a scholarly bent of mind and was a munificent patron of education and literature. It appears that his personal interest in the progress of education went beyond the boundaries of the State. He is supposed to have donated generously to Sanskrit institutions in Banaras, and established a big *Pathshala* at Kashi for which all expenses were borne by him.<sup>25</sup> The educational system that prevailed under his rule remained governed by indigenous functional concerns, although Ranbir Singh encouraged religious education through a study of classical languages like Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic. But in accordance with the religious tenor of his rule, Ranbir Singh's ultimate goal was to disseminate classical Hindu learning among his Dogra subjects.<sup>26</sup> Thus, the shrine consecrated to the worship of Rama or Ragunatha, known as Ragunath Temple became a centre of extensive classical Sanskrit learning, where hundreds of Brahmin pupils were trained in various branches of Sanskrit scholarship.<sup>27</sup> The temple institution also had a translation department where, with the aid of *moulvis* (Muslim priests), Arabic and Persian philosophical and other works were translated into Sanskrit, and a staff of Pandits translated the entire spectrum of *Dharamashastras* into Hindi and Dogri.<sup>28</sup> Ranbir Singh revitalized old system of education on the pattern of *madrassa* and *pathshala*. *Pathshalas* for learning of Sanskrit, Hindi scriptures and law, grammar, logic, science and medicine were established at Jammu and Uttarbehani, on the principles of ancient *mathas* and *ashrams*. These institutions were residential and also admitted day students and were maintained by donation from the Maharaja, the ruling family and well to-do-

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<sup>25</sup> Sukhdev Singh Charak, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranbir Singh*, Jay Kay book House, Jammu, p.240.

<sup>26</sup> Sufi, *Kashir*, vol. II, p.791.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., vol. II, p.790.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., vol. II, p.790.

citizens.<sup>29</sup> Education at all levels was made free and stipends in the shape of free books and free boarding and lodging were made available to all the students. For the teaching of Hindi and Sanskrit Ranbir Singh founded a well-equipped *Pathshala* in Jammu in 1857, known as Ranbir Ragunath *Pathshala*, in the premises of Ragunath temple, Jammu. It appears that the teaching of Sanskrit was put on a special footing and in addition to the best available local talent the Maharaja went to India personally to request erudite Pandits to man his *Pathshala*.<sup>30</sup> As centres of high Hindu learning these *pathshalas* were thrown open to students from all over India, like Punjab, Tran-Sutlej territory and other parts.<sup>31</sup> In these *pathshalas* a comprehensive system of periodical check-up and examinations was devised to keep the students active in learning. These examinations were conducted in three different periods—monthly, half-yearly and yearly. If a student wished to commence a new book, he was examined in the book already finished by him. Annual examinations were held at the Ragunath temple complex, Jammu, and list of examinees, recommended by the teachers as candidates, was framed out of which a group of 25 was examined every day. These regulations were meant to make the *adhiyapak* (teacher) accountable for any short coming of the scholar in the reading. The student had to take a declaration from the teacher at the time of receiving stipends to the effect, “that he has read so much in this month, and if, at the time of examination he should not prove such as declared by me, I shall refund the stipend of the scholar.”<sup>32</sup> Thus it was the responsibility of the teacher to point out deficiencies of his students from time to time. If a student proved unfit for study after a trial of six months he was turned out from the

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<sup>29</sup> Sukhdev Singh Charak, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranbir Singh*, p.240.

<sup>30</sup> S.L. Seru, *History and Growth of Education in (Jammu and Kashmir) 1872 A.D to 1973 A.D*, p.34.

<sup>31</sup> Amar Singh Chohan, *Development of Education in Jammu and Kashmir State: 1846-1947*, Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi, 1998, p.2.

<sup>32</sup> Quoted in Chohan, *Development of Education in Jammu and Kashmir State: 1846-1947*, p.3.



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*pathshala*. If a teacher had not disclosed the unfitness of the student, he had to pay the expenses that might have incurred in teaching a student.<sup>33</sup> At the end of each course degrees and medals were awarded to the successful and deserving students under the seals of Shri Ragunathji and the signatures of the members of the examining board.<sup>34</sup> The monthly report of students was also checked and the progress report of students was sent to their guardians and parents. Syllabi taught in those *pathshalas* were comprehensive and included all types of Indological studies. In this regard these institutions were remarkably different from the traditional *pathshalas*. In addition to four *Vedas*, *Vyakaran* (grammar), and *Shastras*, the subjects included mathematics, astrology, demonstrative science and occult science. The *Mimanas* (system of philosophy), *Nyay* (logic), *Sankh* and *Yog*, *Vedant*, *Dharamshastras* and *Mantarshastra*, *Jyotish* and *Chikista* were included in the *shastric* studies.<sup>35</sup>

Ranbir Singh aided few *madrasas* of Muslims in Kashmir like the *madrasa* of Nawakadal, Maharaj Gung and Basant Bagh.<sup>36</sup> Two institutions of higher learning were also established one in Jammu and one in Srinagar with 400 and 500 scholars on rolls respectively. These institutions were affiliated to the newly established university in Punjab. The courses of study included English, *shastris* or Sanskrit, law, vernaculars, Persian and medicine, both *ayurvedic* and *unani* system.<sup>37</sup> Maharaja Ranbir Singh established the first printing press in the State. It was known as Vidya Vilas Press and was located at Jammu. Maharaja also founded a Translation Bureau for the translation of books from various languages.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Charak, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranbir Singh*, p.254.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p.258.

<sup>35</sup> Chohan, *Development of Education in Jammu and Kashmir State: 1846-1947*, p.4.

<sup>36</sup> Muhammad Yusuf Ganai, *Kashmir's Struggle for Independence*, p.66.

<sup>37</sup> *Report Majmui (Urdu)*, Government of Jammu and Kashmir State, 1882-83.

<sup>38</sup> S.I. Seru, *History and Growth of Education in (Jammu and Kashmir) 1872 A.D to 1973 A.D*, Ali Mohammad & Sons, Srinagar, 1999, p.33.

The idea behind it was to prepare readymade books for the students reading in various educational institutions which he opened in the State. In this way books, on geography, geology, history and other subjects were translated into Hindi and Sanskrit. Arabic books were translated into Hindi as also in Persian. Many Sanskrit texts in *Sharda* script were translated in to *Devangri* script. About the Translation Bureau Sir Aural Stein says:<sup>39</sup>

Translation into Hindi of standard works, selected from the whole range of Dharsanas, the Dharma and other Sastras was executed and partly printed with the object of spreading knowledge of classical Hindu learning among the Maharaj's Dogri subjects. Again Persian and Arabic works on historical, philosophical and other subjects were translated into Sanskrit with the assistance of competent Moulvis, in a spirit of true enlightenment desired to promote between the representatives of Hindu and Mohammedan scholarship in his dominions.

Sanskrit religious texts like Mahabharata, Bhagwat-Gita and Upanishads were also translated into Persian. The Persian poet Saadi's famous book *Gulistan* was calligraphed in original with its transliteration in *devanagri* script and translation in Hindi.<sup>40</sup> The result of this brisk literary activity was piling up of large collection of manuscripts and printed works of great value, in the form of the establishment of manuscript library at Jammu.<sup>41</sup>

My lengthy treatment of education under Ranbir Singh underscores two key points. One education, as envisaged by Ranbir Singh, was to be the sole preserve of the ruling class and religious elite. Second, because of his attachment towards traditional education, Ranbir Singh did not pay much attention towards modern education. From the

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<sup>39</sup> Stein quoted in S. L. Seru, *History and Growth of Education in (Jammu and Kashmir) 1872 A.D to 1973 A.D*, p.33.

<sup>40</sup> Charak, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranbir Singh*, pp. 251-60.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., pp. 251-60.

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available sources on the period, it appears that modern education did not exist in Kashmir till the advent of the European Christian Missionaries.<sup>42</sup>

**Christian Missionaries and the Modern Education:** It was because of the efforts of the Christian missionaries that education system in Kashmir began to be reorganized on the pattern of the West. These missionaries initially faced stiff opposition from the people as well as the State. But this official antagonism was slowly and gradually overcome by a combination of tact, good will and determination.<sup>43</sup> In the long run the years of useful services rendered by the medical missionaries in a land where pestilence was very common, made them popular among the people and undermined the hostility of the State authorities.<sup>44</sup> By and large the beneficial results rendered by the missionaries were clear even to the most illiterate. The proposals of the Christian Missionaries to establish schools in Kashmir were approved by the C.M.S in London. The arrival of the Rev. J Hinton Knowles in 1880, therefore, really marked the foundation of the school on the hospital premises in Srinagar.<sup>45</sup> Conscious of how precarious was the foot hold that they had gained for the first 12 years, the missionaries sought to run the school on lines that would give no offence to the people and local authorities. From 1880 to 1883 it was under the Reverend J. S. Doxey and from 1883 to 1894 under Hinton Knowles its founder. In 1890, he was joined by C. Tyndale Biscoe who had the great and congenial task for helping the former to develop the school in Srinagar.<sup>46</sup> In 1894, Knowles passed the responsibility of the

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<sup>42</sup> Brain Holmes edited, *Education Policy and The Mission Schools: Case Studies of the British Empire*, Routledge, London, 1967, p.152.

<sup>43</sup> Brain Holmes, *Education Policy and The Mission Schools: Case Studies of the British Empire*, p.158.

<sup>44</sup> E.D. Tyndale Biscoe, *Fifty Years Against the Stream: The Story of School in Kashmir 1880-1930*, Wesleyan Mission Press, Mysore, 1930, p 1.

<sup>45</sup> C.E. Tyndale Biscoe, *Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade*, p.260.

<sup>46</sup> E.D. Tyndale Biscoe, *Fifty Years Against the Stream*, p.1.

school to Biscoe who remained its Principal and supervised its branches for the next fifty years.<sup>47</sup>

Every year the missionary school turned out men gifted with an entirely novel outlook on life. Later these young men spread far and wide in the country as teachers, officials, traders, etc. The products of the Mission school were talking a distinct language and acting in a novel, unorthodox and non-conformist manner. Thus, as Bazaz rightly remarks “an intellectual revolution born in the classroom of the C.M.S was slowly and gradually travelling in diverse directions and was imperceptibly bringing the whole society in its vortex”.<sup>48</sup> It is pertinent to mention here that till the end of 1890's there was not even a single Muslim boy on the rolls of the missionary school. It were the Kashmiri Pandit boys who owing to their rich pedigree and economic strength responded to modern education.<sup>49</sup> The Muslims boys, owing to their chronic poverty<sup>50</sup> and conservative role of Muslim religious class, who dissuaded their community to take to English education, did not respond to English education for a pretty long time.<sup>51</sup>

**Colonial Intervention, Dogra State and Modern Education:** Regarding the role of the State in education we find that for a long time it was not interested in providing modern education to its subjects, though it did patronise a few *madrasas* and *pathshalas*.<sup>52</sup> The fact that there was only one state run Middle School in 1890 amply demonstrates it.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> See, Brain Holmes, for the contribution of Christian Missionaries, pp.155-172

<sup>48</sup> Prem Nath Bazaz, *Daughters of the Vitasta: A History of Kashmiri Women From Early Times to the Present Day*, Pamposh Publications, New Delhi, 1959, p.215.

<sup>49</sup> C.E .Tyandale Biscoe, *Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade*, p.265.

<sup>50</sup> Brain Holmes, *Education Policy and The Mission Schools: Case Studies of the British Empire*, p.163

<sup>51</sup> Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, *The Blazing Chinar Autobiography*, p.28.

<sup>52</sup> Muhmmad Yusuf Ganai, *Kashmir's Struggle for Independence*, p.66.

<sup>53</sup> Annual Administration Report of J&K 1891, State archives Srinagar, p.85.

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Even though this institution was established in 1874, however, it was not modernised until 1885, when the curriculum of the Punjab University was implemented in the State run schools.<sup>54</sup> Why the State did adopt an indifferent attitude towards education in general and modern education in particular? The contemporaries give various plausible reasons in this regard. First, it seems that the Maharajahs were apprehensive of the dissemination of modern education among the masses because it was likely to foster political consciousness among them. This is also substantiated by Arthur Brinckman, the author of *Wrongs of Cashmere*:<sup>55</sup>

The rajah will not allow education there but to blind us sends a few thousand rupees occasionally to our Punjab schools. The Cashmeres are not allowed to improve in anyway by the rajah. Keep them grinding for our benefit is the sole thought of their rulers.

This fact has been rather avowedly corroborated by Prem Nath Bazaz, to quote him:<sup>56</sup>

The awareness that they (Rulers) were Hindus and the overwhelming majority of the Kashmiris professed Islam, constantly made them apprehensive; they disliked the idea of making their subjects politically conscious and thought that imparting of education was only an effective way of awakening the people to their political and human rights ...Even when, belatedly, a few boy's schools were started in the city to meet the repeated charges of anti-progress, no steps were taken to make them attractive or to get students enrolled in large numbers.

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<sup>54</sup> Annual Administrative Report Jammu and Kashmir, 1889-90, State archives Srinagar, p.87.

<sup>55</sup> Arthur Brinckman, *Wrongs of Cashmere: A Plea for The Deliverance of that Beautiful Country from the Slavery and Oppression Under Which it is Gone*, Thomas Bosworth, London, 1868, p.24.

<sup>56</sup> Prem Nath Bazaz, *Daughters of the Vitasta*, p. 215.

For Lawrence, the prejudice of the people toward mosque schools and private tutoring was yet another factor responsible for the government's lack of interest in the educational development of the State. This prejudice was one of the reasons why the government did not show enough interest in the educational development of the State. Referring to the background of the indifferent attitude of the State toward the educational aspirations of its subjects, Lawrence opines:<sup>57</sup>

The answer is that the more affluent villagers prefer the mosque schools, or the system of private tuition... The rural population does not at present want assistance from the State, and fathers have the old fashioned idea that homely morals are better than the scholarship and advanced thought which is born of the State schools.

The growing number of *moulvies* that the government appointed in government schools as a means of winning the Muslim support for modern education also attests to the fact that the popular bias in favour of religious education hampered the growth of modern education among Kashmiris in general and the Muslims in particular.<sup>58</sup> Thirdly, the government recognised that the supply of educated Pandits

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<sup>57</sup> Walter Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, p.229.

<sup>58</sup> Annual Administration Report of J&K 1912, p. 86, See also, Report of the Commission appointed under the orders of His Highness Maharaja Bhadur, dated 12th Nov. 1931, to Enquire into the Grievances and Complaints, Jammu, Ranbir Government Press, 1931, p.15-16. During the year 1911, there was only one post of the Arabic teacher in the State High School, Srinagar on Rs. 25 per mensem. Now there are as many as 107 Arabic teachers. To these appointments is largely due the enormous increase in the number of Muslim scholars. The chief duty of the Arabic teachers consists in insisting the Muslim public at large to send their sons to the state education institutions. They are also required to impart instructions in religious education and their efforts have met with considerable success. Bahadur Chandhri Munshi Mohammad Khan, *Census of India, 1921, Vol. XXII, Kashmir Part-I Report*, Mufid-i-Am Press, Lahore, 1922, p.112.

greatly exceeded the demand. The spread of education was, therefore, supposed to produce a discontented and dissatisfied populace inimical to the peace and tranquilly of the State.<sup>59</sup> Beginning in the 1890s, the State's interest in education seems to have increased with time. From the contemporary sources of the period, it becomes evident that the expansion of the State educational institutions was the result of British intervention in Kashmir from 1885 onwards,<sup>60</sup> as well as the pressure exerted on the government by the Indian Muslims in general and the Muslim socio-political organisations from Lahore in particular.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, the role played by the Kashmiri Muslim educated youth (who had obtained higher education from various Indian universities in early thirties of the twentieth century) in persuading the government to provide educational opportunities to the Muslim masses, cannot be under-estimated.<sup>62</sup>

Cumulatively, with the coming of Christian Missionaries, the colonial intervention and the outside pressures, the traditional system of education gradually lost its prestigious position. This waning of traditional education was more conspicuous among those sections of Kashmir society (like Kashmiri Pandits) who tried to acquire education for employment purposes, as with the modernization of the State administration, the new education seemed to offer better employment avenues.<sup>63</sup> Thus, the traditional education lost

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<sup>59</sup> Walter Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, p.229.

<sup>60</sup> Annual Administrative Report Jammu and Kashmir, 1889-90, pp.23-26.

<sup>61</sup> For instance, it was under the pressure of the All India Muslim Educational Conference, which sent a deputation to the Maharaja in 1913 under the leadership of Sahibzada Aftab Khan that the government appointed a Special Inspector for Muslim Education and then an Educational Commission under the Chairmanship of Mr. Sharp. JKA, F. NO: 217/P.9 of 1913, State Archives Jammu.

<sup>62</sup> Mirza Shafiq Hussain, *Kashmiri Musلمانu ki Siyasi Judujehad kay Muntakhab Dastawezaat (1931-1939)*, Srinagar, Sheikh Mohammad Usmaan & Sons, 2015, pp.430-433.

<sup>63</sup> It may be noted that it was only with the establishment of the British Residency in Kashmir in 1885, that the process of the

its economic base once modern education, howsoever meagre, made its appearance on the social fabric of Kashmir society. The State, moreover, took the control of this education and correspondingly bore the responsibility of its costs. As in other parts of India, in the traditional system of education in Kashmir, the teacher was remunerated by the community he served. Under the new system, he became a paid servant of the State government. Similarly, once the State interest in running the schools was established, locally available financial support began to dry up, permitting the State to bring all aspects of School education under its control. Modern education with its codified procedures for the recruitment of the teachers, its elaborate machinery for inspection, and its norms of evaluation for the award of the scholarship and certificates, got entrenched in the State, and a new pedagogical culture emerged in Kashmir.<sup>64</sup>

The basic norm of this culture was to treat the prescribed text book as the *defacto* curriculum, rather than as an aid.<sup>65</sup> The text books were prescribed by the State, and the teachers training institutions worked very hard to make the teacher familiar with it.<sup>66</sup> As Nita Kumar, argues in the context of Banaras that “as single agency colonial State, in progressive bureaucratic stages, wrote a government syllabus that all subjects of the empire were expected to learn”.<sup>67</sup> In the similar manner in Kashmir, once the State became the agency for disseminating education, the knowledge that was being diffused became homogenised. It was no longer differentiated for each distinct social group, be it Muslims or Pandits. It also seems that the content of textbooks had no other meaning for the teacher and the student except as material to be mastered, which in the case of most subjects meant

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modernization of the Kashmir administration and technology started necessitating the man power well versed in western education especially in English.

<sup>64</sup> Political Department 101/P-102/1907, Jammu State Archives.

<sup>65</sup> Old English Records, F. No. 73/P-49/1911, Jammu State Archives.

<sup>66</sup> Annual Administrative Report, Jammu and Kashmir, 1918-19.

<sup>67</sup> Nita Kumar, *Lessons from Schools: The History of Education in Banaras*, p.72



memorization for reproduction at the examination. What meaning the lessons in the textbooks could have had for the student was inextricably linked to the urgency to pass in the examination.<sup>68</sup> The text book, therefore, was the curriculum. They were seen as containing the only knowledge which mattered in the sense of having been approved by the government as the basis of examination.<sup>69</sup> All other forms of knowledge were invalidated by this text book culture.

Modern education, thus tried to exclude the spectrum of traditional knowledge about traditions, religions, folklore, crafts, arts and sciences from its definition of education. Being familiar with this knowledge or even having mastery over them, did not count as education. Moreover, in sharp contrast to traditional education as mentioned earlier, modern education was seen as a means of acquiring government employment. Emphasising how education was seen as a channel to employment in the context of British India Lord Curzon noticed that people viewed modern education “not primarily as the instrument of culture or the source of learning, but as the key to employment, the condition of all national advance and prosperity and the sole stepping stone for every class of the community to higher things”.<sup>70</sup> Similarly, in the context of Kashmir, as the modernization of administration especially from 1885, offered job opportunities to the English educated youth. It motivated people for seeking Western education and the popular mind saw education an individual acquisition leading to a stronger position in the labour market.<sup>71</sup> Moreover, this new type of education brought an entirely different curriculum in the educational institutions of the State. Moreover, in sharp contrast to traditional education as mentioned earlier, where the focus of education was on religiosity, modern education was dominated by the subjects like English, Mathematics,

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<sup>68</sup> C.E. Tyndale Biscoe, *Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade*, p.256.

<sup>69</sup> Old English Records, F. No. 73/P-49/1911, Jammu State Archives.

<sup>70</sup> Quoted in Aparna Basu, *The Growth of Education and Political Development in India, 1898– 1920*, New Delhi, OUP, 1974, p.6.

<sup>71</sup> C.E. Tyndale Biscoe, *Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade*, p.256.

Geography, and Arithmetic. Besides, the history of India and outside world and general knowledge were taught to the students.<sup>72</sup> Such a type of education made the youth of Kashmir conscious about their rights and the power they possessed to change the character of the Government with the support of oppressed masses. This eventually led to the emergence of political consciousness in the early thirties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>73</sup>

It is pertinent to mention that traditional education had such a delicate importance that the State could not afford to ignore it while crafting its educational policy. Thus, in addition to financing modern education, the State also supported *madrassas*, *maktabs*, and *pathshalas*. It was only in the 1930's that the significance of traditional education had all but vanished under the weight of the sweeping wave of modernization, that the government began to withdraw its patronage from traditional educational institutions.<sup>74</sup> However, to avoid hurting the susceptibilities of the religiously oriented population, *Maulvis* and *Pandits* were recruited for imparting religious education and teaching of Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian.<sup>75</sup> Moreover, with a view to

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<sup>72</sup> Old English Records, F. No. 73/P-49/1911, Jammu State Archives, p. 20,

<sup>73</sup> M.Y Ganai, *Modern Education and the Rise of Political Consciousness in Kashmir*, ICH : Proceedings, 65<sup>th</sup> Session, 2004, p. 897.

<sup>74</sup> To quote the Census of India, 1931, pp. 261, 262, "The number of these indigenous institutions is on the decline as the people realise the futility of sending their children to such institutions and prefer to send them to State schools where education on modern lines is imparted. In harmony with the public sentiment His Highness Government has sanctioned a new set of rules refusing grant-in-aid to such Maktabs and Pathshalas as lie within a radius of two miles of a Government school and as have no arrangements for providing education in the three Rs.

<sup>75</sup> Bahadur Chandhri Munshi Mohammad Khan, *Census of India, 1921, Vol. XXII*, p. 110. During the period of Mr. Glancy the total number of Arabic teachers was 97, Glancy Commission Report, p10.

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improve the educational system, the State of Jammu and Kashmir appointed two Educational Commissions one in 1916 under the Chairmanship of Mr. Sharp and another in 1938 under K. G. Saiyaidein. Besides, in the annals of the Glancy Commission (1932) the educational problem figured prominently. These commissions, investigated the complex problems of school education in the State like, religious disparity in educational institutions, problem of inspection, pay anomaly of teachers, problem of teachers training and so on. However, the State paid little regard to the recommendations of these commissions.<sup>76</sup>

So far as the progress of modern education is concerned in 1890-91 the Kashmir Valley had eighteen village elementary schools and one middle school. Eleven of them were located in Srinagar, while the remaining eight were in various towns and villages. With the exception of one High school that was created as a result of the upgrading of the Srinagar Middle school in 1891-1892, the number of State schools increased from 1890-91 onwards. In 1894-1895, in Kashmir valley alone there were 32 primary and upper primary schools. In 1901, there was one State High school, sixteen primary schools and nineteen indigenous branch schools in Srinagar alone.<sup>77</sup> However, there were just two Girl's schools in 1905.<sup>78</sup> In Kashmir province in 1905-06, there were four vernacular middle schools and three High schools.<sup>79</sup> With the opening of Hindu college in Srinagar in 1905 by Miss Annie Besant in Srinagar higher education was started in Kashmir.<sup>80</sup>

In Jammu & Kashmir, the number of State-run schools climbed to 379 (202 primary schools, 120 middle schools, 30

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<sup>76</sup> See, Mirza Shafiq Hussain, *Kashmiri Musلمانu ki Siyasi Judujehad kay Muntakhab Datawezaat*, pp.90-101.

<sup>77</sup> Bahadur ChandhriMunshi Mohammad Khan, *Census of India, Kashmir, 1901, Vol. XXII, Part I*, Lahore, The Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1902, p.49.

<sup>78</sup> Annual Administration Report of J&K 1905, State archives Srinagar, p.130.

<sup>79</sup> Annual Administration Report of J&K, 1905, pp.128-129.

<sup>80</sup> File NO: 71/P-120, 190; Jammu Archives.

secondary schools and 27 other institutions) in 1911.<sup>81</sup> It should not be out of place to mention that in 1911, two aided schools, the Hindu High School and the Fatehkadal Middle school were taken over by the State.<sup>82</sup> In addition, on July 22, 1911, the government acquired control of the Hindu College in Srinagar, which was afterwards renamed as Sri Pratap Hindu College.<sup>83</sup> In Jammu and Kashmir in 1916, there were 311 primary schools (including 36 government-aided schools) and 37 secondary schools.<sup>84</sup> The number of girl's institutions was, however, only 16 in the whole of Jammu & Kashmir.<sup>85</sup> By 1923, towards the close of the Pratab Singh's rule there were 565 educational institutions (including 440 primary schools, 41 middle schools, 13 high schools, 2 colleges and 69 other institutions).<sup>86</sup>

During the period of Maharaja Hari Singh (1925-1947), the government took unprecedented interest towards the educational welfare of the State. The new Maharaja took the initiative of opening several new schools in the *mofassil*, such as the Hari Singh High School in Baramulla, and raising the

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<sup>81</sup> Bahadur Chandhri Munshi Mohammad Khan, *Census of India, 1921, Vol. XXII, Kashmir Part-I Report*, p. 110

<sup>82</sup> Annual Administration Report of J&K, 1911, p.70.

<sup>83</sup> The State granted Rs. 1,500 per month to the college established in Srinagar by the trustees of the Central Hindu College of Benaras under the guidance of Mrs. Annie Besant. It was affiliated to the Punjab University. After sometime due to inadequate resources the college lapsed into very inefficient education, so much so that there was fear of it being disaffiliated from the Punjab University. The College reached a moribund condition and it fell short of the requirements of the University. The trustees were paid Rs. 20,000 as liabilities and the school was taken over by the State. File NO: 71/P-120, 1910; Jammu Archives, Annual Administration Report of J & K 1911, p.69.

<sup>84</sup> H. Sharp, *A note on Education in the State of Jammu and Kashmir*, Calcutta, Superintendent Government Printing, India, 1916, p. 2.

<sup>85</sup> Sharp, *A note on Education in the State of Jammu and Kashmir*, p.53.

<sup>86</sup> Annual Administration Report of the Education Department, Jammu and Kashmir State, State Archives, Srinagar 1923, p. 1.

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standards of several others, such as the Hanfia Middle School in Anantnag, which became a High school in 1926. The education department even began to take steps to provide Muslim teachers in schools situated in localities with a preponderantly Muslim population.<sup>87</sup> Within a year of his rule, the number of government and aided institutions in State increased from 782 in 1925 to 961 in 1926 and the number of pupils enrolled in these institutions rose from 47,792 in 1925 to 54,829 in 1926.<sup>88</sup> This was obviously the result of the growing consciousness among the Muslims of Kashmir from the twenties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>89</sup> In 1930, the State passed the Compulsory Primary Education Act which emphasized free and compulsory primary education.<sup>90</sup> In 1932, the Act was also applied to the girls of Srinagar, Anantnag, Baramulla, and Sopore.<sup>91</sup> As a result of this act the number of educational institutions witnessed a significant increase. As per the Glancy Commission report (1932), there were 842 Primary schools (inclusive of 35 aided schools) and 59 Middle schools (inclusive of 6 private schools), 76 High schools and two colleges in the whole of Jammu and Kashmir.<sup>92</sup> According to the same report in the whole of J& K State, there were 144 girl's schools, of which two were high schools, fourteen middle schools and 128 primary schools.<sup>93</sup>

By 1941 there were 1888 educational institutions<sup>94</sup> (1143 Primary schools, 311 Middle schools 89 Secondary and 3 Colleges, and 342 other institutions) in the State as compared

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<sup>87</sup> General Department 1190/Misc 35/1930, Jammu State Archives.

<sup>88</sup> Annual Administrative report of Jammu and Kashmir, State Archives Srinagar, 1926,

<sup>89</sup> For the demands persistently made by the Muslims of Kashmir for their educational advancement See Memorandum submitted by Anjuman-i-Nasratu'l-Islam in 1923, *G. H. Khan Freedom Movement in Kashmir 1931-1940*, Gulshan Books, Srinagar, 1991, p. 106

<sup>90</sup> Annual Administration Report of J&K, 1940-41, pp.42-43.

<sup>91</sup> File NO: 39/18, Year 1931, Jammu Archives.

<sup>92</sup> See Glancy Commission Report, p. 9

<sup>93</sup> See Glancy Commission Report, p.10.

<sup>94</sup> Annual Administration Reports of J&K, 1941, p188.

to 1246(848 Primary schools,270 Middle schools, 81 Secondary schools and one College) in 1931.<sup>95</sup> It is worthwhile to mention that it was in 1940 that Sri Pratap College was split into two separate colleges- S. P. Intermediate College and Amar Singh Degree College.<sup>96</sup> In the whole of Jammu& Kashmir State there were 140 girls schools in 1931 and 241 in 1941.<sup>97</sup> The Ganganath Report also gives some information about girl's education in J&K in 1944.According to this Report there existed 5 High schools, 41 Middle schools and 190 Primary schools for girls in Jammu and Kashmir.<sup>98</sup> However, in spite of all the progress in education sector only the fringes of actual educational needs of the people had been touched by 1947 and at the time of independence the literacy rate in the State was just 5%.<sup>99</sup> Though the expenditure on education increased from Rs 58610 in 1872-73 to Rs 3752500 in 1947, it was only 7% of the total revenue.<sup>100</sup> Despite all the arrangements for the training of teachers, a large percentage of them were still without any training for their profession. The problem of accommodation remained throughout the period; consequently classes were held under trees and rented buildings.<sup>101</sup> The higher education too remained confined to only a small section of people. It is no wonder that the number of autobiographies and memoirs written by educated people who experienced Dogra rule, the period is

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<sup>95</sup> Pt. Rai Bahadur, Pt. Anant Ram, *Census of India, 1931, Vol. XXIV, Kashmir Part-I Report* , Jammu, Ranbir, Government Press, p. 254.

<sup>96</sup> Due to the unprecedented increase in the enrolment of S.P. College, Srinagar, which had become totally unmanageable the State Government bifurcated it. Annual Administration Reports of J&K, 1941, p188.

<sup>97</sup> Annual Administration Reports of J&K, 1941, p.188.

<sup>98</sup> Ganga Nath Report on the J&K Administration, Nov. 1944, State Archives Srinagar, p.191.

<sup>99</sup> Madhav Godbole, Report of the committee on Economic Reforms for Jammu and Kashmir. Aug,1998, p. 245.

<sup>100</sup> Annual Administartive Report of J&K Government, 1873, and 1947.

<sup>101</sup> File no, 141-HR-27-05-1937, His Highness records, State Archives Srinagar.

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overwhelmingly categorized as one of backwardness and illiteracy.<sup>102</sup>

**Conclusion:** The educational practice in Kashmir for most part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was dominated by traditional functional concerns. The indigenous *madrasas* (for Muslim boys) or *pathshalas* (for Pandit boys) imparted basic religious education to the students. While Gulab Singh, the first Dogra ruler, was more concerned with consolidating his newly acquired territories, his successor, Ranbir Singh encouraged religious education and especially stressed the spread of Hindu learning. It becomes obvious that in this period the State did not consider education either its responsibility or a priority and a very little infrastructure was set in place. But the period, following the death of Ranbir Singh under the influence British intervention, coupled with strenuous efforts of Christian missionaries and the external pressure of outside Muslim organisations, educational system of Kashmir underwent a considerable change. As a result of the complex interplay of these actors, the traditional system of education lost its earlier prestige and modern system of education with its set procedures gradually established itself in the State. This process of modernisation of education intensified under Hari Singh. Much applauded step in this direction was the legislation of free and compulsory primary education. However, despite these efforts, the State continued to be backward in education till the nationalist government took over the reins of the administration after independence.

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<sup>102</sup> Abdullah, *The Blazing Chinar*, p.30. See also, Mufti, *Myeān Kath*, p.39. See also, Aga Ashraf Ali *Kuch toh Likiyeki Log Lahen gay*, Srinagar, Kashmir Times Publication, 2010, p. 127.

## Traditional Moorings of Rural Kashmir: A Historical Perspective

Mohsin Yousuf

**Abstract:** *Till 19<sup>th</sup> and even upto the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the nature and character of Kashmiri's rural economy and society was feudal. Not only society but the State also relied mainly on agricultural income. Later in 1947 as a result of the downfall of colonial State and the end of autocracy in Kashmir, the process of modernization accelerated culminating in the demise of various socio-economic institutions of rural Kashmir. The present generation if not informed about this heritage would be unable to comprehend the process of the journey from the recent past to the present. There is no denying the fact that there are various accounts written by the Europeans that inform us about the socio-economic institutions of rural Kashmir. But owing to their foreign origin at times they were not able to capture the exact context, or the sources of information that they have relied upon were not free from certain elite biases. Keeping in view the above facts, the present paper aims at discussing the rural society and its prominent economic institutions most of which have either declined or are breathing their last breath in the present day tide of modernization.*

**Geographical Location:** The valley of Kashmir is located on the foothills of Himalayas. Surrounded by the mountains, Kashmiri people continued to rely upon traditional sources of wealth like agriculture, horticulture, livestock and handicrafts till the recent past and in fact in case of horticulture at present times also.<sup>1</sup> As late as 1890, the Valley did not have any road connectivity with Indian plains. Even after the construction of Jehlum Valley Cart Road in 1890 and the Banihal Cart Road in 1922 which mostly remained closed during inclement weather, especially in the winters, the

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<sup>1</sup> For minute details about the significance of agriculture, livestock and handicrafts towards the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century in Kashmir, see Walter Roper Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, Chinara Publishing House, Srinagar, 1992, pp. 319- 357, 358-369, 370-398 respectively.



people of Kashmir largely continued to rely upon indigenous forces of production.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the people of the Valley especially those who lived in rural areas continued to live by traditional economic institutions with their roots in agriculture till the recent past. It is therefore pertinent to discuss some of the prominent economic institutions as under:

**Economic Institutions:** As mentioned above, agriculture was the main source of rural economy and as such the peasant was a pivot round which all the economic institutions of rural Kashmir revolved. The agricultural wealth in the form of paddy, maize, pulses, peas and various kinds of fruits that were produced by the peasant was main stay of subsistence for the rural as well as urban population.<sup>3</sup> The peasant in order to plough and cultivate the fields and to raise his livestock required the services of landless village brethren like blacksmith, carpenter, wicker-worker, potter, leather-worker, barber, oil-presser, cowherd and shepherd etc.<sup>4</sup> As is true of every feudal society, there was deficiency of cash currency and as such the transaction was mainly conducted through barter system. As a result of exorbitant taxation, the peasants often found themselves hard-pressed, but by dint of their hard work they continued to manage their living, besides filling the coffers of the State and catering the needs of *nangars* or *taifdars* (landless village brethren) who facilitated their cultivation and served their various other needs. Therefore, it is worthwhile to discuss the inter-relationship between the peasant and his dependants as well as his facilitators separately.

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<sup>2</sup> For the construction of the road that connected the Valley with Punjab via Rawalpindi and the Gilgit- Srinagar road see Ibid, pp. 244 and 397. The Srinagar-Jammu road known as Banihal Cart Road was thrown open for traffic later in 1922.

<sup>3</sup> For the agricultural resources of Kashmir see Walter Roper Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, pp. 319- 357.

<sup>4</sup> An interview with Saja Begum, W/O Late Abdul Ghani Ganai, R/O Audsoo, Achabal, Anantnag, Kashmir, Age 75 years, dated 10 June, 2022.

**Peasant and Carpenter:** The relation between the peasant and the carpenter was like the relation of nail and flesh. The peasant not only sought his services for construction of his residential house, stable and chicken-coop, but the manufacture of various implements especially the plough that enabled the peasant to cultivate land. The carpenter besides manufacturing the handles of various agricultural iron tools like spade, sickle and shovel prepared various other items of daily use for the peasant household.<sup>5</sup>

As remuneration for manufacturing agricultural tools he used to receive his *talab* (payment in kind) annually. The quantum of *talab* was determined by the size of the landholding and it varied from 2 *traks* (8 *manwattas*) to one *kharwar* (16 *traks*) of grain especially paddy. However, for the construction of residential houses and stables he was paid separately, earlier in the form of kind and later i.e., around the beginning of 1950s, in cash also. At times the peasant used to pay in the form of livestock like cattle or sheep. Moreover, there was a tradition of *bakshaish* once the main construction of the house was completed. In this connection the peasant would offer either some cattle or sheep or a homemade blanket called *chader* to the carpenter as a gift and in turn the carpenter would make the staircase of peasant's new house for free.<sup>6</sup> However, the daily cash remuneration even in 1970s was round Rs. 10. Moreover, after the harvest of *Kharif* (autumn) and *Rabi* (summer) crops the peasants would often share some of their vegetables, rapeseeds and pulses with the carpenter and the tradition was known as *mangai*.<sup>7</sup>

The profession of carpentry both in rural as well as in urban areas was associated traditionally with a *kram* (surname) known as *chan*. However, in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a result of the availability of cash currency in rural society, the traditional institution of carpentry witnessed a change and people from other working classes especially the peasantry also opted for this profession for want of employment. But the fact remains that any new

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

comer could hardly compete with the skill of those who were carpenters by birth.<sup>8</sup>

**Peasant and Blacksmith:** Next to the carpenter, the peasant was dependent upon the blacksmith for the procurement of agricultural implements like plough-share, spade, sickle, shovel, axe and nails for the construction purposes. Besides, for sharpening various implements the peasant used to go to the shop of his traditional blacksmith who too received *talab* in kind for his services.<sup>9</sup> But as a price for tools, he received the payment mostly in kind separately. At times the peasant paid him in the form of various types of fowl like chicken or duck. Here again as in the case of the carpenter, the amount of *talab* was fixed in view of the size of landholding of the peasant. Big holding naturally required the involvement of more tools and as such a peasant with large holding and manpower had to pay more quantity of produce as *talab*. Therefore, the quantity generally varied between two *traks* to one *kharwar*.<sup>10</sup>

**Peasant and Potter:** The use of copper utensils owing to the mass poverty was rare and as such the people mainly relied on earthenware. Therefore, the potter enjoyed a due space in the feudal economy of the times under discussion. Both male and female members from the potter families carrying loads of various types of pottery would move in the villages and sell their items to the villagers mostly against the payment in kind. In order to test the quality and the error free condition of a particular item the village women would mildly strike it by hand in order to assess it by sound. In case of invisible cracks or poorly backed condition the sound used to be called *beger* (unclear) and in case it was free from cracks and

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<sup>8</sup> An interview with Ghulam Rasool Rather, S/O Late Qadir Rather, R/O Audsoo, Achabal, Anantnag, Kashmir, Age 78 years, dated 08June, 2022.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

properly baked, the sound used to be clear.<sup>11</sup> The potters and their customers had traditional bonds as they either used to be from the same village or the same area. The potter by virtue of his craft did not receive any *talab* because after the transaction between the potter and his customer there was no need of being in permanent touch. However, in case of formal request of the potter the well off peasants known as *safedposh* or *badgres* would occasionally offer him various provisions like pulses or vegetables.<sup>12</sup> Potters locally known as *kraals* were/are a humble community who earned their livelihood by dint of hard labour while remaining busy with their craft. They write their surname as *kumar*. Their life style is simple and in case of dress and food habits etc., there is no difference between them and other villagers who are mostly peasants. Due to the opportunities of modernization the pottery industry has received a setback and such families have mostly switched to other occupations and professions.<sup>13</sup> People both in urban and rural Kashmir especially from the second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century started to replace the use of earthenware. They began to use modern machine utensils made of copper, steel, brass and glass etc. Speaking practically by now the once popular pottery industry has mostly declined.<sup>14</sup>

**Peasant and Tailor:** Dress like food is an important feature of life and in order to obtain it, the procurement of raw material and the weaving and sewing facility was essential. In case of 19<sup>th</sup> century Kashmir cotton and wool was produced locally and as observed by Walter Lawrence the art of

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<sup>11</sup> For details about the pottery industry in rural Kashmir see Walter Lawrence, *Op.cit*, p. 373. And for the test of pottery items by women the author was informed by Saja Begum, *Op.cit*, while an interaction with her.

<sup>12</sup> An interview with Gul Muhammad Kumar, R/O Tailwani, Achabal, Anantnag, Kashmir, originally from a potter household but by now has switched over to daily labour as an expert in pruning the heavy trees in the village, Age 65 years, dated 15 May, 2022.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*.

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weaving was very common in Kashmir. Earlier, the tailor in rural Kashmir would sew by using the needle alone, but by the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century sewing machines were used by the tailors.<sup>15</sup> The rural folk would take pride by arguing the use of German made sewing machines by prominent tailors of their respective village or area. Like other *taifdars* (landless brethren) the tailor was also paid in the form of annual *talab* (remuneration). And it varied from family to family in view of their economic standard and the number of family members. The tailor was supposed to repair old clothes for which he received *talab*. But, in case of sewing new clothes, he was paid separately. Besides, he was paid *mangai* like blacksmith, carpenter and barber.<sup>16</sup>

On the occasion of marriage, tailor locally known as *sech* was invited in advance in order to sew various dresses called *vardan* for the bride. For sewing such dresses it would take him fortnight or a month keeping in view the number of dresses and the people that he would engage in the job.<sup>17</sup> Before he would initiate the process, *vanvon* (songs in chorus by women) was arranged and something in the form of kind and even cash was paid to him for making what was called *daslab* (beginning). At the end of his job, he was paid separately for this purpose.<sup>18</sup> In a marriage party accompanying the groom, the tailor, carrying along a box containing dresses for the bride used to be an important guest. After performing the rituals of marriage, the tailor was supposed to display the *vardan* before the mother and other female relatives of the bride for their attestation and verification.<sup>19</sup> In case of poor quality or some sewing error,

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<sup>15</sup> An interview with Muhammad Akram Ganai, R/O Audsoo, Achabal, Anantnag, Kashmir, whose uncle namely Abdul Rehman Ganai happened to be the prominent tailor during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and who used to go for tailoring purposes even outside his village in Kokernag area of Anantnag, Kashmir, Age 78 years, dated 07 June, 2022.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

both the father of the groom as well as the tailor had to listen awkward language and at times the ladies criticized and castigated them through *vanvon*.

However, the wit and smartness of the concerned tailor could save the day. Otherwise on such occasions the things would take ugly turn and the whole marriage party including the groom had to face a tough trial.<sup>20</sup> Given this state of affairs, the tailor enjoyed a special status and had ample opportunity of bargaining with the father of the groom and as such his returns after sewing *vardan* and his treatment during that course of time definitely mattered.<sup>21</sup>

The traditional institution of tailoring as a result of modernization, new designs and fashions, and the availability of cash currency and readymade garments has by now come to an end although the process of decline had set in around 1980s. And it was probably from this time that some families owing to the availability of cash either by virtue of some business or public service etc., started to sew their clothes against cash payment. It resulted in the opening of tailoring shops in remote towns and big villages also. This way the traditional relation between the rural masses and the local *darzis* (tailors) came to end.<sup>22</sup>

**Peasant and Barber:** The peasant had no other way but to seek the services of *navid* (barber). In addition to maintaining himself by shaving, he had to shear the wool of his sheep by seeking the services of the barber. Besides, in view of the absence of modern means of medical facilities some of the barbers would perform the duties of *hakim* (traditional physician) also. That is why some modern educated families of this community maintain their prestige by concealing their

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<sup>20</sup> Information collected from the octogenarian women of village Audsoo, Anantnag, Kashmir, on 5 June, 2022.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> An interview with Mohammad Yusuf Ganai, R/O Audsoo, Achabal, Anantnag, Kashmir, a social and political activist, Age 58 years, dated 10 June, 2022.

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exact origin and preferring their surname as *Hakim* instead of *Hajam* (barber).<sup>23</sup>

On the occasion of marriage in a rural household, the barber had to discharge the duty of applying *mehndi* (dye) on the hands of the groom. On the night of *mehndirat* (celebration during the night when *mehndi* was applied on the hands of groom) *navid* (barber) used to be a special guest. Before the ritual would start, the barber would continue to rub *mehndi* after mixing it with water for a reasonable time during which relatives of the groom were supposed to offer him something in the form of kind or in the form of cash as well.<sup>24</sup> In case he would feel that he did not receive a reasonable amount of presents, he would not apply *mehndi* at all even after the repeated requests by the people around. During the application of *mehndi* the women would go for *vanvon* especially in the praise of the groom and his parents. After prolonged celebrations all throughout the night, the ritual was generally performed towards the dawn.<sup>25</sup> On the day of marriage before proceeding with *baraat* (marriage party) the barber would bathe the groom. Earlier in absence of modern washrooms the ritual was performed in *gupangan* (the lower portion of the house where the peasants were placing their cattle and sheep) and later especially since 1980s in modern type washrooms locally called *maet* located in the residential house under the staircase leading to the next storey. On this occasion the barber in addition to some gifts in the form of kind or cash would at times also take some of the good conditioned old clothes of the groom.<sup>26</sup>

In addition to it the barber used to perform circumcision of rural children even upto the 1970s. Later on the local compounders were preferred for this ritual. The rural Muslim population inspite of their humble economic status would perform the circumcision ceremony of their boys with religious zeal and enthusiasm and the concerned boy was called *Sunat-Maharaz* (means the groom of sunah- the

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

tradition of holy prophet). On this occasion after enjoying the Kashmiri *wazwan* (method of cooking sumptuous dishes in the Valley) and before conducting the ritual of circumcision, the barber was offered presents in kind and cash. On this occasion the women folk would perform *vanvon* praising the barber, *Sunat-Maharaz* and his parents also.<sup>27</sup>

The barber in addition to *mangai* generally received two *traks* of paddy per head annually as *talab*. However, for circumcision and marriage ceremony he was paid separately. And on the occasion of marriage the tailor and the barber used to be special guests. Both of them would accompany the bridegroom on his *baraat* (marriage party) hosted by the in-laws. Like other traditional economic moorings, the job of traditional barber has undergone changes to a great extent. Now a sizable population in rural Kashmir do their shave and hairdressing against cash payment. Naturally in remote towns and villages barber shops have come up.<sup>28</sup> It is also pertinent to note that the local barbers have mostly given up their ancestral occupation by switching-over to other jobs. In present day Kashmir, this art has largely passed into the hands of the people hailing from Bihar and U.P. This way this traditional mooring like others has almost come to an end.<sup>29</sup>

**Peasant and Wicker-worker:** For manufacturing of bins, baskets and *kangris* (firepots) the peasants depended upon the wicker-workers. Some towns of the Valley like Achabal, Anantnag, Seer-Hamadan, Hazratbal, Srinagar and Chrar-i-Sharif, Budgam etc., have their localities where the people associated with this craft are settled permanently. But, in the countryside various other economically marginalized sections especially the *watals* (low caste Muslims) had adopted this

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> It is pertinent to mention that Muhammad Yusuf Ganai in his interaction with the author revealed that in his area i.e. Achabal, Anantnag, the localities where the people even in 1980s were seeking the services of traditional barber and the barber would go from home to home or sit on some green patch outside the village for shaving his customers.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.



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job and had become the masters of this occupation. It is mostly they who served the peasant in lieu of remuneration. The remuneration varied from *manwatta* (about 2 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> lbs) to *trak* (4 *manwattas*). For small items it was paid in *manwattas* and for large items like bins it used to be in *traks*. Besides, these wicker-workers who occasionally served as cowherds would receive *mangai* from all types of produce from the peasant.<sup>30</sup>

**Peasant and Leather-worker:** Another category of *watal* community associated with the leather art known as *moochis* would prepare shoes and sandals for the rural people most of whom belonged to the peasant class. The *moachi* would collect hides locally for preparing foot-wear and his customers also used to be the local people. Sometimes he obtained hides from the cattle that used to die due to various diseases.<sup>31</sup> Generally, the *moochis* were settled in big villages where they did not face the shortage of customers. It is pertinent to mention that among the peasantry it was only *safedposh* (peasantry with large holdings) that used the leather foot-wear. The common peasantry mainly relied on straw made footwear called *pulhor* or *chaker*.<sup>32</sup> It was from the beginning of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when machine made goods entered the urban centers of Kashmir in

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<sup>30</sup> For details about the wickerwork in the rural Kashmir towards the close of 19<sup>th</sup> century see Walter Roper Lawrence, Op.cit, p. 372. And for the remuneration paid and their additional occupation as *Gupangur* (cowheard) the information was collected from the octogenarian peasants of village Audsoo and Tailwani, Achabal, Anantnag on 3 June, 2022.

<sup>31</sup> For details about leatherwork in Kashmir see Walter Roper Lawrence, Op.cit, p. 379. Also about the presence of leatherwork in rural Kashmir the author learned at village Nowgam and Shangus where the octogenarian peasants revealed that in both the villages which are large in size there were few households of *moochis* who prepared footwear for the locals. And from Shangus Abdul Razak Moochi had been very prominent.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

bulk that common people in rural areas began to use rubber and plastic footwear whereas the rural elite preferred the imported machine made leather footwear, culminating in the decline of traditional leather-work in rural Kashmir. *Moachi* it is pertinent to mention was preparing shoes and sandals on the order of the customer after taking his measurement. By now this rural industry has vanished completely.<sup>33</sup>

**Peasant and Shepherd:** For rearing his sheep, the peasant had no other alternative but to rely upon the services of shepherd locally known as *pohul*. Before discussing the relation between the farmer and the shepherd it is pertinent to mention that in view of mass poverty, all the households in a village were not in a position to rear cattle and sheep as it required fodder especially for harsh winters. Therefore, the size of the cattle and sheep reared by a particular household depended upon the size of its landholding. Peasants with large landholdings and a good manpower and the availability of sufficient fodder could rear a good number of livestock. In case of households with small holdings the number used to be very small and those households which were extremely poor as a result of meager landholdings could not afford to rear livestock at all.<sup>34</sup> However, in a fragile economy open to climatic risks livestock formed a source of wealth or subsistence as it enabled the peasant to receive some cash that as mentioned earlier was deficient in the feudal societies. Therefore, a household with good size of livestock in the form of sheep, cattle and horse was considered affluent and thus belonging to rural elite.<sup>35</sup>

The *Pohul* (shepherd) take village sheep to the pastures around the village in spring and autumn whereas in hot summers he shifted them to mountain valleys where he possessed his ancestral pastures. There the cool climate as well as lush green pastures were most suited for the sheep. Like other *nangars* (landless village brethren) shepherd was

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> An interview with Muhammad Akram Ganai, R/O Audsoo, Achabal, Anantnag, Op.cit, dated 07 June, 2022.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

also paid in kind in the form of *talab* and per sheep he would receive one *manwatta*, but with the passage of time there was some increase.<sup>36</sup> Besides, he would receive *mangai* from all the substantial commodities produced by the peasant household like rapeseed, pulses, peas and vegetables. He was just like a family member of the peasant and in harsh winters when he had no job to do, he served as the storyteller during the long winter nights. The peasant children, therefore, used to be emotionally attached to him and always remembered him as *pohul*.<sup>37</sup>

However, the *pohul* is more known for his deceitful approach towards his client as he often used to grab his sheep by excusing that it was killed by some wild animal while in mountain pastures. And at times he really suffered such losses due to wild animals or vagaries of weather. However, he was supposed to preserve the hide of the dead sheep or cattle for the recognition and confirmation of the concerned peasant.<sup>38</sup> On return from the mountain pastures to nearby forests the peasants in autumn would approach him to collect their sheep and the practice was known as *vasai*. It was at this occasion that the shepherd would demonstrate the hides of the dead sheep to the peasant to get it attested. At this time in case of disagreement a verbal duel would take place between the two and ultimately the matter was resolved by making the *pohul* or peasant to swear either by the holy scripture, as both of them used to be Muslims, or to swear at some prominent shrine.<sup>39</sup> It was only after the resolution of the dispute that *pohul* could collect his *talab* from the

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> For the manoeuvring of shepherd with peasant see Walter Roper Lawrence, Op.cit, pp. 361-362. Also see the *Pahelnameh* (Shepherds Account) by Ghulam Muhammad Dar Pardesi vide Amin Kamil, *Kashreh Asan Trayeh*, Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Language, Srinagar, 1966, pp. 147-149.

<sup>39</sup> The author learned about the same from Muhammad Yusuf Ganai whose household in the village had also been rearing sheep in a good number till the beginning of 1990s and he himself has been witness to such developments.

peasant. However, all said and done in spite of acrimony at times the relation between the peasant and shepherd used to be affectionate based on the values of live and let live.

**Peasant and Cowherd:** Village cowherd locally called *Gupangur*, an integral part of village society, served the peasantry by grazing its cattle in the pastures around the villages. He was paid one *trak* per cow or bull. But for grazing milch cows and calves that were not sent to mountain pastures, the cowherd used to collect *bata* (cooked rice) and the dishes for his lunch.<sup>40</sup> Before bringing the cattle back at evening he would also collect some amount of rice for his dinner. The cowherds collected the cattle in early morning from the spot called *Gurewan* and returned it back at the same spot by evening. The marginalized sections of the society especially the *watals* (low caste Muslims) opted for this occupation. Both *pohul* and *cowherd* were selected by the village *biradari* at the onset of spring every year.<sup>41</sup>

**Conclusion:** The valley of Kashmir located at the foothills of the Himalayas and surrounded by the lofty mountains for want of road connectivity remained cut-off from the neighboring world for a pretty long time. The Jehlum Valley Cart Road constructed as late as 1890 that connected Kashmir with Punjab via Kohala was closed down as a result of partition in 1947. Now onwards the Valley remained connected with the Indian plains by virtue of Banihal Cart Road alone that had been thrown open to traffic in 1922. However, this road passes through a hazardous terrain and till present day it remains frequently blocked especially during the winter and spring season. Therefore, the poor connectivity of the Valley was responsible for its slow process of modernization. This is the reason that in comparison to British India, Princely Kashmir continued with its feudal economy for a pretty long time. The handicap of poor connectivity also acted as a stumbling block towards modernization of Kashmir even in the post-independence

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

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period. But there is no denying the fact that the process of modernization started from 1885 with the establishment of permanent Residency in Kashmir. With the passage of time various measures were taken by the Dogra Maharajas especially Maharaja Pratap Singh and Maharaja Hari Singh in the form of the construction of roads, land reforms, establishment of the educational institutions, and arrangement of hospitals etc. that went a long way in Kashmir's transition to modernism. But it is pertinent to mention that in case of rural Kashmir the nature and character of economy continued to be feudal for a long time even in the post-independence period. However, from the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the process of modernization accelerated. Consequently, in 1980s the change in various fields of life was obvious. As a result of progressive measures of the nationalist government especially the land reforms leading to green revolution there was the influx of cash currency, though in a moderate manner in rural Kashmir. With the passage of time the mass poverty in rural Kashmir ended and people in addition to agriculture had various other opportunities of income. It ultimately paved a way for the decline of traditional relationship between the peasantry and its facilitators like carpenters, blacksmiths, wicker-workers, leatherworkers besides vanishing the age old ties between the peasantry and shepherd, cowherd, barber and tailor.

## Heritage of Pargan-i-Phakh

Faheem Farooq

**Abstract:** *The valley of Kashmir by virtue of various heritage sites and above all its scenic beauty has rightly been called as the Switzerland of Asia. That is why the Mughal emperor Jahangir has symbolized it with paradise on earth. From ancient to modern period the Valley for administrative convenience had been demarcated into various zones known from medieval times as Parganas (districts). It was done keeping in view the connectivity and geography of various areas. Among such parganas, Pargana-i-Phakh has a great historical significance. Being in close proximity of Srinagar- the capital city of the Valley- Pargana-i-Phakh or the valley of Phakh owing to its tremendous scenic beauty has always been the abode of rulers, priests, missionaries and the common people. It is no wonder, therefore, that the monuments of all the periods of Kashmir history are located in this area. The historical sites like the Neolithic settlement of Burzahom, relic of Kushan period in the form of tiles at Harwan and the Mughal gardens of Shalimar and Nishat have added to the charm and grandeur of Phakh valley. The religious places like Hazratbal shrine, Shankaracharya temple, Gupt Ganga Shiv temple, Gopi Nath temple and various other shrines endows the area with a spiritual touch and makes it a hub of cultural synthesis. As far as the nomenclature of the said pargana is concerned the term Phakh in Kashmiri language connotes hunger. It is pertinent to mention that most of its agricultural fields had very little irrigation facility till the construction of Biglikol (canal that drains along the foothills of Khimber mountain towards the east and is mainly meant for hydro-plant at Ganderbal) during the times of Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad the then Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir (1953-63). Therefore, the area largely relied on rain-fed crops with little production and was also deficit in revenue. Later the people in the area switched over to the cultivation of various types of plantation nurseries. Therefore, the Sher-i-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology was established there close to Shalimar locality. Keeping in view the emphasis of the education policy of 2020 on heritage, the present paper*

*endeavors to focus on the prominent heritage sites of Pargana-i-Phakh.*

### (A) Heritage of Ancient Times

**Burzahom:** Burzahom is situated in the east of Srinagar on the Yanderhom Karewa about 1.5 kilometers from the famous Dal Lake. The site is capped with eleven megaliths. The archaeological potential of the place was first noticed by Helmut De Terra in 1935. He conducted a small-scale excavation at the site and came to the conclusion that the cultural remains of this site pertained to three different archaeological periods including Neolithic and Chalcolithic. The final and the third phase of activity was ‘the uppermost layer’ which ‘contains potsherds belonging to the same Buddhist period as the site of Harwan, which represents the 4th century AD’.<sup>1</sup>

The first systematic large-scale excavation at this site was conducted by T.N. Khazanchi of the Archaeological Survey of India, between 1960 and 1971, with some interruptions. He differentiated the cultural deposits of the site into four periods<sup>2</sup> as listed below:

- i) Neolithic period I
- ii) Neolithic period II
- iii) Megalithic period
- iv) Early historic period

The structural remains of Period I consisted of dwelling pits which were circular and square in plan. The circular pits were wide at the bottom tapering towards a narrower top. The largest among them was 2.78 m in diameter at the top and 4.57 m at the bottom and 3.69 m deep.<sup>3</sup> The presence of birch, burnt clay, and charred hay inside some of these pits clearly indicates that the roofs were thatched with birch and

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<sup>1</sup> H.D. Terra & T.T. Patterson, *The Ice Age in Indian Subcontinent and Associated Human Cultures*. 1939 (rep. 2003), p. 234.

<sup>2</sup> Khazanchi summarily reports the excavation in *Indian Archaeology-A Review* 1960-61:11, 1961-62:17-21 etc.

<sup>3</sup> *Indian Archaeology 1961-62: A Review*. New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India. p. 17.

supported by wooden posts. Another significant structural activity at the site includes the scooping of square pits. Rectangular pits were also found during the excavations at the site. 'It is interesting to note that the square/rectangular pit chambers were found in the centre of the settlement, while the round/oval ones were at the periphery.'<sup>4</sup> Some storage pits were also noticed close to dwelling pits with a 60-91 cm diameter containing animal bones, and stone and bone tools.

The antiquities of period I include pottery, stone and bone tools etc. Oblong and oval stone axes (some pecked and ground), chisels, axes, and other stone tools form the part of the stone industry. Bone tools are represented by points, harpoons, needles etc. Tools made from antlers were also found.<sup>5</sup>

In period II, people moved out of pits and constructed mud and mud brick houses above the ground. The pits were refilled, leveled and plastered with mud and covered with a thin layer of red ochre. Human burials formed an essential feature of this period. No grave goods were found in burials except some occasional beads around the neck of some of the bodies. A skull of a human body had holes which gives an indication of trepanning. Handmade pottery continued to be used with an addition of black burnished ware represented by dish with hollow stand, globular pots, jars and funnel-shaped vase.<sup>6</sup> Black burnished ware was represented by a high necked jar with a flaring rim, globular body, with oblique notches incised on lower part of the neck.<sup>7</sup>

A wheel made vase of orange slipped ware, painted in black with a horned figure paneled between the neck and shoulder bands is significant. A comparison of this has been sought with some wares of pre-Harappan phase at KotDiji, hinting an import from a nearest site of Sarai Khola. A wheel-made red-ware pot containing 950 beads made of

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<sup>4</sup> Upinder Singh, *A History of Ancient and Early Medieval India*. Delhi: Pearson. 2008. p. 111.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 111.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 113.

<sup>7</sup> Abdul Rashid Lone, 'An Appraisal of the Prehistoric Archaeology of Kashmir', *The Journal of Kashmir Studies*. 2020. V. VII, p. 60.



agate and carnelian was also recovered from the same level suggesting an indisputable contact with outside cultures.<sup>8</sup>

Another important discovery was a stone slab bearing a hunting scene, incised on the upper half of the stone. The scene depicts two human figures hunting a stag, one of them, probably a male attacking the animal from the front with a bow and an arrow. Other person, a female, is attacking the animal from behind with a long spear which has almost pierced through the body of the animal. The stag occupies the central position in the scene—shown with a spotted or stripped body and many branched antlers. In the upper part, a dog and two symbols are depicted. The dog has distinctly long, straight ears, long legs and a curved tail. The symbols comprise two concentric circles, with 16 radiating lines all around.<sup>9</sup>

This scene is a graphic representation of Neolithic life and the first indubitable example of Neolithic art in India recovered from stratified levels at Burzahom. The hunting scene is very important as it perhaps depicts one of the principal occupations of the Burzahom settlers.<sup>10</sup>

**Harwan:** Harwan is a modern village situated about one and a half mile to the north-west of the gardens of Shalimar near Srinagar. The archaeological ruins at Harwan were first accidentally discovered in 1895, in the course of construction of the conduit which carries drinking water to Srinagar.<sup>11</sup> This chance discovery did not attract much attention till Hiranand Shastri identified the location of the Buddhist site in what was then a forested area. Shastri explored the site in

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<sup>8</sup> B.K. Thapar, 'Fresh Light on the Neolithic Cultures of India', in B.M. Pande & B.D. Chattopadhyaya eds. *Archaeology and History: Essays in memory of Shri A Ghosh*. Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan. 1987. pp. 247–54.

<sup>9</sup> B.M. Pande, 'Neolithic Hunting Scene on a Stone Slab from Burzahom, Kashmir', *Asian Perspectives*. 1971. V. 14, pp. 134–38.

<sup>10</sup> Abdul Rashid Lone, 'An Appraisal of the Prehistoric Archaeology of Kashmir', *The Journal of Kashmir Studies*. 2020. V. VII, p. 61.

<sup>11</sup> R.C. Kak. *Ancients Monuments of Kashmir*, Gulshan Books, Srinagar. 1933 (reprint 2002). p.105.

1919 and found some brick tiles stamped with images.<sup>12</sup> However, the first systematic excavations at the site were conducted by R.C. Kak in 1920-21 and in subsequent years. Systematic excavations were again carried on at the site by L. K. Srinivasan of the Frontier Circle of the Survey, assisted by Shali in 1973.<sup>13</sup>

The excavations at the site exposed the ruins of a Buddhist structural complex which flourished around fourth to seventh century CE. The earliest and the first of the series of constructional activity at the site was purely of pebble style. The structures of the pebble style were discovered on a lower level than the structures of the other two types of masonry viz. diaper pebble and diaper rubble. On a higher level of the middle terrace of the settlement, an isolated patch of a monastery in pure pebble style was exposed which appears to have had an opening on the northern side. Additionally, at a lower level on this very terrace, Kak further illustrated a rectangular structure to the north-west of the monastery laid in north-south orientation in pure pebble style. It has a flight of steps facing north-west.<sup>14</sup>

On the highest terrace at the site are the ruins of foundations of an apsidal temple, built in diaper pebble masonry, which is surrounded by a courtyard paved with terracotta tiles bearing motifs of humans, animals, birds, flora and abstract designs. The exposed stupa basement which is situated on the lowest terrace appears to be among the later constructions since it is built of untrimmed stones with the empty spaces filled by smaller stones, which is known as diaper rubble style of construction. The stupa also had an enclosure wall built in diaper rubble style. The stupa is built in the middle of a rectangular courtyard facing north. Such rough and crude method of construction without any binding material is definitely of a later date. The discovery of a coin of Toramana underneath the stairs of the stupa fixes

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<sup>12</sup> R. C. Agrawal. *Kashmir and its Monumental Glory*. Aryan Books. New Delhi. 1998. pp.89-90.

<sup>13</sup> Abdul Rashid Lone. *The Art and Archaeology of Early Historic Harwan*, in Indian Journal of Archaeology, 2017, V. 2, No. 4, p. 514.

<sup>14</sup> R.C. Kak. *Ancients Monuments of Kashmir*, pl.LXXVII.

its date, and consequently also the style in which it was built, to the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> century C.E.<sup>15</sup>

Apart from structural remains, Harwan is also known for the recovery of terracotta tiles, depicting flora and fauna of the contemporary times, laid in concentric circles around the pavement of apsidal stupa, located on the topmost terrace of the site. It is pertinent to mention that the paving of courtyards of the Buddhist religious edifices with terracotta tiles, was a unique feature of Kushana period settlements in Kashmir.<sup>16</sup> Thus excavations yielded important evidence of constructional techniques, artistic remains and other cultural material which are of Buddhist attribution.

**Dal Lake:** Dal Lake is most celebrated water body of Kashmir situated to the north-east of Srinagar city. It is multi-basin drainage lake whose origin is traced to an ancient Karewa/Nagum lake.<sup>17</sup> Dal Lake since its origin has attracted people towards it and it is reflected from the fact that the earliest Neolithic settlement of Burzoham is situated on northern shore of the lake. According to D. P. Zutshi and A.R. Yusuf people of Burzohama utilized lake for their day to day needs.<sup>18</sup> Such was the scenic beauty of the lake that fourth Buddhist council also was convened on its north-eastern bank during the time of Kanishka.<sup>19</sup> Till the close of 14<sup>th</sup> century Dal lake was mostly visited by pilgrims as its banks were occupied by great religious centers. For the easy movement of the public Sultan Sikander (1389-1413) constructed an embankment for pedestrian traffic between settlements in the western part of the city (Naidyar) with the

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<sup>15</sup> R.C. Kak. *Ancient and Medieval Architecture of Kashmir*. in RUPAM, 1925, Vol. 24, P.87.

<sup>16</sup> Abdul Rashid Lone. *Kushana Presence in Kashmir: Characterising the Material Culture*. Proceedings – South Asian History Conference, Patiala, Punjab: Department of History, Punjabi University, 2017, p. 74.

<sup>17</sup> D.P. Zutshi and A.R. Yusuf, *Lakes and Wetlands of Kashmir Himalaya: Ecology, Conservation and Management*, Heritage Publishers, New Delhi, 2014, p. 36.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. p. 37.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

villages located along the eastern shore of the lake (Nishat).<sup>20</sup> The embankment made people easy to travel from one shore to another. Irrespective of having this road people mostly used to cross the lake in the boats and for the safe passage of the boats and boatmen Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin (1420-1470) constructed an island called Sona Lank.<sup>21</sup> Another one was constructed by his grandson Hassan Shah (1472-1484) in Bod Dal called Rup Lank.<sup>22</sup> Both these islands were used for recreation and the buildings constructed by rulers there were used by kings and their courtiers for pleasure. With the passage of time these buildings were demolished by earthquakes, invaders and also through vagaries of weather. Fortunately, both the islands continue to exist even today and have been developed for tourist recreation. Dal Lake became an attractive site for Mughal rulers who laid more than seven hundred gardens around it.<sup>23</sup>

It became a modern tourist site only after the British intervention. It was in 1918 that a British Resident, Martin Lennard built a double storey houseboat named 'Victory'.<sup>24</sup> Foreign travellers who started visiting Kashmir in large numbers preferred their accommodation in these houseboats. Subsequently it attracted the attention of Maharaja Hari Singh who not only constructed the Boulevard road but also constructed his summer palace Kotar-Khana at Gagribal basin.<sup>25</sup> Boulevard after 1950 emerged as a site where State allowed the construction of hotels and restaurants. A new island was laid near Gagribal basin which was named Nehru Park.<sup>26</sup> In recent years restaurants have been further expanded with additional facilities. People living in Dal Lake called *Hanjis* are the beneficiaries of this tourist site who facilitate the rides of

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<sup>20</sup> Pir Hassan, *Tarikh-i-Hassan*, Vol. I, Eng. Tr. By A.R. Khan, City Book Centre, Srinagar, 2013, p. 100.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Pol. File. No. 33/19, State Archives, Jammu, Jammu and Kashmir Government.

<sup>25</sup> Annual Administrative Report, State Archives Srinagar, 1944, p. 47.

<sup>26</sup> Dal Development Report, Prepared by Jammu and Kashmir Government, Srinagar, 2007, p. 9.

visitors through their special boats called *Shikaras*. After the establishment of Lakes and Waterways Development Authority State government also introduced modern boats to facilitate the tourists.<sup>27</sup>

### (b) Heritage of Medieval Times

**Nishat Bagh:** Nishat Bagh (garden) was laid by Asif Khan, the brother of Empress Noor Jahan on the banks of the famous Dal Lake with buildings, fountains and waterfalls in 1634 AD.<sup>28</sup> During the Afghan period (1752-1819) the garden was slightly repaired by Azim Khan, but in 1876 AD Ranbir Singh ordered new buildings to be constructed and repairs to be made.<sup>29</sup> Stuart describes Bag-i-Nishat (the garden of pleasure) as “the greatest of all Mughal gardens. Its twelve terraces, one for each sign of the zodiac, rise dramatically higher and higher up the mountain side from the eastern shore of the Dal Lake.”<sup>30</sup> In 1634 AD, when Shah Jahan visited the garden, he liked it very much as compared to Shalimar and had an idea to call it by his name while saying repeatedly that it is very pleasant.<sup>31</sup> It stretches out over a rectangular area of approximately 116.70 acres and measures about 556.50 x 350.00 m.<sup>32</sup>

**Shalimar Bagh:** Shalimar Bagh (garden) known also as *Farah Baksh* (Abode of pleasure) and *Bagh-i-Faiz Baksh* (Abode of benediction) was laid out by Emperor Jahangir in 1619 AD.<sup>33</sup> Stuart while mapping this garden divides it into three compartments i.e., *Diwan-i-Am*, *Diwan-i-Khas* and

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ghulam Hassan Shah Khuihami, *Tarikh-i-Hassan*, Vol. II (Urdu translation by Hussain Qasimi), Ali Muhammad and Sons, pp. 210-211.

<sup>29</sup> S. Maqbul and Raja Banu, *Political geography of Kashmir*, Araina Publishing House, New delhi, 1984, p. 168.

<sup>30</sup> C. M. V. Stuart, *Gardens of the Great Mughals*, London, 1913, p. 161

<sup>31</sup> Ghulam Hassan Shah Khuihami, *Op.cit*, pp. 201-211.

<sup>32</sup> Jan mellissa Hollingsworthkoen Aertgeerts Haenraets, *Mughal Gardens of Kashmir*, Towards the UNESCO World Heritage Nomination for INTACH (Jammu and Kashmir Chapter), Deptt. Of History, University of Kashmir and Deptt. Of Floriculture, Government of Jammu and Kashmir, Gulshan Books, 2013, p. 13.

<sup>33</sup> C. M. V. Stuart, *Op.cit*, pp. 162-163.

*Diwan-i-Haram*.<sup>34</sup> Azim Khan repaired its inside and outside roof and walls and Raja Ranbir Singh (1857-1885) expanded a substantial amount of it and wished to keep it neat and clean. Jahangir and Noor Jahan choose this site because of its natural beauty and the availability of water for irrigation and decoration.<sup>35</sup> The archaeological explorations have discovered a *hamam* (traditional heating system) that was hidden under the heap of soil and waste deposited on the spot over a long time.<sup>36</sup> Presently the department of floriculture has the responsibility of its maintenance and recently i.e. during 2021-22 some repairs have taken place. The water supply to the garden is procured from a branch of Ara rivulet that flows down from the mountains behind the garden. It enters at its upper end and flows from each successive terrace in beautiful cascades, and ultimately passes into the reservoirs below.<sup>37</sup> Shalimar owes much of its charm to its locality. In the background of the garden lies Mahadev mountain with snow clapped peak and pine-clad slopes. The stone used in its structure is limestone which is suceptible of high polish and might be termed grey marble. Once the garden was full of grapes, apples, almonds and peaches. The present size of the garden is 594 x 250 m.<sup>38</sup>

**Chashmai Shahi (Royal Spring):** It is a spring famous all over India for its pure, transparent and cold water nearly a mile from the south-eastern margin of Dal Lake. This garden was founded by Ali Mardan Khan, a Mughal governor during the times of Shah Jahan in 1632 AD.<sup>39</sup> It is small as compared to Nishat and Shalimar with only three terraces, but not least attractive as compared to other Mughal gardens of

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid. pp. 163-167

<sup>35</sup> Bridge Keena, *Travels in Kashmir*, oxford University Press, 1989, pp. 40-42.

<sup>36</sup> Jan Haenraets, *et al*; *Op.cit*, p. 35

<sup>37</sup> Charles Elison Bates, *a Gazetter of Kashmir and its Adjacent Areas*, Gulshan Books, 2005, pp. 374-375.

<sup>38</sup> Jan Haenraets, *et al*; *Op.cit*, p. 10.

<sup>39</sup> Sanjay Prakash Sharma, *Kashmir Through Ages*, RBSA Publishers, Jaipur India, 2004, pp.203-205; Samsar Chand Koul, *Srinagar and its Environs*, Utpal Publications Motiyar Rainawari, Srinagar, Kashmir, 1981, pp. 449-450.

Kashmir.<sup>40</sup> The garden was planned around the natural spring the water of which is still drunk reverently by the visitors who consider it holy.<sup>41</sup> The approach is through a terraced orchard of cherries, peaches and apricots and is most beautiful especially when the trees are in blossom.<sup>42</sup> It is often full of visitors. Just outside the garden a few beautiful huts have been built on a delightful spot for the convenience of visitors. The total area within the rectangular perimeter is approximately 1.73 acres with a width of 70.83 m and length of 122.81 m approximately.<sup>43</sup>

**Pari Mahal:** Bagi-i-Pari Mahal is famous as *kutiloon* (any monument situated on high altitude). It was Prince Dara Shikoh who laid this garden at the desire of his spiritual mentor Mulla Shah, near Theed village, on the bank of a mountain. The steps of the garden present a wonderful sight.<sup>44</sup> It has seven terraces and three beautiful gardens. Pari Mahal (the place of fairies) a massive building now in ruins stands on the side of the mountain on the southern side of the Dal Lake. The retaining wall is ornamented with series of arches and it has a doomed ceiling.<sup>45</sup> It is believed that Dara Shikoh designed it for his tutor Mullah Shah and named it after his wife Pari Begum.<sup>46</sup> It stands about 400 feet above the level of the Lake and it is approached by a zig zag road. The view from the Mahal is particularly fine and soothing. The garden is 122 x 62.5 meters in length and width.<sup>47</sup>

**Chaudri Bagh:** Chaudri Mahesh a grandee of the times of Shah Jahan built it in village Ishbar. He was the advisor of the Mughal governor Saif Khan who ruled the Valley between (1664-67) and (1668-71). Chaudri Mahesh laid out a vast garden with numerous terraces, fountains and cascades

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<sup>40</sup> Badruddin Muqem, *Holy Sites of Jammu and Kashmir in the Surrounding of Mighty Himalayas*, Gulshan Books, 2011, p. 80

<sup>41</sup> Bridge Keena, *Op.cit*, p. 49.

<sup>42</sup> Ernest F. Neve, *Things Seen in Kashmir*, pp. 71-72.

<sup>43</sup> Jan Haenraets, *et al*; *Op.cit*, p. 169.

<sup>44</sup> Ghulam Hassan Shah Khuihami, *Op.cit*, pp. 211-212.

<sup>45</sup> Sanjay Prakash Sharma, *Op.cit*, p. 23.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*. p. 29-30.

<sup>47</sup> Jan Haenraets, *et al*; *Op.cit*, p. 12.

on the slopes of the hill of Ishber.<sup>48</sup> Presently this garden does not exist and on this spot a colony called Dewan colony has come up. However, the senior citizens of the Ishber locality till now call it as Chaudri Bagh.<sup>49</sup>

**Bagh-i-Mulla Shah:** Bagh-i-Mulla Shah was laid by Dara Shikoh near Dara village at the desire of his mentor Mulla Shah.<sup>50</sup> At the request of his teacher Dara Shikoh had constructed it on the summit of the mountain. The royal canal passes through it. Presently there are some lofty chinar trees and Mullah Shah's mosque in a dilapidated condition. The senior citizens of village Dara say that during the construction of Mughal gardens, Jahangir would often stay at village Dara. There is a lofty chinar in the village which till now is known as Mughal-boyn (the chinar of Mughals). Besides, there is also a large dam which is known as Mughal dam. Hassan Shah Khoihami the 19th century historian has almost corroborated the observations of the senior citizens of village Dara.<sup>51</sup>

**Bagh-i-Aliabad:** During the times of Shah Jahan (1628-1658), Ali Mardan Khan laid a garden above Tailbal village with lofty buildings, concrete walls, a big canal, a vast tank, fountains and waterfalls etc.<sup>52</sup> It was built in 1635 AD. It had seven terraces. On the northern extreme of this garden are the remnants of Mughal walls built in bricks in lime surkhi mortar, mixed with brick zera. Below this part of the garden at the depth of about three feet is visible the foundation of the structure of dust stone. It is only half exposed but abruptly it extends in the north-south direction.<sup>53</sup> The senior citizens presently residing at the spot reveal that Mughal emperor Jahangir desired to build Shalimar garden close to Tailbal rivulet but later on he had changed his mind. Hassan

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<sup>48</sup> P. N. K. Bamzai, *Cultural and Political History of Kashmir*, M. D. Publications, New-Delhi, 1994, p. 411.

<sup>49</sup> An Interview with Mughli Begum, R/O Ishber, Age 85 years, Dated 22 May, 2014.

<sup>50</sup> Ghulam Hassan Shah Khuihami, *Op.cit*, p. 212.

<sup>51</sup> Ghulam Hassan Shah Khuihami, *Op.cit*, p. 212.

<sup>52</sup> Ghulam Hassan Shah Khuihami, *Op.cit*, p. 212.

<sup>53</sup> S. Maqbul Ahmad, *et al*; *Op.cit*, pp. 170-170.



Shah in his account corroborates the observations of the octogenarians of the locality.<sup>54</sup> It is pertinent to mention that this garden does not exist today. Now it is a fully populated locality. A mohallah and a colony has come up there. The mohallah has been named after Aliabad and the colony as Abshaar (waterfall) colony.<sup>55</sup>

### (c) Heritage of Shrines:

**Hazratbal:** Originally it was known as Bagh-i-Sadiqabad and presently Hazratbal. It was laid by Sadiq Khan one of the nobles of Shah Jahan in 1699. The holy relic of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was brought by Noor-ud-Din Ishbari from Bijapur.<sup>56</sup> For some time it was placed at Khanqah-i-Naqashbandi (Srinagar) and later shifted to the mosque already built by Shah Jahan at Bagh-i-sadiqabad. Later the spot was called Hazrtabal and overtime it emerged as an important center of religious tourism. It was owing to the efforts of Shaikh Muhammad Abdullah that the new structure of the shrine was raised in 1969.<sup>57</sup> Every month during the holy month of Rabi-ul-Awal (month of Muslim calendar) for the first twelve days, Kashmiri Muslims all over the Valley throng for prayers and a view of the holy relic there. The 12<sup>th</sup> day of Rabi-ul-Awal which is the birth anniversary of holy Prophet is celebrated as Eid-i-Milad. On this occasion a huge congregation is organized at the shrine in which a large number of Muslims participate. Above all, after Khanqah-i-Mullah this shrine has been the center of mass mobilization during the course of freedom struggle in Princely Kashmir.<sup>58</sup>

**Shankaracharya Temple:** The prominent saint and philosopher Shankaracharya stayed at this temple when he

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid. p. 213.

<sup>55</sup> An interview with local resident dated 15 June, 2022.

<sup>56</sup> Ghulam Hassan Shah Khuihami, *Op.cit*, p. 213.

<sup>57</sup> S.M. Abdullah after being released from jail during the Plebiscite Movement took up the reconstruction of Hazratbal Shrine by collecting donations all over the Valley especially Srinagar.

<sup>58</sup> It is worthwhile to underline that after *Khanqah-i-Muallah*, Hazratbal Shrine has been the next prominent centre where the leaders of the freedom movement were addressing to public meetings.

came to Kashmir in order to revive Santan Dharma. It was from this time onwards that it was called Shankaracharya instead of its earlier name Gopadrirya.<sup>59</sup> The Gopa-Agraharas offered by emperor Lalitaditya to Brahmins as it was named is the fertile plateau at present in the form of Gupkar locality at the eastern foot of the hillock.<sup>60</sup>

The temple crowning Takht-i-Suliman or Shankaracharay (hillock) rises to the height of 1000 feet above the plain.<sup>61</sup> It was first built by Sandiman (2629-2564 BC) and later on repaired by Gopaditya (426-365 BC) and Lalitaditya (699-736 AD), Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin (1421-1472), Shaikh Mohi-ud-Din (Sikh governor between 1841-46) and Swami Shivratananand Saraswati.<sup>62</sup>

**Guptganga Shiv Temple:** Gupt Ganga a paviter (sacred) spring located at Ishbar is a spot of pilgrimage for Kashmiri Pandits and the Hindus outside the Valley. This conveniently approachable tirtha (sacred spot) is the scene of a very popular pilgrimage on the *vaishaki* day. A ruined mound immediately behind the tank is the site of Isesvara shrine.<sup>63</sup> Being a devotee of Shiva Shamdhimat Aryaraja, a pious ruler and a devotee of Shiva had built various shrines in the name of his lord. It was he who built this temple in the honor of his guru Shri Ishan.<sup>64</sup> This spot is known as Gupt Ganga i.e. Hidden Ganga. Abul Fazl mentions about the Guptganga spring at Ishbar. He says that it was held sacred by the people all over India and it was called Suryasar and was surrounded by temples.<sup>65</sup> There are three springs and behind these springs is the temple of Shiva and Parvati with a high lingam of about four feet. There are a few buildings around and an apple orchard in front of the temple.<sup>66</sup> Ksemendra

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<sup>59</sup> Badruddin Muqem, *Op.cit*, p. 10.

<sup>60</sup> M.A. Stein, *Ancient Geography of Kashmir*, Calcutta, 1999, Vol. V, p. 162.

<sup>61</sup> Sanjay Prakash Sharma, *et al*; *Op.cit*, p. 19.

<sup>62</sup> Samsar Chand Koul, *Op.cit*, pp. 62-63.

<sup>63</sup> M.A. Stein, *Op.cit*, Vol. II, *Op.cit*, p. 455.

<sup>64</sup> Samsar Chand Koul, *Op.cit*, p. 47.

<sup>65</sup> Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, p. 361.

<sup>66</sup> S. Maqbul Ahmad, *et al*; *Op.cit*, p. 107.

mentions Guptaganga spring by the name of Satatadhara. It is located in a narrow gorge some 1500 feet below the rock of Suresuari.<sup>67</sup>

**Ashram of Lakshmanjoo:** Swami Lakshmanjoo Raina was the last and the tallest saint and philosophers of Kashmiri Shaivism.<sup>68</sup> He was born at Namchibal, Fateh Kadal in Srinagar on 9 May, 1907.<sup>69</sup> Narayan Das the father of Lakshmanjoo had purchased some land at village Ishbar. In 1935 AD Lakshmanjoo choose this secluded site at Ishbar village for meditation as well as abode. He loved the spot because his mentor and ideologue Abhinavagupta, one of the stalwart philosophers of Kashmiri Shaivism had lived somewhere around this place about nine centuries earlier.<sup>70</sup> Swami Lakshmanjoo began his religious mission in the form of lectures and discourses and his disciples began to throng and listen to him and thus seek enlightenment.<sup>71</sup> On the birth anniversary of Swami, a pooja was organized at the ashram. Later *prasad* and food would be served to the devotees. Every year around ten to fifteen thousand people would participate in the ceremony and take *prasad* in the company of their guru.<sup>72</sup>

#### (d) Heritage of Modern Times

**Gulab Bhawan:** Gulab Bhawan the Maharaja's palace is situated on the southern side of the Gagribal, revealing high aesthetic sense coupled with engineering skill, in the selection of the excellent site, the laying out of lawns and terrace and the grandeur of the huge structure of the palace that commands a majestic view of the lakes and the distant snow capped mountains. It was built by the Maharaja Hari

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<sup>67</sup> Vinayak Razdan, *Ishber Nag* ([www.searchkashmir.org/2010-2011/archive.html](http://www.searchkashmir.org/2010-2011/archive.html)).

<sup>68</sup> Swami Lakshmanjoo- encyclopedia, Oct. 2007, ([http:// en. Wikipedia.org/wiki/lakashmanjoo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/lakashmanjoo)).

<sup>69</sup> T. N. Dhar Kundan, *Saints and Sages of Kashmir- Culture and Heritage of Kashmir KECSS Research Series-V*, APH Publishing Corporation, New Delhi, 2004, p. 300.

<sup>70</sup> Swami Lakshmanjoo- encyclopedia, Oct. 2007, ([http:// en. Wikipedia.org/wiki/lakashmanjoo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/lakashmanjoo)).

<sup>71</sup> T. N. Dhar Kundan, *Op.cit*, p. 301.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid. p. 302.

Singh (1925-1947) in 1932. It was decorated with plaster moulding rather than paper mache.<sup>73</sup>

The people of this locality especially from Theed and Gupkar village were removed from this place. Consequently, the land of the two villages was transformed into the private estate of Maharaja. In exchange, they had been provided the barren land at Harwan.<sup>74</sup>

**Dachigam National Park:** Dachigam is one of the prettiest localities of Phakh valley. It has been named as Dachigam (the village of grapes). It covers an area of 1.14 sq km's and is approximately 22.5 km's long and 8 km's in width.<sup>75</sup> Dachigam a valley within the valley of Pargan-i-Phakh is one among the most charming dales of Kashmir. Its rich variety of flora and fauna, its luxuriant mountain slopes, the wild animals like panther, bear and deer make it a rare spot all over Kashmir. A silvery stream emptying the Marsar drains this emerald green valley. A little higher up the valley there is a huge rock called Shankar-Pal (Shankar's rock).<sup>76</sup> Maharaja Hari Singh the last ruler of the Dogra dynasty declared Dachigam as his private hunting spot in 1910. In February 1981, it was upgraded as a national park.<sup>77</sup>

**Tulip Garden:** Tulip represents the largest ornamental perennial crop throughout world with Holland dominating the production (86%) of the world market. Gulam Nabi Azad the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir conceived the idea of developing a tulip garden in Kashmir in 2006. Earlier it was the part of Nehru Memorial Botanical Garden Chashma Shahi laid in 1969 by Professor K.N. Koul, the then Director Department of Gardens, Parks, and Floriculture and was meant for growing fruit trees and was locally called as Siraji Bagh. This part of Siraj Bagh was converted into a beautiful

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<sup>73</sup> Bridge Keena, *Op.cit*, p. 210.

<sup>74</sup> Vide the copy of a letter No. 43/C, Dated 20 April, 1949 from Manager Private Estates, Srinagar to Tehsildar Srinagar.

<sup>75</sup> S. L. Shali, *Kashmir History and Archaeology through the Ages*, Indus Publishing Company, New-Delhi, 1993, pp. 57-59.

<sup>76</sup> Samsar Chand Koul, *Op.cit*, pp. 43-44.

<sup>77</sup> National Park and Wildlife Sanctuaries, Jammu and Kashmir Government, 1980-85; S. L. Shali, *Op.cit*, pp. 57-59.

Tulip Garden. Mufti Muhammad Syed the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir opened it up for public on 6 April, 2015.<sup>78</sup> Tulip garden is emerging as a major spring season tourist destination and a popular heritage site of *Pargana-i-Phakh*.

**Conclusion:** Pargana-i-Phakh located towards the north-east of Srinagar has been famous for its natural beauty and heritage sites belonging to ancient, medieval and modern periods of the history of the region. In addition to various sites of heritage including the Neolithic site of Burzahom, Harwan- Kushan site- depicting the zenith of cultural glory through its tiles, Mughal gardens, Shankaracharya temple, Gupt Ganga temple, Hazratbal shrine, Pari Mahal, Gulab Bhawan and Tulip Garden situated in its lap, it also locates the famous Dal Lake. Burzahom and Harwan informs the lovers of history about the richness of art even in remote past. The presence of religious sites in the form of various temples and Muslim shrines inform us about the rich heritage of religious traditions. Being the relics of composite culture from remote past these religious sites have helped in enriching the inclusive traditions of the Valley in general and the people of *Pargana-i-Phakh* in particular. Besides, the presence of famous Mughal gardens in the form of Nishat, Shalimar and Chashma Shahi being visited by the tourists all over India and foreign countries have facilitated the modernization especially in the lower belt of the *Pargana* besides enriching its economy.

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<sup>78</sup> C.M. Mufti Muhammad Sayed throws open Tulip Garden, Greater Kashmir, 7 April, 2015.

# **Agrarian Landscape of Kashmir: Structure, Elite and Social Cleavage (1846-1947)**

*Mohammad Shafi*

**Abstract:** *This paper begins by explaining the different facets of agrarian structure, social cleavages and peasant stratification, which manifested in the Kashmir Valley because of the establishment of the Dogra State. The emergence of Dogra State on the political scene of Kashmir brought tremendous changes in the agrarian domain with unequal distribution of resources. In this paper, an attempt has been made to unpack the different policies of the State through which it buttressed the interests of the Agrarian elite and maintained its hegemony in the rural areas. It further highlights how extra-economic coercion, land grabs and peasant evictions by different officials exacerbated the social cleavages.*

**Introduction:** Agrarian structure can be defined as the distribution of assets and rights tied to land among populations that live in rural areas or derive a significant income from rural activities. In academic scholarship, we hardly encounter a detailed characterization of an agrarian structure as different scholars define the domain in different frameworks. Daniel Thorner, P.C. Joshi, and Stein use the term agrarian structure to refer to the network of relations among various groups of people connected with the process of cultivation of land. Stein in fact treats the relationship between people, groups of people and the land as a systematic unity.<sup>1</sup>

Daniel Thorner describes agrarian structure as the sum total of ways in which each group of people operates in relation to other groups,<sup>2</sup> and Joshi treats the agrarian structure as a set of mutual relations of three groups namely

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<sup>1</sup> Burtein stein, *Integration of the Agrarian System of South India*, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1969, p. 175.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel Thorner, *Agrarian Prospect in India*, Delhi University Press, 1956, p. 8.

landlords, tenants, and laborers.<sup>3</sup> These definitions of the agrarian structure point towards two important variables, land and man. Therefore, any discussion on the agrarian structure demands a nuanced understanding of various components like, land ownership, land distribution, and land management. The agrarian structure of any region is shaped by historical forces, the land tenure system, organization of credit and the burdens imposed by the government. The tenure system may be legal or customary under which land could be owned. The system of land tenancy under which production and distribution is operated and the net produce divided between the owner and direct producer, constitutes an important component of agrarian structure.<sup>4</sup>

Tenancy being, the most important part of agrarian structure predominantly determining the distribution of the produce between the landlord and the tenant; but in history, it has always been the former who got more than the tenant out of the produce. Though some believe that not all type of tenancy was exploitative in character and tenants were not getting exploited at an unprecedented rate. However, the period with which we are concerned over here and while analyzing the sources, it becomes visible that tenants were getting exploited at the hands of the State.

Gunner Myrdal while writing about the tenancy categorized them into two: privileged and under privileged.<sup>5</sup> He makes a distinction between the two on certain grounds, and writes that privileged tenants have always been conferred with hereditary rights over the leased land, fixity of rent and high degree of security and under privileged remained without these remunerations. Apart from all this, peasant class constitutes an important component of agrarian structure.

K. L. Sharma, while speaking about the class differentiation of the peasantry in India refers to hierarchical

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<sup>3</sup> P.C. Joshi; *Land Reforms in India; Trends and Perspectives*; Allied publishers, Bombay, 1975, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Daniel Thorner, *Agrarian Prospect in India*, Delhi University Press, 1956, pp. 10-17

<sup>5</sup> Gunner Myrdal, *The Asian Drama: An Inquiry into the Poverty of Nations*, Vol. 1, Penguin press London, 1968, p. 1038.

relations between various segments of people who depended upon cultivation for their livelihood.<sup>6</sup> According to Sharma, differentiation doesn't simply mean a division of society into landlords, peasants, tenants and labourers. It also doesn't mean a classification based on rich, middle and poor peasants. "Differentiation", as per Sharma, "can be found among all sections of people, zamindars, jagirdars, peasants and tenants".<sup>7</sup> And, in the context of the Valley, it was quite apparent. There was differentiation among *jagirdars*, *chakdars*, *Maufidars*, (whom we have termed as Agrarian Elites), Peasants and tenants.

Agrarian structure played a tremendous role in shaping the livelihood of rural areas. It had the potential to distort growth as the people who held control over land hardly remained concerned for the people working on their estates. It acted as a barrier in yielding positive results in the process of production as peasants lacked incentive for work. They worked only out of compulsion in order to make and fulfill their subsistence needs. The progress hampered by the structure is clearly visible in Kashmir through the sources during the Dogra period. Only few were getting benefited out of it and the rest of the rural population who had direct connection with the land as far as carrying out the process of agricultural production experienced hardships and extreme penury.

While, bringing the agrarian structure of Kashmir into the realm of academic discussion; the economy of the Valley remained agrarian from times immemorial, and of paramount importance. It is an established fact that, agrarian domain comprised the main source of income to the State and 75% population of the Valley was entangled with it.<sup>8</sup> Considering land as State property, was in existence in many Princely States of India under British paramountcy, and Kashmir was

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<sup>6</sup> K.L.Sharma, *Agrarian Stratification. Old Issues, New Explanations, and New Issues, Old Explanations*, EPW, Vol. 18, No.42, Oct .15, 1983.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> *Ganganath Report*, 1944, Jammu and Kashmir State repository (hereafter JKA). Srinagar Archives. p. 73.



not an exception to this phenomenon.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, in British India, the State also claimed to have a supreme right of ownership over all land, and it was tax to be paid on time that determined the ownership claims of the occupants; if failed to pay, State would justify the official auction of land deeds to other tax payers.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, the ramifications of the State ownership of property created a class in agrarian domain that remained non- agrarian in nature, (non-agrarian here symbolizes remaining out of the main agricultural activity) but disrupted the edifice of the countryside; put the actual doers of the work into drudgery and the phenomenon continued in Kashmir till the reforms of 1947. So, it can be assumed that the structure remained feudal with Maharaja as the head of the State along with different non-agrarian elites (*jagirdars*, *Maufidars*, *Mukharedars*, and *chakdars*) who buttressed the administrative system till the end of its supreme might, and below in this edifice became apparent the peasant; the main actor in the realm.

**Background of State Formation and the Dynamics of Agrarian Relations:** The State of Jammu and Kashmir came into being by virtue of the Treaty of Amritsar signed between the East India Company and Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu on 16 March 1846 A.D. The Treaty transferred “forever” into Gulab Singh’s “independent possession” and of his male heirs “all the hilly or mountainous country” situated to the east of the river Indus and west of the river Ravi. Moreover, the British government promised Gulab Singh complete support against any external aggression.<sup>11</sup> Contrarily, Gulab Singh was required to pay the British government seventy-five lakhs of rupees (*Nanakshahi*) and acknowledge the supremacy of the British government. He was also bound to refer all his disputes with his neighbors to British arbitration and alter his

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<sup>9</sup> Baden Powell, *The Land System of British India*, vol.1, Ooriental Publishers, Delhi 1974. pp. 320-332.

<sup>10</sup> David Ludden, *Agrarian history of south Asia*, Cambridge, p. 170.

<sup>11</sup> Robert A Huttenback, *Kashmir and the British Raj 1847-1947*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 5.

frontiers only with British consent.<sup>12</sup> However, the British authorities in India did not bother to ascertain the views of the people of Kashmir and the whole transaction was concluded behind their back.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, the treaty didn't make even a single provision in favor of the people of Kashmir and was thrust upon them without their consent. Eventually, this bilateral Treaty, not only empowered Gulab Singh from Raja to Maharaja but the three disparate territories of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh were also amalgamated to create this new political entity.<sup>14</sup>

The treaty made Gulab Singh the sole proprietor of all land in Kashmir and all attempts to acquire ownership titles to land were aimed at legitimizing the exorbitant taxation policy. Consequently, the treaty altered the agrarian relations in Kashmir and peasants lost both the occupancy and proprietary rights over land and became mere tenants cultivating for a small share of what they produced from the soil with little bargaining power. Apart from this, a group of landlords also manifested in the agrarian space of Kashmir whom we entitle as 'agrarian elite' which shall constitute the core discussion of the paper. They constituted the people who became the collaborators of the newly established State and the real masters in the agrarian space of Kashmir and started exercising sovereignty over the countryside.

**Agrarian Elite and Social Cleavages:** Invoking the term 'agrarian elite' (a class deriving power out of land by staying out of its main activity), for a particular class makes it clear that it constituted a group of people who were completely departed from the main agrarian activity. They would employ tenants and agricultural laborers to carry out the cultivation and as a result, they could extract their share at the time of

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<sup>12</sup> C.U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads Relating to India and Neighboring Countries*, Vol. XII (Calcutta: Central Publication Branch, 1831), p.3.

<sup>13</sup> Mridu Rai, *Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects: Islam, Rights, and the History of Kashmir*, (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004), pp. 20-26; P.N. Bazaz, *Inside Kashmir* (Srinagar: The Kashmir Publishing Co., 1941), P.31.

<sup>14</sup> Mridu Rai, op.cit. p. 20-26.

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harvest through various intermediaries. This class consisted of *Jagirdars*, *Chakdars*, *Maufidars*, and peasant landlords.

It had been a class that exercised power at peripheries and sustained the might of the State; however, State also delineated their position with great pomp and splendor by giving them the revenue of various eStates in lie of services rendered to the State. However, *jagirdars* were conferred with civil and military power. The other two classes remained out of its ambit but they also exercised sovereignty in their respective domains assigned to them. It was basically a type of shield implied by the State as no pre-modern State could sustain itself without the loyal and local elements. Out of these class, some were supposed to pay modicum revenue to the State as residual whereas some were free to have all, without paying anything to the State like religious elite.

***Jagirdars:*** The first actor that we get in the category of non-agrarian elite was *jagirdar* with rights over certain villages assigned to him as *jagir*; the *jagirdar* got the land cultivated with the help of tenants and agricultural laborers and by living, on rental earnings derived from the area.<sup>15</sup> Almost one fourth was kept with the peasant and the rest was appropriated by the assignee; besides the right over the land revenue, *jagirdars* also had the right to charge a tax over pastures (grazing tax), forest and water mills existed within their assigned area.<sup>16</sup> Thus, the picture that manifests about this class is unique in many ways. First, it seems to be a most privileged class who had fullfleged control over the resources under their possession. They were completely free to deal with the peasants keeping in view the self-aggrandized needs and interests. While giving open access to this class by the State, to decide all the matters eventually resulted in the deterioration of economy of the peasants. Even after putting everything at the disposal of the *jagirdar*; he could never get

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<sup>15</sup> R.L Hangloo. *Agrarian conditions and peasant protests in the princely State of Jammu and Kashmir(1846-1931)*, in Y. Vaikunthum, peoples movement in princely States, Manohar Delhi, 2004, p. 168.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 84. See also Mirza Afzal Beigh, *on the way to Golden Harvest: Agricultural Reforms in Kashmir*, Ranbir Government press, Jammu, 1951, p. 8.

satisfaction and would keep sending his officials for extra-economic charges to the peasant with warrants of attachment<sup>17</sup>. Moreover, They always preferred to cash out their income in kind and never strived for cash salaries as it was quite known to them that getting salary in cash would result in lacking other privileges and other economic coercion which they imposed on peasant class. Under this situation, the peasant was left with no choice and could not decide anything for himself except to endure the burden of extreme exploitation and to carry out the cultivation silently without any option.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, *jagirdari* system gave rise to absentee landlordism, which further put cultivators in distress. A chain of agents emerged between peasants and the *jagirdars*, which further exploited them by extracting more than they were supposed to pay to the *jagirdars*.

Apart from this, the Darbar or the State itself strengthened the position of the *jagirdar*. The Dogra rulers favored the *jagirdars* coming from their kiths and kins and especially from their co-religionists. Besides, State also wanted to consolidate its administrative apparatus through them that is why they were provided leniency in carrying out the decisions independently in their respective areas. Although, we expected some signs of change in this institution when colonial State took interest in the affairs of Kashmir when they started reordering the agrarian space during the time of Pratap Singh but the change didn't affect the system as was believed to be. A committee under J.L. Kaye was framed with the intention of removing flaws from the *jagirdari* system in order to improve the condition of peasantry working on their lands.<sup>19</sup> The report highlighted many things such as, interference of State in revenue holdings under the possession of *jagirdars* and delineation of the rights of both *jagirdars* and tenants working on them.

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<sup>17</sup> Mirza Mohamad Afzal Beigh, on *the way to Golden Harvest: Agricultural reforms in Kashmir*, Ranbir Government Press, Jammu, 1951, pp.8.

<sup>18</sup> Revenue Ministry, on *the Road to New, Kashmir*, p. 1. Quoted from Showkat Naik, *Landlords, peasants and the Dogra rule in Kashmir*, IHC.

<sup>19</sup> Chitralkha Zutshi, *Languages of Belonging; Islam, Regional Identity, and the Making of Kashmir*, pp. 74-75.

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But all this phenomenon remained on paper at Residency and nothing changed at the ground level. The tenants continued to suffer as before. Though it was written in the report that jagirdars had no entitlement to collect cesses and had no right over the wastelands which they had colonized over the years but nothing manifested practically.<sup>20</sup> However, after 19th century some changes took place which protected the rights of the cultivators. Some cultivators were given the permanent cultivating rights over the *jagir* lands and others ended up being as mere tenants. Those who were given permanent rights came to be declared as *Mustaqil-e-kashtkar* that means they could not be evicted as long as they would pay revenue to the *jagirdar*.<sup>21</sup>

One of the most surprising fact which came to limelight about the *jagir* lands in Kashmir in the first half of the 19th century was that the *jagirdars* wanted the peasants working on their land to be granted proprietary rights from the State. For this purpose, they submitted a memorandum to Lord Reading when he visited Kashmir in 1924<sup>22</sup>. It seems to be a bit incomprehensible for one to understand how Jagirdars could be in favor of their own liquidation. What was their purpose in getting the proposal passed? Once we understand the picture of rural landscape, it seems crystal clear that they wanted to create a land market from where they could purchase the land from the peasant class by becoming the real owners of land which could not even be snatched by the State. And even if snatched by the State for some purpose they had to be given compensation which earlier was totally absent.<sup>23</sup> They were representing the State and they knew that it is difficult for State particularly the newly Maharaja Hari singh to terminate the institution of *jagirdari* which is clearly reflected from the facts.

The position of the *jagirdars* were further buttressed by the State by granting the rights of *shamalatdeh* with *assami*

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> JKA, old English Records, file no.: 32-R/L-186 of 1913.

<sup>22</sup> Rashid Taseer, *Tarikh-i-Hurriyat-i-Kashmir*, vol.1, p. 71.

<sup>23</sup> JKA, Rules, orders, and Notification, order dated Feb; 25, 1926, pp. 30-35; Adm. Rep. 1926-27, pp. 30-34.

rights to them.<sup>24</sup> Through this, we find the position of cultivators getting deteriorated further because before doing this move they could graze their cattle and bring fire wood from community pastures to their households, but now they could not go there without State's consent and had to pay a tax to the *jagirdar*.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, those *Jagirdars* whose assignment was above 500 Rs were granted the proprietary right as part of his *jagir*, a *khudasht* and residential unit between 200 and 600 kanals.<sup>26</sup>

The event of 1931 altered almost the position of landlord class in Kashmir. A wide campaign started against the State and the exploitative nature of various agrarian institutions. The campaign was led by the nationalists under the leadership of Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah. The notions of defiance against the oppression were being percolated among the masses by the nationalist leaders. During this time of turmoil, the *jagirdars* assured full cooperation along with peasant landlords,<sup>27</sup> to the Dogra State.<sup>28</sup> In this regard, they received honorary treatment from the State and developed a bond which was so strong until broken by the Abdullah government in 1950 when the abolition of Big Landed Estates Act was passed and land was transferred to the actual cultivator.

**Chakdars:** The second class that held an influential position in Kashmir among the rural population was *Chakdar*. *Chakdari* as an agrarian institution emerged in 1862 under the

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Mirza Afzal Beigh, *on the way to Golden Harvest; Agricultural Reforms in Kashmir*, Ranbir Government Press, Jammu, pp. 8-10.

<sup>26</sup> JKA, Rules, orders and Notification, order dated Feb; 25, 1926, pp. 30-35; Adm. Rep. 1926-27, pp. 30-34.

<sup>27</sup> Peasant landlord is a term used by Dietmar Rothermond to signify a class in rural landscape who held social power and enjoyed privileges on part of the State. Dietmar Rothermond, "Emergence of Peasant Landlord in India" in *Agrarian and other Histories*, eds., Binay Bushan Chaudhry, Utsa Patnaik, Tulika books, New Delhi.

<sup>28</sup> JKA, Pol. Dept; File No: 375/50 of 1931. *Census, 1931*, pp.5-6.

reign of Ranbir Singh.<sup>29</sup> The main intention of this institution was to strengthen the Dogra State further by giving fallow lands to the persons especially belonging to Hindu faith along with some Muslims. Though, they held large holdings of land but they would never carry out the process of production themselves. They also employed cultivators in carrying out production. Through this institution, large chunks of wasteland was permanently allotted to the influential people who had close connections with the Dogra State with the purpose of bringing it under cultivation and thus increasing revenues of the State. The assignee of *chak* was termed as *chakdar*.<sup>30</sup>

There is no doubt that cultivable land increased out of it along with the increase of revenue. But we need to see did it really benefit the tenancy or further served the interests of agrarian elite. Once we go through the sources, we learn that the rights of others communities which were dependent on such lands getting displaced. One might assume that by bringing such land under cultivation; revenues of State might have increased 3 times, but speaking practically we find that the land held by *chakdars* was more than that what they paid as revenue.<sup>31</sup> By and large *chakdars* were trying to extend their *chaks*. They would often cooperate with officials at rustic level associated with the State who were often found by unleashing terror on those peasants who had occupied the coveted land and as a result, they had no option except to desert their lands.<sup>32</sup> *Chakdars* didn't hesitate in employing tools and tactics for seeking the service of the local tenancy to bring their follow eStates under cultivation. What could have been done in these circumstances at all? State could have taken action if they won't have represented the State in a judicious manner. Therefore, we conclude that they were the

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<sup>29</sup> A. Wingate, *Preliminary Report of Settlement operations in Jammu and Kashmir*- 1887, Jammu and Kashmir State Archives, Jammu Repository, p. 28.

<sup>30</sup> Jammu and Kashmir Archive, Jammu Repository, General Dept: File No 1176-C of 1930.

<sup>31</sup> Jammu and Kashmir archives, Jammu repository. Old English Records; File No; 117 of 1896.

<sup>32</sup> E.F.Knight, *where three empires meet*. pp. 60-70.

State itself like *jagirdars* and as such, nothing was done in favor of the cultivating class.

At the same time, it is mandatory to mention that to some extent these *chakdars* would come to the rescue of tenants working on their lands when they were requisitioned for the *begar*. In fact, they were acting as a shield to them for personal petty gains and the whole wrath of *begar* was being faced by the *khalisa* cultivators who didn't have anyone to save them. Maximum revenue officials held numerous lands as *chaks* from governor to tehsildars; and, it wasn't difficult for them to displace the original occupants and bring the hired labors on their lands and claim rights over the revenues by paying meager amount to the State.<sup>33</sup> In fact, the intention of the State was not bad at all; its purpose was to make economically State strong as far as revenue was concerned, that is why we find since 1860s till 1940s State didn't hesitate in increasing the area under *chaks*.<sup>34</sup> However, the officials whom it was officially granted; they cheated both the State and the poor cultivators by accumulating tremendous wealth in the form of the revenue along with the arrears.<sup>35</sup>

Thus, it becomes obvious that this novel institution neither served the interests of the State nor of the tenant class. It diminished incentive for work among the peasant class. Even if they would work on such lands that could have been basically out of compulsion and survival purposes. Peasants only toil day and night over tracts of land when they found that their yield will bring prosperity and diminish suffering. But, the moment they realized that thier hard work will hardly make any positive impact on thier lives, they stopped working passionately on the farm. This situation was realized by the British Government of India when it started the process of intervention in the government of the State 1885 onwards. Immediately after getting control over various departments after the establishment of Residency land settlements were carried out and they began to dig over the

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<sup>33</sup> Wingate , pp. 85-86

<sup>34</sup> Jammu and Kashmir Archives, Jammu Repository; Gen. Dept. File No 1224 of S 1930.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.



issue. It realized that if revenues of the State had to be increased; it is mandatory to bring some reforms in different agrarian institutions. And some sort of rights of the peasant need to be delineated in relation to the land.

Andrew Wingate was the first settlement officer who on the request of Maharaja Pratap Singh was deputed for this task by the colonial State. He took the task of settlement and assessed the land and submitted his report on August 1, 1888.<sup>36</sup> After studying the details minutely, he came up with various recommendations regarding the *khalisa* cultivators, arrears, *chakdars* and wasteland. As far as *chakdars* were concerned he argued that the authority of allotting certain lands as chaks with the intention of bringing fallow land under cultivation and increase the revenues of the State had been misused by the officials of the State by parceling out the most fertile lands among themselves which had resulted in the deterioration of State revenues.<sup>37</sup> This type of situation was clearly visible to the colonial officials and they wanted to come up with a solution for it. However, they could not do much to this class as they were also dependent on them but to some extent they wanted to bring some sort of prosperity among the cultivating class by establishing transparency between the State and the officialdom associated with land management which they did. The first thing colonial officials proclaimed was that all the lands particularly fertile grabbed under the norm of *chakdari* system which was not allowed should be resumed and the rights of cultivators over such land shall be delineated.<sup>38</sup>

The proposals forwarded by the Wingate were severely opposed by the officials and made cultivators believe that the work undertaken by Wingate would not benefit them which was absurd and redundant attempt on part of the State. Why *chakdars* instigated peasants against the reforms introduced by the colonial State? Basically *chakdars* acted as an elite category of the State. Their rights over the land was totally

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<sup>36</sup> Wingate, *Preliminary report of settlement operation in Jammu and Kashmir*, 1887, p. 87.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., pp. 62-63.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., pp. 60-70.

different from others. They had entitlement over the produce along with the land; they could pay the dues through installments and could bring more land under cultivation and with time, they were also conferred with the permanent status which became the main reason of their strength which colonial State failed to undermine.<sup>39</sup>

Moreover, when Walter Lawrence succeeded Wingate as the settlement Commissioner, he could not also crush the influence of these landed magnates and when he proposed reforms on their holding he had to face a severe resistance and, therefore, was left with no alternative except to come up with concessions which were in their favor.<sup>40</sup> One of the most disastrous thing which Lawrence did was that he gave legal status to the *chakdars* by conferring them the *assami* rights which was totally detrimental for the cultivating class.<sup>41</sup> As a result, their grip over the rural area became strong and their influence increased tremendously. They acted both as revenue officials and *chakdars* and it wasn't impregnable for them now to employ devices of grabbing more and more land. They could easily persuade the revenue officials in their favor. As the *chaks* were closely affiliated with the *khalisa* lands they wanted proprietary rights for peasants like *jagirdars* so that they could purchase land at nominal rates from the peasant class. And once peasants of *khalisa* villages were given the proprietary rights in response to Glancy Commission recommendation in 1933, land became a commodity which could be mortgaged and sold. Therefore, the landed elites took advantage of it and once again turned the peasant class into tenancy. This class of officials also reinforced the might of the Dogra State. They showed valor and strength in maintaining the power of the Dogras till 1947. As far as the relationship between *chakdar* and the cultivating class is concerned, we can easily derive a conclusion that the peasant was always at disadvantage and the only thing, which

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<sup>39</sup> Jammu and Kashmir Archive, Jammu repository, old English Records, year 1904, File no 145, wastelands and *chakdars*.

<sup>40</sup> Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 424.

<sup>41</sup> Jammu and Kashmir Archives, Jammu Repository. Gen. Dept; File No: 107/h-94 of 1904.

attracted the tenants for working on chak lands, was their exemption from begar.<sup>42</sup>

**Muafidars:** The third important class which dominated the countryside and exercised immense influence among the rural population was none other than the class of *Muafidars*. This category of agrarian elite was totally different from the above two categories as they were endowed with religious knowledge which was used as a tool to act as a sigh of relief for the oppressed and a sigh of hope in the hopeless situation. This class held extreme position in rural areas and were the actors of social power. Dogra State favored this class by giving them revenue free grants. The main beneficiaries of these grants were *pir*, *sayid* and *pandit* families. Since ancient period, the practice of granting revenue free lands to Brahmans, temples, vihars had been a dominant trend.<sup>43</sup> During medieval period, the trend remained in operation.<sup>44</sup> Thus, Dogra State also allotted portions of land to these privileged people for strengthening their power and position.<sup>45</sup>

The *Mauafi* grants were basically of two types during the Dogra period. The first was religious in nature, under which one-third amount of revenue was received by the *maufidar* in cash and other two thirds in kind.<sup>46</sup> Religious *Maufis* had basically religious institution under its jurisdiction. Mosques, shrines, temples located in the whole Valley were operated by this class. The right over these were hereditary in nature remaining with generations.<sup>47</sup> Non-religious *Maufis* were given to the persons who had to carry out constructions of

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<sup>42</sup> Lawrence, *Position of Cultivating Class in Kashmir*, 1890. p. 1

<sup>43</sup> Kalhana's *Rajatarangni*, Vol. 1. Sahitya Academy, Srinagar, India (Reprinted. Ed) 2007, pp. 18-40

<sup>44</sup> Mohibul Hassan, *Kashmir under sultans*, pp. 43.

<sup>45</sup> Jammu and Kashmir 1947-1950, *An Account of Activities of the first three years of Sheikh Abdullah's government*, government research library Srinagar.

<sup>46</sup> Chitralkha Zutshi, Chitralkha Zutshi, *Languages of Belonging; Islam*, pp. 74-75.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

work for public use, such as bridges and wells.<sup>48</sup> They were conferred almost the same privileges as the *jagirdars* but they had one more advantage which was not to pay anything to the State.

They didn't have entitlement not only on such lands but also over the fate of the peasant. There are two ways through which State maintained its own prestige. One was structure of coercion and the second structure of legitimacy. Through structure of coercion, State employs army, police and law which makes the subject population subordinate to the power. But it is difficult for State to maintain its might over a long period of time through this and it is here States employs structure of legitimacy in which religion is being used as a tool through which subjects give consent to the power. And this type of tactics remains intact for over a long period of time. It represses the zeal and zest among the subject population against the oppression. They accept their condition and fate whatever the conditions, filled with trials and tribulations will be; they are made to believe that everything is pre-destined. The State employed this tool, "the structure of legitimacy" through *Maufidars*, because both Muslim and Pandit priests were the instruments of it.

**Peasant Landlord:** Apart from these agrarian elites, we find one more elite class in agrarian stratification 'the peasant landlord'. They were being employed by the State at local level through whom agrarian produce reached to the granaries of the State. This class has been different even though living in close proximity with the actual cultivators. They held most fertile tracts of land in villages of Kashmir, but never engaged themselves in the process of production. The peasant landlord could be found among the upper and middle class peasants who generated surplus by employing labor.<sup>49</sup> They also had social, political and economic influence and by and large exercised social power over the villagers. This class consisted of Muqadam's and Waddars,

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<sup>48</sup> Proceedings of the State council of Jammu and Kashmir, 1898-1900, Jammu State archives.

<sup>49</sup> Dietmar Rothermond, *Emergence of Peasant Landlord in India*, p. 6.

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(*Moneylenders*) collectively called in Kashmiri terminology *safed-posh*.<sup>50</sup> Besides, holding large fertile tracts; they engaged themselves in moneylending, because rural moneylending has been a universal activity as peasant was always in need of credit.<sup>51</sup> There is a distinction between professional moneylenders and agricultural money lenders. In Kashmir, both existed but as far as rural areas were concerned; we find the existence of 'agricultural moneylenders' who were landholders in the village. And, there was a close nexus between the peasant landlord and different agrarian institutions of the State. A sort of patron client relationship could be seen among various agrarian elites, and all were engaged in serving their own petty interests at the cost of poor peasants who employed family labour in carrying out the process of production. They would suck their blood without showing even a bit of mercy upon them.

The peasant landlords were also very cautious about maintaining their dominant position among the villagers and would employ tools for that. Charity, feeding the indigent, and donations to mosques, and shrines were part of their tactics in order to colonize the mindset of rural population. It was done with great pomp and splendor.<sup>52</sup> Below in this edifice could be seen the actual peasant who was directly engaged with the process of production and known by a generic term zamindar (*gruce*) which is prevalent even at present.<sup>53</sup> As far as agrarian society is concerned, peasants constituted the bulk of total population; even if we look at the present 3.4 billion people in developing countries are associated with it. By and large peasants have been described

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<sup>50</sup> Walter Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 253.

<sup>51</sup> Dietmar Rothermond, *Emergence of Peasant Landlord in India*, p. 7.

<sup>52</sup> G.T. Vigne, *Travels in Kashmir, Ladakh, Iskardu, Countries adjoining the mountain courses of Indus and Himalayas North of Punjab*, Vol. II, London: Henry Colburn Publisher, p. 110.

<sup>53</sup> The term zamindar held a different meaning in the context of Kashmir rather than India. In Indian context zamindar acted as an intermediary class associated with the collection of revenue but in the valley of Kashmir it signified the cultivating class. Mridu Rai, *Hindu Rulers Muslim Subjects-Islam, Rights and the History*, permanent Black, 2004, p. 40.

more or less homogenous and undifferentiated mass, but it is not the case at all. We can find differentiation within the peasant class. It didn't constitute a homogenous but a heterogeneous class. Whatever categories of peasants did we have in Kashmir were nothing more than producing machines whose produce sustained the State artisan class, govt officials and city populace. And during the Dogra period more than 80% was associated with agriculture.<sup>54</sup>

The peasants of Kashmir were of three categories working on different lands held by the agrarian elites as per the census of 1911.<sup>55</sup>

- 1) Those holding land directly from the State
- 2) *Mustaqil kashtkar*- those holding land in occupancy
- 3) Sub-tenants

A note prepared by Lala Bhawani Das, revenue member, out of assessment reports of six tehsils asserted that in the Valley most of the land was held by *assamis*, from one-half to one percent by occupancy tenants and from sixteen to twenty percent by tenants at will.<sup>56</sup> There is no doubt that the peasants were the main actors in the process of production but their condition was very bad. There wasn't one factor responsible for peasant being poor and experienced hardships. A lot of literature has been produced about the condition of peasantry but their focus remained largely State oriented; like oppressive taxation, corruption and harsh methods of appropriating the revenue from them. Natural, particularly geographic and environmental remained absent. Natural factors were also responsible for stratifying the peasant class. This might seem strange a bit how it was responsible for heterogeneity and stratification among the classes; but it is quite obvious that the environment of the region was such that it could not produce more than one crop

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<sup>54</sup> Ganga Nath Report, 1944, *Jammu and Kashmir State Archives and Museum*, Srinagar repository, p. 73.

<sup>55</sup> Matin-uz-Zaman Khan, *Census of India, Vol. XXX-Kashmir*, Newul Kishore Press, Lucknow, p. 8.

<sup>56</sup> Lal Bhawani Das, *The Review of the Assessment Reports of the Six Tehsils of Kashmir Valley*, 1906, p.6.

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in a year. For six months, the Valley would remain under snow and no economic activity could be carried out; so cultivating class had to work in order to make their survival possible whatever conditions would have been prescribed by the State and the agrarian elites. Whether they would work as occupants, sub-tenants or tenants at will; they didn't have any option to be left except to accept their fate. Apart from this, cultivators realized that their labor would not be repaid if they sowed crops other than rice and therefore they choose to concentrate on *kharif* crops,<sup>57</sup> and therefore rice became the main food grain of consumption and market for economic transactions among people.<sup>58</sup> Out of various types of peasants which existed in the Valley, it was only 'the peasant landlords' that could fulfill his aspirations and enjoy two meals throughout the year and hardly face any kind of starvation. The rest had to experience penury and deprivation and face severe hardships. They could not enjoy eating rice not more than six months; in fact, they would not have faced acute shortage of food, had not they been exploited by the State officials and upper class peasantry in the name of rent and other cesses. Therefore, at times they had to compromise with different varieties of saag (Knol Khol) which wasn't much nutrient. Food crisis were prevalent in such a way that the members of the peasant family were at times fighting against each other for food.<sup>59</sup>

**Conclusion:** The agrarian structure during the period under study remained exploitative in nature. Disparities and social cleavages, which existed between different groups of people dominating the countryside, was the creation of the State and its collaborates. The Dogra State employed certain devices in order to carry out its functions, maintained its power and prestige over the peripheries, and thus, asserted its sovereignty over the entire region. Novel institutions were being created and patronized by the State, which did not only create obstacles in raising the level of production but also

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<sup>57</sup> Chitralekha Zutshi, *Languages of Belonging; Islam*, p. 61.

<sup>58</sup> Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 330.

<sup>59</sup> Prem Nath Bazaz, *Inside Kashmir*, p. 229.

reduced enthusiasm among the cultivating community for work. To some extent, it benefited the State but at large it were the officials occupying dominant positions in the agrarian space who lead the game by grabbing maximum share out of the produce of land and lived an affluent life at the cost of the majority. The general condition of the peasantry in the stratified agrarian population was very bad with low standard of living, and at times they could not expect two times meals for a week.



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