

ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT OF KASHMIR UNDER SIKHS 1819-1846

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Abstract

The beautiful valley of Kashmir has been named by people with different names. Some call it "Heavens on Earth," some call it "Switzerland of India," and the famous Mughal rulers called it "Paradise on Earth." The valley has remained an apple in the eyes of foreign invaders since the very past. Among all these foreign rulers, some were rude and some were soft. The 19th-century Kashmir witnessed the rule of Sikhs, which stretched over a vast area extending from Kashgar in the east to Punjab in the north, Khorasan in the south, and Afghanistan in the west. The Sikh rule was founded by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1819 and continued by his successors till 1846. These Sikhs ruled Kashmir in a turbulent way, and the people of the valley suffered a lot. They imposed high taxes on innocent peasants, leaving the land uncultivated. They implemented a beggar system, which resulted in people leaving the valley. During this period, the economy of the valley faced a decline as trade decreased, and cottage industries were shut down. These Sikh rulers drained the economic resources of the country, resulting in the valley during the Sikh rule presenting a picture of a desert due to exorbitant taxes and inhuman tyranny of Sikh rulers.

Keywords: *Switzerland, paradise, heaven, stretch, turbulent, peasants, desert, exorbitant, tyranny.*

INTRODUCTION

The valley of Kashmir always attracted foreigners since ancient times, be it the Mauryans, Kushans, or Mughals. The valley of Kashmir experienced the rule of great rulers such as Ashoka, Kanishka, Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan, and others. However, the Mughal rule in Kashmir did not last long due to the weak later Mughal rulers. Ahmad Shah Abdali defeated the Mughals at the battlefield of Haripur, located in the southern part of Kashmir, in 1753. Afghans ruled the valley through their governors until 1819. These Afghans introduced the policy of draining the resources of the valley for their personal benefit. The Afghan period in the history of Kashmir is known as the dark period. Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the ruler of the Lahore Durbar (Punjab), closely observed the situation. He always had an eye on extending his territories towards the east but was hindered by the conclusion of the Treaty of Amritsar in 1809 with the British East India Company. Taking advantage of the weak administration of the Afghans, Ranjit Singh marched towards Kashmir. However, he encountered Fateh Khan, who was the prime minister of Shah Mahmud of Afghanistan and also had ambitions to capture Kashmir. Without waging war, both rulers entered into an agreement to launch a joint expedition over the valley. As per the agreement, Ranjit Singh agreed to send 12,000 troops and, in return, would receive one-third of the spoils and the territories of the valley. It was also decided that he would be supported by the Afghan army in the conquest of Multan.

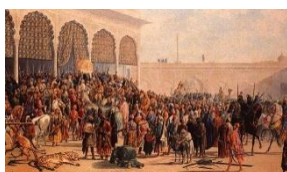
The combined forces of Ranjit Singh and Fateh Khan marched towards the valley in 1813. From the ranges of Pir Panjal, Fateh Khan's army penetrated the valley and bravely fought against the existing Afghan governor, Atta Mohammad Khan, at Shergarhi

in Srinagar. The battle ended quickly as Atta Mohammad fled, and the valley fell into the hands of Fateh Khan. However, Fateh Khan showed unwillingness to fulfill the terms of the agreement with Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Now, Ranjit Singh, unaware of Fateh Khan's dishonesty, decided to conquer Kashmir solely. He sent a strong force under his trusted general, Diwan Ram Dayal, for the annexation of Kashmir in 1814.

The expedition met with failure as the continuous rains and snow posed a barrier to their march at Tosh Maidan Pass. Upon learning about the entry of Sikh forces, the Afghan forces, under the able leadership of Azam Khan, pushed Maharaja's forces out of the hills. As a result, Ranjit Singh's forces abandoned the campaign and returned to his capital. However, fortune turned the tables in favor of Ranjit Singh, as Birbal Dhar, one of the able ministers of the Afghan government in Kashmir, had sought refuge with the Sikhs. He provided valuable information about the strength and entry routes of the Afghans into Kashmir. Taking advantage of Birbal's information, Maharaja Ranjit Singh organized his army for another expedition to Kashmir under the capable command of Diwan Chand, Hari Singh Nalwa, and Prince Kharak Singh on June 18, 1819. The Sikh force, comprising 12,000 troops, crossed Dhimber and Pirpanjal passes and reached Shopian in Kashmir. At that time, Jabbar Khan was the Afghan governor of Kashmir. He faced the Sikhs with an army of 5,000 troops. Despite the brave resistance of the Afghan forces, victory favored the Sikhs. Jabbar Khan, the last Afghan governor of Kashmir, was badly wounded in this war and went to Peshawar, thus paving the way for the beginning of Sikh rule in Kashmir in 1819. From 1819 to 1846, for twenty-seven years, the valley of Kashmir experienced the administrative rule of ten governors appointed by the Durbar (Lahore).

- Dewan Moti Ram 1819-1820
- Sardar Hari singh Nalwa 1820-1822
- Dewan Moti Ram (2nd term) 1822-1825
- Dewan Chuni Lal 1825-1827
- Dewan Kripa Ram 1827-1831
- Bhim singh Ardali 1831-1833
- Prince Sher singh 1832-1834
- Colonel Mian Singh 1834-1841
- Shiekh Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din 1841-1845
- Sheikh Imam-ud-Din 1845-1846.

So it was the 19th century that Valley of Kashmir witnessed non Muslim rulers after several centuries. Their rule affected every aspect of people in society. However in this paper I would like to emphasize much on the economy of Kashmir under sikhs to make the readers understand about the happenings of society during this period.



primary sector /agriculture

Being a rural society agriculture was the primary occupation of people of Kashmir since the dawn of Societies. Agriculture has always greatly contributed to the progress of human civilization in every part of the world. Agriculture formed a pivotal position in the economy of Kashmir. The availability of fertile soil and availability of water resources has made as a basic area of sustenance. It was this land availability that not only provided the basic Foodstuffs for survival to its dwellers but also stabilized their economy with the production of different cash crops such as cotton, oil seeds, saffron etc. To run the administration of the state collection of revenue was unavoidable part of the govt. The state treasury too heavily rely on the revenue generated from this agricultural sector. Thus to meet the unending expenditures increase in taxation was un neglectable. This consistent increase in revenue has a deep impact on innocent peasants of the valley. These peasants had to bear the exorbitant taxes which made their life quite miserable. Being an agrarian society we will understand it by highlighting its different spheres :-

Types of available lands in Kashmir during sikh era

Being an agrarian society since very early times the valley of Kashmir always have availability of different types of land which were classified as Abi, syomb, nambal and khushk

Abi:- Abi was that type of land which could have been easily irrigable. Such soil was rich in minerals and was used for cultivation of rice which was a staple food of the people of the valley . Abi land was further subdivided into Abi-shali and Abhi-sagar both were used for the production of paddy(rice) vegetables, red chillies, tobacco, poppy etc.

Syomb:- such a land was generally situated near the banks of river Jhelum and in the periphery of wular lake. It was flooded annually and as the result it gets better and better for cultivation due to the presence of moisture. such lands were capable of producing huge quantities of food products every year.

Nambal :- It included the areas which remained wet most of Year (marshy). These lands were mostly used for fodder and cultivation of such grasess which were used for manufacturing of mats (wagey). How ever during summer these nambals dried up and rice was grown but production was minimal.

Khushki :- These were the areas without irrigation and with less moistures. These were also known as table lands or sometimes as wudurs, they mostly depend up on rains crops such as wheat, barley, and maize was grown over these lands.

Along with these four types of lands, another important method of cultivation was the establishment of floating gardens, which were first introduced in Kashmir by Zain-ul-Abidin (Akbar of Kashmir), who ruled Kashmir from 1420-1470. These floating gardens can still be found floating around Dal Lake today, and a section of society called "hanjis" earns their livelihood by cultivating different types of vegetables. The fertile area of Kashmir resulted in abundant crop production in the valley.

For ploughing the fields, oxen were used in pairs, making it easier for peasants to cultivate more land and ultimately increase production. Crops like paddy, maize, millet, and peas were sown in May-June and harvested in September-October, categorized as

kharif or autumn crops. Crops sown in October-November and reaped in April-May were designated as rabi or spring crops, which generally included wheat, barley, pulses, and mustard. Each crop grew under specific geo-physical conditions. Vegetables were grown all over the valley, including lettuce, turnip, radish, carrot, spinach, cucumber, potato, beans, and chili. Peasants produced a variety of vegetables on a number of floating islands around Dal Lake. Additionally, in rural areas, every cultivator possessed a vegetable land called "Ver" (kitchen garden) attached to their residence. The valley of Kashmir is famous for the production of fruits such as apples, pears, walnuts, and grapes of high quality. Cultivators grew twenty-four varieties of grapes, including hasaini, kishmishi, sohibi, maska, panfakir, and kanhapn. Moorcraft mentioned that four types of walnuts, such as khanak, wantu, dunu, and kaghzi, were prevalent in Kashmir.

The first one was wild and rest were cultivated. G. T. Veign said that shahabad was famous for the cultivation of wheat, haripur for turnip, nirpur for rice, pampur for ghee, Jahum for hemp, Kothihar for silk are some of the best known places of valley. pampore which was famous for the cultivation of saffron a cash crop was grown here over the pleatues called karewas in kashmir. Although being such a fertile and highly productive tract but still did not witness expansion in agriculture due to the Oppressive taxation policies of the government. Policies of the government were so unfavorable to the peasants that they started to migrate to other states of india in search of good lives. Morcraft writes "land under cultivation was not more than 1/16th such were the economic condition of the state". Valley presented totally a deserted look owing to the dark era of the sikh rulers.wrote, "not more than 1/16th of the cultivable land was under cultivation." The Valley presented a deserted look. Jacquemont Victor(1828-31) a traveler said that "Kashmir surpasses all imaginable poverty". He was astonished to see such poverty crept in the valley.

Land holdings

Holding the ownership over the land was having control over the particular area. Being an agricultural country people of valley were enjoying rights over the land since early times which was also continued during this period. The whole land was divided into categories as khalsa, jagir,dharmarth and khud-kasht.

Khalsa:- it was the state property which was under its direct control of state.for cultivation of This land,it was rented to the peasants of that particular village who had to pay revenue toward state.most of these lands were available in the far off locations.

Jagir:- it was a portion of land that was handed over to a military officers or civil officer in lieun of their salaries. These jagirs were only given to the trusted ones by the rules depending upon their choices. The holder of this jagir was known as jagirdar similar to the one prevalent during mughals in India. All these jagirdars mentained their land either themselves or through their agents khalsa land divested by the Sikh rulers to the personages for serving the state either

in civil or military capacity were known as jagir. The grantees were known as jagirdars. They were authorized to collect the revenue from the land assigned to them. These jagirdars managed their jagirs either personally or through their agents.

Dharmarth:- These were the religious grants made by the state to important religious institutions or religious persons. It was a kind of charity given by sikh rulers to religious institutions. It was similar to the earlier terms such as agrahara grants and madad i mash. these grants were paid in cash, kind or even by bestowing lands. These lands granted to these religious institutions were known as dharmarth.

Khudkasht:- The term khudkasht means self cultivating, it guarantees ownership of an individual over land. Only those lands fall in the category of khudkasht owners who belong to the superior class of peasants called as Asudahahwal. There was no ban on sale and purchase of these kind of lands what required was payment of sales tax towards govt which was fixed by the officials. Although land was available for the peasants but they could never enjoy its benefits due to the multiple extraction of revenue by state as the result we frequently saw people left land uncultivated.

Karkhans

The rural economy of Kashmir was always engaged to agriculture owing to easy availability of water and fertile tracts. However with the passage of time people started to work intelligently and hence paved the way for the establishment of agro-based industries like cloth weaving, smithy, carpentry, oil pressing and animal husbandry. The artisans received a share of the village produce in lieu of their services which in history has been designated as the system of client-patron relationship. With the emergence of such things we see villages emerged as self-sufficient and whatever surplus remained was sent to cities. This flow of village surplus to cities changed the course of economic spheres of those residing in cities. The flow of goods from rural to urban areas integrated the people of Kashmir. The dependence of people continued to increase day by day as we see that the arts and crafts which were practiced in cities received great impetus in the Valley. During the Mughal rule shawls of all varieties were manufactured in Kashmir for different sections of society with different prices according to one's purse. These skillful artisans specialized in various designs and techniques. The mode of productivity, the system of monopolization of resources, market and concentration of surplus profit in the hands of mercantile community led to the emergence and growth of the capitalist class under whom the artisans manufactured the preferable shawls. All this reduced the artisans to a state of semi-bondage, driven by social compulsions and started to live a life of wretched plight with very meager wages. This plight was further accelerated by Afghan rulers due to their taxation policy which left the shawl weavers in tears and traders who were associated with it. For the first time in the history of Kashmir a department known as Daghshawl was inaugurated to regulate the activities of the shawl weavers. Unfortunately this proved to be of no mercy on behalf of weavers. The Sikh rulers during their period started to revive this industry in valley as they started to give some concession to these artisans and introduced some policies to save the industry from drying up. Colonel Mahan Singh had

given a new lease of life to the drowning industry which increased the number of looms. It was due to his efforts that artisans started to return to Kashmir from plains of India. Mr. Ventura who was an Italian military general of Maharaja Ranjit Singh boosted the shawl trade of Kashmir and integrated it with Italy. Though the industry reached to its glory both in quality and quantity yet it proved to be short lived due to the non-availability of raw material and emergence of natural calamities which gave serious setbacks to the industry. On the other hand government imposed exorbitant taxes on shawls at various stages of production and distribution led the artisans to face same fate as earlier. The situation became so worst that these shawl weavers once again left their factories and even some commit suicide. Thus the decline of the industry was inevitable.

The carpet industry of Kashmir along with the shawl industry flourished too. The industry owes its origin to Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin popularly known as Bud Shah. Since then it faced decline however it was Jahangir (1605-1628) through the efforts of Ahmed Beg (governor) tried to revive it again. The carpets of Kashmir with greater perfection and with multiple design of mosques, gardens, wild animals, gliding fish etc. These carpets of valley became so much famous that they replaced those who were imported from Iran. However industry soon witnessed gloom under the miserable Afghan rulers who imposed heavy taxes on artisans. Sikhs under Colonel Mahan Singh tried to improve carpet industry and introduced new designs of natural beauty and purity of material. The artisans produced small sized carpets and embroidered with gold zari and colored silken threads. Though the Sikhs tried to boost the craft yet it had not achieved such glory as was seen during Shahrin dynasty as it could not compete with the imported Iranian ones.

Francois Banier, a traveler, noted that wood carving flourished at a rapid speed during the period (1826). The specimens of carpenter's art are still extant in the form of Khatamband ceilings, pinjira kari, as wood carving in mosques of Shah-i-Hamdan and Nakshband Sahib in Srinagar. During this period there were state-owned Karkhanas apart from private Karkhanas

Apart from the above mentioned industries Kashmir also witness the manufacturing of galichas, dhurries, gabas and other floor coverings.

Kashmir also witnessed iron, silver, brass vessels and furniture manufacturing. Boats of different styles were manufactured in the Valley. George Foster hold, "The Kashmiris fabricated the best writing paper of the east". The paper mache which was introduced by Zain-ul-Abidin was of such a great quality that writings over it could have been washed easily. The carpenters who produced pen boxes, jewelry boxes, book ends, etc. become important items of external trade. The Valley continuously attracted the Europeans who had come to the Indian sub-continent after the establishment of British rule, it also opened a way to European travelers to visit Kashmir at preferably. On the part of Europeans they introduced Kashmir in their novelties to the World, which ultimately exposed Kashmir to international tourism.

Transport and communication

The so called valley of Kashmir is encircled by huge mountains accompanied by narrow passes. It were these passes which were used by people frequently to integrate with the outside world. Mughals established direct contact with Kashmir and were continue visiting the valley through these passes. Abul Fazal in his Ain-i-Akbari noted that there were (26)

routes which linked Kashmir with the rest of the world, out of which (6) were regularly used. These routes remained open even during winters as well. These Mughals paid much attention for the maintenance of these roads, constructed bridges and established inns, which boosted the trade and commerce of the state. Some of these routes may be introduced as.

Mughal road:- This route connects Kashmir with Gujarat. It runs over the Pir-panjal pass via Hastivanj. The important stages on the road were Saidabad, Noushahra, Chings, Rajouri, Thane, Bahramgalla, Poshiana, Aliabad, Hirapure, Shopiyan, Khampure and Shadimarg where inns were established which turned these places into trade centers. Muzafferabad pakhli route:-it connected Kashmir with Rawalpindi and Peshawar. It was an all season route and helped in the development of trade and commerce

Poonch route:- The route linked Kashmir through Haji-pir pass and Tosamaidan pass. Further it linked Jammu through Rajouri. There were two routes leading towards Kishtwar from Kashmir, one from Singhpur and another via Dasu. It connected Kishtwar with Badarwah and Jammu through Ramban. The road was traversed on foot and ponies were also used due to uneven terrain.

Central Asian route:- The route passes through Ladakh from east to west. It was accessible from March to November. It connected Kashmir with Tibet, Kashgar, Yarkand and China. The trade between Kashmir and Bhutan, Nepal, British India was also carried on by this route. The route functioned as an artery to the cottage industry of Kashmir as the whole raw material of shawl wool was imported through this route. Due to its high altitude and arid climate which caused scarcity of fodder, the trade was mostly carried on by the porters tied on their backs, though horses, mules and yaks were also put into service.

Navigation:- it too was an important means of transportation of goods from place to place. The availability of boats and water ways make it possible for people to travel from one place to another through these waterways. It is estimated that there were 7500 boats in practice during the period to carry goods from place to place.

Trade

Trade and commerce has always played an important role in the growth of every economy. It played an important role in bringing the prosperity of valley dwellers. It has remained a great source of source of the state which stimulated manufacturers and gave employment to a reasonable portion of the population. Trade brings integration of people from distant areas and pours wealth into the state. Trade was held with British India, Punjab, Nepal, Delhi, Bombay, Tibet, Central Asia, Tehran, etc. we have abundant

information that during sikh rules in kashmir trade in different commodities was held over the vast areas both internally as well as externally which improved the standard of people of kashmir. These traders were rich enough to live a luxurious life.

Trade was carried on both through land and water. The geography of kashmir being mountainous and due to the absence of fair-weather roads, ponies, potters, were used for continuous flow of trade across areas. During consistent rainy seasons when land routes got halted water ways were used for hatless flow of trade which led to further increased flow of traders. It is estimated that nearly (94) ninety four jetties/ports on the banks of river Jhelum, Nalla Mar and Dal Lake. The trade was mostly done in commodities such as, agricultural products, livestock and craft production. The boats laden with paddy, vegetables, fruits, tobacco, paper, earthenware, grass, bricks, stones and forest products were unloaded at the ghats of the Jhelum and Dal lake. The important markets places for domestic trade were, Shergarh, Zainkadal, Tankipora, Chattabal, Bazaar-i-Salatin and Habba kadal in the capital city of Srinagar. Similarly, Shahabad, Anantnag, Bijbehara, Shopian, Tral, Pampore, Pattan, Baramulla, Sopore, Kanihama, Kereri and Chrar-i-Sharif were the rural towns. Anantnag was the central town for the saddle cloth and gabba manufacturing. whileas Sopore for pattu cloth. The merchandise were subjected to octroi duty at various places. To regulate the flow of trad and collect revenue system, octroi posts were established at Anantnag, Sonawar, Maisuma, Batmalu, Chattabal, Haft Chinar, Daderhama, Shahabudin Pura, Sopore and Baramulla. The octroi rate was fixed as per value of the commodity. Trade was controlled both by the state and private businessmen. The paddy trade remained as the monopoly of the state government. Moocroft, stated that the revenue exacted by the government in kind was sold in the market on high prices. No individual was allowed to dispose of his produce till the government stock was finished. These steps of govt. has restricted the growth of local trade in the valley.

Despite the internal trade, the Valley also witnessed a free flow of trade with foreign countries such as Persia, Central Asia, Russia, Bhutan, Nepal, Punjab, and British India, which remained excellent. The trade route leading to Central Asia through Srinagar always remained the busiest. The chief export was shawls. Merchants had a complete monopoly over the wool trade in regions such as Ladakh, Gilgit, and Tibet. They employed agents throughout these regions who would pay advances to artisans and later collect the shawl wool from them. They established warehouses in China, Turkistan, and Central Asia. Bed sheets with hand embroidery were also sold by them.

Saffron was grown in regions like Pampore, Inderkot, and Kishtwar, which was exported to Yarkand, Tibet, China, and purchased by British merchants as well. The traders of the Valley also dealt in forest products such as Saussursa, Lippa (costus), calamus, amber beads, and wormwood, which were sold in Indian markets like Surat and Ahmedabad. Additionally, various kinds of scents and flowers were exported, yielding handsome profits to the traders.

Kashmir was also renowned for the production of fine paper, which was in great demand in India and exported to Iran. On the other hand, Kashmir imported various products like salt, shawl wool, cotton cloth, pepper, turmeric, ginger, and sugar. Hundis were used as a method of payment for long-distance trade. Each and every product was subjected to tax. The export of shawls from Kashmir incurred a tax of 3 rupees, whereas 4 rupees were levied on imports. To facilitate smooth trade, the government established inns and sarais at Banihal, Shahabad, Anantnag, Bijbehara, Shopian, Tral, Pampore, Hazratbal, Batmalo, Sopore, Sumbal, Patten, Kanihama, Charar-i-Sharif, and others.

Trade for the first time was hindered in the valley since the establishment of sikh rule in Kashmir from 1830 as we see these sikhs created terror in their governing areas. Sectarian riots during the reign of Bhaman sing forced the traders to quit their business in the valley, Besides that these greedy sikh rulers even increased the taxes on traders which compelled them to leave the valley at the earliest. It is estimated that in 1846 the government collected 104000 as custom duty by establishing a good no. of check posts throughout the valley. In this way the hard earning money of these traders was looted by the govt over the name of taxes. These high exorbitant taxation policies of the government ultimately proved disastrous for the long standing internal as well as external trade of the valley.

Government's revenue sources

Being an agricultural country land was the main source of livelihood for the people of Kashmir. It was the revenue from these peasants which was used to run the administration of the state. The devised methods of collection of revenue were continued by sikhs with some least modifications as were under the mughals. The state share was $\frac{1}{2}$ of the total produce. These Sikhs further enhanced the revenue as was under afghans as four traks per kharwar. Officials such as Qanungo and Patwari received additional three seers (2850 gms) per Kharwar, whileas, Sazawol, shikdar, Muqaddam, Tarazdar and Harkar received collectively five Seers (4750 gms) per Kharwa from the peasants as additional cess. Peasants also had to pay extra taxes such as nazrana, mandiri (maintenance of temples), tambul (marriage of royal family), rasum-i-daftari (collected for clerical staff). Daftar-i-diwani was charged @ of Rs5 (five) per thousand Kharwar of a village. Rusadat was a tax collected on fruit trees, willows and vegetables. Kah-charai (grazing tax), Sar-i-deh (pastoral levy) was charged @ of Rs 1(one) from small villages and Rs 2(two) from large villages. Rusad-i-chungi was exacted @ 4(four) traks, per 100 kharwars. Thandari, which was levied Rs 1/(one) from a small village and Rs 2/(two) from a large village. It was collected for the thanadars/police official's who rendered their services to the peasants by protecting them from thieves. Besides, the peasants paid a portion of his produce to the village artisans and menials like carpenters, iron smiths, potters, cobblers and barbers. After all these expenses peasants were left with less than $\frac{1}{4}$ th of the total produce, which made their life extreme miserable. Peasants were also subjected to begar (forced labour) to carry military contingent to

mountainous tracks especially during harvesting period, which worsened their already shattered economic condition.



Thus peasantry was living miserably under the oppression of the state. At times peasants left land uncultivated as they were not getting the fruits of their hard work but were always brought back by the government forcibly to cultivate their lands. The doomed atmosphere of valley led the people to migrate to other parts of India in search of new avenues which finally culminated to the decline of population in valley. The so called agricultural country was shattered to such an extent that even fertile land remained uncultivated. Moorcraft writes “everywhere people are in abject condition, exorbitantly taxed by the Sikh government and subjected to oppression of every kind throughout the valley

CONCLUSION

The valley of Kashmir, which has a long history of being ruled by Muslim rulers, suddenly came under the control of Sikhs during the early part of the 19th century. These Sikhs proved to be strong enough to defeat and eliminate the Afghans from Kashmir in 1819, marking a new chapter in the annals of Kashmir's history. Since the dawn of Sikh rule, the Muslim-dominated territory of Kashmir witnessed an alien rule and the greed of these rulers to acquire more and more wealth from the country by any means necessary. The Sikh rulers, jagirdars, and revenue officials followed selfish policies of extracting wealth to meet their unending royal necessities. This impoverished the peasants and exploited hardworking traders and craftsmen in the valley through the imposition of exorbitant taxes. From 1819 to 1846, the valley of Kashmir endured an oppressive and tyrannical period under the Sikhs, marked by extreme suffering and pain. Peasants left the land uncultivated, trade declined, industries suffered, and economic resources were drained with each passing year. This collectively created an atmosphere of threat and fear in society. The Valley under Sikh rule presented a deserted look, which deeply impacted the political scenario of Kashmir. With the end of these oppressive years, the valley witnessed the rule of the East India Company. However, instead of shouldering the responsibility of governing such a hilly country, they passed it to the Dogras through the Treaty of Amritsar, for a fixed amount of 750,000 Nanak Shahis. Through this treaty, Kashmir's fate passed to another non-Muslim dynasty known as the Dogras.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest related to this study. All research was conducted impartially, and no influence from any third-party organizations or financial interests have affected the outcomes of this study. The conclusions drawn are entirely those of the authors based on the analyzed data.

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