

Economical Developments in Kashmir during Mughal rule (1586to 1752)

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Abstract

Kashmir is an ancient land with the highest degree of civilization achieved by its people, its natural beauty and the sources made its neighbours cast covetous eyes to occupy it. People of this region took pride in their independence and self-realization but the weakness, instability led to its annexation by the Mughals in 1586. Though For some time it remained a part of the province of Kabul, Kashmir s assured under Jahangir the status of full-fledged province (subah) like other Mughal Indian province, The Kashmir lost their independence but their cultural, industrial, artistic and agricultural growth was not impeded but got a further fillip by the great change effected by its becoming a part of Mughal empire.

The Mughal conquest of Kashmir in 1586A.D marked a new epoch the history of the land, breaking the long state of isolation, which introduced significant changes in the administrative machinery, ruling class, social set up, economic conditions, cultural intuitions. The impact of Mughal rule and the closer contacts of the people of the valley with rest of the country deeply affected the social life of Kashmir resulted in greater participation of the people of Kashmir in the corporate life of the empire.

Keywords: Kharif (autumn crops), Rabi (spring crops), Kashta(ploughed),Uftada (unploughed), Karkhana

INTRODUCTION

The Mughal rulers of India had covetous eye on Kashmir since the founder of the dynasty Baber, who tried to annex Kashmir but failed in his mission. No doubt his son Karman conquered the land in 1531AD, but holds it for a period of two months.¹ It was in 1540 AD Humayun who succeed Baber, received invitations from the nobles of Kashmir to conquer the territory, but he was defeated by Sher Shah Suri of India..Mean while Mirza Haider was requested by Abdul Magary Regichack of help against kajichack ². The Mirza also suggested to Humayun to march to Kashmir, but he declined to accept their proposal. Mirza Haider alone went to Kashmir in1540 and defeated the forces of Nazuk shah, the ruler of Kashmir ³. The Khutba was recited and coins were stuck in the name of Humayun. Mirza Haider held the reigns of territory till his death in 1552AD⁴.Nazak shah was succeeded by Ismail shah in 1555AD. Ismail shah was a just a titular

head and it was Gazi shah who ruled the kingdom⁵. In 1555A.D India again witnessed the Mughal rule as Humayun defeated the Pathan ruler of Suri dynasty. In 1556 Akbar the great Succeeded the Humayun as the ruler of India, who after consolidation of his rule in India began to interfere with the affairs of Kashmir⁶. Mean while Ismail shah died in 1157AD and Gazi Shah proclaimed his nephew Habib Shah as king. In 1561AD and account of Habib shahs in competency he himself ascended the throne⁷. During his regency Akbar approached by the refractory nobles. Accordingly in 1560 Akbar deputed QARA BAHADUR with a force of seven thousand soldiers against Gazi Chak and he marched towards Rajouri⁸. Ghazi Chak also moved against him and Mughal forces who routed with sizable amount wounded and killed. Qara Bahadar was compelled to retreat. The reminder of this defeat was that Akbar did not launch any attack for 26 years⁹. Hussain shah succeeds the Gazi shah.

Akbar personal interest within the State of Kashmir affairs became marked during the reign of Hussain Shah Chak (1563-1570) when internal dissension was at its highest. He deputed his envoys to Kashmir to form a search into the difficulty. The Sultans received them well and offered those presents and agreed to give his own daughter in marriage to Akbar's son Salim, But Akbar who was enraged at the persecution of the Sunnis and therefore the delay within the conquest of Kashmir could not be appeased by even such a humble gesture. He refused the presents of Hussain Shah and his daughter. This insult is claimed to possess shocked the Sultan to death. Later in the reign of Hussain Shah's brother, Ali Shah Chak, the presents and Hussain Shah's daughter were accepted but only the Sultan recognized Akbar as his overlord. The Mughals attempts at conquest continued till the year 1586AD, when Bhagwan Dass and other generals were commanded by Akbar to march into Kashmir. Akbar did not personally march at the top of his Army, but sent his trusted men to accomplish the deed. Kashmir was then ruled by the ease-loving king Yusuf Shah Chak who being a weak ruler couldn't confine check his warring nobles or suppress the Sunni-Shia conflicts of which the people were very much tired, helped by the inclemency of weather and natural defences, the Kashmir forces succeeded in halting the advance of mighty but cumbersome Mughal Army. The Mughal general Bhagwan Dass appealed to Yusuf Shah Chak to come to terms. As per treaty Mughals withdraw their forces from Kashmir and Yusuf shah Chak agreed to pay personal homage to Akbar¹⁰. Thus the ruler was presented to Akbar at attack on March 28, 1586 by Raja Bhagwan Dass who had assured him (Yusuf shah Chak) of same return. The emperor not only refused to ratify the peace treaty concluded but also Yusuf shah to be imprisoned. Later on he accepted the treaty but the Sultan was not set free. He died in sep. 1592 and was buried at Biswak, district Patna in Bihar¹¹.

After withdrawal of Mughals from Kashmir prince Yaqoob declared himself free from the treaty obligations and asserted his position as independent ruler under the title of Shah Ismail¹². He did not attempt to bring closer the two Muslim sects. Being a Shia, of utmost views, he asked the Qazi Musa to incorporate the name of Ali in the Friday prayer Khutba¹³. On his refusal Qazi Musa was assassinated¹⁴, His religious fanaticism and extremism alienated the Sunnis from Ismail shah. So Sheikh Yaqoob Surfi escorted by a gaggle of persons approached by Akbar with an invitation to annex Kashmir. Akbar on June 28, 1586 sends a outsized army from Lahore under the command of Qazim khan. They took the route of Bhimbhar Rajouri and got the support of the natives. The ruler also came to defend the advancing forces. They met with each

other at a place namely Hastivang, Aliabad (Shopian). In this encounter firstly Mughals were defeated but they resumed their fight and entered Srinagar on 14 Oct. 1856.¹⁵ Kashmiri forces were demoralised and disintegrated, but they restored to guerrilla warfare. Mohd Qazim khan was such a lot demoralised by the continuous pressure and harassment from the Kashmir's that he send his resignation to Akbar. But it had been not accepted on the opposite side's there was considerable loss of life and property. Each of them tried to overpower the others and regain the control over the strategic points. But the arrival of fresh contingent under the command of Yusuf Khan Razvi infused new blood within the Mughal army. Kashmiri forces gave way under the pressure of Mughals. Yaqoob Chak fled to kastiwar.¹⁶ The demoralised nobles were persuaded to trust the Mughals, while on the opposite hand the hostile nobles were crushed. This mixed policy of suppression and specification began in touch fruits and on the instigation of Mohammad Bhat, Lawhar Chak son of Ibrahim Chak and Ismail Naik surrender before Yosuf khan Razvi .When Yaqoob khan didnot to overcome the Mughals, His associates surrendered to the Mughals along Abdul maali, Shamas Chak, and Shamas din¹⁷. They used for peace through Bahauddin and he granted them Mansabs, but they were not allowed to return to Kashmir. 18 Similarly a force was dispatched against Yaqoob shah Chak who was encamped at punjyari in Dachunkhover, where from he again fled to kistawar. In June 1589 Akbar visited Kashmir .Yaqoob decided to send his brother (Aiba khan), to Emperor Akbar for apology. Akbar accepted his submission. This step lead Yaqoob chack to pay personal homage to the emperor on 28 July 1589. Meanwhile he was arrested and was send to Rohtas in Bihar where he died on 05 Oct 1593 and was buried near his father's grave. With this ended the long struggle of the Kashmir, to maintain their independence against the Mughals. Hence Kashmir became the part of the huge Mughal empire, Abul Fazil in his book AIN-AKBARI has written that ruler of Kashmir is composed of Palki, Bhimber, Swat, Bijore, Kandhar and Zubulistan with Kabul its capital. Later on Tibet, Kishtwar, poonch, baltistain and iskard were brought under rule. This way the territory breaking the age long state of isolation. the province of Kashmir was placed under the control of subadars (governors) appointed by then central govt. who were responsible to the centre for administrative activity¹⁹ The Mughals ruled for a period of 166 years (1586-1752), during which eleven rulers;

- 1) Akbar (1586-1605)
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- 2) Jahangir (1605-1627)
- 3) Shah-I-Jahan (1628-1658)
- 4) Aurangzeb (1658-1707)
- 5) Bahadur shah (1707-1712)
- 6) Jahandar Shah (1712-1713)
- 7) Farukhsiyar (1713-1719)
- 8) Rafi-ud-darajat (April, 1719- June, 1719)
- 9) Rafi-ud-daula (June, 1719-September, 1719)

10) Mohammad Shah (September, 1719-April, 1748)

11) Ahmad Shah (1748-1754)

Represented by 52 subadars utilized their services. Owing to prolonged warfare and constant mobilization of forces, the economy of the territory was affected badly. Akbar paid his due attention towards streamlining the administration to redress the grievances of the people. He introduced various reforms to bring executive and economic setup of the valley at par with other parts of India. The same has been highlighted under the following heads

Agriculture: land revenue remained main source of the income of the state exchequer throughout the Mughal period, and intrinsically main interest of the rulers revolved round agriculture. Abul Fazil has mentioned that there was not a single piece of land which was not brought under plough. Three-fourth of the whole land of the Subah was mountainous, and therefore the rest one-fourth was brought under Plough and orchards, Mirza Haider in *tarikhi-rashidi* has mentioned four category of land, *Abi*, *Lalmi*, *Bhagh* and *Nambal*. 20

The *Abi land* was meant for paddy cultivation, which was irrigated by a variety of water resources. It entailed regular irrigation which was generally rendered possible by countless springs and streams of water discharged by the snowy mountains, further several canals drawing water from river *Jhelum* irrigated large tracts of arable land in different corners of the valley. Though the Mughals has not constructed new ones but repaired old ones. They appointed a person in every village namely *Mir-Aab* to distribute water for irrigation.

Another kind of land was *Lalmi*, which was meant for the cultivation of spring crops including wheat, barley, pulses and mustard etc. it depended upon periodical rains for irrigation.

The third *Baghi* land contributing to the mass of area in the valley was meant to grow fruits of which we have a detailed account in *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*.

The fourth kind known as *Nambalor*, *maidanee* land, which was swampy and unfit for cultivation. Kashmir valley is also abounded in dense forests and in pastoral land which provided sufficient grazing for sheep and cattle²¹.

Crops: Hardly any substantial change has taken Place within the cultivation since the Mughal period. The peasant's implements were the plough, with an iron plough share, a wooden mallet for clod breaking wooden spade with an iron tip²². The crops were divided into two broad groups *Rabi* & *Kharif*. The crops like Barley wheat, mustard, cotton, grams, lentils sown in Oct-Nov & reaped in April-May were designed as *Rabi* Crops. Rice, pulses, water chestnuts, maize, and saffron were sown in May-June & reaped in Sep-Oct. are designed as the *kharif* Crops.²³

Pulses of varied varieties: Amaranth, sesame, rape, linseed and flax were also cultivated with in the *karewas* of Kashmir.²⁴ Tobacco cultivation appears to possess been introduced in 18th century.²⁵ Cotton cultivation was not so extensive. Water chestnut was extensively found with in the lakes. It constituted the main food of thousands of individuals round the lakes .of all important cash crops saffron is famous for its bouquet and medicinal Properties was extensively cultivated in *Pampore* and *Inderkot*. Under Mughals an outsized area was brought under

cultivation of saffron²⁶. Qualitatively and quantitatively rich vegetables like beans, Turnips, radish, spinach, carrot, pumpkins, white beans, cucumbers and Onions were mainly produced..

Horticulture- even before the annexation, Kashmir was famous for her delicious fruits of varied types, but during the Mughal rule large tracts of land were brought under orchids. The Mughals made an introduction of grafting as a means to preserve and produce new varieties from those. During the reign of Akbar cherries (shahala)and apricots(zardula)were brought from Kabul by Mohammad Quli Ashraf and planted in Kashmir. Similarly peas, Almond, pomegranate, peach were introduced. Abdul Hamid Lahorie in his book badshanama mentions that melons of Kashmir were so great than Kabul. In addition to it Akbar introduced new variety of “sahibikishmish”.on account of extensive cultivation of the apricots, balistain was known as tsertabotu. As per sources several areas were special used in different agriculture products.

G.veign epitomises the fact and hold that wheat of shahabad, the turnip of haripur, the ghee of Pampore, the silk of kothihar are best in the valley. This made pagans of valley inter dependent on each other²⁷ but sugarcane cultivation as introduced by sultan zainabadian had vanquishes at all during this period

Industries: Kashmir from the ancient time is known for his artistic zeal. Majority of the population lives in villages and always remains busy with in the agricultural pursuits and in petty handicrafts like cloth weaving, smithy, carpentry, oil pressing and animal husbandry. These crafts were also agro-based. The artisans even up to recent times received a share out of the village produce in lieu of their services. Intrinsically a village to a greater extent remained self-sufficient during our period. It supplied its basic requirements within the village. Though the excess produce found its way to the town. It was been appropriated within the shape of land revenue and other cesses. All these factors led to the expansion of Srinagar especially and other townships in generally. These urban centres turned to be the natural shelters for various sort of artisans. It is, therefore, founder that the famous industrial centres of shawl manufacture flourished within the city of Srinagar. Where over 2400 looms were busy with in the production of this costly stuff which filled the coffers of the Suba with money. The skilful artisans specialised in various techniques, designs, and artistic embellishments.

Carpet Industry: This industry flourished simultaneously with the Shawl Industry. Kashmiri carpets were considered superior to those from Persia.

Minor Arts and Crafts: A good deal of iron, silver, brass vessels paper machine, paper, wood carvings, and furniture of delicate nature and boats of varied styles were also manufactured in the Subah.

Minerals: Though mineral exploitation within the Subah of Kashmir was sadly neglected, yet some effort was made to extract the earth's hidden natural treasures. Copper, iron, sapphire and salt peter, mines were figured out during a minor diatonic scale. The iron was obtained from Shahabad, and Khriue mines mainly. Iron ore was exported to Lahore also. Copper was obtained from Aishmuqa. .Gold was mainly acquired from the sand of the go Indus in Greater Tibet.²⁸

Trade: Trade and commerce played an crucial role within the economy of Kashmir. It remained a good source of income for the state. Their commercial activities were connected with Bengal,

Nepal, Bhutan, China, Iran, Tibet and Central Asia. The traders were engaged both in internal and external trade which boosted the economy of the territory during this era.

External Trade: Despite the natural barriers Kashmir kept excellent trade relations with Persia, Central Asia, Russia, Bhutan, Nepal, Bengal and Patna. Within the course of time it was extended as far as Golconda and Bijapur. Within the 18th century Kashmiri merchants had started trade of Medicinal herbs and such other products with East India Company also. Due to the ever-increasing demand of the shawls and other articles of the luxury by the Mughal nobility and aristocracy, the trade with the Countries developed tremendously. The caravan route leading to the Central Asia from Lahore via Srinagar was well frequented and remains always busy. The shawl remained the chief commodity of export and so the wool merchants had flourished business. These merchants had almost monopolized the wool trade in the wool producing regions of Ladakh, Gilgit and Central Tibet. That They had developed their agents throughout this region to advance the loans and collect the shawl wool from the producers. that They had established their warehouses in Chinese, Turkist, Central Tibet, Lahasa, Nepal and Bhutam. The bluk of shawl trade was carried on with Mughal India. Additionally to the shawl, floor covering like carpets, dhurries, and printed and embroidered sheets were also sold in the imperial FarashKhana. Silk worm seeds were imported from Gilgit and China, Tibet and there have been were reared on the mulberry leaves. The material was exported to India and Central Asia.

Saffron: This costly condiment was cultivated in Pampore, Inderkot and Kistawar. It has been prescribed by the physicians as a medicinal herb and was also used as a spice to flavour food with its fragrance. It was exported to India, Yarkand, Tibet and China. With In the 17th and 18th Centuries alittle quantity was purchased by the English and the Dutch merchants too. The costs varied from time to time. Abul Fazl states that the price of saffron varied from rupees 8 to 12 a seer.

Fruits and Vegetables: Large quantities of vegetables and fruits were exported to India. The dry fruits made their way into the markets of Lahore, Ahmadabad, Agra and Amritsar. During the 17th Almond, Walnuts, apples, peaches, grapes, quince and quince seed, melons and Watermelons were the Most fruits exported to the Indian market.

Forest products: an outsized number of merchants were engaged with in the trade of forest products just like the medicinal herbs. Saussursalappa(Costus), Calamus and Amber Beads, Warm wood etc. They delivered them to Indian markets like Surat, Ahmadabad etc. Besides these articles various sort of scents and flowers were also exported to India and sold at exorbitant prices.

Paper: Kashmir also remained famous with in the production of fine paper. It has been in great demand in India .great quantity of the paper was exported to Persia from Ahmadabad which was presumably brought from Kashmir.

Imports: The most articles imported were salt,, cotton cloth, cloves, mace, paper, silk worm seeds, turmeric, ginger, and sugar.

Salt trade was also a flourishing one. Since salt was not available in the Subah, so it has imported from India. On account of its high consumption, it has been in great demand in the

Valley. The labourers also received their wages in terms of salt. It has been brought from Bengal also, merchants purchased it mainly from there. Thana had turned to be a salt mandi for Kashmir²⁸. **Internal trade:** Internal trade are often defined because the sum of activities which bring into contact the producer and consumer. The continued peace and stability within the territory, during the Mughal period boosted the internal trade. Large number of commercial centres emerged in Kashmir during Mughal period. Important centres of trade and commerce that continued from the traditional times were Srinagar. As per rajtrangi there were regular arranged markets (hattas) within the city of Pavarapura (Srinagar). It was no doubt in predecessors' period (Sultanate) the trade though flourished yet was carried on indoors. The period witnessed a systematic marketing system. Bernier holds that trade in Srinagar was very brisk and therefore the streets were linked with long rows of outlets offering various commodities for sale. An equivalent led the development of separate markets e.g. Bazari-Saraffan, Bazari-Baqulla, Bazari-Sabaka. Consequently trade at Anantnag, Sopore, Shopian, Awantipore, and Baramulla got a flip. Therefore most important feature of internal trade was Barter system. The chief means of transport within the Valley was river Jhelum. Potters carried heavy loads over difficult terrain. Pack ponies were used for carrying paddy and other food grains from distant villages to the town market as wheeled carriages were unknown. The rivers were spanned by bridges constructed of stone and timber that expedite the flow of trade as journey and transaction of goods became easier²⁹.

Trade Routes: The valley was surrounded by an unbroken chain of high mountains. But this ring of mountains was pierced by various passes which established link within the surface world³⁰. The Mughals' occupation enhanced the importance of Suba, and a regular link was maintained with the remainder of the Empire. Abu Fazl states that there have been six routes connecting Kashmir with the outside world. The Central Asian trade route linked Kashmir with India and Central Asia. But only six routes were of great importance. These routes remained open for the most part of the year, even during the winter. The Mughals paid great attention to upkeep of these routes, construction of bridges and inns were built. These steps gave a fillip to the trade and commerce of the subah. The imperial or Mughal road, Muzaffarabad-Pakhli route, Kashtaur-Uiarduan route, Zojila route, and Poonch route were of great significance.

a) Mughal road: - This route connected Kashmir with Gujarat. It passes over the Pir-panjal pass via Hastivanj. The important stages on the road were Saidabad, Noushahra, Chingas, Rajouri, Thane, Bahramgalla, Poshiana, Aliabad, Hirapure, Shopian, Khampure and Shadimarg where inns were established which turned these places into trade centres of the time.

b) Muzaffarabad-pakhli route: - This route connected Kashmir with Rawalpindi and Peshawar. This route remained open for the whole year.

c) Poonch route: - This route linked Kashmir through Haji-Pir pass and Tosamaidan pass. Further it linked Jammu via Rajouri.

d) Kishtwar route: - There are two routes leading to Kishtwar from Kashmir, one from Singhpur and another via Dasu. The route connected Kishtwar with Badarwah and Jammu through Ramban. The road was traversed on foot and ponies were also used due to its uneven terrain.

e) Central Asian trade route: - The route passes through Ladakh from east to west. It has been passable from March to November, but merchants often used the route due to its commercial importance. It connected Kashmir with Tibet, Kashgar, Yarkand and China. The trade between Kashmir and Bhutan, Nepal, Bengal etc. was also done by this route. No doubt the route functioned as an artery to the cottage industry of Kashmir as the entire raw shawl wool was imported through this road. Due to its high altitude and shortage of fodder, the trade was carried on by the potters on their back, though horses, mules and yaks were put into service.

f) Navigation: - It has been the most source of transport with in the Valley, but in the hilly tracks animals like mules, camels and donkeys were used and yaks in Tibet. The majority of trading commodities were carried on the back of potters as wheeled traffic was unknown. There had been 7500 boats in Kashmir when Akbar visited the Valley in 1589. The cargo boats were referred to as *Bhats*(big boats) and *Shikaras*(light boats). During the period Akbar introduced new types of boats in Gujarati and Bengali model to accelerate the flow of trade³¹.

Coinage: The medium of exchange of Kashmir as prevailed same as prevailed during the Hindu and Sultanate periods remained operational during Mughal period also with slight change in type and weight. The currency under the Mughals consisted of Dinar, Bahagani, Puntsu, Hath, Sasun, lakh, Crore there value was as:

- a) 12 Dinars 1 Bahagani
- b) 2 Bahagani 1 PANTSU
- c) 4 Puntsu 1 Hath
- d) 10 Hath 1 Sasun
- e) 100 Sasun 1 lakh
- f) 100 lakh 1 crore (10000000 dinars)

In addition to these there have been other sort of of coins like Ashrafis and Tankas. Akbar had a fine currency in gold and silver. In Srinagar Sarafa Mohalla in ZainKadal is claimed to possess sbeen the locality of mint in the city. During Sikhs 1819-1846 and The Dogras 1846-1947 AD) like a rolling ball under which it experienced nothing but suffering and pain.

The Mughals it retrained its seat as mint town³¹. The monetary value of the local smaller coins with that of Mughals as given by Abul Fazl in his book Ain-i- Akbari stood as:

- a) 1 hath (hundred) = 1 copper dam
- b) 1 sasun (thousand) = 10 copper dam = ¼ of a Rupee.
- c) 1 lakh (lakh) = 1000 copper dam

Weight and measure: During Mughal period the units of weight and measurement had not gone any major change to the prevalent system of Hindu and Sultanate periods which existed as:

- 1) 16 Mashas = 1 Tola (11.76 gm)
- 2) 80 Tolas = 1 seer (940 gm)

- 3) 7 ½ pols = 1 seer
- 4) 5 seer = 1 Trakh (4.700kg)
- 5) 16 Trakh = 1 Kharwar (76kg)
- 6) 1 Kharwaar = 80 seer
- 7) 1 Gira = 2 ¼ inches (5.6cm)
- 8) 16 Gira = 1 Gazz (90cm)

In addition to it Akbar introduced “Men” (mound) which was divided into 40 equal parts called “seer”. Though the seer and its subdivisions were standard Mughal weights yet weighing in Kashmir was done in Kharwars and Traks. Even the payment in cash was calculated in kharwars of paddy and the measurement of land in Traks, which was equitant to ¼ of an acre of the present day³³. However, at present 80kg is considered a Kharwars in Kashmir.

CONCLUSION

The period opened a new chapter in the history of Kashmir as the territory lost its status as a separate entity which it enjoyed up to 1586A.D. The emperors of the dynasty ruled the state through their subadars (governors) who with some exceptions tyrannized and bleed the people by their extortion. The writers and travellers hold that though in the earlier period the land witnessed a change as isolation ended, communal harmony prevailed, trade flourished and industries developed yet in the concluding period it progressed the growth of Kashmir in their full stature. The indicators like failure of administrative machinery, disturbance of peace, ignorance of welfare of subjects and torture to peasantry were observed. Consequently these factors led to the disintegration of the empire and passage of the territory from one tyrant group to another i.e. Afghans in 1753 A.D. Since then the territory passed from one power to another (The Afghans 1753-1819).

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