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## **HISTORY OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR**

**Unit-I**

**Lesson-1**

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**Introduction**

The sources are those evidences which are available to the historian with the help of which he reconstructs the past. These evidences are sacred in the sense that it is on the basis of these remnants of the past that the historian understands and interprets the events of a bygone era. He does so for a better understanding of the present. The sources can be literary, epigraphic, numismatic or archaeological. A careful unbiased study of these sources is essential in order to have a clear understanding of the history of a given region, in a well demarcated time frame and in the given context.

### **Objectives**

The objective of this lesson is to acquaint you with the numerous sources of the history of ancient and early medieval Kashmir. The rich variety of sources which are available will help you to understand the socio-economic, religious, political and administrative history of ancient and early medieval Kashmir.

### **Sources of Kashmir History**

We have abundant sources of Kashmir history which tell us about the history of different aspects of the valley of Kashmir. Of these, the literary sources are both indigenous as well as foreign. We obtain detailed information of the socio-economic, religious and political history of ancient and early medieval Kashmir. Besides this, we have numismatic as well as archaeological evidences which not only helps us to reconstruct the past events but also helps us to corroborate the information gleaned from different literary sources, thereby attesting the authenticity of such evidences or facts of history.

### **Literary evidences Sanskrit sources**

The earliest source available to us, belonging to the 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D. is the Nilamata Purana. It was composed by Sage Nila. The Nilamata Purana is an ancient Sanskrit text which gives us detailed information about the pilgrimage spots, rituals and ceremonies observed by the people of Kashmir. We are also informed about the origin of Kashmir. The details obtained from the Nilamata helps us to reconstruct social and religious history of ancient Kashmir. The Kuttanimata kavya composed by Damodargupta is a work of the 8th century A.D and informs us about the prevalence of prostitution in early Kashmir. The poet Ksemendra belongs to the early medieval period and has authored several works. Some prominent works which are available with us are Darpadalan,

Charucharya, Kavikanthabharana, Suvrattatilakam, Samayamatrka, Dashavataracaritam besides others. The works of Ksemendra throw a flood of light on the society, economy and religious systems prevalent in contemporary Kashmir. The poet Bilhana composed Vikramankadeva caritam and Somadeva Bhatta wrote Kathasaritsagara. Besides these works, the magnum opus pertaining to the history of ancient and earlymedieval Kashmir is the Rajatarangini written by Pandit Kalhana. It was composed in 1148-49 AD by him. The Rajatarangini contains eight cantos or eight books and it records the history of various dynasties which ruled Kashmir from early days down to the time of the author. Although the first three books are not all that reliable, the account from the fourth book onwards is considered fairly accurate and authentic. Thus we have accurate historical record of the history of Kashmir from the seventh century onwards.

Jonaraja continued the narrative of Kalhana in his Rajatarangini and recorded events till 1459 AD. Thereafter, his pupil, Srivara described the events till 1486 AD in his Jaina Rajatrangini. The narrative was continued by Prajyabhatta who brought it down to 1512 AD in his Rajavalipataka. Suka, the pupil of Prajyabhatta continued the narrative thereafter and recorded history till 1596 A.D.

### **Persian sources**

There are several Kashmir chronicles written in the Persian language which inform us about the different aspects of the history of Kashmir. Sayyid Ali wrote his Tarikh-i-Kashmir during the reign period of Sultan Yusuf. Shah Haidar Malik Chadura wrote Tarikh-i-Kashmir, which informs us about the later period of the sultanate. Narayan Kaul Ajiz, author of 'Tarikh-i-Kashmir' describes the history of Kashmir from the earliest times to 1710 A.D. Another valuable history of Kashmir is Baharistan-i-Shahi by an unknown author. Besides other details, this book describes the life of Yusuf Shah and Yaqub Shah in exile. Pandit Birbal Kachru wrote Mukhtsar-tarikh-i-Kashmir, wherein he tells us the history upto the sikh rule. He also mentions the social customs and traditions of the Hindus.

There are several other important histories available which tell us about the political life, socio-economic conditions of the people of Kashmir before and after its conquest by the Mughals. Mirza Haidar Dughlat composed Tarikh-i-Rashidi which tells us about the Sultanate period, arts, crafts and architecture of Kashmir. It was completed in 1546 AD. Abdul Qasim Badauni wrote Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh where he describes the relations of

Akbar with the Chak rulers of Kashmir. Abdul Fazl's Akbarnama is another valuable work. Emperor Jahangir wrote Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri where he describes the socio-economic condition of Kashmir of his time.

### **Other important works**

Besides recorded historical works, we have several biographies of saints. Prominent among them are Khulasatul Manaqib by Nur-ur-Din Jafar Badakshi, Tuhfatul Ahbab by an anonymous author and Hilyatul Arifin by Khwaja Ishaq. Kashmiri literature and folk lore also gives us important information.

### **13.4 Foreign accounts**

Accounts of foreign travellers are also important source of Kashmir History. The accounts left by Chinese pilgrims, Muslim scholars and European travellers provide us with valuable information regarding the history of Kashmir.

The Chinese pilgrim monk Hiuen Tsiang visited Kashmir during 631-634 AD. He has described in his memoirs the routes by which he entered the valley. Although the name of the reigning king is not mentioned by him, he was most probably Durlabha-vardhana of the Karkota dynasty. He mentions the tolerant and generous nature of the king, existence of several buddhist viharas and the prevalence of Buddhism in Kashmir. Another Chinese pilgrim Ou' Kong visited Kashmir in 759 AD. He too has left an account of Kashmir which is very useful. The well known muslim scholar Al-beruni visited India along with Mahmud Ghazni. Although he did not visit Kashmir, yet he gives an illuminating account of it in his book entitled Kitab-ul-Hind. Among European travellers, the account of Francis Bernier who visited Kashmir in 1665 A.D. is noteworthy. We get an idea of socio-economic conditions in the valley of that time. He was followed by several other travellers whose accounts are valuable sources of Kashmir History.

### **Archaeological evidences**

The archaeological evidences available from Kashmir are rich sources for reconstructing history of ancient and early medieval Kashmir. The earliest monumental remains of the historical period have been reported from Harwan and are dated 3rd to 6th centuries AD. At Uskur, they are dated 2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> centuries AD. Harwan is a prominent

site where buildings and terracotta tiles have been excavated. These tiles reveal certain sasanian and central Asian characteristics with a background of Gandhara art of the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> centuries AD. The archeological remains of temples constructed during the reign period of Lalitaditya have been reported. Of these, the majestic ruins of the Sun temple at Martanda clearly represent the glory and splendour of this period. Several sculptural remains have also been reported. The remains at Avantipura are a fine example of the architectural achievements of the reign of Avantivarman. The stupendous work done by archaeologists like Alexander Cunningham, George Buhler and Aurel Stein went a long way in unearthing the rich legacy of archaeological remains existing in Kashmir.

### **Numismatic evidences**

Coins are equally important as sources of Kashmir history. They often substantiate the literary evidences, thereby attesting the authenticity of the literary data. The rise of the Karkota dynasty in Kashmir brought forth a regular series of Kashmir coins. These coins were known by different names, for example, Dinnaras, Swarna Rupaka, Tanka and Kedara. Several gold, silver, white metal and copper coins of the kings and queens of Kashmir have been found from different parts of the valley, north western India and also from Monghyr in Bihar and Banda in Uttar Pradesh.

The coins of the Karkotas are of bold but rude workmanship. They depict the standing king and seated goddess. It is believed by several historians that the Sri Pratapa coins should be attributed to King Lalitaditya Muktapida. These coins have been found at Faizabad, Banda, Varanasi, Monghyr and Nalanda. Since King Durlabhaka had never won over these regions while Lalitaditya had conquered most of them, they have been attributed to King Lalitaditya. Gold coins bearing the legend Sri Yasovarman have been attributed to King Samkaravarman of the Utpala dynasty. Harshadeva also got minted several coins while his gold and silver coins are few, his copper coins are abundant.

### **Let us sum up**

The details in the foregoing pages clearly tell us about the numerous sources of Kashmir History. The primary sources, in Sanskrit and Persian, the accounts of foreign travellers, the remains of monuments, the sculptural evidences together with the coins are the evidences with the help of which we can reconstruct the past. The student of history

must take into account all those evidences in order to understand the ancient and early medieval period of the history of Kashmir

**LALITADITYA: CONQUEST AND ADMINISTRATION**

**STRUCTURE**

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## **Introduction**

The primary source of information for the history of Karkotas is Kalhana's Rajatarangini. The account of Kalhana pertaining to the Karkota dynasty is enumerated in book 4 of his chronicle. This can be substantiated by other sources, such as other literary works, accounts of foreign travellers, epigraphic and numismatic evidences. According to the Rajatarangini, Durlabhavardhana was the son of Karkota naga and became the first ruler of this dynasty. He succeeded Baladitya, the last ruler of the Gonanda dynasty in 625 A.D. Durlabhavardhana was succeeded by his able son Durlabhaka who adopted the title of Pratapaditya. King Durlabhaka was greatly enchanted with the beauty of Narendra Prabha, the wife of Nona. He subsequently married her with the consent of Nona. Queen Narendraprabha gave birth to three sons namely, Chandrapida, Tarapida and Muktapida. The third and youngest son is better known in history as Lalitaditya Muktapida.

## **Objectives**

The objective of this lesson is to help you to understand the multi faceted personality of one of the most outstanding monarch of the post Harsha era, Lalitaditya. The conquests of Lalitaditya were numerous and made him the most powerful Karkota King. His administrative reforms, his works of public welfare, his patronage to art and letters depict him as a capable administrator as also a person with refined tastes.

## **Lalitaditya Muktapida (724-761 A.D.) A brief background**

The greatness of a king in ancient and medieval period was mostly estimated by his conquests. And in this respect, Lalitaditya can rightly be regarded as the most illustrious monarch of eighth century Kashmir. Lalitaditya ascended the throne in 724 A.D. At that time, the political condition of northern India was very dismal. There was political



fragmentation and numerous principalities were ruled by weak rulers. The Arabs were getting united under the banner of Islam and were threatening Kashmir. Under such circumstances, Lalitaditya conquered several regions and succeeded in having sway over a large area in the northern India. His suzerainty extended over a large portion of the subcontinent and large tracts of the Central Asian regions.

Lalitaditya is remembered in the annals of India not only as a great general but also as a good administrator, promoter of literary activities and as a patron of art and architecture. Historians are of the opinion that under his benevolent rule, the valley of Kashmir rose to its zenith of glory and prosperity.

### **Conquests of Lalitaditya**

When Lalitaditya ascended the throne in 724 A.D, the political condition of northern India in general and north western in particular was very obscure. Lalitaditya had ascended the throne at a mature age and therefore had sufficient experience in warfare and military administration. Making full use of that, he decided to first consolidate his position in the valley. He first subdued the petty neighbouring states on the western and north western fringes of Kashmir. The stage was now set for further and bigger conquests.

### **Conquest of Kanauj**

The most significant conquest of Lalitaditya was that of Kanauj which was ruled by the ambitious Yasovarman. The imperial ambitions of Lalitaditya were largely responsible for this conquest besides other reasons. The information pertaining to this conquest are obtained from Kalhana's Rajatarangini as well as from Gaudavaho, composed by Vakpatiraja, the court poet of Yasovarman. The first confrontation between the two kings went in favour of Lalitaditya. Yasovarman was forced to conclude a treaty with Lalitaditya. However, the wordings of the draft treaty did not give due respect to the victor king, Lalitaditya. Hence, this was taken as a pretext for a second attack by Lalitaditya who was goaded to do so by his ministers. The outcome of the ensuing long battle for supremacy proved disastrous for Yasovarman who was completely routed by the forces of Lalitaditya. The vast region around Kanyakubja including the capital now formed a part of Lalitaditya's empire.

### **Conquest of Bihar, Gauda and Kalinga**

After the defeat of Yasovarman, Kalhana mentions his conquest of Kalinga. It can be presumed that the intervening regions submitted to his might and he marched triumphantly to the eastern coast. The ruler of Gauda (Bengal), Rajabhadra of the Bhadra dynasty most probably submitted before Lalitaditya and even offered elephants which joined the latter's armies. The ruler of Kalinga (Orissa) thereafter bore a brunt of an attack from the Kashmiri king and was vanquished.

### **Conquest of the deccan and western India**

After a successful campaign in the north, Lalitaditya turned his attention to the Deccan India up to the river Kaveri. He passed over Karnata which was ruled over by Queen Ratta. This queen is stated to have paid her homage to Lalitaditya. Then he reached the banks of the river Kaveri and conquered few islands. Thereafter he over ran the seven Konkanas and advanced as far as Dvaraka. On his return journey he clashed with and subdued the Maitrakas of Valabhi. Here it should be noted that the conquests of Lalitaditya were not aimed at territorial expansion but was merely a digvijaya. The territories of the defeated rulers were not annexed. After exacting tributes from them, King Lalitaditya returned to his capital with eleven crores of gold coins from his campaigns.

### **Tibet and Central Asia**

Soon after Lalitaditya returned to Kashmir, he faced the threat of an attack from Tibet. The army of Lalitaditya had just returned after a prolonged tiring campaign. Under the circumstances, Lalitaditya was compelled to request the Chinese Emperor for help. According to the Chinese Annals, Mu-to-pi (Lalitaditya Muktapida) sent U-li-to as his ambassador to the Chinese court to seek aid against a common enemy. However, the mission was a failure. Emperor Hiuen Tsung did not agree to the request as he was himself facing internal problems. Nevertheless, Lalitaditya was able to meet the Tibetan challenge alone and succeeded in defeating them. According to Kalhana, Lalitaditya also occupied the high plateau land north and north east of Kashmir and subdued the local nomadic tribes.

Lalitaditya next turned his attention towards Central Asia. The people of this region

offered stiff opposition to Lalitaditya. Kalhana tells us that while the Kambojas were defeated easily the Tuhkharas offered initial resistance and later fled away. The Tuhkhara chief, Mummuni was defeated thrice by Lalitaditya, which suggests a tough resistance on the part of Mummuni. The Bhauttas and the Darads suffered a similar fate. Thereafter, Lalitaditya proceeded towards Strirajya. The king of Uttara-Kura fled away without offering any resistance. Kalhana informs us that the victorious king Lalitaditya imposed certain practices on the defeated peoples which were marks of their subjugation.

There are certain other evidences apart from Kalhana's chronicle which also indicate that Lalitaditya had indeed carried his arms in the regions mentioned earlier. An eighth century inscription in sharada script found at Kabul suggests that Lalitaditya had come to the rescue of the Brahmanas and saved them from the clutches of the Turks. Alberuni also mentions in his memoirs that the people of Kashmir celebrated a festival on second day of Chaitra (March) every year on account of a victory gained by their king Muttai (Lalitaditya Muktapida) over the turks. Obviously this statement must mean that the Kashmiris celebrated Lalitaditya's victories during the course of his Digvijaya campaign.

### **Lalitaditya's administration**

The achievements of Lalitaditya in peace are as significant as his conquests. His administrative reforms, his principles of governance, his work of public welfare and his patronage to art and architecture make him the tallest and the most eminent ruler of Kashmir. His religious tolerance exhibits his magnanimous disposition.

### **Reforms in Central administration**

Before the accession of Lalitaditya, the business of the state was looked after by eighteen chief officials who were known as Karmasthanas. After becoming the king of Kashmir, Lalitaditya reorganised and improved the central administration. As the workload had increased, he created five new functionaries, viz. Mahapratiharapida (high chamberlain), Mahasandhivigraha (chief minister), Mahasvasala (master of horses), Mahabhandagara (keeper of treasury) and Mahasadhanabhaga (not identified). The offices of these five Karmasthanas taken together were called Panchamahasabda. This title, Panchamahasabda was assumed by the officer who presided over all of them. Kalhana informs us that

Mitrasarman, who was earlier a Samdhivigrahika or the foreign minister was made the Panchamahasabda.

### **Principles of governance**

Lalitaditya was a farsighted ruler. He was conscious of the problem that could arise from the insubordination of powerful classes of the society. Over the years, the landed oligarchy, the Damaras had grown into a powerful body and become troublesome and nearly rebellious. This led Lalitaditya to prophesize that his successors should not allow the villagers to have more food supply than was required for one year's consumption and neither more oxen than were required for the tillage of their fields. For if they had more wealth than they required, they would soon become formidable Damaras and may even surpass the orders of the ruling king.

### **Extension of irrigation facilities**

Lalitaditya exerted himself for the cause of people's welfare. In order to provide protection from recurring floods, Lalitaditya drained the water of the overflowing Mahapadma lake by means of suitable channels and thereby lessened the danger of floods. This also augmented the land produce. Kalhana informs us that Lalitaditya made distributary arrangements at Chakradhara and other Karewas for lifting water of the river Vitasta and its distributaries to many villages by the construction of a series of water wheels. This made more water available for irrigation purposes. The large tracts of land which were hitherto under-used became productive. This in turn led to increased production of crops and also to the rise in the prosperity of the people.

### **Lalitaditya-As a patron of art and architecture**

The glory of Lalitaditya's reign lies in his building activities. He founded several towns, such as Sunischitapura, Darshitapura, Phalapura, Parnotsa, Lokapunya and Parihasapura. However, it is difficult to trace the remains of all of them. There are no signs left of Sunishitapura and Darshitapura. Phalapura may be traced to a village near modern Shadipur. Parnotsa refers to the town of Poonch. It appears that Parnotsa existed even before the time of Lalitaditya for it is mentioned by Hiuen Tsang in his memoirs. The town Lokapunya has been identified with the Lokabavana on the Anantnag-Verinag road. The

town Parihasapura lies in the modern pargana of Paraspor.

Apart from founding towns, the tolerant king, Lalitaditya is credited with building several temples, Viharas and Stupas. He also bestowed wealth on them and attached villages to them for their maintenance. He built the temple of Keshava Vishnu in Darpatapura, the temple of Aditya at Lalitapura, a large vihara with a stupa and the temple of Muktasvamin Visnu in Hushkapura and the Siva temple of Jyestharudra near the shrine of Bhutesvara at Bhutser. His queens, other relatives and his ministers also vied with one another in building shrines and other edifices. Out of all his building activities, two names stand apart. One is the town of Parihasapura, wherein he built several shrines and the other is the Sun temple of Martanda which is undoubtedly the finest example of Kashmirian style of architecture.

The Rajatarangini of Kalhana informs us that Lalitaditya sanctified the town of Parihasapura by the installation of huge gold and silver images of Visnu in the temples of Parihasakesava, Muktakesava, Mahavaraha and Goverdhanadhara. He also installed therein, the image of Garuda, the vehicle of Visnu, on a 54 hands high pillar of stone. He also built the grand Raja Vihara, with a large Chaitya as well as the image of Buddha.

The Sun Temple of Martanda is undoubtedly the most magnificent example of Lalitaditya's architectural genius. He built it in honour of the Sun god near the tirtha of the same name. The scenic location of the temple, its imposing dimensions, the beauty of its architectural design command admiration from an onlooker even in its present dilapidated condition. The architecture of Kashmir reached the stage of full maturity during the reign of Lalitaditya.

Lalitaditya patronized learning also. According to Kalhana, he extended his patronage to Bhavabhuti and Vakpatiraja, who had earlier adorned the court of Yasovarman of Kanauj. His religious policy was tolerant. Although himself a Vaisnava, he extended full patronage to other religions existing in the valley at that time. Cankuna, a Buddhist, was elevated to the position of Lalitaditya's chief minister.

### **Let us sum up**

Lalitaditya Muktapida is known in the annals of history as a great conqueror as well as an able administrator. He has to his credit the conquest of a vast area inside as well as

beyond the frontiers of India. This includes the conquest of Kanauj, Bihar, Gauda, Kalinga, deccan as well as western India. He is also stated to have subdued the hardy Tibetans, the Kambojas, the Tuhkharas, the Bhauttas and the Darads. After these numerous victories, he triumphantly returned to Kashmir with eleven crores of gold coins.

As an administrator, he exhibits his humane disposition. He brought about several administrative reforms in the Central administration. He carried out works of public welfare for the general welfare and prosperity of his people. He gave certain principles for good governance which clearly attest his far-sightedness and political wisdom. He was an indefatigable builder as well as a patron of art and learning. He was, to top it all, a religious tolerant. These characteristics of his personality clearly make him the tallest and the ablest ruler of eighth century Kashmir.

**AVANTIVARMAN: ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS**

**STRUCTURE**

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**Objective**

**Early problems faced by Avantivarman**

**His relations with Chief Minister, Sura**

**Avantivarman's administrative reforms**

**Construction of irrigation works and promotion of agriculture.**

**Avantivarman- As a patron of art and architecture**

**Avantivarman- As a patron of learning**

**Avantivarman- As a religious tolerant and a generous donor**

**Let us sum up**

## **Introduction**

The history of Kashmir, under the later Karkotas is a sad tale of misrule, distress and oppression. The later Karkota kings were utterly worthless and imbecile. There was no security of life and property. The vast empire, so painstakingly extended at the cost of great human sacrifices, had greatly shrunk. The Damaras' and other self seeking elements were strengthening themselves, asserting their will whenever possible. The pleasure seeking spineless kings were totally oblivious of all that was happening around them. Consequently, the minister Sura managed to seat Avantivarman, grandson of Utpalaka, on the throne of Kashmir. Avantivarman had no connection with royalty. Nonetheless, he succeeded in laying the foundation of a new dynasty in Kashmir-the Utpala dynasty.

## **Objective**

The objective of this lesson is to enable you to understand the administrative reforms of king Avantivarman (855-883 A.D.) of the Utpala dynasty. The reign period of Avantivarman is devoid of conquests and acquisition of fresh territories. However, it is still remarkable in the history of Kashmir. The fame and glory of Avantivarman rests primarily on a series of administrative reforms carried out by him. He was ably assisted by his chief minister Sura. The second person of consequence was his minister Suyya, who was the architect of the several works of irrigation and public welfare. It was on the basis of these works that Avantivarman succeeding in establishing order, stability, peace and prosperity in Kashmir.

## **Early problems faced by Avantivarman**

Soon after accession, Avantivarman had to face repeated challenges to his authority by some of his rich and influential brothers and cousins. However, Avantivarman suppressed all of them with the help of his loyal chief minister, Sura.

The power of the Damaras had been increasing over the years. Under the weak successors of Lalitaditya, they had managed to amass great wealth by high handed methods. They had started keeping armed soldiers and this added to their vanity and arrogance. They showed little regard even for the king's authority. Kalhana gives us a detailed account in Book five of his Rajatarangini, of a Damara named Dhanva who had become so powerful



that he had even appropriated the villages attached to the shrine of Siva Bhutesa. Dhanva had left no option for the priest of Bhutesa temple, so that the latter had to offer a wild growing vegetable of bitter taste called Utpalasaka to the chief deity. This knowledge hurt and enraged the king so greatly that he left the temple without completing his prayers. He mentioned a sudden attack of colic as the reason for his sudden departure. But, Sura is said to have understood the real cause. He therefore went to the temple of Bhairava and called Dhanva, whom he looked upon as his son, to meet him. The vain and haughty Dhanva came along with his armed soldiers. As soon as he entered the Bhairava temple, Sura's men cut off his head and threw his body into a tank. Sura, then rejoined the king in the Bhutesa temple and completed the prayers.

The above mentioned account clearly exhibits the menace of the power of the Damaras in early medieval Kashmir. It also brings to light the relations between Avantivarman and his chief minister, Sura.

### **His relations with chief minister Sura**

There are several verses in the fifth book of the Rajatarangini which point to extremely cordial relations between Avantivarman and Sura. Avantivarman had acquired the throne with the help of Sura. It was with his active help that he had been able to suppress his foes. As such, the king was extremely grateful as well as dependent on Sura. The entire Dhanva episode indicates a kind of awe that Avantivarman nurtured for Sura. He could not openly tell him about his displeasure with Dhanva. But it was the political sagacity of Sura that he punished Dhanva, for the latter, although like his son, was becoming a challenge to his own authority. Another fact that Avantivarman could not disclose to Sura till his very end was that he was a vaisnava and not a Saiva. He even built the temple of Siva Avantisvara after his accession. Probably he did so because Sura was a devout saiva and the king did not wish to displease Sura, his loyal minister.

### **Avantivarman's administrative reforms**

As mentioned earlier, the fame and glory of Avantivarman rests primarily on a series of administrative reforms carried out by him. He was keenly interested to do away with the sufferings of his people and to usher an era of stability, economic welfare, peace and prosperity. He was ably assisted by two people, his chief minister, Sura and his minister

Suyya.

### **Construction of irrigation works and promotion of agriculture**

The first task which confronted Avantivarman was to make available more arable land since its shortage had a deep impact upon the economy of the country. Further, Kashmir was liable to devastating floods. During the reign of Lalitaditya, the waters of the Mahapadma lake were drained out to some extent through suitable channels. This exercise reduced the danger of floods and also increased the land produce. These channels were however, neglected during the reign of the later karkota rulers and had remained blocked for years by boulders which had not been removed. To add to troubles famine broke out in Kashmir.

King Avantivarman undertook a series of reforms in order to do away with the sufferings of his people. He was ably assisted by Suyya, whose schemes of drainage and irrigation works went a long way in improving the economy of the valley.

Kalhana has given us a graphic account of Suyya's schemes in his Rajatrangini. Avantivarman gave Suyya a free hand along with ample resources to carry out his plan of clearing the Vitasta of its boulders. Soon, the bed of the river was cleared of all obstructions. Then, a dam was constructed for storing its waters for agricultural purposes. Suyya thereupon planned the confluence of the Sindhu and Vitasta near Srinagar which had their junction near the temple of Vainyasvami. The water collected from the rivers were regulated and supplied to different villages for irrigational purposes. These minor streams were made safe through the construction of embankments. The mentioned measures provided great relief to the people Economic conditions improved rapidly. It is given in the Rajatrangini that prices of food grains which had risen to 1,050 dinnaras per Khari during the days of famine, fell rapidly from 200 dinnaras to just 36 dinnaras per Khari.

### **Avantivarman-as a patron of art and architecture**

The economic prosperity obtained due to the above mentioned schemes enabled Avantivarman to found magnificent and extensive temples and towns. The king founded the town of Avantipur and built two temples in it. These were the temples of Avantiswamin Visnu and that of Siva Avantisvara. Although in ruins at present, the temple of Avantiswamin is regarded as one of the most imposing monuments of early Kashmir. Encouraged by the

building activities of the king, his relatives and ministers also followed suit. Prince Suravarman, the heir-apparent, built the temple of Visnu, Suravarmasvamin, besides a Matha and a Gokula. Prince Samara founded the temple of Samarasvamin. The chief minister Sura founded the town of Surapura besides several temples. His wife, son and nephews who were also devotees of Siva founded several temples and mathas in honour of Siva. Several ministers also laid pious foundations of temples. This includes Suyya, who founded a town after his own name, Suyyapur (modern Sopor). He also constructed the Suyya-setu dykes, after the name of his mother.

The sculptures and icons made during this time were delicate and artistic. Visnu was worshipped in his Trailokyamohana form, wherein the central face was of Vasudeva, to the right was his Nrsimha avatara, to the left was the Varaha avatara and at the back side was the fierce face of Rishi Kapila.

#### **Avantivarman-as a patron of learning**

Avantivarman was a patron of learned men. His chief minister, Sura emulated his example and honoured learned men by giving them a seat in the king's Sabha. Among the learned men, four find mention in Kalhana's narrative. They are, Muktakana, Sivasvamin, Anandavardhana and Ratnakara. Beside these scholars, there was Ramata, who was famous for his work on grammatical science. Bhatta Kallata was a renowned philosopher. He was the pupil of Vasugupta, the founder of the Spandshastra branch of Kashmir Saivism. Bhatta Kallata wrote Spandasarvasva. Infact, he was largely responsible for spreading the teachings of his master as a religion.

#### **Avantivarman-As a religious tolerant and a generous donor**

Avantivarman was a tolerant ruler. Although a devotee of god Visnu, Avantivarman worshipped God Siva and even erected a temple in his honour, Siva Avantisvara. This was perhaps to give regard to his chief minister and well wisher Sura's religious affiliations. He disclosed that he was a vaisnava on his death bed, while listening to the recital of the holy Bhagavadgita.

Kalhana tells us that Avantivarman was a generous and liberal hearted king. Soon after his accession, he had gold and other valuables ground into powder and distributed the same to brahmanas as a porridge.

### **Let us sum up**

In this lesson, the administrative reforms of Avantivarman have been discussed at length. Avantivarman was a peace loving king. Although his reign is devoid of any fresh conquest and resultant extension of territory it is nonetheless very important in the history of Kashmir. Avantivarman's administrative reforms, particularly his efforts at drainage, extension of irrigational facilities and thereby improve agriculture went a long way in ameliorating the sufferings of the people. Economy of Kashmir improved by leaps and bounds. Price of one khari of rice which was 200 dinnaras' dropped to merely 36 dinnaras' during his reign. He curbed the power of the unruly damaras, founded towns, temples, patronised learned scholars and generously gave donations to the deserving people. His long reign of twenty eight years brought material prosperity to the populace of Kashmir

**DIDDA - AS REGENT AND AS QUEEN (958-1003 AD)****STRUCTURE****Introduction****Objective****Didida - As Regent (958-981 AD)**

**Abhimanyu II - (958-972 AD)**

**Nandigupta (972-973 AD)**

**Tribhuvana (973-975 AD)**

**Bhimagupta (975-981 AD)**

**Didida - As Queen (981-1003 AD)****Let us sum up****Introduction**

Queen Didida was the daughter of king Simharaja, the lord of Lohara. On her mother's side, she was the grand daughter of king Bhima Sahi, of the royal house of the Sahis. King Bhima Sahi was the ruler of Udabhandu. Udabhandu was the ancient capital of Gandhara. She was given away in marriage to king Ksemagupta (950-958 AD) of Kashmir. Didida was a remarkable lady in many ways. She was charming, intelligent, ambitious and a successful queen with a dominating personality. She was also shrewd, calculating, determined and possessing a masterful personality. She had one physical defect. She was lame. She ruled Kashmir for nearly half a century, first as the chief queen of Ksemagupta, then as the regent of her son and three grandsons and subsequently as an

independent ruler. She ruled Kashmir during very turbulent times, with a steady determination.

### **Objective -**

The objective of this lesson is to enable you to understand the personality of Queen Didda as well as her rule over Kashmir, first as the regent and then as an independent ruler.

### **Didda - As Regent (958-981 AD)**

The matrimonial alliance of Queen Didda with king Ksemagupta was destined to influence the history of Kashmir for a very long time. Ksemagupta was totally under the influence of his intelligent Queen. So much so, that he came to be known as Diddaksema. Several copper coins bearing the legend "Di-Ksemaguptade (va)" have been discovered, which further strengthen our contention. Ksemagupta took another wife. She was Chandralekha, the daughter of the Lord of the Gate, Phalgun. This new alliance raised the status of Phalgun and he was made the Prime minister. This development was not liked by Didda and it resulted in straining of relations between the two.

### **Problems faced by Didda**

Ksemagupta died in 958 AD. He was succeeded on the throne of Kashmir by his minor son - Abhimanyu II. Didda became the regent of her son.

Soon after the accession of Abhimanyu II, Prime minister Phalgun decided to retire

to Parnotsa along with his followers. Few jealous ministers poisoned the ears of Didda that Phalgunahad evil intentions. He had wanted Didda to immolate herself on the funeral pyre and thereafter himself usurp the throne. Instigated thus, Didda sent royal bodyguards to bring Phalgunahack to the capital. Meanwhile, Phalgunahad reversed his march along with his men and it appeared as if he would confront the Queen. But he seemed to have changed his mind on reaching the shrine of Varahamula, where he laid his sword at the feet of the god. Thereafter, he set forth again for Parnotsa. In this way, we see that Didda had to face trouble soon after becoming a regent. The exit of Phalgunahad from the active political scene, for the time being, saved Kashmir from the threats of a possible civil war. It also gave an opportunity to Didda to take full control of the state of affairs.

### **Abhimanyu II (958-972 AD)**

Abhimanyu II was a minor when he ascended the throne and as such was unable to play a leading role in the contemporary politics of Kashmir. His nominal rule was marked by unrest, conspiracies and rebellion, wherein, the Queen-mother, Didda played an important role.

### **Rebellion of Mahiman**

Mahiman and Patala, related from their maternal side to king Parvagupta, considered themselves claimants for the throne. They revolted openly and were supported by several disgruntled elements as well as by Saktisena, the father-in-law of Mahiman. The situation had become very alarming. At this critical time, only Naravahana, the able and experienced minister stood firmly by the side of the regent queen. The rebels reached the temple of Padmasvami for a confrontation. Meanwhile, Didda, who was anxious for the safety of her son went to Suramatha. Thereafter, exhibiting her forbearance, fortitude and statesmanship, she managed to win over a large number of rebels to her side by offering them gold. A peaceful settlement was arrived at between the queen and Mahiman. Subsequently, the queen decided to root out this tendency of revolt. To achieve her ends, she acted with great diplomacy. She bestowed favours of rank, position and wealth upon the rebels. Yashodhara, who was noted for his bravery, was made the commander-in-chief. Mahiman was reduced to a state of helplessness and subsequently done away with.

### **Rebellion of Yashodhara**

Yashodhara had been made the commander-in-chief of army, from amongst the rebels. Soon, in order to gain further esteem of the queen, he marched against a Sahi chieftain, Thakkana. After a brief resistance, Thakkana was defeated and captured. But when he paid tribute, Yashodhara reinstated him.

Yashodhara's absence in Kashmir due to the said expedition was taken advantage of, by his jealous colleagues. They poisoned the ears of the regent queen, stating that Yashodhara had committed treason, since his actions did not conform to the queen's orders. Led by Rakka, the conspirators ultimately succeeded in poisoning Didda's mind against Yashodhara. Didda apprehended trouble at Yashodhara's end. Therefore, as soon as the latter returned to Kashmir triumphantly, she served upon him an order of banishment. This order was bound to cause another uprising. Yashodhara rebelled in the year 962-963 AD and several refractory elements rallied around him. Discontentment spread in the royal forces as well, but the faithful Naravahana stood by Didda once again, along with his followers. The situation became very alarming and the queen became anxious for the safety of her son. She sent him away to a safe place and entrenched herself in the royal palace. The rebels had an upper hand. But fortunately she was not attacked. The Ekanagas stood firm and were successful in beating back the rebels. Yashodhara and few of his supporters were taken prisoners and were mercilessly executed. Kalhana tells us that Didda did not rest at this. She took the opportunity to reorganize the administration. She got rid of corrupt and opportunist ministers and officers who had been systematically robbing the state treasury and fleecing the subjects to their own advantage.

### **The rise and fall of Naravahana**

As mentioned earlier, the minister Naravahana was the only person who had supported Didda during the tumultuous days. He was able, loyal, responsible and devoted to his duty. Didda felt grateful and thereafter rewarded and honoured her loyal supporters, including Naravahana. The latter was bestowed with the highest appellation of the Rajanaka. However, Naravahana's rise in status caused a lot of heart-burning amongst other high officials. The treasurer, Sindhu, who was jealous and wily by nature, created a lot of misunderstandings between the queen-regent and Naravahana. Few other disgruntled



elements also joined hands. The affection, trust and regard between the queen and Naravahana began fading. He was publicly shamed and insulted on several occasions. When repeatedly disgraced thus, the loyal minister, Naravahana committed suicide.

### **The Damara Uprising**

After the exit of Naravahana, Didda decided to suppress the unruly Damaras. The latter had been gradually adding to their strength and their suppression was imperative. Her first target were the sons of Samgrama Damara of Uttaraghosa. However, they managed to escape to their native place. There, they killed the lord of the Gate, Kayyaka. There was every likelihood of their rebellion taking the form of a popular uprising. Her efforts to arrive at a settlement with the Damaras were short lived. To add to her difficulties, her minister Rakka died at this critical time. Didda was now obliged to recall Phalguna, from Punch. Phalguna accepted the offer and took charge of the administration. He managed to suppress the Damara revolt for we do not hear of them for some time.

Thinking that her troubles were over, Didda at this point of time, committed several moral lapses. The misconduct of the queen had its repercussions on the administration of the country also. Things were going from bad to worse. Meanwhile, Abhimanyu II was growing up and had started taking notice of the developments around him. Unfortunately, he died in 972 A.D. He left behind three infant sons.

### **Nandigupta (972-973 A.D)**

After the death of her young son, Abhimanyu II, Didda was deeply grieved. Her eldest grandson, Nandigupta was seated on the throne and the regency remained with Didda.

Kalhana informs us, in the sixth book of the Rajatarangini that in order to distract her mind from grief and also for the merit of her departed son, she undertook construction of several cities and religious edifices. She got constructed several Visnu temple, mathas, buddhist viharas etc. In all, she laid sixty four pious foundations. However, the pleasant change in Didda did not last long and she again took to her libidinous and licentious habits by the end of a year. She found Nandigupta a hindrance in her evil ways. Hence, as Kalhana informs us, she got rid of him through witchcraft. This was in the year 973 A.D.

### **Tribhuvana (973-975 A.D)**

Nandigupta was succeeded on the throne by his younger brother, Tribhuvana in 973 A.D. Queen Didda remained the regent. Tribhuvana remained on the throne for two uneventful years. Didda got rid of him too in 975 A.D.

### **Bhimagupta (975-981 AD)**

Bhimagupta was the third and the last grandson of Didda who ascended the throne in 975 A.D. It was during his reign that the aged, crafty minister Phalgun, died. He had a restraining influence upon Didda and in the event of his death, it became difficult to check Didda. She started openly indulging in excesses of misconduct. Also, though old, she developed intimate relations with a Khasa courier, named Tunga. Her lust for Tunga reached such proportions that she even got the city-perfect, Bhuyya poisoned to death, for he had objected to her misconduct. Meanwhile, Bhimagupta was growing up and had started realizing the sad and shameful state of affairs in Kashmir. He wanted to bring reforms. The queen-regent objected to it. She openly imprisoned him, tortured him and finally put him to death.

In this manner the queen-regent put all her grandsons out of her way and herself ascended the throne in 981 A.D.

### **Didda - As Queen (981-1003 A.D)**

The reign period of Didda as an independent ruler of Kashmir covers almost a quarter of a century, yet Kalhana has not given us a detailed account of it. He refers to the meteoric rise of Tunga, unsuccessful rebellions of Vigharaja and Prithvipala, uprising of the damaras and the smooth transfer of power to Samgramaraja and to the Lohara dynasty.

### **Rise of Tunga**

Kalhana informs us in the sixth book of his Rajatarangini, that soon after the accession of Didda, Tunga began to take full advantage of his intimacy with the Queen. He asserted himself and came to occupy the office of the sarvadhikarin or the Prime Minister. His brothers were also placed on important responsible posts. The ousted ministers who had thus been displaced became furious and this paved way for the outbreak of a rebellion.

### **Rebellion of Vighararaja**

The dis-satisfaction and heart-burn that had been caused by the rise of Tunga and his brothers led the disgruntled officials to hatch a conspiracy against the Queen and Tunga. They invited Vighararaja, the nephew of Didda as well as a good warrior to lead the rebellion. The clever Vighararaja knew that he could not succeed in the event of an open contest against the Queen and Tunga. He therefore, took recourse to diplomacy. The Brahmanas were an important section of contemporary Kashmiri society. They also had a hold on the other sections of the community. Vighararaja instigated the prominent among them to undertake a prayopavesa or a fast unto death till their grievances were redressed. The people in general, as such considered Tunga to be the cause of all troubles. This led to general unrest. The shrewd Queen hid Tunga in a well guarded place and won over the fasting Brahmanas by offering them wealth. Thus, the rebellion of Vighararaja ended in failure and he returned to Lohara, disappointed.

Later, Kalhana informs us, Tunga and his followers punished the rebels ruthlessly. Vighararaja again incited the Brahmanas to go on fast. The plot was however exposed. The brahmanas were again won over using similar tactics. The agents of Vighararaja were killed. Other greedy brahmanas were imprisoned.

### **Rebellion of Prithvipala**

Prithvipala was the ruler of Rajapuri. He had been humbled by Phalgun and had thereupon accepted the suzerainty of Kashmir. However, the unsettled conditions at the Kashmir court encouraged him to declare his independence. He tried to assert his position and even succeeded in routing a section of Kashmiri forces. However, the situation was retrieved by Tunga. He, along with his followers launched a surprise attack, and burnt the city. Prithvipala sued for peace. In this way Tunga succeeded in rising in esteem of the Queen. He was henceforth, also given command of the army.

### **The Damaras**

It appears that the damaras were again raising heads during this period. Tunga, who had been given the command of the army, succeeded in suppressing them.

### **Transfer of power**

After the murder of Bhimagupta, the third and last grandson of Didda, there was no rightful claimant left to the throne. Consequently, Didda chose Samgramaraja, son of her brother Udayaraja as her successor and appointed him yuvaraja. She did so after testing the intelligence of the latter.

Didda died in 1003 A.D. After her death, the throne of Kashmir smoothly passed into the hands of another dynasty - that of the Loharas.

### **Let us sum up**

In this lesson, the entire career of Queen Didda has been discussed. As daughter of the Lohara house, with the proud Sahi blood in her veins, Didda emerges as an enigmatic personality. She was widowed early in life. She restrained herself from burning herself on the funeral pyre and thereafter became regent to her young son Abhimanyu II. Her long career as a regent is marked with revengeful attitude whereby she brought about the downfall of Phalguna, suppressed Mahiman, punished Yashodhara and even Naravahana. The death of Abhimanyu II engulfed her with grief and for a while we notice her performing several pious deeds. However, the lust of power and authority soon overtook her and she cleared the hindrances in her way - her three grandsons, without any feeling of guilt. She had a suspicious nature. She committed several moral lapses. Her repeated moral misconduct is a glaring weakness of her otherwise strong personality. The study of her career as the chief queen, queen regent and an independent ruler leaves us with the impression that Didda, despite her shortcomings, emerges as a celebrated woman sovereign of early medieval India.

**FOUNDATION OF SULTANATE : FACTORS AND EVENTS**

**STRUCTURE**

**Introduction**

**Objectives**

**Foreign Invasions**

**Arab Invasions**

**Invasions of Mahmud of Ghazni**

**Decline of Hindu Rule**

**First Lohara Dynasty (1003 - 1101)**

**Second Lohara Dynasty**

**Foundation of Sultanate in Kashmir**

**Rise of Rinchana**

**Rise of Shahmir and foundation of Sultanate in Kashmir**

**Let us sum up**

## **Introduction:**

Kashmir owed its earliest contact with political Islam in the 8<sup>th</sup> c A.D., when it was several times subjected to the attack of Arabs. Two centuries later, Mahmud of Ghazni twice led his armies for its conquest. But both the Arab and Turkish invasions ended in failure. However in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 14<sup>th</sup> c Muslim rule or sultanate was established in Kashmir and it was not the result of foreign invasion, but due to internal conditions obtaining there.

## **Objectives :**

This chapter aims at a thorough understanding of the developments that took place in Kashmir which ultimately led to the foundation of Sultanate in Kashmir.

## **Foreign Invasions:**

### **Arab Invasions:**

Between the years 711 and 713 Muhammad Qasim occupied Sindh and the lower Punjab. He then marched from Multan and carried his arms to the borders of the kingdom of Kashmir. Threatened by the Arab advance, Raja Chandrapida of Kashmir sent an envoy to Chinese Emperor for help. However, no aid was received, but fortunately Muhammad Bin Qasim was recalled by the Caliph Sulaiman to Damascus and so the Arab danger for the time being removed. In the reign of Caliph Hisham (724 - 743), the Arabs of Sindh under the leadership of Junaid again threatened Kashmir but Lalitaditya (724 - 760) who was ruling Kashmir at that time defeated them. But in spite of this victory Arab aggression did not cease. When Hisham bin Amr Taghlibi was appointed governor of Sindh by the Caliph Mansur (754 - 757), he also attempted an invasion of valley. He however failed to enter the valley and occupy it and this was the last attempt of Arabs to invade Kashmir and when again a Muslim

invasion of the valley took place it was undertaken by the Turks.

### **Invasions of Mahmud of Ghazni.**

In 1002 Mahmud of Ghazni routed the forces of Jaipal of Kabul, Jaipal's son and successor Anandpal also suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of Mahmud (1009), and died after a few years. Anandpal's son Trilochanpal, whose power was now confined only to the salt range, appealed to Samgramaraja (1003 - 28), the king of Kashmir for help against Mahmud. Samgramaraja agreed to help Trilochanpala. Provoked by Samgramaraja's conduct, Mahmud decided to invade Kashmir and punish him. With this view, he proceeded towards Kashmir, but this expedition ended in failure owing to adverse weather conditions. In Sept. Oct. 1021, Mahmud again set out for the invasion of Kashmir, but this time again he could not get any success. After these two failures Mahmud abandoned the idea of invading Kashmir. When two centuries later Turkish rule was established in India, it did not have any affect on Kashmir. Even by the end of 13th Century, when Turks had succeeded in subduing the whole of northern India, they did not turn their attention towards Kashmir. And when in the 2nd quarter of 14th century Muslim rule came to be established in Kashmir, it was not the result of foreign invasions but due to the internal conditions prevailing there.

### **Decline of Hindu Rule**

In Kashmir Hindu rule began to decline with the establishment of Lohara dynasty in 1003. Henceforth, the Hindu rule in Kashmir started on its downward course until it met its overthrow in about 1320 under Suhadeva. The kings who occupied the throne, during this period were for the most part weak and worthless and allowed themselves to be dominated by low favourites and corrupt ministers. The people were subjected to hated corvee, and to all kinds of oppressive taxes. The Damaras or the feudal chiefs grew powerful, defied royal authority and by their constant revolts there prevailed confusion and chaos in Kashmir. Life and property was not safe, agriculture declined, trade too declined and Kashmir sunk to the depths of degradation.

### **First Lohara Dynasty (1003 - 1101)**

Samgramaraja, the first ruler of Lohara dynasty, neglected the administration and his greedy officials plundered the people. He was followed by a series of incapable rulers. However, in 1089 Harsha ascended the throne and remained till 1101. In the beginning he ruled wisely and worked for the welfare of people. But later his character degenerated under the influence of his evil counselors. His foreign campaigns were nowhere successful. Inside the valley the feudal chiefs or Damaras were a constant source of trouble. His reckless expenditure on troops and costly pleasures involved him in financial difficulties. To meet the crisis he even plundered the temples, levied oppressive taxes upon people. The result of his misgovernment and tyranny was that the nobles rose against him and put him to a miserable death.

### **Second Lohara Dynasty**

Uccala (1101 - 11), the first ruler of second Lohara dynasty was generous, capable and energetic but failed to establish law and order because of his corrupt ministers. He again was followed by oppressive rulers. But in 1128 - 55 Jayasimha occupied the throne of Kashmir. He was the last great Hindu ruler of Kashmir. He restored peace and order in the country. As Kalhan observes, "He restored to this land, which owing to the baseness of the time was like a decayed forest, wealth, population and habitation." After Jayasimha's death country again lapsed into chaos. The political and economic decline became more rapid after him. His successors were weak and incompetent. In 1301 Suhadeva ascended the throne of Kashmir. But the heavy fines and taxes, which he extracted made him unpopular. Like his predecessors he also neglected the defences of the country by leaving the passes unguarded. As a result many adventurers and invaders entered the valley without any difficulty.

Such were the conditions when a foreign invasion led by Zulju occurred in Kashmir. Zulju was a Mongol who came from Turkistan. Zulju entered Kashmir by Jehlum valley as the passages were not properly defended so he did not meet any resistance. Although Suhadeva tried to stop him by paying him a large sum of money. But Zulju instead of withdrawing continued to march.



Unable to face Zulju, Suhadeva fled to Kishtwar. Mongols plundered Kashmir and set fire to the villages and made women and children their slaves. The only place which remained partially safe from the fury of Mongols was the district of Lar, where Ramachandra, Suhadeva's commander in chief, shut himself up in a fort and protected the inhabitants of the town and the neighbourhood. The Mongols continued their ravages in the valley for 8 months. After the withdrawal of Mongols the inhabitants who had fled to mountains returned to valley. As there was no organized govt., the local chiefs made themselves independent. Among those who took advantage of prevailing anarchy, the most prominent person was Rinchana.

## **Foundation of Sultanate in Kashmir**

### **Rise of Rinchana**

Rinchana was the son of a Ladakhi chief, who ruled Ladakh from 1290 - 1320. The wars between the Ladakhis and Baltis had been very frequent at that time. Owing to some conflict with Baltis, Rinchana realized that his position is precarious, he left Ladakh and came to Kashmir. On reaching the village of Gagangir, he decided to settle there with the permission of Ramachandra to whom the place belonged. During Zulju invasion, Rinchana remained in district of Lar and was employed by Ramachandra to establish law and order. By performing his duties with energy and efficiency, he grew influential and won the confidence of the people. And after withdrawal of Zulji, he asserted his independence and began to aspire to the throne of Kashmir. Although he had established himself firmly in Lar, but the one challenge that he had to face was from Ramachandra and he knew that he was not strong enough to fight him in open. So, he made a plan. He sent his Ladakhi followers in the disguise of merchants in the fort of Lar and they made a surprising attack on Ramchandra, Rinchana too marched and attacked, Ramachandra was defeated and killed, and his son Rawan Chandra was imprisoned and Rinchana occupied the throne of Kashmir in 1320. But he realized that without the support of local people, he would not be able to stabilize his position. The first thing which he did was that he befriended with Rawan Chandra and conferred upon him title of Raina

and made him Commander in chief and also married Rawan Chandra's sister.

Rinchana was fond of the society of learned men and saints and used to discuss with them their respective religions. During this period he came into contact with Sayyid Sharfuddin commonly known as Bulbulshan, belonging to Suhrawardiya order of Sufis. Rinchana learnt from him about Islam and was greatly impressed by his teachings, which were so simple, free from ceremonies, caste and priesthood that he embraced Islam and adopted the name Sadrudin on the advice of Bulbulshah.

### **Rise of Shahmir and foundation of Sultanate in Kashmir**

Rinchana died in 1323 he left behind a son named Haidar who was under the guardianship of Shamir, Rinchana's trusted counselor. As Haidar was minor, his mother Kota Rani acted as regent. But this arrangement was not regarded as satisfactory, for it was apprehended that without a sovereign the country might again lapse into anarchy. So Kota Rani, accordingly on the advice of Shamir and other nobles of land, recalled Udayanadeva, the brother of Suhadeva, from Swat, where he had been living since Zulju's invasion, made him king and married him. Udayanadeva, however, was cowardly and incompetent, and it was really Kota Rani who was the virtual ruler. Udayanadeva died in the year 1338. Although Kota Rani had two sons, one from her first husband Rinchana who was in the charge of Shahmir, the other was by Udayanadeva, was under the guardianship of Bhatta Bhiksana. But Kota Rani ignored the claim of both to the throne and herself ascended the throne. But no sooner did she assume the reins of government in her hands, than her position was threatened by her eldest son's tutor Shahmir.

Shahmir's ancestry is shrouded in legend. According to some accounts he was descended from the Pandus, heroes of Mahabharata, while others trace his descent from the rulers of Swat. But from a study of the character and achievements of Shahmir and his successors, it is more probable that his family was of Turkish origin. Turkish adventurers began to enter Kashmir from the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century onwards in search of employment. They were treated

with respect by the rulers of Kashmir and were employed in their armies. In the similar way, in 1313 Shahmir came to Kashmir with his tribe in search of fame and fortune. Suhadeva, who was then ruling Kashmir, employed him and gave him a village near Baramulla as Jagir. Shahmir seems to have been intelligent enough to grasp the state of affairs in the valley quickly and then identified himself fully with the people. As a minister of Rinchana he seems to have played an instrumental role, it appears that he must have helped him in his struggle against Ramachandra and because of the confidence that Rinchana placed in him, former appointed him his minister as well as guardian of his only son Haider.

During the reign of Udayanadeva, Shahmir by his tact and ability, further strengthened his position. He cooperated with Kota Rani in organizing resistance against Turkish invasion, and in the end succeeded in repelling it. This considerably increased his prestige and popularity in the country for he had saved the people. To consolidate his position further he entered into matrimonial alliances with the important feudal chiefs of the valley. On Udayanadeva's death, Kota Rani ascended the throne, but she was alarmed at the ambition and growing power of Shahmir, she appointed Bhatta Bhiksana as her Prime Minister, who, being one of the ablest and most powerful men in the kingdom, she hoped would act as a counterpoise to Shahmir. Moreover in order to be safe from the danger of Shahmir's proximity in Srinagar, where he was very popular, she transferred her capital to Andarkot. Shahmir was however angry with Kota Rani of having ignored him and raised Bhatta Bikshan to the position of prime minister. Therefore, he made up his mind to overthrow both Kota Rani and Bhatta Bhiksana. First he succeeded by means of conspiracy in securing the assassination of Bhiksana and after that he besieged Kota Rani in the fort of Andarkot. Although she resisted his advance but as most of the important chiefs of the kingdom had been won over by Shahmir, she felt helpless and decided to surrender and accept his condition. She agreed to be his queen and to share throne with him. But Shahmir did not trust her and moreover Kota Rani still possessed some following in the country, he felt apprehensive

and therefore threw her into prison along with her 2 sons. According to Jonaraja "She was won by his assiduity; and within 24 hours of marriage, Shahmir caused her to be captured by the Tikshanas and on the 10th bright lunar day, in the month of Shravana (Sawan) in the year (44) 15, the queen dropped from her kingdom." After imprisoning Kota Rani, Shahmir himself ascended the throne under the title of Sultan Shamsu'ddin and thus laid the foundation of sultanate in Kashmir and his dynasty ruled Kashmir for about 200 years.

### **Let us sum up**

The sultanate was founded in Kashmir not as a result of foreign invasion but by a coup d'etat from within the country. Hindu rule in the valley had been in a decadent state for nearly 2 centuries before the rise of Shahmir dynasty. The kings who occupied the throne were weak and their ministers corrupt, the Brahmans were dissatisfied with ruling class; civil strife was almost continuous, trade languished and agriculture was at a stand still. It was on the account of these factors that Shahmir though a foreigner whose religion and culture were quite different from those of the inhabitants of Kashmir, was able to seize power and lay foundation of his dynasty.

**SULTAN SIKANDER : CONQUESTS AND RELIGIOUS POLICY**

**STRUCTURE**

**Introduction**

**Objectives**

**Life of Sultan Sikandar**

**His Early Life**

**His early career as King**

**His Conquests/Territorial Acquisitions**

**Conquest of Ladakh**

**Subjugation of Rai Magrey**

**Timur's Invasion of India: Exchange of courtesy with Sikandar**

**His Religious Policy**

**Imposition of Shari' at or law of Islam**

**Influence of important Sayyids**

**Forcible conversions and Demolition of Temples**

**Responsibility of Sultan Sikandar or Saif-ud-din for anti-Hindu policies**

**Impact of heavy influx of learned men from Persia**

**Sultan Sikandar as Patron of Art and Architecture**

**Sultan's Religious Policy towards followers of Islam**

**His own character**

**Let us sum up**

### **Introduction**

The advent of Muslim rule in Kashmir did not coincide with the introduction of Islam. Bulbul Shah, a Muslim Sufi Saint from Turkistan, who visited Kashmir during the reign of Sahadeva (1301-10 CE), was one of the first to propagate Islam in the valley. The people abetted by corrupt Hindu rulers were attracted towards the simplicity and human piety of the Muslim divines. The new creed found a fertile soil to grow in due to continuing internecine strife among the feudal landlords, and took a firm root in the valley.

In this context, it was but natural that the Kashmiris welcomed the advent of Shah Mir, though he was a non-Kashmiri. He assumed the name of Sultan Shamas-ud-din (1339-42 CE), thus founding a Sultan dynasty of Kashmir whose kings ruled Kashmir for 222 years. Out of these, in this lesson we will deal in detail with Sultan Sikandar and about his various policies.

## **Objectives**

The study of this lesson would enable you to:

- a) Demarcate the territorial boundaries during the reign of Sultan Sikandar Shah.
- b) To analyse the factors that influenced and shaped the personality of Sultan Sikandar Shah.
- c) To understand the reasons for which he has been entitled as *Butshikan*.

## **Life of Sultan Sikandar**

### **His Early Life**

In his old age Sultan Qutb-ud-din (1373-89 CE) felt unhappy because of having no heir to leave his kingdom to. "At last", says Jonaraja, "there came a Yogi named Brahmanath and through his favour the king obtained a son after some time." There were great festivities at his birth and the boy was named Shingara, later known to history as Sultan Sikandar. The queen gave birth to another son who was named Haibat. While the boys were still young Qutb-ud-din died, leaving the queen and the ministers in great grief. Ultimately through the intervention of Rai Magrey, the Prime Minister, the eldest son Sikandar was crowned as the king of Kashmir.

### **His early career as king**

Sikandar began his career as King under the guidance and care of his able mother. As the new Sultan was a minor, his mother named Sura, also called Haura or Subhatta, acted as regent and exercised all the royal powers with the help of two ministers viz. Saha or Sahaka and Udda or Udaka (also called Rai Magrey). The chronicles do not describe the events of her regency clearly and fully. She, however, appears to have been a woman of ability and strong character. She ruled with a firm hand, and put to death her own daughter and son-in-law for conspiring against Sikandar. Meanwhile, however, Rai Magrey acquired great ascendancy, and first poisoned Sikandar's younger brother Haibat Khan to death and then did short work of Saha, apparently to please the King. But when he found that Sikandar was greatly offended and grieved at this treacherous act, he apprehended trouble for himself. Thenceforth his one aim was to establish his own rule in the country, but his apple cart was upset as shortly after Sikandar came of age and took the reins of government in his own hands in 1393 CE. Sikandar cleverly employed this ambitious minister in another direction.

## **His Conquests/Territorial Acquisitions**

### **Conquest of Ladakh**

After taking reins of government in his own hand, Sultan Sikandar decided to get rid of Rai Magrey. The neighbouring territory of Ladakh had already seceded from Tibet and Sikandar thought it to be the best time to subjugate it. Fearing chastisement for high-handedness in the past, Rai Magrey also tried to get into his master's good graces by offering his services for the conquest of Ladakh or Little Tibet. Sultan sent Rai Magrey with a strong force to fulfil this aim. Sikandar was playing a double game. Should Magrey get defeated he would be free from his ambitious rival and should his arms meet with success he would add a large territory to his kingdom. However, success attended Margrey's arms and he returned victorious after conducting this campaign very efficiently.

### **Subjugation of Rai Magrey**

After a short time he considered himself strong enough to declare his independence. This was too much for Sikandar. Magrey raised the banner of revolt and fled away to Wular pargana. Sikandar first tried to persuade him to give up his refractory conduct, but having failed in the attempt he sent Laddaraja to attack from the front, while he himself marched from the rear. On approach of these forces Rai Magrey fled without offering any resistance. But he was seized by the chief of Banihal, and sent to Sikandar. The Sultan spared his life in consideration of his past services, but threw him into prison where after sometime he committed suicide. Thus Sikanar got rid of Magrey as well as acquired Ladakh. Then Suha Bhatta became his chief minister.

### **Timur's Invasion of India: Exchange of courtesy with Sikandar**

In 1398 the storm of Timur's invasion burst on India. He had left Samarqand in April 1398 and encamped on the banks of the Indus on 20<sup>th</sup> Sept., at the very spot where Jalaluddin Khawarizm Shah had fled before Changiz Khan by crossing the river. Here he received homage from the envoys of various countries. Sultan Sikandar too acted wisely and in order to avert Timur's invasion, sent an envoy to him professing submission because he was aware of the ride of Timur's march by offering resistance. According to Zafarnama, Timur, through his grandson Rustam, and Mu'tamad-Zain-ud-Din, his envoy, sent from Delhi a robe of honour of gold embroidery to Sikandar as a mark of favour after annihilating the army of Mahmud, the last Tughluq ruler. Thus there opened up between the two



monarchs means of mutual relations. Maulana Nur-ud-Din Badakhshi, a distinguished follower of Shah Hamadan, was deputed by Sikandar to take costly presents to Timur. In acknowledgement Timur sent a message expressing his desire to see Sikandar.

Accordingly Sikandar left Srinagar. But as soon as he reached Bhimbar, he was informed by Timur's ministers that tribute of thirty thousand horses and one lakh silver coins would have to be paid by him when he met Timur. As Sikandar was then not in a position to meet this staggering demand, he returned to Srinagar in order to make up his deficiency. Sikandar engaged himself in arranging for the presents which Timur's nobles had desired to be kept in readiness.

Meanwhile Timur had left Delhi and his representatives joined him in the neighbourhood of Jammu. On Feb. 24, 1399 Nur-ud-Din presented a letter to Timur from Sikandar, which was written in respectful terms and expressed his desire of waiting on him. On being asked why Sikandar had not processed to Dipalpur as ordered, he explained that the Sultan had advanced as far as Bhimbar or Jabhan but returned to collect money and horses which he expected would be demanded from him. Naturally the disclosure of this exorbitant demand brought Timur's anger on their head. He told them that the tribute demanded from Sikandar was beyond his means and that he should have been asked to pay according to his capacity. He also reassured Maulana, and sent him back along with Zain-ud-din to Sikandar with the message that "he was not to consider himself bound by the demand made by officers, but to trust in my royal favour" and to meet him "without fear" on the banks of Indus after twenty-eight days.

On receiving these instructions, Sikandar again set out, but on reaching Baramula, he learnt that Timur had crossed the Indus and proceeded towards Samarqand. Hence, he returned to Srinagar and from there sent him costly presents. It is said that Sikandar also sent his son Shahi Khan, the future Zain-ul-Abidin, to the court of Timur in order to strengthen friendly relations with him. He stayed there for seven years, and got interested in the famous arts and crafts of Samarqand which later proved to be an asset. But there is no mention of this deputation in any contemporary history as the prince obviously must have been unborn then, Badshah having born in 1401 AD. But what is a fact, according to *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, is that Sikandar sent his ambassadors with much tribute to Timur.

The acquisition of Ladakh raised his prestige very high and his fame traveled far in Central Asia and Persia. He conducted several campaigns to the neighbouring principalities of Jammu, Rajauri and Poonch and after subjugating Gandhara or north-western province

of India, married the daughter of the chieftain, viz. Mira, of that place. This lady was destined to become the mother of Sultan Sikandar's illustrious son, Zain-ul-Abidin.

After subjugating these regions, Sikandar sent an army under Suhabhata and Laddaraja to subdue Pala Dev, Raja of Jammu, who had not paid him tribute. Realising the futility of resistance, the Raja submitted, and sent his daughter as a present to Sikandar. But as soon after he again declared his independence, Sikandar sent Suhabhata and Jasrat Khokhar, with whom he had entered into an alliance, with a large army against the Raja. They defeated him and sacked Jammu.

### **His Religious Policy**

The Providence thus saved Kashmir from a great scourage. But its people were destined to suffer from the hands of their own ruler. Though brave and cultured, Sikandar was a fanatic. Popularly known as *But Shikan*, he is compared with Aurangzeb, the Mughal emperor of India. At first, however, he was tolerant, and did not object even to the building of a Siva temple by his own wife, Shoba Devi. But later he was egged on to follow an intolerant policy towards his Hindu subjects by the men of this own faith who flocked to his court from foreign lands. These men, the majority of whom consisted of the Baihaqi Sayyids, were attracted to Kashmir by Sikandar's fame as a liberal donor. They were "astonished to see that in a Muslim state Islam did not have the domination but existed side by side with the practice of the infidels".

### **Imposition of Shari'at or law of Islam**

Sikandar was the first Sultan of Kashmir to enforce the Shari'at or the law of Islam with great strictness in the country. Being himself a staunch Muslim who carefully conformed to all that his religion required of him, Sikandar put an end to those practices which were contrary to the Shari'at. He banned the use of wine and other intoxicants, and prohibited gambling, the dancing of women and the playing of musical instruments like the flute and guitar, allowing only the playing of drum and pipe for military purposes. And in order to see that the Islamic law was properly enforced, he established the office of the Shaikh-ul-Islam. These measures were adopted by Sikandar under the influence of Sayyid Muhammad Hamadani. It was also due to his advice that the Sultan imposed two *pals* of silver as *Jizya* upon the non-Muslim and prohibited the application of *qashqa* (tilak- a

religious mark made by the Hindus on the forehead). But it is said to his credit, however, that he remains the first Indian ruler to have abolished the custom of *sati* among Hindus.

### **Influence of important Sayyids**

The most important of the Sayyids who came to Kashmir in the time of Sikandar and cast a spell on him was Mir Mohammad Hamadani, son of Sayyid Ali Hamadani. He was an Alavi Sayyid. Arriving in 1393, he “added fuel to the fire of the king’s fierce zeal”. When Mir Mohammad Hamadani started his campaigns of conversions, he was able to win over Suha Bhatta, the Sultan’s chief minister, and give him the name of Malik Saif-ud-din. The newly converted minister urged the Sultan to adopt a more vigorous anti-Hindu policy. By coming in contact with these orthodox Sunnis, the king was fired with religious zeal and he resolved to run the state on purely Islamic Law and to propagate the faith by force. Suha Bhatt accompanied by soldiers used to visit the famous temples and destroy them. Martand, Vijayeshwari, Sureswari and other well known temples of Kashmir were razed to the ground. By his tacit approval of the wicked deeds of his minister, history has held Sikandar responsible for these. Hindus in their thousands were put to the sword and the major portion of the Brahmin population of Kashmir migrated to the south.

### **Forcible conversions and Demolition of temples**

All the sacred books of the Hindus that Sikandar could lay his hands on were sunk into the Dal Lake. The people were offered three choices of death, conversion and exile. As a result of it, remarks W.R. Lawrence “Many fled, many were converted and many were killed, and it is said that this though monarch burnt seven maunds of sacred threads of the murdered Brahmans. When Saif-ud-din heard that many Brahmans were quitting Kashmir, he forbade the frontier guards to allow none without a permit. But despite these restrictions many Brahmans succeeded in escaping from the country. Some of the Brahmans servants of the Sultan, who had accepted Islam, were suspected of having done so only outwardly to save their skin. They were also required to pay *Jaziya*.

No effort was spared to demolish the Hindu temples and destroy their idols. To quote Jonaraja, “The good fortune of the subjects (Hindu) left them, and so the king forgot his kingly duties and took delight, day and night, in breaking images. There was no city, no town, no village, no wood where Suha or Saifu-ud-din left the temples of gods unbroken. Of the images which once had existed, the name alone was left. According to a scholar, “for one year a large establishment was maintained for the demolition of the grand Martand

temple, but when the massive masonry resisted all efforts, finally fire was applied and the noble buildings were cruelly defaced.

### **Responsibility of Sultan Sikandar or Saif-ud-din for anti-Hindu policies**

Recently, a great controversy has arisen over the responsibility of Sultan Sikandar and Saif-ud-din for the vigorous anti-Hindu policy and the extent of destruction of the temples. While one set of scholars lay the chief blame on Saif-ud-din, and the other set holds Sikandar chiefly responsible for the persecution of the Hindus. Similarly, while some scholars say that only few temples were destroyed, others are of the view that only a few of them escaped destruction. It must be remembered that as Saif-ud-din had been a Brahman, Jonaraja resented his conversion to Islam and therefore magnified his iconoclastic activities. The Muslim chronicles also speak of the wholesale destruction of temples, but they distort facts owing to their anxiety to represent Sikandar and his ministers as champions of Islam. The falseness of their view is evident from the fact that if we add up the list, given by them, of temples allegedly destroyed, then not a single one should have remained standing. In reality, however, even over a hundred years after Sikandar, a large number of temples were still in existence in the valley.

A. K. Majumdar remarks, "Sikandar's reign marks a turning point in the history of Kashmir from social and religious point of view. It appears that previously the rulers were Muslims, but the subjects were predominantly Hindus. There was religious harmony and even Muslim kings and people were not very orthodox in their beliefs. It is proved among other things, by the Hindu names like Lakshmi and Sobha borne by the queens, consecration of a golden *Ling* by the latter, and the performance of a *yajna* sacrifice by Qutub-ud-din to avert famine. This is probably due to the paucity of Muslims in the country.

### **Impact of heavy influx of learned men from Persia**

The change in the religious policy of Sultan came when there was a heavy influx of Muslims, Saiyyad theologians and other learned men reached Kashmir from Persia. There seems to be little doubt that they brought with them that fanatic iconoclastic zeal which distinguished Islam in other parts of India, but from which Kashmir was happily free up to this time. Sultan Sikandar treated the new immigrant Muslim kindly and granted them land and *Jagirs* to settle in his kingdom. Jonaraja gives a detailed account of this development. He says, "the king had a fondness for *Yavanas*. Many *Yavanas* left other sovereigns and took shelter under this king (Sikandar) who was renowned for charity. Muhammada of

Mera country became chief of *Yavanas*. The king waited on him daily, humble as a servant, and like a student he daily took his lessons from him. He placed Muhammada before him, and was attentive to him like a slave. As the wind destroys the trees and the locusts the *sali* crop, so did the *Yavanas* destroy the usages of Kashmir. Attracted by the gifts and the honours which the king bestowed and by his kindness, the *Yavanas* entered Kashmir even as locusts enter a good field of corn". They became the friends of king who appointed them to all the important offices of the state.

Jonaraja, Baharistan-i-Shahi and Farishta hold Suha Bhatta (Saif-ud-din) mainly responsible for anti-Hindu policies of Sikandar. According to Jonaraja, "Suha Bhatta (after demolishing the temples) felt the satisfaction, and with the help of the leaders of the army (meaning the Sayyids, Ulemas and the newly converted Kashmiris) tried to destroy the caste of the people... the Brahmins declared that they would die rather than lose their caste (meaning religion) and Suha Bhatta subjected them to a heavy fine (*Jaziya*) because they hold to their caste (religion)". Modern historians like Wolsey Haig, Chas.J. Rodgers and T.W. Arnold, on the basis of Farishta's account also blame Suha Bhatta mainly for Sikandar's anti-Hindu measures. G.M.D Sufi writes, "Malik Suha Bhatta, Sikandar's minister, appears to be responsible for the destruction of a few temples that took place in Sikandar's reign.

But the above view is refuted by Srikanth Kaul and Dr A.K. Majumdar. Srikanth Kaul points out that 'Neither the convert Suha Bhatta nor the zealout *Yavana* could have effected anything had not the bigotry of Sikanar countenanced their destructive schemes'. Dr.Majumdar holds similar views. He writes, "It has been urged by some that it was not the Sultan but Suha Bhatta and the other converts who were responsible for the religious persecution. But as Jonaraja has observed in this connection, it is an established rule that master is responsible for the fault of his servant. A.K. Majumdar continuous, "Sikandar was not innocent in the matter as is presented by his supporters, for he personally supervised the demolition of the temples and, in atleast one case, he was not satisfied by merely razing a temple to the ground, but saw to it that its foundations were dug up. This one instance, if true, is sufficient to prove his personal zeal and bigotry. After all, it was not Suha Bhatta but Sikandar who was honoured by his co-religionists with the title *Butshikan* (destroyers of idols)".

As regards the number of the Hindu temples destroyed by Sikandar, Jonaraja says that there was no village or town where temples were not razed to the ground in the time of Sikandar. Nizam-ud-din, Farishta and many other writers also say that Sikandar or

Suha Bhatta demolished either all or a large number of Hindu temples. But Mohibul Hasan says that the charge is fantastic. G.M.D Sufi remarks that “even if Sikandar in zeal for his own religion had transgressed the limits of modernization, it is unquestionably a false charge against him that he demolished all Hindu temples then not a single should have remained standing. On the testimony of Mirza Haidar Dughlat, who ruled Kashmir from 1540 to 1544 A.D., they (G.M.D Sufi and Mohibul Hasan) hold that there were 150 temples in the valley of Kashmir. In 1546 Dughlat wrote, “First and foremost among the wonders of Kashmir were the old temples. In and around Kashmir there were more than 150 temples”. But the position describe by Dughlat was of one and a quarter century after Sikandar’s time. During this intervening period many new temples were built and old ones repaired, which had been constructed during the rule of Zain-ul-Abidin which lasted for fifty years. It is thus futile to wrangle over the use of the word “all”. The word “all” may be taken here to mean “most”. On the basis of evidence available to us, we can say Sikandar’s rule was responsible for the demolition of most of the temples.

However, it may be noted that Sikandar was not the first Kashmiri ruler who destroyed the temples. Before his time, many rulers of Kashmir in the Hindu period resorted to plundering the temples and melting the images of gold and silver to augment their depleted treasuries. Kings like Jalauka, Kalasa and Harsha resorted to such means.

### **Sultan Sikandar as Patron of Art and Architecture**

Sultan Sikandar was a great builder. He founded the town of Sikandarpura, and there built a magnificent palace and a grand Jama Masjid. The latter’s architect was Sadr-ud-Din Khurasani. It had 372 wooden columns, each 40 yards in height and 6 yards in circumference. There were four archways each of which contained 32 of these columns. Sikandar also built a mosque in the town of Bijbehara, and laid the foundation stone of an Id-gah in Srinagar which was completed by his son Sultan Ali Shah. Besides the mosques, he built khanqahs (hospices) in the villages of Vachi and Tral, and in the town of Sopore. Sayyid Ali Hamadani had built a raised floor in Ala-ud-Dinpur for the congregational prayers. Sikandar constructed there in 1396-97 a hospice known as Khanqash-i-Mulk. He endowed it with the three villages of Vachi, Shaura, and Nunahwani and appointed Maulana Muhammad Sayyid as trustee. Sikandar also constructed another mosque near the spring of Bawan. It was two-storeyed with a beautiful garden around it, having all kinds of flower plants and fruit trees. The place was so pleasant and picturesque that

Sikandar used to spend his time there in spring. His example was followed by subsequent rulers of Kashmir until the time of Muhammad Shah.

### **Sultan's Religious Policy Towards Followers of Islam**

Sultan's religious policy towards the followers of Islam was very generous and he tried to promote their welfare. He abolished taxes such as *Baj* and *Tamgha* which were imposed on horses, cows, goats, silken cloth etc. owned or purchased by Muslims. Hospitals were constructed for the free treatment of the patients. A number of villages were endowed for the benefit of travellers, no doubt the non-Muslims living in his empire might have been benefitted by these measures.

### **His Own Character**

Although Sikandar does not seem to have been a well-read man, he patronized literary men. To his court were attracted scholars from all parts of Asia, chiefly from Khorasan, Transoxiana and Mesopotamia. As a man, Sikandar possessed a puritanical character. He abstained from liquor and other intoxicants and did not listen to music in accordance with the Islamic teachings.

### **Let us sum up**

Thus the iconoclastic activities of Sikandar have been greatly exaggerated. In many instances it was not Sikandar who pulled down the temples, but what really happened was that when the inhabitants of a certain locality embraced Islam, the temple was converted into a mosque, or it went into ruins due to sheer neglect. Many suffered because of earthquakes. But these factors were ignored, and Sikandar was held responsible for any temple that was found in a crumbling state. Some writers have even gone to the extent of suggesting that he employed gunpowder to destroy temples. Stein, however, observes: "The early use of gunpowder in Kashmir has been doubted by others, and I believe rightly. Earthquakes and the imperfect fitting of the stones, observable in all Kashmirian temples, are sufficient to explain the complete ruin, notwithstanding the massive character of the materials." Another writer similarly observes: "It is scarcely possible to imagine that the state of ruin to which they have been reduced (referring in particular to the temples of Avantipur), has been the work of time or even of men, as their solidity is fully equal to that

of Egypt. Earthquakes must have been the chief agents of their overthrow.” After a reign of 25 years Sikandar breathed his last in 1413 A.D. He was buried in the enclosure outside the mausoleum of his wife below the fourth bridge in Srinagar.



**SULTAN ZAIN-UL-ABIDIN: ADMINISTRATION**

**Introduction**

**Objectives**

**His Administration**

**Reappointment of Pandits**

**Eradication of Corruption**

**Price Control**

**End of Black-marketing**

**Currency**

**Taxation and Registration**

**Judicial Reforms**

**Development of Agriculture**

**Settlement of Land Revenue**

**Construction of various Canals**

**Famine and Flood**

**Development of Arts and Crafts**

**Introduction of Wooden Architecture**

**Encouragement to Learning**

**Royal Court filled with Galaxy of scholars**

**Compilation and Translation of various works**

**Building of Royal Library**

**Music and Dance**

**Other Public Works**

**Conclusion**

### **7.1 Introduction**

Suha Bhat alias Saif-ud-Din, continued as the strong arm minister in the reign of Sultan Ali Shah (1413-20 A.D.), the eldest son of Sikandar. The only event of note in his short reign was the loss of Ladakh. He won the confidence of Hindus by his tolerant deeds and appointed Shahi Khan, as minister after the death of Saif-ud-Din.

Shahi Khan ascended the throne in 1420 and styled himself as Zain-ul-Abidin (glory of the devout). The people of Kashmir-Hindus and Muslims-who had already noted

his abilities, welcomed his debut as the Sultan. The fame of Zain-ul-Abidin rests mainly on his peaceful activities. His reign was an era of glory and prosperity for the people- social, economic, political, religious and cultural. A modern historian, M. Hassan writes: “of all the Sultans who sat on the throne of Kashmir, Zain-ul-Abidin was undoubtedly the greatest”.

### **Objectives**

- (a) To study ascendancy of Shahi Khan to the throne as Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin.
- (b) To analyse various spheres of life of subjects viz. social, political, religious and cultural during the reign of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin.
- (c) To understand various factors, both internal and external which influenced his administration.
- (d) Apart from administration to analyse various other reforms such as economic, judicial, etc.

### **His Administration**

At the time of accession of Zain-ul-Abidin to the throne, the whole administrative machinery of the kingdom was broken down, and there was great frustration among the people. Due to the misconceived policies of Sikandar and Ali Shah, the whole administration had become paralysed. The first task before the Sultan, therefore, was to restore order out of the chaotic conditions prevailing in the kingdom. For this purpose, he reconstructed the whole administrative machinery. To his good fortune, the Sultan had a band of trustworthy and able followers like Halmat Raina, Ahmad Raina, Malik Masud, Mirza Hussain and Muhammad Khan who helped him in this task. He appointed his brother Muhammad Khan as his Chief Minister.

### **Reappointment of Pandits**

The predecessors of Zain-ul-Abidin, motivated by their fanaticism, had removed the Pandits, the old class officials, from the government jobs and had expelled them from the state. But Zain-ul-Abidin encouraged the Pandits to return to Kashmir and many responded to the call as he promised to give them every facility and completely guaranteeing them religious and civil liberties. Farishta remarks, “Preliminary to all other measures, he recalled the Brahmins who had been expelled and caused a general toleration of all be publicly notified.”

### **Eradication of Corruption**

When Zain-ul-Abidin came to the throne, corruption in the country was rampant. Jonaraja records that the judges who were till then accustomed to taking bribes from both the plaintiff and the defendant, were severely dealt with and corruption among the public officials was totally rooted out. He employed spies to inform him about the conduct of his officials of all ranks. His spy system was so efficient that the Sultan was able to know “all about his subjects except their dreams”. Once a judge named Malvana Mallanasaka was found guilty of accepting a bribe. He was dismissed from the job and also made to surrender the amount of the bribe..

### **Price Control**

To check profiteering and arbitrary raising of prices of commodities by the merchants, Zain-ul-Abidin introduced a system of price control. He issued orders that the merchants should not hide their commodities and should sell them at a small profit. The government fixed the rates of different commodities and informed the public of these prices in the form of bulletins engraved on thin copper plates and publicly shown in all the cities.

### **End of Black-marketing**

The Kashmiri traders generally carried on their business in their houses. It discouraged competition and encouraged cheating and black marketing. Zain-ul-Abidin issued orders that the articles meant for sale should be openly displayed and sold at a reasonable profit in the open market. This greatly helped in checking hoarding of goods and black marketing.

### **Currency**

As Sikandar had indiscriminately melted down gold and silver idols, the currency of the country had been greatly debased. Zain-ul-Abidin reformed the debased currency and issued a large number of silver and copper coins. During his reign copper mines were worked, and their income was set aside by him for his own expenses. Gold dust was also collected from the sandy banks of the rivers, and the government’s share of this was one-sixth.

### **Taxation and Registration**

The taxation system also was greatly reformed and many arbitrary taxes were abolished which his officers realized from the peasants to fill their own pockets. He ordered that land sold should be registered on *bhurja* (birch-bark) so that the sale might not be afterwards denied. This was done in order to curb forgery which was very common and the Sultan ordered the registration of all important documents.

### **Judicial Reforms**

During the preceding years, inefficient government and chaotic conditions had made the crimes of theft, highway robbery, drunkenness and debauchery quite common among all the classes of the people. The Sultan put down every kind of crime ruthlessly. All the criminals were apprehended and put behind the bars. Srivara tells that the Sultan, “published a common order that if any theft occurred anywhere, the headman of the village or town where the theft occurred should be held responsible. This system prevented crimes and travelers slept at ease in the woods as in a house”.

Realizing that poverty and unemployment were the real causes of criminal tendencies of the people, he made efforts to provide suitable jobs to the erstwhile criminals. He dispensed justice promptly and intelligently. He codified law and like Asoka had it engraved on copper plates and placed in public places and the courts of justice. However, he abhorred bloodshed and rarely put to death any offender for a petty crime. Thus the offenders of petty crimes were only imprisoned. Capital punishment was awarded only for serious offences. “Though the king was king-hearted”, writes Jonaraja, “yet for the sake of his people he would not forgive even his son or minister or a friend if he were guilty”. He cites the case of Mir Yahana who, while drunk, had killed his wife. Although he was a great favorite of the king he was found guilty and executed. G.M.D Sufi observes that Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin was, in this respect, perhaps, the first systematic law-giver of Kashmir. The Sultan was the highest court of appeal. He himself took great pains to find out the truth in all complicated cases and obtained repute for his Solomon-like dispensation of justice. He was endowed with unusual commonsense and intelligence and decided many cases which even baffled his judges

### **Development of Agriculture**

To increase the agricultural production, the Sultan paid special attention to the promotion of agriculture which was the backbone of the economy of the state. During his preceding reign due to lawlessness and insecurity the condition of the cultivators had deteriorated. Much of the cultivated land had remained uncultivated due to the insecure and chaotic conditions in the state. The officials used to oppress the poor peasants. Zain-ul-Abidin took many useful measures for their uplift.

### **Settlement of Land Revenue**

Land revenue, being one of the important sources of income, not unnaturally, attracted Sultan's first attention. He undertook the task of settlement of land revenue. He divided the country into a number of *parganas* and each *pargana* comprised a number of villages. The holding of each cultivator was measured with a *Jerib*. The accurate measurements were either recorded on *Bhoj Patras* or inscribed on copper plates. The land records were preserved in the Central Records Office established at Sopur.

There exists difference of opinion among the scholars as regards the state share of the cultivator's produce. According to Mohibul Hasan, state charged one-half or one-third of the gross produce as state share. But the popular view as held by R.K Parmu is that it was one-sixth of the production. In the famine stricken areas the normal rate of land revenue was reduced to one-seventh in the most affected areas. All the chronicles agree that in the newly reclaimed *parganas* of Zainagiri, the state share was one-seventh of the gross produce. To safeguard the peasant from the oppression of revenue officials, the Sultan kept a vigilant watch over their activities. He prohibited by law the revenue officers from accepting any gifts from the cultivators.

### **Construction of various Canals**

To ameliorate the condition of the cultivators and to promote agriculture, the Sultan constructed several canals in the country. Srivara writes, "There was not a piece of land, and not a forest, where the king did not excavate a canal". The notable canals were:

- (i) The Kakapur Canal irrigated tracts of land around the village Kakapur.
- (ii) The Karla Canal irrigated the territory lying between Shupiyan and Ramu. The Sultan also built a town named Zainagiri after his own name on the bank of this canal.

- (iii) The Chakdar Canal originated from Nandmarg in the Pir Panjal range and irrigated the plateau of Chakdar.
- (iv) The Shahkul or Salalpur canal drew water from the Sindhu river. It carried water across the district of Lar and irrigated the plateau around the Manasbal lake.
- (v) The Avantipur canal irrigated the lands around the town of Avantipur.
- (vi) The Lachham Kul or Zainaganga canal drew water from the Sindhu river and irrigated lands around Naushahar, a new town founded by the Sultan. This canal was extended to Jama Masjid and emptied itself into Mar canal.
- (vii) The Mar canal or Nalla Mar, previously the surplus water of the Dal lake flowed out into the Jehlam at Habbal Kadal. But Zain-ul-Abidin diverted the water of the lake into the Mar canal which he extended up to Shadipur where it emptied itself at the confluence of the Jehlam and Sind. In consequence a large tract of land was recovered for cultivation. The Sultan spanned the canal with seven bridges of masonry. This canal linked Srinagar city with the Dal lake and, thus, formed an important inland highway for traffic.
- (viii) The Lall Kul or The Pohru canal drew water from the Pohru river. A dam was constructed to divert the water of the river to the canal. The canal irrigated the territories upto Zainagiri, a new town founded by the Sultan.
- (ix) The Shah Kul or the Martand canal diverted the water of the Lidar river to irrigate the arid plateau of Martand. The Sultan made efforts to grow sugarcane in this area but the experiment failed due to the unfavorable climatic conditions for the crop.

Many of these canals provided water to the dry *karewa* lands. The irrigation projects of the Sultan resulted in the draining of marshy lands and reclamation of large tracts of land for cultivation. Agriculture production increased considerably which made the peasants prosperous. Moorcraft estimates that in the reign of Zain-ul-Abidin, the annual production of rice in Kashmir was about seventy seven lakhs of *kharwars*. It is noteworthy that in the whole history of Muslim rule in India, there is only one more ruler that is Firoz Shah Tughlaq, who may claim the glory of having attached so much importance to the irrigation works as was done by the Sultan of Kashmir.

### **Famine and Flood**

All these commendable exertions of Zain-ul-Abidin could not, however, save his country from the ravages of a famine which occurred towards the end of his reign (1460 A.D.). Its immediate cause was an early snowfall which completely destroyed the ripe

paddy crop. It was followed by a severe winter. The price of rice, the staple food of the Kashmiris, shot up enormously. A chronicler Srivara records, “Ahungry man distressed with the thought of what he should eat entered a house at night, and discarding gold and other riches, stole rice from a pot”. Feeble, emaciated men in villages longed to obtain rice which was like metal to them, but lived on edible leaves, roots and fruits. Formerly one *khara* of paddy would be had for 300 *dinaras* but owing to the famine the same *khara* of paddy could not be obtained even for 1500 *dinaras*.

The Sultan took various measures to alleviate the sufferings of the famine-stricken people. He distributed free food from his governmental stores, curtailed the revenue demands of the state on the cultivators, and distributed loans to the needy. Fortunately, the next crop was bumper one which soon relieved the distress of the people. When the normal conditions were restored, the Sultan apprehended the black marketers and hoarders who had harassed the people by selling the foodstuffs at high rates.

### **Development of Arts and Crafts**

No doubt the valley had been famous in Hindu times for its arts and crafts, but they had greatly suffered in the chaos which lasted for over two hundred years preceding the establishment of the Sultanate. Besides, a large number of artists and craftsmen had perished in the course of Zulju’s invasion. Zain-ul-Abidin, however revived the old industries which had either disappeared or declined, and at the same time introduced new ones. Kashmiris with their natural aptitude for things artistic, soon acquired a great mastery in these crafts and began to produce articles in such beautiful designs and varieties that they acquired an unrivalled fame in Asia and Europe. Even a century after Zain-ul-Abidin’s death, Mirza Haider of Kashgar who brought Kashmir under his virtual rule, was struck by the industrial and artistic productions of Kashmir. He in his famous *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* says, “In Kashmir one meets with all those arts and crafts which are in most cities uncommon, such as stone-cutting, bottle-making, window-cutting, gold beating etc. In the whole Mave-ul-Naha (the country beyond the river Oxus, that is, Khorasan) except in Samarqand and Bukhara, these are nowhere to be met with, while in Kashmir they are even abundant. This is all due to Zain-ul-Abidin.

Pandit Anand Koul writes, “Zain-ul-Abidin turned Kashmir into a smiling garden of industry inculcating in the hearts of the people sane conceptions of labour and life and also implanting in their minds the germs of real progress. He introduced correct measures



and weights and made artisans and traders taken solemn oaths not to kill their golden goose by cheating and swindling. He thus promoted commercial morality and integrity and industrial righteousness- qualities which constitute the backbone of a people's credit and reputation. It was through these virtues that the Kashmiris successfully carried on their shawl and other trades worth crores of rupees annually with distant corners of the globe at a period when Kashmir was an isolated State and communications with the outside world were very difficult"

Zain-ul-Abidin adopted novel methods to attract foreign craftsmen to his country and to induce them to settle down here permanently. But if a foreign craftsman insisted on leaving the state, after a brief stay, he was asked to train local men in his art or craft before he left. In case he was unwilling to do so, he was not allowed to leave Kashmir. The Kashmiris who wanted to go to foreign countries to learn new crafts, were given liberal state assistance. Lastly, persons were made to learn some art or crafts in the jails.

### **Introduction of Wooden Architecture**

Zain-ul-Abidin was an enthusiastic builder. He introduced wooden architecture in his country and built numerous magnificent buildings throughout the length and breadth of his Kingdom. :There was not a river, not a field, not a village, not a town, a piece of land", says Srivara, "which the King did not mark with the name of Jaina or Zain-ul-Abidin". He adorned the town of Zain Nagar (modern Nanshahr) with a number of beautiful buildings. Mirza Haidar says that the royal palace "Rajdan" was a unique building in the East.

The Sultan founded many other towns after his own name which included Zainapur (shopiyan tehsil), Zainkot (near Srinagar), and Zainagiri (near Sopur). He built a palatial building, the Zain Dab in Zainagiri which was later burnt down by the Chaks. The Sultan also built a small town named Helalpura near the Capital to commemorate the killing of a mad elephant by one of his servants named Hella. He built rest houses for himself and the inns for the travelers on main roads.

Lawrence says that Zain-ul-Abidin planted gardens wherever he went, four of his well-known gardens being Baghi Zaingiri, Baghi Zain Dab, Baghi Zainour and Baghi Zainkut. But these gardens are now extinct. The layout and designs of these gardens seems to have been of the purely Kashmiri type but improved upon by the influence of Samaqand and Bukhara types.

But the greatest achievement of Zain-ul-Abidin was the creation of a charming artificial island, Zaina Lank, in the Wular lake. It was built on a site in the lake whose once existed

an island but had submerged in the water. The Sultan reclaimed this island by filling that site with wagons filled with stones thus raising that site above the water level of the lake. He built a palace, a mosque and a garden there. The Sultan also built two other islands, Sonalank and Rupalank in the Dal lake.

### **Encouragement to Learning**

No account of Zain-ul-Abidin's reign can be complete without the mention of the great physician, Sri Bhatt, who cured the king of a dangerous disease. When after his recovery the king wanted to make a valuable gift to the Pandit, the latter refused to take it. "The only gift I will receive", he said to the king is "the removal of all restrictions on the Pandits imposed by Sikandar including the poll tax (Jaziya)". The king while realizing Sri Bhatt's concern for the welfare of the members of his community readily granted him the request.

Zain-ul-Abidin was a great patron of learning and literature. He himself was a great linguist, a scholar and a poet. He was proficient in Persian, Sanskrit, Tibetan as well as in Kashmiri which was his mother tongue. It is said that he wrote a treatise on pyrotechnics or the art of making fireworks, in the form of dialogue and another work named Shikayat which discusses the human vanity and transitoriness of the world.

### **Royal Court filled with Galaxy of Scholars**

The Sultan took great interest in the intellectual development of his subjects. He was surrounded by a galaxy of scholars local as well as foreigners. These include prominent scholars like Sayyid Mohammad Rumi, Maulana Nadiri, Sayyid Mohammad Sistani, Maulana Kabir, Qazi Sayyid, Ali Shirazi, Sayyid Mohammad Madani, Jonaraja, Srivara, Yodhabhatta and Nothosoma Pandit. The Sultan had frequent discussions with them on literary as well as spiritual topics. Jonaraja writes, "Possessed of merit and appreciating merit in other, the king encouraged learning, and the stream of learning which had run down like a canal which breaks through a gap, now began to flow smoothly once more". The centres of learning established by the Sultan began to attract students from such distant places as Herat and Transoxiana. Under Zain-ul-Abidin's patronage, education became so wide spread in Kashmir that, it is said, even women, cooks and porters became poets, and began to compose books.

### **Compilation and Translation of various works**

Many celebrated writers contributed to the growth of literature. Jonaraja continued the work of Kalhana's Rajatarangini. He wrote the second part of Rajatarangini and completed the work of writing the history of Kashmir upto 1458 A.d. in Sanskrit verse. After Jonaraja's death, his work was taken up by another chronicler named Srivara. Many Kashmiri describing the life and achievements of Zain-ul-Abidin. Yodhabhatta wrote the biography of the Sultan under the title of Zain Prakasha. Bhattavatara, who had studied Shah Nama of Firdausi and other Persian works, wrote Jaina Vilasa, containing the sayings of the Sultan. Mulla Ahmad and Mulla Nadiri were also great chroniclers of his time. Mansur Mohammad contributed a work of medicine. Not only were new books written, many were translated also under the personal care and suspension of Sultan. A regular department was indeed maintained for this purpose, and eminent scholars were employed in it. Mulla Ahmad translated the Mahabharata, Dasavatar and Rajatarangini from Sanskrit into Persian. Srivara translated Jami's Yusuf-u-Zulaikha from Persian into Sanskrit.

### **Building of Royal Library**

The Sultan's fondness for books led to the building of a big royal library. He sent men to India, Persia, Iraq and Turkistan to purchase books and manuscripts. The library survived one hundred years after his death when it was destroyed. As a result of the Sultan's efforts education made rapid strides in his kingdom.

### **Music and Dance**

Zain-ul-Abidin was a great lover of music and other fine arts. He always made generous allowances to musicians. Hearing of the Sultan's generosity and his love for music, a good many masters in this art flocked to Kashmir from all directions. One such artist was Mulla Udi of Khorasan. He played on Ud to the great delight of the Sultan and his courtiers. Another master was Mulla Jamal who was a great expert in vocal music. Srivara the author of the Zaina Rajatarangini was also an accomplished musician and he used to entertain the King often and the latter would always reward him for his fine performances. The Raja of Gwalior hearing of the Sultan's taste for music sent him all the standard books on Indian music, including the Sangitachudamani. Gwalior has been the centre of this art and later was proud of its associations with Tansen. It was thus indeed due to Zain-ul-Abidin that music in Kashmir reached a high pitch of excellence.

The Sultan also reintroduced the art of drama and dancing which had suffered due to the Puritanism of Sikandar. Many actors and dancers, both men and women, came to Kashmir at his invitation and the King would hold special festivals for their performances.

Festivals and fairs were held at different places in the valley, for example at Pampore, Bijbihara, Anantnag, Baramulla, Magam, etc, and the King would grace these occasions with his presence. Fireworks and illuminations were also attractions of these fairs.

### **Other Public Works**

Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin was a great builder. Remains of his numerous towns, villages, canals and bridges still exist and bear his name. To increase the agricultural production, he constructed several canals noted among which were the utpalapur, Nandashaila, Bijibihara, Advin, Amburher, Manasbal, Zainigir, and the Shakul at Bawan.

Many of these canals supplied water to the otherwise dry karewa lands. During the past 70 years many of them have been repaired and reconstructed and put to use “the long and peaceful reign of Zain-ul-Abidin”, says Stein, “was productive of important irrigation works. Jonaraja’s and Srivara’s chronicles give a considerable list of canals constructed under the Sultan’s, Jonaraja mentions that one of his engineers, Damara Kach, paved a road with stones and thus made it fit for use even during the rainy season. Similarly he built the first wooden bridge in Kashmir still known by the name of Zainakadal (Zain-ul-Abidin’s bridge).

### **Conclusion**

Making an estimate of Zain-ul-Abidin, Dr. Bamzai remarks, “Long was his death lamented and even up to this day the people take his name with reverence and gratitude as a word of good omen. No tribute can repay the debt Kashmir owes to him forever. The poet chronicled the year of his demise in the feeling rendered in this stanza:

“Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin went to dwell in heaven.

The crown and the seal became lusterless,  
the earth and the sky became gloomy;

From that date evidently headless became in the world.

Justice and generosity; learning and power,  
Glory and pomp; peace and tolerance.”

**SULTAN ZAIN-UL-ABIDIN: HIS RELIGIOUS POLICY**

**Introduction**

**Objectives**

**Various Confidence Building Measures Adopted by Sultan**

**Rehabilitation of Brahmins**

**Re-building of temples**

**Participation in the Hindu festivals**

**Stopped few inhumane Hindu practices**

**Sultan's quest for learning**

**High posts to non-Muslims**

**His Personal Character and Outlook**

**Repercussions of His Religious Policy**

**Contrast and Comparison of Sultan Zain-Ul-Abidin and Akbar**

**His Social Policy**

### **Introduction**

P.N.K.Bamzai writes, “It is for his high sense of tolerance that Zain-ul-Abidin will always be known in history. Living in an age when religious persecution was the order of the day, his reign shines out as a bright gem amid the narrow- minded and short-sighted rulers of his time. He made Kashmir the real paradise in which men of all the religions and nationalities mingled together and shared one another’s joys and sorrows.” By temperament, Hindus in the valley were peace-loving people. In return for his patronage and love, they offered Budshah their full cooperation. The Hindus vied with the Muslims in turning their homeland into a smiling garden of peace and prosperity. Despite its immoral start, Budshah’s reign marks the golden age of Kashmir as do Akbar and Asoka in that of the sub-continent as a whole. He was a much-loved king whose judgements are famous for their fairness and whose reign is marked by prosperity. The chief glory of Sultan’s reign is, however, his policy of toleration towards the Hindus. His father, Sikandar, was a fanatic, and had greatly vitiated the peaceful atmosphere in the country by his intolerance and short-sightedness. He had imposed many restrictions on the Hindus. These were, no doubt, allowed to continue during the early period of Zain-ul-Abidin’s rule also. But not long after all of them were abolished. J.P. Ferguson observes, “Indeed history can give few example where the policy of the father was so completely reserved by the son as was the case with Sikandar and Zain-ul-Abidin. Where Sikandar destroyed, Zain-ul-Abidin restored and where the former banished and killed Hindus, the latter recalled them and exalted them”. From the very beginning the king showed a humane nature. He stopped the genocide of Hindus. Srivara says, “After the (mis) rule of Ali Shah, his beneficent rule was experienced by everybody as an application of cooling sandal paste on a simmering desert at the end of the dog-days of scorching summer.” Srivara describes his rule and justice as Dharma Raj like Yudhishtira’s.

There was no Muslim ruler as tolerant as Budshah (King of Kings). Perhaps as a child he had heard the groans of aged Hindus when his father Sikandar and even his elder brother Ali Shah were slitting their throats. When he reached adolescence, he may also have witnessed horrifying shrieks of thousands of children and women whose houses were looted and burnt by soldiers, and they were forcefully converted to Islam. He may have considered all these to be against the cardinal principles of Islam.

### **Objectives**

- (a) To study the liberal treatment being followed by Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin towards non-muslims.
- (b) To analyze various measures adopted by Sultan for religious tolerance.
- (c) To study various features of sultan's religious policy.
- (d) To compare and contrast religious policies of Zain-ul-Abidin and Akbar.

### **Various Confidence Building Measures Adopted by Sultan**

Right from his childhood he had learnt that Allah is 'Rab-ul-Almeen' (God of the world), 'Rahmat-ul-Almeen' (merciful to the world), 'Rahman-ul-Rahim' (most gracious, most compassionate). He must have thought that God is preserver of the universe and benefactor of its people. He also must have realized that the persecution of Hindus by Sikandar and other kings had done more harm to Islam than good. He must have abhorred the killing of people feeling it was an un-Islamic act. The cardinal principles of Islam are a belief in the unity, mercy and supreme love of God's creations. Zain-ul-Abidin made his best efforts to undo the great wrongs that his predecessors had done to the Hindus. His father Sikandar, had followed a policy of ruthless persecution of the Hindus and had put numerous restrictions on them. Zain-ul-Abidin continued these restrictions in the early years of his reign but soon after he adopted a policy of religious tolerance.

### **Rehabilitation of Brahmins**

In the first place, Zain-ul-Abidin recalled the Brahmins who had been expelled from the kingdom, and caused a general toleration of all religions to be publicly notified. Many of them heartily responded to this call. They were given full freedom, and all the odious persecutionary measures of Sikandar's reign were cancelled. The Sultan enacted certain laws which provide to the Hindus a just administration and trial of their cases

according to their own laws and customs. The Sultan also abolished *Jaziya* altogether. He also remitted the poll tax. The Hindus could now hold their festivals, apply *tilak* on their foreheads, put on dress in according with their traditions and customs, and educate their children as they liked their women could perform *sati* and other customs which had been prohibited by Sikandar.

### **Re-building of temples**

Many of the temples which had been demolished in the reign of Sikandar, were rebuilt and permission was granted to erect new ones. Jonaraja and Srivara mention that the king built two temples near Ishabar and granted rent free lands to maintain them. The king remitted the poll-tax and granted *Jagirs* to deserving Hindus. *Baharistan-i-Shahi* says, "All those temples and idol-houses of the infidels which had been destroyed totally in the reign of Sultan Sikandar, May God bless his soul, were re-built and re-habilitated by him. Most of the unbelievers and polytheists, who had fled to the lands of Jammu and Kishtwar because of the overwhelming strength of Islam, were induced by him to return to Kashmir."

### **Participation in the Hindu festivals**

The Sultan participated in the Hindu festivals in order to win the goodwill of his Hindu subjects. The Rajatarangini of Jonaraja gives a detailed account of how the Sultan took part in the annual Nagayatra festival, when he would wear the robes of a Hindu mendicant and perform pilgrimage in company with the Hindus. On this occasion, he distributed alms liberally and fed thousand of ascetics and Brahmins. Similarly when the monks of Sri Jain monastery celebrated the worship of vessels, he took part in it and fed the monks. During the festivity of Ganacakra, he fed the devotees for five days with rice, meat, vegetables and fruits. He dismissed them on the twelfth day of the moon after presenting them with quilts, and many other things. On the thirteenth he saw the display of lamps on both sides of the river on occasion of the worship held to celebrate the spring. He visited a number of towns on the occasion in order to witness the display of flowers and to enjoy music and dancing. To expiate for the wrongs done to the Hindus by his father, he built numerous homes for the widows of the Brahmins who had suffered during the reign of his father.

### **Stopped few inhumane Hindu practices**

To create confidence among his Hindu subjects, the Sultan still went further. A.K.Majumdar remarks that he stopped the practice of Hindu widows procreating sons



by others (or remarrying) at the bidding of their kinsman, and also the practice of disallowing the daughters with children, of persons dying without leaving any male issue, to perform funeral oblations, which, though contrary to Hindu law, was followed by the covetous kinsmen of the deceased. Nizam-ud-Din also says that the Sultan “took an agreement from the Brahmins that they would not act in contravention of what was written in their books. All this shows that the Sultan imposed on the Hindus the personal law as laid down in their Shastras (scriptures). It appears that he stopped the killing of cows by means of poison, and passed some regulations about eating beef. Not only did he ban the cow-slaughter but the killing of birds and fish in several nagas, i.e., springs, sacred to the Hindus, was also stopped. Sikandar had also imposed two pails of silver as Jaziya upon the Hindus. Zain-ud-Abidin reduced it to one masha in the beginning, but abolished it completely later on. However, as per some scholars it was kept at a low rate, but never realized so as “to put up a semblance of an Islamic state in which all enjoyed equal rights”. The cremation tax which the Hindus of Srinagar had to pay was also remitted.

### **Sultan’s quest for learning**

Zain-ul-Abidin was much impressed with the Hindu scriptures and he was conversant with Sanskrit language. It is said that he loved reciting shlokas from Yoga Vasistha. Srivara says ‘Faithful application of the six schools of philosophy enriched his whole span of life like the seasons with their refreshing crops of flowers embellishing the pleasure garden of India.’ He got many of these including the *Mahabharata* and *Rajatarangini* translated by his courtier Mullah Ahmed into Persian and the Persian and Arabic treatises were translated into Sanskrit for his close study. In fact, he revived the tradition of historiography. According to K. Ayyappanicker, “The Sultan was himself a great scholar, having command over several languages. There is a macaronic lyric in manuscript form ascribed to him, which contains one couplet in Kashmiri too:

*‘The slender waist and delicate body are the passion’s garden and pleasure’s foliage,  
The simplicity of fancy; the majestic height is a pillar to the zenith and basis of the nadir.’*

He further mentions that Sultan’s pen name was Qutb. During his rule, even Muslims studied Hindu scriptures. It is not as if he respected Hindu scriptures only- the fact is King Budshah was a devout Muslim and he did his best to spread Islam but not with violence, not by desecrating deities placed in Hindu temples, or by killing people who refused to be

converted to Islam. He collected all the great Islamic scholars such as Hussein Quazi Rizwi, the Islamic theologian Maulana Kabir, and Quazi Jamal-ud-Din, a scholar of great merit. These notable personalities helped the spread of Islamic philosophy in the state. It was because of his efforts that Islam came to Ladakh.

### **High posts to non-Muslims**

During his reign non-Muslims held high positions and were trusted by him, for his criterion in making appointments was not the religion of the candidate but his ability. Shiva Bhatta, a Brahman was his court physician as well as Afshar-ul-Ataba i.e. head of the medical department, and a confidant whom he always consulted on important matters. Another person who was his counselor and stood high in his favour was Tilakacharya, a Buddhist. Two other Brahmans, Simha and Rupyabhatta, were the court astrologers. Karpurbhatta was a Brahmin physician much respected by the Sultan. Siryabhatta was the superintendent of the king's court of justice. The Sultan was so much attached to him that on his death he distributed a large sum of money in charity.

### **His Personal Character and Outlook**

Of Zain-ul-Abidin's physical appearance there is no description in the chronicles. Srivara says that he was handsome and had a black, flowing beard, but beyond this he does not mention anything. However, it is evident from a close study of the accounts that the Sultan did not possess the physical strength, energy and prowess of Shihab-ud-din. Nor is there anything to show that he was a great soldier, for there are no military exploits to his credit. It is true that he defeated Ali Shah but this was due more to the help he received from Jasrat Khokharb than to his own initiative and valour. And the armies which won victories in Ladakh, Baltistan and Kulu were not led by him but by his commanders.

Zain-ul-Abidin led a saintly life. He did not take any money from the State treasury for his personal use, but contented himself with the earnings from a copper mine near Aishmuqam. There is also evidence to show that he led a moral life. He never kept concubines, nor did he have more than three wives at a time. He first married Taj Khatun, the daughter of Sayyid Muhammad Baihaqi. The Sultan was very much devoted to Taj Khatun and her death greatly affected him. His other two wives were the princesses from Jammu. The Sultan possessed a deeply religious nature. He was strict in the performance of his religious duties and praying five times a day. He abstained from the use of liquors and

during *Ramzan* would not even take meat. He held the Sufis, learned men, and Brahmin Pandits in great respect and granted them lands. In his private life he wore a simple dress, although his regal robes became famous throughout Northern India and Central Asia for their fine and costly material. He was a highly religious man, extending equal respects to all the great religions of the world. He venerated holy saints and faqirs. "The king", says Jonaraja," took his instructions about inferior hermits and gave them ear-pendants, vessels of gold, and clothes.

### **Repercussions of His Religious Policy**

As a result of Zain-ul-Abidin's policy of religious toleration, "Hindu traditions distinctly re-asserted themselves while the country enjoyed something like a return of its old prosperity." In the words of Srivara, "The king's virtuous mode of government in the Kali Yuga became glorious like the very middle of the Satya Yuga". On account of his religious policy, Zain-ul-Abidin is often compared with Akbar, the most illustrious of all the Mughal Emperor of India. But some authorities opine that the former's policy was more enlightened, more tolerant, and more successful than that of latter.

### **Contrast and Comparison of Sultan Zain-Ul-Abidin and Akbar**

In India, the Muslim rule was established towards the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century A.D. since then the Muslim rulers had been following a harsh policy, with varying degree, towards the Hindus. Even during the short rule of Sher Shah, the Hindus were treated as second class citizens: they had to pay Jazia and pilgrimage tax; positions of trust and responsibility in the State services were given to but a very small fraction of them; and there was no restriction on the cow-slaughter. But Akbar proclaimed, for the first time in the history of the Muslim rule in India, complete religious toleration. His policy, which broke with the past completely, was, therefore, unique and original.

In Kashmir, on the other hand, from the very first day of the foundation of the Sultanate, the Muslim rulers had not been making any distinction between their Muslim and non-Muslim subjects. In fact, tolerance had been a tradition with them. It was only under Sikandar and Ali Shah that the Hindus of Kashmir were persecuted for the first time. When Zain-ul-Abidin, therefore, adopted a tolerant policy, he merely revived the traditional policy of his land. He created no 'new concept of politics' and his religious policy was not at all the "most unique example in History."

Thus, there is no comparison between Akbar's religious policy and that of Zain-ul-Abidin; Akbar was an innovator whereas Zain-ul-Abidin was a mere reformer in this field.

### **His Social Policy**

As mentioned above, Sikandar had banned some social practices of the Hindus, but Zain-ul-Abidin restored these in pursuance of his policy of peace with all the religions even though some of the practices, like sati, were atrocious. The Hindus, however, wanted the Sultan to go further and take some more retrograde steps to gratify them. The widows of the Shudra community, for instance, used to remarry, but this practice was repugnant to the Brahmans. Hence, the latter used to harass the Shudra women. But Zain-ul-Abidin took the Brahmans to task for doing so. He also tried to put a stop to the immoral traffic among their women. All this shows that the Sultan was not conservative by nature, and he might have undertaken further social reforms had the Hindus supported him.

**SOURCES OF THE HISTORY OF JAMMU**

**STRUCTURE**

**Objectives**

**Introduction**

**Early References**

**Dogri Folk Songs and Ballads**

**9..5 Archaeological Remains (Sources)**

**Monuments and the Dogra Architecture**

**Coins**

**Dogra Art**

**Historical Geography of the Dogra Land**

**Conclusion**

## **Objectives**

After reading this lesson, you will be able to know the different sources that historians use for writing the history of Jammu. The lesson also furnishes some useful information about the early history of Jammu.

## **Introduction**

It is usually thought that there is a great paucity of source material for the history of the Dogra-Pahari people, particularly on their ancient annals. Unfortunately for the Dogras, they did not have a Kalhana or Al-Beruni to compile and collect their annals and antiquities. But it does not mean that source material for the Dogra history is scanty. The only difficulty is that it has not been collected and reached out. If worked out properly by qualified persons well versed in the scientific techniques, undoubtedly, voluminous political and social history of the Dogra people can be authoritatively written on that as any other race in India.

## **Early References**

There is hardly a doubt that Jammu is an ancient Principality. Though it is not mentioned by that name in the Sanskrit and Persian literatures of the old yet this land found mention after its chief town which has changed for a couple of times. The first historical mention of the land may have been covered by the name 'Madra-desh' which had its headquarters at Sakala or Shalkot i.e., the modern Sialkot which is only 26 miles to the South of Jammu city. Raja Shal, the maternal uncle of the Pandus made incursions on Jammu several times and ultimately conquered it. For many generations this territory remained subject to Shal's successors when at last 454 years after Kaliyug a certain Raja, named Joti Parkash recovered and occupied Jammu and afterwards his descendants ruled there unabated. It might have happened somewhere in the hoary past of which a legendary history of Jammu is recorded in the Vanshavali. But coming to the historical period, the mention of the state under the name Durgar occurs on two Chamba copper-plate title-deeds dated between 1056 - 66 A. D (first issued by soma-vamam and the second by Soma and Asatta, rulers of (chamba).

### **Dogri folk songs and ballads**

An analysis of the Dogri folk-songs published so far presents a great variety of compositions which falls into two great classes (i) Ballads and (ii) Lyrics

A great variety of Lyrics, such as Jhanjhotian, bishanpate, dhotru, Pakhan, Nausatra, behne, Swashi and Gugrian are no more than rhymed over-flow of emotions.

The Ballad literature of Baran and Karkan and the devotional type is expected to yield some knowledge of historical facts. But this folk literature fails to give much help to the historians of the Dogras. They convey only a few dejoined stray facts of social history. However, some anecdotes of local history have been preserved in these ballads clad in superstition and fancy. The historic Barans of Mian Diddo, Mehta Basti Ram, Wazir Ratnu, General Zorawar Singh, General Baj Singh are of considerable historical value. Whole of this Balled literature may help a historian in reconstructing a fragmentary picture of the cultural life of the Dogras.

### **Archaeological Remains**

Archaeological remains are spread over whole of Jammu region. Recently some archeological excavation have been conducted in this region and very surprising remains have been found in Jammu region. Whatever little excavations and survey work has been recently been done in the district of Jammu, Kathua and Udhampur, it has brought to light stone tools belonging to the early man. These tools are similar to those found in the valley of Sohan river in western Punjab near Rawalpindi. At Lakhanpur some sites of Pleistocene Age extending from 3 Lakh years to about thirty thousand years from today were found. These included rough stone tools like ace, hammer, chopper. In Samba area some sites at Nandi, Mananu, Paith and Diyalachak have been discovered which yielded Paleolithic i.e., early stone age tools like Bi-facial hand ace, uni-facial choppers, scrapers, discoids and flakes- Southern slopes of the Udhampur district particularly on the banks of Gambher Khad near the village Kishanpur Nagrota, yielded a few early stone age tools of the kind. Those exploitation reveals that the habitation of early stone Age man were scattered all over the Jammu region lying between the Chenab and Ravi.

### **Monuments and the Dogra Architecture**

The history, culture and importance of the erstwhile principalities can be gauged from the numerous forts, palaces, ancient shrines and other structures that are still standing. There are several such monuments and well known forts and palaces in Jammu region. Among the famous forts and palaces of Jammu region, Bahu fort, Poonch fort, Rajouri fort, Jaganu fort, Krimchi fort (only a part of a wall exists), Moheregarh fort and Ramnagar, Basohli and Jammu Palaces etc. are notable. Since very little research work has been conducted on these forts and palaces, it is difficult to discuss their history. Moreover, some individuals have worked in this field and thus enabled us to learn some interesting facts about these.

Few archeological remains uniformly spread from River Ravi to the Chenab and Northward to inner mountains besides those of Chamba and Kangra Hills belonged to the early medieval ages when the Dogras had not yet appeared in the Shivalik hills. The highly developed stage of these monuments presuppose a long history of evolution which goes far into the hoary past since when these hills were occupied by a non-Dogra people not yet identified, these hills were thus inhabited by a civilised people who have left traces of their existence in Jammu state. The Dogras must have inherited this tradition in art and architecture and carried it on to the latest eras. During the Dogra period a number of monuments were erected at Basohli, Jammu and the regions around them. The Baradari at Purani Mandi was erected by Raja Mal Dev in about 1380 A.D. Traditions has to convey the information that the material for its construction was brought from Pathankot after that town had been conquered and sacked by Mal Dev.

Maharaja Ranjit Dev the last effective ruler of the Dev Dynasty, seems to have taken special interest in erecting monuments. His reign is marked by the construction of Haveli Begum buildings meant for the Mughal. Governor of Punjab, Mir Mian-ud-Din, the Mastgarh mosque at Jammu while the Panchbhaktar Shiva temple near Kanak Mandi Jammu were built by Raja Malgar Dev.

Maharaja Ranjit Dev also commenced building of the present 'Palace' known as Mubark Mandi or Durbar Garh Palace, where in the times of his father some miserable



huts stood. In addition to this he also finished the construction of 'Bahu Fort' which was commenced by Gulab Dev in the beginning of Dhruv Dev's reign.

Basohli was another centre of Dogra architecture. The royal palace of the Balawaria Princes which is in decayed condition now, was built in the Mughal architecture style. It contained the court hall, Shish Mahal, rang mahal etc. Raja Bhupat Pal, founder of Basohli was also the founder of this palace. His successors made additions to it in their own times. Mahendra Pal added the Rang Mahal and Shish Mahal which were decorated with mural paintings depicting the Nayika and other erotic themes. The importance of the Palace lies in the fact that it figures in a number of Basohli miniatures. Now this palace which was once seven storeyed has turned in to a massive ruin and there is very little to show that it was once a magnificent building so brought to completion and decorated by Raja Amrit Pal that it was regarded as one of the wonders of the hills of Jammu. Its square turrets, open and embattled Parapets, projecting windows, Chinese roofed balconies and a moat like tank in front presented a general appearance which, without entering into specific detail reminds one of the some palaces of their times in England, France, Germany etc.

In addition to the Palace, Basohli has two shiva temples and some rock cut caves on the Ravi bridge, one of which is called 'Vishveshwara' gufa.

There is in the cave a human figure on the wall - 6 feet high. Tradition identifies this statue with 'Vishvakarma' the founder of Basohli.

The ancient monuments found in Chamba and Kishtwar and to the west of the Chenab were erected by Kashmiri architects in their style. But in Jammu and Basohli areas no traces of Kashmiri influence can be seen. Rather it was a style which emerged independently and was perhaps introduced there by the 'Durgaras' who occupied the Jammu Shivaliks in or before the 18th century A.D. The ancient monuments at Babor, Kirmchi, Sudh-Mahadev and Billawar may even be attributed to the early Dogras, then called the 'Durgaras'.

Thus if studied carefully the Dogra monuments can provide us useful information

for reconstructing the history of this region.

### **Coins**

The Numismatic finds of Dogra hills have been very poor indeed. A few specimens collected at Srinagar Museum have been described by E. Beilley. These include a few coins of the Hindu Sahi kings who once ruled over Dogra region where they had their important seat at Nagarkot (Kangra). Cunningham, also mentions few coins - there are 15 coins of Odumbaras (Pathankot region). Five coins that of Kunindas, the ancient tribe of Kangra valley. There are few coins at the Dogra Art gallery Jammu also.

### **Dogra Art**

The Dogra art received world wide appreciation – especially Dogra painting- and very interesting and useful study of the Dogra miniatures had been made. The study of Dogra art started by the publication of such books as ‘Geeta Gobind’ in Basohli school of paintings, painting of Himalayan states, Rajput paintings (B. Goray) etc. Various schools of Dogra painting evolved in the Dogra Hills. The Basohli style painting is the earliest and is hailed as the original and highly matured school which evolved in the Dogra Hills and afterwards spread to other centres like Jammu, Mankot, Bhadarwah, Jasrota, Nurpur, Chamba, Mandi, Guler and Kulu. These schools of painting preserve a visual and pictorial record of a social order which has passed away. Above all they tell us of the ideals which inspired the Hindus- the rulers, the common people, the poets as well as the painters.

### **Historical Geography of the Dogra Land**

For a scientific reconstruction of Dogra history, a fair knowledge of ancient and medieval geography and ethnography is very important and indispensable. The Political boundaries as well as the inhabitants of the Dogra land had generally changed during the ancient and medieval ages. Political empires expand and contract, the place names change from time to time. Even the names of races and tribes undergo changes. Unless a person is thoroughly equipped with the knowledge of the ancient and medieval geography of the

land of Dogra, he is not able to reconstruct the history of Dogra land.

The historians of the Dogras has therefore to proceed from geographical data to be gleaned laboriously from ancient Indian literature starting with the Rig-Veda and the Satapatha Brahamana, several mantras of which reveal in description of the cool and refreshing rivers of Duraga. The Chandrabhaga, the Devika, the Aapaga, the Udda, the Revati and perhaps the Basantar. The mountain system of the land also find mention in the Geography of the Puranas and the Epics.

In addition to above mentioned incomplete sources of Jammu history, the following books written as historical geography can also provide some information for reconstructing Jammu history.

- (i) Sir A. Cunningham : The Ancient Geography of India
- (ii) The Geographical Dictionary of Ancient and Medieval India by N. L. Dev.
- (iii) The Geography of Puranas by S. M. Ali.
- (iv) D. C. Sircar's studies in the Geography of Ancient and Medieval India.

These sources gives a vast information on the Dogra history of the ancient days and many help in reconstructing a graphic picture of the social and political transactions of Jammu. There are many other works written by Indian authors which throw light on the history of Dogras of Jammu.

- (i) Ganesh Dass Wadhera's Tawarikh-i-Raj-gan-i-Jammu
- (ii) Twarikh-i-Jammu by Hashmutallah Khan.
- (iii) Twarikh-i-Jammu by Thakur Kanth Singh
- (iv) Twarikh-i-Dogra Desh by Nar Singh Das Nargis
- (v) Gulabnama written in persian by Dewan Kirpa Ram

Moreover a large number of books have been written by foreigners who were in the service of Lahore Darbar or the British Govt. These books directly deal with the Hill

state and are reliable source of Dogra history, if used judiciously.

### **Conclusion**

Thus there are large number of source material on the history of Jammu people, but whatever is available is too unweildy. The source do not speak out themselves, these have to be workout by people whom they concern by painstaking history minded scholars who are adept in that art.

**RAJA MAL DEV 1361 -1400 A. D**  
**POLITICALACHIEVEMENTS**

**STRUCTURE**

**10.1 Objective**

**10.1 Introduction**

**Accession**

**Achievements**

**Timur's Invasion**

**Mal Dev's conversion**

**Conclusion**

## **Objectives**

- i. To make you understand about the early history of Jammu under Raja Mal Dev.

## **Introduction**

After the death of Prithviraj Chauhan, Narsing Dev of Jammu captured a huge territory of Punjab. He died in 1257 A.D and was followed by Arjun Dev and Jodh Dev. Raja Mal Dev was the son of Jodh Dev. He succeeded to the throne in about 1360 A.D and ruled upto 1400 A.D. Raja Mal Dev was a tall and great ruler. His memory is still cherished by the people of Jammu. It was probably Raja Mal Dev who shifted his capital from Babbapura to Jammu. Earlier his predecessors had shifted the capital from Jammu to Babbapura due to frequent attacks by Muslim Invaders.

## **Accession**

Jodh Dev was succeeded to the gaddi by his son Mal Dev, the hero of several legends and traditions of the Dogras. The Date of his accession has been variously given. Ganesh Dass has given his date of accession 1410 Bikrami, corresponding to 1347 A.D and Hejire 749 (1361 A.D, where as G. C. Smyth has given 1389 Bikrami, corresponding to 1332 A.D and Hejira 749 (1348 A.D) Raja Mal Dev's date of accession, therefore, varies from 1332 to 1361 A.D. At the same time tradition makes him contemporary with Timur's invasion of India which took place in 1398-99 A.D. as it has been believed that Raja Mal Dev had ruled for 40 years. His accession to power may safely be placed in 1360-61 A.D or a little after.

## **Achievements**

Raja Mal Dev must probably shifted the Dogra capital to Jammu which had been abandoned by the rulers during the period of the recurring invasions of Turks since the days of Mahmud, though Jammu had remained their military outpost ever afterwards. Traditions amply proves this fact. It is stated that he bought a big rock from the bed of the Tawi and placed it at the spot where it lies to this day in the Mohalla "Kali Janni". He gathered his kinsmen and the people at Kali-Janni and sat on that rock and appointed himself 'Raja'. This place served as sacred place long after Mal Dev-where every new

Raja King celebrated his 'Raj-Tilak' (accession to gaddi). Hence forth this Rajput colony was treated with greater respect by the people around, while the Meghs and numerous other new comers and temporary inhabitants, Hindus, who had fled from the Muslim rule and migrated from the Punjab hither-all now looked up to the Mal Dev as their rightful lord, prince and protector. This way Jammu regained its past glory and importance as a capital. The Purani Mandi buildings (as mentioned by Ganesh Dass Wadhra in Rajdarshini) were erected during his reign, but they are extinct now except "Raj-tharha". The building is now known as 'Amar Kshtriya Rajput Sabha'. At the corner of this building houses a small shrine marking the spot where Mal Dev first sat on his gaddi as the ruler of Jammu and at this spot all the subsequent Dogra rulers upto the last one, Maharaja Hari Singh were appointed at the time of accession. The rock 'Kali-Janni' once lay within the precincts of this palace which was also known as 'Mal Dev-ki-Mandi'.

An interesting anecdote is narrated about the erection of the Pucca palaces at this spot by Mal Dev at the later date. Once he became offended with Rana Kailasa (1357-1397). The furious Dogra Chief made a surprise attack on his relatives and in the fight the Pathania Raja was defeated and victor dismantled the Nurpur fort and palace and carried the bricks to Jammu out of which he built his brick palace at the Purani Mandi. This must have taken place in 1397 when Raja Kailasa, the conqueror of Tatar Khan, the Tughluq governor of Lahore and Muhammad Tughlaq, is stated to have been killed.

This event lead to impairment .of Mal Dev's relations with the Taughlaq Sultans of Delhi. The Wazir of Nurpur (then called Dhammere) went to Delhi and complained against Mal Dev's highhandedness there upon Mal Dev destroyed and plundered the palace and town of the Pathanias, and made preparations for battle with imperial forces. In the battle Mal Dev routed the Delhi army sent against him. However, Mal Dev's half brothers, Jankar Dev and Inder Dev, went over to the Imperial forces and helped them in seizing Mal Dev's person by treachery. He was carried to Delhi, a prisoner, and his half brothers were installed in power at Jammu by the Imperial officers. He was, however, reconciled to the Tughlaq Sultan of Delhi by show of his super human power in a duel and was released and restored to power. The Sultan acknowledged him ruler of Jammu. The Dogra Raja, however, continued to flout the authority of the sultans of Delhi like most of the Hill chiefs. According to the tradition recorded by -G. C. Smyth, Mal Dev was able, when occasion

required, to assemble round him 300 or 400 armed followers, and with such instruments at his command he did not lose the opportunity of “making himself known and dreaded all over the neighboring low lands” and by his heroic acts and mighty inroads, he showed that he little respected and even defied the great Muslim power of the age. However, the disturbances of the times gave him and some of his descendants opportunities to ravage the low lands on different occasions for some forty or fifty cross-over hundred kilometers.

Thus Mal Dev extended his kingdom on all sides. He conquered territories in the east up to the river Beas, and ravaged and plundered the plain region many miles south of Sialkot. The Dogras may have been forced to offer nominal allegiance to the Sultans now and there, but mostly they asserted their independence and Amir Timur was informed in 1399 A.D that the inhabitants of Jammu region were not submissive and obedient to Sultans of Hindustan.

### **Amir Timur's Invasion of Jammu**

Timur had occupied Delhi on 17 Dec, 1398 after routing the tughlaq troops in a battle on the eve of which he had mercilessly ordered the slaughter of one lakh Hindu captives in chains. After plundering the capital of sultans for about 3 weeks, he left Delhi on hearing of the Hindus, while inhabited the outer hills (Siwaliks) determined to carry a holy war against him, he left for the hills and strom these states and reached to the neighbourhood of Jammu via Kangra. On the way he conquered several forts and ultimately camped near Mansar. One of the forts he conquered belonged to Thalosa-Babore and the people there were disarmed and about 40 Hindus were ordered to serve Timur's Treasurer which the people resisted out of disobedient rebellions spirit. Timur ordered a general assault on the fort which was stormed and its inhabitants annihilated. Two thousands thus perished or were made prisoners and buildings were levelled with the ground.

Here Timur was informed that the castle or fortress of Jammu was near, that it was connected with the Siwalik and Kuka mountains and that the inhabitants were not submissive and obedient to the Sultans of Hindustan. He therefore decided to carry his arms against the infidels of Jammu and on 23 Feb, 1399 he marched from Mansar and encamped at the village Baila (about 9 miles) in the territory of Jammu. Probably, Timur passed through Purmandal and Uttarbehni and the locality of Baila was few miles south of it on the bank of



Devika. Timur sent a force against the village. The villagers quite big in number had ambushed themselves in the Jungle at many places along the borders of the Jungle and were prepared to give battle and offer resistance. Timur's army could not dare to attack them. Consequently Timur himself arrived there next day. He too thought it prudent not to provoke the defenders who had completely deserted the village and plundered the remnants of grain, sugar and oil. After that they set fire to the houses and destroyed the buildings.

The same day, 24th Feb, they advanced about six miles and then encamped, probably in the vicinity of the modern Bari Brahmana or Kaluchak on the bank of the Balol torrent, as Timur descended along it from the rugged hills to the fertile plain through which he marched on to Jammu. It was at this place that the envoy of Sultan Sikander of Kashmir reached Timur's camp on 24 Feb, 1399 and Timur wanted the Sultan to be informed that he should wait upon him on the banks of the Indus without bringing any presents.

On 26th Feb 1399 Timur again marched and came up opposite to the city of Jammu and camped there. The five or six kos (about 9 miles) he travelled, he saw entirely cultivated country hardly having any dry or waste land. He probably encamped in the Satwari plain where "there was grain and grass enough between the tents to feed the animals;

The record of Timur's proceeding against Jammu is not proud one. He evaded a direct fight with the people of Jammu. The Rai with a force of bold and fearless men had taken his stand in a strong position on the mountains where they discharged their arrows and kept on shouting. Timur was not in a mood to fight a pitched battle. He therefore adopted a cunning strategy which he describes in his own words.

On the next day, the 20th, after resting for a night, again moved with the intention of attacking the town of Jammu. I came in to the valley where the source of the river of Jammu is situated, and there I encamped. After few days I sent my army over the river to the foot of a mountain, on the left of the town, and to the village of Manu on the right. When my forces had secured these positions, the demon spirited Hindus sent their wives and children from their villages to the top of the mountains, and they fortified themselves in their village. The Raja with his war like gables and athletic Hindus, took his position in the valley, where they howled like so many Jackals. I commanded my troops that not a soldier

should go towards the mountains, or have anything to do with these gabres, but that they should attack and plunder the town of Jammu and the village of manu, Accordingly my forces fell to plundering and secured huge booty in forms of grain, goods of all kinds, and cattle. I returned victorious with baggage to my camp and passed the night in pleasure and rest.

“As soon as morning broke, the drums sounded. I selected certain troops which were placed under the command of experienced veteran Amirs and I instructed them to go and hide themselves in the Jungle, while I marched away with the drums playing. The Hindus and the gabres who had fled to the hills due to the approach of army, came down confidently from the top of hills. When they reached the plain, the Amirs rushed suddenly from their ambush upon the infidels and killed a great number of them. A few of them worn out and wounded had escaped to the Jungle and woods. The Raja (Mal Dev) of Jammu, who was ruler of the country, with fifty Raes and Rajputs had been made prisoners.

When my eyes fell upon the Raja (Mal Dev) of Jammu who was wounded and prisoner, fear took possession of his heart and he agreed to pay certain sums of money and to become a Muslman if I would spare of his life. I instantly order him to be taught the creed, and he repeated it and become a Muhammadan. Among these infidels there is greater crime and abomination than eating the flesh of a cow or killing a cow, but he ate the flesh in the company of. Musulmans. When he was thus received into the fold of the faithful, I ordered my surgeons to attend his wounds, and I honoured him with a robe and royal favours.

### **Mal Dev's Conversion to Islam**

The fact of Mal Dev's conversion to Islam under compulsion cannot be ruled out. During these centuries and after such conversions of rulers at the point of sword were usual. But Mal Dev seems to have abjured as soon as the invader had crossed the Indus. During these centuries of their struggle with the Muslims, Hindu rulers had learnt to play such game of conversion under compulsion as a matter of policy and to come back to their religion by performing “Prayshchitta” laid down for such cases.

But Dogra Folk ballads give a different version of Mal Dev's role in the affair. In

one of the legends it is narrated that Mal Dev organized a confederacy of Rajas against Timur and fought the invaders in defending Kangra and died there a heroic death. Another ballad lauds Mal Dev's terrible battle with the invaders in which Timur was badly repulsed. It is probable that the Raja of Jammu which Timur's men captured in ambuscade, was not the Raja, but only a vassal of the king of Jammu, who along with fifty Rais and Rajputs might have come down the valley of the Tawi on way to the plain country lying across it and fell into ambuscade. It was some Zamindar or rai who was forcibly converted to Islam, and not the King of Jammu. That is why the great Rakwal, Chandel and Chauhan Rajput dynasties did not hesitate to marry their daughters to Mal Dev's successor; In case of Mal Dev's conversion to Islam this could not have been possible. Rajputs have been over zealous for the preservation of the purity of their blood.

Ganesh Dass records another tradition. He states that Timur invited Mal Dev to submission and conversion to Islam to which the proud Raja replied by recourse to fight. Mal Dev made a sudden outburst, surprised and routed the invading forces and took shelter in lofty fastnesses. Timur's forces reacted after plundering the neighboring villages. Timur's battles in the hills seem to have been against the crowds of people, who were wont to hover around the retreating armies with the intention of relieving the invaders off some of the booty, and not against the Rajas. Moreover, the eight forts stormed by him did not include any worth the name, like those of Kangra, Taragarh, Mall, Pathankot, Dhamani, Jasrota. These forts could only be taken after pitched battle and held for months together and not by a retreating invader hurrying the safe route through the hills for the safety of his loot. Anyhow Timur's retreat through Jammu hills, has left memories of many a heroic scuffle by the Dogra martial clans with one of the greatest scourges of Central Asia.

### **Conclusion**

The reign of Raja Mal Dev is a glorious chapter of the history of Jammu which makes him the hero. He left behind strong and well established principality to his son and successor, Hamir Dev (1400-1423)

**RISE OF JAMMU KINGDOM UNDER RANJIT DEV**

**STRUCTURE**

**Objective**

**Introduction**

**Date of Accession**

**Confinement of Ranjit Dev**

**Ranjit Dev's diplomacy during Afghan-Mughal struggle for the supremacy over Punjab**

**Ranjit Dev's Conquest and Territorial Possessions**

**Reverses in Kashmir**

**Jammu-Bahu struggle**

**Ranjit Singh and Sikh Misls**

**Administration of Ranjit Dev**

**Conclusion**

## **Objectives**

- i. To make you understand about the political developments under Ranjit Dev.
- i To make you understand about just and liberal Administration under Ranjit Dev.

## **Maharaja Ranjit Dev -1735 -1782 A.D**

### **Introduction**

Ranjit Dev was perhaps the most notable ruler who ever rule in Jammu before the rise of Gulab Singh. He succeeded his father Dhrub Dev to the throne of Jammu in 1725 AD. Soon after ascending the throne, the process of expansion and consolidation of Jammu Kingdom which had been started by Dhrub Dev was successfully continued by his son and successor Ranjit Dev. Under Ranjit Dev's enlightened rule the principality of Jammu expanded into a big kingdom. He ruled during the period of most crucial period of the history of Punjab and the Dogra-Pahari Hill states. There was chaos and disorder in these states. On the one side Mughal emperors were trying to maintain their hold on the Punjab and Siwalik hills. On the other side Khalsa solders were trying to materialise Guru Gobind Singh's idea of common wealth to fight against Muslim rulers to save Dharma. Ranjit Dev had to cope with all these and led his kingdom towards expansion and consolidation.

### **Date of Accession**

Dhrub Dev had four sons - Ranjit Dev, Ghansar Dev, Surat Dev and Balwant Singh. Ranjit Dev being the eldest son, followed his father on the throne of Jammu. But his date of accession to the 'gaddi' of Jammu has been variously given by historians. The authors of the History of the Punjab Hill states are of the opinion that Ranjit Dev came to throne in 1725A.D. But according to the calculations based on the evidence of Gulabnama

he must have succeeded his father Dhruv Dev on the throne in 1782 Bikrami (1725 AD) Dhruv Dev ruled for 22 years and died in 1782 Bikrami (1725) in which year Ranjit Dev might have occupied the throne of his father. He ruled for a comparatively long period of 57 years. Diwan Kirpa Ram records on page 81 of his Persian biography "For fifty seven years he hoisted the flag of ruler ship. Again on page 82, he inform us that Ranjit Dev's son Brajraj Dev succeed his father on the ninth day of the month Baisakh of the year 1839 Bikrami (1781-82 AD)

Thus, the chronology of the Jammu Rajas may be fixed definitely as under -

1. Dhruv Dev, father of Ranjit Dev, ascended Chief-ship in Bikrami year 1760 (AD 1703 and ruled for 22 years and died in Bikrami 1782 (1725 AD)
2. Ranjit Dev succeeded his father on the throne of Jammu in Bikrami year 1782 (1725 A.D). He ruled for 57 years and died in the month of Baisakh 1838 Bikrami (1781-82 A.D)
3. Brajraj Dev become the Raja of Jammu on the 9th Baisakh, 1839 Bikrami or April, 1782 about 18 days after the death of his father Ranjit Dev.

### **Early Career and Confinement of Ranjit Dev**

Ranjit Dev inherited a kingdom spreading upto the Ravi. He was an ambitious and adventures youngman and tried to extend his way and influence in the plains. He attacked and plundered the town of Sialkot and occupied some important forts. He almost put stop to the communication between Kashmir and Lahore. Such activities of Ranjit Dev were not liked by Zakariya Khan the Mughal Governor of Lahore, who called Ranjit to his court of Lahore. But Ranjit Dev did not respond. Zakariya Khan then along with Bahuwal chief hatched a conspiracy and sent promises and invitations to Ranjit Dev to visit to Lahore court where he was confined for twelve years. It is also believed Zakariya Khan marched to Jammu and arrested Ranjit Dev and kept him in prison for 12 years. Ranjit Dev's brother Ghansar acted as the regent in his absence. Ranjit dev was released on the payment of ransom money of two lakhs.

## **Ranjit Dev's diplomacy during Afghan-Mughal struggle for the supremacy over Punjab**

The Mughal-Durrani struggle for the supremacy over Punjab and the rise of Sikh power along borders of Jammu also posed a serious challenge to the existence of Dogra kingdom-greater wisdom and political diplomacy was required in order to save Jammu from these dangers. The Durrani invasions on the Punjab started in 1748 and in 1752 Ahmed Shah Durrani succeeded in getting the province of Lahore from the Mughal emperor of Delhi. With it most of the Hill states also submitted to the Durrani. Mughal control was thus terminated. Ranjit Dev supported Durrani and was duly awarded. Durrani gave him a large Jagir in Kashmir. Ranjit thus became the first ruler from Jammu in recorded history to possess some kind of territorial rights in Kashmir. The same year The Afghans annexed Kashmir. In 1754, Afghan governor Sukh Jewan, declared himself virtually independent. Sensing opportunity, Ranjit Dev in 1755 made an attempt to conquer Kashmir, but failed.

At this political development the Dogra ruler had wisely to decide with whom he should align, the Afghans or the Mughals. He closely observed the course of events and acted diplomatically and sided with the person in possession of Lahore, he won over the friendship of Ahmed Shah Durrani by helping him to conquer Kashmir in 1762. Meanwhile when Mughals gathered strength and pressed hard. Afghan governors. Ranjit Dev sided with the Mughals. When Ahmed Shah Durrani invaded Kashmir for the fourth time in that year he came to know about Ranjit Dev's duplicity. So he sent a strong force against him. Ranjit Dev diplomatically submitted without fighting and made friendship with Afghans, which was well-coming by Afghans, because Durrani was in need of Ranjit Dev's help against Sikhs whom Afghans wanted to drive out from Hills of Punjab.

However the Afghan hold on the Punjab was insecure and shaky. The neighboring hill states were under them only in theory. This was partly because of Maratha invasions. More important, the Lahore kingdom and hill chiefs had begun to reclaim the areas that the Mughals had taken from them.

## **Ranjit Dev's Conquest and Territorial Possessions**

Taking full advantage of this situation Ranjit Dev asserted his independence, and also claimed his supremacy over the surrounding hill chiefs between the Chinab and the

Ravi. He invaded Chamba, with the help of Amrit Pal of Basohli. For a while his kingdom included Poonch and Rajouri in the West, Nurpur and Chamba (both Himachal Pradesh) in the East and Sialkot and Gurdaspur (both Punjab) in the south. Kangra, Mandi and Sukeet (all Himachal Pradesh) came under his sway.

Ranjit Dev subdued most of the petty Hill states around Jammu namely Mihar Singh Raja of Kishtwar, Shamsheer Chand, Raja of Chanani, Kirehipal, Raja of Bhadarwah and Amrit Pal Raja of Basohli. The other states of Jammu which were annexed by Ranjit Dev were Bahu Bharti, Reasi, Samba, Mankot, Trikot, Dalatpur, Lakhanpur and Jasrotra. Jammu, Thus Jammu under Ranjit Dev became the largest state in the region.

### **Reverses in Kashmir**

Ranjit Dev's influence had already been introduced in Kashmir valley by the grant in 1762 A.D of the Jagir worth 60,000 Kharwar of Shali (Sic) by Ahmed Shah Durrani, Pandit -Birbal Kachroo testifies to the transaction.

So in 1769 while the Haji was busy in subjugating Skardu, Ranjit Dev launched an attack via Banihal pass with a large force. But Karim DasAfghan forces got timely intelligence and ambushing themselves behind the rocks in the side of the valleys, fell upon the invaders suddenly and with such fury that Ranjit Dev's army had to restart seat in grave disorder. Thus, has expedition across the Pir Panjal came to halt at Mirbal pass and the young heir apparent Brijraj Dv was also not on good terms with his father.

### **Jammu-Bahu Struggle**

The fort of Bahu had been for sometime the seat of a separate principality ruled by a line of princes belonging to the same family to which Ranjit Dev and his ancestors belonged.

Although the two portions of Jammu and Bahu, had been re-united, and the Bahuwal Rajas expelled from Bahu by Hari Dev of Jammu who ruled about 1650-1675 A.D. yet a descent of the Bahuwala, Ugar dev seem to have revived his claim to a separate and autonomous chief ship of Bahu. Taking advantage of the Mughal suspicion about Ranjit Dev's political activities Ugar Dev the Chief of Bahu, poisoned the ears of the Mughals and in vindictiveness ordered him to proceed- to the Deccan with Mughal armies. Ranjit



Dev suspecting treachery, refused to comply with this order.

Thereupon he proceeded to Jammu in person, seized the Raja and brought him to Lahore where he was kept in confinement for 12 years.

During the captivity of Ranjit Dev his brother Mian Ghansar Dev carried on the administration of Jammu with the help of Mian Sinat Singh. The Lahore army once again tried to occupy Jammu with the help of Ugar Dev of Bahu, but Mian Ghansar Dev and Surat Singh ably assisted by Mian Rattan Dev and Mian Chandan Dev, the commanders of the army, met the imperial forces at Miran Sahib about ten miles South of Jammu. The imperial army was repulsed with heavy losses. The Jamwals occupied most of the Bahu territories as well.

The impending Jammu-Bahu struggle became a grim affair. It was therefore, thought necessary that Ranjit Dev should be liberated from the Lahore confinement. With this object Mian Chandan Dev approached the Mughal governor through Adina Beg Khan, the then Faujdar and got Ranjit Dev released on the promise to pay a ransom of two lakhs of rupees.

However the Jammu-Bahu struggle did not cease with the release of Ranjit Dev. It took some time more to resolve itself. Ranjit Dev had to undergo some more adventures before he finally occupied his ancestral throne of Jammu. He retired to the Bhag territory situated in the lap of Udhampur and Reasi mountains and waited his opportunity. At least with the aid of troops raised in these mountains and from Jammu, he defeated Ugar Dev of bahu, who fled towards Lahore. His territories were occupied and given over to Mian Ghansar Dev in Jagir. But on the intervention of the Lahore governor Ugar Dev was restored to his principality of bahu as a vassal of Ranjit Dev. Mian Ghansar Dev was now transferred to the Jagir of Bhalwalta (Udhampur)

### **Ranjit Singh and Sikh Misls**

Braj Raj Dev elder son of Ranjit Dev appealed to his father's enemy, Sardar Charhat Singh of the Sukar Charia Sikh misl (clan). He also asked Jai Singh of the Kanheya misl too help him dispose his father. This was in 1774 Ranjit thus found himself compelled

to seek the help of Jhahda Singh of the rival Bhangi misl. Jammu had been trisatary had first raided the state and plundered the town.

A six-month war between the two groups ensued. Charhat Singh was killed, either when his own matchlock burst or in a battle at Udhu Chak near River Basantar. It was clear that the Bhangis were going to win. So Jai Singh bribed a sweeper in the Jammu camp to assassinate Jhanda Singh. The sweeper did so when Jhanda was walking about in his camp unarmed.

Both misls thus lost their leaders and returned to the Punjab. However, the Sikh had obtained a foot-hold in Jammu.

Despite pin pricks from his elder son, Ranjit Dev established Jammu as the main power among the 22 hill states.

Ranjit Dev died a natural death in 1781 or 1782. Braj Raj succeeded him.

### **Administration of Ranjit Dev**

Jammu was under Ranjit Dev for over a half a century till 1782. He was a man of administrative ability. It was during the reign of the Ranjit Dev that Jammu suddenly grew in importance.

Ranjit Dev was an enlightened ruler. He earned great appreciation across the world for his sense of justice and impartiality. Many stories of his justice and equality have been mentioned by Lala Ganesh Dass in his Rajdarshani. George Forster, who visited Jammu in 1783, a year or two after the death of Ranjit Dev was inspired by his high ethical values. He was a just and a wise ruler. He was tolerant towards people of all sorts. The result was that many people were attracted towards Jammu, and Jammu town spread and flourished.

Ranjit Dev adopted a very enlightened emigration policy. He encouraged merchants, artisans and displaced royalty to settle in Jammu. He extended them every kind of help and protection. At one time or other a number of political refugees took shelter in Jammu and

were well treated by Ranjit Dev. Among the political refugees who took shelter in Jammu included Malika Zamani, the wife of the Mughal emperor Mohammed Shah (1719-48) Mughlani Begum, the widow of Mir Mannu, who had succeeded Zakaria Khan as the Mughal governor of the Punjab, the family of Raja Kaura Mall and that of Charat Singh. "We must go to Jammu" had said Mughlani Begum, "I do not see any place as safe as "this one"

During Ranjit Dev's reign the town of Jammu prospered greatly. Due to the confusion in and the disorder in the plains, the routes had become unsafe for merchants and other travelers. As a result the trade route was diverted to the hills. Ranjit Dev revived the older route from the plains through Himachal Pradesh which had been earlier mentioned by Al-Beruni. It passes through Nahan, Bilaspur, Nadaum, Gular, Nurpur to Basohli before reaching Jammu. This route was safer than the Mughal route but had fallen into disuse. By this route George Forster travelled in 1783. Jammu had thus become a mart for trade and craft and routes from Kashmir to Delhi passed through this town. The security and the commercial importance of the place therefore attracted persons of all avocations from far and wide. It is said that most of the men of wealth and corpulence, hearing the report of the fame of the prosperous Maharaja settled in Jammu. As a result the population of Jammu increased tremendously and town had increased to about 3½ miles in circumference.

In that age of political instability and religious persecution, Ranjit Dev extended his protection to all irrespective of caste and creed. He gave shelter to Muhammadans also. He accorded them full religious freedom, civil rights of property and worship. He constructed separate quarters for their residence. Muslim nobles, merchants and artisans all were treated alike by him. Ranjit Dev even built a mosque for them and thereby gave an irrefutable proof of his religious toleration and enlightened conscience. George Forster an Englishman who travelled Jammu in 1783 was all praise for Ranjit Dev for his regard which he gave to the Muslim immigrants.

Ranjit Dev also overruled Hindus who complained that the water of Public wells was being polluted by the Muslims' vessels. Ranjit Dev decreed that water was pure and could not be polluted by the touch of any class of people.

The state administration was run by the ruler himself. Ranjit Dev directly ruled over his home principality of Jammu. He had annexed many petty principalities. The king

appointed military cum civil officials called “Thanakdars” to carry on administration of these tracts. The officials were responsible to maintain law and order in the areas and to collect revenue.

To carry on the administration of his kingdom he was assisted by a number of high officials, but only few of them had been mentioned in the records.

The most important official was Wazir. All orders of the king were carried out through Wazir. Udho was appointed as Wazir.

There was another important official called Dewan who was responsible for the revenue affairs of the state.

Kul-Purohit exercised great influence over the king. He was advisor to the king regarding all religious matters.

Yuvraja also assisted the king in the administration.

Army- Ranjit Dev had a standing army units of his own Jambwal kinsfolk, which were commanded by great generals Ghamsar Dev and Rattan Dev. But most of his army seems to have been organized on feudal and clan basis which was called at the time of need.

### **Conclusion**

Jammu was under Ranjit Dev for over a half century till his death in 1782 AD. He was a great general and man of great administrative ability. Taking advantage of the confused political state of the Punjab owing to the decline of the Mughal rule, the Durrani invasions and rise of the Sikhs, Ranjit Dev extended his authority over the hills situated between the Chenab and the Ravi.

One of the redeeming features of this period of constant upheaval and chaos was the peace that prevailed in Jammu through the enlightened and liberal administration of Ranjit Dev.

**EARLY LIFE AND RISE OF GULAB SINGH TILL 1819 A.D**

**STRUCTURE**

**Introduction**

**Objective**

**Early Life**

**Rise of Gulab Singh**

**Seige of Kashmir 1812-13**

**Conquest of Jullundur**

**Conquest of Reasi 1815-16**

**Frontier campaigns between 1815 to 1819**

**Conquest of Multan 1819**

**Conquest of Kishtwar 1821**

**Conclusion**

## **INTRODUCTION :**

The state of Jammu during the 18th century was ruled by Raja Ranjit dev. At that time the state was weakened by the dissensions in the ruling family. After the sack of Jammu the prestige and fame of the house of Ranjit dev disappeared; Brijraj dev was left helpless without resources (son of Ranjit dev). With the protecting power of the chief of Jammu broken, the constituent units of the Dogra state were left defenseless, and that helpless state looked towards the neighbouring Sikh chiefs for help. Soon with the breakdown of Mohamman authority in the Punjab the great Sikh misls began to acquire political and territorial importance, and Jammu, along with the rest of the northern Punjab, became the scene of rivalry between the sardars of Bhangi, Kanaihya and Sukerchakia misls. They tried to devour these petty hill states one by one, so that the central authority of the Dogra state disappeared till that time when it was re-established by the skills of Maharaja Gulab Singh.

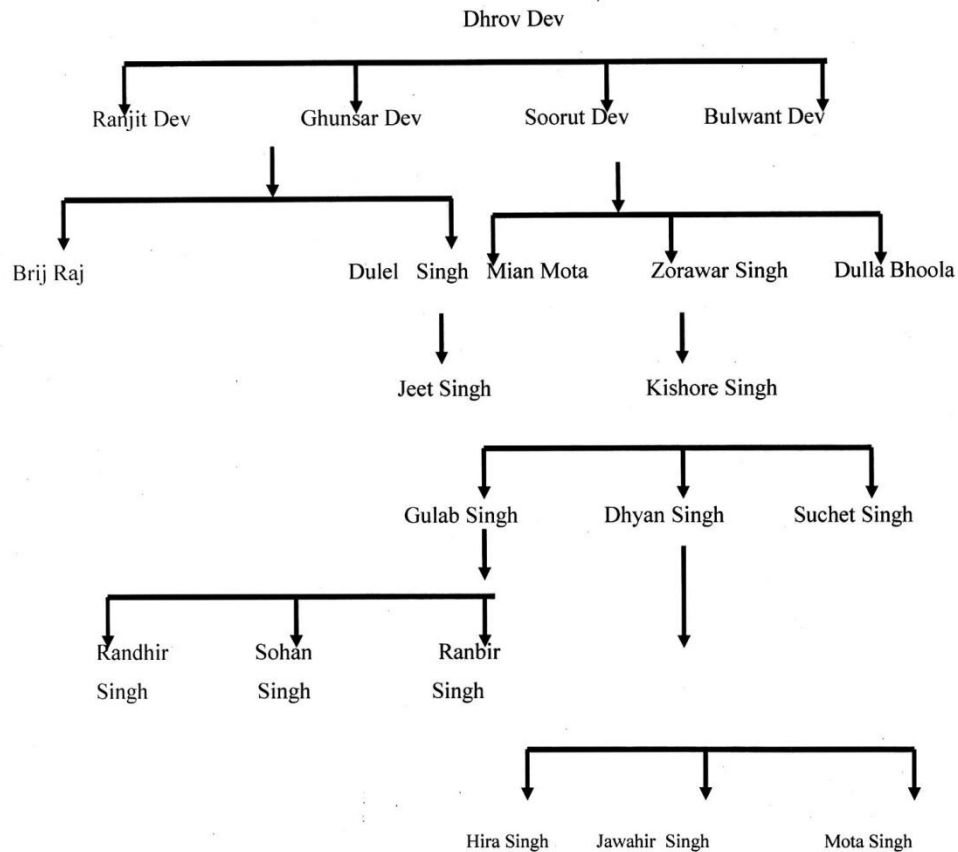
## **OBJECTIVES**

- To study the genealogy of Dogra ruler.
- To study how Gulab Singh acquired a unique position.
- To assess Gulab Singh's services under Ranjit Singh of Punjab.

## **EARLY LIFE :**

The sovereignty of the house of Dhrova dev over the surrounding country disappeared, but Brijraj was still in possession of the Jammu town and fort and continued to maintain the form and court of petty royalty. The hilly districts of the interior remained in the possession of the other members of the family, who held them as jagirs. On the death of Brijraj, he was succeeded by his one-year old child Sampurna dev. The state was managed by Mian Mota, a cousin of Brijraj. Sampurna dev died at the age of eleven, and was succeeded by Jeet Singh, the son of Dulel Singh. Gulab Singh was descended in direct line from Raja Dhrova dev through his third son, Mian Soorut dev. Soorut dev, who was thus the third brother of Raja Ranjit dev, had a son, Mian Zorawar Singh. His son was Kishore Singh,

who held the jagir of Andarwah in Jammu tehsil. Gulab Singh was his eldest son. The following is the genealogy of the family:



Maharaja Ranjit Singh, in his grant of the raj of jammu to Gulab Singh, mentions the fact of Gulab's ancestors having been the rulers of the state. Ranjit Singh's father and grand father had fought against the Raja of jammu, Ranjit dev and Brijraj dev, and therefore knew the history of that family intimately. The ancestry of Maharaja Gulab Singh became a matter of controversy, not only through the malice of his enemies, but also through the sycophancy of his courtiers. Akashmiri pandit went to the length of identifying the thirty-five missing king in the Rajatarangini with the early ancestors of the Jammu family.

There is, however, not the least doubt that Gulab Singh descended in the direct male line from Raja Dhrov dev, the Rajput prince of the Surya Vansi (solar) dynasty, who ruled

over Jammu in the eighteenth century. Mian Kishore Singh is reported to have been a valiant soldier. He lived mainly on his jagir at Andarwah, eight miles from the modern town of Samba. His financial condition does not seem to have been prosperous, and he achieved distinction only after his sons attained prominence. Kishore Singh married a Rajput lady of the caste. The marriage was celebrated at gam madtha, a village in the Basohli district. By this lady he had three sons, Gulab Singh, Dhyan Singh and Suchet Singh. Gulab Singh was born in 1792 (on the 5th katik, 1849, Vikrame Samvat), Dhyan Singh was born in 1796, and Suchet Singh in 1801. Early in his childhood Gulab Singh was sent to live with his grandfather, Zorawar Singh, a stern old warrior who lived in his jagir, dyawago, at some distance from Jammu. Like all true Rajputs of the time Zorawar Singh had great contempt for the study of letters, and does not seem to have taken any trouble to give his grandson literary education. All that Gulab Singh seems to have learnt was to read and write but though Zorawar neglected to give Gulab Singh any school education, he trained him in all arts. Thus even at a very early age Gulab Singh could ride his horse like any cavalry trooper and wield his sword with deadly effect. He was also an excellent marksman.

An opportunity soon came for Gulab Singh to exhibit his power. The affairs of Jammu were in great confusion. Raja Jeet Singh, the nephew of Brijraj Dev, was an incompetent man; and his Rani was an ambitious, intriguing woman. She took the management of affairs in her own hands. Taking advantage of the confusion resulting from this, Ranjit Singh ordered, in 1808, Bhai Hukam Singh to reduce Jammu and to annex it to the Sikh state. The Sikh general advanced with a very considerable force and reached the confines of Jammu. Mian Mota, who was in charge of the defence, organized a small force and came out of the town to give battle. When the force met outside the Gumat gate, young Gulab Singh, who was just sixteen, was found taking an active and prominent part in the battle. His spirit of adventure had been roused. Here was a unique opportunity to distinguish himself before his Rajput brethren and to earn a name for himself. Without even obtaining permission from his grandfather, Gulab Singh borrowed a charger from the stables and appeared on the battlefield. His prowess on that day attracted the attention of Hukam Singh, the enemy commander. The defence was to some extent successful, and Gulab Singh's part in it was no mean one. Hukam Singh had to withdraw his forces to Saidgarh. But a skirmish could not stem the onrush of Ranjit Singh's forces, and the whole province



passed under the suzerainty of Ranjit Singh and the Lahore government.

Soon after this Gulab Singh left his grandfather's protection. It seems that one day he took a horse from his grandfather's stable and went for a ride in the forest. By careless riding he hurt the animal, and on return his grandfather who, true to his soldier's creed, loved his horse as comrade, scolded the boy for his carelessness. The sensitive mind of the boy- he was still hardly more than seventeen- was so hurt by these unkind words that he took some ornaments from his mother and left the home at night with a attendants. Gulabnama of Kirpa Ram mentions that Gulab Singh left towards Peshawar that night with Feru Jhiwar and Mian Singh Rudal and other attendants. He heard that Shah Shuja during his stay in Kabul was raising a fresh army. He, therefore, decided to travel to Kabul. When they halted on the bank of the Indus river the attendants, who were Hindus and accompanied him and also out of fear of Mian Mota Singh made excuses for not proceeding to Peshawar. The youth was, therefore, compelled to beat back a march.

Foiled in his intention to go to Kabul, Gulab Singh approached Dewan Khushwaqt Rai of Zargar caste, a servant of Sardar Nihal Singh Attarewalah, and also diwan managing the jagir of sardar nihal singh. The dewan was intensely disliked by the people of the jagir, whom he oppressed greatly by his merciless exactions. As there was great unrest among them, the dewan decided to raise a small force for the purpose of defending himself and his master's property. So he started recruiting a new army in his service. Immediately Gulab Singh approached the dewan and offered his services, which were accepted. Because diwan considered his arrival an augur to his own glorification and so became very happy and satisfied. Certain jamadar, who formerly employed in the service of Zorawar Singh, reported to Khushwaqt Rai the identity of the new recruit. Gulab Singh did not have to wait long to win his spurs. Soon after he joined service a skirmish occurred in which the Dewan's force were routed by the villagers. But Gulab Singh stood fast and undaunted the whole night with a handful of his men, and with the blow of sword and musket pressed the enemy hard. Gulab singh 's courage and intrepid action saved the fort and enabled the Dewan to put down the incipient rebellion when the report of this event reached to Diwan Khushwaqt Rai he was all praise for the audacity and heroism of that prince. In this way, he spent two month in excursion and hunting in that quarter. During this time the fame of his audacity and heroism which he had exhibited during the battle of Bhai Hukam Singh Chimni,

became known to the Maharaja of Punjab and a farman was issued in the name of Mota Singh, summoning into presence that youth possessed of glory and awe. Both Gulab Singh and Mian Mota put their appearance before the Maharaja at Daska, a few kilometers from Sialkot, where Ranjit Singh's army then encamped. Immediately, Gulab Singh was taken into service and enrolled as a Ghorchara or cavalryman in the samvat 1867 (1809 A.D)

### **RISE OF GULAB SINGH:**

The author of Gulabnama says that Gulab Singh was taken into Ranjit Singh's service as commander of a regiment on a monthly salary of Rs. 275. This is not unlikely Cunningham, and, following him, most of English writers, assert that Gulab Singh was employed at the Lahore court as a running foot man. This is quite improbable. It is clear that he was personally well known to Ranjit Singh and was holding a sufficiently important post near the Maharaja, we find him, almost immediately after his own appointment, presenting his brother Mian Dhyani Singh at court. Dhyani Singh was appointed on a monthly salary of Rs. 60. Kishore Singh was also introduced to Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Who appointed him to a civil post carrying Rs. 55 a month.

In 1809, when Gulab Singh joined the Lahore court, Ranjit Singh had not attained that eminence which in later time Gulab Singh had brought for him. Gulab Singh played a prominent role in all campaign that led by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Gulab Singh as a military commander in his army rendered meritorious services to his master.

### **SIEGE OF KASHMIR 1812-13**

In 1812 Ranjit Singh started his first expedition against Kashmir in alliance with Fateh Khan and minister of Shah Mahmud of Kabul. Gulab Singh also distinguished himself in this expedition. The alliance, however, broke. General Mokam Chand was on behalf of Ranjit Singh lead the army and Fateh Khan to made a plan to murder Diwan Mohkam Chand. In 1813 Maharaja Ranjit Singh attempted to oust Fateh Khan. In this campaign Gulab Singh's regiment played a prominent part. Further on the advice of Ajar Khan of Rajouri the Punjab army was divided into two parts. But this division of the Punjab army was disastrous. The people also rose in rebellion behind the Sikhs. At this time

Gulab Singh and his company escaped with difficult. In these perilous circumstances Gulab Singh showed the greatest courage in reassembling his forces and bringing them back safely. His father, Mian Kishore Singh, was wounded in this campaign Ranjit Singh was greatly pleased with Gulab Singh's achievements and for these services he gave him jagir of Kharoti, Bhandian and Beol and also rendered meritorious services to his master in the campaigns of Atak fort and Garh-Dhamala in 1812.

### **CONQUEST OF JULLUNDUR**

Gulab Singh continued to rise in favour of the Lahore court. At the siege of Jullundur he distinguished himself greatly, and was as a reward given additional jagirs of Chohana and Ramgarh. He was also empowered of 200 soldiers. This was the first force which owned Gulab Singh as its master. Ramgarh was reduced after some fighting, and Mian Zorawar Singh, with his family, took his permanent abode there.

### **CONQUEST OF REASI 1815-16**

Soon afterwards Gulab Singh conquered Riasi for Ranjit Singh. Maharaja Ranjit Singh awarded riasi as a jagir to Mian Dewan Singh. But the relation between Mian Dewan Singh and Gulab Singh was not good and this naturally disliked the grant of Reasi to his enemy. As Dewan Singh was in the plains, Gulab Singh forestalled him and took possession of the area and put Wazir Zorawar Kalhoria in this area.

### **FRONTIER CAMPAIGNS BETWEEN 1815 TO 1819**

In the frontier campaigns of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Gulab Singh played a prominent and noteworthy part. The most important among them was the campaign against the tribe of Yusuf in 1819 A.D which enabled Ranjit Singh to acquire Peshawar. In the same year a Sikh force was sent against Aghar Khan, the rebellious Raja of Rajouri, the command which was conferred on Gulab Singh. He amazingly succeeded in over-running the country and capturing him by a bold stratagem.

### **CONQUEST OF MULTAN 1819**

In all the campaigns that the sikh king carried on, at this time Gulab Singh played a prominent part especially at the siege of multan, in 1819 his personal bravery attracted Ranjit Singh's favourable notice. One of the Sikh Sardar fell dead at the very foot of the fort. No one ventured except Gulab Singh, who, without a word, rushed forward to the amangement of the whole army and brought back on his horse the body of dead comrade.

During this time a patriot of Jammu named Mian Dido, who was earlier defending Jammu against Hukam singh's attack in 1808-09, he and Gulab Singh had worked in unison. But later, Gulab singh left him and joined Ranjit Singh's service. Dido won the heart of the local people. He made many attack on Sikhs. And also Lahore authorities found it impossible to collect revenue from there.

Now the opportunity knocking the doors of the Gulab Singh and Gulab Singh was not the man to let it slip. Having secured the permission he started without delay. After some time the dedo was killed at Trikuta hills by the forces of Gulab Singh.

### **.6CONQUEST OF KISHTWAR 1821**

According to M. L. Kapoor, Kishtwar was occupied by Gulab Singh in 1821. It may be stated here that a year ago when Ranjit singh had granted this territory to the Jammu family, it was not in his possession. The grant, therefore, merely amounted to a licence to subjugate kishtwar and Gulab Singh subjugated it without striking a blow. Its ruler was Tej Singh and Lakhpat Rai was his Wazir. Through a stratagem. Gulab Singh sowed seeds of estrangement between them. The trick was successful. The Wazir joined the hands with Gulab Singh. Later Tej singh was arrested and after some time, however, he was released.

Thus by 1821, Gulab Singh's authority came to be established over a vast area in the jammu region. Patti bhoti, Cheneni, Samarth and Bandralta were conferred on the jamwal family as a by an agreement. Peace and security was

soon restored in the lands given to the family in jagirs, and the grateful sikh monarch exalted Gulab Singh to the Raj of these territories with capital at Jammu , and honoured him with title of "Raja". The "Raj-Tilak" was bestowed by Ranjit singh himself on June 17, 1822 [4th ,1819 Bikrami] . By the same deed the government of Ramnagar-Bandralta was entrusted to his younger brother, Mian Suchet singh. On June 20,1827, Gulab singh's younger brother, Raja Dhian Singh was also made Raja and the chief ship of Bhimber and chibhal, including Punch, was granted to him in perpetuity.

### **CONCLUSION**

Thus the scattered units of the former Jammu kingdom began to be coalesced together and the foundation of the future J&K state was laid during the third decade of the nineteenth century under the able leadership of Gulab Singh whose sane and serene diplomacy outwitted even the seasoned British 'politicians' of the Victorian era.

**EXPANSION OF JAMMU RAJ TILL 1846 A.D**

**STRUCTURE**

**Introduction**

**Objective**

**Expansion of Dogra Raj**

**Seige of Samartah 1814-25**

**Conquest of Bhimber in 1827**

**Conquest of Peshawar**

**Conquest of Ladakh**

**Conquest of Baltistan**

**Conquest of Western Tibet**

**Conclusion**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Gulab Singh was just thirty years old. He had every reason to be proud of his achievements. With nothing but a name, a proud ancestry, and his own talents he had succeeded in getting back his hereditary possession and in being recognized by Ranjit Singh as the Rajah of Jammu. His fame as a warrior had reverberated through the Punjab. He had become an important grandee at the Lahore court, where his brother also stood high in favour. Dhyani Singh, though hardly more than twenty-seven, was the most influential Man in Lahore government. Suchet Singh was reputed to be the most handsome man in the Sikh army.

Soon after the conferment of Jammu, Gulab Singh thought of extending his territorial possessions.

## **OBJECTIVES**

- An attempt to study expansionist policy of Gulab Singh.
- To study the expansionist policy in the frontier illaqs.
- Role of Zorawar Singh in the conquest of far flung area.

## **EXPANSION OF DOGRA RAJ**

### **SIEGE OF SAMARTAH IN 1824-25**

Samartah was the first where Gulab Singh addressed himself in 1824-25. The fort of Samartah was surrounded by the Ramnagar and Mankot area, these

area were under the control of the Gulab Singh's brother Suchet Singh. Like Bandraltha, Mankot, Jasrota and Bhadu, Samartah also occupied an important position. Gulab Singh, therefore, laid siege to Samartah with the help of about thousand men. But his plan ran into a snag as the fort was protected by the a moat. Preparations were than set on foot to fill the moat with felled trees. Some ladders for scaling also were procured. A warning was simultaneously given to the besieged to be prepared for dire consequence if they delayed their surrender. Quick came the response, the fighting ceased ,and Gulab Singh became the master of the fort. When Ranjit Singh heard of it, he sent his own men to take the possession of Samartah. But later on , he bestowed not only this fort but along with it Ramkot and Samba also to Suchet Singh.

### **CONQUEST OF BHIMBER IN 1827**

Bhimber was next to fall into the hands of the Dogra bothers. Sultan khan, its ruler , had been made a prisoner by Ranjit singh in 1812. But in 1819 , he was released to do a good turn to the Maharaja in the conquest of Kashmir, and his reward was the restoration of a part his territory. Later, he and Rahmatullah Khan, who had been recognized as the ruler of Rajouri in place of the rebellious Agar khan , bore Gulab singh`s company on an expedition towards Peshawar. The expedition was directed against Syed Ahmed , a fanatic [1827]. When the three returned from Peshawar , after accomplishing their job , Gulab singh asked Sultan khan and Rahmatullah khan to sojourn at jammu , which they agreed it do. One day , they were invited to see Gulab singh in his palace. They went, but suspecting some foul play, Rahmatullah khan left immediately, and then secretly escaped to Rajouri. This set Gulab singh`s back up. His confidence in Sultan khan also was shattered. The latter was, therefore ,cast into prison, and his state was declared to have been to have been annexed to the Lahore kingdom. But Ranjit Singh gave this territory as well as that of Chibbhal, including Poonch, as jagir to Dhian Singh.

Dhian Singh had, by this time , grown so much upon the Maharaja that this grant was made at a grand function held in march 1828. To mark further the



estimation in which he held his chamberlain, Ranjit Singh awarded him the title of Raja-i-Rajgan Kalan Bahadur, or Raja of Raja, and also made him his chief minister. His son, named Hira Singh was also created a Raja.

### **CONQUEST OF PESHAWAR**

Gulab Singh rendered valuable services to the Lahore Darbar after he became Raja. In 1818, Peshawar was invaded by the Maharaja's forces, and Yar Muhammad Khan, its Afghan governor, found salvation in becoming a Sikh tributary. But in 1823, Azim Khan, his elder brother and the ruler of Kabul, challenged Ranjit Singh's authority, and incited the tribal people for a holy war against him. Consequently, a large army under Sher Singh, a son of the Maharaja, supported by many generals, including Mir Dewan Chand, Hari Singh Nalwa, and Gulab Singh, and followed by the Maharaja himself, trooped off against him. In the battle which ensued at Naushera in March 1823, the Khalsa forces routed the Afghans, though at a great sacrifice. Yar Muhammad Khan was then confirmed in his appointment.

Peace in the frontier region, however, proved to be only transitory. In 1827, Sayed Ahmad, an Afghan, set himself up as a reformer, and called upon his followers to join him in a holy war against the Sikhs. To deal with his formidable insurrection, Ranjit Singh despatched a powerful force across the Attack. A detachment under Budh Singh Sindhanwalia, who was in charge of the frontier districts, moved to Akora, a few miles above Attock. Gulab Singh, who was then at Jammu, was also ordered to proceed to the site of hostilities. Collecting his forces stationed at Jhelum under Dewan Amir Chand, he reached Peshawar by forced marches. Hari Singh Nalwa also joined him there. The fighting between the two sides, however, went on unabated for fifteen days. The strength of the enemy forces was more than the Sikh army. Thinking that God was always on the side of big battalions, many Sikh chiefs favoured a defensive strategy. But Gulab Singh was opposed to it. He pointed out that their safety lay in mobility. Ultimately, his counsel prevailed, and two engagements were fought the second at Saidu, in which both the sides suffered heavy losses. But finally, the Khalsa forces carried the day. Fortune undoubtedly favoured the

bold.

The power of Sayed Ahmed was, however, only curbed and not crushed, he resumed his threatening posture. The tribesmen became so bold that in 1829 they attacked, defeated, and killed Yar Muhammad khan. And soon Peshawar occupied by Sayed Ahmed.

Alarmed at these developments, Ranjit Singh decided to take the field in person. Many chiefs of note, including Gulab Singh, Suchet Singh, Hari Singh Nalwa and Sindhanwalia Sardars, were sent in advance. But before they reached Peshawar, the Sayed and his followers ran away.

According to M. L Kapoor, 'in 1834, Ranjit Singh decided to annex Peshawar and sent forces under Nau Nihal Singh, Hari Singh and General Ventura. Gulab Singh and Khushal Singh, were asked to establish control over Tonk and Bannu. After Peshawar was occupied, the Maharaja also pushed on in that direction. But then Dost Muhammad Khan left Jallalabad in order to dislodge the Sikhs. In the struggle which followed in May 1835, Gulab Singh opened the attack, but the result was indecisive. The two sides then entered into negotiations which also broke down. Ranjit Singh then took some measures for the consolidation of his position at Peshawar. One of these was the construction of a new fort of a massive strength, and this work was done with great alacrity by Gulab Singh, Suchet Singh and Hari Singh. Subsequently, some more forts were also erected. Before leaving Peshawar in 1835, the Maharaja appointed Prince Sher Singh its governor, Gulab Singh in charge of the revenue affairs. But the frontier region remained always disturbed.

But it was thus mainly owing to the energetic exertions of Gulab Singh and his brothers that Peshawar was saved, and the frontier region pacified in 1837.

### **CONQUEST OF LADAKH**

In 1834 Gulab Singh decided to attack Ladakh. He made a confidential inquiry of the company, and, on being informed that the British government had no

objection to his expedition , a well equipped force was prepared under general Zoarwar Singh. This force marched through Kishtwar and entered the Ladakhi province of Purig. This province was held by the tri-sultans , whose capital was at Kartse. There was no opposition at first, as the Ladakhis were taken by surprise , but about 5,000 men were collected in haste and on the 16th August , 1834 , an attempt was made to stop the Dogra advance at Sanku. The Ladakhis were heavily defeated. Kartse fell to the Dogra and Zorawar pursued systematic policy of leaving small garrisons in the forts with a sufficient supply of arms.

From Kartse the invading army marched down the Suru river. On the plains of Pashkyum the Ladakhis were again defeated. As winter was approaching , Zorwar , anxious to return to a warmer climate , entered into negotiations. But the Ladakhis , depending upon the extreme cold of the winter to drive away Zorawar`s men , refused to negotiate and took to guerilla warfare. Moreover, they also set themselves to collect an army with which to fight the Dogras. By the time their preparations were over winter had lost its rigours. The Ladakhi army marched to Langkartse , where the Dogras had encamped for winter. But the army that had been collected with so much difficulty did not fight. The Dogras watched for a few days the camps of their enemies , and finding that they were not exerting themselves , attacked them. No effort was made by the Ladakhis to defend their positions. They ran away , and in their flight the snow of their country inflicted untold misery. After this Zorawar had but little fighting to do. The Ladakhi army retreated to Leh. Tsepel lost heart and agreed to negotiate , and himself came to Bazgo , where a meeting took place between the Zorawar and the King. After the terms were settled Zorawar went up to Leh and installed Tsepel as a ruler holding power from Gulab Singh. He was asked to pay an annual tribute of Rs. 50,000. After making peace Zorawar returned to Lamayura.

The Sikhs , who were jealous of Gulab Singh`s growing power , looked upon Zorawar`s conquest with envy. At the instigation of Mihan Singh , the governor of Kashmir , the Ladakhis rose in revolt , and the Dogra garrison in Suru was

put to death. The cold season had set in and snow had closed the passes. But Zorawar was not the man to wait. By forced marches he arrived to leh , to the utter surprise of his enemies. The Gyalpo expressed remorse at what had taken place , but Zorawar inflicted exemplary punishment on the rebels. Placing sufficient garrisons in the fors and leaving an agent , Dewan Daya Ram , with the king , Zorawar returned to Jammu. The next year Zorawar returned to Leh to find Tsepal at the head of a rebellion engineered by the Sikhs in Kashmir. Tsepal was deposed and was given merely the village of Stog , where his descendants still live with the nominal title of Gyalpo. In his place Ngroub stanza , a relation of the old king , was made governor of Ladakh. This time , however , Zorawar did not want to take anything on trust. He fortified leh and placed a garrison there. Next year Zorawar again appeared on the scene , deposed Ngroub Stanza , who was accused of rebellion , and reinstalled Tsepal at an increased tribute.

The country , though conquered , had not yet settled down. By the end of 1840 the Ladakhis found a leader in a man called Sukamir. Before the rebellion could mature Zorawar again appeared with a sufficient force. The rebel leader was caught and publicly executed. This created sufficient fear in the mind of the Ladakhis , who had since peacefully accepted the rule of Dogras over their country.

In the words of R.A. Huttenback , "in fact , the possible invasion of this area was viewed with some enthusiasm by the company , for it was hoped that as a consequence a large portion of the Tibetan trade would be diverted to its holdings".

### **CONQUEST OF BALTISTAN**

Having thus finally conquered Ladakh, Zorawar turned his attention towards Baltistan. Though the people of Baltistan are of the same stock as the ladakhis, they are, as Mohammad by religion. The leading chief of the Balti country was the sultan son of the reigning ruler, requested Zorawar`s help to get his claims recognized. Zorawar organized a ladakhi army under their own generals, and

with the help of this force invaded Baltistan. The Baltis army was defeated and the fort of Skardo was taken. Mohammad Shah was made the sultan, but Zorawar left a Dogra garrison to support his authority.

### **CONQUEST OF WESTERN TIBET**

Zorawar was not satisfied with these conquests. He now undertook a more difficult, and as it turned out a disastrous, expedition. During the long history of India no army from Hindustan had attacked Tibet. Zorawar conceived the idea of conquering the central Tibetan province for his master and prepared an expedition.

In May, 1841, he advanced up the Indus and conquered Rudok and Garo. From there he advanced into the district of Mansarowar. So far there had been no opposition. His army consisted only of 5,000 soldiers, most of whom were Balti and Ladakhi recruits, stiffened by a small Dogra force.

Zorawar himself camped at a point where an attempt would be made by the Tibetans during the winter, but in this he was wrong. It was in November, 1841, Zorawar Singh heard that a Lhasa force was approaching to meet the invaders. But this time Zorawar Singh's force had not been able to meet with better fate.

Finally, the battle commenced on 10th December, 1841, in which Zorawar was wounded by a bullet. And finally the Dogra army suffered a lot. But though Zorawar was killed and a whole army was destroyed, Gulab Singh did not lose heart. A new army was immediately raised and dispatched under Dewan Hari Chand and Wazir Ratam. With the approach of the Dogra force the Tibetans fled in the direction of the Shyok. The Dogra leaders occupied Leh.

The Lhasa authorities sent Tibetan force to help the Ladakhis. The contending armies met at Drangtse, where the Tibetans had entrenched themselves. The Dogras dammed up a river and flooded their entrenchments and thus forced them out of their strong position. A fierce battle took place outside the entrenchments and the Tibetans were defeated. On this, the Lhasa government agreed to seek peace and signed the treaty.

## **CONCLUSION**

Thus, Gulab Singh reaped a good harvest of his military campaigns and expanded the boundaries of the Jammu Raj far and wide. Though the occupation of Tibetan territory proved a short-lived affair as Gulab Singh found no opportunity to organize and strengthen his hold on it. British interference was the main cause of it. In spite of the ultimate failure of his Tibetan policy, the conquest remains a monument of his forward policy in the trans-Himalayan central Asian territories.

Gulab Singh through his military exploits held in jagir Jammu, Reasi, Kishtwar, Bhadarwah, Padar, Chineni, Akhnur, Dangli and Khanput in the hill region.

Through his diplomacy skill he finally became the Raja of Jammu and Kashmir state in 1846.

## **CIRCUMSTANCES LEADING TO THE FOUNDATION OF MODERN JAMMU AND KASHMIR**

### **STRUCTURE**

**Introduction**

**Objectives**

**Punjab Politics**

**Negotiation with British**

**Conclusion**

### **INTRODUCTION**

State of Jammu and Kashmir came into being in 1846 by the treaty of Amritsar signed on 16th of March 1846 between Gulab Singh on the one side and the British on the other. This treaty was signed after the defeat of the Sikhs in the Anglo Sikh war at Sobraon in 1845.

Gulab Singh was a strong figure at the court of Lahore but after death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh there was chaos in the Lahore court. Still the Dogra brothers stood for the integrity of Lahore kingdom. Maharaja Ranjit Singh was succeeded by Prince Sher Singh. Raja Dhian Singh (brother of Gulab Singh) was his minister. Both Sher Singh and Dhian Singh were in the struggle against the discordant elements in the state. Assassination of Sher Singh and his minister Dhian Singh led to a change in Gulab Singh's attitude towards tottering Sikh state. After this incident there was a complete collapse of administration and law and order in the Lahore state and the subsequent rulers failed to establish government authority. As such there was every likelihood of disintegration of Ranjit Singh's well knit Kingdom. Punjab Kingdom had become the 'sick-man' of India with no hope of recovery. No body could save the Lahore from heading towards disintegration except collective

efforts of its courtiers, chiefs, governess and rulers who themselves were rent with distrust and jealousies. This made Gulab Singh lukewarm towards the Sikh Kingdom.

At Lahore, there was no power to whom Gulab Singh could be loyal. The soldiery was fickle, independent and arrogant, everyone was probing his way in the dark and probably it was only Gulab Singh who had a light in his hand. And so when the war against the British came, the Sikhs entered the war in a clumsy and leisureed manner. The army moved but halted some miles from Lahore because having got their pay many went home. At last the troops moved towards the frontier and on December 11, 1845 they began to cross the Satluj. Lord Harding declared war and Darbar's possessions on the south of Satluj were confiscated and Ciz-Satluj chiefs were called upon to cooperate to punish a common enemy. All the Sikh and Non-Sikh chiefs of Ciz-Satluj states threw their lot with the British. The hill chiefs were the first to rise against the Sikhs. The rulers at Lahore had already annoyed Gulab Singh by attacking him in his capital only ten months before. At the same time, the rulers had no ambition to win the war and did not therefore deem to make up with Gulab Singh and to take him in confidence.

The Sikh forces were being defeated firstly, they were locked in a deadly conflict



with the British at Mudki. Three days later, they sustained another defeat. This was a ferozeshehar. This broke their morale. Here Gulab Singh was being implored by the Sikhs to aid them.

### **OBJECTIVES**

- To study the role of Gulab Singh in Punjab politics
- Gulab Singh's relation with British.
- Gulab Singh's efforts in the formation of the new state

### **PUNJAB POLITICS**

When at last the Sikh force were locked in a deadly conflict for the first time with the forces at Mudki, on December 18 they thought of the dogra chief, who was still licking his wounds inflicted by the unruly Khalsa and its imprudent chiefs and probably counting them and swearing vengeance on very count. Three days later on December 21, Khalsa forces sustained another staggering defeat after a brave fight throughout the night when "the fate of India trembled in the Lahore". This disaster at Ferozeshehar broke the morale of the handful of brave commanders who had remained loyal to the Darbar. At this juncture Gulab Singh, who could have bought 40,000 men by a sign of his finger, was being implored by the Sikh to aid them. He had a critical and difficult game to play. The army offered to make him Maharaja, and to kill the traitors Lal Singh and Tej Singh. Fortunately for the British their prestige had its influence on his mind and his memory recounted the treacheries of the Sikhs to himself and his countrymen, and he decided otherwise. He remained firstly at Jammu, the Rani Jindan telling him not to stir unless she required him. Meanwhile Gulab Singh cajoled the whole of the leading panchayats of the Sikh army, affecting to see every visitor from the battle field at any moment, whether he was bathing or eating, as if his whole heart was with the Sikhs. He got all the wheat-carriers in the country, loaded them with immense display with about one-fourth of what they would carry, put placards in "gurmukhi" on their necks to the effect that they were carrying supplies from Gulab Singh, so that the army and the country might imagine that incessant and enormous supplies were being forwarded to the stalwart and devoted Khalsa by their loyal and affectionate friend. But before his active participation in the battle he decided to wait the result of the struggle,

knowing well, that whatever result followed, his position was a safer one. He knew that the Sikh oligarchy hoped for the destruction of the unruly democratic Khalsa, which was trying to take over the state. He had therefore expected, sympathetic though he was, "that the sikh army would be destroyed by their power opponents then he could safely step in a mediator between the British and the Sikhs. The Raja therefore tried but the repeated demand of the sikh army that he would join it, obliged him to leave Jammu and proceed to Lahore, but he had determined to keep clear of the struggle until the onset should show how he was to act. 'I am not going empty handed to great campaign that is to end at Calcutta,' gave out Gulab Singh. When all is ready for campaigning, off I start. This will be a long war", said he, "It is a race to the capital and devil the hindmost." Thus he temporized. But he held the power to creat an insurrection which should have shaken the British power more even than the mutiny of 1857. All the protected Sikh states in the Malwa, Nabna, Jhind and Patiala were ready envelop the army in case of reverse.

But from the disorganized manner the Sikhs entered war, Gulab Singh could rightly anticipate their defeat. Moreover, he had not been consulted on or taken into confidence in the affair. He, therefore, dallied participation in a war which had almost been lost by the division of loyalties among Sikh chiefs and the lukewarm reluctance of the Khalsa forces. If things had been in his owere he would have avoided the situation. "Had Gulab Singh succeeded Jawaheer Singh," observes M'Gregor, " he would have used his best endeavours to prevent a collision between the Sikhs and the British. So he had not approved of the Sikh action in being first break the treaty of 1809 by crossing the satluj. He knew the ill intention of the Rani Jindan and courtiers in inciting the army for a war but he had not expected the army to precipitate matters. The two consecutive defeats of the Khalsa forces confirmed his suspicions and revealed to him true intentions of the rulers of Lahore. He had therefore decided to remain neutral, and avoided joining a suicidal war.

However, after Mudki and Ferozeshehar even the Rani had implored Gulab Singh to come to Lahore and bring his troops to her aid. He sent evasive answers. After the battle of Aliwal more pressing invitation were sent; he alone, in their opinion, could settle affairs wih the English, because he had not taken part against them. The Lahore Darbar, knowing " he had not participated in their crimes chose to employ him for a particular object as being the man most acceptable to us (the Britisher)." At this invitation Gulab

Singh had found the occasion opportune to return from jammu to Lahore and was spontaneously hailed as minister and leader at Lahore on the 27th January (1846) to give and vigour to the counsels of the Sikhs.

But Gulab Singh came too late; their fame had reached its height and defeats and subjection speedily overtook them. The next day, on 28th February at Aliwal the British general Harry Smith inflicted a sharp defeat on Ranjodh Singh Majithia and Ajit Singh of Ladwa, both of whom fled the field. Large number of Sikhs soldiers were killed fighting, many were drowned in the river. Fifty six guns were lost to the enemy.

The defeat of Aliwal resulted in the evacuation by the Sikh garrison of all the hitherto occupied by detachments of Lahore soldiers on this side(south) of the river Satluj, and the submission of the whole of the territory on the left bank of the river to the British government.

The defeat of the Sikhs at the very time when they were rejoicing in united councils and exulting in anticipated victory, completely overthrew their whole scheme. Gulab Singh protested publicly in the Darbar against all that had been done. Instead of wasting time and energy in attempting to rally his defeated forces, he upbraided them for the rashness and folly of hoping to overcome the conquerors of India. He accepted the responsibility of attempting a settlement and immediately opened negotiation with the English Commanders.

When the representatives of the Khalsa implored the Raja, whose military skill was considerable, to lead them against the enemy, Gulab Singh is reported to have merely taunted them their stupidity in fighting allies to whom Ranjit Singh had been loyal for more than a quarter of a century.

"I refrained from joining you against the English when you first crossed the satluj," he told them, "Why should I help you now when you face certain defeat." When they offered to murder Lal Singh and Tej Singh and make him commander-in-chief instead, he merely laughed at them. He had been persuaded to come to Lahore to bring about an honourable settlement for the Lahore government and to salvage it from the impending disruption to which the rebellious soldiery had dragged it. The lawless Khalsa had been destroyed and the object of the Rani and her government had been satisfactorily achieved. Now they wanted some settlement with the British government and safeguard their personal interests and offices. They requested Gulab Singh to undertake this task as he was the

only person "acceptable" to the British. He was not expected to lead the Khalsa to victory, as they had already suffered three several defeats and had been shattered. He would have squeezed out of the British the best terms possible in the circumstance but in the heat of a despaired defeat the Khalsa would not succeed to the extent he had desired.

### **NEGOTIATION WITH BRITISH**

The defeat of Aliwal had shattered all hopes and Gulab Singh now lost no time in sending a communication to the Governor General which might "lead to overtures for an arrangement." He was to be made minister and "says he is ready to do whatever we (the British Governor-General) like to order."

While negotiating for settlement of the fate of the defeated Lahore Government, Gulab Singh had his own interests also in view. The disintegration of Sikh state was imminent and the disbandment of the Khalsa unavoidable as Hardinge had emphasized once more that "it is indispensable that the Sikh army should be disbanded their state of anarchy and mutiny is the cause of all the mischief", and that "the existence of the Sikh army on a Republican system cannot be permitted to remain as it is," Gulab Singh therefore, secretly sent his personal physician, a Hindu named Bansider Ghose, to negotiate on his behalf with the British. He is said to have written that he would help the British in their campaign with all means in his power if they would confirm him and his family forever in possession of their present estates and lands; leave him also in possession of all territories then under his rule "contenting yourselves with a tribute of five annas in every rupee of revenue."

Negotiations with Gulab Singh were therefore opened. It was clear to him that provided the Khalsa was disbanded or greatly reduced in strength, Sikh sovereignty in Lahore would still be acknowledged. Gulab Singh was satisfied at the prospect of an honourable settlement which could also bring credit to his statesmanship in case he could buy off British withdrawal after receiving some war indemnity or disbanding some Sikh forces. He therefore, ordered the Khalsa at Sobraon to withdraw north across the Satluj, into Lahore territory. His order caused much uncertainty and low morale, and it was not obeyed. The Sikhs once again disobeyed civil and diplomatic authority and ultimately brought about the doom of the Lahore state. Gulab Singh's advice and order was disregarded. He was expected to settle terms for the Lahore state without of course the obedience of military force with

which instrument diplomats see their views through.

With much of the Sikh force intact, which was later destroyed at Sabraon, Gulab Singh could bring into play his subtle diplomacy to keep the British confined to the South of the Satluj and contented to receive an indemnity and formal supplication of amnesty. Immediately after Aliwal, and in anticipation of a speedy settlement now when Gulab Singh had arrived on the scene, Hardinge had welcomed his moves and had not envisaged to annex any part of Lahore kingdom north of Satluj. On that occasion Hardinge had only found it indispensable that the Sikh army should be disbanded. Their state of anarchy and mutiny is the cause of all the mischiefs he believed. He was not in favour of conquest of any part of the Sikh kingdom "as India was already so over-grown and large that we do not want territory. We shall keep what we have confiscated on this side, make them pay expenses of the war, clip their wings and lessen their power, but I have always been averse to annex territory and I still hope to keep up a Sikh nation, that is a Hindu people as contradistinguished from the Muhammadan."

Hardinge was also not ignorant of the fact that if Gulab Singh chose to lead the Sikhs in war his skill and capacity might have protracted the war. Gulab Singh who had not desired for himself an independent kingdom at that time and "was still more desirous of becoming the acknowledged minister of dependent Punjab," did not like the reckless Sobraon. He hoped to squeeze out honourable terms for the Khalsa from the British Governor-General. But the impatient soliders disdained all diplomacy, and had lost all faith in their leaders whom they had not only disobeyed but even molested and persecuted oftenly. The matters therefore, verged on disaster, and the armies of Lahore which had in a surprise thrust, advanced only 15 miles into the British territory retraced back all the distance and the final showdown came on 10th February, 1846 on left bank of the Satluj river.

Gulab Singh however, had not come to lead the Sikh army in a battle. He had been appointed Wazir by the chiefs and people when danger pressed them. Rani Jindan had sent for him "from Jammu and entrusted him with the task of negotiating with the British." He had not appeared on the scene ostensibly on behalf of the Lahore Darbar and entered into negotiations with the British on his own accord.

Gulab Singh refused to forward provision or gun powder to the army at Sabraon and communication with the governor-general, Lord Hardinge. He had been called upon to salvage the Khalsa Kingdom, from the peril to which it had fallen due to the obstinacy of its soldiery, and was not expected to win a lost war. He had tried to keep back the Khalsa from falling into the futility of another battle and extract the most favourable terms for his oppressors. But in the heat of defeats the army listened to no prudent advice. On the 10th February the British charged the Sikh entrenchments from three sides. Tej Singh fled across the pontoon bridge and had it destroyed. The soldiers fought desperately and bravely under the dauntless Sham Singh Attariwala, but were routed. Many were killed, and many more drowned in the swirling waters of the Satluj. Nearly 10,000 soldiers lost their lives in the action. All their were either captured or abandoned in the river.

It was a complete and crushing defeat at which populace of Lahore expressed their exultation by deriding the defeated soldiers as they had been pleased at the prospect of relief from the obsessions of lawlessness characterized by the term "Sikh anarchy." The remains of Sikh under Sardar Tej Singh and Raja Lal Singh on retiring from Sobraon entrenched at Raibam, about eighteen miles east of Lahore. They were variously estimated at from 14,000 to 20,000 one horse and foot, with about thirty-five guns. They had been positively ordered by Raja Gulab Singh to remain stationary. The war of a self-willed and self-seeking army thus ended in an ingominous defeat and disaster after five desperately fought out battles from 18th December 1845 to 10th February 1846. Now the helpless diplomat was left with difficult and delicate task of rectifying the damage done to the Lahore state by lawless "burchas" who had at last learnt the benefit of showing respect and obedience to the civil authority. But it came about too late. Had it occurred before Sobraon, it would have made a difference.

To Gulab Singh's overtures for safeguarding his personal interests in the event of the Lahore Kingdom, Governor-General had given uncommittal replies, but at the same time he referred to his proclamation which assured consideration to those who did not participate in hostilities against the British. Hardinge was apprehensive of Gulab Singh's attitude was afraid lest he should throw in his weight on the side of the Sikh in which case the results could be disastrous. To secure the continuation of his neutrality, Hardinge committed himself to Gulab Singh. He had been told by Major Lawrence a week before the battle of

Sobraon, on the third of February, that "we appreciated his wisdom in not having taken up arms against us, And that his interests would be taken into consideration."

Thus the Governor- General did all that was honourably possible " to keep Gulab Singh and his over-rated Rajput levies neutral," and he admitted that "Gulab Singh was most before I crossed the river Satluj."

When the news of the defeat of the Khalsa reached Lahore the Rani and the Darbar urged Raja Gulab Singh to proceed immediately to the British camp, to beg pardon in the name of the Darbar and the Sikh government and endeavour to negotiate some arrangements for the preservation of the country from utter ruin. Before he undertook this mission, the Raja stipulated that the Darbar, the Chiefs, army officers and the 'panchayats' should sign a solemn declaration that they would abide by such terms as he might determine on with the British government. This is said to have been immediately acceded to.

On the night of 12 february the advance guard of the British army camped among the ruined domes and fallen arches of the old town of Kasur. Hardinge had meantime sent a note to Gulab Singh, to present himself for negotiations at once if Ranjit Singh's kingdom was to survive as an independent state. Hardinge had also reached Kasur on the 14th Gulab Singh arrived promptly the next day, the 15th February, accompanied by Diwan Dina Nath, Fakir Nurud-Din and Sultan Muhammad khan in the Governor-General's camp with full credentials from the Maharaja, and empowered to agree in the name of the Maharaja and the government to such terms as Hardinge might dictate.

When Gulab Singh, accompanied by Sultan Muhammad Khan and several influential Sardars, met Hardinge, the latter explained him and his colleagues that the offence which had been committed was most serious and the conduct of the chiefs and the army was most unwarrantable. He, however, admitted that he "recognized the wisdom, prudence and good feelings evinced by him in having kept himself separate from these unjustifiable hostilities of Sikhs. He also expressed his willingness to make his sense of that conduct in the proceedings which were to be carried through".

On his arrival at Kasur, Hardinge had prepared for circulation, a proclamation declaratory of his present views and intentions with regard to the Punjab. A translation of the same was given to Raja Gulab Singh and his colleagues. This proclamation had

clearly laid down that the occupation of the Punjab by the British forces will not be relinquished "until ample atonement for the insult offered to the British government" shall have been exacted. These objects will include full indemnity for all expenses incurred during the war. It also declared in equivocal terms that "the government of India will, under any circumstances, annex to the British provinces, the districts, hill and plain situated between the river Satluj and Beas". The chiefs remained the greater part of the night in conference with chief secretary to government and Major Lawrence and before they separated a paper was signed by them conceding all the demands. The terms demanded and conceded were the surrender of the territory, hill and plain, lying between the Satluj and Beas rivers, the payment of one and a half crores of rupees as indemnity, the disbandment of the present Sikh army and its reorganization on the basis of pay which obtained in the time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and limiting the extent of the force to be henceforth employed. It was also agreed to surrender all the guns that had been pointed against the British. The entire regulation and control of the both banks of the river Satluj was also given over to the victors.

Gulab Singh played his part cleverly in conducting the negotiations. He protested against the imposition of large indemnity. He came out several times to consult his companions on all vital points of settlement which had to be considered in the light of the principles already determined by the victors in the proclamations. As a result of this protest, the indemnity demanded by the victors was reduced from two crores to rupees one crore and a half. Gulab Singh's whole-hearted endeavours, as being the mediator between the falling state of Lahore, and the victorious Governor-General of India, were directed towards maintaining the prestige and honour of the former. Therefore, not a moment was to be lost in adopting measures for retarding the progress of the British army towards Lahore; for then the Raja's position might probably not be an enviable one; at least it would not be so agreeable as he desired. He had accordingly proceeded with all expedition towards Kasur, to endeavour, if possible to arrest the progress of the Governor-General. Everybody at Lahore had expected a British attack on Lahore and a total disruption of the Sikh State. Gulab Singh's first endeavour was to avert this calamity. He, therefore, went to Kasur with all the preparations for the continuation of a war and to negotiate from the position of confidence, if not of strength. The remains of Sikh army under Sardar Teja Singh and Raja Lal Singh on retiring from Sohraon had



encamped at Riabam, about 18 miles east of Lahore. They were variously estimated at from 14,000 to 20,000 one horse and foot with about thirty-five guns. They had been positively ordered by Raja Gulab singh to remain stationary. The Raja had himself moved from jammu to direct affairs at Lahore. He went to meet Major Lawrence at Kasur. He was accompanied by his troops and his artillery commander, Alexander Gardner. "I had about 500 men, writes Gardner," Gulab Singh some 2000, and 20,000 or 30,000 men within hail. Now here were the Sikhs crossing at Hari-Ka-Ghat and the British at Kasur who were therefore in a most critical position, as they were between the Sikh and Dogra armies. Of course Gulab Singh had a double move and Lawrence seemed to be anxious at the military mistake of moving the British army between one strong, though beaten, force and another fresh in body and of a doubtful course of policy. Gulab Singh was certainly conscious of this position and was the last man not to exploit it. J.D.Cunningham records that "at Kasur Gulab Singh had said the way to carry on a war with the English was to leave the sturdy infantry entrenched and watched, and to sweep the open country with cavalry to the gates of Delhi." The strategy implied in Gulab Singh's threat was exactly the one against which Hardinge had already received a caution. He had received a letter from the Duke of Wellington in which he had urged "most strongly to look after Delhi, reinforce its garrison and watch all roads leading to it, for the Sikhs would certainly make for it, and if it fell into their hands, the place would, from the prestige attending its name become at once a rallying point for the disaffected all over India, and the result might be most disastrous."

But as the Sikh command and the Lahore courtiers were not anxious to win the war, "It by no means being the intention of the regency that their troops should be successful, but on the contrary, be destroyed by the British, so as to get rid of them forever." Hence there was no question of following such a strategy. But now when Gulab Singh was at the helm of affairs at Lahore he could exploit all the weak points in case he was provoked to join arms with the Khalsa. His influence with the Sikh force and his own wealth both in treasures and munitions of war rendered him still formidable, should he be driven by the exacting demands of his conquerors to fall back on the support of the Sikh. The state of anxiety for the British was not yet over. The tidings of the disasters which befell the British particularly at Buddowal, were still circulating all over the country. Rumours of the most alarming and disastrous character now began to

circulate. It was reported that both the Governor-General and Commander-in-chief had been killed, our (British) army annihilated and the Sikhs in full march on Delhi. It was feared that the protected cis-Satluj Sikh states, would rise against the English and throw in their lot with the Khalsa soldiers. "The wildest rumours prevailed as to the results of the campaign itself, due in part to severe straits in which the British found themselves during earlier stages of the war." Once, at least, during the conflict they (the Sikh) were within an ace of a victory which would have set all India in a blaze." Though Sikh generals had failed to exploit this situation, yet Gulab Singh held the power, and if compelled, could have used it to "create an insurrection which would have shaken the British power more even than the mutiny of 1857. All the protected states in the Malwa, Nabha, Jhind, and Patiala were ready to envelop the British army in case of a reverse." Every state, more especially every Hindu state, disaffected towards British rule had looked to the Sikh rising with the hope that at last a Hindu army had appeared which might drive back the English.

Gulab Singh was not slow in capitalising out of these apprehensions of the British Governor-General and his assistants. His military powers and diplomatic skill was well-known to them. His preparedness to court the perils when his views and desires were not given due consideration were all too well-known to the British to ignore him. Particularly while negotiations were still pending and the season advancing it was desired to conciliate one who might render himself formidable in a day, by joining the remains of the Sikh forces, and by opening his treasures and arsenals to a war-like population. As early as the third of February, Governor-General's political agent, Major Lawrence, had in written document, told him "that we appreciated his wisdom in not having taken up arms against us, and that his interests would be taken into consideration." Gulab Singh had, since Sikh attack on Jammu in January, 1845, made several overtures to the British in anticipation of break up of the Lahore Kingdom and its annexation by the British, offered to transfer his allegiance to them in return for confirmation of all territories in possession of his family. The Sikh defeat would necessarily lead to the end of Ranjit's kingdom, that was what could be reasonably expected. But when the British Governor-General announced his willingness to suffer the existence of a dwarfed Sikh Kingdom at Lahore under their protection Gulab Singh was pleased to aspire for the office of Prime Minister of Lahore. In the opinion of Gulab Singh's greatest critic J.D. Cunningham, he was "still more desirous of becoming the

acknowledged minister of the dependent Punjab," and that "the overtures of the Raja-after the battle of Aliwal had foreboded the total rout of the Sikh army were all made in the hope of assuring to himself a virtual viceroyalty over the whole dominion of Lahore." Even when the British government had openly decided to install him as Maharaja of Jammu & Kashmir "his separation was less in accordance with his own aspiration than the ministry of Ranjit's empire." However, the British Governor-General had his own plans of weakening and partitioning the Lahore Kingdom, and thereby appearing Gulab Singh by making him the master of one portion.

During the negotiations Gulab Singh's honest endeavour was, if possible to arrest the advance of the Governor-General on Lahore; but his intentions and hopes were doomed to meet with disappointment for the Governor-General indignantly refused to listen to any arrangement, which would prevent him from sealing under the walls of Lahore, any treaty that might be made. The Raja was alarmed at the posture of affairs and determined on bringing the young Maharaja Dalip Singh to meet the Governor-General.

Three days later, Maharaja Dalip Singh was escorted by Gulab Singh. Gulab Singh acted as master of ceremonies for the Governor-General's Darbar. "Gulab Singh's oriental form of expression was rather fine," wrote General Hope Grant who was present at the meeting. "If, said Gulab Singh, my son or dearest friend were taken ill, I should immediately send for the most eminent physician, and throw the sufferer into his hands, request his advice, and make the patient swallow the physic prescribed. I now place the Maharaja in the hands of the Governor-General as that skillful physician. I know everything he will do with regard to him will be for the best and for his advantage."

Thus the submission was tendered and the pardon of the British Government was requested, the Governor-General treated the Maharaja as a prince restored to the friendship of the British government. The next morning the Governor-General accompanied him to Lahore and reached there on the 20th February.

On the restoration of young Dalip Singh to the head of the government, Gulab Singh was appointed Wazir or prime minister. He had already negotiated terms for a settlement at Kasur, leading to the treaty of Lahore on 9 March, 1846. By the terms of the treaty the Darbar was compelled to give up the Jalandhar Doab, pay a war indemnity of one and a half

crores of rupees, and reduce the army to 20,000 infantry and 12,000 cavalry. The treaty also included an important stipulation that Maharaja Dalip Singh "here agrees to recognize the independent sovereignty of Gulab Singh, in such territories as may be made over to the said Raja Gulab Singh by Aseparate agreement between himself and the British government with dependencies there of which may have been in the Raja's possession since the time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh."

Though it was not immediately revealed to the public it was at this juncture, as betrayed by this clause, that the authorities devised this scheme by which they in due course would assist Gulab Singh to acquire Kashmir and other hill territories. Hardinge, who had previously informed peel of his resolve to make jammu independent of Lahore, convinced that the financially bankrupt Sikh government would be unable to pay stipulated indemnity, obviously planned to manoeuvre Lahore into surrendering Kashmir and hill territories as compensation and in turn to transfer them to Gulab Singh.

As Hardinge anticipated the Darbar was unable to pay the full war indemnity and two thirds of the indemnity could not be realised. The Lahore Darbar instead ceded the hill territories between the Beas and the Indus, including Kashmir and Hazara. A week later, on 16 march, 1846 the British signed a "separate agreement with Gulab Singh and transferred to him" all the hilly or mountainous country with its dependencies situated to the eastward of the river Indus, and westward of river Ravi, including Chamba and excluding Lahul for 75 lakhs of rupees, "and to mark our (British) sense of Raja Gulab Singh's conduct during the late operations by regarding him in the mode most in accordance with his ambitious desires."

The Sikhs reacted venomously and expressed their bitter resentment over this arrangement and once more unsuccessful attempts were made on the Raja's life. Rani Jindan dismissed him from wazarat and reinstated Lal Singh. In an angry letter to Henry Lawrence, she warned that if Kashmir were given to Gulab Singh she will appeal directly to Queen Victoria. The vindictive Rani and her new Wazir also endeavoured to nullify the Raja's power by offering his territory to the British as reparation for the indemnity. Gulab Singh found this a pretext for breaking off his relation with Lahore.

This (offer) appears to have alarmed Gulab Singh exceedingly and he openly declared that they might manage their affairs as they pleased he would have no further concern with

them that he should take his departure and make his own terms with the British.

Gulab Singh was invested with the title of Maharaja on March 15, 1846, and the treaty of Amritsar between him and the British government was signed the next day. But a portion of the territory first proposed to be ceded to him was resumed and the payment accordingly reduced. The country between the Ravi and the Indus was then transferred to him on the payment of 750,000. The liquidation was made easy by his being considered the heir to the treasure of Suchet Singh found at Ludhiana and estimated at 15,00,000 rupees. The territory finally transferred to him included Kashmir, the portion of hill country to the south between Ravi and Indus and Ladakh and Gilgit, with Baltistan upon Raja Gulab Singh he obligation to respect the rights of the dispossessed chiefs and the Raja under the guarantee of the British government whereby cash allowances were assigned to them in perpetuity.

Chamba, west of the Ravi, and Hazara, were included in the territory transferred to Gulab Singh. But an arrangement was made by Sir Henry Lawrence by which, in 1847 Gulab Singh got Lakhanpur on the Ravi and Bhadarwa in lieu of Chamba. Finding it difficult to control Hazara, Gulab Singh in 1847 approached the Sikh Darbar with a proposition of exchange. His request was granted through the good offices of the British government and the ilaqa of Manawar, Garhi, etc., were given to him in exchange. In 1847 a settlement was effected between Gulab Singh and the hill Rajas, under guarantee of British government which took the form of an assignment to them of certain cash allowances which amounted to Rs, 42,800. The government of India took over from Gulab Singh the districts of Sujampur, part of Pathankot, and certain lands between the Chakki and Beas rivers, as a set off against charges on account of the maintenance of some hill chiefs who had removed from Kashmir into British territory. The boundary of Jammu & Kashmir was thus finally laid after these and several other minor adjustments.

The treaty also bound Gulab Singh "to join with the whole of his military force the British troops when employed within the hills or in territories adjoining his territories." On their part "the British government will give its aid to Maharaja Gulab Singh in protecting his territories from external enemies." The sum of seventy-five lakhs of rupees was to be paid in two instalments, "fifty lacs to be paid on ratification of this treaty and twenty-five lacs on or before the 1st October of the current year, 1846.A.D." But we find that only

first instalment and about 15,00,000 of the second were paid by the 14th April, 1847. The last instalment, however was paid into the Lahore treasury as late as 15th March, 1850.

Finally, Gulab Singh was to " present annually to British government one horse, twelve perfect Shawl goats of approved breed (six male and six female), and three pairs of cashmere shawl" as tribute.

## **CONCLUSION**

Thus Gulab Singh's efforts resulted in the formation of the new Jammu&Kashmir State. The political consciousness of the region of Jammu. which had found expression in a long string of names of its rulers in the vansavali, and was further deepened by the efforts of Dhruv Dev and Ranjit Dev, found its ultimate fulfillment. Gulab Singh's latest ambition had been positively anticipated by the British agent who informed Ellenborough as early as April, 1844 that in the event of an Anglo-Sikh war Gulab Singh would probably align himself with the British, but he would in return, want to "be recognized as the independent sovereign of Peshawar and Kashmir and also the hill states between the Indus and the Satluj. Gulab Singh managed to materialize his ambition without, however, aligning himself with the British, by sheer diplomatic moves and dexterous handling of events to his benefit a realistic trait of personality in which he equaled the top ranking British and Indian diplomats of his time. Like a practical statesmen, following a ruthless, Kautilyan political ethics, he had the knack to read the spirit of the time and the necessities of his rivals and to make the maximum out of these. Whether it was the disintegrating condition of Lahore kingdom, or the need of the British power in India, these served Gulab Singh's ends exactly as he had calculated these to fetch him political distinction, and to talk about the want of patriotism or treachery of Gulab Singh, the last of a sikh murdered family, is worse than idle." Similarly to talk in terms of sale and purchase of Kashmir is to ignore the nature of treaties and politics, as the transaction included " all the hilly or mountainous country eastward of the Indus and westward of the Ravi, including Jammu, Chamba and Ladakh, and not only Kashmir. Moreover, in the words of a contemporary observer; Gulab Singh has a undoubted a right to purchase, as they (the British) to sell it. In exchange for a crore of rupees they took it; and in exchange for a crore of rupees they parted with it again."

**ADMINISTRATION UNDER GULAB SINGH**

**STRUCTURE**

## **Introduction**

## **Objectives**

## **Administration under Gulab Singh**

- (a) Reorganisation of Administration**
- (b) Revenue Department**
- (c) Police**
- (d) Judicial system**
- (e) Suppression of crime**

## **Rationalization of Jagir system**

## **Land revenue policy**

## **Rationing of Rice**

## **Gulab Singh and Shawl trade**

## **Begar System**

## **Military Deptt.**

## **Let us sum up**

## **Introduction**

Gulab Singh the founder of the Dogra dynasty of Jammu and Kashmir, was born in the year 1792 (5th Kartik 1849 Bikrami Samvat). He was son of Kasur Singh, a grandson of Sarup Singh, one of the brother of Raja RanjitDev of Jammu , whose descendents ruled Jammu till its occupation by the Sikhs in 1809 A.D. Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Punjab, mentioned the fact of Gulab Singh's ancestors having been the rulers of the principality Raja Dhrou Deo was a Rajput prince of the Suryavansi (Solar) dynasty who ruled over Jammu in the 18th century. In 1811 A.D., Gulab Singh left his native country for Lahore. He entered Maharaja Ranjit Singh's service as a mere trooper. In 1820A.D. pleased by Gulab Singh's meritorious services in various expeditions in Kashmir, North-west provinces in general, Maharaja Ranjit Singh granted him Jammu in Jagir. In 1822 the administration of Jammu was finally transferred to Gulab Singh.



Once installed in Jammu, Gulab Singh preferred to spend most of his time there. He quickly and shrewdly extended his authority. He entered upon a policy of expansion and consolidation of his power and extended his authority to Ladakh and Baltistan between 1834 A.D and 1841 A.D. After the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1839 A.D, he became the most important and influential figure in Lahore Darbar's politics. In 1846 A.D. he rose to the position of a minister of the Sikh Govt. The Sikh army crossed the Satluj against his advice and was defeated in the first Anglo-Sikh war. Gulab Singh used his influence in tackling the difficult task of negotiating the treaty of Lahore (1846 A.D) which was essentially from a position of weakness. By one of the terms of this treaty, Kashmir with its dependencies was ceded to the British. The latter in their turn handed Kashmir to Gulab Singh for a sum of seventy five lakh rupees by the treaty of Amritsar signed on March 16, 1846. Gulab Singh was given the title of Maharaja and he, thus became the Maharaja of J&K. He was an able administrator and consolidated his authority in his state.

## **Objectives**

After studying this lesson, you will be able to

1. Find the role played by Maharaja Gulab Singh to introduce a well defined administrative system in Jammu and Kashmir state.
2. Trace the factors he paid serious attention to the social customs of Sati and female infanticide.
3. Gulab Singh was also concerned with administering speedy justice.
4. We can find Gulab Singh did little to improve his army.

## **Administration under Gulab Singh**

It was not easy job for Gulab Singh to look after an administration which had gone from bad to worse in the time of Sikhs especially under the last two Sikhs Governors, Mohi-ud-Din and Imam-ud-Din. At the beginning of his rule in Kashmir Gulab Singh was faced with the same conditions that so many rulers had faced for centuries in the state; the economy in Shambles; burdensome taxes, minimum agricultural production, frequent religious conflicts and incursions into the valley by discounted or fortune-seeking neighbours. The Shawl industry which was the main source of livelihood for the people was taxed very heavily. Reckless governors had given away much of the land in the valley as rent-free concessions, forced labour told upon the peasantry, sati and infanticide were common, robbers infested the will. Soon after the occupation of Kashmir, Maharaja Gulab Singh undertook the difficult task of reorganization of the administration and improving the economic conditions of his subjects.

### **(a) Reorganisation of Administration**

The Dogra kingdom was divided into several provinces, including Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh, each of which was administered by a governor in the name of the Maharaja. Every province was in turn divided into several parganas (districts). The top officials in each pargana were the zilahdar (district officer), the thanadar (police officer), and the qanungo (revenue officer). These officials were responsible for maintaining peace and collecting revenues in the area under their jurisdiction.

Gulab Singh did many reforms for the Civil administration of his dominations. The Chief Departments which the Maharaja started were revenue and police administration.

**(b) Revenue Department**

Revenue Deptt whose Chief officials and office bearer in Kashmir were four wand-wales (collectors), thirty-six Kardars and a body of Mokdams (Numberdars). The divisional agreement of Kashmir into 36 Parganas or tracts of land which owes its origin to time immemorial, induced the Maharaja to have appointed one Kardar for one Paragna, 12 of whom were placed by him under the immediate control of one wand-wala who including three other wand-wala, making together four in number, were directly supervised by the Maharaja.

But the Divisional Revenue deptt. of Jammu Province was placed solely under the management of his able wazir, the famous Dewan Jawala Sahai, who in addition to his being the Prime Minister of the state, was even the Provincial Supreme Head of that Department.

The four wards or divisions appointed in Kashmir for the supervision of the Kardars, were named Maraj, Shehar-i-Khas, Kruhin-Bangil and Kamraj and their head quarters were respectively Anantnag, Srinagar, Pattan and Sopore. The first wand-walas were wazir Punoo, Pandit Raja Kak, Mian Amir Singh and Dewan Arjan Mal.

Ind - another Deptt. of the Maharaja after the fashion of the great Mughal of Delhi was named Daftar-i-Dewani. All accounts belonging to each and every Deptt. of the state were kept, checked, audited by this office, not less strictly and properly than the Accountant-Generals, officer of the present day.

The third administrative machinery of Maharaja Gulab Singh was called Daftar-i-Nizamat, which kept land records village after village, throughout the State, and gave him full information about the condition of the Zamindars, as well as about the treatment which they received at the hands of those persons, to whom they paid their land revenue, or who had any other supremacy over them in transacting other business.

**(c) Police**

Fourth - The fourth contribution set out by the Maharaja was the revival of the old Hindu system of maintaining internal peace and preventing and suppressing crime and gang-robbery by appointing Kotwals and Thanadars. A Kotwal was the name of the chief guardian of peace appointed by the Maharaja in a city or a town, but when he was posted in the suburb to take charge of a Parganah, he was called a thanadar.

Every Pargana in addition to a Kardar had its guardian of peace in a Thanadar who in addition to his duty as a maintainer of peace like a police officer of the modern time. He also administer justice within the Pargana or jurisdiction in every case of any description which took place between the two parties. He also had to serve as an agent to collect Beggaries as well as medium between Sarkar and Royat to supply grain, wood, and other necessities or the state service, and also other state business.

#### **(d) Judicial system**

It was only during the reign of Maharaja Gulab Singh that the judicial system of this northernmost state of British India received its first footing and sincere patronage, although there no apparent sign of change in the existing judicial administration. Infact, the administration of the justice in this state between 1846 and 1889 was rather primitive and ill-organised. Maharaja Gulab Singh could not organize the administrative machinery because of his frontier wars and other pre-occupations. The officials were not required to record any statement of proceeding. Cases were usually lodged, committed, represented and decided verbally. The Thanadars and Kotwals, whose duties were to suppress crimes, served as the lowest court within their respective jurisdictions. At the other end was the Maharaja, the highest court of Justice, who was easy accessible and ready to listen to complaints.

The Kardars whose main duty was to collect land revenue also disposed of petty civil and criminal cases. Nevertheless, if any party was not satisfied with the judgement Kardar, Kotwal or Thanadar or any other officials he was at liberty to submit an appeal to the Maharaja. The easiest way for him was to go direct to his court during his office hours. No sooner the eye of the Maharaja had caught any person praying by the use of his arm for the favour of permission to see him, he sent one of his orderlies to bring him in his presence. He was not required to pay any court fee for presenting his case. With the customary offering of a rupee one could get his attention drawn amidst a crowd even by

shouting, "Maharaja, arz hai", that is, 'Maharaja, a petition'. It was widely known that Gulab Singh never lost his patience while hearing a case. He passed his judgement, at the same time according to his merits, and often rebuked the original court or authority for his having failed in doing justice to the appellant.

Gulab Singh believed that it was his sacred duty to administer justice. Officials-in-charge of the administration of justice tried their best to be true to their duty because they knew well that an appeal submitted to the Maharaja, if went against their prior judgement, might earn them a bad name and invite as well his displeasure. They were therefore not interested in laws and procedures but wanted justice to be administered so fairly that no party might submit to him an appeal.

Gulab Singh was a man universally feared by the people. His methods of judicial administration were both crude and primitive. For those guilty of murder the punishment was azhab, which meant amputation of limb before hanging one to death. The flaying alive of thieves had its effect as a deterrent. K.M Pannikar writes, "His justice was rude but it was expeditious. He toured the state often and was relentless in his punishment of corrupt and tyrannical officials. His summary methods in dealing with them made him a terror to the tribe of petty functionaries".

#### **(e) Suppression of crime**

Gulab Singh took many stern action to suppress all the crime and gang-robbery by appointing Kotwals and Thanadars to restore peace and order in his empire. He launched an extensive expedition against burglars and garroters and Galabans (the professional robbers of horses). He captured their leaders, and got them executed publicly after a summary trial. Their dead bodies were kept suspended from the gallows for months together to create terror in the minds of law breakers. He also drove out the Bombas and Khokhas (local hill tribes) from the valley and stationed strong garrison in the forts for the guarding the passes. Every effort was made to root out crime from the country and to encourage trade and commerce.

#### **Rationalization of Jagir system**

Maharaja Gulab Singh experienced great difficulty in dealing with the problem of Jagir grant. The selfish sikh governors had granted land jagirs to their favourites after

exacting large sums from them as 'Nazranas' or tributes. Gulab Singh thoroughly investigated the jagirs that his predecessors had so freely allotted, differentiating between these which were legitimate and long standing and those given to Sheikh Imam-ud-din's favourites. When Gulab Singh took over Kashmir, there were as many as 3115 Jagirs grants in Dharamarath (religious service) besides alienations of other kinds. Many of these grants were unregistered. The Maharaja, on his first visit to Kashmir, is said to have remarked that he had actually got nothing in return for 75 lakhs paid by him, as two-thirds of the area was mountainous and hence unfit for cultivation and the remaining one-third was held by the Jagirdars, with the assistance of local influential men called "raises" headed by Raja Kak Dhar, the Maharaja was able to ascertain the bonafides of the Jagir holders. He resumed the Jagirs of those who had been recently granted. The dispossessed landlords greatly resented Gulab Singh and his adviser Raja Kak's action. But Gulab Singh paid no heed to their protests. Taylor, who conducted an independent inquiry, wrote to the British Govt. that the Maharaja was inclined to be just and reasonable. K.M Pannikar remarks, "His point was that people who began as revenue farmers should not claim the land they held in farm to be Jagirs; that grants when made should be strictly adhered to, that grantees who were given one acre should not be allowed to possess two on the same Sanad, and that in cases of treason, rebellion and gross misbehaviour the Jagirs should be liable to resumption".

### **Land revenue policy**

The economic condition of the people was very bad. The extortion of the officials had badly affected the economy of the state. The cultivators were in acute distress. After paying their due to the Govt. and gratifying the exorbitant demands of the corrupt officials, the cultivators were hardly left with the one third of their produce. Most of the land in the valley remained uncultivated. The people who had suffered heavily during the famines of 1832 A.D and 1838 A.D continued to emigrate to Amritsar and Ludhiana, despite the stringent restrictions imposed by the Govt. on the free movement of people across the passes. The staple food of the common people was 'Shingharas' which grew wild in the lakes. Even this humble food crop was subjected to unjust tax.

In realizing revenue, the Maharaja had purposely restored the old system of collecting it from the agriculturalists mostly in kind, to be realized twice a year at the end of each

harvest. But the condition of the Serfs and the cultivators became pathetic. The cultivators were required to give  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the produce of his land as revenue to the Govt. Besides, they were forced to purchase seeds for the crop at unreasonably high prices from the Govt. stores. The agricultural labourers were required to work for the govt. or petty officials without any remuneration at all.

Great expense and hard labour, because it was impossible to collect the state grain and use it properly without engaging a host of weighers to weight it, porters, pack ponies and boatmen to remove it from place to place, as well as a train of storekeepers to take it in charge.

### **Rationing of Rice**

The most important reform instituted by Maharaja Gulab Singh was the rationing of rice to the city population. Due to its being cut off from the rest of India by high mountains as well as the tyrannous treatment of the cultivators by the government. Kashmir was experiencing shortage of food-grains every now and then. The difficulties of the city population were doubly aggravated by the cornering of the grain by unscrupulous dealers. In order to meet this situation the Maharaja established a rigid monopoly of rice and had it sold at a fixed price to the citizens. This was all the more necessary because the majority of the people were artisans and shawl weavers, who needed to be supplied cheap grains to be able to produce the valuable articles of export on which depended the economy of the valley.

### **Gulab Singh and Shawl trade**

The shawl trade of Kashmir was flourishing, because there was a great demand of Kashmiri shawls in the European countries. The prosperous proprietors of the factories made large exports of shawls through their agents at Lahore and Calcutta. The lucrative trade was a source of livelihood to a large number of weavers. But the growth of shawl trade in no way improved the condition of the weavers. They were paid very low wages and their conditions of service were bad.

The reorganization of the shawl department was a pressing problem and needed the immediate attention of the Maharaja. This department was called Dagshawl or Shawl Making Department. The Dagshawl in course of time also began to regulate the labour

employed by every Karkhandar or proprietor of a factory. The rich Karkhandars made it a point to shift the incidence of taxation on to the shoulders of the weavers. During the Sikh period the Karkhandars represented to the Darogah, Ram Dayal, that no sooner had a man learnt his work and probably some of the employer's trade secrets than he rose in value in the labour market and every effort was made by his employer's rivals to secure his service. The practice of enticing away an operative was, therefore, made penal. The shawl weavers were thus in absolute charge of the Karkhandars. They became their slaves and were forced to work very hard. In 1846 Sheikh Imam-ud-din, the last Sikh governor gave them a little relief by setting the shawl-weavers free from the bondage of Karkhandars and remitting two annas per Kharwar in the rate of Shali advanced as niliv. This revived the industry and during Gulab Singhs rule there were 27,000 weavers working at 11,000 looms. But the wages paid to the workmen were miserably low. Moreover in actual practice the Karkhandars managed somehow to keep the workmen under perpetual bondage.

The shawl weavers could bear the tyrannous system no longer. For once they combined and struck work on 6th June, 1847, and asked for a permit to emigrate in body to the Punjab. The Maharaja was forced to act. He called their leaders to meet him and after inquiring into their grievances issued orders for their redress. Now the shawl weaver had to pay only according to the actual work done by him on the loom and could change his employer at will. He was now no longer a serf.

### **Begar System**

The Maharaja in order to relieve the peasants of a grave injustice undertook the reform of the Begar system. It would not be out of place here to mention the origin of his iniquitous custom which reduced the peasantry to a class of slaves. The Kashmir Valley, surrounded by high mountains and in the absence of any other transport, necessitated the employment of large numbers of men for carrying essential commodities into or out of the Valley. And during any large scale military venture huge armies of porters were requisitioned from the countryside. As Kashmir fell into the hands of unscrupulous conquerors and tyrants, payment to these porters was not made and the custom of forced labour or Begar developed consequently. Maharaja Gulab Singh, therefore, tried to rationalize the system and to mitigate some of the



hardships it entailed. "His idea was to determine certain number of men in each village who wanted to be considered liable to do labour when called upon by the government. For this they were to be paid one Kharwar of rice per month in pay and free rations when employed. Men not called upon to do Begar in the course of the year were only to be paid six Kharwars for that year. An officer was appointed to take charge of his work". Most of the ills of this system, however, continued for some decades more and it was not till 1920 when public opinion against it developed in and outside Kashmir, that the Begar system was abolished altogether.

### **Military Deptt.**

In the very beginning of his reign the Maharaja had to devote much attention towards military activities in supervising the Military Department which comprised a well-appointed and preserving army marshaled by generals, all gallant and famous for their having been victorious in the battles ever fought by them. As a ruler, he regularly revised the army, their arms and bedding on fixed intervals, and had such a deep regards for his soldiers. State was responsible for the treatment of the soldier. All medical treatment and medicines were provided free of cost to soldiers. Even Maharaja visited personally to his suffering soldier and tried his best by his soothing words and deeds to lessen his distress and relieve his wants.

### **Let us sum up**

Gulab Singh was unquestionably a man of great vigour, foresight and determination. He was the founder of Dogra rule in Jammu and Kashmir. He was remarkable figure in the history of northern India during the first half of the 19th century. Gulab Singh was a distinguished as a soldier and a diplomat, and knew the statecraft of his own days exceedingly well. He made the best use of the ruin that overtook Sikh power in the Punjab. He showed his ability in carving out a kingdom for himself in North. Gulab Singh had not been the selfish, despotic ruler that Kashmir had known on so many occasions in the past : he was shrewd and, no doubt, self-seeking but he also had the good fortune to exercise these traits in ways which are remembered as predominantly beneficial for his people and subjects. His peaceful administration and his army's extraordinary expeditions beyond the state borders brought pride and prosperity to Kashmir. Gulab Singh must also be credited with wisdom and foresight in that as his own health deteriorated he began to groom his son to take

ver the administration of the state.

**ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS OF MAHARAJA RANBIR SINGH**

**STRUCTURE**

**Introduction**

**Objectives**

**Administrative reforms**

- (a) Reorganisation of the administration**
- (b) Judicial system**

**Economic reforms**

- (a) Improved the means of communication**
- (b) Postal system**
- (c) Shawl Industry**
- (d) Land Revenue**
- (e) Currency**
- (f) Begar System**

**Patronage to Art and Letter**

**Let us sum up**

## **Introduction**

The accession of Maharaja Ranbir Singh to the gaddi of Kashmir precipitated no crisis in Government and the transition between rulers proceeded smoothly. Before the commencement of his rule in Jammu and Kashmir, Ranbir Singh, the only surviving son of Gulab Singh, had gained experience in administration as a close confidant of his father. Born in 1829 A.D. in the fort of Ramgarh. He was trained for soldiering from his youth and joined his father in several campaigns. He did not receive much literary education but had qualities of sharp memory, quick grasp of facts, sterling moral character and political acumen. He accompanied his father in the campaigns in and outside his kingdom. This training made him a proficient soldier and an efficient commander of men. At the age of 14, he was married to the daughter of Rajas Bijay Singh of Seeba and three years later took over the administration of Jammu, after Gulab Singh had acquired Kashmir state.

Two years before his death, Maharaja Gulab Singh had installed Ranbir Singh, as his successor to the throne, and had himself started a secluded life in Kashmir. The installation or 'Rajtilak' ceremony of Ranbir Singh was attended by rulers of several native princely states and nobles of the Punjab. The British Government put their seal of approval on Ranbir Singh's succession to the gaddi in the lifetime of his father, by offering various costly gifts to the new Maharaja.

After his father's death, Ranbir Singh made no drastic changes in the administration of J&K but concentrated on improving economic conditions in the still impoverished state. He reorganized administrative system and introduced several useful reforms. But progress was slow because Ranbir Singh's deputies and officials did not share their ruler's enthusiasm for reform and blatantly continued to exploit the people. P.N.K Bamzai remarks that the officials were accustomed to the old style of rule and knew no better. They believed in helping the people to produce wealth by sympathetic treatment but at the same time exacting

the last farthing out of them to fill the coffers of the Maharaja and this on pockets.

### **Objectives**

After studying this lesson, you will be able to :

1. Study the reforms introduced by Maharaja Ranbir Singh for the welfare of the people of Kashmir.
2. Ranbir Singh devoted much attention to administrative reforms in the Govt. of the state.
3. We can find Maharaja Ranbir Singh's role in the modernization of Kashmir.
4. Examine the various social, economic, educational and judicial reforms made in J&K by the Maharaja Ranbir Singh during his rule.

### **Administrative reforms**

Maharaja Ranbir Singh was anxious to improve the lot of his subjects. He was keen to reorganize the ill-equipped administrative machinery and thus to provide true and speedy justice to the people. His anxiety for improvement was reflected in his talks, recorded by the Sir Richard Temple, he says : I tried to hint delicately that, like all other places, Kashmir would benefit by increased care. The Maharaja said that he was conscious of many defects and that as soon as he had leisure from affairs at Jammu, he would go to Kashmir and introduce several reforms, adding that he felt himself responsible to God for the care of his people". He again told Richard Temple the 'he was endeavouring to improve the judicial system and that had doctors of Hindu and Mohammedan law in the work".

#### **(a) Reorganisation of the administration**

It was the first to attract Maharaja's attention. He organized three main departments - the revenue, the civil and the military - with clearly defined spheres of their work. New sub divisions were created for both civil and revenue administration. He divided the administration of the state into three main heads : Daftar Nizamat, Dafter Diwani and Daftar Jangi.

The Jammu province was divided into 7 wazarats - Jammu Khas, Jasrota, Ramnagar, Udhampur, Reasi, Nowshera and Mansar. The land revenue assessment was considerably improved. The Jammu wazarat had four Tehsils and 30 Parganas. The Kashmir province was divided into six wazarats - Shahra-i-Khas, Anantnag, Shopian, Pattan, Kamraj and Muzaffarabad. Jammu province was governed by Maharaja himself and Kashmir was governed through governors.

**(b) Judicial system**

The systematization of administration and departmentalization of function were tasks which involved considerable effort and attention. The most important features of this reorganization were the establishment of regular courts of justice with defined powers, the framing of laws and the appointments of Chakladars at every police station to dispose of petty civil and criminal cases. Now, for the first time in the history of the state, a penal code was introduced. It was drawn upon the lines of Macaulay's code and contained one hundred sections only. This code, with amendment, still form the basis of the penal law operating in the state. Courts of appeals were set up in Jammu and Srinagar and about 30 lower courts operated in other areas of the state. The Maharaja himself often presided over cases; both he and the established courts were easily accessible to the people.

In 1873, a Mixed Court comprising a British office and a civil judge of the State was established to decide civil suits between Europeans and their servants on the one hand, and the subjects of the Maharaja on the other.

By 1885, Sadar Adalats had been established both at Jammu and Srinagar. The judges of the Sadar Adalats were subordinate to the Governors of their respective provinces, whose advice was sought while deciding important cases. The powers of the courts were confined to civil and criminal cases only, the revenue cases went direct to the Governor.

There were in all twenty-five courts of law in the time of Maharaja Ranbir Singh, of which fourteen were Wazarat Courts, situated at Srinagar, Anantnag, Haripur, Kamraj, Reasi, Nowshera, Kishtwar and Bhaderwah. There were three courts, one each at Ladakh, Gilgit and Skardu. Besides, there was a court in Srinagar called Adalat Dag-i-Shawl. By 1885, the Panchayat Court, consisting of four Hindu and four Muslim officials, was also established at Srinagar. This court too like those mentioned earlier heard petty civil and

criminal cases. Its members were men of dignity and performed their duties like Munsiffs. They received their salaries from the government exchequer. New court rooms, record-offices and prison-houses had also been established by this time.

Justice was not expensive. A petitioner was required to affix only a half a rupee worth of stamp on his petition to have it heard by the Maharaja himself. He would "examine and sharply cross-examine the witnesses" and often refer the case to a magistrate for further investigation. But the crimes of all kinds were rare, chiefly because the people remembered the terrible punishments inflicted by Gulab Singh on the criminals and also because of the introduction of the system of fixing responsibility for undetected crimes upon local officials.

### **Economic reforms**

#### **(a) Improved the means of communication**

The traditional mainstays of the Kashmir economy, were encouraged by Ranbir Singh and transportation and communication facilities were improved. New roads were constructed and five lakhs of rupees were spent on repairing existing routes. The Maharaja realized the importance of good means of communications both inside the state and with the other parts of India. He improved means of transport and communication. The construction of the cart road between Rawalpindi and Srinagar was started towards the end of his rule. Similarly a kacha road was built between Jammu and the Valley.

#### **(b) Postal system**

Telegraph and postal services were instituted. Postal arrangements were made more efficient. Telegraph links were established between Jammu and Srinagar. To increase the speed of mails 129 stages were set up between Jammu and Srinagar and it took only 25 to 30 hours for the mail bags to reach Srinagar from Jammu and vice versa. Settled condition in Kashmir valley attracted many visitors to Kashmir and in order to afford facilities to European visitors a direct mail line from Jammu to Lahore was established in Samvat 1921.

**(c) Shawl Industry**

Maharaja Ranbir Singh took various steps to encourage Trade and Industry. The taxation system was reorganized. Maharaja paid special attention to the shawl manufacturing industry. The shawl weavers were paid very meager wages and were bound for the work for one master, they have no right to change their masters. The weavers decided to unite and proceed in a body to the residence of the Governor to present a petition to redress their grievances. Raja Kak Dhar, the head of the Shawl Department misrepresented the facts about the condition of the weavers and misled the Governor that the weavers assembled there would storm his house and kill him. The Governor immediately called a company of soldiers to disperse the procession of the weavers. In the stampede that followed, a number of shawl weavers jumped into the nearby river and twenty eight of them were drowned. When Maharaja came to know about the bad conditions of the weaver; Maharaja reduced the tax on shawls in 1868 and also reduced the price of paddy that shawl weavers purchased from the Government stores. But shawl trade declined due to fall of export of shawls from Kashmir due to Franco-Prussian war of 1870-1871. Soon Maharaja realized that shawl industry is completely ruined, he abolished all the taxes on shawl industry completely and retained only a nominal duty on the export of shawls .

**(d) Land Revenue**

Ranbir Singh's first concern was with land revenue reform. He tried to assess the land revenue at a fixed rate. Before Ranbir Singh the system of land tenure in the valley had been inequitable and riddled with corrupt practices, the system of revenue collection was so ruthless that people were unwilling to put land under cultivation. They were not sure whether they would ever receive any benefit of their labour. A cultivator would only produce as much as would, after payment of his revenue, provide for the actual wants of himself and his family. The excess would be absorbed by rapacious underling officers. The Maharaja, when he came to know of it, immediately toured the Valley to assure the cultivators of his sympathy towards them. While camping at Achhabal he personally attended to the complaints of the wronged peasantry and the officials were compelled to return all the money they had squeezed out of the impoverished people. But no sooner was the Maharaja's camp struck than the officials indulged in their usual game of robbing and harassing the cultivators.



Much of the efforts of Ranbir Singh to ameliorate the economic condition of the people were rendered useless by his officials and servants who did not co-operate with him in implementing his reforms. The standard of living of the people remained low as before. In 1877 A.D., the excessive rains destroyed the crops and brought famine in Kashmir. The famine resulted in a heavy loss of life. It was estimated that three-fifths of the total population of the valley was wiped out by the famine. W.R. Lawrence writes, "Many attempted to escape to the Punjab, but at the barriers troops were stationed to prevent the migration of the people. At the end of 1878 A.D., however, the old system of 'Rahdari' under which no man could leave the Valley without permission, was given up, and some of the weak survivors tottered over the passes to the Punjab, many dying in the way".

The Maharaja spared no pains to procure grains from the Punjab to save the lives of starving people. But unfortunately the officials turned the efforts of the Maharaja to save the lives of famine-stricken people into a source of profit. The famine conditions subsided in October 1879 when the crop was bumper.

New agricultural products were introduced and wine-making was encouraged. Experimental tea gardens were laid out in the tehsils of Reasi and Basohli. Silk seeds, imported from China and distributed in villagers. The Government freely spent money on sericulture, hops, wines. Iron and coal mines were opened in some parts of Jammu. Trade with British India increased significantly after customs duties were reduced. In 1870 a trade treaty was concluded with the British Indian Government. Under its terms, his Highness the Maharaja undertook to forego all duty on the trade between Central Asia and British India. In return for the same concession made by the Indian Govt. for goods imported into the state through British India.

Opium cultivation which was restricted to Bhaderwah and Kishtwar only was extended to other parts of the states as well. Abrewery was established at Gupkar and the Kashmir wine a gold medal at the Calcutta Exhibition, Sir Oliver, St. John, officer on special duty in Kashmir, conveyed viceroy's appreciation to the Maharaja on this successful manufacture.

**(e) Currency**

Maharaja Ranbir Singh introduced his own currency. The state mint was closed twelve years after his death in 1897 A.D. when the British currency was introduced. Similarly the state postal system was amalgamated with the Indian postal system in 1894 A.D.

**(f) Begar System**

The means of communication were rough and rude in the extreme, so that man instead of animals had to be used as beast of burden. A certain amount of compulsory labour is necessary for the upkeep of communications. It is to be regarded as the rendering of personal service in lieu of money and as part of the conditions under which they hold their land.

**Patronage of Art and Letter**

Maharaja Ranbir Singh was a patron of learning and art. His court attracted learned men from all over India. He gave a donation of one lakh of rupees when the idea of establishing the Punjab University at Lahore was first mooted, and when the University came into existence, he became its first Fellow. He also donated liberally to Sanskrit institutions at Banaras and made provisions from the State for students who studied there. He established several schools, Maktabas and Pathshalas in Jammu and Srinagar and some of the towns in the State. He took a personal interest in the progress of education. In every Wazarat and Tehsil a school was opened and provision was made for higher studies in oriental languages. A big Pathshala was opened at Ragunath Temple, Jammu and another at Utterbhan where instructions were imparted in the Vedas, Grammar, Kavya Shastra and Niyay. Books were supplied free and scholarships granted.

The Raghunath Temple at Jammu, constructed shortly after Ranbir Singh's accession, became a famous centre of learning and research. A Sanskrit College, a magnificent library and a translation bureau were established there. A large number of Sanskrit and Persian books were printed and translated into Dogri, Hindi and Urdu. Most of the Sanskrit texts written in the Sarada script of Kashmir were transcribed into Devanagiri. Again Persian and Arabic works on historical, philosophical and other subjects were translated into Sanskrit with the assistance of competent Maulvis in order to facilitate the exchange of

ideas which the Maharaja in a spirit of true enlightenment desired to promote between the representatives of Hindu and Mohammeden scholarship in his dominions".

### **Let us sum up**

Maharaja Ranbir Singh conducted the affairs of state in Jammu and Kashmir with dedication to his subjects and with pride in his own traditions. His careful and diligent attention to conditions in the state brought great improvement in educational and medical facilities and his reasoned approach to conflict helped calm religious turmoil. Muslims were allowed full freedom in the practice of their religion and when Muslim sects rioted against each other, Maharaja Ranbir Singh intervened to restore harmony. His personal life was orderly and rational and he was not a victim of excesses. Foreign visitors to Srinagar recorded scenes of the Maharaja daily conducting public audiences with lively rapport with his subjects.

Ranbir Singh breathed his last on 14th September 1855 A.D. He was followed by his successor, Partap Singh, H.E. The viceroy and Governor-General in a letter dated Simla, the 14th September, 1885 wrote : Maharaja Ranbir Singh rendered valuable service to the British Govt. I feel that his loss is the loss of a friend.