

A Comparison of Socio- Political and Economic Conditions of Kashmir during the 19th Century Dogra Rule from 1846 to 1947 with their Relevant Impact

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Abstract—Due to the Treaty of Amritsar, the state of Jammu and Kashmir has always been deprived from attaining the status of a conquered territory. Hence, during the subsequent years the shape of the state was recreated majorly as per geo-political and administrative convenience rather than commonality shared by the local people. Quite obviously the enforcement of the Dogra ruling was also the pursuance of the very age old tradition, which had been transmitted from the pre-colonial era of Mughal, Afghan and Sikh rulers of Kashmir who were also no more interested in giving Kashmir's the right to determine their own future. In this brief paper the discussion will be around the Socio- Political and Economic Conditions of Kashmir during the 19th Century Dogra Rule and their comparative analysis to present the scenario of Kashmir in that period. It has been observed that in spite of the eagerness of the initial administrators of the Dogra regime to create loyal followers from the Hindu clerical caste of Kashmiri Pundit, the whole valley was commoditized like an economic asset rather than a political possession. In addition to this religious, linguistic and cultural division between the rulers own territories and Kashmiri people were fueling this psychological trauma which ultimately deprived any bond between the local people and the Dogra regime backed by the British Empire. Therefore, it can be stated that this paper has tried to present the feudalistic political system due to which the socio- political life and economic aspects of the people suffered unabatedly in this regime.

Keywords: *Treaty of Amritsar, 19th century Kashmir, Dogra's, Socio-political life, Economic aspects, Education,*

1. INTRODUCTION

Apparently due to the Treaty of Amritsar (16th March, 1846) Kashmir became a part of the newly created state of Jammu and Kashmir and as a consequence deprived from attaining the status of a conquered territory. Quite obviously the shape of the state was recreated majorly as per geo-political and administrative convenience rather than commonality shared by the local people. Further, the enforcement of the Dogra ruling over Kashmir by the British ruler was a one-sided decision which undoubtedly went against the interests of the vast majority of the local people. However, this very age old tradition had been transmitted from the pre-colonial era of Mughal, Afghan and Sikh rulers of Kashmir who were also no more interested in giving Kashmir's the right to determine their own future. Apart from these, with the set-up of the state of J&K, vital change in arrangements of power had been observed during the Dogra rule under the major influence of the colonial government of India (Parvez, 2007). Although the initial administrators of Dogra regime, such as Gulab Singh (1846-56) and Ranbir Singh (1853-85), were eager to create loyal followers from the Hindu clerical caste of Kashmiri Pundit, yet some prominent Kashmiri Muslims like Sayyid as well as Pir families ensured a smooth transition of the valley to the Dogra kingdom.

When Gulab Singh took over the control of Kashmir, the socio-political and economic condition of Kashmir was highly deplorable and this trend was sustained due to the Dogra rulers' economic rebuilding and political consolidation of the state, like resumed all the land grants, re- imposed state control on the state industries, introduction of the food rationing system, and reorganization of shawl department. As such the whole valley was commoditized like an economic asset rather than a political possession.

In addition to these religious, linguistic and cultural division between the rulers' own territories and Kashmiri people was fueling this psychological trauma which ultimately deprived any bond between the local people and the Dogra regime backed by the British Empire. Hence, the status of Kashmir reduced to serfdom starting from agriculture and then gradually encompassed the industry, trade Commerce, lakes, forests and other natural resources under the ruling of the Dogra regime with its back-breaking taxation. So, it can be stated that under the oppression of the government forces and officials the local people were starved to death and most unfortunately even at that time, grave diggers were subjected to tax (Collett, 1898). Therefore, the genesis of the present Kashmir conflict is lying within its past history as the basic rights of the Kashmiri Muslims trampled during the 19th century by the autocratic rulers, denying the opportunities of socio-economic development with intentionally hurting their religious sentiments.

In this paper the discussion will be around the socio-political conditions vs. economic conditions and their impact as the Kashmir has acquired a unique geo-political status in the Indian sub-continent since the 19th century. The heterogeneous society of Kashmir was stratified into Muslims, Hindus as well as a small number of Sikhs who entered into the state during the Sikh rule (1819-1846). Although Hindu and Muslim communities were superstitious and orthodox, yet they shared intimate relations with each other. The Hindus of the state mainly suffered from the social stratification due to their caste system. Except in a few exceptional cases the general people were riding with poverty while contentment assumed to be a relative luxury (Knight, 1996). Till the end of the 19th century the general lifestyle of the people, including house building, food habits, dress, ornaments and customs, were not changed. Hence, the much perceptible change was not observed on the whole of the customs of the Kashmiri Muslims and Pundits. Historical records revealed that Kashmir has always maintained a distinctive cultural past for thousands of years. As the local inhabitants of the valley adopted, shaped and transmitted this cultural heritage generation after generation, therefore this paper will discuss about the specific cultural traits-features developed around the social, economic, religious, political, educational and other fields of human life (Dhar, 1989).

1. Literature Review

Kashmir, the Paradise on Earth, has a very age old history of autocratic ruling. The Kashmiri people lost their independence with the Mughal annexation of Kashmir in 1586 AD. After their acquisition this valley was controlled from Delhi and the gloomy picture of their ruling was found in the literary and historical writings. The Mughal power waned in India during 1753 AD and the Afghans conquered the valley during 1753- 1819 with their tyrannical outlook. The lack of the benevolent attitude of the Afghans was quite distinct from the Kashmiri documents of that time as they did not take part in the state building process in the 18th century India which proved to be quite fatal as well as disruptive for locals. As the Kashmiri people had to face a lot of misery under the both Muslim rulers, therefore they welcomed the Sikhs heartily as they drove the Afghans out from Kashmir in 1819 AD. Balraj Puri said with the establishment of Sikh rules (1819-1846) a specific Hindu tone was established which continued with the Dogra regime.

The Sikh rulers were also turned out as fortune seekers and great oppressors and as such under the British intervention the autocratic rule of Gulab Singh was established by the middle of the 19th century in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The entire Dogra regime trampled the basic rights of Kashmiri Muslims and hence the development of socio- economic opportunities was denied. Along with religious sentiments were intentionally hurt. Although the British Empire had consciously made attempts for reducing the pathetic condition of the majority community of the state, yet the confiscation and oppression reigned the entire Dogra regime. Their harsh and unjust economic policies undoubtedly dispossessed the Kashmiri peasants. During their regime the peasants were simply reduced to tenants at will. In the entire history of the valley the Kashmiri Muslims lost their ownership rights over their lands. On the behalf of the Government, the Maharajas continued their brazen exploitation and inhuman practice in any measure by fixing the kotas of people for doing the indentured labor (Digby, 1890). Their terrible condition and intense exploitation were documented in the articles of many European writers, Like Arthur Brinkman, Robert Thorp, William Digby and others. They pointed out that the gravest problems of Kashmiri people, both in rural and urban area, were caused by the poverty. The Dogra rulers continued their oppression toward the vast majority of the Kashmiri Muslims through the

exorbitant taxes and communal bias. So Kashmiri Muslims were filled with a sense of indignation due to the oppressive treatment they experienced from the Dogra rulers. Even few writers also commented that these pathetic conditions of Kashmiris were all the atrocities that were deliberately created by the Dogra government and unsurprisingly patronized by the British Government (Dhar, 1989). Hence, this paper, will try to explore the political turmoil and at the same time, Efforts have made to uncover the contours of the communal nature of the Dogra ruler. Thereby it will try to make a conscious comparison of socio-political oppression and economic exploitation that critically affected the lives of majority Kashmiri Muslims.

1.1 Social and Economic Conditions

Social condition - According to Taylor Wilkin literature is an important document of a spontaneous expression of the society due to whole past has been embedded within it as a legitimate object of historical inquiry or knowledge. By following his objective it can be stated that Kashmiri folk literature represents the various facets of the Kashmiri society. Due to possession of all the dominant traits of the feudal character, the Kashmiri society can be segregated into three major categories- a) upper class, b) middle class and c) lower class. The highest layer of social enjoyed the aristocracy and associated luxury. The next social hierarchy possessed by the landed elite, like urban Karkhanadars, Sikh and Dogra people. The lowest category of Kashmiri society was formed by the peasantry, artisans and other categories of skilled labor. With the end of the Kashmiri Sultanate the Kashmiri people had to face the new schemes of oppression and extortion. The Kashmiri folk literature is full of glaring examples of public misery and agony. Due to the corrupt behaviors of Mughal officialdom, the local people had developed hatred and contempt against the Mughal imperialism. The Mughal governors were busy to squeeze the last penny out of the cultivator and trader for which no means were found to address their grievances. The same situation was repeated during the Afghan rule in Kashmir as the people experienced the worst type of political vulgarity as well as official vandalism. Many Kashmiri plays of that period symbolically project the helplessness of the Kashmiri peasant society and reveal the unkind behavior of Afghan governors and their subordinate officials. However the social and economic exploitation also persisted during the Sikh rule and in some cases proved harsher than their previous ones. The Sikh legacy was characterized by the illegal exactions, drain of wealth, official oppression, peasantry migration as well as deepening social tensions and crises. Further, providing incentives to the influential and privileged sections of the society, introducing the institution of Begar (forced labor) and the religious prosecution coupled with moral degeneration are some of the darkest side of the Sikh legacy in Kashmir.

During the Dogra period the social exploitation attained the highest reach due to people were heavily taxed as well as the condition of the peasantry was miserable and unhappy. The chief feature of oppression during this rule was the land transfer from peasants to Dogra aristocracy. The majority of the population, comprised of the peasantry and artisans, was suffered miserably under the autocratic and sectarian rule of the Maharajahs. Under their ruling Kashmiri Muslims were living a life of abject poverty and oppression. Hence, due to excessive extortion and oppression by the Dogra officials people were resorted to migration. So, during the 19th century the Kashmiri people experienced a troublesome dichotomy between economic opportunity and socio-political grievances. Statistically the variables of political and social grievances, like ethnic and religious fragmentation, political repression, political exclusion, and economic inequality, were less significant than the proxies of the economic viability of waging war, such as the availability of lootable resources, remittances, and the lack of economic alternatives. However, during the first fifty years of Dogra rule the discontented people suppressed their grievances in the absence of any open channel of expression. The situation changed after 1932 as an organized struggle was launched against the oppressive Dogra regime with the formation of Muslim Conference.

Economic condition –

History of Kashmir is always associated with a very repressive economic exploitation and misery. This sustained scenario was characterized by the ruthless taxation, inhuman collection machinery, unjust and unfair tax criteria as well as utter deprivation. Hence, during the Dogra period peasants suffered most miserably as the entire feudal economic system was converted into a weaker type of capitalism. The state was functioning communally in levying and collecting taxes from the people (Knight, 1996). Even if the poorest Muslim community has to pay tax except the tailors. Undoubtedly the British Empire assisted the upper class Hindus to consolidate and increase their wealth at the expense of masses in spite of imposing a semblance of peace over the state. E. F. Knight also stated that throughout the regime state officials of the Dogra Maharaja were exploiting the masses for their own benefit which can be termed as killing the goose on behalf of them that laying the golden eggs. Due to the prohibition of the trade and barter between the producer and consumer, both parties were deprived of making their life smoothly functional either in terms of money or food. Most tragically the crop of the villagers was taken away by the supreme ruler and as such development of various needs and their consequent exploitation expanded both horizontally as well as vertically. In this context the following realization of Francis Young husband can well explain the economic conditions of Kashmir in 1860's-

“In the early 'sixties cultivation was decreasing; the people were wretchedly poor, and in any other country their state would have been almost one of starvation and famine; justice was such that those who could pay could at any time get out of jail, while the poor lived and died there almost without hope. There are few men of respectable and none of wealthy appearance; and there were almost prohibitive duties levied on all merchandise imported or exported”. (1911, pp. 110-125). From various studies, it was observed that in other parts of the Indian subcontinent frequent land settlements were carried out along with the rapid accumulation of capital in agriculture with its improvement. But most tragically Kashmir was still passing through a traditional economic order (Mukherjee, 1988). Apart from the geographical isolation from the rest of the Indian subcontinent, alarming consequences were created for the state, passing through the agrarian economy, due to the rural economic infrastructure increasingly neglected by the corrupt and inept bureaucratic management. Peasants were under intense pressure due to the land distribution system and as such migration became an intense reality (Wilson, 1901). As an inexhaustible source of manpower, the landless peasants became the forced laborer for the landlords and the state officials.

The large population of the state was supported by the agrarian structure which was considered as the main industry. Further, the sector was seriously suffering from the overcrowded population and also no means were found to relieve it. Hence, it became necessary that the state would make progress in the economic field. Obviously the physical and economic circumstances of the state were justifying that the production of food grains should have taken precedence over commercial crops. Thereby the emerging accepted theory assumed that an appropriate portion of cultivated lands should be cash crops (Wakefield, 1879). So the decision was that the purchasing power of the agriculturalists should be increased and can be applied to the state only subject to the overriding condition that provision of food for both urban and rural population should come first. As such agriculture was identified as a supporting structure by the figures of density of population, soil productivity, average holding and the percentage of cultivated area occupied by various crops. All these presented no alternative to this proposition.

On the basis of above analyses it can be stated that the political condition of Kashmir was overshadowed by the corruption, ruthless taxation and exploitation, On the other side the Maharajas were appeared to be too much preoccupied with the western penetration for introducing anything new and settled in the field of agriculture for attaining large profits. Throughout the Dogra period the features of the agrarian structure were marked by the mounting pressure on land, the increased fragmentation of holdings, the volume of indebtedness, forced labor, the sad lack of interior communication and the general mental outlook of the landless peasants (Thorp, 2015). So the methods of agricultural farming practiced during the Dogra period offered no ground for optimism in regard to the increase in the yield of various crops. The farmers bounded themselves to the ancient methods of agriculture and as such the way of manuring were unscientific and the use of labor was uneconomical. Hence, they were failing to introduce the crops that would fill up the gap during the off season, which made his dependence on the seasoned crops very

pronounced as well as scientific rotation and artificial manuring were also practically unknown. Quite naturally good cultivation was suffering from the absence of well-integrated effort (Younghusband, 1911). So, the whole scenario of the peasantry was quite unsatisfactory. The less incentive availability prepared the general psychological make-up of an agriculturist in such a way that it would finally preclude him from taking any risks in terms of improvement in the methods of cultivation. As a consequence of all these scenarios, the average villagers developed an outlook on life and religion that was full of superstition, pathetic, contentment and sullen fatalism. So, the factors of lack of enterprise and inaction obliged the average agriculturalists, with little spare capital, to not afford any scope for adventure (Younghusband, 1911).

As Arthur Brinkman observed that “the crop of the villages were stored in the open air granaries strictly guarded for weeks and months for regular or otherwise taxation” (1868, pp. 48-50). So, by duly calculating and valuing the whole produce of the country the grain was dispensed in just sufficient quantities to keep the life and soul together. Although some improvements were made during the 1870's, yet the taxation remained high. He also observed that still much wasteland existed in which people were unwilling to pursue cultivation as the system of land revenue administration could not provide certainty that they would ever receive the outcomes of their labor.

1.2 Political Conditions of Kashmir

From its very historical past Kashmir has experienced tremendous political changes. The native people of Kashmir were indelibly affected by the occupation rule of the Mughal's, Sikhs, Pathans and Dogras. Hence living under the rulers' suppressive measures inflicted deep wound on the psyche of Kashmiri people. The political history of Kashmir is always occupied with betrayals and unfulfilled promises. Recognized as a separate and distinct nation the people of Kashmir were forced to slavery under the alien rulers. By snatching their civic and fundamental rights, these rulers drove them to live like a slave. The destiny of Kashmiri people remained almost same under the rulings of Mughals, Afghans, Sikhs and Dogras. Ruthless exactions, violent suppression, maltreatment of Muslims and their atrocities were dominant features of these ruling leaders. So, the political life of Kashmir in the midst of the 19th century had turned itself silently to an unsavory turning point as the British Empire hard-heartedly handed over this Paradise on Earth to Dogra Maharaja Gulab Singh in 1846 for a paltry sum of Rs. 75 lakh (Kaiwar, 1994). As such the following observation of Huttenback can be very much well-regarded in this respect- “the final act of the Drama was to be played in Kashmir itself; Gulab Singh still had to defeat the Sikh Governor, who was unwilling to surrender the province” (2005, pp. 185-189). Maharaja Gulab Singh was already the master of Jammu, Ladakh and Baltistan and after the possession of Kashmir, Maharaja occupied the Gilgit as well. Thereby British Empire took a sordid and shameful step that devoid all the sense of fairness, equity and justice. Without consulting the leaders of Kashmir they enslaved the Kashmiri people and made their living condition pitiful like animals (Kapur, 1968). So, it can be stated that the Treaty of Amritsar was a move by the British for vesting their authority solely on Maharaja, the lesser version of their own sovereignty, to arrange the hierarchy as well as superior and inferior rights through accommodative and negotiated processes. Quite obviously created on the basis of pure geopolitical requirements, the sovereignty of Kashmir has historically suffered from the injustice, suppression and corruption under the different administrators. So, misery and starvation followed every aspect of life of people, particularly the Muslim population, as administrators mostly favored and provided privileges to the Pundits and Hindus. Ruling with all the might and terror Gulab Singh and his ascender Ranbir Singh were also acknowledged for crushing and suppressing the people fighting against oppression (Brinkman, 1868). Various studies have clearly indicated that Dogra rulers were extremely greedy and they kept their position consolidated by spreading terror throughout the valley. Hence the overall condition of Kashmiri people under the Dogras was very much hostile. Therefore, the plight of the poor people of the valley increased due to the barbaric and corrupt system of the government as well as the ruthless attitude of moneylenders. So, the whole industrial, agriculture, education and other relevant sectors were in turmoil during the 19th century. As such the comparison of socio-political with economic conditions and analysis of their impact can be very much critical in this context (Knight, 1996).

Dogra regime was established in 1846 and with this a new ruling structure was initiated. The Treaty was a form of 'Sale Deed' and the power of the valley transferred to a non-local Hindu prince mainly inhabited by the Muslims. This Treaty affected the life and conditions of people in various ways. One of the major example was the declaration of all proprietary land rights in Kashmir as null and void. This was due to the strong conviction of the Maharaja Gulab Singh that he had purchased every minute thing of the Kashmir along with its people and livestock. This mentality was strongly adhered by the subsequent maharajas of the Dogra regime. Maharaja Gulab Singh was so much obsessed with the power handed over to him that he made a declaration that Kashmir was his private property and as such established a centralized government system there (YosufSaraf, 2005). Thereby, it can be easily assumed that the basic structure of political system remained feudalistic. Quite obviously due to the unsound policies of the ruling class, the socio-political life and economic aspects of the people suffered unabatedly in this feudalistic oriented state. It was also observed that the upper class Hindus, particularly benefitted as they consolidated and increased their wealth at the expense of the general masses. So, during the Dogra regime disputed decision on the ownership of land fueled the land management problem of Kashmir (Wilson, 1901).

Ranbir Singh succeeded Gulab Singh in 1857 and after that Pratap Singh sworn in 1885. The British Empire replaced his ruling temporarily in 1889 by a council. However, such reforms were unable to bring any change in the lives of Kashmiri people and they had to endure heavy taxation, state monopoly in the trade, ruthless judiciary system, as well as lack of proper healthcare and social welfare. Hari Singh succeeded Pratap Singh in 1925 and he also remained apparently indifferent to the welfare of people throughout his twenty-three years of rule. Hence Alastair Lamb stated that-"In every aspect of the State's life there was discrimination against the Muslim majority and the application of legislation expressly designed to favor Hindus. Until 1934, for example, the slaughter of cows was a capital offense; and it continued to be forbidden under lesser penalty after that date. The administration of the State was dominated at all levels by the Pandits, Kashmiri Brahmins, who were notoriously corrupt and avaricious. Muslims were in practice severely disadvantaged by the educational system which began to develop in the State in the first years of the 20th century." (1968, pp. 62). However, the positive developmental attitude has been demonstrated by the subsequent Dogra rulers after the death of Gulab Singh in 1857. Some progressive measures were adopted for benefitting the residents in the form of security provision through different acts. Although with the establishment of the Dogra rule the maharajas tried to bring a change in the administration, yet it cannot be denied that the conditions of the Kashmir almost remained the same as it had been under the Sikhs. The feudal structure of the valley was characterized by the various social classes of the society, including jagirdars, pattadars, chakdars and other segments of the peasantry who made up all social classes in a variety of ways (Thorp, 2015). Besides, no pure and simple landlord class existed while presence of chakdars were numerous. Moreover, it was agreed by the high officials and maharajas that the greatest rewards of this society must go to the agriculturalists and as a consequence they were more concerned with the system of raising taxes.

Under the regime of Maharaja Gulab Singh the conditions of people did not improve due to the greediness of rulers for money and further the situation was aggravated as the Muslims were treated as second class citizens by the Maharaja in spite of their vast majority in the valley. The most concerned fact is that officials were fiercely Hindu and as such they favored their own people above the Muslims in every way (Parvez, 2007). Even the Hindus were exempted from doing the forced labor and Hindu tax collectors were blatantly corrupt. Francis Younghusband also observed that all measures of relief were impeded by the corruption and obstruction and as such the starving inhabitants were not allowed to migrate to the parts where they could get food. In addition to these due to the bad communications, import of food from neighboring provinces, where it was existed in plentiful quantity, was also very much difficult (Younghusband, 1911). As a result, two-thirds of the population died; a number of the chief valleys were entirely deserted; whole villages laid into ruins, as beams, doors, etc., had been extracted for sale; some suburbs of Srinagar were tenantless, and the city itself was half destroyed; trade came almost to a standstill, and consequently employment was difficult to obtain (Younghusband, 1911). So, this greatest calamity had openly exposed the blatant defects of the system. Further, Walter R. Lawrence pointed out that the most unfortunate fact was during that period in Kashmir no special laboring class was existed and as per custom the people of Srinagar were exempted

from forced labor and the whole demand for labor was forced on the villagers. Moreover, the Pandits, Sikhs, Pirzadas, Gujars and cultivators working on the land granted by the officials were free from all fears of being forced laborer. As a consequence of these exemptions, out of a total population of 814241, 52216 men were free because they were Hindus, 4092 because they were Sikhs and 114170 because they were Muslims residing in the city and towns (Lawrence, 2010). Apart from these after finishing the job of filling the government kotas with their life and land, the villagers were sent up to the Frontier areas of Gilgit and Astor in the autumn of every year with the loads of food on their backs. They had to cover their journeys in twelve days and even in some cases within a month without the slightest provision for food, shelter or clothing. So, during their journey on the snowy hill mountain tracts they mainly had to starve to death either by hunger or harsh weather. Hence it can be stated that for the dishonest and corrupted officials of the state, the institution of the forced labor was considered as a potent instrument for oppression and exploitation. The every aspect of life of the Muslim population was overshadowed by the oppression of the Dogra regime (Lawrence, 2010). Even women and children became victims of exploitation and it went so deep that women had to resort to certain 'socially disapproved' ill practices for the survival of their families. In this context, Robert Thorp observed that the government encouraged and protected this heinous crime and also granted permission to purchase a girl for prostitution in exchange of one hundred Chilke Rupees revenue. These unfortunate women like the shawl-bafs were legally forbidden from returning to the normal lives. The avaricious nature of Dogra government can be blamed for forcing the young girls and in some cases the children to the prostitution (Lawrence, 2010). Thorp also commented that "The sale of young girls in cashmere to established houses of ill-fame, is both protected and encouraged by the Government; and it helps to swell that part of his revenue which the Maharaja derives from the wages of prostitution." (2015, pp. 95-98).

By the 1870's the Kashmiri Shawl weavers, wealthy during the Mughal rule, became poor due to different forms of taxation. Moreover, a deliberate policy of ethnic cleansing or genocide by starvation was occurring during the period of 1877-78 with the death of thousands of Muslims as the Hindu government seized the stockpiles of food, grain and additional supplies. The following comment was significant in this regard- "The year 1877 was a cruel time. A bad season was added to excessive taxation, so that the people preferred leaving their crops to rot in the ground to gathering what would bring in so little profit to themselves. Villages were deserted, trade went down, and starvation decreased the population. It was only with the last Maharajah that a turning loomed in the long lane of Kashmir's misfortunes." (Thorp, 2015, pp. 100-102).

The Lolab valley was not only depopulated but also a large extent of the district beyond that valley became deserts. So this fertile and splendid country was totally destroyed at the hand of these Hindu Maharajas. According to Sir Lepel Griffin and Dr. Downes, the famine of 1876-78 directly swept away from one-third to two-fifths of the Kashmiris due to the maladministration of corrupt native officials as well as visitations of cholera. The happening of this epidemic situation can be wholly blamed on the outrageous defying sanitary laws. Hence the following observation of William Digby substantiates the real fact- "The famine and the injudicious action of the revenue authorities had reduced the people to a state of absolute poverty" (1890, pp. 96-102).

Educational Reforms prior to the late 19th century

2. The education system in Jammu and Kashmir was informal and indigenous. In past times Kashmir was the center for studying Sanskrit language. Even pupil from various parts of the world kept visiting Kashmir for significant advanced education. Essential instructions amid Muslim rule was given through "Maktabs" and "Madrasas" additionally there are likewise remains and hints of advanced education during the Buddhist period as the higher educational organizations like Nalanda, Taxila and Vikramshila existed in that period. Under this education system the Pandits and Moulvis imparted education to local Hindus and Muslim boys in Pathshalas and Madrasas respectively (Sharma, Mohammad, 2019). The early Dogra rulers also did not show any interest to promote the educational affairs among the people (Knight, 1996). The first Dogra Maharaja Gulab Singh was too busy in consolidating his dominions. However, his successor Maharaja Ranbir Singh had first undertaken some active interest in the

education system and made some feeble attempts at founding a few state supported institutions. In spite of all these efforts the education system continued to remain as unregulated and religious. No concerted effort was made on the part of the government to promote education among the mass people. Most tragically the government was opposed to the schools established by the Christian missionary society in Srinagar in 1880. Hence it was quite obvious that during this period the state did not consider education either its responsibility or a priority (Zutshi, 2018). In fact the situation changed after the establishment of the British ascendancy in Kashmir and some reform measures were introduced in the educational field. As the state did not feel the necessity to educate the local masses, therefore the state council, in the initial years of its rule, did not make any serious attempt to reform the educational sector of Jammu and Kashmir. However, some steps were taken to improve the educational standards after the British intervention only due to create a class that could help with the task of administering the vast country.

3. Analyses of the Impact of Communal Attitude of Dogra Administration

By degrading the majority section of the Muslim population and systematically ignoring their basic rights the Dogra state functioned in partial, communal and unjust manner. Religion overshadowed the state functioning and as a consequence determined the distribution of privileges, honors and even rights and liberties. Mridu Rai pointed out that, “the Dogra State was actually a Hindu State and its rulers tried their best to broaden its Hindu nature, with the result Kashmiri Pundits as a co-religionists’ class found it easy to get associated with it and the Muslims were marginalized (2004, pp. 256-275).” As such a large number of Muslim shrines and mosques were confiscated and declared State property, like Pather Masjid, Khanqah Sokhta, Khanqah Bulbulshah, Khanqah Darashikoh, Idgah and so on in Srinagar and Khanqah Sufi Shah and Bahu Mosque in Jammu (Wakefield, 1879). Moreover to check the spread of Islam, the government had promulgated a law to debar the Hindu, converted to Islam, from the right of inheritance and in the case of vice versa the Hindu person could attain the right of inheritance. Apart from these they were subjected to various difficulties and inconveniences by the local officials. In addition to these various laws were imposed in favor of Hindu along with not tolerating the Muslim names. As such Islamabad changed into Anantnag. Maharaja Ranbir Singh also closed the Friday market in Jama Masjid, Srinagar and opened a new market called Maharaja Gunj. Maharaja Hari Singh also discouraged the business of Muslims and Muslim contractors and instead encouraging the local contractors, especially the high contractors from outside and gave them loans without any interest (Vinge, 1842). So the majority of Kashmiri Muslims were subjected to grave injustice during the Dogra period.

4. Comparison of Socio-Political and Economic Conditions of Kashmir

It is very critical to state that during the 19th century, whether Kashmir is suffering from socio-political turmoil or economic exploitation. The reason is that they were mutually affecting each other. In this regard it is better to say that throughout the world, people mostly unrest due to socio-political and economic problems. However, in the Kashmir valley the different rulers failed to provide any sense of identity with the ruling class, especially among the vast Muslim population. The un-ending political oppression, social exploitation, economic distress and disparity as well as natural calamities started right from the annexation of Kashmir by the Mughals. Their harsh ruling and heavy taxation continued in the Afghan regime also. During their regime people were reduced to the lowest ebb of penury and degradation. The whole economic structure destroyed due to negligence and heavy taxation. Under their cruelest and tyrannical ruling peasants and shawl weavers were obliged to discontinue their profession. Their miserable condition continued in the same way during Sikh and Dogra rules also. In contradiction to their predecessors, the Dogra rulers made some efforts for improvement in spite of the disorder within the state. However, the rulers had undertaken some constructive steps, like the establishment of a centralized government, the introduction of the western system of education, construction of roads and canals as well as installation of electricity (Wilson, 1901). Although these were steps to provide the state a new shape, yet it can be stated that all these measures were initiated

only after the intervention of the British. The British Empire had established their full-fledged residency in Kashmir in 1885 and this political intervention obliged the Dogra rulers to take certain steps in the name of the socio-economic welfare of the state. But the Dogra rulers kept the basic administrative structure of their state as feudalistic. The most shameful fact is that during the Dogra regime Kashmir was considered as purchased property and their attitude was like a master ruler over the slave (Wakefield, 1879). Hence, due to historical necessities the freedom struggle of the Kashmiris was initiated by the Muslims and it was quite obvious that non-Muslims would remain aloof from this movement.

Thereby this paper undoubtedly proves that the economic condition was much worse than the socio-political turmoil. Within the state population the Muslims generally belonged to an unprivileged class. This was also demonstrated by the Dogra rulers as they favor religious bias to their own people and withdrew the royal privileges to the Muslims and bestowed the same upon non-Muslims. Another example of economic exploitation was that Maharaja Gulab Singh confiscated the land grants of the Muslims and awarded the same to the non-Muslims (Zutshi, 2018). Maharaja Gulab Singh was not the sole example of this type of oppression, the valley had suffered this way throughout the Dogra regime. Apart from these, several religious places and shrines of the Muslim community were confiscated by the Dogra rulers. Thereby it can be stated that the political decision was biased as it supported the religious susceptibilities toward Muslims. Further, all these shrines were converted into store houses for arms and ammunition. Hence, it indicates that Dogra rulers openly demonstrated the religious fanaticism. So, this clearly supported the fact that biased political scenario deteriorated the social and economic conditions (Knight, 1996). In Kashmir, during the 19th century, political turmoil might affect the lives of people, but the worse social and economic conditions made their lives more pathetic.

In British India, during the 19th century, the people enjoyed the freedom of the press and the platform. But most tragically, the people of Jammu and Kashmir were devoid of all such facilities and there was a strict ban on the freedom of the press and platform even up to the thirties of the 20th century. In this context the comments of Sir Albion Banerji, the Foreign Minister of the last Dogra ruler, Maharaja Hari Singh, was well-regarded. In 1929 at the Lahore press conference, after his resignation, he rightly observed that the people of Kashmir were treated as “dumb driven cattle” (Kapur, 1968). Moreover, according to a contemporary historian Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz, the vast majority Muslim population of the state was “dealt with harshly only because they were Muslims” and “were synonymous to hewers of wood and drawers of water”. Hence, from the above analyses and the review of the communal attitude of the Dogra rulers, it can be stated that social and economic conditions were worse in the valley during the 19th century in spite of the political turmoil.

Conclusion

Although under the predecessors of the Dogras the Kashmiri Muslims were suffering from social, economic and political disempowerment, yet it was the Dogras who took this exploitation to unprecedented levels. The entire Dogra regime was considered as extremely greedy and cruel. As such the ruling dynasty obliged many Kashmiri families for migrating toward the south, specifically in the neighboring state of Punjab. As all these regions were directly governed by the British, therefore in these areas's abundance of work and business opportunities as well as protection from persecution existed. Further, this situation persisted as the Dogras maintained their ruling in alignment with the religious division. So, the period of the 19th century experienced intense social and economic exploitation than the political turmoil. The social and economic exploitation were so intense that the majority of the Muslims migrated to the affluent areas, like Punjab, for working opportunities and less religious oppression. Although it was difficult to say whether the political turmoil was intense or the social and economic exploitation, yet from the majority of the writers' accounts, it can be stated that the Muslims suffered from poverty, hunger and other miseries due to the exercise of inhuman practices

by the Dogra rulers. Apart from de-industrializing and de-humanizing the majority Muslim population of the state, they also sowed the seeds of a communal politics in the state. They also encouraged this situation with religious fervor and ethnic 'otherness'. As a consequence the people of the state suffered vehemently from the communal environment that was only nurtured and multiplied under the Dogra rule. The age old tradition of inclusive, tolerant and pluralistic political culture of the Kashmir was totally destroyed under the Dogra regime. Although the British intervention in Kashmir had a positive impact upon Kashmir economy as well as upon the society, yet the majority of the Muslim population submerged in the depths of illiteracy. Thereby, the following decades experienced the appeals of the Kashmiri Muslim leadership to the residency to overcome the backwardness of Muslims in the field of education and the insistence on state recognition of Muslims as a separate category in this field.

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