

Impact of the Afghans on the Society of Kashmir during 1753-1819.A.D

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Abstract: *The people of the valley invited Afghans to help them get out of the shackles of oppression they were subjected to in the early time. Instead of providing a solution to their difficulties, the invitation just added to their misery. With their arrival, each and every sect was affected. They put a greater strain on the Kashmir valley's economy and were always attempting to divert the valley's rich resources to their own country. To satisfy their illicit aspirations, a slew of new taxes were enacted. The valley's non-Muslim population remains the hardest afflicted by difficulties. Even more of them fled to other regions of the country to save their lives, disregarding their property. Some areas remained desert-like due to the lack of human habitation. They destroyed the arts and crafts that have made the Kashmir valley famous around the world. A large number of craftspeople changed careers in order to preserve their lives.*

Keywords: Artisans, Drain, Jazia, Newer Taxes, Social Disorder

Introduction

Ahmad Shah Abdali the then ruler of Kabul came to Lahore in 1752, two Kashmiri members of the nobility, Mir Muquim Kant and Khawja Zahir Didmari, waited for him and shamelessly offered him to put Kashmir under his dominance. An Afghan force led by Abdullah Khan Aihak Aqasi, a fighter of Nadir Shah, accepted Ahmad Shah's offer and seized the valley. Despite their best efforts, the Mughals forces of Kashmir were ruthlessly defeated and the Afghan Governor hoisted the Afghan flag on the ramparts of Akbar's town in Srinagar. Thus the Mughal era in Kashmir thereby comes to the end, but it remained in the north of the country. The Kabul rulers ruled Kashmir for about 67 years. Sikhs captured Kashmir in 1819 A.D. from Ahmad Shah Abdali's dynasty, who had governed the region since 1753. As the Mughals had done, Afghan governors and deputy governors were sent to Kashmir. Twenty-eight governors and deputy governors were in charge of Kashmir during this period. Kashmir was briefly controlled by the Afghans. The Afghans were encouraged by the Kashmiris to assume control of the state. They anticipated that once central Mughal rule fell, the Afghans would give them with acceptable and superior governance, but this proved to be a pipe dream. Instead of receiving help, the Afghans mercilessly loot Kashmir, which is characterised by rack rents, wealth draining, heavy taxation on commerce and crafts, and a lack of patronage for indigenous artists. These arts and crafts were introduced to the inhabitants of the valley much earlier; particularly after Sultan Shamsud-din Shah Mir established Muslim control in 1339 A.D.

Kashmir's people have long been noted for their artistic abilities. Srinagar was the epicentre of knowledge. However, localities like Anantnag, Sopore, Badipore and Pulwama were not left behind. People were required to participate in some industrial skill during the winters, in addition to their other obligations, in order to meet their day-to-day necessities. Shawls, Silk, Woollen Cloth and other textiles were among the main industries. Aside from these, the personnel also carried out various other industrial tasks. Shawl work in Kashmir is as old as the valley's hills among the remaining enterprises. During the Sultanate time, it was a very wealthy industry that served as a supporting foundation for people in the economic field. Muslim monarchs resurrected Kashmir's links with Central Asia throughout the mediaeval period, attracting artisans to the valley. Mir Syed Ali Handani, together with a significant number of followers, put their feet in the valley during the era of Sultan Qutub'd-din, 1373-89 A.D. Some of them were qualified and excellent artists in many fields. Not only was the Shawl talent introduced, but also other skills of the same sort at various locations. The Sultans supported, fed, and stimulated the industry. Shawl business experienced a huge boost because to their encouraging efforts and the favourable backing of overseas artists. When the Sultans ruled Kashmir, many of the arts and crafts that have made Kashmir famous around the world were brought in from Persia, chiefly in the time of Sultan Zainul Abidin. Stone polishing, for example, is rare in other cities, but it

is popular in Kashmir. By the time Hindu hegemony came to an end, there were still a few crafts and arts that existed. An enormous number of artists and craftsmen perished in Dalucha in 1320 A.D. during the invasion. Zainul Abidin, who ruled from 1420 until 1470 A.D., restored and reformed all of the forgotten arts and crafts. He pioneered new methods of promoting handicrafts and the arts. Thousands of artists and craftsmen flocked to the valley because of his support for foreign artists and craftspeople. Arrangements were made for them to stay in the valley permanently with their families, and they were urged to do so. To leave the valley after a brief visit, an artist had to first teach his profession to the local males. Professors from all over the world were summoned to Kashmir by the Sultan to teach the locals. If a local wanted to learn a new design or art form, he was encouraged to do so by the monarch, who was also responsible for providing for his own family's needs. Because of Sultan's liberal outlook and luxuries, Kashmir was transformed into an industrial park. Consequently, the valley saw a surge in commercial activity. It is worth noting that there was a significant advancement in the fields of glassmaking (silk and shawl weaving), papermaking (woodcarving), and bookbinding. Kashmir had a poor industrial sector previous to the entrance of these arts and crafts, so much so that even looms were not indigenous to the region. When he ruled, Kashmiri shawl was exported to many different areas of the globe. After his death, the arts suffered because of the societal problems of the people. However, Central Asian king Mirza Haider Dughlat, who commanded the valley in 1540-51 A.D., revived the trade. Despite the fact that there were Shia-Sunni tensions in society throughout his brief time, he was able to expand the Shawl trade by inviting select talented masters, such as Nazuq Beigh of Khokhand, to the Kashmir valley. Nazuq Beigh is credited with creating some of the more recent shawl patterns, such as the Texture of Shawl, which features red and green patches in regular rows. Until he arrived, no one had heard of it. As a result of new designs, Kashmiri shawls have earned a large following outside of the valley. They then made several different styles of finished scarves, with Jamawar being the most popular. In 1586, the Mughals arrived in India, and the art appears to have gotten better as a result.

From the outset of Akbar's reign, the Kashmiri Shawl became a luxurious and a prized item, as a result, a valued item in the royal harem. Parm- Narm was the term given by Akbar to the best Shawl. According to Abul Fazl, Akbar promoted the Shawl business since he was fond of them, and they became the vogue of the day. During Akbar's reign, there were "two thousand factories manufacturing Shawl," according to Mohibul Hassan. Shawl weaving received some type of support from later Mughal monarchs. "The Shawl industry will very soon change the economic status of people in the valley of Kashmir," according to Bernier. As a proof of mastery over the craft, the rising demand resulted in price changes ranging from two hundred to twelve hundred dollars.

With the Afghan conquest of Kashmir in 1753-1819 A.D., Kashmiri shawls were already in a very high demand in and outside the Kashmir valley. They improved the art in question. Some innovative designs were added into established designs as new floral work during the height of Afghan dominance, raising the price. They began persecuting individuals, including skilled employees and others, almost as soon as they realised the valley's revenue. Kashmiris suffered at the hands of harsh-tempered Pathans during the Afghan regime. They allotted the high positions only those men of their origin who extorted as much wealth as they could from Kashmir's poor. Because they didn't know as when they would be called by the Afghan aristocrats to return back to designate the new favourite on their position, hence the chosen authorities gathered money as rapidly as they could.

Raja Suhk Jewan Mal reigned from 1754 until 1762. A.D., a short-lived Pathan ruler, was much more famous with Kashmiris as compared to the other Pathan governors. His reign was only a few months long, yet he was able to bring in Brahmans from all around India to strengthen his influence in Kashmir. When he asked them to help him, the Brahmans instead started destroying and pillaging the community. In 1762, Nuru'd-din Bamzai was sent by Ahmad Shah Abdali to remove him from power. His capture and transport to Lahore resulted in his death at the hands of Ahmad Shah Abdali. It was Bulund Khan Bamzai who took charge of the government when Nuru'd-din left for Kabul. It was only in 1764, however, that Nuru'd-din regained control of Kashmir is a fictional character. He named two Kashmiri nobility as revenue collectors and diwans, respectively. For a time, they worked in a friendly environment, but their relationship deteriorated due to a disagreement about income collection, which resulted in Mir Muqim's murder, with Kailash Dhar accused of being the perpetrator. Nuru'd-din entrusted the government to his nephew Jan Mohammad Khan before departing, but he too proved to be an infamous ruler. Faqirullah Khan, another king in Kashmir, forced a considerable number of Hindus to convert to Islam. Amir Khan Sher Jawan, who

reigned from 1772 until 1776, gave some relief to Kashmiris, among all the Afghans he was the best of all that governed the valley of Kashmir, after all he is credited to have built the Amira Kadal Bridge and the Sher Garhi palace in Srinagar.

Almost all the Pathan governors were very cruel and inflicted cruelties and took a variety of severe tactics in order to rob and plunder Kashmir's wealth, which was then funnelled to Kabul. Hajji Karim din Khan, who reigned from 1776 to 1783 A.D., imposed a slew of illegitimate levies on Kashmiris. He was driven to commit the most horrific atrocities by a need for blood and money. The harsh policy towards Kashmiris was maintained and further tariffs were placed on Kashmiris without respect for caste or creed. As much as four or six times their annual income was expected of the wealthy jagirdars and aristocracy to pay Nazrana (Zari-i-Niyaz). Zari-i-Hubab, a grain tax on farmers, and Zari-i-Ashkhas, a tax on merchants and bankers, were both passed into law. Aslam Harkara, his dishonest tax collector, placed all of these harsh and merciless restrictions on the people of Kashmir. Dad Khan exceeded his forebears in the field of martial arts. The vast majority of the income went to Kabul, with only a small portion going to local development. Being the first to impose the traki tax (one trak per kharwar as an extra tax on the peasantry) and the Dag Shawl (Department of Shawls) system in order to maximise revenue from the hungry Shawl weavers, their lives had become very wretched as a result of having their earnings taken away from them violently. As a result, they became disinterested in the Shawl project. A large number of people moved to different locations to preserve their lives rather than their property. His mistreatment of workers was so severe that the Shawl industry made a profit of Rs. 13 lakh in a year. Daily salaries for real labourers ranged from two to four paises. The caretakers took care of the rest. In such circumstances, the world-renowned Shawl industry experienced a labour scarcity. The Shawl weavers were duped by the Dag Shawl department, which was the main reason for this. It's worth noting that in most of the nations like Turkistan, Afghanistan, Europe, Iran, and Russia the demand for the Kashmiri Shawl was very high. Kashmir's Kani and Amalika Shawls have a good reputation in the market. The Amali Shawl's design is made up of very imperceptible stitches that span the entire ground in an exquisite pattern and style.

Azad Khan is known for his ferocity and cruelty. He only made things worse by chopping off the skulls of innocent Kashmiris. The pandits, Shias, and Bombas were the first to be killed. He started tying up the pandits two by two in grass sacks and dumping them in the Dal Lake. Hindus were also subjected to a variety of additional societal constraints. Jazia was reinstated once the forehead mark was outlawed. Many Brahmans fled or were slain as a result of the imposition of Jazia, and many were converted to Islam. All of these inhumane acts were carried out in order to instil terror among them, and they were the first to impose suffering on Kashmiris. From 1785 until 1786, he was succeeded by Saifud-d-din Madad Khan and there is a well-known adage that "Zulm-i-Asad ra rasid Madad" meaning "Madad out Heroded Asad." The Mir Hazar, who reigned from 1793 to 1794, was the next in line. A.D., who drowned Brahmans with leather bags rather than grass sacks. They took everything that was gained through various activities. Workers in several arts were surrounded by obstacles under such challenging circumstances. Nonetheless, they were able to produce the highest quality Kashmiri Shawls as a generational craft.

In the reign of Abdullah Khan Alkozai (1796-1805), Syed Yahya of Baghdad paid a visit to Kashmir in 1796.A.D. he chose to leave after seeing numerous holy sites throughout the valley. Abdullah Khan Alkozai, however, gifted him with the Kashmiri Shawl before his return. Napoleon received the Shawl that had been offered to him. From that day forward, international demand for Kashmiri Shawls grew, and France became the largest exporter of Kashmiri Shawls. France alone accounted for 80% of the exporting share. Within a reasonable amount of time, these lovely Shawl wraps became fashionable among Westerners.

Atta Mohammad Khan, who reigned from 1807 to 1813 A.D., wreaked havoc on society. Both Shais and Brahmans were his main targets. Brahmans were terrified by an elderly woman named Koshib who functioned as his emissary. She used to shave the heads of Brahman girls in order to ruin their attractiveness. Muslims used to ride on the back of a Non-Muslim "Pandit" at this time, and the well-known saying "you are a Brahman, I will mount on you" "Buta chuk to khosa dita" is still used in Kashmiri. According to Moorcroft, the total value of Shawl items created in Kashmir during the Afghan administration was over 35 lakhs rupees each year. During the Sikh period, it fell by half of the total listed above. The last Afghan governor to rule over Kashmir was Jabar Khan in 1819 A.D. He governed the region of Kashmir for barely four months until being vanquished by Maharaja Rangit Singh. The Kashmiris had grown tired of the negative effects of Afghan control, which led to their demise and the conquest of the valley by Sikhs.

Conclusion

The period was extremely detrimental to all aspects of society. The re-establishment of relations and trading ties with Central Asia created havoc and disarray. As a result, there was utter social upheaval in the Kashmir valley, which eventually led to economic issues for the inhabitants.

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