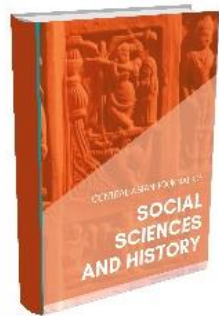




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## **An Analysis of Trade and Trade Routes in Jammu and Kashmir with Focus on Dogra Ruling Period**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Trade since century's weather it is land route or sea route has been an important means for a state not only to export goods and earn hard currency but also to connect with people of other places and regions. For this purpose, routes play an important role in facilitating the system of trade. Since, Jammu and Kashmir is a land locked region, only land routes were used to facilitate its trade with other regions. Due to its mountainous topography, the availability of such routes traversing these difficult terrains were in large number for conducting both inter and intra-regional trade. Traders and caravans through these routes exported and imported varied number of good ranging from salt, sugar, saffron, shawls, rice, walnuts, raw silk, oil, poppy etc which were in a great demand in these regions like in major towns and cities of Srinagar, Jammu, Anantnag, Leh, Gilgit etc. Therefore, our research intends to study it and the important patterns followed weather it is regarding the use of important routes, popular goods exported and imported during the reign of the Dogra rulers.

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The description of the state according to the Treaty of Amritsar on March 16, 1846, as, 'situated to the eastward of the river Indus and westward of the river Ravi'. Strategically constituting the northernmost extremity of India, Jammu and Kashmir is situated between 32.17' and 36.58' north latitude and 73.26' and 80.30' east longitude.<sup>i</sup> In order to conduct trade in Jammu and Kashmir there were in existence of a number of trade routes through which the trade was conducted. Some were of greater significance and some were of lesser significance according to the availability and maintenance. Frederic Drew in his work *The Jammu and Kashmir Territories* has given full description of about

routes numbering thirty. This includes routes such as from Jammu by Banihal to Srinagar, from Abbotabad by Muzaffarabad to Srinagar, from Mari to Srinagar, from Leh by Karakoram to Yarkand; summer route, from Palampur in Kangra by Kulu to Leh etc.<sup>ii</sup> On other hand Tarikh-e-Hassan mentions a total of twenty-seven routes<sup>iii</sup> and W. Wakefield mentions of eleven principal passes of which Pir Panjal, Baramula, Ferozepore and Banihal are described as the most important whose route lead to the valley from the plains of India.<sup>iv</sup>

In order to go to Punjab for the purpose of trade or travel, the people of Kashmir generally followed one or three old routes which took two or three weeks to complete the journey. The first was the Muree route which started from Srinagar to Deval via Baramulla and thence forward to Rawalpindi via Muree. While the distance from Srinagar to Baramulla was covered by a boat, that from Deval to Rawalpindi was done by a cart and consisted of eleven marches. The second route was the Pir Panjal route and was most popular among the pony men. Remnants of old Mughal sarais were still seen almost at every halting place. It led from Srinagar to Bhimbar and then to Gujrat. The high Pir Panjal pass (11,400 feet) had to be crossed on this route. The third was the Punch route. It passed through Uri and reached Thana Mandi which lay at a distance of seventy miles from Bhimbar although this route was not much used.<sup>v</sup>

Jammu was reached from Srinagar by a route which crossed the Banihal Pass (9,200 feet). After crossing this pass, the route descended to the Lahu Lari pass (8,200 feet), where the Chenab river was crossed and then to Dhansal (1,840 feet), where it led to Jammu. This was chief commercial route partly because Jammu was not far from Amritsar and also it remained open for more months during a year than some other routes.

Before further dwelling into detail regarding the trade and articles of production, we shall see the types of goods forming part of the exports and imports as described in Tarikh-e-Hassan who has put the total figure of the Kashmir trade at forty lakh rupees in Kashmir currency. The following is the list of important goods exported and imported into Kashmir.<sup>vi</sup>

### **Kashmir goods exported and imported from rest of India and Khorasan:**

**Exports-** kani pashmina, blankets, raw silk, apricots, oil, chequered carpets, pashmina thread, pashmina, ambri apples, rice, deodar timber, embroidered pashmina, saffron, walnuts, poppy etc.

**Imports-** English textiles, desi textiles, spun cotton, Bombay and Pahari tea, Punjabi salt, white sugar, spices, medicines, iron, copper, aluminum, zinc, pure cotton, raw and solid leather, Irani and Peshawari pens, scent, gun powder, dates, gold and silver etc.

### **Goods exported and imported from Yarkand, Ladakh and Lhasa to Kashmir:**

**Exports-** pure saffron, saffron dust, textiles, white sugar, qand and nabat, Kashmiri and Peshawari snuff, weapons, honey, til oil, paposh, Ataree medicines, cows, dwarf horses, brass etc.

**Imports-** Shawl wool, tosa wool, simple pashmina sheets, pashmina pattu, Yarkandi namdas, Khatakay textiles, Yarkandi Horses, Guldar Chinese textiles, green and black tea, Chinese medicines, Yarkandi carpets, Tibeti salt, Ushum textiles, sulphur, charas etc.

**Goods imported from Askardu to Kashmir-** Dry kishmish, black zeera, gul-e-sanjed, dry mulberry.

After the establishment of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, the amount of duties to be levied on the

goods was to be remained at the same level as before the Treaty of Amritsar, but due to it not being defined properly due to which duties on goods was increased gradually. This led to decrease in trade. Till, 1863 these rates were in force. On piece of goods the average duty was twenty percent on value, on metals sixty percent and on tea, sugar over hundred percent. This led to excessive pressure on Kashmiri goods and heavy burden on the natural route to the markets of East Turkestan. This matter was however, taken up between the Maharaja and the British officials and substantial reduction was made. By the treaty of 1870, all transit duty on goods for East Turkestan was abolished and great reductions were made on goods due to which on only few articles the rate of twelve and a half percent exceeded and rates were reviewed and modified from time to time. This in coming years showed the desirable increase in the value of trade of Kashmiri goods as shown by the civil and military gazette of 13<sup>th</sup> April, 1886 in the following table.<sup>vii</sup>

**Value of export of goods from Kashmir**

	<b>1862 (in Rupees)</b>	<b>1882 (in Rupees)</b>
Timber	3,00, 000	10, 33, 362
Woolen goods	60, 000	2, 72, 288
Shawls	12, 60, 000	11, 32, 185
Fruits etc.	33, 000	1, 04, 977
Grain	20, 000	88, 793
Raw Silk	7, 000	1, 03, 360
Ghee	1, 50, 900	10, 69, 363
Drugs, Spices etc.	1, 43, 000	3, 38, 311
<b>Total</b>	<b>19, 70, 000</b>	<b>41, 41, 638</b>

This table though not fully complete, gives us ample evidence of great strides that were undertaken in the field of trade within a period of twenty years. Many varied factors can be attributed to this increase in trade ranging from the reduction of duties and also improvement in the lines of communication between Kashmir and Punjab, tapping the great potential available in trade business.

Other, than the trade between state and other territories, inter-regional trade was also carried out between the provinces. It was carried mainly via the Banihal and Shopiyan as the Jhelum valley road was mainly used for the passenger traffic. The chief articles of import from Jammu were manufactured cotton, wool, grains and pulse and other articles of merchandise. The cotton cloth from Jammu was brought into Kashmir by the Kashmiri's when returning from Jammu or Punjab via Jammu, where they used to go and work as labourers in winter. On the other hand, the export trade from Kashmir to Jammu was carried chiefly on goods which mainly included fruits and vegetables, woolens, provision and other articles of merchandise. Ghee was the major item under provision. The other important articles of export were drugs and medicines, grains and pulses and hides and skins.<sup>viii</sup>

This inter-provincial trade although showed continuous decline in case of Jammu exports and marginal increase in case of Kashmiri exports. The value of exports from Jammu to Kashmir in 1905-1906 was Rs. 247,807 which declined in 1920-21 to Rs. 23,353. The value of exports from Kashmir to Jammu in 1905-1906 was Rs. 55,295 which increased marginally in 1920-21 to Rs. 94,278 which was generally fluctuating. This rapid decline and disfavour for inter-provincial trade can be attributed to growing trade with Punjab, which was certainly more profitable.<sup>ix</sup>

The Kashmir trade with Punjab which passed mostly through the Jhelum valley road and when it was closed, it passed through the Garhi Habibullah to Muzaffarabad route and through Jammu over Banihal pass.<sup>x</sup> The chief articles of import into Kashmir from Punjab were raw and manufactured cotton, tea, salt, sugar, grains and pulses, metals, oils, liquors, provisions, seeds, spices, snuff and tobacco, drugs and medicines, leather, manufactured silk, wood and woolens, dyeing materials, gunny bags and apparel. The trade figures shown by Walter R. Lawrence has provided us data from the year 1884-1885 to 1892-1893. In these trade figures of Kashmir which also include trade of Jammu territory, he had shown also trade of Punjab with Ladakh. In these figures the export of Kashmiri goods has shown a decline from the year 1884-1885 to 1892-1893, while the imports have shown an increase for the same period although the total value of trade has shown an increase from Rs. 93,09,131 to Rs.1,02,01,339.<sup>xi</sup>

In case of Ladakh, both exports and imports have shown a decline for the period 1884-1885 to 1892-1893 including the total value of goods exchanged which declined from Rs. 7,18,067 to Rs. 5,38,554 for the above period.<sup>xii</sup> The trade of Kashmir during the year 1891-1892 increased as compared to the previous year which could be attributed the opening of Jhelum valley road. Although, it again showed a decline the next year, which according to Wakefield was caused due to several factors which included bad harvest, less snowfall on the mountains, serious conflagration in the Srinagar city and occurring of severe epidemic of Cholera hindering all trade in the city and the valley.<sup>xiii</sup> The value of exports from Punjab to Kashmir in 1905-1906 was Rs. 4,267,332 which tripled to Rs. 12,713,868 in 1920-1921. While the value of exports from Kashmir province to Punjab which included articles such as timber, silk, fruits, ghee, wool and woolens, Kuth drugs and medicines, live-stock and charas amounted in 1905-1906 to Rs. 3,861,119 which in 1920-1921 increased to Rs. 9,764,978.<sup>xiv</sup>

Similarly, in case of Jammu the foreign trade was conducted mostly through the Jammu-Sialkot railway during the period mentioned below. The work on the railway started in October 1888 and was completed in 1890. It was opened for traffic on March 13, 1890. Similar efforts were made to link Kashmir with Punjab and surveys were conducted but due to high costs involved the project was not carried forward.<sup>xv</sup> The chief articles of import from Punjab included manufactured cotton, grains and pulse, sugar, metals, seeds, tobacco and snuff, fruits and vegetables, raw cotton, drugs and medicines, oils, salts, tea, apparel, leather, spices, dyeing materials, silk, wool and woolens, building material, provisions and liquors which in 1905-1906 amounted to Rs. 3,796,780 and in 1920-21 it increased by four times to Rs. 12,024,657.<sup>xvi</sup> Those exported from Jammu to Punjab included timber, drugs and medicines, provisions, live-stock, fruits and vegetables, grains and pulses, hides and skins, wool and woolens. The value of exports from Jammu to Punjab during the period of 1905-1906 amounted to Rs. 4,302,948 which increased to Rs. 7,135,544 in 1920-1921.<sup>xvii</sup> This increase in the trade of both Jammu and Kashmir provinces could be a major reason for the downfall of the inter-regional trade. This could be due to the improvement in the means of communication with the establishment of roads, railways and facilitation of feasible trade environment by the government.

Another, important part of the trade was with Central Asia. It passed through Kashmir between rest of India, Turkestan and Tibet via Leh. In 1904-1905 the total value of trade of this trade was 61.2 lakhs. During the ten years ending 1901 the average value was 44.3 lakhs, the maximum being 62.2 lakhs in 1895-1896 and the minimum figure being 30.1 lakhs in 1891-1892. The imports from Central Asia to Ladakh amounted to 17.8 lakhs of which of which the majority 14 lakhs came from Turkestan and the remainder from Tibet. Goods valuing 11.3 lakhs went to Punjab via Kashmir and also via Kullu. The

chief articles of imports included raw silk, Russian gold coins, raw wool and charas. The exports from Ladakh to Central Asia amounted to 11.4 lakhs out of which 10 lakhs went to Turkestan and rest to Tibet. The important articles of export were European cotton piece goods, coral, silk goods etc. The value of trade passing from the rest of India to Ladakh was 14.3 lakhs.<sup>xviii</sup>

Since, we are talking about period during the princely era, it gets pertinent to mention about the last decade of the Dogra ruling period. It is also important to underscore that during this period the First World War was taking place. Following data would get us a sense regarding impact of World War on the trade aspect. The total value of imports and exports during the period of 1939-1940 was 5,75,64,209 rupees.<sup>xix</sup> These are the figures when the war was in initial phase. In comparison to it, when we study the figure of 1942-1943, when the war was at its peak, there shows a drastic decrease in the value of trade, which is at low of 48,616,000 rupees<sup>xx</sup> with imports of goods and services outshining exports. The exports were just over one-third of imports. Therefore, this data clearly depicts the negative impact of war on trade of the former J&K state, affecting revenue collection of the government and reducing export earnings.

## Conclusion

Thus, we can conclude by taking into consideration the above data, the importance of trade in the economy of the former Jammu and Kashmir state. It cannot just be downgraded to the aspect of revenue collection. It affected the movement of peoples both across the border and within the state territories, resulting into cultural intercourse. It also proves incorrect the assumptions regarding the secluded nature of the state. The increase in the inter-regional trade also proved that, the government was serious about increasing the trade, which it facilitated by constructing new roads and railways for the easier movement of goods and services.

<sup>i</sup> Jyoteeshwar Pathik, *Glimpses of History of Jammu and Kashmir*, Jay Kay Book House, Jammu, 2016, page 2.

<sup>ii</sup> Frederic Drew, *The Jammu and Kashmir Territories*, Reprint, Gulshan Books, Srinagar, 2009, page 377 Appendix IV.

<sup>iii</sup> Ghulam Hassan Khuilhami, *Tarikh-e-Hassan Vol.1*, City Book Centre, Srinagar, 2014, page 145-161.

<sup>iv</sup> W. Wakefield, *Sketches of Kashmir and Kashmiris*, Shubhi Publications, Gurgaon, 2017, page 14-15.

<sup>v</sup> M.L Kapur and Sindhu Kapur, *Social and Economic History of Jammu and Kashmir*, Gulshan Books, Srinagar, 2013, page 271-272.

<sup>vi</sup> Ghulam Hassan Khuilhami, Op. Cit., page 276-278.

<sup>vii</sup> *The Civil and Military Gazette 1886*, quoted by D.C Sharma in *Documentation on Kashmir*, Jay Kay Book House, Jammu, 1985, page 110-111.

<sup>viii</sup> M.L Kapur and Sindhu Kapur, Op. Cit., page 292-293.

<sup>ix</sup> Ibid.

- <sup>x</sup> M.L Kapur and Sindhu Kapur, Op. Cit., page 296.
- <sup>xi</sup> Walter R Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, Gulshan Books, Srinagar, 2005, page 384-385.
- <sup>xii</sup> Ibid., page 385.
- <sup>xiii</sup> Ibid., page 386.
- <sup>xiv</sup> M.L Kapur and Sindhu Kapur, Op. Cit., page 300.
- <sup>xv</sup> Ibid., page 281-282.
- <sup>xvi</sup> Ibid., page 303.
- <sup>xvii</sup> Ibid., page 305-306.
- <sup>xviii</sup> Walter R Lawrence, *Kashmir and Jammu Imperial Gazetteer*, Gulshan Books, Srinagar, 2012, page 77.
- <sup>xix</sup> *Annual Administrative Report of the Jammu and Kashmir* (October 1939 – October 1940), Ranbir Government Press, Jammu, 1941, page 109.
- <sup>xx</sup> *Administrative Report of the Jammu and Kashmir State* (October 1941 - April 1943), Ranbir Government Press, Jammu, 1944, page 110-111.