

## CULTURAL IMPACT OF AFGHAN RULE OVER KASHMIR (1752-1819)

Amar Jahangir\*

Dr. Mirwais Kasi\*

Dr Muhammad Alam♥

### **Absrract:**

Kashmir, the fairy land, Heaven on earth, has a long history of different dynastical rules. It has been ruled by Hindus, Buddhs, and Muslims dynasties. Every dynasty has its own culture, which represents the identity of that dynasty. Culture is a way of living of the people of any community. The culture of Afghans and Kashmir is based on pure Islamic values. The present study is an attempt to explore the cultural impact of Afghan rule over Kashmir during 1752 to 1819. History revealed that during this period some cultural changes took place in Kashmiri society. Social Composition of Afghan Society, Women's Position, Early Marriages, Food and Drinks, Leisure activities (Sports/games), Issuance of the coin of Kashmiri saint, Theatres, Dramas and Music directly or indirectly influenced the Kashmiri culture. Kashmir was the land of peace and harmony, which accepted the different cultural changes with open hearts. This research is based on information obtained from secondary sources.

**Key words:** Kashmir, Afghan rule, Cultural impact, and Society.

### **Introduction to Kashmir:**

Kashmir is a land which is famous for its natural beauty, scenery and glory throughout the world. Its scenic spots, beautiful valleys, high snowy clad mountains, rivers with ice-cold water, ever-green fields, attractive lakes, springs, dense forests and beautiful health resorts, enhance its splendor and are the rich source of great attraction for tourists. It is a place to enjoy the natural beauty, trout fishing, big and small game hunting etc. in summer.

Generally there are different opinions about the Kashmir and particularly for the valley of Kashmir. Since the purpose here is not to write the detail history of Kashmir but to give a historical background just for the introduction, a mixture of different opinions was thought to be a basic opening. Different people explain the word "Kashmir" differently. Following are some examples in this regard.

1. According to the oldest text book of Kashmir, "Nilamat Purana", the Kashmir Valley was formerly a lake known as Satisar (Mir, 2011).

---

\* Lecturer, Institute of Kashmir Studies, University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Muzaffarabad 13100, Pakistan.

\* Assistant Professor, Department of International Relations, University of Baluchistan, Qta.

♥ Assistant Professor, Department of International Relations, University of Baluchistan, Qta.

2. Geographer Major Reonald and Mr. Fredic Andrew have acknowledged that the Kashmir was in the shape of great lake and has been reshaped due an earthquake near Baramula (Hashmi, 1993).

3. It is also interpreted, that the word Kashmir is a compound of two words, "Kash" and "Mir". "Kash" means Channels and "Mir" means mountain (Sufi, 1948). Therefore, Kashmir is a Land of channels and mountains.

#### Historical Background of Kashmir:

Kashmir has long historical significance of different tribes rule over Kashmir from 3180 BC (Fauq, 2003). It has been ruled by many Hindu and Muslim dynasties. Different Hindu dynasties ruled over Kashmir from 3180 BC to 1325 AD (Ibid, 2003). The history of Muslim rule over Kashmir begins from 1325 when RENCHIN SHASH embraced Islam, and was renamed as Sultan SADR-UD-DIN, followed by Shah Miri dynasty in 1343 for almost 211 years from 1343 to 1554 AD (Ibid, 2003). Chak dynasty ruled from 1554 to 1586 AD (Tishna, 2014). The Mughals ruled over Kashmir for 167 years from 1586 to 1752 AD. After them the armies of Ahmad Shah Abdali conquered Kashmir (Balooch, 2012). Afghan ruled over Kashmir for about 67 years from 1752 to 1819 AD (Sufi, 1948).

#### Objectives of the study:

The main purpose of the study is to describe the cultural contribution of Afghan rulers over Kashmir during their period. This Research work has following aims;

1. To examine the various aspects of the cultural history of Kashmir.
2. To identify the cultural contribution of Afghan rule and highlight the cultural impacts of Afghan rule over Kashmir.

#### Methodology:

The study has been conducted by the combination of all the available qualitative data, which based on the secondary sources regarding the past history and the period of Afghans rule over Kashmir.

#### Cultural Impact of Afghan rule over Kashmir:

Culture is the complex of belief, practices, knowledge, art, law, custom, morals, and other capabilities which acquired by the people as members of a society. In simple words there are different dynamics of culture, which refers to some changes in culture of a society. In cultural values we mostly considered the ideas and symbols which are linked with human groups. It is impossible that any society can be static because cultural changing in a society is a universal process. The cultural dynamics in a society is a very complex phenomenon. If the changing forces related to the social structure then it can be declared as endogenous. The rise of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism is a good example of endogenous change in religious ideology. The continuous changes in religious ideology are occurred with the advent of Islam from outside in the Kashmir society (Hussain, 2010). The spread of Islam in Kashmir science fourteen century during the period of Shahmiri

dynasty when Shah Hamdan came to Kashmir with seven hundred preachers of Islam from central Asia and settled in Kashmir. The arrival of the large number of Muslims from Central Asia established different cultural contacts and directly or indirectly affected that society and brought some social and cultural changes. Although this foreign impact brought some changes in Kashmiri culture partially because the links with past were not interrupted and Kashmiri refused to renounce their practices and beliefs completely (Sufi, 1948). Fourteen and fifteen centuries were continuously faced a conflict between those who refused to renounce their beliefs and who wished to adopt the Iranian way of life. Lastly, the conflict was resolved by old and new mixture which; resulted a new society with mixed ideas in sixteen and seventeen centuries. This research study is an attempt to explore the things of Afghan culture which directly or indirectly affected on Kashmir society.

Sociologists defined society as; it is a group of people with common territory, interaction, and culture. People of the same society share aspects of their culture, which refers to the language, values, beliefs, behavior, and material objects that constitute a people's way of life. Although the study of cultural structure of medieval Kashmir in regarding to Afghan's culture is very difficult because the data is not available in detail. The position of Kashmir under Afghan is covered in darkness. There is very short material available on Afghan's period in Kashmir.

During the time of Hindus the society of Kashmir was divided into four casts (Brahmans, Vaish, Khustri and shudder). Brahmans were occupy all the key positions in Kashmir during their times (Stein, 1968). After the advent of Islam the cast system in Kashmir society was completely disappeared. It was replaced by equality, justice, and harmony. No doubt, Islam provided a unifying force and leaving. The Sufis tried to remove all the gaps between different classes and proved their self as a bridge to establish the harmony in the society, but due to some functional and economical differences the real social equality could not be achieved in Kashmir (Mahibulla, 1967).

In the society of Kashmir numbers of people were living but it is impossible to mention the exact number of people, who lived in the valley of Kashmir during Afghan's period, as there is almost no reference to a census, taken at any time. Although the valley was populated and judging by the number of different villages exist until recently. In "Zafer Nama", it is mentioned that the earth was populated (Fazal, 1891). Saif Khan conducted the census in valley of Kashmir during the Mughals Period in 1670 AD. That census showed 1,243,033 souls in Kashmir, including 90,400 and 41,812 infantry and cavalry (Hassain, 1954). Except it there is no record of the population of Kashmir.

With the arrival of Afghan rule there is a prominent change in the valley of Kashmir. Many people were migrated from Kashmir valley due to political uncertainty and natural disasters. There are no records to show that how many people were lived in valley of Kashmir during this difficult time? We get some

hints from the dairies of some European travelers who visited the valley of Kashmir after the end of the Afghan rule (Bamzai, 1960). One European tourist "Moorcroft" mentioned in his dairy that the population of Kashmir valley was very short, a large number of the city of Srinagar was diminished, but also the villages and small towns were empty. this situation shows that the large number of people were migrated from Srinagar (capital of Kashmir) to a safe place or the grasslands of India and other countries.

### **Social Composition of Afghan Society:**

Afghan society of Kashmir can generally be classified into the different groups; like Ruling class of Afghans, Government Officials from Afghanistan, Landed Elite, Religious Elite, Farmers, and Village Professionals. The Afghan ruling class usually belonged to wealthy families and generally keeps the distance of the premises. After Afghan royalty the most influential class was government officials whose include Subedhars, Naib Subedhars, Diwan and a smaller group than Qaningo, Chowdhari, Mugdam, Amil, Amin, Kardar, Tehvildar etc. The landlord class of Afghan rule was included Zamindars, Jagirdars and Ijardars. This class played a very important role as a bridge between the formers and the state (Mushtaq, 2001). Qazis, Muftis, Sheikhs, Sayyeds, Sufis and Ulmas were considered as religious class. This class always keeps distance from commoners. Formers were the main source to increase the economy of the state of Kashmir. This class was very important but there position was not better than cattle. Skilled workers of the village were known as village professionals, they included Weavers, Barber, potters, carpenters, and shepherds (Ibid, 2001).

### **Women's Position:**

It is true that a woman constituted the soul of every human society, but unfortunately she has not been the subject of attention from researchers. Kashmiri women played very important role to promote the social, cultural, and religious activities. After the domination Afghans in Kashmir the social institutions were affected with the political de-stability and the women of Kashmir which once occupied an important position in Kashmir was entered in to the oblivion, darkness, ignorance, illiteracy, disease and addiction (Bazaz, 1959). The reaction and the protest against this injustice were expressed in any other way or in folk songs (Tang, 1987).

### **Marriages:**

The custom of marrying children at an early age came into fashion during the rule of Afghans (Bamzi, 1960). An Afghan would not abuse a married woman, however, enough, so the only remedy to save the person the honor of a married woman her young. Under the Afghan people generally subject to great difficulties for women, it has become the main target of his dissolute behavior. Kashmiri women without distinction of caste or religion were physically and spiritually broken; its presence in all spheres of social activity was completely overshadowed (Bazaz, 1959).

### **Food and Drinks:**

Since ancient rice was staple food of Kashmir. Therefore, their failure resulted in a famine. The rice was cooked in a variety of ways are usually cooked and then eaten, and some of them was kept overnight to be taken in the morning. The staple food in Afghanistan was rice, fish and various vegetables. They introduced Kashmiri foods Gashtaba, Kabab, Roganjosh later, Afghan bread and Kabli Pilao added in their foods and drinks on their own choices (Sufi, 1979).

#### Leisure activities (Sports/games)

During the middle age Polo was the very famous game in Kashmir which had a place of honor. Every large and small city/town has a polo field known as Chawgan. (The open plateau near Kishtwar town is still called Chawgan) The polo game was introduced from Gilgit in Kashmir where it is still famous and popular. Different other games were the part of that era like; single strikes and individual fights (Lawrence 1895). In line with available sources, the Kashmiris under Afghan have developed a unique range of leisure activities to offer comfort and solace in great psychological stress activities. These hobbies are canoe race, enjoying music parties during the summer evenings in the waters of the famous Dal Lake (Bamzi, 1960).

### **Issuance of the Coin of Kashmiri Saint:**

The most significant contribution of the Afghans, in the socio-cultural discipline that they issued the coins in the name of national poet saint of Kashmir (Shaikh Noor-ud-Din Rishi) in Kashmir by an Afghan Governor Atta Mohammad Khan (Tishna, 2008). Shaikh Noor-ud-Din Rishi considered a symbol of composite culture of Kashmir.

### **Theatre, Dance and Music:**

Although Persian influences were very prominent in the field of art and reached at high position during Mughal's period but after the inversion of Afghans in Kashmir, the process of degeneration was began in theatre, dance and music. However, the "Hafiza Nagma", and "Sufiana" were popular music and "Chakri", and "Bacha Nagma" were popular Kashmiri folk. This Kashmir folk and music gained a public recognition as a new popular entertainment. The "Dastaan Goi" or counting art plants in Kashmir has received a new impetus during the Afghan government lasts. People in rural Kashmir, especially during cold winter nights have managed to organize parties tell stories with one purpose reduce pain received as a result of the Afghan brutality.

### **Conclusion**

During the Afghan rule over Kashmir from 1752 to 1819, Kashmiris were suffered too much from the behavior of Afghans and other multiple factors. These factors brought some political, social, religious and cultural changes. In cultural changes they adopted the Afghan dress code "Shalwar, Qameez", compositions of Afghan society directly influenced the culture, position of women, early marriages

were common, food and drinks, issuance of the coin of Noor-ud-Din Rashi, leisure activities, art and folk songs, sufiyana kelam, music, theater and Dastan Goi commonly influenced the Kashmiri culture. Despite being Muslims, Afghans never accepted religion in the policy of the state. Most Afghan governors delegated from Kabul to Kashmir, often showed total disconnection from the center and it says a lot about your personality and fragile compromises. The wealth of thirst, power and authority marked the main features of governance to Kashmir. Women have preferred to stay at home and "purdah". It is equally true that this work help us to understanding the distinctive political behavior of rulers which influenced the culture of Kashmir during 18th and 19th century.

**References:**

- (1) Baloch, S. R. H. (2012). Ghazni se Kashmir tak; Dastan-e-merdan-e-hur Sudhans. Islamabad: Sudhan education information wing. p.66.
- (2) Bamzi, P. N. K. (1960). Political and Cultural History of Kashmir. India: New Delhi printing press. pp. 478, 519, 529.
- (3) Bazaz, P. N. (1959). Daughter of Vatista. Jammu and Kashmir: Srinagar Publishers. p. 16.
- (4) Fauqu, M. D. (2003). Tarikh-e-Kashmir, Lahore: Mushtaq Book Corner. pp. 53, 318, 425, 467.
- (5) Fazal, A. (1891). Aain-e-Akbari; english translation by H. Blockmann in 1973 & H. S Jarrett in 1993. India: Calcutta. p.353.
- (6) Hashmi, M. I. (1994). The Bleeding Kashmir, Karachi: Royal Book Company. p. 2.
- (7) Hussain, N. (1954). Indian Society and Culture: Continuity and Change. India: Jewar Publisher. pp. 4,5.
- (8) Khuihami, G. H. (1954). Tewarikh-e-Hassain. Research and Publication Department Jammu and Kashmir Srinagar. p.
- (9) Mahibullah, H. (1967). Kashmir Salateen k Ahed mein. Translated by Ali Hamad Abbasi. India: Azam Guds publications New Delhi. p. 174.
- (10) Mir, G. M. (2011). Jammu Kashmir ki Geographiya-e-Haqeeqtain , Rawalpindi: Royal Publisher. p. 21.
- (11) Stain, M. A. (1879). Sagas of Kashmir. India: Calcutta Printing Press. p.174.
- (12) Sufi, G. M. D. (1948). Kasheer. Lahore: Punjab University printing press. p. 297.
- (13) Sufi, G. M. D. (1979). Islamic Culture in Kashmir. New Delhi: light and life publishers. p.
- (14) Tang, M. Y. (1987). Kashur Culture Luk Betan Hendis Enes Munas. UK: Anhar Kashmir Department of Kashur.
- (15) Tishna, N. A. (2008). Araq-e-Jammu and Kashmir. Urdu Bazar Lahore: Al Faisal Publishers. p. 150.
- (16) Tishna, N. A. (2014). Tarikh-e-Kashmir. Lahore: Al Faisal Publisher, Ghazi street, Urdu Bazar. p. 111.