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## Kashmir under the Afghans (1752-1819)

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### Abstract:

*The current paper ventures to understand the participation of Afghan rule in the regional transformation of Kashmir. The emergence of Afghans on the political forefront of Kashmir in the middle of 18th century was a direct outcome of Mughal administration. Afghan subadars tried to establish their political hegemony on the remnants of the Mughal structures which had already started dwindling under the later rulers of Mughal dynasty. Unlike pre-Mughal period, the political situation prevailing in the adjoining territories had comparatively greater impact on the political and administrative functioning of the region of Kashmir, itself. Though disgruntled nobility and internal administrative instability had a role to play in the frequently changing dynastic rule in post-Mughal Kashmir but the dynamics of political formations in the adjoining regions, especially in Lahore, Sind and Punjab determined the course of political history of Kashmir under and after the Afghans.*

*The Afghans ruled Kashmir for 67 years which witnessed the rule of Pathan emperors at the Imperial court and around 26 subadars in the province of Kashmir. Though, it was an extension of Mughal administrative machinery and institutions but the position and functioning of the significant provincial officials like subadars, sahibkars, diwans, etc. underwent certain changes. The Afghan rulers didn't engage themselves in overhauling the administrative measures in the valley but continued with the systems pertaining to governance, initiated by early Mughals, except a few official positions especially in the revenue administration of the region.*

*Besides the impact of Afghan functionaries on the socio-political and economic facets of the valley, one would also try to figure out the nature and role of local elite who played a substantial role in the ever-changing conditions of the state.*

**Keywords:** *Afghan rule, Kashmir, Administration of Pathans, Transformation and role of indigenous nobility.*

### 1. Afghans in Kashmir (1752-1819)

The genesis of the establishment of Afghan rule in Kashmir lies in the invasion of Hindustan by Nadir Shah [<sup>i</sup>] in 1738-39. By deposing the last member of Safavid dynasty which had ruled Persia for more than 200 years, he proclaimed himself as the *Shah* of Persia. He ruled it from 1736 to 47 and during these years he undertook several military campaigns on all the sides bordering his kingdom. After leading successful expeditions in Mashhad, Ottoman empire and Kandahar, Nadir Shah shifted his attention towards the empire of Mughals which was then ruled by emperor Mohammad Shah (1719-48). With the conquest of Kandahar in 1738, he decided to invade the Mughals lands and the very first regions which fell under the siege of Persian invasion were Ghazni, Kabul, Peshwar, Sindh and Lahore. After the battle of Karnal, [<sup>ii</sup>] Nadir Shah returned the throne of Hindustan, [<sup>iii</sup>] to Mohammad Shah except the regions of Kabul and Peshwar which were consolidated within the empire of Persia and headed towards his capital, Khurasan. [<sup>iii</sup>] In the meantime, Fakhr-ud-daula, a Mughal *subadar* stationed in the province of Kashmir, failed to overcome the worsening political situation created by the internal rebellion and got consequently, replaced by another *subadar*, Ati'ullah Khan (son of former *subadar*, Inayatullah Khan Kashmiri). [<sup>iv</sup>] He retired to Lahore where he decided to recapture the administration of Kashmir with the help and assistance of Persian troops. He re-entered Kashmir successfully along with assistance provided by the troops of Nadir Shah and started governing the province as a representative of Afrashid empire. He read *khutba* and struck coins in the name of Nadir Shah but his rule faced terrible resistance from the people of Kashmir. Along with the efforts of Ati'ullah Khan and Abul Barkat Khan, the Persian army was displaced from the province and once again Mughal *subadars* started administering the affairs of state. [<sup>v</sup>]

The concluding years of Mughal rule in Kashmir not only witnessed the grave limitations in the office of *subadari* but the growing internal conflicts between the indigenous nobility resulted in the interminable administrative confusion in the province. The contending nobles who were fighting to acquire the provincial government didn't let any *subadar* to reorganise the stable rule in the region. In order to dethrone Abul Qasim Khan from the administration of Kashmir, Mir Muqqim Kanth (another local noble who had worked as a *naibsubadar* in 1742) invited the troops of Ahmad Shah Abdali to establish Afghan government in the region. Ten years after the Persian invasion, Kashmir was again invaded by the Afghan forces of Ahmad Shah Abdali who emerged as a successor of Nadir Shah and re-captured the territories which were once conquered by his master. After the death of Nadir Shah in 1747, Ahmad Shah Abdali became the *Amir* of Khurasan and strengthened his position by conquering the regions like Ghazni, Kabul, Lahore and Sind (1749), Herat (1750), Nishapur and Mashhad (1751). After the conquest of Lahore and Punjab, these regions had become almost

autonomous under some Sikh and Rajput chiefs which led Ahmad Shah Abdali to re-capture them in 1751. From Lahore, he sends his expedition to Kashmir in 1752. Actually the internal disturbance caused by indigenous nobility became fundamental factor for the conquest of Kashmir by the Afghans.

During the closing years of Mughal rule many indigenous nobles who had reached to the higher positions in the administration became enough strong to direct the politics of the region as per their vested interests. Some of these local elites who played huge role in controlling the politics of region were Mir Muqqim Kant, Khawaja Zahir Didamari, Abul Qasim Khan, etc. Mir Muqqim Kant who was installed on the *naibsubadari* of the province by Quli Khan, took the reigns of the government in his hands in the absence of any appointed *subadar*. During his tenure there were frequent rebellion organised by the local military troops against this authority which created chaos in the valley and alienated many other officials too. [vi] The crumbling political situation provided Abul Qasim Khan [vii] with an opportunity to install himself at the *naibsubadari* of the region by defeating Mir Muqqim in a battle and ousting him to his hereditary *jagir* at Koihama. Though Mir Muqqim made many attempts to overthrow Qasim Khan but failed which ultimately led him and Zahir Didamari (who was another prominent figure who had worked as *sahibkar* under Malik Hasan Irani) to write an invitation to Ahmad Shah Abdali to conquer Kashmir and replace Mughals by Afghan administration. The Afghan emperor sent fifteen thousand troops headed by Abdul Khan Ishaq Aqsai to conquer Kashmir in Afghan empire. [viii] Though Abul Qasim managed to prevent Ishaq to enter into the province of Kashmir for few months by presenting him with one lakh rupees but ultimately the Afghan commander decided to enter into the region and confronted the army of Abul Qasim Khan at Shopian, some 48 kilometers away from the capital city of Srinagar. Besides the assistance and direction provided to Afghan troops by Mir Muqqim Kanth, [ix] some of the local chiefs of Abul Qasim like Gul Khan deserted him and joined the opponent forces which led the victory of Pathans and consequent, establishment of Afghan rule in Kashmir.

The Afghans ruled Kashmir for 67 years which witnessed the rule of four *pathan* emperors at the Imperial court and around 26 governors in the province of Kashmir. The information regarding the appointment and tenure of Afghan *subadars* is given in the below mentioned table:

Afghan Emperor	Subadar	Naib Subadar/Sahibkar	Tenure
Ahmad Shah Abdali (1753-72)	1. Abdullah Khan Ishaq Aqsai (1753) 2. Khawaja Abdul Khan Kabuli (1753) 3. Raja Sukh Mal (1753-62)  4. Noor-ud-din Bamzai (1762-64) 5. Buland Khan Bamzai (1765) 6. Noor-ud-din Khan Bamzai (1765-66) 7. Lal Khan Khatak (1766) 8. Khuram Khan (1766-67) 9. Mir Faqir-ullah Kanth (1767-68) 10. Noor-ud-din Khan Bamzai (1768-69) 11. Khuram Khan (1770) 12. Amir Khan Jawan Sher Khan (1770-72)	2. a. Sukh Jiwan Mal 3. a. Ab. Hasan Bandy b. Mir Muqqim Kanth. c. Ab. Hasan Bandy d. Mahanand Pandit  6.a. Mir Muqqim Kanth  8.a. Kailash Dhar  10.a. Lal Khan	1. 6 months 2. 4 months and 7 days 3. 8 years, 4 months and 4 days  4. 3 months 5. A few months 6. 1 year and 6 months 7. 6 months 8. 1 year 9. 11 months 10. 1 year 11. 6 month 12. 6 years and 4 months
Timur Shah (1772-93)	1. Haji Karim Dad Khan (1777-83) 2. Azad Khan (1783-85) 3. Madad Khan Ishaizia (1785-86) 4. Mir Dad Khan (1786-88) 5. Mulla Gafur Khan (1788) 6. Juma Khan Alazai (1788-93) 7. Rehmat-ullah Khan (1793) 8. Mir Hazar Khan (1793-94)	1. a. Mir Fazil Kanth b. Dilaram Kali  4. Gafur Khan  8. Khawaja Ishaq	1. 7 years 2. 2 years, 5 months 3. 9 months 4. 2 years, 1 months 5. 4 months 6. 4 years, 7 months 7. 3 months, 12 days 8. 1 year, 2 months
Zaman Shah (1793-1800)	1. Rehmat-ullah Khan (1794) 2. Kifayat Khan (1794) 3. Mohammad Khan Jawan Sher (1795) 4. Sardar Abdullah Khan (1795-1806)	2. Mirza Badru-ud-din  4. Sahaz Ram	1. 4 months 2. 3 months
Shah Shuja & Mahmud Shah	1. Sardar Abdullah Khan (1795-1806) 2. Sher Mohd. Khan Mukhtar-ul-daula 3. Atta Mohammad Khan (1806-13) 4. Wazir Fateh Mohammad Khan (1813-19) and his brother Sardar Azeem Khan 5. Jabbar Khan (1819)		1. 1 years 2. 5 months 3. 6 years 4. 7 years 5. A few months.

Table 1

As far as the Afghan administration is concerned, it was an extension of Mughal administrative machinery and institutions but the position and functioning of the significant provincial officials underwent certain changes. The Afghan rulers didn't engage themselves in overhauling the administrative measures in the valley but continued with the systems pertaining to governance, initiated by early Mughals except a few official positions, especially in revenue administration which will be discussed little later. Besides, there were certain offices whose nomenclature changed under the Afghans. For instance, *karguzar* which was the official name of *naib subadar* under Mughal got changed into *sahibkar*. [<sup>x</sup>] The most significant official who played a considerable role in administrative functioning throughout the period under discussion, and showed visible transformation, was *subadar*. A *subadar* was an immediate and foremost representative of central authority, primarily responsible to maintain law and order in the province and to transport the extracted revenue from all the *parganas* to the imperial court. Usually, the military commanders who were sent either to occupy a territory or suppress the rebellion in an already subjugated region happened to become the *subadar* of that province. As the replacement of *subadars* on the basis of any stipulated time never occurred in Afghan rule, thus *subadars* were changed when they revolted against Imperial authority or by the complaints of their subordinate in the imperial court. For instance, Amir Khan Jawan Sher who worked as a commander of military under *subadar*, Khuram Khan sent a written complaint against the inefficiency and incompetence of said *subadar* to the central authority which resulted in the replacement of Khuram Khan by Amir Khan Sher Jawan Khan. [<sup>xi</sup>] But in case of Kashmir, the former reasons for dismissal of *subadars* were more prevalent. The *subadar* continued to rule in the region as long as he remained in the good books of the emperor. As already mentioned, no specific time period was allotted to the office of *subadari* in the available sources. The tenure for which Afghan *subadars* worked in Kashmir is utterly uneven. There seems no established rule for the appointment, term and retirement of this position under Afghan government, particularly in the *suba* of Kashmir. While some of the governor ruled the valley for a few months and others continued to administer the provinces for years together which is also evident from the information given in the table above. The very first *subadar*, Abdullah Khan Ishaq Aqsai ruled for just six months and then appointed Khawaja Abdul Khan Kabuli on the *subadari* of Kashmir who in turn, could not stay longer than four months and seven days. [<sup>xii</sup>] Similarly, Noor-ud-din Khan who was appointed on the *subadari* of Kashmir for thrice, administered only for three months during his first visit. [<sup>xiii</sup>] There were eight other *subadars* who could govern the territory for not more than a few months. On the contrary, there were *subadars* who remained in the administration for several years like Raja Sukh Jiwan Mal who administered the province of Kashmir for almost eight and a half years. [<sup>xiv</sup>] In the same way, Amir Khan Jawan Sher, Haji Karim Dad, Sardar Abdullah Khan, Atta Mohammad Khan and Wazir Mohammad Khan were some Afghan *subadars* who ruled for six and a half years, seven years, eleven years, six years, seven years respectively. [<sup>xv</sup>] In both the case, the period of rule was far less or far more than the tenure of *subadari* prescribed in the administrative structure of Mughals.

Unlike Mughal administration where all the significant official positions were directly appointed by the emperor, in the Afghan rule, it was the Afghan *subadar* who was responsible to appoint the next *nazim/subadar*, *sahibkar*, *peshkar*, *diwan*, *qazi*, *qari* and several other significant provincial positions in the region. Every time a new *subadar* was appointed, he used to select the officials for the above mentioned subordinate positions. The provision was initiated by the very first governor, Ishaq Aqsai who while leaving for Kabul after his six months of governorship, appointed Khawaja Abdullah Khan as the new *subadar* of Kashmir along his *sahibkar*, Sukh Jiwan Mal in 1752. [<sup>xvi</sup>] Similarly, Sukh Jiwan Mal who became the *subadar* in 1753, appointed Abul Hasan Bandy as his *sahibkar* who was later replaced by Mir Muqqim Kanth. Then re-appointed Hasan Bandy but at last murdered him when he felt Hasan Bandy intrigues against his rule. [<sup>xvii</sup>] Kailash Dhar was the first Kashmiri Pandit who got appointed as *sahibkar* by Khuram Khan. [<sup>xviii</sup>] Later on, Karim Dad Khan appointed Mulla Gaffur Khan and Ziab-ullah as *sahibkar* and *qazi*, respectively during his *subadari* in the province. [<sup>xix</sup>] Under Abdullah Khan's governorship, Sahaj Ram was appointed as *sahibkar* and *peshwar* by him. In short every *subadar* appointed his subordinates in provincial court and besides *sahibkari*, most of the other positions were filled with his consent. For instance, Khuram Khan appointed Mir Husain Kanth as the Raisul-ul-mulk and *peshkar*, simultaneously at both the positions. Similarly, Mirza Hazar Khan appointed Khawaja Issa and Mulla Qawa-mi-din, as *qari* and *qazi* of the state. Atta Mohammad Khan appointed Pandit Sahaj Ram as a *diwan* of the province. The unquestionable authority to appoint the immediate subordinates urged these *subadars* to appoint their own kin-mates sometimes on several significant positions in administration. Juma Khan proclaimed his son, Abdullah Khan as the *qazi* of Kashmir and after his death, his son Rehmat-ullah Khan proclaimed himself the next *subadar* of the region and administered Kashmir for three months and 12 days. [<sup>xx</sup>] Sher Mohammad Khan Mukhtar-ul-daula was another *subadar* who appointed his son Atta Mohammad Khan at the *subadari* of Kashmir. [<sup>xxi</sup>]

These *subadars* gradually became enough strong to dilute or initiate any institutions as per their political and vested requirements which is illustrated with an example of Mir Hazar Khan who made an attempt to remove the very significant office of *diwan*. [<sup>xxii</sup>] Such attributes which got incorporated in the institution of *subadari* made Afghan governors almost autonomous, as a result, a good number of these *subadars* very often revolted against the imperial authority and disassociate the provincial politics from the Kabul government and proclaimed themselves as the independent rulers. Among 26 Afghan governors, eleven *subadars* after securing their position at province, took up arms against Afghan authority and declared themselves as independent rulers or took political lineage with some other regional kingdoms. The first Afghan governor who attempted to separate Kashmir from Afghan empire was Sukh Jiwan Mal. [<sup>xxiii</sup>] Similarly, there were some other *subadars* like Mir Faqir Kanth, Amir Khan Jawan Sher, Azad Khan, Mir Hazar Khan, etc who made an attempt to separate Kashmir from the Afghan rule but failed to establish any permanent independent government in Kashmir.

Though Afghans didn't come up with any different political organization but they certainly added few more functionaries, especially in the revenue administration to ensure the efficiency in revenue collection. *Peshkar* was an office which Afghan governors

introduced in the province of Kashmir and the official appointed at this position was to deal primarily with the revenue and custom affairs. He was also considered as a personal assistant to the *subadar*. [xxxiv] The office of *sahibkar* and *peshkar* had clear distinction as *sahibkar* had to assist the *subadar* in ensuring law and order in the region while as the services of *peshkar* were purely economic in nature but very often both these positions were occupied by the same official. As already mentioned, Sukh Jiwan Mal worked both *sahibkar* and *peshkar* under Abdullah Khan Kabuli. [xxv] Mirza Karim also held both the positions together in 1796. [xxvi] Similarly, Pandit Sahaj Ram was appointed as *sahibkar* and *peshkar* in 1796. [xxvii] Sometimes the official appointed at the position of *peshkar* not only occupied the additional charges of *subadari* but *diwan*, too. For instance, Harnam Das Tikku worked together as the *diwan* and *peshkar* under the Afghans. [xxviii] Pandit Sahaj Ram who was appointed as *sahibkar* and *peshkar* in 1795, got the additional charges of the office of *diwani* in 1806. [xxix]

Furthermore, the office of *shiqdar* and *sazawals* became very prevalent during the Afghan period in Kashmir. These officials were appointed to appoint the *kardar* during the time of harvesting of crops. While *shiqdar* was responsible to keep vigilance on the standing crops so that farmer might not steal their crop before calculation and *sazawal* was to inspect the activities performed by the *shiqdar*. [xxx] These institutions were incorporated in the revenue administration in order to ensure the proper, maximum and quick extraction of revenue and exploitation of the tax payers. [xxxi] As rest of the offices worked in same manner as they used to work in the pre-Afghan period, except the office of *tahwildar* where the revenue both in cash and kind was deposited. [xxxii]

With the changing ruling dynasty, changed the morphology of local ruling class in the province of Kashmir. In pre-Mughal rule, the local ruling elites majorly included Chaks, *Magrays*, *Bhats*, *Rainas*, *Dars*, etc and had played considerable role in the political activity of kingdom of Kashmir under Shahmir [xxxiii] sultans and Chak rulers. Though very few like *Dars* continued to share political space for some time under early Mughals but the other families started gradually disappearing from the political panorama of Kashmiri society. Infact, other names which were hitherto absent in the early medieval history of Kashmir like *Maliks*, *Beighs*, *Dars*, etc started taking prominence in the political activities of Mughal *suba* of Kashmir. Later on, during the rule of later Mughals, the families which came to the forefront and exhibited their participation in the political affairs of the country were *Kants*, *Beighs*, *Bandays*, *Dhars*, etc These were the people which had come from the central Asian regions, especially Tajikistan, during the Muslim rule and had gradually got settled in Kashmir. [xxxiv]

These politically prominent families had emerged enough strong to conduct the politics of the region according to their own vested interests, right from the time of later Mughals. Infact, it won't be wrong to say that *Kants* and *Bandays* were the main architects of Afghan rule in Kashmir. When Mir Muqqim Kant and Abdul Hasan Bandy (very high profile officials under later Mughal rulers) failed to get any admirable position under the *subadari* of Qasim Khan, the last Mughal *subadar* in Kashmir, they intrigued against the Mughal authority and prompted Ahmad Shah Abdali to send his troops to capture the *suba* of Kashmir under Afghan empire. [xxxv] For six months, Mir Muqqim Kant assisted or rather guided the first governor, Abdullah Khan Ishaq Aqsai in exploiting his fellow Kashmiris and laying the foundation of Afghan rule in Kashmir. [xxxvi] Like later Mughal period, these elites played a considerable role in enthroning and dethroning of the *subadars* even in the initial years of Afghan rule and tried to consolidate the reigns of government in their own hands. For instance, Sukh Jiwan Mal, the Afghan *sahibkar* in 1752, with the assistance of Abdul Hasan Bandy killed the second Afghan *subadar*, Abdullah Khan along his two sons and consequently, occupied the most powerful positions of *subadar* and *sahibkar*, respectively in the province of Kashmir. [xxxvii] This bespeaks of the might and authority which these elite groups enjoyed and displayed in the political arena of Kashmir during the latter half of eighteenth century.

Their presence in the political and administrative history of Kashmir remained confined to the first half of Afghan rule. Later on, they started diminishing and were gradually replaced by other groups patronised by Afghan rulers. Actually, their activities got curbed right from the *subadari* of Sukh Jiwan Mal in 1753 who not only imprisoned both Mir Muqqim Kant and Khawaja Abdul Hasan Bandy and restricted their interference in the administrative measures. Sukh Jiwan Mal forced Abdul Hasan Bandy exiled him from Kashmir and forced him to spend rest of his life in Kohistan where he breathed his last. [xxxviii] His death ended the major participation of Bandy family in the mainstream politics in Kashmir.

The local elites not only revolted against the Afghan governors by acquiring the support of other local chieftains [xxxix] but they seldom hesitated to confront each other in order to occupy better positions in the administrative machinery. It was Mir Muqqim Kant who instigated Sukh Jiwan Mal to dismiss and imprison Abdul Hasan Bandy and occupy his position of *sahibkar*. Though Mir Muqqim Kant was again imprisoned during the reign of Buland Khan Bamzai but by joining the camp of Noor-ud-din Khan and helping him in dethroning the former, Mir Muqqim again managed to occupy the post of *sahibkar* under Noor-ud-din and got later killed for his mischiefs in the same tenure. [xl] After his death, his sons continued to uphold their political inheritance in the administration of region but their participation was restricted by the policies of alienation adopted by Afghans against them. Mir Faqir-ullah Kant's occupation of *subadari* for eleven months was the last major attempt which this family took to maintain their political lineage and subsequently, the position of local elite groups started shuffled by some other families.

The most striking feature of the ever-changing relationship between imperial Afghan governors and local elite groups is that the local power gradually shifted from Muslim families to the Pandit families of Kashmir who were majorly denied of these political spaces right from the time of Shahmir dynasty. Though it was Sukh Jiwan Mal who started appointing pandits in the administration of Kashmir by assigning one of the prominent positions of state to Mahanand Pandit Dhar <sup>[xli]</sup> but from the Khuram Khan's reign, the entry of Pandit at higher level of state systems became more frequent. Khuram Khan not only appointed Kailash Dhar as his personal assistant but starting patronising the people from his community and initiated their inclusion in the state affairs. This exercise of appointing Pandits at the higher offices was successfully carried on by other *subadars* from time to time. For instance, Pandit Sahaj Ram acquired both the positions of *sahibkar* and *peshkar* under the reign of Abdullah Khan in 1795. He was given the additional charges of *diwani* under Atta Mohammad Khan. <sup>[xlii]</sup> The other pandit names who were appointed at higher level government were Harnam Das, Pandit Mohanand Dhar, Pandit Mahadev, Diwan Dilaram, Diwan Nandaram, Birbal Dhar, etc under the rule of different Afghan governors. <sup>[xliii]</sup>

Afghan rule was the starting point for the pandits to enter into the imperial services who had been deprived of such opportunities right from the establishment of Muslim rule in Kashmir. By the end of Afghans in Kashmir, they emerged as a sole politically elite group who administered the functions of statehood during the Sikhs and Dogra period in Kashmir. Like the elite families of Bandays and Kants in Afghan context, it was these Pandits who became instrumental in bringing the Sikh troops in Kashmir and merging it as one of the provinces of Lahore Darbar under Raja Ranjit Singh. Under the governorship of Sardar Mohammad Azeem Khan, the entire province of Kashmir was entrusted to Pandit Birbal Dhar, Mirza Pandit Dhar and Sukha Ram Sufayi. Being the *peshkar*, Birbal Dhar, owed an amount of rupees one lakh to Afghan *subadar* which he failed to pay, thus hatched a conspiracy along with other two companions against Afghans and invited Sikhs forces to replace Afghans on the throne of Kashmir. <sup>[xliv]</sup>

#### Assessment of Afghan Rule: -

It won't be wrong to say that the Afghan governors enjoyed autonomous powers in administering law and order in the society which changes the assessment of rule from one *subadar* to another. Except for a few *subadars* like Amir Khan, Kaifiyat Khan and a few, collectively, the rule of all the other Afghan governors brought all-round degeneration of Kashmiri society. Their rule proved unproductive politically, economically and culturally in the valley as they left nothing but the marks of misery, corruption, poverty, sectarian discord in the region. The sole ambition of Afghan rulers was the extraction of revenue who seldom took an interest in the political and social welfare of the people.

The exploitation of common people and drain of wealth started right from the appointment of the very first governor in the *suba* of Kashmir. <sup>[xlv]</sup> The extraction of one crore rupees within sixth months shows the efficiency with which Afghans started their exploitative methods in the *suba*. The heavy demands of taxation were not confined to the provincial governors only, infact the central authority displayed their urge for greater revenues from time to time. The greatest reason for the rebellion of Sukh Jiwan Mal was the demand of central government (Ahmad Shah Abdali) to transport the amount of revenue ten times greater than the one actually calculated from the province of Kashmir. <sup>[xlvi]</sup> Lal Mohammad Khan was another *subadar* who resorted to all the methods of loot and plunder and killing of common people. The Kashmir pandit became soft target of his exploitative policies. He levied extra taxes on traders, *mansabdars* and Hindus and amassed huge amount of wealth for the recruitment of huge army. <sup>[xlvii]</sup> The cruelest and barbarous among all the Afghan representative in Kashmir was Khawaja Karim Dad Khan. His repressive policies not only resulted in the economic exploitation but widened the gap between different religious and sectarian groups. Besides *malia*, which was general land revenue extracted in every dynasty, he invented end number of taxes to amass huge wealth and property. He initiated *zar-i-niyaz*, a tax imposed on *mansabdars* and *jagirdars* of the valley who in turn exploited the peasant taxes. <sup>[xlviii]</sup> The amount extracted from *zar-i-niyaz* was two times greater than tax collected from *jagirs*. He imposed *zar-i-galat* to the people of Kashmir which made urban as well as rural population, cut down their fruit and other trees and sold them off and collect some money which was paid to the provincial treasury. Karim Dad Khan made irreparable loss to the economy of Kashmir. The orchid and other gardens which were constructed on the banks of Dal Lakh and other places throughout the valley and nurtured by almost all the former rulers of various dynasty, were desolated in order to pay the *zar-i-galat* to the government. He taxed *muqqadams* and *chaudaries* in the villages who in turn extract every single penny from the poor cultivators. Besides, for holding Hindu community responsible for death of some government officials (whom he had himself kept in hiding) who used to collect *zar-i-niyaz* and *zari-i-habubat* from the *mansabdars* and *jagirdars*, Karim Dad fined Pandit community 50,000 rupees and it became customary to collect this amount from Pandits every year and was given the name of *zar-i-dozar*. <sup>[xlix]</sup> Under the counselling of Dila Ram Kali who was his *peshkar*, he introduced *Dag-pashmina*, a tax imposed on shawl weaver which had adverse effects on shawl industry of Kashmir. <sup>[l]</sup> He didn't even left *Hanjis*, a community of boatmen who dealt with water-nuts and were taxed 75 dams irrespective of age and gender. <sup>[li]</sup> There was no individual who wasn't paying tax during the reign of Karim Dad. He left no stone unturned to exhaust the economy of the region. He adopted tortuous and brutal methods like cutting of noses and ears, murdering and hanging the bodies on gates of mosques, etc. to extract revenues from the reluctant payers. Hasan Shah says that his son, Azad Khan hundred time brutal and inhuman than his father and in terms of administering the *suba* followed the footsteps of his father in order to terrorize the people and ensure his autocratic rule. He made it habitual to kill a couple of person per day. <sup>[lii]</sup>

Besides, there were some other taxes *dastar-shumari* (turban tax), a sort of toll tax, *damdari* (tax on bird catcher), *sar-i-darakti* (tax on orchids), *zar-i-dudi* (fuel tax), *zar-i-nikah* (marriage tax), *zar-i-bayutat* (revenue extracted from newly built gardens or buildings), *zar-i-hasrat* (tax on shops), etc. which were imposed in Kashmir (in their strictest form) by the Afghan rulers. It was actually the severe policies of revenue extraction which led Birbal Dhar to join the Sikh camp and architect the downfall of Afghans in Kashmir.

The policies of Afghan *subadars* not only ruined the economic life of Kashmiris but inflict sectarian and communal tensions in the society. A religious rift between different Muslims and Pandits and sectarian discord between *Sunnis* and *Shias* got further widened during Afghan rule in Kashmir. Sukh Jiwan Mal was the first governor who banned *Azaan* and cow slaughter in Kashmir under the counseling of his *sahibkar*, Mahanand Pandit. It was because of these religious policies, a major portion of troops who were Muslims alienated with him and became the significant reason for his dismissal from the charge of *subadari*, and his subsequent murder by Afghan troops. [iii] Later on, to avenge the entire Pandit community for the murder of his father, Mir Muqqim Kant by Pandit Kailash Dhar, Faqir-ud-din after installing himself on the *subadari* of Kashmir levied many extra taxes on Hindu communities. He killed many prominent Hindus and forcibly converted 2000 Hindus to Islam. [iv] For the same crime, Mir Fazil Kant who became *diwan* under Amir Khan, imprisoned Kailash Pandit, tortured him to death and suppressed his entire community by imposing various fines and penalties. [v] Though there are certain constructive measures credited to Amir Khan like construction of fort of *shergari* and *AmiraKadal* (bridge) [vi] but his reign also witnessed social clashes in the form of *shia-sunni* conflicts. Karim Dad Khan, the most notorious *subadar*, ordered the mass rape of one 1000 girls irrespective of religion or sect which made womenfolk vulnerable in the society. [vii] Shia-Sunni conflict which occurred in *subadari* of Buland Khan Bamzai, resulted in cutting of ears and noses of Shias who were involved in igniting the riot and others very heavily fined. [viii] The anti-*shia* attitude of Buland Khan furthered alienated them from sunnis folk and the rift kept on increasing. Similarly, Karim Dad brutally killed Anwar Malik, a *shia* who was accused with the murder of Kamal-ud-din Naqashbandi, and his dead body was hanged on the gates of mosque of *Khanaqah* of Mir Sayyid Ali Hamdani in Srinagar. [ix]

The miseries of Kashmiris were further aggravated by the frequent natural calamities like rains, floods, earthquakes which resulted in terrible famines and epidemics and wrecked disaster on the socio-economic conditions of the region. Kashmir witnessed ten deadly famines during the rule of Afghan and it was once under the *sahibkari* of Abdul Hasan Bandy that certain measures were taken to redress the grievance of famine stricken people by distributing food and seeds to the population. [x] During an epidemics in Azad Khan's reign, twenty thousand people died and the misery was further increased with the shortage of salt at the same time. [xi] It is because of these miseries and ill-being inflicted on the people of Kashmir, the Kashmir historian have designated Afghan rule as one of the darkest periods in the history of Kashmir.

## 2. References

- i. Nadir Shah Afshar also known as Nadir Quli Beg in the history of Iran, was a chief of semi-nomadic tribe of Qazilbash who entered into the military services of Shah Tahmasp II of Safavid empire and later on became the Shah of entire Persia. James Fraser, The History of Nadir Shah: Formerly Called Thamas Kuli Khan, The Prefect of Persia: To which is Prefix'd a Short History of the Mongol Emperors, London
- ii. The Persian invasion of Nadir Shah resulted into a fierce battle between his forces and troops organised by emperor Mohammad Shah on 13th Feb, 1739, at Karnal some 110 kilometres from Delhi. The Mughal forces were defeated and Nadir Shah entered Delhi as a new emperor.
- iii. Hasan Shah, Tarikh-i-Hasan, Vol II, p.421
- iv. Jaffar Khan Kant, a local chieftain had waged war against the naibsubadar, Abul Barkat Khan and defeated him with the help of Gujurs. he had taken the reigns of government in his hands and restored to atrocities and exploitation in the region. The imperial government sent Fakhr-ud-daula along his naibsubadar to counter the situation in which he miserably failed and was replaced by Ati'ullah Khan. Didamari, Waqi'at-i-Kashmir, f.223
- v. Ibid; f.223-225
- vi. Under the influence of some mansabdars, Mir Muqqim Kanth had pacified the provincial troops by dismissing most of them and curtailing the salary of rest of the troops. The alienated troops resorted to frequent uprisings and disturbed the peace of the region. Hasan Shah, Tarikh-i-Hasan, Vol.II, p.435
- vii. Abul Qasim Khan was son of former naib-i-suba, Abul Barkat Khan who had tried many time to capture the administration of Kashmir but was defeated and captured by Abul Mansoor Khan Safdar Jung and deported to Delhi where he breathed his last. After his death his sons, Abul Qasim Khan and Noor-ud-din Khan continued his fight for provincial autonomy.
- viii. Hasan Shah, Tarikh-i-Hasan, p.435
- ix. When Abdul Khan Ishaq Aqsai decided to enter into the province of Kashmir, Mir MUqqim Kanth went in person to welcome Afghan troops at Sayidabad. Hasan Shah, Tarikh-i-Hasan, p. 436
- x. Kachru, Majmu'at-ul-Tawarikh, f.185b
- xi. Hasan Shah, Tarikh-i-Hasan, p.456
- xii. Ibid, p.448
- xiii. Hasan Shah, Tarikh-i-Hasan, p.454
- xiv. Ibid, p. 453
- xv. Ibid, p. 464, 471, 496, 503, 509,

- xvi. Ibid, p.447-48
- xvii. Ibid, p, 448-451
- xviii. Ibid, p. 452
- xix. Ibid, p.546-48
- xx. Hasan Shah, Tarikh-i-Hasan, p.481
- xxi. Ibid, p.500
- xxii. Ibid, p.483
- xxiii. After administering Kashmir for some time, Sukh Jiwan Mal was asked by Ahmad Shah Abdali, the then emperor of Afghan empire, to send the revenue ten times greater than the actual income estimated from the province of Kashmir, which left him with no other option but raise voice against the imperial authority. He defeated the Afghan forces headed by Abdullah Khan Ishaq Aqsai and established his rule in Kashmir. The disassociation from Afghan didn't last for longer and Sukh Jiwan Mal who had administered Kashmir for Bamzai who replaced him as the next Afghan governor of Kashmir. Ibid, p.449, 452-53
- xxiv. Kachru, Majmu'at Tawarikh, f.166; Parmu, A History of Muslim Rule in Kashmir, p. 501-02
- xxv. Hasan Shah, Tarikh-i-Hasan, p.481
- xxvi. Ibid, 484
- xxvii. Ibid, 491-92
- xxviii. Didamari, Majmu'at Tawarikh, f.238-29a
- xxix. Ibid, f.197a, Hasan Shah, Tarikh-i-Hasan, p.491
- xxx. Didamari, Majmu'at Tawarikh, f.160b
- xxxi. "They increased the number of the functionaries to speed up the revenue realisation and the exploitation of peasantry, in particularly and other strata, in general." Kaw, The Agrarian System of Kashmir, 1586-1819 A.D, p.234; Ramjoo Dhar, Intizami Mulk-i-Kashmir, f.3a-5b
- xxxii. Under Mughals only cash revenue was deposited in the office of tawildar which was later on distributed as salary among the different officials. Ramjoo Dhar, Intizami Mulk-i-Kashmir, 3a-5b
- xxxiii. The Shahmirs was the first dynasty which laid the foundation of Muslim rule in Kashmir. It was founded by Sultan Shams-ud-din, alias Shahmir in 1341. Baharistan Shahi, p.29
- xxxiv. Hasan Shah, Tarikh-i-Hasan, Vol.I, p.414-506
- xxxv. Ibid, Vol.II, p. 435
- xxxvi. It is believed that Abdullah Khan Ishaq Aqsai had collected wealth worth one crore rupees in both cash and kind, during the first six months in Kashmir and took it to Kabul. Hasan Shah, Tarikh-i-Hasan, p.452-3
- xxxvii. Hasan Shah, Tarikh-i-Hasan, p.447
- xxxviii. Sukh had an apprehension that Abdul Hasan Bandy was intrigues against his life which led him to imprison his sahibkar and replace him with Mir Muqqim Kant. he stated exploiting the family and admirers of Hasan Bandy by imposing various taxes on them. After sometime, Sukh Jiwan Mal realizing his mistake, discharged him and re-appointed him on the position of sahibar but by then, Hasan Bandy had turned into a rebel who took charges of government and seized all the water borne connectivity as soon as Sukh Jiwan went to Baramullah to suppress the revolts. Abdul Khan took up arms against Sukh Jiwan Mal but was defeated in the war which forced him to ran away to Kohistan. Hasan Shah, Tarikh-i-Hasan, p.450-51
- xxxix. The chieftain families of Khokas and Bambas of Muzzafabad and Baramullah had always tried to disrupt the political peace of the region by indulging into loot, plunder and other anti-state activities throughout our period of study. the local influential elite groups sometimes united with these hilly chieftains to organise joint revolts against the Imperial authority in the state. In 1767, Faqir-ullah Kant with the help of Bamba chief, Mahmud Khan Bamba raised revolt against the Afghan subadar, Khurram Khan. As a result, Afghan troops were defeated and Faqir-ullah replaced Khurram Khan as the new subadar of Kashmir. Ibid, p.456-57
- xl. Mir Muqqim Kant made every possible attempt to expel Kailash Dhar who was worked as peshkar under the same governor from administration but failed which led Kailash Dhar to plan the murder of Mir Muqqim and got him killed. Ibid; p.459
- xli. Ibid; p.452
- xl.ii. Ibid; 491, 500-01; Didamari, Majmu'at-ul-Tawarikh; f.215-16ab
- xl.iii. Didamari, Majmu'at Tawarikh, f.215-226 ab
- xl.iv. Hasan Shah, Tarikh-i-Hasan, p. 504-10
- xl.v. Abdullah Khan Ishaq Aqsai governed the region with the reign of terror and undertook exploitative measures throughout his visit of six months in the valley. He started extracting wealth with both the hands and at the time of his departure, he had managed to obtain wealth worth one crore both in cash and kind. Hasan Shah, Tarikh-i-Hasan, p. 448
- xl.vi. As it wasn't possible for Sukh Jiwan Mal to collect such a huge amount from the tax payers, thus, with the consent of some his subordinate officials like Hasan Bandy, etc., he took up arms against the Afghan government. Though some of the Afghan nobles like Kichak Khan, Milak Hasan Khan Irani, Azeem Khan and Meera Khan didn't agree with the decision of raising a revolt against Afghan rulers but they were all killed except Khawaja Kichak who was exiled from the country. Hasan Shah, Tarikh-i-Hasan, p.448-449
- xl.vii. Ibid; p.448
- xl.viii. Ramjoo Dhar, Intizami-Mulk-i-Kashmir, f.5a; Ibid; p.569
- xl.ix. Hasan Shah, Tarikh-i-Hasan, p.469

1. Hasan Shah, Tarikh-i-Hasan p. 480
- li. In pre-Afghan period, the hanjis old man, an adult and a child had to pay 12, 60 and 36 dams respectively. Kachroo, Majmu'at Tawarikh; f. 160ab
- lii. Hasan Shah, Tarikh-i-Hasan, p.471.
- liii. Ibid; 452
- liv. Hasan Shah, Tarikh-i-Hasan, p.458
- lv. Ibid; p.461 Amir Khan Jahan Sher constructed a palace and a fort which included a huge residential quarters for state officials and constructed a bridge to improve the connectivity. Ibid; p. 461-62
- lvi. Ibid; 467
- lvii. Ibid; 467
- lviii. It started all with the anti-sunni comments passed by some Shias of zadibal (an area in Srinagar inhabited by shia community) to the renowned sufi and priest of the then times, Khawaja Habibullah Nowsheri. Sunnis burnt and looted the houses of shias. After enquiring, Buland Khan ordered to cut off the noses and ears of accused Shias and fined the other people involved. Ibid; 454
- lix. Ibid; 471
- lx. Ibid; 449
- lxi. Ibid; 474