

HISTORICAL STUDY OF NON - AGRARIAN ECONOMY OF KASHMIR FROM (1846-1885)

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ABSTRACT

Kashmir is renowned for its artistic skills and marvellous crafts since time immemorial. Bernier, Moorcroft, Vinge and other travellers who visited the place, have highly praised the artistic tastes of the people of Kashmir. Mirza Haider Dughlat, in his Tarikh-i-Rashidi recorded, in Kashmir one meets with all those arts and crafts which are in most cities uncommon. Francis Bernier, who visited Kashmir in 1665 during the early years of Aurangzeb's reign, stated that it is due to the certain properties in the water of that country (Kashmir). Though the Kashmiris practiced myriad arts and crafts since ancient times, it was during the sultanate period that their artistic skill found their proper vent. The sultan Zain-ul Abadin revived and introduced new arts and crafts from Central Asia. The Mughals immensely contributed to the development of no agrarian sector of Kashmir especially, the shawl industry. Though the Afghans and Sikhs are known for their oppression but they still promoted the shawl industry.

Keywords: Kashmir, Industry, Skills, Artists, Shawl.

INTRODUCTION

The Dogra period saw the climax and decline of many arts and crafts of Kashmir. H.W Bellow, who visited Kashmir in 1873-74, highlighted the artistic prowess of Kashmir in these words, "their shawls and embroideries, their sliver work and paper-maciiie-painting, their stone engraving and wood carving, alike exhibit proofs of wonderfully delicacy and minute details but tell of no active expenditure of muscular force. Lawrence the settlement officer in Kashmir in 1889 said that every Kashmir seems a weaver and the home spun cloths woven by the villagers were highly appreciated by many Europeans. It was during this period that the prominent Industries i.e. shawl and silk industries engaged large number of people and they became the major source of revenue for the state. During the period under review both rural and urban crafts thrived and provided employment to a substantial section of population. Srinagar was the chief

industrial centre of Kashmir province. However, the other areas were equally known for their own peculiar arts and crafts. Islamabad had good reputation as an embroidery centre, Kulgam was famous for lacquered woodwork, Bijbhera enjoyed fame for its excellent wood carving and Zainager and its environs were famous for soft woollen cloth. The following table depicts the number of workers engaged in different occupation of Srinagar city of its total population which 118, 960 in the 80's and 90's of the 19th century.

Occupation	No. of worker engaged
Administration & Defence	10,482
Agriculture & Livestock	3,246
Personal & Household Service	11,66
Provisional-Sellers and Artificers	65,395
Trade and Transport	8,309
Learned & Artistic Professions	8,371
Other occupations	11,97

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the present paper is the Historical study of Non - Agrarian Economy of Kashmir from (1846-1885)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present work which is actually the Historical study of Non - Agrarian Economy of Kashmir from (1846-1885). The present work is based on secondary source of data which was collected from the periodic tables, books, journals, research articles, encyclopaedia, government records, websites and so on. The study is conducted by Descriptive Survey method; schedules are used to collect information from the respondents. The researcher has visited libraries and other concerned departments for the secondary information to the related problem.

Shawl Industry

The shawl manufacturing was one of the deep rooted industries of Jammu and Kashmir State. Kashmiri shawl without which no fashionable lady in nineteenth century deemed her wardrobe

complete, enjoyed name and fame all over the world. Although the manufacturing of woollen products existed in Kashmir since ancient times, it was Sultan Zain-ul- Abadin who revived and considerably developed it. He made elaborate arrangements to make it an industry of great importance. He provided weavers facilities necessary for the development of this craft. In his Tarikh-i-Rashidi, Mirza Haider Dughlat has praised the sultan for his enthusiasm with which he popularized the Kashmiri handicrafts. Mirza Haider Dughlat also made special contribution to this industry. Under the Mughals the industry made steady progress. They set the industrial, commercial and production patterns of its kharkhandars creation new social patterns among its craftsmen. In his Tuzk-i-Jhangari, Emperor Jahangir describes the shawl as one of his favourite item of dress. Thus the royal patronage made shawl a status and fashion symbol throughout the empire particularly on the occasion of imperial festivals. It became so popular that it is mentioned in the account of important imperial historians and travellers.

During the Sikh period the shawl enjoyed uninterrupted state patronage. The shawl trade was established with west Asia and Europe. Merchants from Uzbekistan, Turkistan, Turkey, Persia, British India and Europe frequently came to Kashmir to purchase the fabrics. Thus the shawl industry was flourishing. In the twenties of nineteenth century the total trade of shawl goods amounted to thirty-five lakh rupees per annum. When Gulab Singh became the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir, the shawl trade began to revive in 1846, the total number of looms were 7,000 and 17,000 weavers were working on them. In the same year the, there were 3,500 kharkhandars in valley who run the separate units of this prominent industry. However, in 1847, due the migration of shawl weavers to Punjab the number of loom reduced to 6000 and that of the weavers to 15, 000. But the condition of weavers was not good. The shawl baf (shawl weaver) was required to pay Rs 47 as baj (tax) to the government annually. Besides, they had to work from dawn to dusk but were given very low wages and were not allowed to change their master (kharkhandar) at will. In early 1847, the kharkhandars solicited the maharaja that there should be early numbering of workers, nazarana should be minimized, the time of workers should be fixed and that a settled Ayeen (regulation) should be framed for them. In June, 1847 emboldened by the demands of their kharkhandars, the worker in order to concede their demands, struck work and about four thousand shawl weavers migrated to Lahore. The shalbafs demanded the reduction of baj, nazarana and increase in wages. After noticing about the strike, Maharaja Gulab Singh appealed the weavers to restore their work and their demands would be given due consideration. Consequently, he organized an open darbar in July 1847 and enquired into the grievances of workers. Then he announced many new regulations which are as follows;

Maharaja Ranbir Singh was a man of reforms. He strived to encourage the crafts and industries as a means of employment of his Kashmiri subjects. He tried to revive and reform the traditional crafts and introduced new industries. Shawl industry reached to a great height, yet its decline

also commenced in this period. It was the result of many factors like decline of external market after 1870's and famine of 1878. It is said that best shawl ever manufactured in Kashmir was during the Ranbir Singh's reign. They were very excellent in texture, very soft in colour and of most celebrated and colourful design, of eastern style of decoration. The income from Daghsawl from Gulab Singh's reign till 1869 was seven lakh rupees per annum and the export of shawls exported valued on average 23 lakh rupees per annum. The average export of shawl was between 25 and 28 lakhs of rupees between 1860 and 1870. In samvat 1922 (1866) there were 11000 shops and 27000 people were associated with this profession.

Methods of shawl weaving

The shawl was manufactured from what is termed as *Pushm* which was obtained from a goat that domiciled in western Tibet, Baltistan, Wardwan, Turfan and Ladakh. It was brought to Kashmir via Ladakh and was sold at four or five annas one seer. However, the best wool was obtained from Turfan in Yarkhand and was sold in Srinagar as Tufrani *Pushm*. It was exported to Britain and other countries of Europe. There were two methods of weaving shawl in Kashmir during the period of our study, hand-made and loom made. Each method employed a separate class of manufacturers, desired colours under his superintendence before it was distributed among the *shalbafs* who worked under an *ustad* or overseer. Robert Thorpe who visited Kashmir in 1865 stated that there were about one hundred *karkhandars* in Kashmir. However, these lived only in the *wazarat* Sher-i-Khas (Srinagar) and *wazarat* Anantnag but houses or *kharkham* in which the *shalbafs* worked were scattered all over the valley. Majority of them were concentrated in Sopore and Pampur. The *shalbafs* working in a particular unit were under the control of the master workman known as *Ustad*. There was one *ustad* for every 25 to 30 *shalbafs* at the end of the each month, the *ustad* presented to the *kharkhandar* an account of work performed by each *shalbafs* in the month under him and he was paid accordingly. This amount was not sufficient for the *shalbafs* to suffice the requirements of his family with any approach to comfort, even in so fertile country as Cashmere.

Silk industry

The genesis of silk industry in Kashmir is shrouded in mystery. N. G Mukerji, a Bengali silk expert who was entrusted with the charge of silk industry of Kashmir in 1871 by Ranbir Singh Writes; No doubt before the Christian era some part of raw silk of Kashmir found its way to the west but nothing is known in Kashmir about the origin of its silk industry beyond the fact that it is very ancient and it is intimately connected with that of Bukhara, with which it has always had interchanged of seed and silk. No doubt, the mulberry trees which are the main source of food for the silk worms (*poit kyum*) existed in Kashmir since ancient times. However, there are insignificant literary evidences to show when actually, the sericulture operations commenced in

Kashmir. It was actually, the Sultan Bad Shah (Zain-ul-Abadin) who besides commencing new industries and crafts encouraged and promoted the existed crafts and industries by rendering the support they required. This industry was virtually introduced by Zain-ul-Abidin who is regarded as pioneer of industrial development of Kashmir. Thus the silk industry enjoyed royal patronage. The preservation of mulberry trees become the prime concern of almost every one and the cattle were not allowed to eat the leaf of mulberry trees. Moreover, the silk worms were imported from Gilgit and Tibet. During the governorship of Haji Karim Dad, the Afghan Governor in Kashmir, the mulberry trees in Maisuma (Srinagar) were cut down to clear the field for horse racing which to a considerable extent affected the silk industry. Vinge who visited Kashmir in 1835 maintained the Korhar division of Kashmir produced the best variety of silk in valley. During Sikh period the income to the state from the silk trade was one lakh rupees per annum. It seems that maharaja Gulab Singh was successful in maintaining the tempo of development achieved by this industry during Sikh period. Hakim Abdul Rahim was given the charge of this industry. But the silk industry was not better organized during Guwab Singh's reign. Under Gulab Singh's rule silk became an important article of trade. It was exported to different parts of India in sufficient quantity. The government procured an income of one lakh rupees as a tax from silk trade alone during the initial period of Gulab Singh's reign. Thus the silk industry was vital source of revenue to the state. In 1846 the government collected Rs. 1, 00,000 as duty on silk from weavers. In 1847-49, the total tax of Rs. 4000 in cash and 3,000 kharwars of cocoons were collected.

Maharaja Ranbir Singh who ascended the throne of Jammu and Kashmir in 1857 devoted his attention and energy towards the economic prosperity in general and that of industries in particular. He placed this industry on a firm footing. He made special efforts to popularize this industry all over state. In 1871 government sanctioned three lakh rupees for the development of silk industry in Kashmir. Consequently, Kashmiri populace associated with silk rearing become familiar with the technique of reeling, employed in Europe. This was first development of this kind. Moreover, maharaja in order to induce majority of population to sericulture, facilitated some amenities and incentives to the people. One gold and five silver medals were awarded by the maharaja annually to most successful sericulturists.

Paper industry

The genesis of this industry in Kashmir dated back to 15 century. Paper making was one of the prominent industries of Dogra period. It was mainly concentrated in Naushera and its vicinity. The other centre of this industry was at Hari Parbat fort, which was run by convicted labour. Gandarbal was another place where the paper art thrived. Here water being abundantly available the mills worked by water power. The material from which paper was obtained constitutes the

pulp, which was an assortment of rag and hemp. The pulp was prepared in mills in Sindh valley and Dachigam Nalah from where it was taken to Srinagar for final manufacture. Besides, lime and soda were used with the pulp. Then, the pulp was placed in stone troughs or baths and mixed with water. A layer of pulp was then extracted from this mixture of an ingenious mould constructed of fine grass stalks. Superfluous water was squeezed under the weight of boulders or couple of men. The sheet thus produced was then stuck on the mud wall and dried. Next the sheet was polished with a pumice stone and then its surface was glazed with rice water finally, a polishing with an onyx stone was given to it and then the paper was ready for use. They were all handmade. In Kashmir three kinds of papers were manufactured.

Paper-Machie

The art of moulding paper-pulp into articles of various shapes and sizes and painting designs upon them was introduced in Kashmir from Persia during the reign of sultan Zain-ul Abadin. This art in Kashmir known as *Kumangiri* or *Karikalamdani* (Lacquer work) was one of the prominent industries of Dogra period as well. It was also called *Kar-imunaqqush*. The material utilized for preparing the articles through this art was the paper manufactured in indigenous units which have been written upon. Besides, soft and light wood, leather for superior pen cases, gold and silver leaves, glue and rice paste were other materials used in paper-machie. Two designs of paper Mache were mostly widely prevalent in Kashmir during the Dogra period these included flat and raised. The content of design was mainly taken from the Persian tradition or the natural environment in Kashmir especially its flora and fauna, peach and almond blossoms along with interwined boughs and twigs with birds perched on them. Brushes made of the hair of goat, pencils from the hairs in the fur of the cat, a sharp knife, a small cutting chisel and shell for mixing the colour, agate for smoothing the surface, Stone slab and muller constitute the tools and implements used for manufacturing articles through this art.

Maharaja Ranbir Singh greatly patronized these industries. He presented paper-machie coffee sets to his European friends which popularized them in European countries. The income derived from this art was an important source of income to the state.

Metal works

Kashmir has since long attained high reputation for the excellence of its metal works. Several travelers who visited Kashmir during the second half of the 19th century were highly impressed with the metal works of Kashmir. Wakefield, a medical officer in British Indian army who visited Kashmir in 1875 stated that Kashmiris are ingenious in metal works, manufacturing good weapons, such as guns and swords and other articles. But their jewellery demands attention, the gold and silversmiths of Srinagar being very clever at their trade, producing admirable work,

great quantities of which are now finding their way to Europe. E. F. Knight who visited Kashmir in April 1890 was highly impressed with metal works of Kashmir and he stated that metal-works of Kashmir were well known in Europe as well.

Silver and gold works

Kashmiris were genius in gold and silver works and produced admirable articles which were in great demand not only at home but also outside Kashmir. Sir George Birwood has given impressions regarding the silver works of Kashmir. Their elegant shapes and delicate tracery, graven through the gilding to the dead white silver below which softens the luster of the gold to a pearly radiance, gives a most charming effect to this refined and graceful work. It is an art to have been imported by Mogals, but influenced by the natural superiority of the people of Cashmere valley over all other Orientals in elaborating decorative details of good design, whether in metal work, hammered and cut or enamelling or weaving. The silver and gold works of Kashmir had genesis in historic period (ancient) but during the sultanate and Mughals eras it became exceedingly effective. This was actually an urban craft confined to the towns especially Sahar-i-khas, present Srinagar. The smith then converted it into different articles with the help of poor and rude tools like hammer and chisel, The *khars* (smiths) manufactured articles in both oriental and European designs. The output ranged from jewellery to the article of daily use like trays, goblets, tea cups, jugs, napkin rings, finger-bowls and scent holders. The jewellery both in silver and gold was executed. These articles were sold at price four annas per *tola*. The silver goods of this period possessed a peculiar feature of whiteness. It is owing to the practice of boiling the products in apricot juice. Although, this craft was confined to the towns of Kashmir only but it provided employment to a substantial section of society who by producing, trading or canning the gold and silver articles from one place either for sale or export, managed their basic needs. Wakefield mentioned, this craft engaged five categories of people directly or indirectly silversmith (*khari*), engraver (*naqash*), gilder (*zarkob*), polisher (*rashangor*) and cleaner (*chakqar*). So it can be asserted with certainty that this craft was one of the vital constituent of Kashmir economy during the epoch under review. The articles produced by silver smiths constituted an important item of both internal and foreign trade. Srinagar, Anantnag, Pattan etc. were the prominent centers where these articles were sold. Even these were sent to England.

Copper works

This craft was confined to the capital city of maharaja i.e. Sahar-ikhas. The copper smiths manufactured distinctive types of copperware and articles with poor and conventional technical know-how. Their tools resembled with implements and tools utilized by the silversmith who included hammer for beating in order to mould the metal and chisel to give shape and finish to the product. The copper good with distinctive designs were manufactured in Kashmir. The

production of the copper smiths was limited and confined to trays, candle sticks, bracelets in the shape of Chinese leaves. But the very beautiful work was the copper enamel. Besides, the indigenous patterns and designs the art of manufacturing was influenced by the Buddhist art of Tibet.

Wood Carving

Wood carving is an old craft of Kashmir. This craft attained recognition during the medieval period and is said to have really introduced in Kashmir by sultan Zain-ul-Abdin. He invited experts from Gujarat who introduced special design of boats. The raw-material i.e. wood was available locally as Kashmir has a rich forest cover but walnut wood owing to its durability and natural-veined surface, was preferred for making articles of various types. The wood was seasoned before being put to use, by exposing to various temperatures changing with season and time. It was this wood that was cut and polished and then carved into various articles like trays, tables, boxes etc. The designs of wood carving were excellent and beautiful. Many designs of wood work were prevalent in Kashmir during the Dogra period like *Sosan*, *chinar*, *badam*, *dacchi* and *muzar poshr*. The *sosan* was motif for titles, the *china* meant a popular motif for wood carving, *dachi* was a design of bunch of grapes, *badam* was based on almond motif and *mazar posh* was raised relief of iris flower. Another design which is still prevalent in Kashmir was *khatambandi*. This was mainly found in ceilings. It consisted of small pieces of carved wood fitted into frames in geometrical designs to form decorative ceilings for rooms. The perfect execution of this is found in Khanqah-i-Maullah mosque of Srinagar. A few of the *Khatambandi* ceiling have been introduced in England. G. M. D Sufi maintained that, "Ceilings of the same construction were found in Samarkhan, Bhakhara, Persia, Istanbul and Morocco. Many people from all over valley were engaged in this craft during early Dogra period. Anantnag was an important centre of this craft and carpenters produced various types of articles to suffice different requirements of people. These goods were traded in valley and were also sent to other parts of India and even to Europe.

Leather works

Manufacturing of leather goods was one of the prosperous industries of Kashmir during the Dogra. It engaged substantial portion of Kashmiri populace. William Moorcroft century has highly praised the leather goods of Kashmir. The classes of people engaged with this occupation were known as *Watals*. The Srinagar city was the prominent center of manufacturing of leather goods and hub of trade in these goods. The raw material was procured from countryside by *watals*. After collecting the skins the *watals* prepared them and then brought them to Srinagar where these skins were given the different shapes. The prominent leather articles manufactured in Kashmir included shoes, chapel, harness and bags. Lawrence maintained, the leather

portmanteau and valise made in Srinagar stands on amount of rough usage which few English solid bags sui-vive and the leather saddle manufactured in valley were more durable.

CONCLUSION

Kashmir is renowned for its artistic skills and marvellous crafts since time immemorial. Though the Kashmiris practiced myriad arts and crafts since ancient times, it was during the sultanate period that their artistic skill found their proper vent. The sultan Zain-ul Abadin revived and introduced new arts and crafts from Central Asia. The Dogra period saw the climax and decline of many arts and crafts of Kashmir. . It was during this period that the prominent Industries i.e. shawl and silk industries engaged large number of people and they became the major source of revenue for the state. During the period under review both rural and urban crafts thrived and provided employment to a substantial section of population. The shawl manufacturing was one of the deep rooted industries of Jammu and Kashmir State. Kashmiri shawl without which no fashionable lady in nineteenth century deemed her wardrobe complete, enjoyed name and fame all over the world. Although the manufacturing of woollen products existed in Kashmir since ancient times, it was Sultan Zain-ul- Abadin who revived and considerably developed it. The shawl was manufactured from what is termed as *Pushm* which was obtained from a goat that domiciled in western Tibet, Baltistan, Wardwan, Turfan and Ladakh. The genesis of silk industry in Kashmir is shrouded in mystery. N. G Mukerji, a Bengali silk expert who was entrusted with the charge of silk industry of Kashmir in 1871 by Ranbir Singh. Another art of moulding paper-pulp into articles of various shapes and sizes and painting designs upon them was introduced in Kashmir from Persia during the reign of sultan Zain-ul Abadin. Kashmir has since long attained high reputation for the excellence of its metal works. Several travelers who visited Kashmir during the second half of the 19th century were highly impressed with the metal works of Kashmir. Kashmiris were also genius in gold and silver works and produced admirable articles which were in great demand not only at home but also outside Kashmir. This craft was confined to the capital city of maharaja i.e. Sahar-ikhas. The copper smiths manufactured distinctive types of copperware and articles with poor and conventional technical know-how. Another work is Wood carving is an old craft of Kashmir.

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