



RESEARCH PAPER

An Over-View of the Literary Evidence of Afghan Rule in Kashmir

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ABSTRACT

Kashmir was ruled by the Afghans from 1752 to 1819. This period is mainly recognized for its literature contains historical evidence. The determination of this study is to evaluate the historiography of “Afghan Rule” in Kashmir. The historians who have been writing about the 18th and 19th centuries think that the literary evidence of Afghan rule in Kashmir can be understood within the context of an intermittent of power struggle. Tribally minded people fought against proponents of a proposal to establish a secular state run by a centralized, unbiased bureaucracy under the control of a dictator. The comprehension of the time period's political and cultural aspects does not seem to have been a priority for the historians. The political system and political dynamics of the Afghan Rule are still unknown because of the odd nature of the chronological evidence that has survived from that time. This is an attempt to highlight the literary evidence of cultural history of Afghans over Kashmir. This study depends on the on secondary sources.

Keywords

Afghan Rule, Kashmir, Cultural History, Historiography and Literary Evidence

Introduction

In 1752, Ahmad Shah Abdali occupied Punjab a third time. Following his victory over the governor Muin-ul-Muluk, he threatened the entire region of Northern India. Kashmir was being controlled at the time by Abdul Qasim Khan. He declared himself king in order to topple Mir Muqim Kanth. A few days later, Ahmad Shah Abdali received an invitation to invade Kashmir from two disgruntled Kashmiri leaders, Mir Muqim Kanth and Khawaja Zahir u Din Didamiri, who sent their agents. (Parmu, 1969) The Afghan king had previously planned to conquer Kashmir, thus this presented him with an opportunity. To capture Kashmir, he sent 15000 soldiers under the command of Abdullah Khan Ishaq Aqasi. At Shupiyan, the Abdul Qasim Khan army faced up against the Afghan army. Abdul Qasim Khan was defeated and transported to Kabul as a prisoner. Abdullah Khan Ishaq Aqasi entered Hari Parbat (Nagar Nagar) and established Afghan sovereignty in Kashmir. (Dar, 2019) For 67 years, Kashmir was fully governed and under Afghan sovereignty. Kashmir was governed by 28 Afghan governors and deputy governors. (Sufi, 1948) First Afghan to lead Kashmir was Abdullah Khan Ishaq Aqasi. He spent a total of six months in Kashmir. In Kashmir, he began the era of dictatorship. He cruelly exploited the people of Kashmir. He murdered a lot of Kashmiris in order to extort money from them. He used torture to obtain a large sum of money—1,000 rupees—in one instance. (Parmu, 1969) He brought back a huge amount of loot to Kabul by wrecking the economy of Kashmir, and made things very difficult financially. He damaged the renowned Mughal gardens and other notable monuments; he deprived Kashmir of

its rich cultural qualities, history, and tradition. People of all socioeconomic levels suffered because of Abdullah Khan Ishaq Aqasi. Due to the simmering anger of the populace he left the country after giving the control of the administration to Khawaja Abdullah Khan as his deputy, and Sukh Jewan Mal as the secretary. (Dar, 2019)

Background of Literary Culture in Kashmir

Historically literary culture of Kashmir is one of its most outstanding features. The Kashmiri writers have left wonderful record of historical paragon in the shape of books and scripted documents with a clear awareness of its historical relevance starting with Kalhana in the 12th century Kashmir and continuing up to the present day. The learned and knowledgeable men who preserved the custom by leaving behind a sizable volume of script material in the Persian during the Mughal and Afghan era were inspired by the writings of previous chroniclers. Since then, Afghans have acknowledged the Persian as the court language, continuing its formal support. Both Hindu and Muslim writers from Kashmir created numerous historical works on a wide range of topics, with a heavy emphasis on capturing Kashmir's political history. (Banzai, 1994) Since that time, Persian has continued to be recognized as an official language and acknowledged in the Afghan courts. Kashmiri writers, both Hindu and Muslim, wrote a large number of books on focusing the political and social history of Kashmir. (Mir, 2011) It is substantial to recognize the literary history especially during Afghan rule in Kashmir. In this study cultural history will be examine for the understanding of cultural impact on Kashmiri society. Sufficient consideration has been given to the ancient and medieval history of the Kashmir however from eighteenth century onward it is more or less ignored by historians. Some of the studies which look at the period after eighteenth century also do not show a comprehensive glimpse of this time.

Literature Review

The current research is focused on the contribution of Afghans in the field of literary work in Kashmir. Although, it's critical to go over all of the published and unpublished research on the problem and location in question but the available literature in the form of books, research articles, and other relevant texts helped in writing of this research work. The information on the subject was collected from different libraries of the State. Considering the available literature on the said topic, the justification for re-writing the history and filling the gap, to highlight the literary evidence of cultural history of Afghans over Kashmir needs more emphasis.

Literary evidence and Afghan Rule

Different historians wrote about the Afghans in Kashmir which has a significant place in the line of literary evidence about Afghan Rule in Kashmir. Some of them are as under:

Kasheer by Ghulam Muhammad Din Sufi

“Kasheer” is a most recent work from the ancient times to the present on Kashmir history is a very important source of literature written by G. M. D. Sufi. The scope of this book is so comprehensive that it was impossible to use all the original references. His description of afghan period in Kashmir is somewhat discriminating and lacks the historical perspective. (Tishna, 2014) No systematic endeavor has been made to create the historical literature on Afghan rule in Kashmir, despite the fact

that we can discover some information about Afghan brutality in a variety of chronicle and historical books. There has not been a real attempt to study and assess the information that has been made available in this local literature, despite the fact that historians of Kashmir and other writers have documented the several manifestations of Afghan government in Kashmir. In accordance with the most recent guidelines for historical research, this study intends to provide accurate and current historical records of evaluating the time period, as well as all historical artifacts and semi-historical information, and so presents the history of Kashmir.

Majmu-e-Tawarikh by Pandit Birbal Kachru

"Majmu-e-Tawarikh" is a remarkable contribution of Pandit Birbal Kachru in the literary history of Kashmir which highlights the history of Kashmir from ancient time to Sikh rule in Kashmir. The chapter 07 of this work is entitled as Afghan period in Kashmir. The author elaborates on the unique culinary preferences of Kashmiris while evaluating the significance of geographical elements in the establishment of socio cultural tastes. For example, the widespread use of the "Kashmiri Namkeen Chaye" (salt tea), also famous as "Nun Chai", indicates that the work goes into great depth on this beverage. The author attempts to set its distinctive genesis against the social and environmental backdrop of Chinese Turkestan. He uses names of locations where salty tea is used lavishly, like Kashmir, such as Tibet, Yarkand, Khotan, and Kashgar, to bolster his claim. The historian discusses the therapeutic benefits of these salty drinks, including numerous popular Kashmiri "Chai" drinks. (Mir, 2011)

Bag-e-Suliman by Mir Sadullah Shahadabi

"Bag-e-Suliman" is also a Persian manuscript which occasionally discusses saints and Sufis and how they influenced Kashmir's history. This is the most important source of knowledge on the events that took place under the Afghans' rule in Kashmir, in addition to being a commentary on the Sufis and saints. (Kaw, 2001) The author also shows how the property tax system contributed to food shortages and how, even when there didn't seem to be any crop failures, each farmer was given the opportunity to keep half of his harvest because he was liable for paying for village upkeep and filing costs. Only by taking part in this discussion will the history of the Afghan rule in Kashmir be fully understood. The history of Afghan administration in Kashmir would be inadequate without an orientation to mentioned chronic, even though it appears that the author mostly drew information from Kul Ajiz Narain and Mohammed Azam, who lived in the pre-Afghan era. (Mir, 2011)

The agrarian system of Kashmir 1586 to 1819 by Mushtaq Ahmed Kaw

"The agrarian system of Kashmir 1586 to 1819" demonstrates this shade of grey, burdening them disproportionately as farmers migrated from Kashmir in mediaeval Kashmir, Afghans. Additionally, it emphasizes over taxation. Numerous farmers have moved away as a result. Sand provides yet another explanation for the agricultural problems that Kashmir experienced under Afghan administration. This form of social responsibility is the product of the illegal actions of the mediaeval state and its agents to maximize their efficiency, the catastrophic effects of natural calamities, and the serious 'beggars,' (Mir, 2011).

Gulshan-e-Dastur by Pandit Nath

"Gulshan-e-Dastur" is a famous book of Pandit Nath in Persian language and acts as an encyclopedia because it covers nearly every facet of Kashmiri history during the time of Shah Ahmed Durrani. (Kaw, 2001) This work focuses on the essential elements of revenue management, with a focus on Afghan-era revenue management and related difficulties. The author provides a suitable foundation for determining the causes of the agrarian crisis in Kashmir during the 18th and 19th centuries by detailing the agricultural structure in Kashmir and every facet of it. Even with natural disasters like floods, taxing was the worst part of the secrecy. Farmers as a result moved out from the Punjab and out of the nation. There was a feeling of oppression, worry, and tax exemption. Farmers who are unable to fight back against this oppression just seek out methods to leave, which puts pressure on migratory farmers. According to him, farmers disregard taxes based on their capacity to pay when they support current approaches to determining the economic obligations of communities. Nath Pandit, the columnist's author, claimed that when farmers were taken from their communities due to unpaid debts, takavi seeds were borrowed and returned by citizens in accordance with local customs. (Mir, 2011)

Gaohar-e-Alam by Muhammad Aslam Munami

"Gaohar-e-Alam" is extremely valuable information about the socio-economic conditions of Kashmir in the 18th century. In the same work, the Munami describes the terrible consequences of the raids by residents of Muzaffarabad and Poonch, which were responsible for Kashmir's political change of guard. This ended up being one of the main causes of the Mughals' downfall in Kashmir, and it helped lay the groundwork for Afghan dominance to take hold after that. The Mughal emperor Shah Alam II, who ruled from 1785 to 1786, is honoured in this historical narrative. In terms of the work's early section, it appears to be a condensed version of the writings of Mohammad Azam Diddamari and Narain Koul Ajiz. Although the author claims to have read the Nur-Nama, Hassan Qari, and Muhammad Azam's narratives, the disputed chronicle has certain errors. He doesn't offer any new knowledge, though, and his convoluted, awkward style occasionally leads him to assert things without any supporting data. (Mir, 2011)

Keefyat-e-Intizami and Mulk-e-Kashmir by Ramjoo Dhar

"Keefyat-e-Intizami, and Mulk-e-Kashmir", is a Persian manuscript which provides an insightful analysis of the characteristics of the culture of Afghans in Kashmir. Inadvertently massive political chaos, court collusions, and conflicts of awareness amongst Afghan central government and provincial powers are revealed in the work. The author indirectly draws attention to the flaws in the Afghan administrative system, which in large part gave the discontent and alienation of the populace legitimacy, despite his apparent lack of interest in identifying the covert forces that provided the basis for political vandalism in Kashmir while the Afghan government (1752-1819) was in power. (Mir, 2011) The author compiled this work around 1883 and describes the Afghan rule in Kashmir in detail in one of its chapters. (Kaw, 2001)

Wajizut Tawarikh by Ghulam Nabi Khanyari

"Wajizut Tawarikh" contains crucial information about the location of the region, making it a very useful source for researchers looking at Kashmir's history

from the standpoint of historical geography. According to the tradition of other mediaeval chroniclers, the author provides in-depth details on the many natural calamities that Kashmiris had to deal with throughout the Middle Ages, notably during the reporting period. The estimated losses from these frequent famines, fires, earthquakes, and floods give adequate information regarding the severity of human suffering as well as the official indifference that has always made the pain and suffering far worse. (Kaw, 2001) Kashmir is dotted with shrines and blessed with the blessings of the souls, and its elevated and enlightened saints have always been highly revered by exalted souls who adored it. According to their customs, the Kashmiris continued to erect "aastans" shrines in their honour over the graves of these revered individuals even after they vanished. Without noting these saints' contributions to and effect on Kashmir's sociocultural past, it is impossible to comprehend the region's genuine historical context and the spirit that gives it its unique personality. A succinct but comprehensive overview of the lives of many saints and Central Asian natives who settled in Kashmir is provided by the author in the work under discussion. This password was created while Atta Mohammad Khan, the head of the Afghan Independent movement, governed Kashmir (1806-1813). The report of Mughal Mir Syed Izzatullah is extremely helpful in comprehending the background of Moorcroft's travels. He travelled with Moorcroft before him from Shah Jahan Abad (Delhi) to Kabul and the heart, stopping in Kashmir, Ladakh, Kashgar, Yarkand, Badakhshan, Khoistan, Bukhara, Samarkand, Khulm, and Kunduz. Additionally, it covers Kashmir's geographical characteristics and traces the history of its rulers beginning in ancient times. (Mir, 2011)

Tawarik-e-Hassan by Ghulam Hassan Khuihami

"Tawarik-e-Hassan" is the most extensive and well-organized book of Persian sources in Kashmir. It is an encyclopedia because it covers nearly every facet of Kashmiri history. This book is divided into four volumes, and it is essential that all four volumes be read in order to understand Kashmiri history from its proper perspective. The author has written a unique volume on the subject since they are completely aware of how geography, topography its archaeological remains, flora and fauna, inside and outside business, agricultural sources, and irrigational accomplishments, etc., shape history. Same volume's author has drawn attention to the Afghan and Mughal governments' approaches to collecting land taxes. This book is a summarized version of primary materials such as Wakat-e-Kashmir by Mulla Mohammad, Brahistan-e-Shahi, Wakat-e-Kashmir by Khaja Mohammad Azim Didamari, Tarikh-e-Haider Mulki Chandroo, Bagh-e-Suliman, Musktassar Tarikh, Gulzari-e-Kashmir, Tarikh-e-Nararn. (Mir, 2011)

Traveler's Biographies during Afghan Rule

A very useful source of information regarding Kashmir during the era under study is travel accounts from Europeans, especially British nationals, who visited the valley on vacation or on business. Its intrinsic importance is inherent in this literature. It expresses opinions held by Europeans about the administrative, social, judicial, and commercial realities of the day. It demonstrates how different intellectual and social classes of European tourists responded to learning about Kashmir's harsh realities. Important travel accounts are as follow:

A Journey from Bengal to England through the Northern part of India, Kashmire, Afghanistan, and Persia, and into Russia by George Forster

In 1783, George Forster landed in Kabul. His report is separated into two parts; book II begins in the Bangal and finishes in the England, then it is this work that provides a full account of the circumstances in Kashmir at the time, making it especially useful for our research. According to authors, only fruits of Kashmir are originated in other portions of Indian continent. However, mention lakes, rivers, streams and other water resources of Kashmir have not fugitive the attentions of writer. The account provides ample insight into the springs, fruits, gardens, flowers, and various kinds of trees. These bodies of water were used for internal trade and communication, however the authors claim that the brutality of Afghans felt on these channels, etc. According to this writing Kashmiri mans in general and women in particular were victims of the Afghan violence. As a result of this menace, both Muslims and Hindus preferred early marriages to protect their daughters from child molestation. In addition, the author has suggested a number of careers for women. His findings about Kashmiri women are generally not positive. He claims that Afghans were unable to remove this sentiment among the people but were undoubtedly impacted even if it was not entirely eradicated. He claims that Kashmiri people love independence and want to love every second of life, even if they just receive 20 rupees. It provides upsetting details of the atrocities carried out by Afghans against Kashmiris in order to achieve their goal. As a result, it helps us comprehend how severe ruling culture and an alien power structure have shaped the collective mentality. We can therefore draw the conclusion that George Forster's description is very helpful in understanding the background of Afghan control in Kashmir. Given that this is the only explanation that was written throughout the period that precedes our study period. As a result, it has great value. Even though the author shown ignorance regarding some occurrences, it is clear that he exaggerated other events. When we contrast certain of Forster's events with those of contemporary authors, we find that they are not even addressed. These incidents have some oral testimony supporting them. Because it sheds light on virtually every element of Kashmiri society and living under Afghan authority, the report is still very useful. (Mir, 2011)

Travels in the Himalayan provinces of Hindustan and the Panjab; in Ladakh and Kashmir; in Peshawar, Kabul, Kunduz, and Bokhara; by William Moorcroft and George Trebeck, from 1819-1825.

End of 1819 saw the start of William Moorcroft's voyage. He had no trouble asking Ranjit Singh for permission to enter his realm. It's possible that Ranjit Singh's plan to travel to Ladakh inspired him to later begin a second military strategy to subjugate all of the eastern Himalayan kingdoms, including the Ladakh and Baltistan. Professor Horace Hayman Wilson edited two volumes contain a description of Moorcroft's travels. His observations on the people and circumstances in Kashmir throughout the latter years of the Afghan authority are quite valued. Also shed light on the agricultural, judicial, revenue arrangement and military security. He similarly references the connections between Khakha and Bomba people and the Afghan and Sikh kingdoms. But most interesting and deserving of further study are his unmistakable insights into the economics and commerce of shawl-wool and the shawl industry. (Mir, 2011).

Travels in the Himalayan provinces of Hindustan and the Panjab; in Ladakh and Kashmir; in Peshawar, Kabul, Kunduz, and Bokhara; by William Moorcroft and Letters from India: Describing a Journey in the British Dominions of India, Tibet, Lahore, and Cashmeer during the Years 1828, 1829, 1830, 1831 by Victor Vincelas Jacquement

Jacquement, a famous philosopher displayed a significant passion for natural history from a very young age. He was able to distinguish between the reasonable and ludicrous due to his impartial excellent sense. The Royal Museum of Natural History of Paris finally gave him the go-ahead to look into the natural history of India. In order to complete his objective, he arrived in London in 1828. The Royal Asiatic Society provided letters of reference for whatever assistance he might require in India. In 1829, he arrived in India, and Lord William Bentinck provided him with a number of letters of introduction that allowed him to be welcomed and helped by all the people he met who proved beneficial. His studies here included the nation's history and some significant languages. On referring to relationships between Sikhs and Afghans, he asserts that the latter are "an aggressive nation that has so many times occupied India and can bring thirty thousand mounted troops in the field." He says immediately, "The days of Timour and Ghazni are past. Only marginally more powerful than Sikhs, the Afghans can at most occasionally confront Ranjeet Singh in fight. He regulates his army in a way that is typical in Europe, and the majority of his officers are from France. According to him, there is a sizable colony of Kashmiris in Ludhiana who knit shawls that are comparable to those from their own country but typically of lower quality. He wrote the following in reference to the conquerors of Kashmir and their overall impact on the nation: and amid the lulls of peace, chaos, and oppression, they devoted their all to work and industry. Due to the complete destruction of the nation in 1831, the destitute Kashmiris appear hopeless and have developed into the laziest individuals. Shortly after describing the general government and the condition of the people in 1831, he writes, "Kashmir transcends all imagined poverty for me." (Mir, 2011)

Conclusion

As many cultures coexisted under the Afghan dynasty's rule, there were notable changes in both their kingdom and their citizens during the Afghan era. However, Kashmir eventually came to be identified as Kashmiri. The Afghan Empire will live on via the art, culture, and architecture of its monuments in Kashmir. But there are also a lot of other Afghan achievements that haven't gotten the credit they deserve. The historical literature during Afghan Rule has a significant importance in Kashmir. Important knowledge gaps are filled by the historical literature from the Afghan era. Resuming research on these priceless writings may enlighten us to important details that have been missed for ages. Based on a careful examination of the sources under consideration, we are inclined to think that these writings provide insightful analyses of the various facets of administrative and social history of Kashmir throughout the Afghan era. A wide range of factors, including agricultural productivity, spending patterns, income management, natural disasters, Kashmir imports, religious elite, mass immigration, and Afghan social, political, religious and cultural development in Kashmir, are advantageous to the researcher. The books and the traveler's historical biographies under consideration offer a genuine regional perspective, in contrast to Mughal history writers published by the non-Kashmiri authors. It is true that the chronicles frequently give the impression of being influenced by personal prejudice and affection, which causes a large number of prejudices in the story and a disregard for fundamental historical standards. In the light of the foregoing, it can be said that knowledge of Kashmir's socioeconomic profile throughout the Afghan era is particularly beneficial. Although there are certain shortcomings, this source is maybe the only one that provides information on the family dynamics at the time.

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