

- * Prof. Dr. Khawaja Zahid Aziz
** Anees ur Rasheed Hashmi

Watersheds from Kashmir & Settlers from Punjab: An Analysis of Sociocultural and Ethnic Links between Kashmir & Punjab

ABSTRACT

Kashmir and Punjab are two neighboring States which are adjacent to each other, similar in socio-cultural aspects but unfamiliar in climate and geographic contents. These states remained interdependently interlinked with each other in natural perspectives such as the watersheds of Kashmir directly flows into the Punjab which irrigates its fields and maximizes its fertility while the flow of people into Kashmir was directly and indirectly linked with Punjab from settlers or migrants and emigrations. The Aryans were migrated from Punjab but with passage of time the Kashmiris travelled and migrated towards Punjab for trade and other activities which made a healthy economic nexus, later down it further encouraged into massive emigrations due to riots, famines and rude governance in Kashmir especially during post Mughal era in Kashmir due to highly taxation and heavy commodification. In the era of Ranjit Sing the majority of migrants mostly focused “movement towards the capital or Lahore Takht” which stated as the movement towards urban from rural area. These ties were extended into mutual trade, domestic and educational relationship and these contacts enhanced more and more with the construction of Sialkot and Jammu Railway line. Although social interconnectivity was on extreme during the uprising of 1931 in Srinagar on the accident of blasphemy of Holy Quran and response from the people of Punjab in kindness and sympathy. This paper is the contribution to dig out the major emigration which caused by famines,

and riots along with its socio-cultural impacts on the links between Punjab and Kashmir in prospects of “Resolution of Accession to Pakistan” dated July 19th, 1931.

A hilly, mountainous, snow-capped tops, lush green valleys, pine trees and saffron crops, whispering lakes, wavy crops covered blessing land which is renowned as “Kashmir” is located at the north of Subcontinent and widely linked with the Jewel of earth, the mighty pastured land with waving river and extensive canal system¹ on the globe; the land of Punjab. The geographic collaboration between Punjab and Kashmir further extended towards social, cultural, domestic, and economic ties with close knits and strong nexus soon looked as one heart in two bodies. Punjab covers an area about 19445 square miles located on the west of the State of Jammu and Kashmir² which is located covering the top borders and looks nearly as a crown over Punjab while the southern and western plains of Kashmir directly link with Punjab. The rivers and water bodies of Kashmir irrigate the land of Punjab by its four main rivers; Indus, Jhelum, Chenab, and Ravi, so, water flow reveals the human migration from Punjab plains to the Kashmir hills. Nothing is known as to the stage of civilization; these early inhabitants had attained when they entered Kashmir. Then came the wave of Aryans invasion from the northwest of India, though this is not accepted by scholars like Keith. As in the Punjab and Northern India, they mixed with the Nagas and turned into one people.³ The verse which narrates the Kashmiri’s emigration from Kashmir to the other neighboring states in such a classical style by showing the famines and unemployment in Kashmir.⁴

تلاش رزق میں تو در بدر ہر وقت پھرتا ہے

کبھی پنجاب تیرا مستقر ہے، گاہ شملہ ہے

Furthermore, most of the historian also claims that the migration in Kashmir was happened from two sides: from the northern parts as from Yarkand, Khotan, Kashgar and Kabal and from southern side Punjab and Shimla. The major flow is from Punjab which was evidenced by the many historians especially about populating the city of Jammu is described in a mythical narration that Raja Jambu Lochan, the Raja of the State of Bahu impressed by the territory across the Tawi River and

inhabited a new city which named as “Jammu”.⁵ Although, this is a mythical narration but shows a true reflection of the people settlement across the watersheds from Punjab to Kashmir valley and its adjacent regions. Like the emigration of Aryans from Punjab to Kashmir was followed by the Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

Another prominent aspect of ethnic and religious similarity in Punjab and Kashmir is expansion of Kashmir kingdom from its western sides i.e. Punjab which starts from Asoka, Kanishka, Maktapad, Budshah etc. but it well boosted in Mughal era when Kashmir came under the Mughal kingdom and merged into Kabal province. The barriers and restrictions in transportation across the current boundaries for Kashmiris were left in that era and Kashmiris were free to travel and trade across the subcontinent. Barrier free trade and travel across the whole subcontinent encourages Kashmiris a lot and many small and micro industries flourished in Kashmir but after the advent of Afghan rule over Kashmir, some barriers and restrictions once again imposed which suddenly reduced export of Kashmiri goods and Afghan governors had no interest in local industry of Kashmir and issues of traders but they had only one interest to collect maximum amount of taxation and took premier quality products, food items, and material from Kashmir to Kabal. Heavy taxation and less accommodation, discouraging the export and snatching of prime quality goods made the worst ever worst circumstances for the Kashmir and they forced to migrant from Kashmir towards its neighboring area especially towards Punjab.

This flow of Kashmiris again forced to bring alien abroad-based ruler from adjacent area of Kashmir, the Punjab, from the Lahore Takht. In 1819 Kashmir became the part of Khalsa State of Lahore after defeating Afghans in Kashmir and other northern areas of Punjab. It is first time in the history of Kashmir that State of Kashmir was directly merged with Punjab State. Ranjit Sing the King of Lahore made a direct control over Kashmir and he appointed the ten governors in which three were Sikhs, two Muslims and five were Hindus.⁶ Initially Kashmiris welcomed the Sikh rulers but very soon the King of Punjab Ranjit Sing’s governors troubled and overloaded local community even Sikhs exploited Kashmiris regardless of religion.⁷ Afghan did not contribute in education during their rule which resulted illiteracy especially in Muslims who suffered under heavy taxation, less facilitation, severe racial and religious discriminations and rural obligation. Soon, anti-Muslim policies were launched which impacted into hardships and sufferings for the

Kashmiri Muslim even though the Srinagar Central Mosque was closed not for week or month but for the 20 years in which the Azan was prohibited. The legal justice of the Lahore Takht, if a Sikh kill a Hindu, he will pay four rupees as ransom while if a Muslim killed by a Sikh then this amount is only two rupees and famous socialist leader and historian Bazaz announced this era of 27 years from 1820 to 1846 as “zulumparast” which made consequences as losing self-confidence, missing self-defenses, compromising on self-perspectives and weakened the fight against barbarism culture and turned into decile.⁸

During 1832-34 famine hit seriously in Kashmir caused massive migration from Kashmir valley to agricultural land of western Punjab for Muslims of Kashmir in the urban areas.⁹ While the Hindu and Sikh migrated towards Amritsar and its surroundings because this famine resulted in heavy dead tolls in Kashmir and Muslims suffered a lot and emigrated in massive numbers.¹⁰ This famine and large scale emigration ends in the attenuation about 25% as a quarter of whole population of Kashmir.¹¹ In this British intelligence mission against Russians and they documented such starvation in terms of Kashmir Muslims sufferings and heavy taxation of Sikh rulers. In these days William Moorcraft travelled through Punjab and met with Ranjit Sing and under his deputed protocol he travelled through whole Kashmir from Tibet, Ladakh, Siachen to Central Asia. He narrated this story as “no more than 1/16 of the cultivable land surface was under cultivation and due to starvation, many people had fled to other parts of India”.¹² On the way back from the spy mission through central Asia Moorcraft was accompanied by about 500 Kashmiri migrants in 1823.¹³ These famines unpopulated the valley and other parts of the State which is narrated in by GMD Sufi in the dialogue narration between Maharaja Ranjit Sing and famous Austrian scientific botanist Baron Hugel on January 13, 1836.

Ranjit Sing: You have seen the whole world, which country do you like best?

Hugel: My own native land.

Ranjit Sing: You have seen Kashmir, what think you of it?

Hugel: The sickness and Famine have of late years so depopulated it, that it must produce a revenue of small amount.¹⁴

Succeeding Sikh rulers nothing changed in the result of Amritsar treaty based founded kingdom of Kashmir extending Hindu monarchy in which Hindu elites deliberately browbeaten, exploiting and subjugating the rights of Muslims in Kashmir.¹⁵ Bose has a declaration during the 101 year rule over Kashmir of Dogra about the disaster and miserable conditions of Kashmiri farmers and peasants¹⁶ while W. Lawrence already narrated the hardships and miseries of Kashmiri labors, farmers, peasants and especially Muslims miseries as giving an evidence about the Hindu elites which narrated by Zutshi in these words, “individually gentle and intelligent as a body they were cruel and oppressive, the Pandits excluded from the upper sections of bureaucracy, although they continued to exercise control of countryside”.¹⁷ Wingate, and Lawrence, described the hardships of Muslims during their visit in rural areas of Kashmir while Gwasha Nath Kaul claims in “Kashmir then and now”¹⁸ that 90% of Muslim householders in Srinagar were mortgaged to Hindu Moneylenders and pawnbrokers.¹⁹ Dogra regime faced a mighty famine which overwhelmed the Srinagar and caused in loss of half some referred to 60% of Muslims population but most interestingly no Pandit was died due to starvation reported by Lawrence. Wazir Punnu was a pandit and Prime minister deliberately stated that, “it was no real distress and that he wished that no Muslim might be left alive from Srinagar and Ramban”.²⁰ Although the Dogra banned on migration from Kashmir, but majority of Muslims wanted shot time or permanent shifting from Kashmir and priority to settle in Punjab. With the lifting of the ban over migration Walter Lawrence resembled the movement of migration as “dam bund was collapsed, for a sea of humanity, drawn from every town and village, was moving towards the snow clad passes on their way to the land of hope- British India...the migration was so extensive that according to 1891 census report of Punjab, 111775 Kashmiri born Muslims settled in Punjab”.²¹ The Muslims settled in Punjab towns Amritsar, Lahore, Ludhiana, Nurpur, Gujrat, Gurdaspur, Sialkot etc. after famine and starvation. In 20th century, during the silk factory revolt, uprising during the accidents of 1931, higher education in Punjab and suspension of fundamental religious rights²² forced the Kashmiris to migrate in Punjab and other Parts of current Pakistan and recorded almost 200000 settled in NWFP and Punjab in 1911.²³ The major migration held during the era of post partition from July 1947 to date in which major Muslim migration from Kashmir held after October 27, 1947 when India dropped paramilitary forces in Kashmir and in November 1947 massive massacre

in which about half millions Kashmiri Muslims were killed who migrated from Jammu in which few thousands succeeded safely reached to Punjab.

The migrants from Kashmir currently settled in Punjab major towns and cities Lahore, Sialkot, Rawalpindi, Gujrat, Jhelum, Narowal, Gujranwala, Faisalabad, Maridkey etc.²⁴ which are ethnically Kashmiris migrated from the Valley of Kashmir and Jammu during Sikh and Dogra rule²⁵ in which the leading personality is “poet of east, National poet of Pakistan, Allama Muhammad Iqbal”²⁶ is prominent in the list of Kashmiris who settled in Punjab. The list of Kashmiri Muslims can be seen today in common surnames (krams) as Butt, Dar, Lone, Wani, Sheikh, Khawaja etc²⁷ mostly Punjabi and Urdu speakers. A remarkable and exclusive research of “Geo TV and Jang News” conducted to dig out prominent Kashmiri personalities had a spearheaded role in the politics of Lahore after the foundation of Pakistan.²⁸ The remarkable and eminent personalities of Kashmir listed after highly commendable leader of subcontinent Allama Muhammad Iqbal are famous story writer Saadat Hassan Manto, famous novel writer Charagh Hassan Hasrat, famous historian Muhammad Din Foaq, prominent Journalist Agha Shorash Kashmiri, former Prime Minister of Pakistan Mian M. Nawaz Sharif, former Chief Minister of Punjab Mian M. Shahbaz Sharif, former Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, former defence minister Khawaja Asif, former Railway minister Khawaja Saad Rafique, former Speaker National Assembly of Pakistan Sardar Ghulam Sadiq, Mir Shakeel ur Rehman founder of Jang and Geo group, Salmaan Taseer founder of Daily Times, Maulana Sanaullah Amritsari, Javid Iqbal, Abbas Sharif, Saifuddin Kitchlew, Ali Azmat, Ismat Beg.

The reasons behind the settlement of Kashmiris in Punjab and the chain of migrations and settled for generations in Punjab because of religious emotions, cultural similarity and resemblance, common values and moral grounds, food preferences, dresses, customs and traditions, social cohesions, sympathy and kindness to each other, mutual respect and ideal Islamic unity and brotherhood which was also mentioned by Chitrallekha Zutshi narrated “the fact of Kashmiri Muslims settled in the Punjab retained emotional and familial links to Kashmir and felt obliged to struggle for the freedom of their brethren in the Valley. Kashmiri Muslim expatriates in the Punjab had retained emotional and familial ties to their soil and felt compelled to raise the banner of freedom for

Kashmir and their brethren in the Valley, thus launching bitter critiques of the Dogra administration”.²⁹

These sentiments, emotions, unity, brotherhood, and religious harmony had seen during the accidents of July 1931 when the whole Punjab stood up with Kashmiri Muslims. On the appeal All India Kashmir Committee on 14th August 1931 Kashmir Day was celebrated in the whole sub-continent especially in Punjab along with the State of Jammu & Kashmir. Many meetings, processions, gatherings were arranged in which thousands of people participated and condemned the blasphemy of Holy Quran and inhuman and injustice treatment with Muslims of Kashmir. The central procession was supervised and presided by Allama Muhammad Iqbal in Lahore, and in Sialkot under the supervision of Agha Ghulam Haider including other parts of current Punjab.³⁰ The role of religious groups on these accidents further shown in the movement of Majlis-e-Ahrar with the leadership of Syed Attaullah Shah Bukhari, Movlana Zafar Ali Khan, Movlana Habibur Rehman, Sheikh Hassamud Din, Movalan Mazhar Ali who started the movement of “Civil disobedience” launched in which thousands of Punjabi walked through Kashmir, hundreds of them crossed the border and retained in jails for months.³¹

This relation further enhanced after the foundation of All India States Muslim League in Srinagar and Jammu which was political interaction. Soon the newspaper which published from Punjab became the strong narrative for Kashmiris and Muslim League leadership visited Kashmir multiple times in which Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Allama Muhammad Iqbal and Kashmiris also taking deep interests and struggle in the movement of foundation of Pakistan. Punjab had opened the gates for the Kashmiri students to take admission in the schools, colleges, especially in Punjab University, Lahore, and many other religious institutions like Madrassas. This emotional attachment still presents across the Line of Control which highly commended by the Muslim Conference just before partition of Subcontinent. The relationship between Punjab and Kashmir became immortal and most durable in the resolution which was passed by Muslim conference for the accession to Pakistan before the 26 days of the foundation of Pakistan shows the strong cohesion and ideal harmony between them. The document shows us how was the relationship between these two regions which forced the people of Kashmir and other political parties for the accession of Pakistan in this narration. “This convention of Muslim Conference

resulted after long excogitation that geographically, economically, lingually, culturally and religiously the accession of the State is Jammu and Kashmir with Pakistan is very crucial because the population of state is comprised on Muslims over 80% and all the rivers which flow from Punjab originated from Kashmir. The Boundaries of Kashmir is jointed with Pakistan boundaries hence the people of the State are also integrated religiously, culturally and economically with people of Pakistan in extreme close knits....³²

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