

By: <sup>1</sup> Dr. Anees ur Rashid Hashmi  
<sup>2</sup> Prof. Dr. Syed Ali Raza  
<sup>3</sup> Noreen Iqbal Swati

## Foundation of Lahore Darbar or Sikh Empire and British Approaches: A Detailed Analytical Study

### *Abstract*

*The foundation of Punjab State historically referred to the Sikh Empire or Lahore Darbar and extraordinary efforts of Maharaja Rajit Singh of Gujranwala. This empire was a regional power that existed from 1799 to 1849 by establishing Lahore as capital after defeating Durrani emperor Zaman Shah Durrani. This empire was established in the result of Treaty of Friendship between Ranjit Singh and East India Company and demolished by East India Company itself after the second Anglo-Sikh War of 1849. This empire was formed by Khalsa autonomous misls and was extended towards north in unbelievable pace. This empire was on peak during 1838-1840, when its borders extended to Gilgit at northern side, Tibet on northern east, Khyber Pass in south, Oudh in East and recognized among the one of biggest autonomous State in Indian Subcontinent with 4.5 million people and considered 19<sup>th</sup> most populous State in the world. The Formation of Lahore Darbar or Sikh Empire based upon great conspiracy of East India Company which was their strategic move against Czar and Napoleon. That move was tactically declared by Britin thinktanks “Ring French Policy” in which they used Maharaja Ranjit Singh by providing sovereignty, creating ring around their occupied areas and pushed back Czars and Napoleon. This paper aimed to explore the secrets and hidden British channels behind the formation of Sikh Empire and its implication on Kashmir, Subcontinent and territory of the Punjab.*

**Key words:** Treaty of Tilsit, British Doctrines, Durrani Empire, Sikh Empire, Misls, Khalsa Sarkar, Dal Khalsa, Ranjit Singh, East India Company.

<sup>1</sup> Research Associate, Institute of Kashmir Studies, University of Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Muzaffarabad.

<sup>2</sup> Professor Department of Kashmiryat, Punjab University, Lahore.

<sup>3</sup> Lecturer Govt. Girls Inter College, Dadyal Mirpur, Azad Kashmir.

### ***Historical Perspectives***

The Empire of Sikhs, Khalsa Empire, Sikh Empire or Lahore Darbar was a State originated in the northern parts of subcontinent by defeating Marathas, Afghans and warring Sikh misls from 1797 to 1849 and established by Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Raja of Gujranwala<sup>1</sup>, extended to the Skardu to Lahasa, Khyber Pass to Sutlej River and Kashmir to Multan. The Establishment of this State from 1797 was indeed a dramatic narration in which Ranjit Singh won all the battles and wars and 1835–1839 era was supreme and golden age of this State.<sup>2</sup> As Ranjit Singh died, the Khalsa State was integrated and soon captured into the mismanagement and bad administration. The conspiracies opened the mouth and heirs of Ranjit Singh murdered and killed one after the other and Khalsa army attacked on British forces once and twice which laid down demolition of the Sikh Empire and grabbed by East India Company under the Lahore Agreement of 9<sup>th</sup> March 1846 between Sikh Empire and East India Company.

The foundation of Sikh Empire was offshoot of the Sikh power gaining movement which started in 1707<sup>3</sup> just after the death of Mughal King Aurangzeb Alamgir. The Sikhism was strengthening soon after the Babur conquests of Northern regions of Indian Subcontinent. The movement was further encouraged in Akbar's reign after the visits of the langar of Guru Amar Das. Mughals donated a land to the langar and Sikh Guru spent his days without any conflict. Jahangir soon smelled the threats of Sikh empowerment in the northern areas and their political influence in the region. Meanwhile a rebellion took place in northern parts of Mughal Kingdom which was led by Khusrau Mirza<sup>4</sup> and it was

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<sup>1</sup> Duggal, K.S. 1989. Ranjit Singh: A Secular Sikh Sovereign. India: Abhinav Publication. P. 25

<sup>2</sup> Hashmi, A.R. 2022. Geostrategic Significance of Kashmir: Reassessing the Historical evaluation of Dogra Rule over Kashmir (1846 AD to 1947 AD). Department of Kashmiryat, Oriental College Punjab University, Lahore. P. 131.

<sup>3</sup> Kalsi, Sewa Singh (2005), Sikhism, Religions of the World, Chelsea House Publications. pp. 106-107.

<sup>4</sup> Melton, J. Gordon (2014). *Faiths Across Time: 5,000 Years of Religious History*. ABC-CLIO. p. 1163.

proposed that Guru Arjun Dev was behind that anti-State move, Jahangir ordered to arrest him. He furthered demanded changes in the passage of Adi Granth but Guru refused and died during arrest.<sup>5</sup>

Guru Hargobind took the command after Arjun Dev and declared Sikh sovereignty by the foundation of Akal Takht and also constructed Gwalior fort to defend Amritsar. By acquiring more and more force, Dal Khalsa was properly established and founded by Guru Gobind Singh who also led expeditions against Durranis. Although Jahangir attempted to maintain the writ of Mughal rule over entire region and also arrested Hargobind at Gwalior Fort but released after few years as assumed no more threats to Mughal reign by them and Sikh community remained in peaceful until advent of Shahjahan. Sikh sovereignty was strikes again and again by that new Mughal emperor but strongly retaliated in Shivalik Hills by Dal Khalsa.<sup>6</sup>

#### ***Lahore Darbar and Establishment of Sikh Empire***

The Sikh Movement was started in 1708 when Guru Singh visited Nanded and public grievances motivated to launch an agrarian uprising under the supervision of Banda Singh Bahadur with zamindar families and poor peasants.<sup>7</sup> In this uprising, soon they defeated two main regions Sadhura and Samana while this uprising concluded as overthrown in Sirhind (Fatehgarh). Rebels destroyed the cities and executed Wazir Khan as the revenge of murder of Guru Gobind and Pir Budhu Shah.<sup>8</sup> So, a temporary insurgent rule was established between Sutlej River and Yamuna River and they had chosen Lohgarh as Capital and declare coinage in the names of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh. Mughal strike again in 1716 and overcame these rebels and arrested 700 militants with their

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<sup>5</sup> Kalsi, Sewa Singh (2005), *Sikhism*, Religions of the World, Chelsea House Publications, P. 98.

<sup>6</sup> Jestice, Phyllis G. (2004), *Holy people of the world: a cross-cultural encyclopedia, Volume 3*, ABC-CLIO. pp. 345-355.

<sup>7</sup> Singh, Pritam (2008), *Federalism, Nationalism and Development: India and the Punjab Economy*, Routledge. pp. 23-29.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid pp. 25-26.

leaders from Gurdas Nangal and sent to Delhi.<sup>9</sup>

It was an establishment of Sikh Confederacy besides of Mughals forces overcame again and again but they had launched a constant, firm and regular resistant against them, in which they often gained the rule and after few months or years they were crushed by the Mughal forces. It is true that the as the decline of Mughal rule started, Sikh becoming more and more powerful and that decline and resulted in creation of power vacuum in the northern areas of subcontinent which were strategically very significant and Sikhs availed the opportunity and formed “Dal Kalsa” meaning the party of Sikhs. On the other side, Durrani had been striking on the western edges of their empire and they captured some areas of Sind, Punjab, Sarhad and prolonged their rule from Kashmir to Sind and Punjab to Kabul. So, the neighbouring areas of Punjab was still under the supervision of Durrani rulers and their allies who were the leftovers of the Mughals administrators and often recognized as Mughal allied Hindu hill-rajahs of the Shivalik Hills.<sup>10</sup> The Sikhs advantage of weak administration and the Sikh forces named as Dal Khalsa after huge struggle acquired their independence in the region which named as “misl” (the term derived from Perso-Arabic referred to the meaning of similar meaning the “independent state like or similar independent state” which was supervised by misldar (administrator). These Sikh misls mutually signed a bond that they will unitedly resist any external which attacked them or arose against them. This union was misls named as “Sikh confederacy”.

The idea of Sikh confederacy was adopted a way back soon after the death of Aurangzeb Alamgir during 1707<sup>11</sup> when on some serious issues the Mughal administrators could not solved the conflict accordingly and Sikh community stood against them. The Mughal administrator also stretched the conflict with Sikh Gurus

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<sup>9</sup> Singh, Kulwant (2006). *Sri Gur Panth Prakash: Episodes 1 to 81*. Institute of Sikh Studies. p. 415.

<sup>10</sup> Patwant Singh (2007). *The Sikhs*. Crown Publishing Group. p. 270.

<sup>11</sup> Chisholm, Hugh, ed. (1911). "Ranjit Singh". *Encyclopædia Britannica*. 22 (11th ed.). Cambridge University Press. p. 892.

with Mughal rulers which opened new administrative challenges and rebellion in Sikh community. These rebellions further enhanced, resulted with the establishment of independent territories as misls under the Sikhism religious monarchy “the Sikh confederacy”<sup>12</sup> with the status of Sikh commonwealth and Antoine declares them “aristocratic republic”.<sup>13</sup> These misls were diverse in the nature as they were unequal in the prospects of area, population, economic strength, defence capabilities but functioned in unison and collaborative mutual militant coordination.<sup>14</sup>

The leadership of these misls held twice in a year named as “Sarbat Khalsa” in Amritsar in which they finally decided to run a rebellion movement against the Mughal on the recommendation of their Gurus particularly under the supervision of Banda Singh with the assistance of all misls; Shaheedan, Bhangi, Dallewalia, Nakia, Phulkian, Nishanvali, Ahluwalia, Kanheya, Panjgarhia, Sykerchakria, Singhpuria and Ramgarhia. These independent misls are established on “Patiala, Nabha, Jind, Kaithal, Barnala, Bathinda, Sangrur, Jalandhar district, Kapurthala district, Tarn Taran, Gurdaspur district, Pathankot district, Hoshiarpur district, Jalandhar district north of Amritsar, Amritsar district, Sheikhpura District, Ambala district, Ropar district, Chandigarh, Yamuna Nagar, Shahbad Markanda, Kurukshetra, Mughal Chak, Qila Didar Singh, Qila Mihan Singh, Ladhe Wala Waraich, Ferozewala, Butala Sham Singh, Marali Wala, Emin Abad, Kalaske, Okara, Bathinda and Panchkula”.<sup>15</sup> The Sikh Confederacy was comprised upon the Cis-Sutlej States in the Punjab region lying between the Sutej River to the north and Himalya to the east, Yamuna and Delhi in the south and Sirsa in the west. Initially these all were under the suzerainty of the Scindhia who was appointed by Mughal

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.sikhmuseum.com/nishan/khalsa/index.html>

<sup>13</sup> Singh, Khushwant (11 October 2004). *A History of the Sikhs: 1469–1838* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press. p. 165.

<sup>14</sup> Kakshi, S.R.; Pathak, Rashmi; Bakshi, S.R.; Pathak, R. (2007). *Punjab Through the Ages*. Sarup and Son. pp. 141-149.

<sup>15</sup> Bhagata, Singha (1993). *A History of the Sikh Misals*. Publication Bureau, Punjabi University. p. 241hen

ruler Shah Alam but after the Sikh-Maratha treaty of 1785, Scindhia recognized the political supremacy of Sikh States and forbear them to attack on Delhi.<sup>16</sup>

Sarbat Khalsa which has literally meaning as “the entire Sikh Nation” became more and more powerful with the passage of time, initially challenged Mughals on the religious ground which was further empowered by the 10<sup>th</sup> Sikh Guru Guru Gobind Singh. Guru Gobind Singh recognized as founder of Sarbat Khalsa who called the first summit and the declaration of summit recognized as “gurmata”. Dal Khalsa on the behalf of these misls and Sarbat Khalsa launched a revenge campaign against the Mughals ruler, government officials and other employees and killed a lot of them. In all circumstances, the death of Banda Singh Bahadar under the Mughal custody, in the jail, fired the sentiments of Sikhs and religions campaigns united them for the effective and strong resistance which soon turned into rebellion and got a rid from the Mughal rule in their own areas.

and he called first summit who was not only religious head of Sikhs but also deeply participated in political affairs of Sikhs in 1708 and its decisions are called “gurmata”. After the death of Banda Singh Bahadur in 1716, the Sikh community was in disarray and chaos and Mughals sub rulers launched a revenge campaign against Sikhs while Dal Khalsa started retaliation by killing government employers, soldiers and plundering posts, arsenals and treasuries.<sup>17</sup>

Khalsa’s all around the Punjab sprinkling in militant actions and new commands and leaderships appeared on the screen as in 1720, Teja Singh was bestowed as “Jathedar” of Sri Akaal Takht Sahib, Taara Singh Waan replaced him in 1726. Sri Akaal Takht Sahib was further strengthened by the Sarbat Khalsa in 1745 when summit unanimously gurmata to organize 25 battalions each of them called Jathas and comprised on 100 militants. These Jathas

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<sup>16</sup> Mittal, Satish Chandra (1986). *Haryana, a Historical Perspective*. Atlantic Publishers & Distributors. p. 11.

<sup>17</sup> Singh, Patwant (2001). *The Sikhs*. (Doubleday). pp. 78–79

stood together against Mughals and on 29<sup>th</sup> March 1748, grumata of foundation of 11 misls under the Sikh confederation which J. D. Cunningham defined them as “theocratic confederate feudalism”.<sup>18</sup> The Sikh leadership once again joined their heads together once again on 29<sup>th</sup> April 1786 and passed another grumata by Sarbat Khalsa to establish ideological Sikh Empire by creating “Golden Temple” to lay the down first stone for the creation of “Khalistan”.<sup>19</sup>



**Figure 1: A map of 1780 of the Northern Punjab showing**

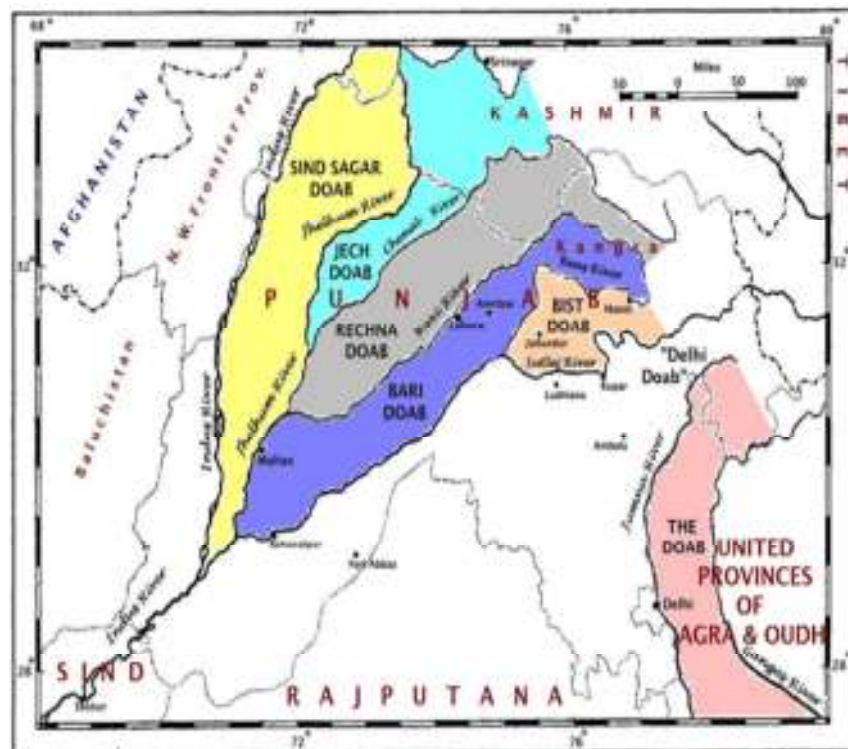
Dal Khalsa which was earlier divided into two main segments; the youngsters who were most under forty in age inducted in militant and fighter groups named “Taruna Dal” while the elders than forty years were named as “Budha Khalsa” and appointed to fulfil the responsibilities to care and look after the administration and managements of Gurdwaras as well as Gurmat preachings movement of the fighter troops and jathas, skill learning, defence

<sup>18</sup> Kakshi, S.R.; Rashmi Pathak; S.R.Bakshi; R. Pathak (2007), *Punjab Through the Ages*, Sarup and Son, p. 8,

<sup>19</sup> Giorgio Shani (2007). *Sikh Nationalism and Identity in a Global Age*. Routledge. p. 58.

strategies of the Taruna Dal.<sup>20</sup>

Dal Khalsa was established and divided into two main groups; the youngers (under 40) will be militants (fighting force) called Taruna Dal and elders were the part of Budha Khalsa who were responsible to run the management of Gurdwaras and gurmata preaching's, movement of the forces, defense strategies and aid Taruna Dal. First attempt for the foundation of Sikh Empire was initiated on 7<sup>th</sup> November 1760, when Sarbat Khalsa collectively issued gurmata to conquer Lahore and ordered Khalsa Dal to attack on Lahore.<sup>21</sup> An expedition was taken under the supervision of Mir Mannu in December 1748 and took the position outside Lahore city. As Ahmed Shah Abdali was expelled from Amritsar



**Figure2: A map of the Punjab region showing the different doabs**

<sup>20</sup> H. S. Singha (2000). *The Encyclopedia of Sikhism*. Hemkunt Press. p. 39

<sup>21</sup> Gurdeep Kaur (2000). "Political Ethics of Guru Granth Sahib: The Concept of State". Deep and Deep Publications. p. 141.



by Aram Rauni, the Dal became overconfident and overpowered but they were defeated by Abdali forces. As Ahmed Shah Abdali went to Kabul they seized again the Lahore in September 1761, Jassa Singh as appointed governor of Lahore entitled himself “Sultan-ul-Qoam (King of the Nation).”<sup>22</sup> From 1760 to 1809 Lahore city under the control of Afghans and Sikhs time to time irregularly.

After acquiring control over Lahore and appointment of Jassa Singh as governor of Lahore, mistrust, war for power and self-interest started amongst the Sikh misls. Initially, it was a cold war between Bhangi, Nakki, Dalewala and Ramgharia against Sykerchakia, karor Singhia, Ahluwalia and Kanhaiya. Rani Sada Kour of Kanhaiya dragged out the Phulkians and destroyed the Bhangis administration and assisted her son-in-law Ranjit Singh to become the Maharaja of Lahore.<sup>23</sup> The warring misls somehow weakened Sikh confederacy while many reconciliations and mediations taken place but they needed a healthy, brave and powerful authority who took the command of all misls and unite the confederacy and merged it into single power under union-kingdom. The most ambitious Sikh leader, Ranjit Singh was occupying the surrounding misls of Gujranwala and as he was assisted by Rani Sada Kour of Kanhaiya they defeated the Bhangi and declared Sikh Empire from Gujranwala which was established by his grandfather Charat Singh. By unification all misls, on 12<sup>th</sup> April 1801, Ranjit Singh announced himself as “Maharaja of Sikh Empire” and government of “Lahore Darbar”.

The Maratha-Sikh Treaty on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1785 was the first license of independent Sikh Empire in the eyes of many historians and analysts who believed that in that particular agreement British was mediator who brought Sikh and Marathas on the negotiation table. Obviously this agreement was foundation of small Cis Sutlej State to protect Scindhia Dynasty but in long run it was frightening of

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<sup>22</sup> Singh, Patwant (2007). *The Sikhs*. Random House Digital, Inc. pp. 87-99.

<sup>23</sup> Singh, R. N. (2003). *Historical Development of Sikhism: Religion to Politics*. Commonwealth Publishers. p. 105.

British's East India Company that how they were clearing their ground for advancement and reducing the resistance and making it lesser and lesser. In the argument they proclaim that some misldars from both sides did not observe the terms of that treaty.<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, mature leadership made another attempt to purify agreement to ensure their legitimacy and independence, albeit of very serious devoted efforts, the leaders could not reach to any fruitful outcome and the agreement notwithstanding the fact that turned against their interests and reality.<sup>25</sup>

British were on spike of strategic move, soon smelled the Sikh-Maratha unification, the waves of mistrusts and disagreements shaken the ground reality and brought Maratha once again in front of East India Company and resulted in 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Maratha war 1803-1805 and Uttar Pradesh fled from Marathas and went into the lap of East India Company and they played very closely with Sikh Empire and Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Arthur Wellesley, the first duke of Wellington, was the first person who pend down a treaty for safeguard the Company in subcontinent and secure the interests of British from the French and Russian forces. British knew the circumstances of their enemies who were preparing to launch intercontinental war against them. In such a crucial time they adopted the “Ring French Policy” which aimed to create a sphere around British Empire by declaring it as a buffer Zone which protect the British Indian Empire from outer Russian or French-Russian attacks. This was revealed on 7<sup>th</sup> July 1807 when Franco-Russian Treaty was signed and named a Treaties of Tilsit.<sup>26</sup> Arthur Wellesley drafted agreement granted full freedom to Maharaja Ranjit Singh clans to limited them in the east of Sutlej and expand toward north for their loyalty with the East India Company and General Gerard Lake.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Sen, Sailendra Nath (1994). *Anglo-Maratha Relations, 1785–96 Volume 2*. Popular Prakashan. p. 30.

<sup>25</sup> Chaurasia, R. S. (2004). *History of the Marathas*. P. 168.

<sup>26</sup> Lefebvre, Georges (1969). *Napoleon: From 18 Brumaire to Tilsit, 1799–1807*.

<sup>27</sup> Wellesley, Arthur (1859). *Supplementary Despatches and Memoranda*

### ***Who was Ranjit Singh?***

Ranjit Singh was popular as Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the son of Maha Singh and grandson of Charat Singh who established a small kingdom in Gujranwala. Ranjit Singh was born in Gujranwala on 13<sup>th</sup> November 1780 and got title as “Sher-e-Punjab (the loin of Punjab)” was the founder of Sikh Empire or Lahore Darbar which also known as Khalsa Sarkar. He started his career as warrior at the age of ten years along with his father Maha Singh and spent many years in battles against rebels, other misls and Afghans. The main ambition was his life was to extend the small kingdom of his grandfather Charat Singh. Luckily he was married in a family who already owned a misl Kanhaiya. With the struggle of eleven years in the battlefields, he defeated the Bhangi misl with the assistance of his mother-in-law and took the throne of Punjab as Sikh Empire at the age of 21 years. His empire grew and grew and took extension and extension and golden era of his rule was the time of 1836-1840.<sup>28</sup>

He assembled warring misls together and repeatedly defeated invaded outsider armies particularly Afghans. He took the rule in Kashmir in 1819 when he defeated the Afghans in Kashmir and adjacent areas under the command of Zorawar Singh and Ranjit Singh. Ranjit Singh was on highest fame in 1797 at the age of seventeen years when the Afghan Ruler Zaman Shah of Abdali Dynasty tried to conquer northern side of Punjab under the supervision of Shahanchi khan with 12000 Afghan soldiers. The battle was fought in the territory which was under the control of Ranjit Singh. Ranjit Singh’s warrior expertise helped to counter down invaded Afghan army and he defeated them badly, so, this victory was first regional recognition of Ranjit Singh amongst the Sikh misls in Punjab.

A year later, Afghan rulers sent another army expedition to conquer the snatched and adjacent areas of Punjab, this time,

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*of Field Marshal Arthur, Duke of Wellington, K. G.: India, 1797–1805. Vol. I. pp. 269–279, 319.*

<sup>28</sup> Chisholm, Hugh, ed. (1911). "Ranjit Singh". *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Vol. 22 (11th ed.). Cambridge University Press. p. 892.

Ranjit Singh did not react and allowed them to enter in Lahore. As they entered in Lahore, Ranjit Singh sieged them and blocked all the supplies and logistics of Afghan army and put of fire all the food depots and other supplies as well as all the crops in the field and all other things which could make a support to Afghans. This phenomenon made frustration, confusion and hopelessness among the Afghan soldiers and they fled away from battlefield and much of them ran away and some hid themselves in safe refuge in Lahore.<sup>29</sup> In 1799, Ranjit Singh reorganize his army which was about 25000 Khalsa and annexed 25000 Sikh soldiers from his mother-in-law's (Sada Kour) misl Kanhaiya and attacked on Bhangi Sikhs who were ruling on the main parts of Lahore, in this attack, Bhangi escaped and left the Lahore open for Ranjit Singh.<sup>30</sup> in 1800 some adjacent areas of Jammu also annexed in Lahore Darbar.

In very next year, Ranjit Singh declared his rule over the Punjab and the inaugural ceremony was organized by the Baba Sahib Bedi who was the descendant of Guru Nanak. This formation shows that the foundation was Lahore Darbar of Punjab State was communal State which was founded on the name of Sikhism and literally it was a Khalsa or Sikh State by all means. Although this day was celebrated in the edges and centers with the prayers of all religions who was settled under the rule of Ranjit Singh and these prayers performed in mosques, shrines, temples, churches and gurdwaras for the lasting of rule of Ranjit Singh as well as for his long life. This rule was officially declared as “Sarkar Khalsa”<sup>31</sup>. The Court of Ranjit Singh termed “Darbar Khalsa”,<sup>32</sup>. The currency of the

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<sup>29</sup> Singh, Kushwant (2011). "Ranjit Singh (1780–1839)". In Singh, Harbans (ed.). *The Encyclopedia of Sikhism*. Vol. III M–R (Third ed.). Punjabi University Patiala. pp. 479-487.

<sup>30</sup> Patwant Singh (2008). *Empire of the Sikhs: The Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*. Peter Owen. pp. 73-76.

<sup>31</sup> Harjot Oberoi (1994). *The Construction of Religious Boundaries: Culture, Identity, and Diversity in the Sikh Tradition*. University of Chicago Press. pp. 114-115.

<sup>32</sup> Jean Marie Lafont (2002). *Maharaja Ranjit Singh: Lord of the Five Rivers*. Oxford University Press. p. 64.

State was coined and issued in the name of Guru Nanak as “Nanak Shahi” (of the emperor Nanak).<sup>33</sup> One year later in 1802, he took the control over the entire Amritsar and defeated Bhangi Misl completely and here also acquired religious support by paying the homage at the “Harmandir Sahib Temple” and announced to rebuild it with marble and stone.<sup>34</sup> Slowly but gradually, Maharaja Ranjit Singh absorbed the smaller states and misls one after the other and annexed with Lahore Darbar under the command of two supreme army commanders; Zorawar Singh and Gulab Singh.

The expansion of Sikh empire which was empowered by the East India company due to two main reasons; first is to make the space between Russian Czars and British Indian Empire with a strong defensive State and secondly is to expel the Afghans to the corners and edges of the Kabul from the territory of the subcontinent. So, in the start of year 1806, Maharaja practically brought on the table of negotiation by East India Company to sign an agreement in which he assured them he would not have any intention to cross the Sutlej River.<sup>35</sup> Completely unaware from the British intrigue, Maharaja focused on the western and northern areas of the Punjab. He sent an expedition to Kasur in 1807 and merged into his empire after defeating Qutbuddin, an Afghan Chief. By making Lahore Safe from all around, Maharaja Ranjit Singh made his intention towards Khewra, Jhelum and other neighbouring areas of Pathovar region. Another main event took place when Dewan Mokham Chand, the Khalsa chief defeated the Afghani Chief Fateh Khan in Multan in 1813 and annexed it with Sikh Empire.<sup>36</sup> Soon after this event, Gulab Singh was set off on campaign of hilly areas of western Kashmir bordered with Jammu as well as he defeated

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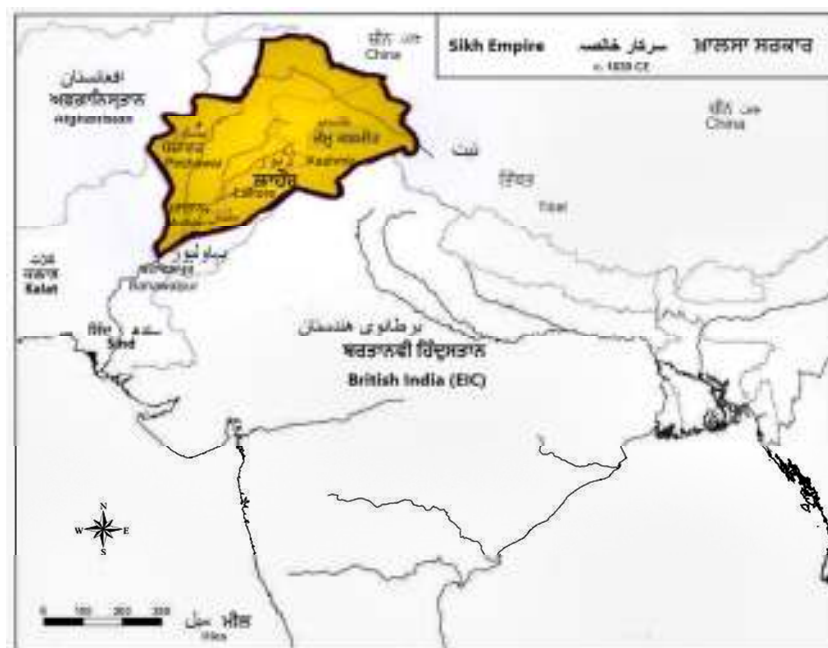
<sup>33</sup> J. S. Grewal (1998). *The Sikhs of the Punjab*. Cambridge University Press. pp. 114-119.

<sup>34</sup> Patwant Singh (2008). *Empire of the Sikhs: The Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*. Peter Owen. pp. 18, 177.

<sup>35</sup> Anita Anand (2015). *Sophia: Princess, Suffragette, Revolutionary*. Bloomsbury Academic. p. 12.

<sup>36</sup> Patwant Singh (2008). *Empire of the Sikhs: The Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*. Peter Owen. pp. 113-116.

Azim Khan, an Afghani leader. In next few years, the expansion and extension of Sikh empire stretched further in Poonch and Jammu territories. During 1818, Sikh armies defeated Jabbar Khan, an Afghan ruler from Multan and Lahore Darbar annexed with Multan territory. The most cruel and inhuman accident was happened in Mang area of Palandari of Poonch State where skin of alive Kashmiri leaders were dissected by Gulab Singh and his army. In 1819, the State of Jammu and Kashmir was handed over to Sikh after the minor resistance by the Afghan rulers in Kashmir and the land of Kashmir merged with Lahore Darbar and opened new passages for Muslim of Kashmir in Punjab.<sup>37</sup>



**Figure 3: The map of Khalsa Sarkar in Subcontinent.**

In 1823, Ranjit Singh forces followed the Afghan in Hazara region and defeated Yousafzai tribes till to the north of Kabul River.<sup>38</sup> The expansion of Sikh Empire extended from northern east by

<sup>37</sup> Singh, Khushwant (2004). *A History of the Sikhs: 1469–1838* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press. p. 299.

<sup>38</sup> Lee, Jonathan (2019). *Afghanistan: A History from 1260 to the Present*. Reaktion Books. pp. 170-190.

Gulab Singh as he reached to Lhasa, northern areas to Skardu and towards northern west side towards Peshawar to Khyber Pass until Afghan were expelled in the Battle of Jamrud. Maharaja Ranjit Singh on 25<sup>th</sup> November 1838 requested East India Company to participate the Grand Review at Ferozepur which was accepted by British and in those historical moments the troops of Dal Khalsa of Lahore Darbar and sepoy troops of East India Company marched together.<sup>39</sup> In the show of power, British gradually stepped down the Sikh Empire and made them limited as Gulab Singh was stopped from further advancement towards north and Ranjit Singh also asked not to follow the Afghan as they signed an agreement with East India Company. The tale of extension was stopped by Viceroy Lord Auckland who made a treaty with Shah Shuja on the condition that British forces from appointed on the banks of Indus River can entered in Kabul through Khyber Pass and soon established a base at Kabul.<sup>40</sup>

#### ***Geo-Demographics of Sikh Empire***

There were many army Chiefs behind the extension of Sikh Empire in which Dewan Mokham Chan, Hari Singh Nalwa, Zorawar Singh, Mahan Singh, Misr Diwan Chand, Dhian Singh, Fateh Singh, Teja Singh and Gulab Singh can be listed but the major achievement can be categorized into three portions; the foundational conquest was taken under the command of Maharaja Ranjit Singh himself, second category was towards western areas of Punjab was commanded by the Dewans, northern areas was conquered by Hari Singh Nalwa, Gulab Singh, Misr Chand Dewan and Mahan Singh and northeastern regions was conquered by Gulab Singh, Zorawar Singh, Dhian Singh and Heera Singh. Most of the historian claims that the after the establishment of Sikh Empire three prominent chiefs were Dewan Mokham Chand, Hari Singh Nalwa and Gulab Singh who got victory and annexed Kasur,

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<sup>39</sup> Perry, James *Arrogant Armies*, Edison: CastleBooks, 2005 pp. 109–110.

<sup>40</sup> Kenneth Pletcher (2010). *The History of India*. Britannica Educational Publishing. pp. 132-145.

Multan, Attock, Peshawar, Pindi, Sialkot, Hazara and Kashmir.<sup>41</sup> During the golden age of Sikh Empire was comprised upon current Pakistani and Indian Punjab excluding Bahawalpur as Mithankot was in South, Sutlej River in the east, DG Khan and Khyber Pass in the west while Indus River and Tibet on its north.

The area-wise control of Sikh Empire over the surrounding region can be determined as “Karyana, Kimachal Pradesh, Jammu Division 1808-1846, Valley of Kashmir from 5 July 1819 to 15 March 1846, Gilgit Baltistan 1842-1846, Ladakh 1834-1846, Khyber Pass, Peshawar 1818-1846, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Hazara to Banu 1818-1836 and parts of western Tibet 1841-1846 as Taklakot”.<sup>42</sup> The demographical profile of the Empire in the light of 1881 census determined the majority of the Muslim population was 51%, Hindu was 40% and the ruling elite Sikhs were only 8% and only 01% other religious people were present. This region was the 19<sup>th</sup> most populous State in entire Subcontinent by approximately four million population.<sup>43</sup> Hari Singh Nalwa and Gulab Singh much contributed to the extension of Sikh Empire and strengthening it by conquering and annexing Poonch, Jammu, Ladakh, Lhasa, Valley of Kashmir, Skardu, Baltistan, some areas of Chinese Turkistan, Chitral, Hazara, Peshawar, Murree and many adjacent territories. After the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh these territories was handed over to East India Company on 9<sup>th</sup> March 1846 after first Anglo-Sikh war and later down to Gulab Singh in Amritsar Treaty of 16<sup>th</sup> March 1846.

### **Conclusion**

The continuous struggle, work hard, bravery and good war tactics made Maharaja Ranjit Singh immortal and this Maharaja was decaled as “the Greatest Leader of All Times” by BBC<sup>44</sup> is an

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<sup>41</sup> Roy, K.; Roy, L. D. H. K. (2011). *War, Culture and Society in Early Modern South Asia, 1740–1849*. Taylor & Francis. p. 147.

<sup>42</sup> Kartar Singh Duggal (2001). *Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Last to Lay Arms*. Abhinav Publications. p. 131.

<sup>43</sup> Hans, Surjit (April 2006). "Why are we sentimental about Ranjit Singh?". *The Panjab, Past and Present*. XXXVII-Part 1: 47.

<sup>44</sup> "Maharaja Ranjit Singh named greatest world leader in BBC Poll". *The*



appreciation of his wisdom, ruling manner and bravery. He started his warrior journey from Gujranwala with few hundred Khalsa forces and reached on peak by a kingdom with more than 0.4 million square kilometer area and consider 2<sup>nd</sup> biggest army in the region of Indian Subcontinent. This king was praised by all the population with few exceptional cases of Muslim minority in entire region as ill-treated by the army commanders of Ranjit Singh. He was praised by the many English writers but could not assessed the British conspiracy and intrigue that how they captured him and used as a tool for their protection and safeguard. The British intrigue and tricks of East India Company were revealed when Maharaja Ranjit Singh was departure from this world and his heirs could not gather the administrative matters of the State. The Intrigues were slowly coming on screen in first Anglo-Sikh war when British received a heavy amount on the name of indemnification of the war.

The bankrupt status of the Lahore Darbar forced them to entrust the Kashmir and surrender from suzerainty of the State which decided in an agreement of 9<sup>th</sup> March after the second Anglo-Sikh war in 1846. This agreement vanished down the black days from Kashmir of Sikh who competed Afghan in viciousness, ruthlessness, nastiness, unfairness and biasness in Kashmir while Kashmiri believed that Sikh would heal their wounds. Kashmiris overall suffered monetarily, economically, socially, religiously, culturally and multidimensionally in all phases of life from bottom to top, individual to collectivity and consequence in massive displacement from Kashmir to other part of Punjab and subcontinent. This era was indeed a paradigm shift which favoured East India Company due to Sikh's less farsightedness. The Britin very positively, effectively and impressively won the great game and displaced their rival by the forces and efforts of third party without taking any tension and paying any penni in defence expenditures.

The Amritsar Treaty of 1809 between Ranjit Singh and East India

Company made temporary few joyful moment for the Ranjit Singh but in whole generation and descendants murdered, killed and died in conspiracy to weakening the Lahore Darbar while on the other hand British spy missions opened new horizons, potential and opportunities for them from Lhasa, Tibet, Khotan to Kashgar.