

STATUS OF KASHMIRI MUSLIMS UNDER SIKHA SHAHI GOVERNORS RAJ: AN ANALYTICAL DISCOURSE

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Sadaf Butt

Lecturer, Pakistan Studies Department, Abbottabad University of Science & Technology

Email: sadafbutt@aust.edu.pk**Saad Jaffar**

Lecturer Islamic studies, Department of Pakistan Studies, Abbottabad University of Science and Technology

Email: SaadJaffar@aust.edu.pk**Hadia Ihsan**

MPhil Scholar, Department of Pakistan Studies, Abbottabad University of Science & Technology

Email: hadiarani51999@gmail.com**Abstract**

After the fall of Afghan Durrani rule, Kashmir came under the Sikha Shahi Raj, which was mainly operated from the Lahore Durbar. Maharaja Ranjit Singh by considering Kashmir as a good exporter of shawls and saffron, used to appoint his most devoted generals and ministers to govern it. Sikha Shahi Raj lasted in Kashmir for 22 years, however most of the rulers never treated the local Muslims as equal natives and Muslims suffered religious restrictions. Currents research work is to describe the state of Muslims of Kashmir under Sikha Shahi Raj, and to analyze how harsh and rude behaviors of Sikhs Governors created a sense of deprivation and mistrust among Kashmiri Muslim population, and how their own subordinates and ministers betrayed them for worldly benefits. Main objective of the present research is to analyze the nature of relationship between Sikh Governors and local Muslims which often remained biased and contradictory. Current research has mainly been conducted through primary and secondary sources including e-books, journals and historical documents from archives and libraries etc. The study has not only tried to bring the forgotten Sikh Governors into the limelight of 21st century but it also analyzed that how Sikha Shahi Raj ended in Kashmir and couldn't maintain its supremacy for a long time.

Keywords: Kashmir, Sikha Shahi Raj, Ranjit Singh, Sikh Governors, Lahore Durbar.

Introduction

Kashmir, paradise on earth is a land of delight for outsiders. They mesmerized from its natural beauty and enjoy wandering in it. Captivating scenery attacks the tourists and the seduction only lies purely in its natural beauty. It presented a quite different picture for its inhabitants altogether in medieval times. Valley of Kashmir is the most beautiful part of South Asia, now it is divided into the Indian Administered Union territories of Jammu & Kashmir, the Pakistan-Administered territories of Azad Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan and Chinese regions of Aksai Chin, Ladakh and Trans Karakoram Tract. At a height of over 5000 feet above sea level, captivating Kashmir valley hosting the enchanting scenery, high snow-covered glorious mountains, magnificent lakes and rivers, salubrious climate, delicious fruits, charming flowers and fascinating Mughal gardens have made it one of the most blessed spots on earth.¹ Due to its fine combination of lakes and mountains, Europeans generally compare it with Switzerland. The sight of mighty mountains and the lovable beauty of the valley surpass all the rest in the world. There were seven passes which provided safest routes to Kashmir and joined it, with the areas of the country. Later on this number increased to 12.

"The famous passes in Ranjit Singh's time were Toshamaiden Pass (10,500 feet), Bahramgala Pass (11,400 feet), Budil Pass (141,120 feet) and the Banihal Pass (9, 200 feet). Lord Roberts described the fertility of the soil of Kashmir thus: Kashmir soil is extremely productive, anything will grow in it, put a stick into ground and in an extraordinary short space of time, it becomes a tree and bear fruits".²

Valley of Kashmir is witnessed the different dynasties and religions and impacts of Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism and Islam have made the Kashmiri Culture versatile and unique.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

History of Kashmir Valley, dates back to 326 BCE, when Abisares was the King of Kashmir, he was the close fellow of Alexander the great, he not only allowed him to retain his kingdom, but increased it. Kashmir became the part of Maurya Empire and during Ashoka's regime Buddhism was introduced and the most famous city Srinagar was also built. After Ashoka, Kaniska conquered Kashmir and Kushan dynasty started. In his reign, the city of Kanishkapur was built and Kashmir became a seat of learning for both Buddhism and Hinduism. Buddhism spread to Tibet and China due to Kashmiri Buddhist missionaries. During 502-530 CE White Huns under the leadership of Toramana conquered the large parts of India including Kashmir and ruled there. During the seventh century Hinduism developed in all parts of Kashmir, due to that influence, many notable Kashmiri philosophers, artists and poets contributed to Sanskrit literature and Hinduism.³

Later in 8th century, Harshavardhan established Karkota Empire in Kashmir. Its emperors were primarily Hindus and Hinduism flourished in Kashmir with full charm. Karkota Empire ended in 855-856 CE and Utpala

dynasty was founded by Avantivarmen, Utpala Emperors ruled for one and half century. Queen Didda was the last Utpala ruler, after her death the Lohara Dynasty started in Kashmir in 1003 CE. Mahmud of Ghazni made two attempts during Lohara Dynasty to capture Kashmir but he couldn't conquer the fortress at Lohkot, so his both attempts remained failed. On the other hand, Lohara Dynasty rulers remained successful in defending their kingdom but their rule became unpopular due to huge taxation, corruption, rise of feudal lords and injustice.⁴ In the 14th century, Sheikh Nooruddin Noorani (Islamic Preacher) spread the teachings of Islam and it gradually became the dominant religion during Shah Mir Dynasty.

A.K. Rafiqi writes about the arrival of Muslim Ruler Shah Mir:

"Shah Mir arrived in Kashmir in 1313 CE along with his family during the reign of Lohara Dynasty ruler Suhadeva (1301-1320). In subsequent years, through his tact and ability Shah Mir rose to prominence and became one of the most important personalities of his time".⁵

During Shah Mir Dynasty, Islam was firmly established in Kashmir. 20 rulers of Shah Mir Dynasty worked for the restoration of peace and justice till 1561. After brief intervals, on behalf of Mughal Emperor Humayun, General Mirza Mohammad Haider invaded Kashmir in 1540 CE. But direct Mughal rule started in 1580, when Akbar conquered it and added it to his Afghan province. Beautiful mosques, gardens and palaces were constructed during Mughal rule; they built Persian water gardens in Srinagar along the shores of Dal Lake in Srinagar. Mughal rule proved to be sensible and normal. Later Afghan Durrani rule started in Kashmir in 1751 to 1819.⁶ Afghan Durrani Rulers remained failed and unpopular due to their weak policies and administration. Wazir Fateh Khan was the last Afghan ruler in Kashmir, though he was popular among Kashmiri public but after his death, Azam Khan became governor and he remained unpopular among the natives. During the first expedition in Kashmir, Sikh army was under the command of Diwan Mohkam Chand and Dal Singh Naherna as Deputy Commander, while Afghan Army was headed by Wazir Fateh Khan. In a fierce battle, Sikh army killed Azam Khan and remained victorious on the Ladakh, and Bhimbar areas, but Sikh Army couldn't conquer entire Kashmir. This created huge mess in the valley and after some time, Mir Hazar Khan became the governor of Kashmir.⁷

CONQUEST OF KASHMIR:

Valley of Kashmir under the governorship of Mir Hazar Khan (1793-1800), faced the tussle between Shias and Pandits that created anarchy in the entire valley and last Muslim ruler couldn't eliminate the rising agitations. Ranjit Singh thought of capturing Kashmir, he made a plan to conquer it, at first he sent spies to Kashmir to report about the political situation in the valley and the road condition which led from Bhimbar to Srinagar. Ranjit Singh conquered Bhimbar in 1811 and Rajauri in 1812 respectively.

According to Hari Ram Gupta:

*“The Maharaja was also anxious to send an expedition to Kashmir. He wished to possess knowledge of the mountain passes and the nature of the valley. He also desired that his soldiers should have experience of fighting in snowfall”.*⁸

The year of 1813 was the luckiest year of Ranjit Singh because; the Sikh Army captured the Attock Fort in 1813, the World’s famous Koh-i-Noor in June 1813 and the victory of Haidru battle in July 1813.⁹ All these conquests highly elated the spirit of Maharaja. In March 1814, after celebrating holi, Ranjit Singh collected his army in Sialkot and advised the soldiers to be ready for marching to Kashmir. Huge amount of money served in the first expedition, Maharaja confessed in a meeting with Rani Sada Kaur and Mokham Chand and explained the military expenditures. Due to heavy snow, occasional blizzards and difficult rocky routes not only increased military expenditures but it also weakened the soldier’s spirit. After facing some failures, Ranjit Singh sent his well-trained General Ram Diyal and Hari Singh Nalwa to Rajouri, Kotli, Pounch, Sarachi and Bimbar areas. In 1818, Maharaja Ranjit Singh conquered Multan, this increased great confidence in his generals and soldiers and thus Maharaja made up a final plan to conquer Kashmir valley at any cost.¹⁰

According to Hari Ram Gupta:

*“Ranjit Singh planned to invade Kashmir, he set-up his camp at Wazirabad, Missar Diwan Chand was invested with the supreme commander of the invading army numbering about 12 thousand with heavy artillery, it was divided into three parts forming one whole body. The main force was under Diwan Chand, the supporting column under Prince Karak Singh and Hari Singh Nalwa marched behind him. The Maharaja with a reserve force was in the rear. He also took up the duty of supplying ammunition, food stuffs and transport”.*¹¹

In a fierce battle, Jabbar Khan (the governor of Kashmir) defeated and fled to Muzaffarabad, then escaped to Kabul via Peshawar. The Sikh army finally entered in Srinagar on 15th July, 1819 and Sikh Raj begun in Kashmir.

BEGINNING OF SIKH POWER (DIWAN MOTI RAM-1819-20)

Almost seven Sikh Governors ruled over Kashmir in 20 years from 1819-1839, first governorship was given to Diwan Moti Ram. He was the only son of the Commander-in-Chief of Sikh Army and the Governor of Jalandar Doab, Diwan Mokham Chand and the father of Ram Diyal (the 2nd governor of Hazara from 1819-20). Diwan Moti Ram’s father was busy in warfare do the Doab’s administration was given to Moti Ram. After Diwan Mokham Chand’s death in 1814, Moti Ram became the confirmed governor of Jalandar Doab, and then he transferred to the governorship of Kashmir in 1819.¹² After taking oath, Moti Ram first of all established military posts in the entire valley, in order to devote himself exclusively, he administered social welfare in all over.

Moti Ram made a contract with Jawahar Maal for 10 lac rupees yearly for the manufacturing of shawls and shawl production and manufacturing increased in Kashmir. Moti Ram was a popular person among Kashmiri natives.

According to Griffon:

*“Moti Ram was indolent otherwise he declared him the best governor who was kind hearted and liked by people”.*¹³

Though he was popular but on the other hand he took some anti-Muslim steps which increased hate among Muslims. In the beginning of Sikh Raj, the fundamental religious rights of the Muslims were snatched away in the Kashmir. Moti Ram banned the Azan and stopped cow slaughter and especially the congregational prayers on Friday in every Jamia Masjid.¹⁴ His cruel steps increased the disturbance and hatred among Muslims for him. During his governorship, Muslims lost their religious freedom.

He also reduced the numbers of parganhas from 22 to 20. Theft and robbery ratio was also decreased and terror of Sikh name brought it almost to a complete stop. In his rule Kashmir suffered from cholera and thousands of people died due to this pandemic. Kashmir faced another serious problem that led the valley towards famine. Scarcity of grains was the major problem of entire valley, people were hungry and they were compelled to sell their children. Maharaja Ranjit Singh sent grain sacks to reduce the shortage of food. Moti Ram’s administration remained weak to overcome on some serious issues because his subordinate officers were non-serious and inefficient so he couldn’t establish peace and justice. In the next year, his eldest son and the governor of Hazara Diwan Ram Diyal was killed in a battle against yousafzai’s. Due to his killing Moti Ram lost his mind and resigned from office in June 1820 and settled in Banaras.¹⁵

HARI SINGH NALWA (1820):

Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa was the second governor of Kashmir, and one of the greatest and bravest military General of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. After this governorship he became the governor of Hazara from 1822-37. During his tenure, he took some serious measures like, he removed the unnecessary taxes on the imported food stuffs, he also abolished (begar) unpaid services by villagers to government officers. He lessened the government share in the saffron production and encouraged its cultivation in the Kashmir. Nalwa constructed Gurdwaras in the different places e.g. Srinagar, Matan, Kathi and Darwaza, which were associated with the visit of first Guru (Guru Nanak) and second Guru (Guru Hargobind).¹⁶

During his reign, Muslims also faced religious restrictions, public were scared of him, no one liked him especially children got frightened when they heard his name. Though Hari Singh was military personnel he was also very strict disciplinarian and the people who committed mistakes were harshly treated by him. William Moorcroft, who travelled to Kashmir during the era of Nalwa, he observed that Nalwa forcibly collected 25 lacs for himself from the

Kashmir's funds and budget. When this was reported to Ranjit Singh, he transferred Hari Singh and made him the governor of Hazara and reappointed Diwan Moti Ram as governor of Kashmir.¹⁷

DIWAN MOTI RAM (1821-26) SECOND TENURE:

On the Maharaja Ranjit Singh's request, Moti Ram accepted the governorship of Kashmir again. After taking charge he persuaded Ranjit Singh to reduce the Kashmir tribute from 52 to 26 lacs. Maharaja accepted his request immediately. Religious restrictions under his governorship were same, Muslims suffered miserable life because administrative posts were dominated by Sikhs while Muslims were engaged with inferior works and they were poor.¹⁸ On the other hand, Moti Ram opened an inquiry against his ministers and checked the corruption in the administration, agriculture, industry and trade. His investigation was severely criticized by Ranjit Singh's Prime Minister Dhian Singh Dogra, he also opposed to the existence other powerful families of Lahore Durbar. Dhian Singh was also the close friend of Maharaja's son Hira Singh.

In Ranjit Singh's reign 3 Dogra brothers (Gulab Singh, Dhian Singh and Suchet Singh) were confirmed the title of "Raja" and Ranjit Singh was satisfied with their devotion towards his kingdom.

"Dhian Singh wanted to have his own people in all the key positions in the state. He poisoned the ears of the Maharaja against Moti Ram, and due to this conspiracy, Moti Ram was dismissed from Kashmir governorship in June, 1826 and Maharaja made him a member of the mission to Shimla in 1827".¹⁹

Under the Moti Ram's second tenure, law in order was satisfactory and his strict policies against Muslims were totally unjust and he remained unpopular among Muslim natives.

CHUNI LAL (1826-27)

Chuni Lal remained the governor of Kashmir for one year, he was the close ally of Ranjit Singh's favorite Dhian Singh. His tenure was full of conspiracies against Muslims and unhuman punishments were also introduced. His real objective was to bring Kashmir under the direction of Jammu (Gulab Singh had internal autonomy over Jammu). Administrative skills are very essential for governing but Chuni Lal had little at administration field. His hatred towards Muslims was unlimited, he was the enemy of Muslims, if somebodies slaughter cow, the guilty persons were hanged and their bodies were dragged through the main bazars. This created great distress and fear among the Muslim natives. Maharaja recalled him to Lahore Durbar in November 1827 and appointed Diwan Kirpa Ram as new governor of Kashmir.²⁰

DIWAN KIRPA RAM (1827-31):

Former Kashmir Governor Diwan Moti Ram's second son Diwan Kirpa Ram appointed the governor of Kashmir in December 1827. Earlier he

had the charge of Jalandhar Doab. Lepen Griffon writes about him in such words:

*“Both father and son were the best governors of Kashmir; he like his father and grandfather was very honest and incorruptible”.*²¹

In the first year, he constructed many beautiful buildings and enchanting gardens in Srinagar and he took keen interest in shawl industry and its production. The next year of his governorship saw the great earthquake in, large number of buildings and houses collapsed and thousands of people died. Kirpa Ram took serious measures and helped the suffered and homeless people, provided them food, cloth and shelter. He was getting popular among Kashmiri and especially among Muslim natives because of his native oriented attitude, so soon he became the victim of Prime Minister Dhian Singh's conspiracies. Kirpa Ram complained against him in Lahore Durbar but Ranjit Singh never liked to receive a complaint against his prime minister. Later Dhian Singh diplomatically persuaded Maharaja to dismiss Kirpa Ram from the Kashmir governorship, so Ranjit Singh imprisoned him.²²

*“The leading nobles of the Lahore Durbar held a conference on 22nd February, 1831. They pleaded before the Maharaja for the release of Kirpa Ram. They said if able and honest officers were punished like this, the entire atmosphere at the court would become corrupt. The Maharaja set him free on realizing a fine of lakhs of rupees for disobeying his Prime Minister. Kirpa Ram felt disgusted and applied for permission to join his father at Banaras. The request was turned down by Lahore Durbar”.*²³

In the absence of Kirpa Ram, Kashmir was under the leadership of Dhian Singh. He was controlling Kashmir on the other hand Kirpa Ram was mentally disturbed so he sought permission to visit Jawalamukhi. Maharaja offered him jagir of Kunjah worth 3 lacs on December 1831, due to his sincere services for Lahore Durbar but Kirpa Ram couldn't forget his imprisonment like an ordinary criminal so he refused to take it. It was the end of one of influential family at the Lahore, Diwan Mokham Chand, Diwan Moti Ram and Diwan Kirpa Ram; three generations were remained loyal to Ranjit Singh in thick and thin.

Griffon writes:

*“This absolute selfishness of Ranjit Singh and the shameful manner in which he ignored faithful services were the most unpleasant features in his character, Diwan Mokham Chand the founder of the Diwan family was his best and most successful general and it was in great measure owing to his military ability, that the Maharaja established himself as sole ruler of the Punjab. But he didn't save his son Moti Ram or his grandson Kirpa Ram from constant slights fines, confiscation and eventual ruin”.*²⁴

BHAMA SINGH ARDALI 1831:

Bhama Singh Ardali was a personal peon of Ranjit Singh, after Kirpa Ram the choice for the office of the governor of Kashmir fell on his personal

ardali. In January 1831, Bhama Singh took the charge. He was not well trained administrator so due to his weak policies poverty ratio had risen and the inhabitants left their native land for searching better jobs in the big cities of India. Another religious issue rose up during his regime, Sunni Shia riots broke out severely in the valley and Bhama Singh completely failed to control those riots, as a result loss of life and property caused enormous problems and almost 300 Irani Shia merchants, who had settled in Kashmir permanently, they immigrated back to Iran. After observing that worse situation, Ranjit Singh recalled Bhama Singh to Lahore in November 1831.²⁵

PRINCE SHER SINGH (1831-34):

After the experiment of peon (ardali), Ranjit Singh jumped at his own son Prince Sher Singh as new governor for Kashmir. He was appointed new governor on 14th November 1831, he was a prince so his salary was according to his luxury life style, and his salary was fixed at Rs. 10,000 per mensem. During his tenure, revenue from the earning of shawls and saffron was directly sent to Lahore Durbar and Ranjit Singh was satisfied but after few months, Sher Singh completely forgot his duties and his secretary Wasakha Singh became absolute ruler. He forcibly collected a sum of rupees 7, 26,000 for himself and kept it secret and sent another sum of two lacs to the Lahore Durbar.²⁶ He didn't know that Ranjit Singh's intelligence department was very effective and fast. Wasakha Singh's corruption was disclosed and he brought to Lahore in chains and five lac rupees fine was charged over him.

After this bad incident Sher Singh started taking interest in government affairs, he had a good hereditary diplomatic skills and later on he proved to be true. He won high success in establishing control over South Western Kashmir and Ladakh. Gulab Singh annexed Ladakh on the approval of Sher Singh. In 1833, Kashmir faced a serious famine, due to starving large number of people died and most of the people migrated to Punjab. On the request of Sher Singh, Maharaja sent large quantities of grain laden which was distributed among people in mosques and temples.

"In big towns and cities of Kashmir, the troops collected people in open spaces in rows and each was given 2 kg of grain daily for their families".²⁷

After facing severe famine, Maharaja sent Jamadar Kushal Singh to help Sher Singh in maintaining law and order situation in Kashmir. In start, he helped Sher Singh devotedly but soon he showed his greed and corruption, looted the Kashmir revenue and income of pashmina. Captain Wade, the Sikh Army's instructor at Kashmir informed Maharaja about Kushal Singh treachery. On 7th September, 1833 he was presented to Maharaja with 3 lac rupees and 5 lacs worth of pashmina. He got imprisoned and Prince Sher Singh was recalled to Lahore Durbar, so the next governorship of Kashmir fell into the hands of Colonel Mihan Singh.²⁸

COLONEL MIHAN SINGH (1834-41):

Colonel Mihan Singh was the bravest and devoted commander in Ranjit Singh's Army, fought many battles and remained succeeded, in October 1834; he took the charge of his new post in Kashmir. In the next month on November 24th, 1834, he sent an investigation report to Ranjit Singh and explained him that on account of the inattention of the Maharaja, Kashmir had become absolutely deserted and its affairs had gone from bad to worse. Maharaja took immediate action, abolished duties in grains and other essential food stuffs and basic commodities. Large number of grains and poultry were imported to Kashmir. Mihan Singh controlled black marketing and severely punished the involved persons. He took many positive steps that were basically in the favor of his Sikh kingdom and governorship. He gave relief in land revenue for the encouragement of the cultivators, to promote cultivation he granted loans to peasants. In his tenure, tariff duties on trade had been reduced. To increase production, shawl factory owners were given loans.²⁹

Mihan Singh also focused on the import export with Ladakh, Afghanistan, Punjab, British India and Central Asia. For staying, inns (serais) were built on every convenient places, postal services were first time developed by Mihan Singh in Kashmir. In his tenure Sunni-Shia riots broke out, he remained failed to overcome this issue because those riots were revolved around shawl making industry. After this tussle, the shawls weavers and merchants who were actually shias left the Kashmir for Amritsar. Mihan Singh also faced another serious issue of thieves and thugs, Kashmiri natives were severely disturbed by the organized thugs called Gulwans; they committed dacoits and looted the innocent people. Mihan Singh took keen notice, controlled them and sent to prison. Mihan Singh was very impressed by Mughal architecture, established Basant Bagh in Srinagar and planted Chinar trees. He also compiled *Tarikh-i-Kashmir*, in which historical and economic importance of Kashmir is described.³⁰

Mihan Singh had a short connection with Dogra Gulab Singh, Mihan Singh wanted to lead a campaign in Ladakh instead of Gulab Singh, but his request was turned down by Maharaja, because Dogras has a great influence on Maharaja.

According to Brigadier Gurbachan Singh:

"Earlier in 1834, when the situation in Ladakh became favorable, Mihan Singh had expressed a desire to lead a campaign but Dhian Singh Dogra was able to convince the Maharaja to allow Gulab Singh to do it and Mihan Singh was asked to cooperate with Jammu. Later Ladakhi revolted, Dogras accused Mihan Singh for instigating it".³¹

After the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1839, political scenario of Kashmir totally changed, soon after the accession of Maharaja Sher Singh, 2 battalions of the Sikh Army revolted in Kashmir and Mihan Singh was assassinated in April 1841 at his residence. With the murder of Mihan Singh,

22 years old Sikh Raj in Kashmir ended and Hindu Dogra Raj started. Dogra's favorite Sheikh Ghulam Mohiuddin was appointed new governor of Kashmir.³²

FROM SIKH RAJ TO DOGRA RAJ:

Sheikh Ghulam Mohiuddin became the governor of Kashmir in 1841, he was a Kashmiri Muslim but Lahore Durbar was handling him and for making it practical shape, Pandit Tilak Chand became the chief minister of Kashmir. During his tenure Muslims couldn't enjoy their full religious freedom, Jamia Masjid was closed since 1819, it was opened for prayers but congregations on Friday were totally banned. He laid two gardens which are still famous as Sheikh Bagh and Munshi Bagh. His rule was neither anti Muslim nor pro Hindu, he died in 1845 and his son Sheikh Immaddin made new governor. He also kept Pandit Tilak Chand as his minister, took strong measures to promote shawl industry this resulted the improved economic stature.³³

After the failure of Sikh Khalsa in first Anglo Sikh War (1845-46), he resigned from office. After the treaty of Lahore 1846, Sikhs were made to surrender the valuable region from River Beas to River Sutlaj and Lahore Durbar was also required to pay 15 million rupees.

"Lahore Durbar ceded Kashmir, Hazara and all the forts, territories rights and interests in the hill countries situated between the Rivers Beas and Indus to the East India Company".³⁴

Raja Gulab Singh Dogra Who already rewarded with a title of Maharaja got permitted by Rani Jinda Kaur to pay 75 Nanak Shahi Rupee to British Resident Henry Lawrence. Gulab Singh paid himself and became the ruler of Kashmir.

"This prompted Gulab Singh to offer the remaining amount in lieu of the state of Jammu and Kashmir which was accepted by the British and that is how Kashmir was sold to Raja Gulab Singh. It ceded Kashmir and all its associated area including Hazara and all the territories, forts, interests, aspirations and interests in the all tracts situated between the river Indus and Beas from the East India Company to Gulab Singh. It was done in a separate arrangement (the treaty of Amritsar) by which the Raja of Jammu, Gulab Singh, acquired Kashmir from the East India Company against the payment of 7.5 million Nanac Shahi rupees, thereby assuming the title of Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir".³⁵

After becoming Dogra Gulab Singh as Maharaja of Kashmir, Dogra Raj started in the valley and the Ranjit Singh's established Sikha Shahi Raj vanished completely on the screen of Kashmir

CONCLUSION:

1. Sikha Shahi Raj lasted in Kashmir for almost 22 years, but it didn't leave any special and positive effects on the lives of Kashmiri's especially Muslims. Sikh Governors continued the religious

restrictions e.g. call for Azan, congregation on Friday, prayers in the Mosques and slaughter of cow etc. Kashmiri Muslims didn't enjoy equal rights and they were treated like low castes. Kashmir paid a large sum of money in the form of taxes to Lahore Durbar, due to the shawl industry and Saffron, income of Kashmir was very high, but Kashmiri people and especially Muslims (who were credited with 80% population), spent a miserable life. Frequent famines prove that revenue from Kashmiri exports never used in Kashmir, it was directly received by Lahore Durbar and very less amount was spent on the welfare of the people and during famines many families migrated to the Punjab and other areas of British India. On the other hand, Sikh Governors were badly betrayed by their Deputy Ministers and subordinates, their greed showed that they were not sincere with Maharaja and Lahore Durbar.

2. Though Ranjit Singh chose experienced administrators, generals and even his personal peon for Kashmir Governorship but they couldn't establish a fair and justice rule over Kashmir. Kashmiri Muslims never raised their voices against Sikha Shahi Raj because:
3. They were socially and economically poor.
4. Shawl industry was headed by Kashmiri Pandits and Muslims worked on daily wages.
5. Muslims were lacked by dedicated leadership during Sikh Raj.
6. Due to the absence of political platform, they bore all the restrictions silently. After Ranjit Singh's death, Mihaan Singh tried to maintain Sikh Raj but after his assassination in 1841, Dogra Raj started in Kashmir forcibly. Sikhs badly defeated in first Anglo Sikh War (1845-46) and lost its valuable regions, after the treaty of Lahore 1846, Gulab Singh secretly conducted treaty of Amritsar and acquired Kashmir from the East India Company against the payment of 7.5 million Nanac Shahi Rupees and became the Maharaja of Kashmir. Kashmiri people suffered Sikha Shahi Raj then Dogra Raj and British also left the Sub-Continent without taking any decision regarding Kashmir. According to the 3rd June Plan and Indian Independence Act 1947, Kashmir should have joined Pakistan but due to the Maharaja Hari Singh's request entire Kashmir valley was given to India. Kashmiri's with the help of Tribal Pathan people freed 1/3 part of Kashmir which is now Azad Jammu & Kashmir but rest of the Kashmir is still under the oppressed rule and above 80% Muslim natives are still struggling for freedom.



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