

M.A. HISTORY

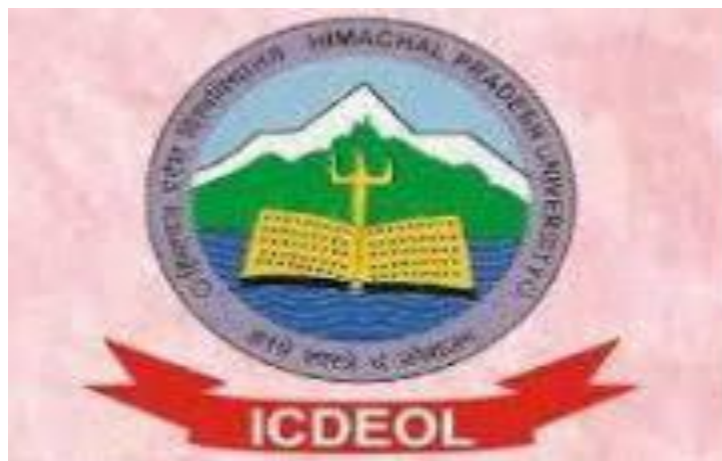
(Third Semester)

Course- HIST 332

History of Himachal Pradesh from Pre-Historic Times to 1971

Lessons 1 to 15

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SYLLABUS

History of Himachal Pradesh from Pre-Historic Times to 1971

Core Course-HIST 332

Third Semester

Course Description

Regional history has been suggested as an active way of history learning and has become popular with debates on globalization and postmodernism in recent years. It will review relevant literature to elicit the potential benefits and problems of using regional history. Throughout this course students will analyze and demonstrate knowledge of the history, or change over time, of the regions, comprise of present Himachal Pradesh. The history of this region is complex and fragmented, Students shall examine the different stages of social and political transformation. Students will assess the historical importance of Himachal history and culture besides various changes in size and administrative form between 1948 to the achievement of statehood in 1971. The course also focuses the regional styles of art and temple structures, the methods and techniques.

Course Learning Outcomes

After completion of this course, the students will be able to

- a. Identify the social, political and economic transformation
- b. Appreciate the region as results of historical evolution
- c. Think about the region's formation and changes
- d. Emphasize integral consideration of various factors that affect the course of history
- e. Examine the relationship between one region and other regions
- f. Reveal certain rules of historical development in by presenting logies of historical developments of all regions

Unit - I

1. Regional history and the regions in history
2. Survey of sources of Himachal history
3. Pre and Proto-history of Himachal Pradesh

Unit -II

4. Tribalism to state formation
5. The emergence of early medieval states in Himachal Pradesh: Chamba (Champak), Kangra (Trigarta) and Kulu (Kuluta)
6. Hill states and external powers: Relations with Delhi sultans, Mughals and Sikh chiefs

Unit - III

7. The Gorkha invasion: Process of repulsion and consequences of the Anglo-Gorkha War of 1814-15
8. Under the British reorganization of the hill states, grant of sanads and territorial aggression
9. The uprising of 1857 and Himachal. The questions of begar, beth dhoom, jugga and reer

Unit - IV

10. Popular protest in Himachal Pradesh with special reference to Praja Mandal movement
11. The birth of modern Himachal, 1948-71
12. Artistic and cultural heritage: Temple styles, Buddhist architecture, school of pahari painting

Essential Readings

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Suggested Readings

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Unit-I
Lesson - 1

Regional History of Himachal Pradesh

Structure

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 Objective
- 1.2 The People
- 1.3 Occupation
- 1.4 Self Check Exercise
- 1.5 Conclusion
- 1.6 Glossary
- 1.7 Answer to Self Check Exercise
- 1.8 Suggested Readings
- 1.9 Terminal Questions

1.0 Introduction:

Discovery of stone implements by anthropologists and archaeologists in the Banganga-Beas valley of Kangra, Sirsa-Sutlej valley of Nalagarh-Bilaspur, and Markanda valley of Sirmur, is a sure evidence of the existence of prehistoric man in these regions of Himachal Pradesh. These sources do not yet help to determine as to who were those prehistoric inhabitants. It appears that the aborigines of these hills are today identifiable among the members of the various scheduled castes and tribes who form a considerable part of the population. These people are represented by such castes as Kolis, Halis, Chanals, Chamars, Dagis, Baris, Dhakis or Turis, Lohars Rehars, Hesis Sipis, etc. These people form the lowest socio-economic strata of the hill society. They are ordinarily short in stature and dark in complexion. It is possible that they came from the original stock of the Kolarian 9 (Kols) race which once inhabited the whole of the western Himalaya. These classes form in many respects one of the most interesting sections of the Himachal community. Politically they have not been very important, but they embody that great mass of such aboriginal element as is still to be found in the hills. Their customs are not only exceedingly peculiar but also exceedingly interesting 'affording us a clue to separating the non-Aryan element in the customs of other tribes. The agriculture of the region is almost entirely in their hands and a great deal of the hardest part of the field work is performed by them.

1.1 Objective:

- 1. To understand the regional history of Himachal Pradesh
- 2. To discuss the cast system of the region

3. To explain the importance of regional history

1.2 The People

They are of non-Aryan origin but through inter-caste marriages, much social interfusion has taken place. This process of ethnic intermixing is still going on. It doubtless has led, in course of time, to many changes in appearance and characteristics of the people and to it again, we may ascribe the fact that they exhibit traces of the features of the Aryan family of languages. Kolis, Dumnas, and Meghas are the only castes having names with ethnological character, but many of the other castes are now distinguished by their occupational names which may also have sprung up from the source as the kolarain race. In others words, it can be said, that those kolis who have taken to some particular trade, are called by that trade name therefore, the distinction between the kolis and other menials is merely occupational. These people are mostly artisans and work as cobblers, basket makers, irons smiths, carpenters, weavers, drummers and tailors. Kolis are industrious and thrifty cultivators. They are manly and of independent outlook but at the same time, indolent most of them cultivate land and a few are good weavers. In some parts of the state, the kolis are generally known as halis and sepi, the former term is in use in Chamba. In Kullu region Koli Dagi and Chanal means very nearly the same thing, but the term 'Koli' is more common in Saraj, Shimla hills and Sirmur, whereas, largely Chanals inhabit Mandi, Kangra and Sirmur. The Barhi better known as Tarkhan in Eastern Himachal and in Kangra, is the carpenter of the region. He is a village wood worker, mends all kinds of agricultural implements and household furniture and also works as mason to build houses in the rural area. In Kinnaur, Domangs work as carpenters and blacksmiths.

Lohars, Sunars and Thatheras are metal workers. The Lohar of Himachal is, as his name implies, a blacksmith, pure and simple. He is one of the village menials, receiving customary dues in the form of a share of the produce, in return for which he makes and mends all the iron implements of agriculture, the materials being provided by the husbandman. Sunar is the goldsmith and the silversmith, and the jeweller of the village. He is also to a large extent a money-lender, taking ornaments in pawns and making cash advances upon them.

Thathera is the man who makes the vessels of copper, brass and other mixed metals. The word seems to be merely the name of an occupation and it is probable that the claim of most of the Thatheras of their belonging to some mercantile caste is true.

The Kumhar is the potter and brick-burner of the country. He is a true village menial, receiving customary dues, in exchange for which he supplies all earthen vessels needed for household use.

The Dumna, called Dum in Chamba, is found in large numbers in the submontaine regions of Kangra and Shimla hills. His working material is bamboo. Like the Chuhra of the plains, he is something more than a scavenger, but whereas the Chuhra works chiefly in grass, the Dhuma adds to this occupation the trade working in bamboo, a material not available to the Chuhra. He makes sieves, winnowing pans, fans, matting, grass rope and string, and generally all the vessels, baskets, screens (chiks), furniture and other articles which are ordinarily made of bamboo.

Rehar or Rihara appears to be very closely allied to the Dumna. He works in bamboo like the Dumna. Found only in the hills he appears to be confined to the Kangra and Shimla hills. In the later, he is described as a herdsman, but he also makes bamboo baskets like the Dum. Like Hesi, he travels about as a strolling minstrel. He is said to make the trinkets of the brass metal, worn by the Gaddi women. He furnishes the music at Gaddi weddings, and other festivals, and works as a navy. Sepi is a weaver of the Gaddi tribe, found in the Brahmaur region of the Chamba, and is virtually the same as the Hali. He is of a low hill-caste whose castemates are professional shepherders. In some places the weavers are called Banaur. In Kinnaur the weaving and shoe making work is done by Chamang.

The Chamar is the tanner and leather worker of the hills and is in some parts called Mochi. The name Chamar is derived from the Sanskrit word Charmakara or worker in hides. But in some places, he is a far more than a leather-worker. He is, in General, a labourer and a field worker in the village. They serve their master during all kinds of jobs, such as cutting grass, carrying wood and bundles, acting as watchmen, and the like, and they plaster the houses with mud when required. They make and mend shoes, make thongs for the cart yoke and whips and other leather goods, and above all, they do an immense deal of hard work in the fields. All this they do as village menials, receiving fixed customary dues in the form of a share of the produce of the fields. In some places, the Chamars also do a great deal of weaving, which however is paid for separately. They are generally dark in colour, and are almost certainly of an aboriginal origin.

Turis, also known as Dhakis in some places, are agriculturists, but their distinctive occupation is music and dancing. Thus, they are usually to be found at a village which has a temple. They also generally do sewing work. In Spiti, the desi appears to share with the Turi or Dhaki the distinction of being the minstrel. The hesis are the wandering minstrels of the higher Himalayan valley. The men play the pipes and the kettledrum, while women dance and sing and play the tambourine. They are (in Lahaul & Spiti) the only class that own no land. Ordinarily a beggar, but sometimes he engages in some petty trade. The Hesi or Hensi is found in Kangra, Mandi and Suket.

1.3 Occupation:

The distinction between a koli and the other menials is mainly occupational. Agriculturally, all are of the same standard as the koli. With time more have taken to agriculture. Today with the spread of education and better communication, the new generation has started discarding the ancestral profession and is shifting to agriculture, horticulture, industry, and employment, etc. Therefore, it can be said that the various to the indigenous stock and in the course of time have undergone certain changes in their original characteristics.

The second and perhaps the most important element in the population of Himachal Pradesh is their Khasha complex. The Khashas originally are from an Aryan tribe of Central Asia which entered western Himalayas through the north-west even before the hymns of Rigveda were composed. They settled in the mid Himalyan belt from Kashmir to Nepal. Later, they were driven deeper into the interior hills by the advancing waves of immigrants from the south.

Khasha people were without caste and class distinction. But with the passage of time and under alien influences, they split into numerous sub-sections and clans. Kanet is one among such important sections. They are identified with the kunindas or kulindas of ancient Sanskrit classics. They are a mixed race sprung from the Khasha, who, even before the coming of the Aryans into the plains of India, occupied the whole sub-Himalayan tract from the Indus to the Brahmaputra, and who, driven up into the hills by the advancing waves of immigration from the south, now separate the Aryans of India from the Turanians if Tibet. The kanets are divided into several sub-castes or Khels. Some of the caste names are said to indicate the name of the founder of the household, others indicate the place from which their ancestors had migrated. Apart from the Khels, there are certain broad divisions of the tribe, which, in spite of modern tendency towards equality among all Kanets, are still clearly traceable.

They are tall, look strong and active, and generally have handsome figures. Many of their women have fine eyes, with a mild and gentle expression on the face. Men on the whole have the advantage of regularity in their features. The finest of these men are found in Kullu and Shimla hills. It is the women who most of the field work, with the exception of ploughing, but in return they have more liberty than the women of many other parts of India. They attend all the fairs and festivals held periodically at every temple in the area. At these fairs, members of both the sexes join for singing and dancing together.

The Kanets are fairly good and careful cultivators. They are generally honest, peaceful and law-abiding people. Allied with the Kanets, are the Rathis and Thakurs. The former are mostly found in Kangra and Chamba and the latter throughout the State and comprise more than one half of the total high caste population, being in fact the people par excellence of these hills, Sir J.B. Lyall says: "There is an ideal current in the hills, that of the land-holding castes. The Thakurs, Rathis, Kanets and Girths are either indigenous to the hills or indigenous by the half blood and that the Brahmins, Rajputs and others are the descendants of invaders and settlers from the plains. This popular idea probably indicates the true origin of the Thakurs and Rathis."

There can be little doubt that as a hill people, they are anterior to the Brahmins and Rajputs who came from the plains at a latter period, and it can be safely concluded that the oldest strata among them are descended, either directly or by the half-blood, from the early Aryan colonists of these hills. The earliest Khasha Aryan immigrants intermarried freely with the aborigines, resulting in a fusion of the two races from which may have originated the various low-caste tribes now forming such an important part of the population. But the continuation of this fusion was not at all times uniform, and the later waves of immigration may have remained more or less isolated, forming the nucleus of the Aryan community which now comprises the thakurs and Rathis. While this was probably the origin of the tribes, it is certain that the general opinion regarding them is also well founded. According to this opinion they have received large accessions from the other castes, either by defection from among the Rajputs or by amalgamation of these castes with the low castes. This is the general belief among them and their family traditions also tend to confirm it.

The Thakur people, however, are large in number than can be satisfactorily accounted for in this way, and it can be concluded that in latter times, a large number

than can be satisfactorily accounted for in this way, and it can be concluded that in latter times, a large number of people were received from other higher castes, especially from the Rajputs, by intermarriages and other connections. It is also possible that many Rathis have assumed the name Thakur for in some parts of the hills the two names are regarded almost synonymous. On the whole, however, the Thakurs rank a little higher than the Rathis. These people are strong and robust of frame, also patient and industrious and inured to toil. At the same time, they are not unwarlike and many of them prefer to join the armed forces.

The Rathis are essentially an agricultural class and are mostly found in Kangra and Chamba regions. The Rathis and Girths constitute the two great cultivating tribes of Kangra proper and the hills below it. They fill much the same position there as do the kanets in the eastern parts of Himachal Pradesh. In all level and irrigated tracts, whenever the soil is fertile and produce exuberant, the Girths abound, while on the poorer uplands, where the crops are scanty and the soil demands severe labour to compensate the husbandman, the Rathis predominate. It is as rare to find a Rathi in the valleys as to come across a Girth in the more secluded hills. The Rathis generally are a robust and handsome race. Their features are regular and well defined, the colour usually fair, and their limbs athletic, as if exercised and invigorated by the stubborn soil upon which their lot is thrown. They are devoted to agriculture, not unacquainted with the use of arms, and are honest, manly and industrious.

The Girths form a considerable part of the population of these hills. They were concentrated in the valleys of Palampur, Kangra and Rihlu. They are found again in the Haripur valley and are scattered elsewhere in every part of the district, generally possessing the richest and the most open lands in the hills. They are subdivided into numerous sects.

The Girths are a most indefatigable and hard-working people. Their lands yield double crops, and they are incessantly employed during the whole year in the various processes of agriculture. In their dealing with one another, they are honest and truthful, and altogether their character, though less peaceful and manly than that of the Rathi, has many valuable traits.

Like Kanets, the Rao also sprang from the Khashas, but Alexander Cunningham opines that Rao is a branch of Kanet. He assigns them to the lower Paber, the Rupins and the Tons valleys and Anderson, to the Saraj area of Kullu.

For quite a long time, Khashas remained isolated from the people of India, and had themselves formed a defined relative status and inter-dependence. Outsiders often ridiculed them on account of their strange customs.

Khashas are generally tall and handsome and have fair complexion, hazel eyes, curly hair and regular proportional features. Their culture has been deeply impressed by their contact with the Dums, whose aboriginal cultural life resembles that of the many tribes of pre-Dravidian origin. This is the main reason why their social life and religious beliefs do not conform with the religious beliefs of the Hindus of the plains, though they claim to be Hindus. As against the Hindus of the plains, the Khashas re-marry widows and have made divorce legal. Although they worship Hindu gods like Shiva and Vishnu, they prefer their own deities, demons and spirits, stones and weapons for worship.

When they go to the temple for worship, they offer sacrifices, sing religious songs and burn incense, etc. They also raise stone-memorials which appear to be a relic of a cult of some aboriginal culture. All this goes to prove that the religion of Khasha is a blend of Hindu and tribal beliefs.

The main occupation of these people is agriculture and live stock raising. Horticulture is also becoming very popular among them. The educated are now taking to other professions like trade and industry. A fraction of their population is also going for technical jobs.

Rajputs and Brahmins entered very late on the racial arena of Himachal Pradesh. They came from the Indian plains, from time to time and for a number of reasons sometimes as an adventurer or at times in search of security. The other important reason of such immigrations was the location of holy places in and around Himachal.

The major clans of the Rajputs are Katoch, Rathor, Sen, Parma or Panwar, Chandel, Bhatti, Gehlote or Sisodia, Chauhan, Tanwar or Tomar, etc. They have descended from the ruling families founded centuries ago by the adventurer princes from the Indian plains. Each clan comprises numerous sub-divisions. As the family size increased, individuals left the royal house to settle on some estate in the country, and their descendants, though still retaining the generic appellation of the race, are further distinguished by the name of the estate with which they are more immediately identified. Sometimes, though not so frequently, the designation of the ancestor furnishes a surname for his prosperity. Thus among the Katoches are Gulerias of Guler; Dadwals of Datapur, Jaswals of Jaswan. Similarly, The Sens of Suket are Suketia, and of Mandi, Mandial. The Chandels of Kahlur-Bilaspur are known as Kahluria. The Rajputs of Jubbal, Rawingarh and Balson are Rathores. Panwar or Parmar and Tanwar or Tomar are mostly found on Solan, Simur and few in Kangra. Bhatti Rajputs live in and around Nahan. Sisodia are sparsely distributed in Tharoch and Dhadi pockets of Shimla district. Pathania Rajputs are mostly from Nurpur and adjoining Kangra region. Their clan name is Tanwar or Tomar.

Besides, there are Dhatwal, Patial, Jerial, Jamwal, Minhas, Jinderotia, Jasrotia, Mankotia, etc. Most of these clans migrated in the past from Jammu hills and settled in Chamba, Kangra and other parts of Himachal Pradesh. Another class of Rajputs, who enjoy great distinction in the hills, comes from the descendants of ancient chiefs or Ranas, whose title and tenure are said to have preceded that of the Rajas themselves.

The descendants of all these noble houses are distinguished by the honorable title of Mian. When approached by other people, they receive the peculiar salutation of Jai Dia, offered to no other caste. Among themselves also, the same salutation is exchanged. The Minas make by far the best soldiers of all Rajputs. Soldiering has been their hereditary occupation from time immemorial, and they regard all other occupations as unworthy of them. Their soldierly spirit always remains undiminished, and in spite of their poverty, they maintain their martial spirit and bearing. Their pride prevents them often from admitting their poverty, and the Mian will often starve in silence rather than lower himself to the subordinate position of a husbandman. It is said that the title of Mian was conferred on them by a Mughal Emperor because of the distinguished courage with which they had served the imperial throne of Delhi.

The Rajputs fall into an upper and a lower class. The former do not themselves plough the fields, their farm work is done either by hired servants or by tenants who pay them batai or fixed rent. The latter work in their fields, and are called halbahu or the ploughers. However, under the compulsions of the present day economic strains, the majority of land-owners have been forced to take to agricultural work.

The Rajputs are indifferent cultivators, and are extravagant and indolent. They are strict and orthodox in their customs, and prefer service to other occupations.

The Brahmins in the State may be divided into three groups. The first group claims to be descended from those Brahmins who accompanied the Rajput rulers from the Plains. They are pure Gaur Brahmins and form the chief priestly caste. They avoid agriculture and refuse to handle the plough. Some have taken to trade and service.

The second group comprises the Sarswat and Kanyakubj Brahmins. They are descended from the original Brahmin inhabitants of the state, but have now begun to intermix with the Gaur or the Brahmins of the first group. They accept wives from the agricultural class of Brahmins also. They are less grasping and quarrelsome than the Gaur. They are also much less rigid in the observance of caste rules, and would eat and smoke in the company of most of the Hindu castes, such as Banias, Kharris, Suds and Kaiths. Unlike Gaur Brahmins, they eat meat also.

The third group comprises the agriculturist Brahmins who are looked down upon by those of the higher classes. These Brahmins are indifferent cultivators but owing to their miscellaneous earnings, say as priests of the village gods, they are generally in fair circumstances.

The high caste Hindus like Kharis (Banjahi, Handa, Kapoor, Malhotra, Saini, etc.) Kaisthas, Karars, Mahajans, Suds and Bohras migrated to the hills during the Muslim invasions of north India from the twelfth to the seventeenth century. These are mercantile classes. Practically, they hold the whole commerce of Himachal Pradesh in their hands. Almost the whole of the mercantile and commercial transactions of the State, excepting as a general rule petting, hawking, and peddling, are conducted by one or the other of this caste. Numerically, the most important of these commercial classes is that of the Khatris, in whose hands the petty trade of the State is mostly confined, and with them rank Kaiths, Karas and Suds. The Kaith of the hills is not the same as the Kaith of the plains. He belongs to the Vaisya, or the commercial class, and ranks with Mahajans.

The territorial distribution of these people is very well marked. They mostly live in towns and large settlements where they can easily carry out their business. Khatris are mostly concentrated in Mandi, Kangra and Chamba, whereas, they are sparsely found in other parts of Himachal Pradesh.

In the hills, every money-lender or shopkeeper is apparently called a Bohra (from the same root as beohar or trade). It will be noticed that in those hill areas, where Bohras are numerous, Banias are hardly represented in the census returns, and vice versa; and there can be little doubt that both the Banias and the Bohras shown for the hill areas are the same as the Mahajans. Mahajan means 'great folk' but this term in the hills really refers to an occupation rather than to the name of any caste; and it appears

that a Brahmir. Shopkeeper would be called a Mahjan whereas in old days, a Mahjan Munshi was called a Kaith.

The Sudes are generally found in Kangra and in the hills to the south of it. From Kangra they moved to other parts of Himachal Pradesh. Some of the Suds trace their origin from Sarhind. Origin and History of Suds mentions that Ahmed Shah Abdali invaded India seven times. Every time, the largest was Sarhind, as it was an important trade centre. The invaders used to link it with Kabul regime, but on his return, it again used to be taken over by the local rules. Disgusted with the loot, plunder and political instability, some families migrated from Sarhind to the mountainous regions and 52 sub-castes came into existence, mostly after the names of the villages, they settled in, such as Bajwaria, Mahdoddia.

The Suds are almost wholly mercantile in their pursuit though occasionally they prefer to serve as doctors, engineers, lawyers and high government officials, and do enjoy an important social status in the hill society. Justice Tek Chand in his introduction to the aforementioned book mentions that 'The Sub Community has a high sense of service, dignity and duty. I have never come across a Sub begging alms or trying to make out a living by ignoble or dishonorable means. Poverty has never robbed him of his dignity or self-respect. By and large the Suds are found to be hardworking and industrious and whenever business, trade or professions have been taken up by them, They have earned good opinions, respect and confidence of the people with whom they have come into contact'. They are of good physique, and are an intelligent and enterprising caste with great power and self-restraint.

The Gujjars of Himachal Pradesh are mostly pastoral and live a purely nomadic life. It is generally held that soon after the Hunas came the Gurjaras, the ancestors of the Gujjars, who may indeed, have come along with them, though the Gujjars are never heard of until near the end of the 6th century. AD as the records frequently bracket them with the Hunas. From the social point of view, their invasions are equally important. They effected the racial composition of the northern Indian people. After the loss of their political power in India, the nomadic Hunas and Gujjars settled down in the country. They married Indian women and were ultimately absorbed in the Hindu Society.

It is impossible, without further investigation, to fix the date of the Gujar colonization of the lower Himachal Hills. They must have entered the hills before the time of conversion of a great mass of them to Islam. Some Gujjars date their conversion from the time of Aurangzeb, it is probable date. Thus, the Gujjars are Hindus as well as Muslims. A Muslim Gujar is a nomad, and therefore, has no settled home in any part of Himachal Pradesh, although the state government has made efforts to permanently rehabilitate him at various places in the State. Today Hindu Gujjars mostly lead a settled life, abandoning the nomadic mode of living.

The wealth of Gujjars consists of buffaloes, as that of the Gaddis consists chiefly of sheep and goats. They live in the skirts of the forests and maintain their existence exclusively by selling milk, ghee, and other produce of their herds. During the hot weather, the Gujjars usually drive their herds to the upper ranges, where the buffaloes rejoice in the rich green grass which springs up during the rains. Thus, their cattle attain

to healthy condition in the temperate climate and avail immunity from the venomous fies which torment their existence in the plains.

The Gujjars are a fine manly race. With peculiar and handsome features. They are never known to be thieves. Their women, who are, as a rule, tall graceful in figure, are supposed to be not very scrupulous. Their habit of frequenting public markets and carrying about their stock for sale, unaccompanied by their husbands undoubtedly exposes them to great temptation.

The Hindu Gujjars are mostly found in the Mandi and Bilaspur districts, Paonta tehsil of Sirmour district and Kangra district. They follow the Hindu religion and social ceremonies and beliefs. Hindu Gujjars are however agriculturists and many of them lead a settled life. As mentioned earlier, the Muslim Gujjars lead an unsettled pastoral life.

The Gaddis are the most remarkable race of the hills. In features, manners, dresses and dialects, they differ essentially from the rest of the populations. They reside mainly on the slopes of the Dhauladhar and its spurs. Their principal agglomerations are found in Bharmaur area of Chamba district. A few of them have wandered down into the valleys which skirt the base of this mighty chain of mountains, but the great majority live on the heights above: they are found at elevations from 1,500 to 2,500 meters.

They preserve a tradition among themselves that their ancestors originally came from the Panjab, and that during the horrors of the Muslims invasions, the people of the cities fled from the open country before their invaders and took refuge in these ranges, which were then almost uninhabited. The term Gaddi is a generic name, and under this appellation are included Brahmins, Khattris, and a few Rajputs and Rathis. The majority, however, are Khattris, and the sub-divisions of this caste correspond exactly with the tribes among the Khattris existing in the plains of the Punjab at the present day.

They are a semi-pastoral, semi-agricultural race. The greater portion of their wealth consists of flocks of sheep and goats, which they feed half the year (the winter months) in the valleys of Kangra and for the other half drive across the Dhauladhar range into the territories of Chamba. They hold lands on this side of the range and also in Chamba. And in former days, were considered subject to both the princely states.

Many Gaddis cultivate the winter crops, as that of wheat, in Kangra, and returning with their flock grow summer or rain crop at Bharmaur. They all wear woollen clothes, which they make from the fabric woven at home out of the wool from their own flocks.

The Gaddis are a simple and virtuous race; they are remarkable, even among the hill population, for their eminent regard for truth. Crime is almost unknown among them; their women are chaste and modest. Like all the inhabitants of mountainous regions, they are frank and merry in their manners. They constantly meet together, singing and dancing in a style quite peculiar to them. They are great tipplers, and at these festive meetings, the natural hilarity is considerably enhanced by deep potations. In person they are a comely race. Gaddi women are well-known in the Himachal Himalayas for their beauty. An open air life, milk diet, and Khatri descent their good looks. Their features are regular and refined, noses are straight, eyes are bright,

complexion is olive-white, and expression mild and engaging. Unlike the Rajput and Brahmin women of Palam valley. They are bright and cheerful, and some of them really look like queens of the mountains. Their beauty is the theme of many a hill-song and even Raja Sansar Chand (1775-1823), the well known patron of Kangra painting, fell in love with Nokhu, a pretty Gaddi girl and made her his queen.

The Gaddis are primarily a shepherd race of the hills. But of late, a tendency has developed among them to seek permanent settlement. Some of the Gaddis have tried to secure technical posts in Government service.

The people of the upper reaches of Kinnaur, Lahaul and whole of Spiti, locally known as the Bhot, are akin to the people of Western Tibet but are usually short statured. They are perhaps the descendants of those who migrated under adverse political and economic conditions from Tibet in the ninth and tenth centuries. There exists evidence of the migration of people from Zaskar and other parts of Ladakh to Spiti. The Spitians are Buddhists by religion while the cantons of Lahaul and Kinnaur are half-Buddhist and half-Hindu with an overthick varnish of Hinduism. The people of Kinnaur, Lahaul and Spiti used to migrate along with their livestock to the lower hills in the cold months. This practice is now almost dead.

Agriculture, supplemented by animal husbandry and trade is the main occupation of the people of Kinnaur, Lahaul and Spiti. Some of the Kinnauras and Lahaulis are highly educated and hold high posts in the State Government Departments.

Besides, there are scores of other scheduled castes and tribes in Himachal Pradesh. Those belonging to these groups constitute a considerable portion of the State's population. The majority of the population of Himachal Pradesh is of Hindus but Buddhists, Jains, Sikhs, Muslims, and Christians, also live with respect here. The people of all groups enjoy perfect freedom to pursue their own way of life, customs, conventions, and beliefs. Perhaps here we find the best example of mutual co-operation, tolerance and cultural harmony.

The people of Himachal Pradesh are amongst the most delightfully colorful in the world. They are humorous and light-hearted even in adversity, and are fond of good living and almost entirely without guile. They are, as a rule, good looking. Most of them have delicate and well formed and are simple and unsophisticated. They are simple, honest almost to a fault. Offences, involving even thefts, are rare. They have generally a great regard for truthfulness.

Except for a few towns, there is hardly any urban life in the hills though of late urbanization is a fact growing trend, and the people live mostly in the villages consisting of a few hamlets dotted over the fields. The villages are found whenever an area of arable-land exists, sufficient to support a few families. Occasionally, a solitary house, locally called dochhi or doagri, may house a family, and it may stand on a small patch where there is no room for more. As a rule, however, there are several houses together, though the villages are always small. They are large down there in the valleys than on the slopes where the soil is poor and less productive.

Each village stands in the midst of its own area of cultivation. In the flat lands, the houses are generally on the same level, higher up they are arranged in tiers, one above

another. In the higher mountains, great care is taken in the selection of village sites to avoid risks from falling rocks and avalanches.

The houses are generally square or rectangular in shape, The favorite aspects are towards the east or west, facing the rising or setting sun, but this feature is often disregarded. A northern aspect is usually avoided. In the lower hills, houses are usually single storied with thatched roofs, while in the upper regions, there are generally two and more storied houses with slate roofs. In the highlands, however, the houses are double storied, the ground floor or basement being used for keeping cattle. The roofs of these houses are flat.

The people of Himachal Pradesh, as a rule, depend on agriculture for living and keep big herds of goats and sheep. More than ninety per cent of the people living in village earn their livelihood directly or indirectly from agriculture. Mostly, there are terraced cultivated fields in the altitudinal zone. Kangra, Bahl and Paonta are the famous valleys. They love taking their cattle out into jungle for grazing and singing there merrily to the music of a flute.

The villages are generally self-sustained units. Every village has a temple where people congregate for common worship. The village gods are carried in palanquins, on a number of occasions, to places of religious interest or village fairs. When in trouble, the people go to the deities to seek guidance and help. The village god is supposed to watch over the destiny of the village. He protects, rewards, threatens and punishes the people, while they, in turn, worship him by singing and dancing.

In the sphere of social relations, an important feature is strong family affinities. They are firmly attached to the joint family systems. Their environment has, in fact, greatly influenced the social status of woman. The sturdy and self-reliant woman of the Pradesh enjoys a greater degree of freedom than her counterparts elsewhere in India. She rules her husband and she likes to rule alone. It is a very common proceeding at betrothal to bind the future bridegroom by a mutual agreement not to take another wife unless his first proves barren or becomes maimed. Armed with such an agreement, and fully conscious of her value to her husband as a field worker and a domestic drudge, as well as a mother of children, the woman is the mistress of the situation, for If her husband proves distasteful to her, there is nothing to prevent her from saying goodbye to him and finding a better companion and living a happy life. The striking feature of the women here is their heavy costumes and jewellery. They enjoy a greater variety of fashion and usually have a bigger wardrobe than men. Jewellery is almost an article of dress. The styles vary from village to village.

Like all hill people the inhabitants of Himachal Pradesh have to put in a bitter struggle to make their living, and like all hill people, they forget their hard life in laughter and songs. They are a happy and joyous people who love to dance and sing at the slightest excuse. For them any little thing is good enough to be celebrated with a mala. Men and women, old and young, they all love a fair. It allows them to show off their finery, to exchange gossip, to buy pretty knick-knacks and above all to dance and sing and forget the cares of the world.

The folk songs of Himachal Pradesh are known for their charm. Their themes are religious as well as romantic. Some songs are in praise of Shiva, Rama, Krishna, and

the local gods and goddesses while other songs tell of the great deeds of their heroes. The glamour of Shimla also appears in many a folk-song since it always attracts the young lovers of the surrounding hills. The songs are usually rich in symbolism derived from nature.

With song goes dancing which is a living tradition in Himachal Pradesh. It reflects the joy of community life and is a spontaneous performance, with no previous rehearsal or preparation. The green meadows and open spaces provide the setting. The most important is an open air dance call naati. It is community dance in which hundreds of people dance in a circle holding hands. The oldest of the dancers leads the chain, though now-a-days the wealthiest or the most influential person may be given this privilege.

1.4 Self Check Exercise

1. Why the Gaddi women of Himalayas Known?
2. What is Region?

1.5 Conclusion :

All in the people of Himachal Pradesh are honest, truthful, industrious, frugal, gentle and good humouredly, faithful in their dealings, frugal, gentle and good humouredly, faithful in their dealings with other people and submissive to authority. In brief, we can say that knowledge of regional history is very necessary to understand the historical background of Himachal Pradesh. Regional history has been instrumental in the information of how different castes emerged in different place in Himachal Pradesh and how it contributed to the development of civilization.

1.6 Glossary

Regional History: Regional history seeks to study the history of particular regions. A region is a large area of land that is different from other areas of land, for example because it is one of the different parts of a country with its own customs and characteristics, or because of it has a particular geographical feature.

1.7 Answer to Self Check Exercise

Ans.1 Gaddi women of Himalayas are well known for their beauty.

Ans.2 Region is a part of the country or the world; a large area of land

1.8 Suggested Readings

1. Ahluwalia, M.S, History of Himachal Pradesh, New Delhi
2. Singh, Mian Goverdhan, History of Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, 1982..
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5. Sharma Bansi ram and A.R. Sankhyan (eds) People of India: Himachal Pradesh, New Delhi, 1986.

6. Yadav, K. C. The Rise of Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh, New Delhi, 2008.
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8. Verma V., The emergence of Himachal Pradesh: A Survey of Constitutional Development, New Delhi, 1995.

1.9 Terminal Questions

1. Describe the importance of regional history?
2. How does the caste system affect the regional history of Himachal Pradesh?

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Lesson - 2

Regions in History in Himachal Pradesh

Structure

- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Objective
- 2.2 Valleys of Middle and Inner Himalayas
- 2.3 Valleys of Outer Himalayas
- 2.4 Chandra-Bhaga Valley or Pattan Valley
- 2.5 Kangra Valley
- 2.6 Chamba Valley
- 2.7 Self Check Exercise
- 2.8 Conclusion
- 2.9 Glossary
- 2.10 Answer to Self Check exercise
- 2.11 Suggested Readings
- 2.12 Terminal Questions

2.0 Introduction

Himachal Pradesh is endowed with magnificent Valleys. They differ in size and are naturally located at various elevations. As a common rule Valleys are small approximately between 8 to 14 km of length and 1 to 3 km in width. Most of the Valleys are formed along either the tributaries or the main river systems. In South zone (Himachal Pradesh), Valleys, almost of wider dimension cut plains into inter fluvial tracts. Kangra presents a good example of tectonic Valleys. The blockage of streams due to endogenic forces formed impermanent lakes that resulted into deposition of lacustrine sediments on the plains of their previous occupancy. Therefore, Valleys like balh formed by Suketi river in Mandi district and the middle tracts fo Sainj and Parbati rivulets in Kullu district are lacustrine plains left behind after disappearance of such lakes. The Valleys could be divided broadly into two groups geographically.

2.1 Objectives

1. To highlights the different ranges of Himalayas
2. To discuss the importance of regions
3. To discuss the impact of region on Himachal History
4. To understand the regional history of Himachal Pradesh

2.2 Valleys of Middle and Inner Himalayas

This region encompasses all the Valleys falling into the North of Dhauladhar and along the both sides of rain Himalayan ranges. These are rarely inhabited and profoundly incised into highly rugged mountainous topography. The main altitude of these Valleys could be ascertained between 2700 m to 4500 meters prolonging from South to North. Some of these Valleys are lying along the river Ravi. The Ravi river rises from Bara Banghal rugged terrain (158 km long) and makes lesser deep narrow Valley in Bharmaur in the East of Chamba. The Ravi Valley embraces Chamba town from both sides covering about 20 km of area. The Chamba and Churah Valleys have emerged of small inter fluvial plateaus. The second series of these Valleys comprises Beas drainage network. The 256 km long Beas river originates at Beas Rishi (or Beas kund) near Rohtang Pass in Pir Panjal range, to the North of district Kullu. The river Beas and its tributaries cut through numerous Valleys extending from Mandi-Kangra borders to the limits of Kullu district. However, in the upper Beas Valley, the moronic deposits, modified by fluvial action are the evidences of past glaciations.

2.3 Valleys of Outer Himalayas

These Valleys are located in between Shivaliks and Lesser Himalayan ranges having about 950 m to 1500 m of altitude. At Rampur particularly the outer Satluj river has made a prominent land feature which marks the boundary between Kullu-Mandi and Shimla-Bilaspur districts. The valley has a gentle slope hardly 3 to 6 km broad, up to 35 km of distance from Rampur. Now onward it is precipitous and deep, because the river course passes through rugged topography. The Satluj river forms a strips of Valleys in Shimla district namely the Suni Valley which is 53 km West of Shimla located in the zone connecting shivaliks and Lesser Himalayas. The Beas river has many outer Valleys in Kangra and Mandi districts having distance of about 112 km. For about 35 km these Valleys along the river are compactly inhabited in Kangra. There are six Valleys from South and four from North joining the main river Valley in Mandi districts. The Balh valley of Mandi district is the most important having about 8500 hectares fertile alluvial area. Further West in Chamba district there is a narrow low Valley along Dalhousie. The Pathankot road separates many small streams from the Ravi basin. Besides, 16 km long Valley forms through Bhattiyat tehsil which joins Shivaliks with Dhauladhar's terminal ranges. These are highly panoramic, thickly populated and mostly fertile formed by river basins in different parts of the State. Beas basin is situated in the centre of the state between Dhauladhar and Shivaliks which includes major part of Kangra district, adjoining parts of Hamirpur district and central part of Mandi district. Beas river forms this basin while Satluj Basin formed by Satluj river is the largest one in the State. The most important Valleys of Himachal Pradesh are being discussed in detail thus.

LAHAUL VALLEY

The Lahul area has three important valley and Chandra – Bhaga valley which is also known as the pattan valley consisting great mass of mountains, and a plain of about 260 sq km. The Lahaul valley possesses a large potential for fish farming and the government seems very keen to harness it.

CHANDRA VALLEY

Through Lahaul and Spiti Region

This valley formed by river Chandra is locally known as Rangoli. A considerable portion of this valley is just an uninhabited snowbed near Baealacha pass. This region is made up of mainly high mountain peaks, large glaciers and vast snowfields. The vegetation exists in patches, mainly pastures, where the Gaddi camp during summer months. The main habitation starts after about 72km downstream flow of the river Chandra from KHOKSAR – the first village in this valley. Several villages are situated on the right bank of the river Chandra after Khoksar, and the left bank of the river is almost a wall like mountain rising from its bed and reaching up to the crest. After the village Gondhla and upto Tandi village, in whose proximity the Chandra and Bhaga rivulets meet, the mountain slopes become gentler having fields and grass pastures. Most of the agricultural cultivation is done around the villages on the right bank.

Through Chamba Region

The Chandra valley is further constituted by the area on both sides of the Chandra –Bhagas river (Chenab) as it runs through Pangi tehsil of Chamba district enters from south near Tranpal Dhar and runs towards North. This region is surrounded by Jammu and Kashmir in its North- West, by Lahaul-Spiti district in its South, by Pir Panjal in the West, and Greater Himalayas bounds it in the East and North –East. The major parts of this valley Panjal in the West and Greater Himalayas bounds it in the East and North-East. The major parts of this valley attain the altitude of about 1800 m to 3000m. Concentration of population decrease as one moves away from the river banks, from the fertile area towards Greater Himalayas and Pir Panjal. The valley has 59 inhabited villages, with population of 12,109 scattered over an area of 12,109 sq.Km. There is no urban area in this valley. The majority of the population is of Gaddi tribal whose main occupation is rearing sheep and goats, besides carrying on cultural activities on subsistence level. Gaddis, being nomads, shift their locks to lower heights of Chamba and Kangra during winter leaving elderly people to look after their households.

In this valley, the climate is temperate in summer and semi-arid in winter. The summers are quite mild and pleasant. It receives a scanty rainfall, and the degree of humidity is very low. From the October to March it experiences severe winter confining people to their houses. The Valley has Himalayan dry temperate forests. The main species of forests found here are Pine and Deodar. The type of soil found here is udalfs, however, clay soils are visible in areas adjoining the river. In higher slopes the soil cover is shallow. The geological structure of this valley, in technical terms, consists of Jutogh and Gneiss structure.

Bhaga valley

This valley is formed by the river Bhaga and is locally called Gara or Punam. The region with higher altitude of this Valley presents a deserted look. The river Bhaga starts from the South-Western foot of the Baralacha Pass and up to the Dracha village it flows in the almost narrow gorge. The Valley becomes wider from Dracha onward upto its junction with Chandra rivulet at Tandi where it has most of its population and vegetation. The Bhaga Valley portion from Dharcha to Keylong is locally known as Stod

and beyond that it is known as Gara. Keylong on the right bank of Bhaga river, is the largest village and is the district Headquarters of Lahaul-Spiti. Opposite Keylong lies Kardang, the erstwhile capital of Lahaul and the seat of famous Monastery.

The Baralacha pass is an important feature of the general configuration of the region. Across Baralacha Pass towards North is a vast tract of about 260 sq km of land known as Lingti Maidan. It is uncultivated and uninhabited with a minimum elevation of about 4270m where only Gaddis move in summer. It is dissected by the Lingti stream which joins Yamuna river subsequently and runs further North-Eastward to meet the Tsarb river, which in turn flowing Northward meet finally into the Zangskar.

2.4 Chandra-Bhaga Valley or Pattan Valley

This Valley made by the union of Chandra and Bhaga rivers is called the pattan valley. It begins Tandi with the confluence of Chandra and Bhaga rivers, and ends at Udaipur its boundary with Chamba. Chandra and Bhaga rivers originate in Chandertal near Baralacha and Surajtal opposite to Baralacha, near Kunzum respectively in this region. This is the most fertile Valley on account of its low elevation and its richer both in crops and population. Most of the villages of this region are situated in this Valley and most of the cultivation is done here. This area may be termed to be orchard and granary of Lahaul and Spiti.

The landmass between the rivulets Chandra and Bhaga contains massive mountains forming the center of this region where it has a very little and scattered population. When seen from a distance it appears like a fort. This mountains mass forms most of the glaciers, torrential nullahs with intervening Valleys and high mountain peaks that raise over 6400m above the msl. This region has the distinction of having the Baralacha Pass. It also gives rise to three important rivers of this region namely Chandra, Bhaga, Yunan, in the South-East, North-West and North respectively.

The Pattan Valley is a narrow one, situated between Grater Himalayan Glaciated Range on the Northern side and Pir Panjal on the South is formed and is formed by Chandra and Bhaga rivers and their major tributaries like Miyar and Thiroth nullahs. This Valley is the only region in Lahaul and Spiti districts that is populous having population of 21,666 covering an area of 1,478.75sq km. out of total 377 villages in Lahaul and Spiti districts, 277 villages from this Valley.

Agriculture is the most predominant occupation of the people while quality seed Potato is the main cash crop. The districts of Lahaul and Spiti does not have any industrial establishment worth mentioning, however, it has a few small scale carpet and cottage industry units.

Geological structure of this Valley is mainly formed by Jutogh group, Central Gneiss formations, Granites (unclassified) and Hamanta group of course, there are deposits of Gypsum and Limestone in the Valley but because of unfavorable working condition and high cost of transportation these deposits have remained untapped. Adjoining the river banks are seen the forest species like Junipers, Blue Pine, Spruce, Walnut, Birch, willows and Poplar.

Due to tough and rough terrain and severe climate conditions transport network in the Valley is underdeveloped. The National Highway No 21 running through Manali to Keylong connects this Valley to the rest of the State.

The Malung Valley

The Valley lies to the East of Baralacha Pass (4891 m) and North of Kunzum Pass (4551 m) between the drainage basins of the Spiti and the Chandra rivulets. It includes small part of Spiti and Lahaul tehsils. The Malung has the main stream of Tasarap Chu a tributary of Zangskar river which ultimately joins the Indus, North of Nimu. Its inhabitants are well known for their Buddhist belief. This region is high, tough, dry and desolate. The main crop of the Valley is barley where yak and sheep are kept in small numbers. Its economy in general resembles that of Spiti area. There are routes through this region to Rupshu and Zanskar. The main passes become operational to animal transportation for only 2 to 3 months in a year. Keylong, Sarchu and Lama-guru are some of the route centres with small habitations. The habitation is very sparse in this Valley having a density of population of 2 only per sq km.

Kullu Valley

The ancient Hindus regarded Kullu, the Valley of Gods, as the farthest limits of human habitation and in the traditional folklore it is often referred to as Kulantapeeth. Hitendra Shastri translates this as, "the end of habitable world" that penelop Chetwode found to be perfect title for her book 'Kullu the end of the Habitable World'. The Kulute, the original name of Kullu, finds mention in Hindu scriptures like Vishnu Purana and Ramayana. The Chinese pilgrim, Hiuen Tsang (A.D. 629-645), described the country of kiu-lu-to (Kullu) to be situated at 117 miles to the North-East of Jalandhra and this exactly corresponds with the position of Kuluta.

Like a slender delicate hued fern glistening in the morning dew, the kulu valley spreads out its charms on either side of the upper reaches of the river Beas. Running North to South, to the base of the Rohtang pass, the main river valley is only 80 km long and less than 2 km at its width. yet with awe –inspiring glens and mossy meadows entwined by rushing stream or meandering brooks flung East and West, a fairly wide area is open to tourist, the trekker, the climber, the sportsman, the artist and to any one who wishes to escape the heat and dust of plains to breathe the exhilarating air of the Himalayas and enjoy the spectacle of variegated mountin as the vale of kashmir.

The principal town of the valley is kullu (1200km) with salubrious climate amazingly has no snowfall. Kullu is a centre of considerable commercial and social activities. Across Beas river lies a pretty town of Naggar which is cooler than kullu. Its main attractions are Naggar Castle, Roerish Art Gallery and some historic temples. Manali (1926 m) situated at the head of the kullu valley, is an important Himalayas resort and trade center particularly for the people of Lahaul and Spiti. There are many places of tourist interest in Manali but Hidimba Devi temple (built in 1553 A.D) and Nehru kund enjoy a special place. In the parbati valley lie the hot springs of Manikaran which are believed to have healing properties.

The Kullu is also the valley of gods, goddesses and temples, producer of trout and golden quality apples .Every spot delights the heart. It was so passionately loved by

former British administrators that some of them turned down promotions in order to stay back there. The road from Mandi to Kullu goes along the Mandi –Larji gorge. This river is a rushing torrent flowing between high walls of crumbly rock .The lush greenery of the kullu valley comes as a welcome change after this barren terrain. The waving crop of wheat, rice fields and orchards of plum, cherry and apple line the valley floor, while scented pine forests climb up the higher slopes of it to the snow line. The cheerful kullu people are dressed in colourful garments of hand woven wool. Apple cheeked children run about the quaint villages, where rustic houses with peculiar hill architecture are fronted with wooden balconies and slate roofs.

Kullu Valley comprises both sides of Beas river along with both banks of Parbati river on its lower parts. The Valley covers an area of 300.18 sq km of this 11.70 sq km area constitutes urban which consists namely Bhuntar, Manali (Notified Area Commitees) and Kullu (Municipal Committee). The Kullu Valley is inhabited by 153,831 persons. Out of this only, 16,924 persons are living in the urban area. The Valley has 109 villages. The population concentration is mostly on the banks of the Beas river and its tributaries like Sarwari Khad, Hurla Nullaha, Sanj Khad, Parbati and Tirthan rivers.

Beas river decorates in the very centre of this Valley. It originates near Rahla in North and flows in the Southern direction up to Aut where Tirthan river meets it from South. This Valley is narrow in the North and becomes wider in the Central and Southern portion of Kullu tehsil. Area adjoining Beas river is fertile and flat. The Valley gradient rises gradually upto 2000 m of height which is known for its scenic beauty having no parallel in the country. It is rightly called the silver Valley during winter because of the shining snow covering its mountainous slopes. Every season has its own charm for the tourists or visitors in this Valley. During winter the snow clad mountain peaks look very beautiful, during rainy season these mountains appear very charming overcastted with floating clouds while during spring season when all the fruit trees wear mantle of multi-coloured flowers the Valley appears conspicuously attractive.

The economy of the Valley is agrarian, where mainly maize, wheat, barley and paddy are grown. It is famous for special varieties of Red delicious and Golden apples. Due to suitable agro-climatic conditions several also grown. Though higher altitudes of the Valley are covered with vegetation mainly of deodar species.

The Kullu Valley doesn't have any large or medium size industries, however, small units of shawl making, carpet weaving, hosiery, knitting, 'pools' making and angora farming are concentrated there. Multi coloured Kullu caps, carpet and shawls are famous internationally and are attractions of tourists.

The transport network of the Valley is formed of mainly roads. The National Highway (N.H.) No 21 and State Highway No 11 connect Rampur with Banjar and the latter touches the N.H. No 21 at Aut. The N.H. No 21 passes through the centre of this region from South to North direction.

Geologically, the Northern extreme of the Valley contains Granites unclassified, the South-Eastern parts have Rampur-Banjar structure. In general the region is mainly comprised of middle proterozoc1 structure.

Practically every village has its own Devi or Devta numbering about 1000, play an important part in the daily lives of the people and provide the local population with the real outlet for their occasional cultural and religious fervor. This is a unique aspect of their culture, these village godlings have a visible sign of their existence in the shape of masks wrought either in silver and gold or in other metals.

Spiti Valley

It is the remotest Himalayan Valley of Himachal Pradesh which lies in the Indo-Tibetan border South of Ladakh. It is situated between 3000 m to 4800 m of height and is strange, exciting, primitive, a mountaineer's delight. Rudyard Kipling has observed regarding this region: "Surely the Gods live here this is no place for men". It has high snow laden mountain peaks, barren rocks, glaciers and swift mountain streams. Several Buddhist Monasteries and old Forts built along these mountain slopes also seem part of the rugged terrain. The snowfall is so thick and severe that many a time the people have to pass the winter months indoor, however, it has scanty rains. Both the Valley of Lahaul and Spiti differ from each other in physical character. The Spiti Valley is the outcome of Spiti river in the Southern and South-Eastern part of the district. It is broad and has tough terrain. Whole of the water of the district is drained by three rivers, namely Chandra, Bhaga and Spiti alongwith their tributaries. Lichtu stream originates from Southern slopes of Kunzum which is considered the source of Spiti river. After Tuckcha, the first village of Spiti Valley, it becomes Spiti river when Rikta stream joins Lichtu.

Four distinct marks of Spiti's topography locally known are, shain (lower region) – lies on both sides of the Spiti river, Pin- also lies on both sides of the main Spiti river, Bhar (middle region) – lies between the point where Shillah Nullaha meets the main river 3 km above Kaza, and Tud (higher region) – includes all portions of the territory above Bhar. The people of Spiti are cheerful and of kindly disposition. They are generally credulous and superstitious. They are generally credulous and superstitious. Comparatively the Lahaul people are more industrious, and their land having better facilities is more fertile than that of Spiti. The only crops grown there are barley and buckwheat. There are number of famous Monasteries situated in the Spiti Valley.

The Spiti Valley is separated from Lahaul by a high mountain rib running North from the main Himalayan range. At places it is 3 km wide. Notwithstanding other differences the topography of Spiti like that of Lahaul is marked by high mountain ranges and narrow river Valleys with flat land being an uncommon occurrence. The arid climate, highly rugged relief and high altitude make the region somewhat thrilling, however, difficult for human habitation. There is level land on either side of the river that gives an appearance of terraces. Due to the Main Himalayan range in the background, this green sweep of the country looks exceedingly beautiful and refreshing. Above the Valley green grassy meadows stretch out for a mile delighting the eye with a profusion of strange mountain flowers. The flowers such as buttercups and daisies, forget-me-nots and wild rose, violets and anemones, iris, columbine, harebell, blue poppy and numerous other varieties grow in abundance.

2.5 Kangra Valley

Kangra is one of the most picturesque and loveliest low altitude Valleys among Himachal Valleys. This Valley runs from West to East rising gradually from Shahpur to baijnath and Palampur. In the bankground to its North the spectacular Dhauladhar range is visible like a great wall of ice throughout. "The impact of the Valley (Kangra) and her people on me was the same as that of Beatrice on Dante. This was the home of the paintings in which human love has been represented with great delicacy... paintings of ageless beauty which throb with passion."1

"No scenery, in my opinion presents such sublime and delightful contrasts. Below lies the plain, a picture of rural loveliness and repose; the surface is covered with the richest cultivations irrigated by streams which descend from perennial snows, and interspersed with homesteads buried in the midst of groves and fruit trees. Turning from the scene of Peaceful beauty the stern and majestic hills confront us. Their sides are furrowed with precipitous water courses; forests of oak clothe their flanks and higher up give place to gloomy and funereal pines, above all the wastes of snow or pyramidal masses of granite too perpendicular for the snow to rest on..."2

Kangra is known for its historical happenings, its forts, temples, miniature painting that developed there. And it has also now been identified for sported at the confluence of Bener and Majhi streams has famous historical temple of Vrijeshveri Devi. Its enormous wealth of gold and precious stones were the object of invaders like Mahmud Ghazni. The dramatic peaks of Dhauladhar range rise above the Dharamshala town and far below are misty plains. At Macleod Ganj in upper Dharamshala resides Dalai Lama, the spiritual Tibetan leader. There are newly built Gelugpa Monastery in the Tibetan township and a little higher up the ridge is a pretty church of St. John in the wilderness where former Viceroy Lord Elgin is buried in its Churchyard.

The famous Bhagsunath with its spring and waterfall is only 2 km away, Dal lake is high on the ridge 3 km away from Dharmshala. The Palampur town (1219 m) is 40 km from Dharamshala set among beautiful tea gardens and pine vegetation. The deep Bundla Chasm falling over a 100 m with the river flowing down in its depth is close to Dharamshala town. The place is said to have curative properties. Palampur also houses the famous Agriculture University of the State along with several sprawling Campuses, Research Stations working in the temperate climatic conditions.

The Kangra Valley is known for the mellow beauty of its landscape, its low hills and Valleys studded with charming hamlets. Through the terraced field with wave like embankments run numerous snow fed rivulets with pure sparking water. Contrasting with the feminine beauty of the low hills is the mighty Dhauladhar with its snow covered peaks and fanning glaciers which cast a spell on the visitor-in its forests and alpine pastures peace and silence reign. It is not only an attractive landscape which makes a country beautiful but also its people. Here in the Kangra Valley. Coupled with the beauty of the landscape is the beauty of humanity. In the mysterious forests of Dhauladhar wander the lovely Gaddi maidens, unconscious of their beauty, living a life of pastoral simplicity. In the hamlets in the Valley are the Rajputs and Brahmin women, clad in graceful ghagras, their screne faces decorated with large nose-rings and their jet black hair crowned with golden conical ornaments, the chowks. In this Valley we do find the

Kangra painting know for their ageless beauty in which human love has been represented in line and colour with great delicacy, and which continue to throb with passion even after the lapse of two centuries,

The Kangra Valley was once the abode of the Ice age man as has been revealed by the discovery of several palaeolithic hand tools in that area. Besides, it is dotted with places of tourist resorts, wars, ancient temples, artistic paintings, beautiful villages and sub-Valleys of exquisite charm and beauty.

It is constituted of relatively plain area stretching in North-West to South-East direction in the district. This Valley is conglomeration of Kangra and Palampur tehsils. Out of total, 4, 072 villages of Kangra district 996 villages comprise this Valley. The Valley has total area of 875.48 sq km as per village papers. It is densely populated and out of 363,316 population 37,355 persons are urban. The numerous tributaries of Beas river like Bhate, Gaj, Manahi, Baner, Neogl and Luni originate from Dhauladhar range and flow into South direction.

The Valley having two crops of Rabi and Kharif in a year is well known for tea production, the main cash crop of this region.

The geological structure of this Valley are Shivalik group and Murree series. In the North-Western part of the Valley Dharmshala nestles species of protected forests of pine and mixed vegetation and it is also known for receiving the maximum rainfall next only to Chhapunji in the country.

The Kangra Valley has good network of road transportation. The only railway tract that passes in the Southern part of the Valley and connects. Jogindernagar with Pathankot via Baijnath and Kangra is about 163 km of total length. The construction of this railway tract was taken up in the year 1926 to transport then heavy machinery for the Shanan Hydro Electric Power Project at Jogindernagar. The Kandrori in Indora block of Nurpur tehsil was the only station in whole of Himachal on broad gauge line in Pathankot-Jalandhar section of Northern Railway. The new Nangal-Talwara broad gauge line has now been extended and completed up to Una. However, the State Highway no 12, 21 and 24 passes through this Valley.

The colossal range of mountains known as Dhauladhar which binds Kangra to the North commences on the right bank of the Beas river from where it leaves Kullu and makes a sudden push towards Mandi town. From this point this range runs North side and after travelling few kilometers makes a sudden bend to the West and passing through Benghal area backgrounds above Kangra Valley. The lower hills of the Valley appear like ripples, by comparison on the surface of the sea and the eye rests uninterrupted on a chain of mountains as they attain height of about 3900 m above the msl. The contour of the Valley is pleasantly broken by ridges and numerous streams where hundred of canals with clear water intersect this area. The species of bamboo, papal and mango are found in abundance here. However, the scattered homesteads present a picture of sylvan elegance.

The Dhauladhar cuts the Benghal area into two halves. The Northern half is called Bara Benghal and the Southern half Chota Benghal. To the East of Bara Benghal is Kullu and to the North is Lahaul and to the West is the Manimahesh range of

Chamba. When the snows melt the long bare slopes of the mountains which surround Bara Benghal on three sides, afford splendid grazing for sheep and goats. General appearance of Chota Benghal is wild, and it is surprising that the glaciers are found so low in this region. The range above Bir is known as Bir Benghal still unknown, However, is perhaps, one of the presents parts of Kangra.

The people of Kangra are lively, good tempered, fond of fairs, festivals and public assemblies. They are deeply religious like other Himachal and there are thousands of temples and innumerable Jatras in these places. In addition to the worship of famous goddesses of Vrijeshveri, Jawalji, the one at Chintpurni and Chamunda Devi, People also worship other deties like Sidh Nag who is supposed to repel witches and grant fortune. The worship of Rali is universal in the district and three chief fairs in her honors are are held at Baijnath, Dad and Chari (5km west of Dharmshala).

The world famous school of painting the art that originated about 200 years ago, during the region of Maharaja Sansar Chand, a great patron of the arts, lies in the famous Kangra Valley. It reflects to a large extent the impact of the socio-plitical life of that particular age when nature was occupying a very prominent place influencing the mind of artists.

2.6 Chamba Valley

This Valley is also known as Ravi Valley or the Valley of Honey and Milk. Chamba has few rivals for its scenic beauty. It's Valley, meadows, rivers, lakes, springs and streams have a charm of their own. It is also remarkable among the hill districts for its historical background and archeological remains. Dr Vogel has rightly called Chamba 'Achamba' (Chamba the charming and wonderful). The people living in this Valley are called the most beautiful race in India.

Chamba is the district headquarters and is situated on a very broad and flat terrace cut into two parts by the Ravi river at an altitude of 996 m. The Ravi Valley is the biggest sub-micro region of Chamba district. It is situated betweet Pir Panjal in the North and Dhauladhar range in the South covering central Chamba in North-West to South-East direction. Ravi river which originates from Bara Banghal a branch of Dhauladhar in Kangra district, is the life belt of Chamba Valley.

The Valley is most populous and it has total 978 villages and one town of Chamba and Dalhousie (Urban Agglomeration). It has population of 213,675 and an area of 2696.66 sq km. The urban area of Chamba Municipal Corporation is 2.35 sq km and is inhabited by 13,761 persons. The whole of the Valley is tolerably open and presents many delightful contrasts. In the lower area of the Valley vegetation is semi tropical and at higher elevations forests belonging to Himalayan temperate and sub-alpine types are found. The important species are Oak, long folia, Chestnut, Deadar, Kail, Juniper, Birch, etc.

Geological structure of Chamba Valley on the areas adjoining the boundary of Punjab is comprised of Shivalik formations and murree series while Blaini formations are observed on the banks of Ravi river. However, the major part of the Valley is comprised of geological formation of jutogh group. Climatic conditions of the Valley varies with its altitude.

Comparatively the Valley is well connected with transport network. Major roads which pass through this region are State Highway no 33 and 37, however, it has no railway link.

The Valley is formed of Bharmaur, Chaurah area, front of Bhattiyat tehsil and Chenab Valley which comprises of Pangi and the Beas region. The Chenab and Ravi rivers flow through this Valley. The Hathidhar, whose highest point is 1280 m is a low range and runs parallel to the mighty Dhauladhar at the aerial distance of about 16 km.

On the mountain slopes the fields are usually of small size, in terraces, the lower border of each being formed by a rough wall to make the ground more level for ploughing. The villages, too, are diminutive, seldom containing more than a dozen houses. In most parts of the Ravi Valley, below 2500 m of height two crops are reaped. The rice are grown at the lower altitudes, while maize, wheat, barley and other cereals in the higher reaches. Above 2500 m of height only one crop is grown. Its Northern mountain slopes are densely wooded, while Southern are often quite barren.

Chamba is famous for its architectural temples in the nagara and pent-roofed styles. The township of Chamba resembles an Italian village fortress. The town founded in 1906 is also known for Bhuri Singh museum. Around Chamba at few kilometers of distance are famous picnic spots with panoramic views such as Sarol, Salooni, Bandalk and Saho. Chamba is known for fine hand emcroedered Rumals 1 and Chappals 2. Bharmaur is 69 km from Chamba once called Bramputra, the origina; capital of the Manimahesh, lakshna devi, Ganesh and Nar Singh. The valley is famous home of the semi-nomadic and semi-pastoral shepherds, the Gaddis, who spend the summer on the alpine pastures, and move more lower regions of Kangra, Mandi and Bilaspur during winter. Khajjiar, one of the most picturesque saucer shaped plateaus is about 1.5 km long and 1 km broad, fringed by dense forests of gigantic deodars is located near Dalhousie. It has a small lake in the center, having a floting island the local people hold the lake sacred for a legend associated with Khajinag, the deity that is enshrined there. It is connected with good transportation. In the higher regions near snowline are found animals like snow leopard, ermine, weasel the ibex and the marmots at lower elevations brown bear, musk deer, leopards, wild sigs and wild fowl .

Dalhousie, named after former viceroy, lord Dalhousie is situated on the outer slopes of the Dhauladhar range. There are number of picturesque walks run through the oak and pine forests around the town that offer exceller view of the Chenab and Beas valleys. Dalhousie is located at an elevation of 2039 m from the msl on pathankoth chamba road, 7 km away from Banikhet.

Pangi Valley

The wild and beautiful pangi valley range separates Kullu from Lahaul and Spiti and is situated North-East of Chamba. It enters Chamba territory on the Western border of Bara Banghal and continues through the district for more than 95km. Seen from Dainkund, near Dalhiusie, this range has magnificent snowy peaks, some of which reach an altitude of 6400 m or so, presents a grand and an imposing spectacle.

The famous Pangi Valley is said to be one of the remotest parts of the Himalayas. It is approached through Chamba from where a moter road leads to

Bharmaur, a sub-divisional small dwelling. Thereafter one has to walk along glacial Valleys and cross high mountain ranges to reach the enchanting valley. However, it could also be approached via Tissa after crossing the sach pass . Beside high altitude meadows, virgin forests the glaciers descending from steep mountain sides occur all over the pangi area.

It is a valley of grandeur and majesty both in appearance and effect. It is highly populated between the pangi and zanskar ranges. The most convenient route for trekking in to the valley is through the sach pass (4428 m) Mainly two communities namely pangwals and Bhots inhabit this valley. The most important temples of the valley are Mindhal and purthi. Pangi is one of the sub-divisions with headquarters at killer. It is situated 137 km North–East of chamba in a deep, narrow gorge , by the side of the Chenab river having halipad facility from where one could take adventurous exciting treks to Manali, Kishtwar (in Kashmir) and to keylong .

2.7 Self Check Exercise

1. What do you know about shivalik Hills?
2. Why Chamba is famous for?

2.8 Conclusion

The word Himachal derives its origins from two Hindi words ‘Him’ and ‘Achal’ meaning Snow and Lap respectively. Thus atymologically, Himachal Pradesh stands for the regions which lies in slopes and foot hills of snow ie the Himalayas. It may however be noted that the Himalayas is not a single continuous chain of mountain but a series of parallel ranges intersected by enormous valleys and extensive plateaus. These valleys played an important role in this region of Himachal. Climate difference is one of the example. If we want to know the history of Himachal Pradesh it is mandatory to know the geographical features of this region.

2.9 Glossary

Shivalik Hills: Known as the Shiwalik Hills and Churia Hills, are a mountain range of the outer Himalayas that stretches over about 2400 km from the Indus river eastwards close to the Brahmaputra River, spanning the northern parts of the Indian subcontinent.

2.10 Answer to self Check Exercise

Ans.1 Chamba is famous for its architectural temples in the nagara and pent-roofed styles.

Ans.2 Shivalik Hills are a mountain range of the outer Himalayas that stretches over about 2400 km from the Indus River eastwards close to the Brahmaputra River, spanning the northern parts of the Indian subcontinent.

2.11 Suggested Readings

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6. Yadav, K. C. The Rise of Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh, New Delhi, 2008.
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2.12 Terminal Questions

1. Define the importance of region in history?
2. Give a brief account of Kangra and Chamba Valley?

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Lesson - 3

Survey of Sources of Himachal History

Structure

- 3.0 Introduction
- 3.1 Objective
- 3.2 Hindu Religious Literature
- 3.3 Epigraphical And Numismatic Sources
- 3.4 Archaeological Sources
- 3.5 Numismatic Sources
- 3.6 Travellers' Accounts
- 3.7 Administrative, Revenue And Settlement Reports
- 3.8 Documents In Persian, Punjabi And Tankari
- 3.9 Secondary Sources
- 3.10 Self Check exercise
- 3.11 Conclusion
- 3.12 Glossary
- 3.13 Answer to Self Check exercise
- 3.14 Suggested Readings
- 3.15 Terminal Questions

3.0 Introduction:-

Very little is known about the past history of Himachal Pradesh and the region remained neglected particularly for want of adequate source material. There is a dearth of historical material concerning the political history of the state. This is also partly because of the reason that the territory comprising the modern state of Himachal Pradesh never developed into an independent sovereign state during the period under review. Like the medieval Muslim kingdoms of north India and the Deccan, there was no such ruler in Himachal Pradesh to patronize the writing of the official history of the area now forming the Himachal State.

During the entire medieval period, Himachal Pradesh remained almost a semi-autonomous region under the various dynastic rules. The position almost remained the same throughout the Sultanate and the Mughal rule. It was only during the period of the Sikh rule under Maharaja Ranjit Singh that the Kangra Hill states came under one suzerain authority. This was followed by the British rule which ended their

independence and henceforth these states became a part of the central administration and authority. Politically and culturally the sources for the study of Himachal Pradesh go back to the most ancient period of Indian history.

3.1 Objective

1. Understand the importance of Historical Sources
2. Study the different sources of Himachal History
3. Understand the relevance of Historical Sources

The Pradesh never failed to attract the attention of the central powers and as such it did not remain immune from the political and cultural currents of the plains and the adjoining hills. As the trade routes passing through Himachal Pradesh hills connected this region with China, Tibet and Central Asia, It has been a centre of commercial activities through the ages. For this and other reasons, the Himachal States remained a centre of attraction for historians, social scientists, sociologists and travellers alike. Broadly speaking, the sources for the study of Himachal history may be classified into:

1. Religious literature
2. Persian Sources
3. Sikh historical and religious literature.
4. Epigraphically and numismatic sources, including documents in Persian, Punjabi and Tankari concerning erstwhile princely states of Himachal.
5. Traveler's account.
6. Administrative, Revenue and Settlement Reports, and
7. Secondary sources including modern works, Vanshavalis, Catalogues, Gazetteers and Research dissertations etc.

3.2 Religious Literature

Hindu Religious Literature

In the first category, the Hindu religious literature mostly forms the source-material for the history of the ancient Himachal. In the absence of proper historical material the history of ancient Himachal is entirely based on the Religious literature in Sanskrit. Of the four Vedas, the earliest Rig-Veda throws some light on the various tribes which settled along the Himalayan foot-hills about 2000 B.C. Similarly the Puranas also contain some useful information about the people of this region, which however, is not very accurate and reliable due to absence of order, arrangement and sequence of events or dates. The two great epics, the Ramayana and Mahabharata, also contain some reference about the people and places of the region. In the arena of the secular Sanskrit literature, mention may be made of the dramas of Kalidasa, particularly the Raghuvansham. Similarly Viasakhadutta's Devichandra Guptam, Mudrarakshasa and Kalhan's Rajatarangini is useful for their information concerning the socio-political as well as the economic life of the early inhabitants of Himachal Pradesh. The Rajatariingini is a history of Kashmir, written by kalhana. It informs about the nature of influence of Lilitaditya (724-760 A.D.) over the Trigartta and over the western hills.

Persian Sources

A large number of Persian chronicles refer to Sultan Mahmud's invasion of Nagarkot, Bhimnagar or modern Kangra, which was then famous as a place of Hindu pilgrimage and its temples were renowned for containing untold treasures. The account given in the *Tarikh-i-Yamini* or *Kitabul-Yamini* (1024 A.D.) in Arabic is followed by Khawand Mir's *Habibus-Siyar* and Ferishta's *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* also known as the *Gulshan-i-Ibrahimi*.

During the thirteenth century, a number of Persian chronicles refer to the Turkish penetration into the Shiwalik hills. Many a times, the rebel nobles or chiefs found an easy refuge in the Himalayan foot-hills. The Ranas and the Thakurs of the Sirmur hills are frequently mentioned in the Persian writings for harbouring the rebel chiefs or nobles. The two contemporary chronicles, the *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* and *Tarikh-i-Ferozshahi*, often mention about the rebels finding shelter in the foot hills of Himachal Pradesh. Incidentally, the foundation of the hills states of Kangra, Chamba, Kahlur, Dhamera/Nurpur, Dhamsi, Bhagal, Bhagat, Deonthal and Suket is ascribed during the same period. This may be due to the repeated onslaughts of the Turkish rulers which compelled the Hindu rulers of the Punjab Hills states to find shelter in the hills.

The first detailed reference to the penetration of the Turkish forces in the Kangra hills is found during the Tughluq period. Badr Chach in his *Qasaid-i-Badr-i-Chach* gives some verses under the title, *Fateh-Qila-i-Nagarkot*. Ziauddin Barani also makes a brief reference to the Nagarkot expedition led by Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq personally. The campaign is believed to be a part of the bigger campaign of the Qarachil, written as *Himachal* by Ferishta and Nizamuddin.

The siege and the conquest of the fort of Nagarkot by Sultan Feroz Shah Tughluq is found mentioned in a large number of contemporary and later Persian sources such as: Barani and Afif's *Tarikh-i-Ferozshahi*; Ferishta's *Tarikh-i-Farishta*; Shahnawaz Khan's *Muasir-ul-Umara*, Jahangir's *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, Anonymous, *Sirat-i-Ferozshahi*, and the *Shash Fateh Kangra*. The account given in these source also find indirect reference in the Kalhan's *Rajatarangini* and the *Dharam Chand Natak*.

The Mongol invader Amir Timur, (1369-1414 A.D.) after plundering northern India in 1398 A.D. returned to Central Asia via the Shiwalik hills. In his autobiography, the *Tuzuk-i-Timuri*, Timur refers to Raja Ratan Sen as a 'Raja' of great rank and power, in the Shiwalik hills'.

During the Afghan period, Rizaqulla Mushtaqi in his *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, gives an account of the conquest of the Kangra and its adjoining hills by the Afghan rulers. The other equally important Afghan sources are Ahmad Yadgar's *Tarikh-i-Salatin-i-Afghana*, Niamatullah's *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani Makhzan-i-Afghani* and Abdullah's *Tarikh-i-Daudi*.

During the Mughal period, the frequent campaigns of Akbar's forces are found in a large number of contemporary and later Persian histories. Among these Abul Fazal's *Akbar Nama* and *Ain-i-Akbari*, Abdul Qadir Badauni's *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, Nizamuddin Ahmad's *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* are quite well known.

For Emperor Jahangir's Kangra campaign, his own autobiography the *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, is an important contemporary source. A detailed description of the Kangra fort

is available in the Shash Fateh Kangra. During the reign of emperor Shahjahan and Aurangzeb, Kangra and its adjoining hill states remained under the charge of Mughal subedars. For nearly two hundred years after their subjugation by Akbar, the hill chiefs remained tributary to the Mughal rules. In letters and other documents these chiefs were addressed as zamindars whereas the title of a Raja was conferred only as a personal distinction. Some royal families of the erstwhile hill states are still in possession of letters and other presents as many of them also received imperial mansabs.

The Sikh historical and Religious Literature

Since a major part of the modern state of Himachal Pradesh is comprised of the erstwhile Punjab Hills States, it is but natural that Persian source pertaining to the Himachal history are also supplemented by the Sikh literary and religious sources from the beginning of the foundation of Sikh religion in the Punjab upto at least the annexation of the Sikh sovereign state of Lahore by the British.

The sources relating to the Sikhs and their history are found in Persian, Punjabi, Nagri, Urdu and English languages and furnish important and in some cases contemporary information about the relations of the Sikhs with the hill States of Himachal Pradesh.

The Guru Granth Sahib or the Adi Granth, i.e. the Holy scripture of the Sikhs, the Janam Sakhis, the bachitar Natak of Guru Gobind Singh, the Gur Bilas of Bhai Sukha Singh, the Gur Sobha of Sena Pat (all in Punjab) and Mohsin Fani's Dabistan-i-Mazahab (in Persian) contain several important details about the spread of Sikhism in the foot-hills of the Himalayas and the Sutlej as well as the relations of the Sikh Gurus with the Hill States of Himachal Pradesh.

Mohsin Fani, the author of the Dabistan-i-Mazahab who was a contemporary of the 5th 6th and the 7th Gurus (Guru Arjun, Hargobind and Har Rai) mentions a number of anecdotes relating to the spread of the Sikh faith in the hills of Himachal and the baptism of Raja Tara Chand of Kahlur (Bilaspur). Guru Gobind Singh's own writing Bach tar Natak is a contemporary and firsthand account of the Guru's mission and his relations with the hill chieftains of Himachal.

The Sikh traditional accounts too refer to the monetary help rendered by the hill-Rajas of Mandi, Kullu, suket, Chamba and Haripur to Guru Arjun Dev for the completion of Harmandir Sahib at Amritsar. Only on the basis of the Sikh literary sources we know about the names of some of the ruling hill chieftains, such as Raja Bhim Chand of Kahlur, Raja Fateh Shah of Garhwal, Raja Medini Parkash of Sirmour, Kirpal of Katoch, Gopal of Guler, Hari Chand of Hindur (Nalagarh) etc. Among a few contemporary sources concerning the life and activities of the Sikh Gurus, particularly Guru Gobind Singh, Hukamnamas also form an important source of information.

A number of Persian and non-Persian sources narrating the activities of the Sikhs during the period of Banda Singh Bahadur and the Sikh Misala in the Himachal Pradesh are available. For the activities of Banda Bahadur (who is believed to have belonged to Sirmour State, now district Nahan of Himachal Pradesh) a large number of Persian sources are available. Among them Khafi Khan. Muntakhab-ul-Lubab, Ghulam Husain's Siyar-ul-Mutakhirin, Sujan Rai Bhandari's Khulsat-ut- Tawarikh, Tahmas

Khan's Tahmas Nama, Bakht Mal's Khalsa Nama. Khushwaqt Rai's Tarikh-i-Sikhan; Aliuddin Mufti's Ibrat Nama; etc., are important ones.

Among the later sources, a number of Persian histories such as Ahmad Shah Batalvi's Tarikh-i-Hind (A.H. 1233/1818 A.D.); Bute Shah's Tarik-i-Punjab (1848 A.D.); in Persian and Kanhiya Lal's Tarikh-i-Punjab (1881); T. Princep's Tarik-i-Punjab (Delhi, 1846) and Sarup Lal's Tarikh-i-Sikhan (Ms). In Urdu, though not directly related to the history of Himachal Pradesh, nevertheless are important sources for the Sikh activities in the Himachal hills, including topographical descriptions, conquests and occupation of hill states by the Sikh misaldars, names and biographical sketches of the Sikh and Mughal or Afghan qiladars, faujdars, subedars or nazims; dates of important events, and personal observations of the chroniclers concerning the 18th and 19th century Himachal history.

During the last quarter of the eighteenth and the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the Kangra Hill States made a serious attempt to build a vast Katoch empire under the leadership of Maharaja Sansar Chand (1775-1823 A.D.) Simultaneously, however, the post-Abdali period saw the rise of Maharaja Ranjit Singh of the Sukarchakia misal who gradually made himself the sovereign ruler of Punjab. With the establishment of the independent kingdom of Lahore, the Hill states too could not remain immune from the growing Sikh influence under the leadership of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

A large number of Persian, Sikh and European accounts are available which contain reference to the rise of Maharaja Sansar Chand who was successful in reducing the adjoining hill states as tributaries to the Katoch kingdom of Kangra. The following Persian histories are useful for an account of the Kangra and other hill states during the rule of Maharaja Sansar Chand and Maharaja Ranjit Singh: Mian Ahmad Yar's Shah-Namah-i-Ranjit Singh, Munshi Ganga Parshad's Ruqqat-i-Munshi Ganga Parshad, Iqbal Namah-i-Raja-i-Kohistan was Sardar Sultan Muhammad Khan Bahadur Barakzai, Kanhaiya Lal's Zafar-nama-i-Ranjit Singh, Sohan Lal Suri's Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Iqbal Nama-i-Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Tarikh-i-Maharaja Ranjit Singh Wa Sardaran-i-Khalsa, and Diwan Amar Nath's Zafar Nama-i-Ranjit Singh.

Apart from these contemporary sources, the Bhandari Collection at the Punjab State Archives, Patiala, is also useful in this context. Manuscript No.509 of the 'Chatar Singh Collection' in the Punjab State Archives, Patiala, is also important as it describes the relations of Maharaja Ranjit Singh with the hill Chieftains of Himachal Pradesh. Among some other useful source of this period, mention may be made of Rattan Singh Bhangu's Prachin Panth Parkash, (Amritsar, 1962), Ganesh Das's Char Bagh-i-Punjab, and the Khalsa Darbar Records in the State Archives at Patiala. These sources contain significant information about annexation of the hill states by Maharaja Ranjit Singh and the Gurkha advance into the western hill states of Sirmur, Kahlur, Hindur and Kangra in the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

3.3 Epigraphical and Numismatic Sources

In case of the history of Himachal Pradesh during the ancient period, inscriptions have proved to be immense value. The earliest inscriptions from Himachal date back to the rule of emperor Asoka. These are rock inscriptions in the Tons Valley; Pathiyar and

Kanhiyara in the Kangra district; Salanu near manglor in Mandi district and Soonpur hillock cave inscription of Hat Koti in Jubbal. The Chamba region of Himachal Pradesh is the richest of all the epigraphical remains beginning from the 6th Century A.D. down to the last century. Another important copper plate has been found in Nirmand (Kullu) dating sixth century which was issued by Maharaja Samudrasen of Kullu.

A large number of copper-plates and documents preserved in the Bhuri Singh Museum at Chamba cover many socio-economic and administrative aspects of the early history of Himachal Pradesh. In all there are three dozen copper-plates dealing mostly with land grants from around the tenth century.

3.4 Archaeological Sources

On the basis of archaeological surveys, it has now been established that the history of the region dates back to the pre-historic times when man made the first settlements on this earth. The archaeological sources include stone tools and implements, coins, inscriptions, monuments and sculptures. Archaeological sites were discovered on the basis of explorations at Guler, Dehra, Dhaliara and Kangra, all in the Kangra district, to trace out the remains of Sohan culture in the sub-Himalayan basin. Surveys conducted around Jwalamukhi, Dehra-Gopipur and Nurpur and other sites give information about the early Stone Age. A number of Neolithic sites have also been brought to light and a number of lithic artifacts have been discovered from these sites. However, till now neither the evidence of an Upper Palaeolithic is known nor have we come across any Mesolithic site in the Himachal Pradesh.

It is difficult to give a satisfactory explanation for such a wide gap between these two culture structures. Probably Neolithic succeeded the Palaeolithic directly and has no Mesolithic precedence. On the whole, whatever archaeological finds have been located, these have made a significant contribution to our knowledge of pre-historic culture of Himachal Pradesh.

Epigraphs

Fortunately, a large number of epigraphs have been found in various parts of Himachal Pradesh, which have helped considerably in the reconstruction of the history of ancient Himachal. The inscriptions may be broadly categorized under three headings: commemorative, Donative and Dedicative. These have been written in various scripts such as Kharoshti, Brahmi, Sharda, Sidha-matrika, Takari, Kutila, Nagari, Sankha, and Bhotia or Tibetan.

The earliest inscriptions from Himachal date back to the rule of emperor Asoka. These are rock inscriptions in the Tons Valley; Pathiyar and Kanhiyara in the Kangra district; Salanu near Manglor in the Mandi district and Doonpur hillock cave inscription of Hat Kotiin Jubbal tehsil of simla district.

Apart from the Salari rock inscription copper-plate grants too have been found in the Kullu velley. Of these, the Nirmand copper plate grant of 612-13 A.D. belongs to Mahasamanta and Maharaja Samudrasen. The Chamba region in Himachal Pradesh is richest of all in epigraphical remains beginning from sixth century A.D. down to the last century. A large number of copper-plates and documents are preserved in the Bhuri Singh Museum at Chamba which cover various political and socio-religious aspects of

the history of Himachal Pradesh. In all there are three dozen copper-plates dealing mostly with the land grants from around the tenth century to the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The Chamba inscriptions are mostly in Sharda script, excepting one which is in Tibetan, and these are all donative in character.

Some Jain inscriptions have also been found in the Kangra region. The earliest is dated 854 A.D. and records the genealogy of Digambara Jains of Kangra. The second Jain inscription is dated V.S. 1296/1240 A.D. found in the Baijnath temple and refers to the teachings of Svetambara faith in Kangra.

Among the prasastis, mention may be made of two prasastis from Baijnath in Sharda script edited by Cunningham and re-edited by Buhler. The latter has placed them in 1204 A.D. In Shimla district, three inscriptions have so far been discovered. The earliest, as already referred above, is from Hat Koti. The second one is also from the same place whereas the third is from Balag, on the left bank of river Giri.

The Tibetan inscriptions so far discovered in Himachal Pradesh come from the Kinnaur and Spiti monasteries which are dated 1050 A.D. and show Guge's control of these areas in Himachal. Apart from these inscriptions, a number of inscriptions belonging to the neighbouring kingdoms also help considerably in assessment of political history of the ancient Himachal. Some of these are the Gwalior prasasti of Mihirbhoja; the Pehowa inscription of 882 A.D., and the Khajuaraho inscription of 954 A.D. These inscriptions suggest that the Pratiharas, the Chandellas and the Palas also made attempts to hold sway over the various parts of Himachal Pradesh.

During the medieval period, apart from Chamba and Kullu inscriptions, we have also a large number of stone-inscriptions, mostly sati-pillars which are found in the Shiwalik hills. These were erected to commemorate the memory of the various hill rajas who died fighting during the course of their battles with Guru Gobind Singh, such as in the battle of Bhangani in the Sirmour hills.

Himachal Pradesh is also dotted with a large number of Brahmanical, Buddhist and Jain temples, which are very rich in art remains such as stone and metal sculptures, wood carvings and various tankas and murals in the Buddhist monasteries. Both the types of Indo-Aryan as well as Khasa temples are rich repertoire of ornaments, scroll works and decorative works, apart from their architectural styles and decorative patterns.

3.5 Numismatic Sources

Apart from Inscriptions, numismatic evidence has also been found very useful in unearthing the remote past of Himachal Pradesh. Numismatic sources are useful in knowing about the political unity, social achievements as well as the economic prosperity of the area around the find-spots of the coins. The earliest coins found in the Himachal Pradesh belong to the ancient tribal kingdoms of Audumbara, Trigarta, Kulutas and Kunindas which flourished between the second century B.C. to the second century A.D. The State Museum, Shimla and Bhuri Singh Museum, Chamba have a large collection of the coins.

The earliest coins found in Himachal are 37 punch marked coins from Arki which bear five symbols on one side and weigh about 54 grains. Indo-Greek coins were

discovered from two villages, Lachori and Sarol in Chamba. Twenty-one coins of Apollodotus have been found in Tappa Mewa village in Himirpur district and thirty coins from Jwala Mukha. These coins indicate Greco-Bactrian penetration into Chamba and Hamirpur areas of Himachal.

The coins of tribal republic found in Himachal Pradesh include those of Kunindas, Audumbaras, Kulutas, Trigartas, Yaudheyas and Hindu Shahis. According to studies conducted recently, the earliest coin in Himachal Pradesh found in Kullu was issued by one Virayash king and it dates back to the first century A.D. A few other coins from Shimla and Kangra in Himachal dating back to first or second century have been found which have been named as punch-marked coins.

Thus apart from the local coins of the Janapadas mentioned above and of the Rajput dynasties of the early medieval period, coins belonging to Indo-Greek and the Kushans have also been found in the state. These coins form an important source for political, social, religious and economic history of Himachal Pradesh.

3.6 Travelers' Accounts

In addition to the literary, archaeological and numismatic sources, we have another very important source of information in the form of account left by foreign travellers. The earliest and a reliable historical reference of the Himalayan States is found in the travelogue left by Hiuen Tsang, the Chinese traveler, who visited India in 630 A.D. and has made important observations about Jalandhara, Kuluta and Srughna. He has left a detailed account of Kullu, its crops, and snowy mountains. He also refers to twenty Buddhist sangharamas and one thousand priests as well as fifteen Deva temples of different sects. He also informs us that emperor Asoka built a stupa in the middle of Kulu. This is unfortunately not traceable now.

A number of European travelers too visited this area. The most important: J.B. Fraser, *Journal of a Tour through snowy Ranges of the Himalaya Mountain*, and to the sources of river Jamuna and Ganga (London, 1920);

Baron Charles Hugel, *Travels in Cashmere and the Punjab*, (tr. from German by Major T.B. Jervis, London, 1845); W. Moorcroft and George Trebeck, *Travels in the Himalayan Provinces of Hindustan and the Punjab etc.* (London, 1837, reprint, 1970);

Major Archer, *Tour in Upper India and in the parts of the Himalayan Mountains*, 2 vols (London, 1833);

George Forster, *A Journey from Bengal to England, through North India, Kashmir, Afghanistan and Persia into Russia*, 2 vols (London, 1798, Reprint, 1970);

G.T. Vigne, *Travels in Kashmir, Ladakh, Iskardo etc.* (London, 1844);

J.C. Davidson, *Diary of Travels and Adventures in Upper India etc.* (London, 1843);

Capt. A.F.P. Harcourt, *Himalayan Districts of Kullu, Lahoul and Spiti* (London, 1871, Delhi Reprint, 1982);

G.T. Vinge, *A Personal Narrative of a visit to Ghazni, Cabul etc.* (London, 1840).

These travelers have made important observations about the state of affairs in the hill areas which they happened to cross. Their accounts deal with the courts of the native Himalayan princes and their relations in contrast with the outside powers including the Sikhs, Gurkhas and the British.

Apart from writing their travel account in book form, some of the European travelers, published their travelogues in the form of articles. Some of the important ones are:

1. Alexander Cunningham, 'Journal of a trip through kullu and Lahul'; Journal of Letters, 1848, XVII.;
2. J.D. Cunningham, 'Notes on Moorcroft,s Travels in Ladhakh and on Gerard,s Account of Kunawar', Journal of Letters, 1844,XIII.;
3. A Gerard, 'Narrative of a Journey from Subathoo to Shipke', Journal of Letters, 1842, XI.;
4. J.D. Gerard, 'Observations on Spiti', Asiatic Researches, 1833, XVIII(2);
5. Patrick Gerard, 'Observations on the climate of Subathu and Kotgarh', Asiatic Researches, 1842, XI.,
6. Patrick Gerard, 'A General statement of the weather at Kotgarh and Soobatho, for 1819-20-21.; Journal of Letters, 1843, XII.

These and other travelers have left interesting accounts of their tours of the various parts of the hill state of Himachal. Their description covers a wide range of subjects such as political conditions of the hill states, the power of the various Rajas, economic and social conditions, art and architecture, sculpture, painting, climate and flora and fauna etc.

3.7 Administrative, Revenue and Settlement Reports Etc.

With the British annexation of the hill states, including those of Himachal Pradesh, a number of settlement reports were prepared. An important settlement report concerning Kangra prepared by G.C. Barnes is found in the Punjab Correspondence of the Board of Administration for the Affairs of the Punjab, Vol. 1. (Lahore, 1852); The issue of land ownership in the hill states is discussed in the Preliminary Report on the General Question of Settlement of Suket State, (Lahore, 1923). Reference may also made to the Report of the Land Revenue Settlement of the Kangra District by J.B. Lyall (Lahore, 1874 and 1882).

The village administration and issues of land ownership have been discussed in a recent article, 'Goshen, A Gaddi Village in the Himalayas'.

3.8 Documents in Persian, Punjabi and Tankari

The Bhuri Singh Museum at Chamba has preserved historical source material of various types beginning from the early medieval period till the end of the nineteenth century. A catalogue of the various types of source material was prepared by J.Ph. Vogel in 1909. After the publication of this catalogue, some more documents were collected by the Museum authorities which are lying there mostly uncatalogued. The

source material available in the Museum includes; Stone Inscriptions, Sculptures, Metal Inscriptions, Wood Carvings, Embroideries and Textiles, Paintings and Archival Documents in Persia, Tankari and Punjabi.

The Chamba Museum contains a collection of 128 documents of which 72 have been catalogued by J.Ph. Vogel. Fifty-six available documents (in Tankari) were collected by the Museum authorities after the publication of the catalogue in 1909 A.D. A large number of the catalogued Tankari documents covering the later half of the 18th and early 19th century comprise of sands, letters, agreements, title deeds, statements and treaties etc. A number of uncatalogued Tankari documents also cover more or less the same aspects.

Twenty-eight Persian documents cover the period from around the middle of the seventeenth century to 1846 A.D. It is quite interesting to note that the Chamba documents of the early period are mostly in Persian whereas from the end of the eighteenth century onwards, these documents are also available in local languages such as Tankari and the Gurmukhi.

A Survey of these documents reveals that most of the Persian documents (sanaas as well as parwanas) were issued by the Mughal administrators and/or the officials appointed by the afghan rulers. The earliest of the Persian documents from Chamba corresponds to the period of Mughal Emperor Shahjahan whereas the last documents relates to the period of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

The Persian documents relating to the Chamba rulers range from the rule of Raja Prithvi Singh (1641-1664 A.D.) to Raja Raj Singh (1764-1794 A.D.) The ruler-wise classification is as under:

Raja Prithvi Singh (2); Raja Chatar Singh (1); Raja Dalel Singh (4); Raja Umed Singh (7); and Raja Raj Singh (2). The Texts of the six documents alongwith the English translation has already been published in the catalogue referred to above.

These documents provide useful information about the administrative as well as the agrarian history of the region. The territories of the conquered chieftains were considered as a part of the Mughal Empire. Very rarely their zamindari rights were confirmed and they were also obliged to pay peshkash (revenues) and even render military service to the sovereign power.

It is quite interesting to note that some of the documents issued by the Sikh rulers of the Punjab to the hill chiefs of Himachal Pradesh are in Persian. These may be listed as under:

1. Letter from Raja Singh of Chamba to the Sikhs for restoration of some territories. The Persian letter bears seal in Gurmukhi. (undated).
2. Letter in Persian dated 27th Jeth V.S. 1878. Letter of Maharaja Ranjit Singh to Raja Charat Singh of Chamba (1808-1844 A.D.).
3. Sanad dated 1st of Har V.S. 1881 regarding confirmation of some villages as jagir to Wazir Nathu of Chamba.

4. Parwana in Persian dated 1st Poh V.S. 1891 bearing the seal of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Refers to Sardar Lehna Singh Majithia, then subedar of Kangra about the grant of a village as jagir.
5. Parwana in Persian dated 3rd of Har, V.S. 1884. Forbids the Kardars from interfering with the jagir of Inder Singh, son of Wazir Nathu of Chamba.
6. Letter on Persian dated 29th of Phalgun, V.S. 1902. Informs Raja Sri Singh of Chamba about the British control of his State. The letter bears the seal of Maharaja Dalip Singh in Gurmukhi.

As against the available Persian documents, the documents in Tankari throw light on the hierarchy of the chiefs in this region. In many cases the weaker states were made vassals by the stronger ones. Chamba being one of the powerful states in the region, very often exercised a suzerain claim over most of the adjoining weaker states.

The Tankari documents are mostly relating to the financial matters. These documents are of varied nature. Some of them deal with the recovery of the amount on account of revenues or pertaining to loans and debts. Some throw light on the rate of interest on various accounts whereas a few documents tell us that money was often paid for the assistance lent by the neighboring chief. The names of the seller and the purchase are known from some of the sale deeds relating to land.

3.9 Secondary Sources

Secondary sources, including modern works, vansha valis, catalogues, gazetteers and research dissertations etc.

The secondary sources for the history of Himachal Pradesh include modern works concerning the Mughals and Sikhs, Punjab and Himachal Histories, Biographies of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Vanshavalis of the various hill chiefs; Catalogues, Gazetteers, Research Dissertations and other periodical literature.

Apart from the above listed monographs, a large volume of literature in the form of research dissertations, relevant to the history of Himachal Pradesh, has been and is being written by the scholars in Himachal Pradesh and other universities. The Gazetteers concerning the various districts of Himachal Pradesh, published from time to time as well as periodical literature may also serve the purpose of scholars involved in writing the political or socio-economic history of Himachal Pradesh.

3.10 Self Check Exercise

1. In which parts of the Himachal archaeological sources were found?

3.11 Conclusion

To conclude, we may say that Religious literature, Persian Sources, Sikh historical Sources, Epigraphically and numismatic sources, including documents in Persian, Punjabi and Tankari concerning erstwhile princely states of Himachal, Traveler's account, Administrative, Revenue and Settlement Reports, and Secondary sources including modern works, Vanshavalis, Catalogues, Gazetteers and Research dissertations etc. played an important role to get information on survey of sources of Himachal Pradesh.

3.12 Glossary

Survey of Sources: The researcher in search of events looks for sources that are still there. All are agreed that historical knowledge come from historical sources. Sources are the historian's raw materials. The remains which the past leaves behind for the posterity to examine are called sources.

3.13 Answer to Self Check Exercise

Ans.1 The Archaeological sources were found in Guler, Dhaliara, Dehra, Masrur, Jawalamukhi, Dehra-Gopipur and Nurpur.

3.14 Suggested Readings

1. Ahluwalia, M.S, History of Himachal Pradesh, New Delhi
2. Singh, Mian Goverdhan, History of Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, 1982.
3. Dutta, C.L, The raj and the Shimla hill states, Jalandher, 1997.
4. Hut Chison J. and J.Ph Vog el, History of Punjab hills States 2 Volume Reprint, Shimla, 1982.
5. Sharma Bansi ram and A.R. Sankhyan (eds) People of India: Himachal Pradesh, New Delhi, 1986.
6. Yadav, K. C. The Rise of Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh, New Delhi, 2008.
7. Thakur Laxman S. (Ed) where Mortals and Mountains Gods Meet, Shimla, 2002.
8. Verma V., The emergence of Himachal Pradesh: A Survey of Constitutional Development, New Delhi, 1995.

3.15 Terminal Questions

1. Why the source of survey of Himachal Pradesh is important.
2. Give a brief account of religious sources of Himachal History?

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Lesson - 4

Pre and Proto History of Himachal Pradesh

Structure

- 4.0 Introduction
- 4.1 Objectives
- 4.2 Prehistory of Himachal Pradesh
- 4.3 Early History
- 4.4 Self Check Exercise
- 4.5 Conclusion
- 4.6 Glossary
- 4.7 Answer to Self Check exercise
- 4.8 Suggested Readings
- 4.9 Terminal Question

4.0 Introduction

The history and traditions of Himachal Pradesh go back to the earliest dawn of human civilization. There is little doubt that two million years ago, at least one form of man lived in the Himachal foothills, the regions known as the Banganga-Beas valleys of Kangra, the Sirsa-Satlej valleys of Nalagarh-Bilaspur of and the Markanda valley Sirmour. These regions are essentially Shiwalik in their geology. Ancient human existence here is testified by the availability of large stone tools, like pebbles, choppers, hand-axes and flakes which are found embodied in the fan-shaped boulders and gravels in the Shiwalik foothills at Guler, Dehra, Dhaliara and Kangra in the Beas valley, Bilaspur and Nalagarh in the Sirsa-Setlej valley, and the Suketi area of the Markanda valley sirmour. The rock commonly used for making these implements was quartzite. The most interesting tool is a bifacially worked scraaper on thin oval flake obtained from the quartzite pebble. These artifacts generally show advanced Acheulian characters. The developed form of the bifacial scraper indicates the existence of an early middle palaeolithic culture in the area. On the basis of typological comparisons with similar tools found in the Indian peninsular region, the tools from the Markanda and Sirsa-Sutlej valleys, etc., seem to be at least 40,000 years old.

4.1 Objectives

1. To understand the early history of Himachal Pradesh
2. To explain the development in pre and proto history of Himachal Pradesh
3. To highlights the different Janpads of Himachal Pradesh

The readily available river water, natural vegetation and animal life created a suitable habitat for early human settlements in these regions. The early man preferred to camp on the terrace which was the most convenient flat surface. The raw material in the form of river pebbles was also at hand to design the tools required for his hunting pursuits. In the earlier stages, he was a hunter and fruit gatherer. Since no metal was then known, he utilized stones for making his artifacts. He could not have hunted the larger games by stone tools alone. For these he had devised the method of driving the animals towards steep slopes or in marshy areas so that the animals would either jump from the precipice and get killed or be trapped in the bogs. For cutting the hunted animals, extracting the flesh and removing the skin, the early man employed stone tools such as choppers and scrapers which have edges suitable for such functions. These tools indicate the earlier stage of human culture in Himachal valleys.

4.2 Prehistory of Himachal Pradesh

The prehistory of Himachal Pradesh is the history of migrations of people from the Indian plains and from Central Asia which has been a womb of nations. The Indus civilization is generally believed to have flourished between 3000 and 1750 B.C. This civilization covered an enormous area from the Arabian Sea to the Gangetic valley in the east. In the north and the east it covered the whole of Punjab as far as the Himalayan foothills, and in the south Rajasthan and Gujarat. In Prehistoric times, outside the Indus valley, the Indo-Gangetic plain was inhabited by Proto-Australoid or, say, Munda-speaking Kolarian people. When the people of the Indus valley spread through the Gangetic plains, they pushed forward the Kolarian people. The latter moved to the forests and valleys where they could live peacefully and preserve their way of life. Thus they fled northward to the Himachal valleys.

In the Vedas, they were called Dasas, Dasyus, Nishadas, etc. In the post-Vedic literature they were mentioned as Kinnaras, Nagas and Yakshas. Who inhabited this region before the coming of these races from the Indian plains in the south is not known. But the Kols, also known as Mundas, were perhaps the earliest and original migrants to the Himachal Hills. Possibly the Kolis, Hali Dums and Chanals of the western Himalayas, and Chamangs and Damangs of Kinnaur, Lahaul and Spiti are the remnants of this very ancient race. At the time of Rig Veda their powerful king was Shambara, who had ninety-nine strong forts in the hills between the Beas and Yamuna rivers.

Then in the third millennium B.C. a powerful and probably the most important race that has left its impact on the history and culture of the Himalayas entered the arena of Himachal Pradesh. It is generally accepted that in the prehistoric times the Aryans left their Central Asian home in search of new land and pastures for their animals. When they moved from Central Asia, they divided themselves into three branches and each branch moved in a different direction. One branch marched towards the west and wandered as far as western Europe, upto Spain. The other branch moved to the south-east. This branch crossed the Pamir, moved to Kashgir and they entered Kashmir. From there it moved forward slowly into the middle belt of the Himalayas subjugating and subduing the aborigines and establishing its colonies in the hills and valleys of Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Garhwal, Kumaon and Nepal. This branch of the Aryans came to be known as the Khashas, who are considered to be Kshatriyas. They

preceded the Vedic Aryans in coming to India. They engulfed the whole of the cis-Himalayas from Kashmir to Nepal and turned the Kolarian land into Khasha land. They spoke a language closely allied to Sanskrit. They were thought to have lost their claim to be considered as Aryans and to have lost become Mlechchhas or barbarians because of their non-observance of the rules of eating and drinking observed by the Sanskrit people of India. These Khashas were a war-like tribe and were known to the ancient and classical writers. They assimilated the aboriginal tribes and were in turn influenced by them in shaping their social structure. When they settled permanently they organized themselves into families and villages. Each unit elected an individual who was called 'Mavi' or 'Mavana' meaning a strongman. He used to receive a tribute from his subjects. These Mavanas were constantly fighting with and plundering each other. The stronger Mavana subdued the weaker one and annexed his circle into his own. In this way the whole region was divided into small units which were called Mavanas. With the passage of time these Mavanas developed into tribal republics which were called Janapadas in Sanskrit Literature.

Now we turn to the third branch of the Aryans which is known as the Indo-Aryans. When the people of this third branch left their Central Asian home, they moved southward and came to Iran. Some of them settled there and developed a specific Indo-Iranian culture and religion. The other adventurous bands of Aryans turned to the east and after crossing the Hindukush through the passes came as far as the Indus valley which they called Sapta-Sindhu or the land of seven rivers. The date of the coming of the Aryans in this region is seven rivers. The date of the coming of the Aryans in this region is placed at about 2000 B.C. When they came to the valley they came into contact with the more civilized people who used to live in fortified cities: They overran them and settled there. Then they moved generally in a north-easterly direction, crossed Punjab and moved up to the foothills of the Himalayas from where they turned to the Saraswati, Yamuna and Ganga valleys. Their movement and settlement were a long and slow process. The dark-skinned dwellers of the soil, whom the Aryans called Dasyus, offered a strong resistance to the invaders. One of the powerful Dasyu kings was Shambara, about whom reference has already been made. The Rig Veda mentions that Shambara was the greatest enemy of the Aryans. After fighting for 40 years the Aryans defeated him. After his defeat some of the Dasyu tribes retreated towards the north and maintained a precarious existence in the hills under the supremacy of the Khashas. The Aryans spread through the plains and seldom tried to penetrate the hills. They lived in the plains of the Sapta-Sindhavah or seven rivers, the northern limit of their extension touching the Shiwalik foothills.

In the Vedas frequent mention has been made of the Himalayas and some of its peaks and the rivers that issue from it, but the Rig Veda knows nothing of the Vindhya and other mountain ranges of India. In the latest ages some Vedic saints and sages with their disciples came to the low Himachal valleys as peaceful settlers and established their hermitages in several places. Among them the Rainika take in Sirmur district is connected with Jamdagni, the Vashishtha Kund in Manikaran of the Kullu valley with Vashishtha Rishi, Nirmand with Parshurama, the Beas cave in Bilaspur with sage Vyasa, etc. In the post-Vedic period, the five Pandava brothers spent most of their exile period in these hills and some of the places like Hatkoti in the Jubbal area and Hidimba goddess in the Kullu valley are connected with them.

The speakers of Kolarian and Indo-Aryan tongues made up the people of Himachal and developed the culture of the region. By the middle of the first millennium B.C. another new racial, cultural and language element came into Himachal-the Mongoloid Tibetan speakers, the Kiratas. But they touched only its fringe in the north and north east and their influence was only local and not of much significance. According to a Tibetan tradition of very doubtful value, the Tibetan first settled in Tibet during the time of the Buddha. But it was over a thousand years afterwards, in the seventh century A.D., that they came into an active contact with Himachal, a Himachal which was already far advanced in her composite Aryan and Non-Aryan culture. The Tibetan tribes were in a very primitive and backward condition. They did not have much to give in the pre-Aryan and Aryan affinities and origin.

4.3 Early History

According to Mahabharata (1000 B.C.) the Himalayan region now forming Himachal Pradesh was divided into a number of small tribal republics. This is also verified by Panini (c. 5th century B.C.). These tribal republics were called Janapadas. The Janapadas were both a state and a cultural unit. Their cultural integrity was reflected and preserved in their manners, customs, and, above all, in the dialect of their people. The Janpadas were originally named after the people settled in them. Later they became territorial units. Panini testifies to this process by stating that the names of the Janapadas did not take after their original settlers, but were then current as independent, proper names for territorial units. Katyayana mentions two types of Janapadas. One was monarchical or *ekaraja* and the other republican or *sangha*. The tribal republics of Himachal Pradesh were *Sangha Janapadas*. They were also called *Ayudhajivi Sanghas*, meaning those who lived by the profession of arms. The Janapadas mentioned in the Mahabharata and also known to Panini are the *Audumbaras*, the *Trigartas*, the *Kulutas* and the *Kulindas*.

The Audumbaras

A story in the Mahabharata mentions that Audumbara is the name of the descendant of the sage Vishvamitra who is the founder of the gotra of the Kaushika group. He was probably their national hero.

The Audumbaras, also known as the Udumbaras or Odumbaras, were one of the most prominent tribes of ancient Himachal Pradesh, whose coins have been mostly found in the pathankot and the jawalamukhi regions of Kangra district. Besides this, stray coins of theirs have also been recovered from the Hoshiarpur district. This shows that the Audumbaras populated the area formed by the western part of the modern Kangra district, i.e., the whole of the region of Gurdaspur district and Hoshiarpur district (the valley of the Beas, or perhaps the wider region between the Sutlej and the Ravi). The Audumbaras have been referred to in association with the people of Jalandhara in Panini's *Ganapatha*. It is generally believed that Panini lived in the 5th Century B.C. Therefore this tribe had its existence as early as the 5th century B.C.

The early story of the Audumbaras is extremely obscure. J.Przyluski, however, conjectures that they had to bear the brunt of the Aryan aggression, as a result of which there was a division in the tribe. According to him, the Mahabharata refers to the Audumbaras of Punjab while the Markandeya Purana and the Brihatsamhita intended to

imply the Southern Audumbaras. The Vishnu Purana couples them with the Trigarta, the ancient people of Kangra and Kulindas. A Buddhist scholar named Chandragomin (5th century A.D.) refers to the Audumbaras in his work Vritti, as a section of the Shalvas. Mention of the Shalvas has been made in the Satapatha Brahmana, a work of the 8th century B.C. Thus the existence of the Shalvas is established in the 8th Century B.C. They were very powerful. Probably there existed many constituent sections of the Shalvas. The Audumbaras were one among them and they all existed at the same time.

The Audumbaras were advantageously situated on the great route of commerce which ran from Takshashila to the Gangetic valley. It was a route from Magadha to Kashmir. Besides, their territory stood on the opening of the several Himalayan valleys serving as natural intermediaries between the mountains and the plains. It is to be noted that Pathankot where a number of coins of the tribe have been found, being the junction of the commercial routes from Chamba, Nurpur and Kangra, was a great commercial centre. The tribe was republican and had an elected king.

The legends in Brahmi and Kharoshthi inscribed on the coins of the Audumbaras throw sufficient light on their form of government.

1.	Mahadevsa Rana	Sivadasa	Odumbarisa
2.	Mahadevsa Rana	Rudradassa	Odumbarisa
3.	Mahadevsa Rana	Dharaghosasa	Odumbarisa
4.	Bhagavati Mahadevasa	Raja Rana	Odumbarisa

The Audumbara coins have an additional word 'Mahadevasa' along with the name of the Raja or Rana and the tribe. It has been taken to be the regal title of the Audumbara leaders. It is possible that the word 'Mahadeva' was used for god Shiva. This legend is supported by the figure of a trident, a symbol of Shiva on the coins. This shows that the issuers of these coins were worshippers of Shiva.

After some time the Audumbaras favored a monarchical form of government. It is possible that the popularly believed Mitra might have been responsible for the downfall of the republican form of government of the Audumbaras. On careful examination of the coming of the two tribes we find that the lineage of the second group namely Rudravarma, Mahimitra, Aryamitra, Bhanumitra, and Ma-habhutimitra followed the former chronologically.

The Audumbaras issued copper and silver coins. They were issued in the name of the community and the king. These coins date from the first century B.C. and have legends in both Brahmi and Kharoshti. On the coins of Sivadas, Rudradas, Dharaghosha and Mahadeva we find the name of the tribe associated with that of the king. There are some Audumbara coins, especially of the Mitras, which omit the name of the tribe. The omission of the tribal names in the series in question may be due to the change in the constitution of the Audumbaras with the increase of the authority of the rulers of the tribe who gave their own name only in the coin legends. The numismatic evidence shows that the Audumbaras asserted their independence and formed a separate state in about the 2nd century B.C. The material prosperity of these people is testified to by the abundance of coins which bear their names. The country of the Audumbaras was, as stated earlier, situated on the commercial routes from the

Gangetic plains to Central Asia. The local industries also contributed a major source of wealth. Sheep rearing was one of the occupations of the people. The sheep of that locality were famous for yielding very fine fleece. The Audumbaras may have grown prosperous through the sale of woolen goods manufactured by them. The economic affluence of the Audumbaras is also attested to by Buddhist texts like the Vinaya. The silver coins of the tribes, though not many in number, also show that they were one of the those few ancient Indian tribes issuing silver coins whose financial position may be presumed to have been sound.

The coins of the Audumbaras that bear the device of a structure along with a trident and a battle-axe help us to know about the religion of the people. The structure signifies a Shaivite temple. The trident and the battle-axe, the former being a special weapon of Shiva, and the names of the issuers of the coins (such as Sivadas and Rudradasa) are clearly indicative of the Shaiva affiliation of the Audumbaras. The coins that bear the figure of a bull also point to the same conclusion, for a bull probably stands for Nandi, the Vahana of Shiva.

Trigarta

The name Trigarta is found in the Mahabharata and in the Puranas, as well as in Panini's work. The Puranic tradition regards Trigarta as natives of the mountains. It is also synonymous with Jalandhara. Hem Chandra says:

"Jalandharas Trigartas Syath"

("Jalandhara, that is, Trigarta")

This is a common name still in use which has been handed down from the time of the Mahabharata and the Puranas. It is, therefore, assumed that Jalandhara was the name of the country in the plains, and Trigarta of that in the hills; and these names may have been used interchangeably for the whole region.

Trigarta is repeatedly mentioned in Sanskrit literature, for example in the Mahabharata where we read of Susharman, the founder of Trigarta, who was the ally of the Kauravas and attached Virata, the king of the Matsyas with whom the Pandavas had sought refuge. Apparently, the Trigarta and the Matsyas were neighbours. According to the Mahabharata, Susharman, when about to attack Virata, marched in a south-easterly direction. The original seat of the family is said to have been at Multan. After the great war of Mahabharata they lost their lands in Multan, and retired, under Susharman, to the Jalandhara region, where they settled and built the fort of Nagarkot. In the Mahabharata and the Brihatsamhita Trigarta is mentioned with other tribes of Punjab. They are closely connected with the Yaudheyas. The Vishnu Purana couples the Audumbaras and the Kulutas. Thus the Trigarta country corresponds to the modern Kangra, the land between the Ravi and the Sutlej. Trigarta denotes the region drained by three rivers, the Ravi, the Beas and the Sutlej.

The first historical mention of Trigarta is to be found in the 5th century B.C., in the writings of Sanskrit writer Panini. It is mentioned by Panini as Ayudhajivi Sangha, and a confederation of six states known as Trigarta-Shashthas. The Trigartas represented a second cluster of mountainous Sanghas being counted amongst Parvatasrainah along with the Niharas, Darvas, Karna-Pravarnas, etc., who formed the north-western group.

The region was split up into a number of states, The Kashika mentions the six members of this confederacy as follows:

1. Kaundoparatha,
2. Dandaki,
3. Kraushtaki,
4. Jalamani
5. Brahmagupta and
6. Janki.

They are not identified. Brahma gupta may be Brahmaur of Chamba. The Janakas are mentioned as helpmates of Susharman of Trigarta. In his Sutras, Panini has described them as Ayudhajivi Sanghas, meaning a martial republican tribe. Mostly they were Kshatriyas.

The existence of Trigarta as an independent republic in the second century B.C. is indicated by a coin bearing the legend 'Trakata-janapadasa' in Brahmi character and the traces of the same inscription in Kharoshthi on the obverse are visible. The coin is square in shape. The square shape of the coin is a further evidence of its early date.

Kuluta

The original name of Kuluta occurs in the Ramayana and the Vishnu Purana. It is also mentioned in the Mahabharata under that name in a list of the countries lying in the north of India. The Markandeya Purana and the Brihatsamhita also notice it among the tracts situated in northern India. The Kulutas are mentioned along with many other tribes like the Audumbaras, the Kashmiras, the Dardas, the Dravabhisaras, the Kulindas, and the Tanganas. They were close to the Audumbaras. The Kulindas are mentioned as their south-eastern neighbours. Thus the territory of the Kulutas was located in the upper Beas valley now known as the (Kullu) valley, as it is often mentioned that the territories of the two peoples, that is the Kulutas and the Audumbaras, were not widely separated. The ancient capital of the Kulutas was Nagar on the Beas, a name included in the Katreyadi Gana (IV. 2.955) of Panini

The Kulutas, as a separate political entity, were known to the author of the play Mudrarakshasa, who tells us that Chandragupta Maurya's (c. 324.B.C.) Himalayan alliance gave him an army recruited from a variety of people. Among them are mentioned the following: the Sakas, the Yavanas (probably Greeks), the Kiratas, the Kambojas, the Parasikas, Bahlikas, Kulutas and Kashmir asviza, Chitravarma of Kuluta, Samhanada of Malaya, Pushkar Chandragupta Maurya was opposed by an alliance of five kings. Aksha of Kashmira, the Samdhava prince, Sindhusena and force of cavalry. The army of Malayaketu also included Khasha Meghakhya, the king of the Parasikas, who joined with a large force of cavalry. The army of Malayaketu also included khasharecruits from the frontier highlands. But these references do not help in explaining the early history of these people.

The Oldest historical record in this connection is the legend on a coin found in the Kullu Valley. The unique copper coin of the Kulutas bears the legend 'Virayasasya

rajna Kulutasya' (of the Kuluta king Virayasa). The practically Sanskrit form of the inscription and the survival of the Prakrit rana in Kharoshthi on the reverse render the date about A.D. 100 very probable. They issued copper coins because copper was available in the country at that time.

The Kulindas (or Kunindas). The ancient Kulindas have a place in the list of Puranic peoples. In the Mahabharata, the Vishnu Purana, the Vayu Purana and the Markandeya Purana, the Kunindas have been called by the name of Kulindas. The Mahabharata mentions that the Kulinda people were conquered by Arjuna. Elsewhere in the Mahabharata they are mentioned in a long list of the tribes dwelling between Meru and Mandara and upon the Soilada River under the shadow of bamboo forests, where king Subaho presented a lump of ant gold at the solemnity occasion of the inauguration of Yadhishthira as universal emperor. From the description therein it is concluded that they were mountaineers and neighbours of the Trigartas. The Vishnu Purna not only mentions the Kulindas but also Kulindo-Palyakas or 'Kulindas dwelling along the foot of the hills.' Panini's Kuluna (Gana-Patha, IV.2. 133, IV. 3. 93) seems to be the same as Kulinda and later Kuninda. The Kulindas (greek Kulindrini) were also mentioned by Ptolemy (c. 140 A.D) in his Geographika as an extensive country including the region of the lofty mountains wherein Beas, the Sultej, Yamuna and the Ganga had their sources. Varahamihira (c. 500 A.D.) locates them with the Kulutas and Sairindhas or the people Kullu and Sirhind. From the above discussion it is evident that the Kulindas were a hill people who lived in the area lying between the rivers Beas-Sultej and the Yamuna (Shimla and Sirmur hills) and between Ambala and Saharanpur in the plains. This is also proved by the fact that a large number of coins of the Kulindas were found in the country between Ambala and Saharanpur on the plains and on the Shiwalik hills.

From the extension of the country of the Kulindas, we can identify them with the Kanets or Kunets of our own times who form the bulk of the population of Kullu, the Shimla hills and the Sirmurhills. They have been identified with the Kulindas or Kunindas of early history. Under both of these forms their names are still pre-served in the districts of Kullu on the Beas, Kannaure on the Sutlej, and Sirmur on the Giri river. The names Mavi or Mavna given to the Kanets and the Khashas designate the ancient possessors of the hills, whom they acknowledge to have been their ancestors. Their tradition says that both the Kanets and the Khashas were the masters of the hills before the great Aryan immigration.

The ethnographic distribution and the numismatic finds of 2nd and 1st centuries B.C. of the Kulindas in the Shiwalik hills right from Kangra to Kumaon, including Himachal Pradesh and the adjoining area of the plains between Ambala and Saharanpur, showed that at that time the Kulindas were independent. During the Saka invasion when the Greeks were pushed out of Mathura, the Kunindas extended their power down into the plains with which they were very much familiar from earlier times. This is justified in view of the fact that like the hill people of the present day they used the plains as grazing grounds for their cattle during the winter months. They issued silver coins. The coins furnish only one name Amoghabhuti, who was ruling during the later half of the first century B.C. When the Sakas advanced into the Punjab plains the Kulindas lost their independence. Soon after it the Kulinda coinage ceased. The reappearance of their coinage in the 3rd century A.D. shows that they reasserted their

independence on the decline of the Kushana empire. It is likely that the Kulindas joined hands with the Yaudheyas and that the two people jointly expelled the Kushanas from the eastern Punjab. They probably disappeared from the political map of northern India some time before A.D. 350, for they are not mentioned in the Allahabad stone pillar inscription of Samudragupta, nor is there any other evidence of the continuation of their rule.

The Kulindas had a republican form of administration. They had a central assembly. The members of the central assembly had the title of kings. Kautilya has referred to as a class of such republics as 'Rajasabdopajivinati'.

From the coin-legends of the Kulindas also, we get confirmation of the fact that they had a republican system. The legend 'Rajnah Kunindasya Amoghabhutisya Maharajasya' corroborates the testimony from literature that all the members of the tribal assembly were called 'Rajas' and the president or the chief of the house was called 'Maharaja'. The reverse of these coins bears the word 'Maharaja' in the exergue, independently. This denotes the importance of the high office. It is a point worth considering that the words 'Raja' and 'Maharaja' cannot be used for one man 'Amoghabhuti' alone as some of the historians assume. The coins bearing the name of Amoghabhuti have been issued during a period extending over centuries. K.P. Jayawal suggests that it was probably an official title, meaning of 'unfailing prosperity'.

'Rajasabdopajivin Sangha' implies a republic which recognized the title of Rajan. A constitution of this sort appears to have prevailed among the Kunindas. Their coins were struck in the name of the 'King' and the political Community'. This appears to be an official title and not a personal name of any king or chief.

The Kuninda coinage bears legends in Prakrit. On the silver coins the Prakrit script is used on the obverse and the Kharoshthi on the reverse. The copper coins mostly have legends in Brahmi only. As the copper coinage was mainly intended for local circulation, the exclusive use of the Brahmi script on it shows that the prevalent script in the Kuninda territory was Brahmi. The silver coins, which were likely to travel beyond the home territories, were inscribed with Kharoshthi also, as the latter script was current in the neighbouring region of north-western Punjab. Allen has remarked that these silver coins have been modelled after the hem drachmas of the latter Greek kings. Economically the silver coins of the Kunindas represent an attempt of an Indian ruler to issue a native silver coinage which would compete, in the market, with the latter Indo-Greek silver coinage.

The coins of the Kunindas fall into two groups, one about the end of the first century B.C. and the other about three centuries later. The former bears the name of Amoghabhuti, with a legend which reads 'Rajnah Kunindasya Amoghabhutisya Maharajasya'. These earliest coins are distinguished by Buddhist symbols only in addition to the name of Kuninda.

Coins were issued by a Kuninda republic again at the end of the 2nd century A.D. or the beginning of the third. These are large pieces resembling the Kushana copper coins. The obverse bears a figure of Shiva holding a trident and the legend 'Bhagavata-Chatresvara-Mahatman'. This legend, which has been considered to be an Indian insignia of sovereignty, can also imply that the tribal state of the Kunindas at one

time was dedicated to Lord Shiva inistemeloirlo neyslan the 2nd century A.D. and the coins were issued in his name in the capacity of its sovereign ruler. The Kunindas were contemporaries of the Audumbaras, the Trigartas and the Arjunayanas in the plains. And, therefore, their social and economic conditions must have more or less similar.

The Yaudheyas had made an alliance against the Kushanas and they succeeded in achieving their aim. This shows that the Kunindas were a martial race and that they were materially strong, as the Yaudheyas would not have preferred to ally with them for warlike purposes had they not been so.

So far as the economic situation of the tribe is concerned, we can infer from their silver coinage that they were fairly prosperous. These republican states, which flourished up to the time of the Guptas and of whom we know from Panini, the Puranas, Buddhist literature, Kautilya, Greek accounts and coins, disappeared in the 5th century A.D., and for this, perhaps the Imperial Guptas were mainly responsible.

In the 4th century A.D., Samudragupta overpowered all these Ganas and Sanghas, and annexed them to his own empire. These Sanghas thus vanished forever. Waris commuting Before 500 B.C. and the beginning of the Christian era, the Persians, the Greeks, the Scythians and the nomadic Kushanas from Central Asia invaded northern India. In 327 B.C., the Macedonians and allied peoples under the leadership of Alexander crossed Afghanistan and advanced as far as Beas river. In Punjab, he met resistance by the republican people who were described by Panini as Ayudhajivi Sanghas', 'Warrior-communities. This is a tradition which is confirmed by Plutarch's statement that when Alexander was in Punjab, Chandragupta met him. At that time, he was living in that locality with Chanakya also known as Kautilya.

Chandragupta was the contender for the Magadha throne. With not only expelled him, but had also insulted Chanakya. When the Macedonians met a stiff resistance, they refused to go further and in 326 B.C. Alexander turned back. An internal rising took place almost immediately after his departure from India. Chandragupta and Chanakya evidently took full advantage of this situation. They the name of some Mlechcha tribes, like the Kirata highlanders. They set out collecting recruits from different places. Kautilya mentions the name of some. Mlechcha tribes, like the Kirata highlanders. According to tradition, he began by strengthening his position through an alliance with the Himalayan chief Parvataka, as stated in both the Sanskrit and Jaina texts, Mudrarakshasa and Parish ishtaparvan. The Jain text even says that Chanakya went to Himavakuta and entered into an alliance with Parvataka, the king of that region. A Buddhist account also mentions a Parvataka as a close associate of Chanakya. The Mudrarakshasa further informs us that his Himalayan alliance gave Chandragupta an army of recruits from a variety of people. Among these are mentioned the following: the Sakas, the Yavanas, the Kiratas, the Kambojas, the Paraskas and the Vahlikas. According to the Mahabharata, the Vahlikas comprised the Prasthalas, the Madras, the Gandharas, the Khasas, the Vasatis, the Sindhus and the Sauviras. If not others, the Kiratas and the Khashas were definitely from the Himachal hills, who joined Chandragupta's army and the Himalayan king Parvatak must be the Trigarta chief, the major portion of whose dominion was spread into the hills and whose capital was at Jalandhara. As at the time of the recruitment both Chanakya and Chandragupta were in Punjab and the recruitment was also made in Punjab and Vahluka, Paravataka, as

mentioned above, must be the chief of the Trigarta-Jalandhara confederation with whom Chanakya had close contact and whose help he sought. Moreover, Panini has described the people of Trigarta as Ayudhajivi, that is those who live by fighting, and Chandragupta would have wanted recruits of that type. This shows that when they were in Punjab, they would have recruited the soldiers from Panjab and the adjoining hill region at Trigarta and not from Kashmir and Nepal which were very far away from Panjab. Moreover, Alexander had made the king of Abhisara, the ruler of Kashmir with the state of Arsaces (Hazara) added to his kingdom. Therefore, the Parvataka of the Mudrarakshasa and Parishishtaparvan, the Buddhist and Jaina texts, must be ruler of the territory between the Ravi and Yamuna rivers. With the help of Chanakya, Chandragupta effected a revolution at Pataliputra and exterminated the Nanda family, and ascended the throne in 324 B.C. His next exploit was to expel the Macedonian garrison and to put an end to the Greek rule in Punjab.

Chandragupta followed up his success by subduing all the states of northern India. In the west, he extended his boundaries as far as Afghanistan. Towards the north, he probably tried to penetrate into the inner hills. The Mudrarakshasa mentions that Chandragupta was opposed by a coalition of five kings among whom the name of Chitravarma of Kuluta is mentioned.

Ashoka, the grandson of Chandragupta, extended his boundaries into the Himalayan region. His son, Kunala, became the governor of Kashmir and Ladakh. Ashoka was a staunch Buddhist. It is said that at the conclusion of the third Buddhist Council, Buddhist monks were selected and sent as missionaries to various regions. Among these, Majjhantika and Ashoka's son, Kunala, went to Kashmir and Gandhara, Ashoka and his daughter Charumati to Nepal, and Majjhima to the Himalayan region. The mission to the Himalayan region was a large one and consisted of a team of four monks, Kassapagotta, Dhundibhissara, Sahadeva and Mulakadeva. Some of the relic caskets from Sanchi contain a few of these names. The Mahavansha mentions that Majjhima along with the other four monks preached Buddhism in five countries of the Himalayas. These five countries must have been between Kashmir and Nepal as separate missions were sent to them. Therefore, these five countries, originally existing in the mountainous regions between Kashmir and Nepal, have come to be called today Himachal Pradesh, Garhwal and Kumaon. As early as 242 B.C.; Buddhism is said to have been injected into the Himachal hills through these Buddhist missionaries and their disciples. Ashoka also built many stupas in the Himalayan region. One of them existed in the Kullu valley about which the Chinese traveller Hiuen-Tsang (630-44 A.D.) has mentioned that in the middle of the country (Kuluta) is a stupa built by Ashokaraja. 'Of old the Tathagata came to this country with his followers to preach the law and to save men. This stupa is a memorial of the traces of his presence. Ashoka also erected many rock edicts. one of the major rock inscriptions is of Kalsi, an important settlement on a trade route at that time, which is at the confluence of the Tons and the Yamuna in the Jaunsar-Bawar region and once a part of the Sirmur state.

4.4 Self Check Exercise

1. Where the name of Trigarth Found?
2. The Original name of Kuluta was occurs in?

4.5 Conclusion:

Thus as far back as in the 3rd and 4th centuries B.C., the people of the hills forming Himachal Pradesh, took great interest and an active part in the Indian political, social, cultural and religious life. They had trade contacts with the people of the plains. They exported herbs and skins of the varieties called Bisi and Mahabisi. They accepted the over lordship of Ashoka, but otherwise they were free to look after their own affairs. In brief we can say that the History of Himachal Pradesh was very ancient. The early people lived in Tribes and there are many resources from which we get information of early people of Himachal regions.

4.6 Glossary

Pre and Proto History: Pre history and proto history is an archaeological discipline that re constructs social, cultural and historical processes by using material culture as a unique source of information about past societies, from the first appearance of humans to the most recent past.

4.7 Answer to Self Check Exercise

Ans.1 The name of Trigarta was found in the Mahabharata and in the Puranas, as well as in Panini's work.

Ans.2 The original name of Kuluta was occurs in Ramayana and Vishnu Purana.

4.8 Suggested Readings

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Verma V., The emergence of himachal Pradesh: A Survey of Constitutional Development, New Delhi, 1995.

4.9 Terminal Questions

1. What is Pre and Proto History? Describe it in the context of Himachal?
2. What do you know about the early History of Himachal Pradesh?

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Unit-II
Lesson - 5
Tribalism to State Formation

Structure

- 5.0 Introduction
- 5.1 Objective
- 5.2 Stone Age to Tribal Republics
- 5.3 Traces of Human Existence
- 5.4 The Stone Age
- 5.5 The Indus Civilization
- 5.6 The Indo-Aryans and Indo-Mongoloids
- 5.7 The Khasas
- 5.8 The Tribal Republics or the Janapadas
- 5.9 From Imperial Guptas to the Rajput States
- 5.10 The Imperial Guptas and Himachal Pradesh
- 5.11 Self Check Exercise
- 5.12 Conclusion
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- 5.14 Answer to Self Check Exercise
- 5.15 Suggested Reading
- 5.16 Terminal Question

5.0 Introduction

The political history of Himachal Pradesh during the Vedic period is not as fully known as it is during the period of the Mahabharata in one thousand B.C., when we come across an era of tribal republics referred as the Janapadas in classical literature. Some of the important tribal republics of Himachal Pradesh were the Audumbaras, the Trigartas, the Kulutas and the Kulinda or Kunindas, which continued to flourish in several areas of the Himachal Pradesh after the decline of the power of the Kushanas. The rise of the latter Audumbaras, Yaudheyas and the Kunindas during this period is known on the basis of archaeological, numismatic and literary sources, apart from the traveller's accounts.

5.1 Objective

1. To understand the history of Tribalism

2. To know the importance of tribal janpads in Himachal History
3. To analyze the Socio- cultural practices during Tribalism

5.2 Stone Age to Tribal Republics

The early political history of Himachal Pradesh is not fully established. This is mainly due to the absence of adequate archaeological and literary sources. Some recent explorations and researches however, have thrown significant light on the political and cultural history of the state going as far back as the pre-historic age.

5.3 Traces of Human Existence

The geological explorations prove that as early as two million years ago, at least one form of man lived on the Himachal foot-hills, in the Nalagarh-Suketi region and in the Kalpa valley of Kinnaur. Fossils of the various animals discovered from some regions of Himachal Pradesh testify to the growth of marshy land, lakes and human life. The archaeological surveys so far carried out, clearly point out the human existence in the area traversed by the Banganga-Beas valleys of Kangra, the Sirsa-Sutlej valleys of Nalagarh-Bilaspur and the Markanda valley of Sirmur.

The archaeological surveys conducted by Professor B.B.Lal and R.V. Joshi traces back the history of Himachal Pradesh to the late stages of the palaeolithic period. The explorations in the Suketi-Nalagarh area and Guler region of Kangra have yielded a large number of stone-implements.

5.4 The Stone Age

The human existence in the Himachal Pradesh is also testified by the discovery of large stone tools like pebbles, choppers, hand-axes and bifacially flakes which are found embodied in the fang-shaped boulders and gravels in the Shiwalik foothills at Guler, Dehra, Dhaliara and Kangra in the Beas valley; Bilaspur and Nalagarh in the Sirsa-Sutlej valley and Suketi area of the Markanda valley of Sirmur. The rock commonly used for these implements were quartzite. The most interesting tool is a worked scaper on thin oval flake obtained from the quartzite pebble. These artifacts generally show advanced Acheulian characters. The sophistry of the bifacial scaper indicates the existence of an early middle palaeolithic culture in the area. On the basis of typological comparisons with similar tools found in the Indian peninsular region, the tools from the Markanda and Sirsa-Sutlej valleys etc., seem to be at least forty thousand years old.

Settled Life

The traces of settled life in the Himachal Pradesh have also been found from a place called Ror in the Kangra district. The stone-tools found here are axes, chisels, picks, axe-hammers and rig-stones which date back to the post -Pleistocene period and indicate the existence of a settled community life, wherein the man used earthen pots and pans, domesticated animals and produced food through agriculture and breeding of live-stock etc.

5.5 The Indus Civilization

The Indus civilization is generally believed to have flourished between 3000 to 1750 B.C. and covered the entire area extending from the Arabian sea to the Gangetic valley in the east. It covered the whole of Punjab as far as the Himalayan foot-hills apart from Rajasthan and Gujarat in the south. It is believed that when the inhabitants of the Indus valley spread through the Saraswati and Gangetic plains, they pushed forward the Munda speaking Kolorian people who used to inhabit this part earlier.

Kolorians - The Earliest Inhabitants : The Kolorian people were forced to migrate to the forests and difficult valleys of the Himalayas. With the passage of time this race spread themselves over the whole of the western and central Himalayas. They lived in groups and had their own language and indigenous beliefs. Traces of Indus Valley civilization are found in Ropar which is located near the hills of Himachal Pradesh. This must have influenced the life of the hills, then inhabited by these people.

During the Rig-Vedic period, these people were called Dasas, Dasyus, Nishadas etc. Literary sources also refer to Kinnaras, Nagas and Yakshas who migrated to the hills of Himachal Pradesh during the postVedic period. However, the Kols, also known as Mundas, are stated to be the earliest original migrants to the Himachal hills and possibly the Kolis, Halis, Dums and Chanals of the Western Himalayas and the Chamangs and Damangs of Kinnaur, Lahul and Spiti are the remnants of this race.¹²

5.6 The Indo-Aryans and Indo-Mongoloids

The second group of people were of the Aryan origin. They were known as the Khasas who penetrated from the north-west and settled in the mid-mountain belt of the Himalayas from Kashmir to Nepal. They developed a specific Indo-Iranian culture and religion in their Central Asian home and their more adventurous band turned to the east and after crossing the Hindukush, came as far as the Indus valley which they called Sapta-Sindhu or the land of seven rivers. The date of arrival of the Aryans in this region is estimated at about two thousand B.C.

From the Indus Valley, the Aryans moved generally in a northeasterly direction, crossed Punjab and moved up to the foothills of the Himalayas from where they turned towards the Saraswati, Yamuna and Ganga valleys. The dark-skinned dwellers of the soil, whom the Aryans called Dasyus, offered a strong resistance to the invaders. One of the powerful Dasyu kings was Shambara, whom Rig-Veda mentions as the greatest enemy of the Aryans. After fighting for about forty years, the Aryans defeated Shambara. Some of the Dasyu tribes retreated towards the north and maintained a precarious existence in the hills under the supremacy of the Khasas. The Aryans mostly spread through the plains and the northern limit of their extension touched only the Shiwalik foothills.

The Mongolian featured people settled in the Himachal hills are mentioned as Bhotas and Kiratas in the Indian literature. In pre-historic times they occupied the sub-Himalayan region and presently they are found only in the higher regions of the Himachal Pradesh. Their characteristic features include Tibeto-Burman language, Lamaistic Buddhism, mixed economy of live-stock raising, shifting cultivation and trade.

5.7 The Khasas

A second branch of the Aryans, which established its colonies in the hills and valleys of Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Garhwal, Kumaon and Nepal, came to be known as the Khasas. The Khasas are considered to be Kshatriyas, who preceded the Vedic Aryans in coming to India. They engulfed the whole of the cis-Himalayas from Kashmir to Nepal and turned Kinnaur-Kirat and Nagaland into the Khasa land. They spoke a language closely allied to Sanskrit.

The Khasas, in course of time, however, lost their claim to consideration as Aryans and became Mlechchhas or the Barbarians because of their non-observance of the rules for eating and drinking as observed by the Sanskritic people of India. The Khasas were a war-like tribe and were well known to the ancient as well as the classical writers. They organised the aboriginal tribes and were in turn influenced by them in shaping their social structure. They organised themselves into families and villages and elected an individual called Mavi or Mavana meaning a strong-man. They constantly fought among themselves and plundered each other. The stronger Mavana subdued the weaker one and annexed his circle into his own. Thus the whole region was split into small units called the Mavanas which later developed into tribal republics called Janapadas in the Sanskrit literature.

5.8 The Tribal Republics or the Janapadas

The political history of Himachal Pradesh during the Vedic period is not as fully known as it is during the period of the Mahabharata in one thousand B.C., when we come across an era of tribal republics referred as the Janapadas in classical literature. Some of the important tribal republics of Himachal Pradesh were the Audumbaras, the Trigartas, the Kulutas and the Kulinda or Kunindas, which continued to flourish in several areas of the Himachal Pradesh after the decline of the power of the Kushanas. The rise of the latter Audumbaras, Yaudheyas and the Kunindas during this period is known on the basis of archaeological, numismatic and literary sources, apart from the travellers accounts.

The Mahabharata refers to a number of small tribal republics called janapadas and information is also corroborated by the Panini Ashtadhyayi. These janapadas, mostly named after the group of peoples or territorial units, retained their own cultural integrity in matters of customs, beliefs and dialects. These were territorial or ethnic units and some were monarchical. The majority, however, was republican in character and these were also called Sangha Janapadas or Ayudhajivi Sanghas who worked under the elected or hereditary chiefs and their own assemblies.

A. The Audumbaras

One of the most prominent tribes of ancient Himachal Pradesh was known as Audumbara, Udambara or Odumbara which finds a detailed reference in the Mahabharata. The Audumbara coins 20 are among some of the earliest coins found in the various parts of the Himachal Pradesh, apart from the Punjab districts of Pathankot and Hoshiarpur.

The Audumbara republic flourished in the Kangra region. Their coins mention the names of the early Kangra rulers Mahadeva, Dharaghosha and Rudravarman. Their

economic prosperity as well as their building skills are testified from their coins bearing inscriptions of a temple and a god. The early history of Audumbaras is obscure. During Panini period in about 5th century B.C. they have been referred to in association with the people of Jalandhara.

The Audumbaras maintained their premier position among the other republics of the north western India. Their ruler Dharaghosha, was probably the most important ruler of the republic and he is said to have successfully checked the advance of the Indo-Greek king Demetrius-I towards the Upper-Bari-Doab. The boundaries of the Audumbara republic extended at least upto the bank of river Sutlej and their dominance continued even under Dharghosha successor, Mahadeva.

The growth of the indigenous regional power of the Audumbaras and their material prosperity is testified from a large number of silver and copper coins which date from the first century B.C. Some of the Audumbara coins are associated with 'Mitras' which omit the name of the tribe. It is suggested that this was a new dynasty related to the Panchala rulers of Mathura whose names also end with the suffix 'Mitra'²⁴. The issue of silver coins may indicate that the economic position of the Audumbaras was very sound. That their republic was situated on the commercial routes from the Gangetic plains to Central Asia, may also have contributed largely to their economic affluence.

The Audumbaras finally fell before the emerging power of the Kushana empire which extended its sway over the area earlier held by the Audumbaras .

B. The Trigarta

The Trigarta is synonymous with the Jalandhara territory as well as a mountain tribe. Its earliest reference is found in the Mahabharata and in the Puranas. It is also mentioned in the Panini work and Hemchandra's Abhidarra Chintamani. Probably Jalandhara was the name of the territory in the plains and the Trigarta of that in the hills. The literary sources concerning Trigarta are also supplemented by the numismatic evidence. A type of a coin issued quite early in the Christian era mentions the kingdom of Trigarta (Trakata-Janapada).²⁷

In the great epic Mahabharata, the founder of the Trigarta is mentioned as Susharman who is further stated to be an ally of the Kauravas and had attacked Virata, the king of the Matsyas. After the Mahabharata war, the family is said to have lost its original home at Multan and retired under Susharman to the Jallandhar region, where they settled down and built the Nagarkot fort.

In the Mahabharata, Trigarta is mentioned with the other Ganas and janapadas of the Punjab. There is also no doubt that the Trigarta country refers to modern Kangra and the land between Ravi and Sutlej²⁸. Panini mentions Trigarta as Sangha and Trigarta Shashathas. ²⁹

Ayudhajivi mountainous sanghas in the North West. The economy of these sanghas,

The Trigarta probably represented the second cluster of including Trigarta, was perhaps based on mercenary services offered by a large number of its members to the kings and traders. These services were necessitated by the economic developments

under the impact of the iron-age leading to political expansion, trade and large scale urbanisation.

C. The Kulutas

The Kulutas ruled over the Upper Valley of Beas river in the Kulu area. One of their rulers called Virayasha³¹ is described as the king of the Kulutas. A silver coin of the king discovered from Kulu has been ascribed to the Ist- Second century A.D.

The Kuluta finds mention in the Ramayana, Vishnu Purana and the Mahabharata. A full chapter entitled 'Kulutapitha' Mahatmya is devoted to the Kulutas in the Brahmanda Purana. The ancient capital of the Kulutas was Nagar on the banks of the Beas. In Vishakhadatta's play,

Mudrarakshasa, written in 324 B.C., the Kulutas are mentioned as one of the tribes which found recruitment in the Chandragupta Maurya's army that had gathered to fight against the Nanda ruler of Magadha. When Chandragupta became the ruler of Magadha, he started a series of conquests including in the area then held by the Kulutas.

During the course of Chandragupta north-western expedition, he was opposed by a confederacy of the five kings including Chitravarma of Kuluta. However, there are only casual references about the Kulutas and very little is known about their history in the republican form. The Kuluta tribe, in fact, seems to have lost its republican character during the early centuries of the Christian era. In all probability, it was parcelled out among the petty Ranas and finally it took the form of a kingdom during the period of emperor Harsha.

D. The Kunindas

The Kunindas or Kulindas are stated to be the most ancient inhabitants of the Himachal Pradesh. Their rule in many parts of Himachal in the pre-Christian era, is known from their early coins. Their influence extended over the area at the foot of the Shiwalik hills, between the Sutlej and Yamuna river, including Shimla, Sirmur and Kinnaur .

The Kunindas, along with the Yaudheyas, probably constituted the two great republics which saw their rise in the Himachal Pradesh after the downfall of the Kushanas. Both are stated to be the cause as well as the result of the downfall of the Kushanas.

The ethnographic distribution and the numismatic finds of the second and the Ist centuries B.C., of the Kunindas in the Shiwalik hills right from Kangra to Kumaon, which included Himachal Pradesh as well as its adjoining areas, shows that at that time the Kunindas were independent. During the Saka invasions, they even extended their power in the plains between Ambala and Saharanpur .

Among the Kuninda rulers, one Amoghabhuti Kuninda existed during the first half of the first century B.C. This is known on the basis of the Kuninda coinage. The Kunindas probably disappeared from the political map of northern India sometime before 350 A.D., for they are not mentioned in the Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta. There is also no other evidence of the continuation of their rule³⁹. It may

thus be safely assumed that the Kuninda state did not survive for a longer period and was probably overpowered by the Yaudheyas.

The Yaudheyas

Like Kunindas, the Yaudheyas also established their republic on the ruins of the Kushana empire. The tribal republic of the Yaudheyas is known from their copper coins which have been classified by J. Allan into early and later groups. The coins of the first group are in Brahmi legend and have been ascribed to the second century A.D., whereas the coins of the second group are ascribed to the third and fourth centuries A.D., when the Yaudheyas had established themselves firmly. The legend found on the coins reads:

Yaudheya ganasya Jayasya i.e. (the coins belong to the ever victorious Yaudheya Republic). The Yaudheyas lived in the plains of the Punjab between Sutlej and Yamuna and their tributaries included some principalities and Janapadas in the hills also. The Yaudheya republic flourished upto the middle of the fourth century A.D. when finally it was subjugated by Samudragupta

The Yaudheya republic came to an end with the expansion of the Gupta empire. The Yaudheyas find mention in the Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta amongst the tribal republics which were defeated and subjugated by the mighty emperor of the imperial Gupta dynasty. With the defeat of the Yaudheyas by Samudragupta in the fourth century A.D., Punjab and the Himachal hills naturally became a part of the Gupta empire. Thus with the end of the different Janapadas and Sanghas, a new chapter was opened in the history of Himachal Pradesh as we shall see in the subsequent pages.

5.9 From Imperial Guptas to the Rajput States

In the period between the downfall of the Kushanas and the emergence of the imperial Guptas, the country between the Himachal mountains and the Narbada river was divided into various independent States (monarchies as well as republics) which did not owe allegiance to any sovereign power. The numismatic and literary evidence indicate the rise of several monarchies and republics in the Gangetic plains and the Himalayan foothills respectively. The Buddhist texts refer to sixteen Mahajanapadas shortly before the advent of Lord Buddha (563-483 B.C.).

Another important event in the history of Himachal Pradesh is the Greek invasion in the last quarter of the fourth century B.C. In 327 B.C., Alexander crossed Afghanistan and by the next year he reached Taxila. The Macedonian forces marched along the foothills of the Himalayas and one of the units of Alexander's forces reached river Beas. There, its advance was resisted by the republican people described by Panini as Ayudhajivi Sanghas or the warrior communities. According to traditional accounts, when Alexander was in the Punjab, emperor Chandragupta met him along with Chanakya, also known as Kautilya.

5.10 The Imperial Guptas and Himachal Pradesh

According to all accounts, Chandragupta and Chanakya took full advantage of the political situation soon after the departure of Alexander. Both of them started

recruiting forces and further consolidated their position by an alliance with the Himalayan chief Parvataka, who is stated to be the Trigarta chief whose country spread into the Himachal hills and whose capital was at Jalandhara.

With the active assistance of Chanakya, Chandragupta led a revolution at Patliputra and ascended the throne in 324 B.C. by exterminating the Nanda family. Soon Chandragupta expelled the Macedonian garrison and put an end to the Greek rule in the Punjab. His success was followed by the invasion of States of northern India including those in the inner hills. In the Himachal hills, however, he was opposed by a confederacy of five kings, among whom, according to Mudrarakshasa's account, one was the Kuluta ruler Chitravarman.

During the same period, Kachhagupta, the younger brother of Samudragupta, is stated to have conquered the territories leading to the door of Kashmir, which may mean the areas of Kangra, Chamba and Jammu. Samudragupta's nephew and successor, Ramagupta, however, proved unworthy and was unable to face a ruler described as Saka or Khasa, who ruled over some hilly tract of western India. Ramagupta even promised to give away his wife, Dhruvaswamini to the ruler of the hills.

Although different interpretations have been given regarding the exact location and the event referred to above, the suggestion that it occurred in the Kangra region of Himachal Pradesh seems to be more plausible. However, without further evidence, nothing concrete can be said at this stage.

It is suggested that Chandragupta brought under his sway, the whole of ancient Himachal Pradesh. The Mehrauli pillar inscription informs us that the emperor crossed the seven rivers of the Punjab and even conquered the Bahlikas "living in Afghanistan or nearby it. It may have been possible only after establishing a direct control over the Punjab and Himachal hills.

That emperor Chandragupta also received military assistance from some of the hill chiefs is known from the Salari rock inscription of Kulu. The inscription refers to the defeat of one Rajjilabala by Maharaja Shri Chandresvara Hastin. The latter was probably deputed by Samudra gupta or one of his successors to make further conquests in the hills. The conquered chief Rajjilabala presumably was a local ruler belonging to Kulu-Mandi region of Himachal Pradesh who may have succeeded in carving out an independent principality for himself after the downfall of the Kushanas.

Kumaragupta

The process of conquests continued in the Himalayan region during the rule of Kumaragupta (413-55 A.D.). This is known both from archaeological and the literary sources. Rajashekhara in his Kavyamimamsa praises Kautilya for the new conquests and introduction of efficient administration in the Himalayas then inhabited by the Kinnaras.

The conquests of the parts of Himachal Pradesh by Kumara-gupta is also known from one of the types of his coins which depict the God Kartikeya on his mount peacock. Since we notice the figure of the God on the coins of the Yaudheyas, Audumbaras and the Kunindas, inhabiting this region, the motif may have been

borrowed from those of the tribal ones by the Guptas after they took these tribes under subjugation .

Skandagupta

During the rule of Skandagupta, the Hunas invaded India and threatened the integrity of the Gupta empire. They were, however, repulsed. After Skandagupta, the Hunas again invaded India and occupied Punjab and possibly some parts of Himachal Pradesh too since the latter controlled the important trade routes connecting Central Asia, China, Tibet, Ladakh and Kashmir. The Huna invasion expedited the decline and the downfall of the Guptas. This created a political uncertainty in the hilly region and resulted in the rise of a number of local rulers and growth of small principalities. It was probably during this period that a number of independent principalities emerged and they managed to delink themselves politically from the plains in the northern India.

Harshavardhana (606-647 A.D.)

The political instability in the Punjab plains and its adjoining hills came to an end with the rise of Prabhakara Vardhan, who carved out a small kingdom for himself on the ruins of the Gupta empire. After defeating and repulsing the Hunas, he chose Thaneshwar (near Kurukshetra) to be his capital. The Harshacharita of Banabhatta informs that Prabhakar Vardhan had taken an oath to make conquests in different directions, including Himachal Pradesh. This era of conquests continued under his son Harshavardhana who moved soon to Kanauj, which was destined to become the capital of northern India for many years to come.

Himachal Pradesh, during the rule of Harshavardhana seems to have enjoyed an era of peace and prosperity. The Rajatarangini and Hiuen Tsang account inform that he succeeded in giving good administration to this region. He appointed provincial governors and ruled through them. Samudrasena was probably one of his chiefs appointed in Kulu.

The account left by Hiuen Tsang, who visited this part of India in 629 A.D., shows that Harshavardhana held control over the different parts of Himachal Pradesh. The King of Jalandhara was instructed by Harsha to extend all kinds of comforts and security to the Chinese traveler during the latter visit there.

From Jalandhar, the Chinese traveller, went to the Tapasavana, which has been identified with the hills, where there were many Buddhist monks and shrines. Further, he went to Kulu and then to Surghna, Brahmapura, and Kumaon regions. From the account left by Hiuen Tsang, it appears that these places in Himachal Pradesh were fully under the control of emperor Harsha.

The Post-Harsha Period

After the disintegration of the Harsha empire, there was a great political upheaval in the north Indian plains. The Gurjara-Pratiharas emerged as one of the leading powers here. They seem to have left their influence on the various parts of the Himachal region. Several bronze and stone sculptures depicting the Pratihara art-styles have been found here.

The Ranas and Thakurs

After the collapse of the Imperial Vardhana empire, northern India again became a congeries of small states. In the cis-Himalayan region, between Ravi and the Yamuna, a new group of petty chiefs, known as the Ranas and the Thakurs, emerged. They claimed to be Kshatriyas. This period is known as the Apathakuri or Apathakurai while the territory of a Rana was called Ranhun and of a Thakur Thakuri or Thakurai.

On the slab inscriptions and copper-plate title deeds, the Ranas are indicated by the name of Rajanka, the court aristocracy of the pre-Rajput period. Hutchison and Vogel are of the view that the word Rana is derived directly from the Prakrit title Rajana (i.e. rajanna, Sanskrit rajanya) and was used either as the title of a petty chief or as a caste name. In the former meaning it is synonymous with Sanskrit Samanta and Thakkura. The oldest record actually bearing the title Rajanka was found on an image at Svain, in the Himgiri pargana of Chamba, which may be assigned to the 9th or 10th century A.D.

The name Thakur means 'Lord'. In ancient period when might was right, all the ancient rulers of the hills gave an impression that they were the Kshatriyas. Men of other communities, who had strong personality and the qualities of leadership, might have conquered a tract of country and assumed or were given the title of Thakkura, later Thakur. The word Thakkura occurs as Thakura in the Mirakula image inscription, but is not found elsewhere in the Chamba epigraphs.

The Ranas and Thakurs exercised authority either as independent rulers or under the suzerainty of a paramount power. The territories of the Ranas and Thakurs were of very diminutive size and their boundaries were liable to constant change accordingly as each ruler gained ascendancy or yielded to a superior power.

5.11 Self Check Exercise

1. Name the famous tribal republics of Himachal Pradesh?

5.12 Conclusion

As a result of the foundation of the Rajput principalities in the Western Himalayas by the Rajput adventurers, the Apathakurai period came to an end sooner in some parts than in others. These Rajput adventurers either came direct from the Indian plains, or were cadets of one or other of the noble families which had already established themselves in the hills.

5.13 Glossary

Tribalism: The behaviour and attitudes that stem from strong loyalty to one's own tribe or social group.

5.14 Answer to Self Check Exercise

Ans.1 Some of the important tribal republics of Himachal Pradesh were the Audumbaras, the Trigartas, the Kulutas and the Kulinda or Kunindas.

5.15 Suggested Reading

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5.16 Terminal Questions

1. What do you understand by Tribalism?
2. Describe Tribalism? How ancient tribes played important role in the history of Himachal?

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Lesson- 6

The Emergence of Early Medieval states in Himachal Pradesh

Structure

- 6.0 Introduction
- 6.1 Objective
- 6.2 Early Medieval States
- 6.3 Self Check Exercise
- 6.4 Conclusion
- 6.5 Glossary
- 6.6 Answer to Self Check Exercise
- 6.7 Suggested Reading
- 6.8 Terminal Question

6.0 Introduction

Very little is known of the history of Himachal Pradesh of the troubled period that followed Harsha's death in A.D. 647 until we come to the reign of King Yashovarman (A.D. 700-740), who was a contemporary of Lalitaditya (A.D. 724-760) of Kashmir. Both were ambitious rulers. We learn from the Rajatarangini that there was a war between them and Yashovarman was defeated. Kalhana, the historian of Kashmir, credited him with having led his troops into distant countries. During this period Trigarta, Brahmapura and other western hills came under his influence. Again, when Shankaravarman (A.D. 883-903) of Kashmir led an expedition for the conquest of Gujara (Gujarat), he was opposed by the chief of Trigarta who was perhaps an ally of Gujara, but on the approach of the Kashmir army, he fled. This chief was Prithvi Chandra. Trigarta was then subject to Kashmir, which had extended its sovereignty as far as the Sutlej, but it did not last long.

6.1 Objective

1. To study the Early Medieval History
2. To analyze the impact of early medieval history on Himachal
3. To study the impact of National politics on Himachal History

6.2 Early Medieval History

Harsha had made Kanauj an imperial city. As a consequence, it had become a centre of power in northern India. During the post-Harsha period, it became the centre

of attraction for all the great powers that arose in the succeeding centuries and they regarded its possession as a consummation to be devoutly wished for. The Rashtrakutas, under the leadership of Dantidurga (c.A.D. 757-773), rose from the south, the Palas under Dharampala (c. A.D. 770-810), from the east, and the Pratiharas under Nagabhatta I, Mihira Bhoja (c.A.D. 836-885) and Mahendrapala (c.A.D. 885-908), from the west and the north. Thus the stage was set for the triangular struggle for Kanauj between the Rashtrakutas, Palas and Pratiharas. To be the master of Kanauj was considered to be the paramount ruler of the western Himalayan hill states. In the struggle for supremacy, it became the seat of Gurjara Pratiharas. They extended their power northwards as far as Pehoa in the Karnal district and their further progress was checked by Shankaravarman of Kashmir. But Rajeshekhara speaks about Mahipala Bhoja II's conquest in the north up to Kuluta. This appears to be Rajashekhara's exaggeration. The empire of the Gurjara-Pratiharas of Kanauj has been described as the whole of northern India, except the three areas especially mentioned there, namely Tirhut, Bengal and Uttarapatha, the last of which comprised western Punjab, the Punjab hills and Kashmir. Mihira Bhoja's Pehoa inscription shows that his armies carried his arms upto Karnal and that the principalities lying in the north western Himalayas were outside the Gurajara-Pratiharas' paramountacy.

As the Pratihara empire declined in the latter half of the tenth century, their feudatories tried to fill the vacuum, and thus arose the Rajput states in Rajasthan and the Ganga-Yamuna Doab. With the country divided into so many fragments, a struggle for supremacy was inevitable. Having no physical boundaries to divide and check them, each fragment tried to reduce its neighbours to subjection. Instead of counteracting the danger from the northwest by presenting a united front, they continued fighting amongst themselves for supremacy. Those, who could not conquer and subdue their rivals in the plains, turned their way to the north and with their followers penetrated into the central and western Himalayan valleys. This led to the rise of powerful hill principalities. Thus, most of these hill states were founded before the eleventh century when the Muslim invasion of India started.

From the 8th century to the 12th century A.D., adventurous Rajput migrants founded numerous states in the outer ranges of the Himalayas lying between the Ravi and the Yamuna. Some of these principalities were founded as late as the 15th or 16th century.

The traditional history of Kangra (Jalandhara-Trigarta) goes back to a time long anterior to the Christian era. After the Muslim invasions began, the territory in the plains was lost, and Nagarkot of Kangra became the capital of the state. From Kangra sprang the off shoots of Jaswan, Guler, Siba, and Datarpur. Traditionally, Jaswan is said to have become an independent state in about A.D. 1170. The next separation was that of Guler, about A.D. 1405, and the foundation of this state took place in the following manner: Hari Chand, the Raja of Kangra, being away on a hunting trip, got separated from his followers and fell into a well. After a fruitless search, the hunting party returned to Kangra, believing that the chief was dead. His funeral rites were performed, the Ranis became sati and Karan Chand, the younger brother of the Raja, was seated on the gaddi. But Hari Chand was still alive, and after twenty-two days, it is said, his presence in the well was discovered by a merchant, who extricated him. On hearing of what had

taken place at Kangra, he resolved not to attempt the recovery of his kingdom and selecting a spot in Guler, he built the town and fort of Haripur and founded a new state. Siba and Datarpur were both offshoots of Guler. Siba was founded in the middle of the fifteenth century by Sibran Chand, a younger brother of the ruling chief of Guler who made himself independent and gave his name to the new state. Datarpur was founded about A.D. 1550 and in much the same way, by Datar Chand, a scion of the Siba family.

The Nurpur state was to the west of Kangra, and is said to have been founded by a Tomar Rajput, named Jhetpal from Delhi, who settled in Pathankot in about A.D. 1000. In its palmy days it included the whole of the present tehsil of Kangra, along with the areas of Shahpur and Kandi, now in Gurdaspur. Its ancient capital was at Pathankot, the original name of which was Pratishtana.

Suket and Mandi tradition has it that Bir Sen, the founder of the Suket state, was the grandson or the great-grandson of the last Hindu ruler of Bengal, Lakshman Sen, the founder of Lakhnauti. When Bakhtiar Khalji attacked the country in 1198-99, Lakshman Sen, who had been told by his astrologer that he could not succeed against the Turk invader, fled from his capital Nadia towards Decca and settled at Bikrampur. His son, Madho Sen, succeeded him there. He was followed by Sur Sen whose son Rup Sen was expelled from Bikrampur and after a series of adventures reached eastern Punjab where he settled at Rupar in the Ambala district and gave his name to the place. The Muslims, however, did not leave him alone there as well, and he fell fighting against his enemies in A.D. 1210. His three sons then fled to the hills, one of them, Bir Sen, turning towards Suket, Giri Sen to Keonthal and Hamir Sen to Kishtwar. In A.D. 1211, Bir Sen crossed the Sutlej and came to Jiuri and from there he attacked the neighboring chiefs and subdued the country, and founded the principality of Suket with his capital at Pangna.

Mandi, like Guler, was an offshoot of Suket. In about A.D. 1330, in the time of Sahu Sen, the eighth ruler of the dynasty, a younger brother named Bahu Sen quarrelled with the raja and left Suket to reside at Manglaur, in Kullu. His descendants lived there for eleven generations until Karan Chand Sen, then head of the family, was killed fighting with a Kullu raja. His queen, a daughter of the chief of Seokot in Mandi, although pregnant, was forced to take flight. She lost her way in the dense oak forest; and with night coming on, she fell exhausted beneath a 'ban' tree where to her a son was born who was named Ban. Rana Seokot having no male heir, recognised his daughter's son as his successor, and on the death of his grandfather, the boy Ban Sen became the chief of Seokat. He enlarged his inheritance and built himself a new residence at Bhinuli, 6 kms. above the present town of Mandi. Afterwards his son Kalian Sen bought Batauhli across the river Beas at Mandi and there constructed a palace the ruins of which may still be seen. Ajbar Sen, nineteenth in descent from Bahu Sen, found in 1527 A.D. the town of Mandi.

Kutlehr, on the border of Kangra and Hoshiarpur, was founded about the tenth or eleventh century by one Jas Pal who conquered the area of Talhati and Kutlehr, and decided his capital to be at Kot Kutlehr. The progenitor of the family was a Brahmin, but on acquiring regal power, he came to be recognized as Rajput. Barnes states that he came from Sabhal, near Moradabad, but the family records trace his descent from a

raja of Poona. The two small states of Bhajji and Koti in the Shimla hills are said to have been founded respectively by his second son and grandson.

Bangahal, like Kütlehr, is said to have been founded about A.D. 1200 by a Brahman, who ranked as Rajput on becoming a raja and his descendents are said to have ruled the state for twenty generations before Prithi Pal, who was murdered about 1720 A.D. The capital of the state was at Bir in Bir Bangahal.

The Bilaspur (Kahlur) state was in the lower Sutlej valley. Previous to the foundation of Kahlur, this territory was under the rule of local chiefs called Ranas and Thakurs. The founder of the Bilaspur state came from Chanderi in Bundelkhand. The story runs that Harihar Chand, a ruling prince, came on a pilgrimage with His four sons to Jawalamukhi a sacred place in the Kangra district, saw Jhandbari, now in Hoshiarpur district, in course of his journey, and attracted by the place conquered and settled down in it. They then went on to Jawalamukhi to worship at the shrine. Nadaun being near, a visit was paid to the Raja of Kangra, then residing there. The retinues of the two chiefs held a friendly tournament, in which the southern knights were successful. The Raja thereupon arranged a tent pegging contest for the following day. The youngest of the four brothers, named Sabir Chand, entered the contest. He was thrown off from the horse-back and thus died. This was attributed to treachery on the part of the Kangra Raja, and led to an encounter in which both he and Harihar Chand were killed. Then the three surviving princes retreated in different directions. Kabir Chand wandered to Kumaon, in the U.P. hills, and was adopted by the raja of that state. Ghambir Chand took possession of Chanehni in the Jammu hills. Bir Chand, the eldest, with his followers retired to the Sutlej valley, where he conquered a territory from the local rulers and settled on the left bank. On being guided by some propitious sign to a site for his capital, he built a temple to Naina Devi on one of the seven ridges now called Dhar Naina Devi. At one end of the hill, he erected a fort called Kot Kahlur, and founded a town called Naina Devi, as the capital of the new state in the plains. This state was founded in about A.D. 900.

Nalagarh was an offshoot of Bilaspur. Kahn Chand, the eleventh Raja of Bilaspur, had three sons: Ajit Chand, Ajai Chand, and Tegh Chand. Ajai Chand resolved to carve out a principality for himself. Having raised a force in his father's kingdom, he invaded the territory of Handu, the Brahman Thakur of Hindur. Handu's cruel and unjust rule had alienated the affections of his subjects, and they welcomed Ajai Chand as a deliverer. Handu was defeated. Ajai Chand thus established the state of Hindur, also known as Nalagarh, in about 1100 A.D.

The tract of the country lying between the rivers Sutlej and Yamuna, the former bounding it to the north-west and north, the latter to the south-east, was divided into a variety of large and small states, governed by chiefs more or less independent, in proportion as they were powerful. Of these, though far from being equal in population and resources, two may be considered as of the first rank, viz., Bashahr and Sirmur. These occupied by far the largest portion of the tract in question, whilst the remainder was divided into great number of petty states, all of which were recognized under the appellation of the Barah Thakurais, or twelve lordships and Athara Thakurais or eighteen lordships. The twelve Thakurais were:

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|--------------|------------|------------|
| 1. Keonthal, | 5. Baghat | 9. Kuthar |
| 2. Kunihar, | 6. Bhajji | 10. Dhami |
| 3. Mehlog, | 7. Koti | 11. Mangal |
| 4. Beja, | 8. Bharoli | 12. Baghal |

These principalities were spread in the lower Shimla hills. A brief account of their foundation is as under:

Keonthal was founded about 1211 A.D. by Giri Sen, younger brother of Bir Sen, the founder of the Suket state. The circumstances, that led Giri Sen to enter these hills, have already been mentioned under Suket state. Baghal and Baghat states were found by two Panwar Rajput brothers. Tradition says that Raja Vikramaditya of Ujjain and his three sons migrated to the Barah Thakurai hills (now forming the Solan district). Ajedev conquered Baghal, his brother, Bijedev, founded the Baghat state and the third brother became a saint.

Bhajji and Koti were founded by the second and third sons of Raja Rampal of Kutlehr in the Una district. Both the brothers are stated to have left Kutlehr on their father's death and established themselves in Bhajji and Koti. Charu founded Bahajji and Chand, Koti. Their capitals were named Mool Bhagi and Mool Koti.

Dhami was established by a Chauhan adventurer who is stated to be a descendent of Prithviraj Chauhan. The ancestors of the founder were driven from the neighbourhood of Delhi to Raipur in the Ambala district by the invasion of Shahbuddin Ghorī in the 12th century.

Mehlog's founder, Hari Chand, came on a pilgrimage from Ayodhya and attracted by the country, conquered and founded the state of Mahlog, the date of the conquest being unknown. At first he settled at Bowen and then settled at Patta and made it the capital of his state.

Kuthar's founder, Surat Chand, came from Rajauri in the Jammu hills, and conquered this petty state. The date of this event also is not known.

Kunihar's founder, Bhoj Deo, also came from the Jammu hills. Mangal's founder was an Atri Rajput. He is said to have come from Marwar.

Beja and Bharoli states were founded by the fugitive Rajput princes from the plains. Athara Thakurais were in the upper hill valleys of the Sutlej, Pabar and Tons rivers. Their names were:

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|--------------|-------------|
| 1. Jubbal | 10. Ratesh |
| 2. Sari | 11. Ghund |
| 3. Rawingarh | 12. Madhan. |
| 4. Balsan | 13. Theog |
| 5. Kumarsain | 14. Darkoti |
| 6. Khaneti | 15. Tharoch |
| 7. Delath | 16. Dhadi |

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| 8. Karangla | 17. Sangri, and |
| 9. Kotkhair-Katgarh | 18. Dodra Kwar |

Bashahr was outside the region of these eighteen Thakurais, and occupied the upper Sutlej valley. It was one of the oldest of the hill states in the western Himalayas. The rajas of Bashahr originally had their seat at Kamru in the Baspa valley. Later on they shifted their capital to Sarahan, and in the 18th century to Rampur, which formed the lower limits of his state.

Among the Athara Thakurais some were of considerable size and importance, particularly Jubbal. Tradition has it that before the 12th century the ancestors of the rulers of Jubbal were rulers of Sirmur. They belonged to the Rathore clan of Chandravanshi Rajputs. Their shifting from Sirmur to Jubbal is accounted for in the following manner. One Ugra Chand, the Raja of Sirmur, had a summer palace at Soonpur, the modern Hatkoti, on the right bank of the Pabar river. While he was having a pleasant time in the company of his three sons, he had to go back to Sirmur on state business. Leaving his family behind, he went thither, but owing to the rains, the rivers were in flood. His capital Sirmauri Tal was swept away by the flood in Giri river, and he and his principal officers found watery graves, and there was none to carry the news to the royal children. A prince of the Jaisalmer house happening to be there at that time on pilgrimage to Badrinath, asked his son Sobha to march and occupy the vacant throne. Soon he was installed on the gaddi by the priests of the principality, and thus the country was once for all lost to the descendants of Ugra Chand.

The three sons of Ugra Chand-Karan Chand, Mool Chand and Duni Chand, then respectively became the founders of the states of Jubbal, Sari and Rawin in the Giri and Pabar basins. Bis Balsan and Ratesh were the offshoots of ancient Sirmur and trace their descent from the old Rathore family of Sirmur that ruled there before the 12th century. Alak Singh is stated to be the founder of Balsan state. He acquired Balsan by conquest, the date of which event is not known. The founder of Ratesh was Rai Singh, a brother of Raja Karam Prakash.

Ghund, Madhan and Theog have a common origin. The traditional account says that a Chandel Rajput of Jaipur, who made a pilgrimage to Badrinath, taking fancy to the hill country, settled at Ram Serai in Garhwal. He afterwards moved to Bilaspur, and had four sons, all of whom founded petty principalities. Janjian Singh founded Ghund, the second son founded Madhan and the eldest son, Jais Chand, founded the state of Theog. All these states were in the upper Giri valley, now forming the part of Shimla district.

Tradition has it that Kumharsain, Khaneti, Delath, Karangla and Kotkhair-Kotgarh states also had a common origin. The story runs that some time in the eleventh century, one Kirat Singh with his brothers arrived from Gaya, driven thence by the fear of Mahmud Ghazni. Some say that he came to Karangla but others insist that he came to a site now called Kumharsain. According to the latter, he acquired the Kumharsain, Kotgarh and Khaneti regions by conquest from one Bhambu Rai Mavana of Delath. Later on Kirat Singh gave Karangla to his brother Kartar Singh and made him ruler of that area. But Khaneti state tradition offers a different version. According to it, Kirat Singh had a son named Uggan Chand and on the death of the local chief, Bhambu Rai,

he stepped into the latter's position. He had three sons, Sansar Chand, Sabir Chand and Jai Singh.

When Uggan Chand died, Sansar Chand got Karangla, and Sabir Chand and Jai Singh came to Khaneti, who started ruling jointly Khaneti, Kotgarh and Kotkhai.

Sabir Chand and his descendants held their kingdom securely for five generations. In the sixth generation, two brothers, Duni Chand and Ahimal Singh, set up rival claims, formed two factions, and each seized as much of the country as he could lay his hands on. The result was that Duni Chand became the ruler of Khaneti, and Ahimal Singh of Kotkhai-Kotgarh.

According to a Delath lore, the state of Delath was founded by Priti Singh, a brother of Kirat Singh, the founder of Kumharsain, and that these were two of the four brothers who came from Gaya and had settled at Karangla in Bashahr.

Darkoti in the upper Giri valley was founded by Durga Singh who is said to be an scion of the Jaipur ruling house. About Tharoch, it is said that Deokaran, one of the Maharaj Kumars of Udaipur, came to the hills and settled at Sirmur. Tharoch formerly constituted a part of the Sirmur state, and was bestowed as a gift on Kishan Singh, the descendant of Deokaran. This state came into being sometime in the 15th or 16th century. Dhadi was an offshoot of Tharoch. Sangri originally belonged to Bashahr, and was taken from that state by Raja Man Singh of Kullu sometime during the first half of the eighteenth century. Later on, it came to be known as Sangri state of Athara Thakurai.

In the list of Athara Thakurais, Capt. C.P. Kennedy includes the name of Dodra Kavar. This region is situated in the upper basin of the Tons river between Garhwal and Rohru valley. It appears that it was under a local chief who was a tributary of Bashahr.

The early history of Sirmur is obscure. It is said that the original rulers belonged to Rathore clan and had their capital at Sirmur, now called Sirmauri Tal, a village in ruins today. At the end of the 12th century, a flood came into the Giri river and swept away the king and all his kin, and the country was without a ruler. Salvahan II, of the house of Jaisalmer, was just then on a visit to Hardwar as a pilgrim. He was invited by a ministerial Hoshang Rai Nath to take up the sovereignty. A force was accordingly sent under his son, Prince Sobha. He put down disorder and became the ruler of the state in 1195 A.D. with the title of Subhans Prakash.

Thus, we see that with the exception of Kangra, Kullu, Bashahr, and Chamba, all the other states were founded by Rajput adventurers from the Indian plains, from the 8th century to the 12th century A.D. It is interesting to note that older and more important states bear names which, as in ancient India, were applicable both to the country and to the tribe by which it was inhabited. Such names are Trigarta and Kuluta. It is very difficult to say whether the name was first applied to the country and then to the tribe, or vice versa. In the case of Trigarta, it was probably the former, if we trust traditional etymology, and in the case of Kuluta, it was probably the latter.

In all these states, the name of the capital was different from that of the principality. The states of latter origin were generally named after their capitals. Thus

the states of Chamba, Mandi, Nurpur and Bilaspur received their names from their capitals.

The history of these hill states is one of almost continuous warfare. When a strong ruler rose to power, the larger states, absorbed or made tributary of the smaller neighbors, but these again asserted their independence as soon as a favorable opportunity arrived. These wars, however, did not lead to any great political changes. On the whole the hill chiefs were considerate of each other's rights. Being generally of the same race and faith, and also often related one another by marriage, they were content to make each other a tributary by turn, or to replace a deposed chief by one of his own kinsmen.

But the main cause, as to why the political condition of the hill states underwent little change in the course of many centuries, lies in the nature of the terrain. The extent of each state was originally determined by natural boundaries, the mountain ranges of the Himalayas, and though exceptional circumstances might some-times lead to extension beyond or reduction within these boundaries, the state would ere long revert to the limits set by nature.

'Considering the restricted resources of the contending parties', writes J. Hutchison, 'these wars must have been waged on a very limited scale. But though limited in scope, these wars were not less destructive, relatively, than the great struggles between powerful nations.

The existence of these petty principalities was ultimately contingent upon the ability of their individual rajas to defend their states against aggression and to maintain their control over them. The raja's strength was derived from a combination of cultural, political and economic factors, each of which contributed to his hold over his people and the forces he could marshal in defence of his boundaries and prerogatives.

The basis for kingship in any community is directly related to the cultural background of the people of that community. In a society where life, wealth and prestige are intimately bound up with land, ownership of land is the ultimate expression of power. And in the hills the general maxim was: The land is the prerogative of the crown.

To put the political aspect of land control in the clearest possible terms, the land was life; the land was security; the land was wealth and prestige. And the land was the raja's. The raja, therefore, controlled life; he controlled security; he controlled wealth and prestige; he controlled his people.

In addition to the political power, which his control over land assured him, the raja could collect taxes, call upon the labour of his peasants to build up his defences and help to till his lands. This compulsory and often unpaid labour played an important role in the day-to-day conduct of the business of the states.

However, it must not be thought that a raja's powers in these respe were unlimited. It was limited simply because there are limits to human endurance. If the raja's exactions in terms of unpaid labour went too far, his peasants left him and migrated to some place more favourable to life and work.

H.W. Emerson writes that the authority of the rajas was of a three-fold nature-religious, feudal and personal. He was the head of the state of religion, venerated as divine, either in his own right or on viceregent of the national god. He was supreme and sole owner of the soil, the fountain from which issued the right of the cultivator to a share of the produce, and master of his subject who owed him personal allegiance and service.

The raja was the fountain-head of justice in his state and in all cases an appeal lay in him and his decision was final.

The economic strength of the hill states depended on several factors. The first of these was the size of the state and its natural resources. The more the land the raja controlled, the greater his income.

Those states, which were fortunate enough to control important trade routes, were able to add very substantially to their resources by levying customs duties on the merchandise that passed through their territories. One of the important sources of wealth of the hill rajas, however, lay in the fertile lands of the riverside. Many of the hill rajas were in a position where they could control sections of this rich land. The crops were richer, and usually more than one crop a year could be grown, so that the income was higher.

The most valuable items of export from the hills were skins, herbs, timber and musk (Pinus Gerardiana).

The material resources of the hill states were always limited and probably few of them had an annual revenue of more than six to ten lakhs of rupees; many of the smaller ones must have had much less. Then money was much more valuable than now, food and other commodities being much cheaper. The feudal service also relieved the state of heavy expenditure, especially in times of war.

With the coming of Rajputs to the hills, art and cultural influences began pouring in from northern India. The stylistic traditions and artistic conventions brought in by these new arrivals were mainly the offshoots of the Pratihara art. The hill chiefs invited their kinsmen to assist them in administration and military adventures. They also invited artisans and artists to build forts, palaces and temples for them. During this period the Indo-Aryan style of temple architecture was introduced. The temples of Indo-Aryan style were mostly erected in the towns and hill-type temples were built in the villages.

About the architectural remains of this period, Ananda K. Coomaraswamy writes in his *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*: 'A considerable series of Nagara temples is found in the Punjab Himalayas. The most important of these is the eighth or ninth century monolithic group at Masrur, Kangra. Structural temples apparently of the ninth century are found at Baijnath, where the Mandap has an interesting balcony window, and the porch is provided with elegant columns having cylindrical shafts and pot and foliage capitals. Baijnath is equivalent to Vaidyanatha, a name of Shiva as Lord of Physicians and may be possibly connected with an early cult of Lokeshvara. The Visheshvara temple at Hat, Bajaura, Kullu has three projection side chapels containing five relief structures of Ganesh, Vishnu and Durga, there are river goddesses at the

sides of the porch; the decorative motifs include chaitya-arches enclosing heads and makaras almost dissolved in arabesque. Thus the ensemble present an appearance analogous to that of later Javanese architecture. This shrine is undated, but may be assigned to the tenth century. In Chamba there are extant in temples at Brahmaur and Chattrahri-large images of Lakshna Devi (Mahisasura-mardani), Sakti Devi, Ganesa and Nandi with inscriptions showing that they were made to the order of a king Meruvaram by a craftsman (Kammuna) of the name of Gugga; assigned on paleographic grounds to the 8th century, the images themselves are mechanically conceived, and apart from the inscriptions would be assigned to a later date. More interesting is the Nirmand mask of Mujuni-devi, queen or goddess of a Raja Hema Prakasa of Kullu, of ninth or tenth century date.

Many temples and sculptures of great architectural and artistic interest are preserved in the valleys of Himachal Pradesh.

6.3 Self Check Exercise

1. Define early Medieval States?

6.4 Conclusion

In the end we can say that the history of Himachal Pradesh shows a process of adjusted development in the early mediaeval time. Gradually, local kingdoms began to emerge here under various rulers. As a separate hill state, slowly the socio- cultural development got a boost here.

6.5 Glossary

Early Medieval States: The intermediate transition period between the ancient and the medieval is referred to as the early medieval. It was marked by the formation of various states at the regional level.

6.6 Answer to Self Check Exercise

- 1 The intermediate transition period between the ancient and the medieval is referred to as the early medieval. It was marked by the formation of various states at the regional level.

6.7 Suggested Reading

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6.8 Terminal Questions

1. Describe the emergence of early medieval states in Himachal Pradesh?
2. How different dynasties emerged in the early mediaeval history of Himachal Pradesh?

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Lesson - 7

Hill States and Delhi Sultanate

Structure

- 7.0 Introduction
- 7.1 Objective
- 7.2 Hill states and Delhi Sultan
- 7.3 Self Check Exercise
- 7.4 Conclusion
- 7.5 Glossary
- 7.6 Answer to self check exercise
- 7.7 Suggestive Reading
- 7.8 Terminal Question

7.0 Introduction

When the Rajputs were rising to power in India and founding different states in the Western and central Himalayas, an important event took place in the north-western India. It was the first great Muslim invasion of India by Mahmud Ghazni. He was a Turki Muslim. His invasions had started in 1000 A.D. and in 1009 A.D. he defeated Anandpal near Peshawar. He then attacked the Nagarkot and seized the control of treasury. The vast treasure was carried by him and he left behind his own garrison to control the fort which probably held the possession till 1043 A.D. when it was expelled by a confederation of the Tomar Raja of Delhi, Parmara Bhoja, the Kalchuri Karna and the Chahamana of Anahilla. The next stage of invasions and conquest of India began in the last quarter of the 12th century A.D. when Muhammad Ghori opened a series of invasions in 1175 A.D. In 1192 A.D., at Tarain, he routed the Rajput army of Prithvi Raj and thereafter captured Delhi. The conquest of Delhi by the Muslim invaders and their eastern and southern penetration into the Indo-Gangetic plains left some effect on the history and culture of Himachal hills.

7.1 Objective

1. To find out the situation of hill states during sultanate Period
2. To analyze the position of Hill States
3. To find out the historical impact of Delhi Sultanate
4. To find out the relationship between Delhi Sultanate and Hill States

7.2 Hill states and Delhi Sultan

There was a series of migrations caused by the advance of the Muslims into the Indian plains. In the 12th century came the Chauhans, Chandels, Tomars, Panwars, and Sens, etc., and founded many small principalities in the Himachal hills. The overwhelming majority of Rajput and Brahmin refugees, however, flooded in after the conquest of Delhi, Benaras and Bengal.

The aristocratic immigrants had to find some livelihood corresponding to their social status and traditions. They became mercenary feudal lords (Thakurs, in distinction from the indigenous aristocracy, the ranas) and at places even independent rulers. Naturally, they formed a very unruly element favouring social unrest from which only they could profit, and dangerous to the existing powers. This probably explains two other developments, the decline of the royal power and the emergence of Trigarta (Kangra) as the sole surviving state east of Kashmir. During this troublous period of Indian history, western Himalayas not only provided shelter to the Hindus but it also gave refuge to the Muslim rebels. Elements of Slave (1206-1290 A.D.) and Khilji (1290-1320. A.D.), dynasties of Delhi Sultanate.

The Sultans of Tughluk Dynasty (1320-1414 A.D.) had more political ambitions than their predecessors. Muhammad-bin-Tughlug (1325-1351) cherished the dream of conquering the neighbouring countries. One of the projects was the sending of an expedition against a hill chieftain in the Himalayas. This was against Raja Prithvi Chand (1330-1345 A.D.) of Nagarkot of Kangra. The Sultan personally undertook this campaign in 1337 A.D. He displayed great religious tolerance on the occasion and according to Sirat-i-Firoz Shahi, spared the temple of Jawalamukhi. Raja Rup Chand succeeded to the throne of Kangra in 1360 A.D. At that time Feroz Shah Tughlug (1351-1388 A.D.) was the Sultan of Delhi. There is a reference in Tarikh-i-Ferishta about the harassment of the Muslims by the Rajput Chiefs of the hills by a continuous guerilla warfare with the view to throw off the yoke imposed upon them.

In keeping with the policy, Raja Rup Chand, during early years of his reign, set out with an army on a raiding expedition and plundered the plains upto Delhi. Feroz Shah Tughlug, offended and provoked by the intrusion and plundering, undertook an invasion of Nagarkot to punish Raja Rup Chand. For this purpose, he recruited a large army in 1360 AD and personally led this expedition to Nagarkot in 1361 AD. The Raja shut himself up in the fort and the Sultan's forces plundered his country far and wide. For six months the siege went on, and both sides exhibited great courage and endurance. At length, fortune smiled on the Sultan. Coming to the conclusion that capturing the fort was an impossibility, he contented himself with holding an interview with the Raja and a promise to give up the campaign. The Raja then invited the Sultan and some of his people into the fort. The Sultan told the Raja that inviting him to be within the fort was a piece of imprudence, and if the retinue in his train resolved to make an attempt on his (the Raja's) life and to siege the fort, what remedy was there. The Raja made a sign to his men and at once a horde after horde of armed men came out of their hiding places. The Sultan was in consternation. The Raja told respectfully that, beyond precautions, he had no other idea in his head. The Sultan put his hand on Raja Rup Chand's back. The Sultan reportedly forgave the Raja and his followers, and gave him an umbrella, and an embroidered dress of honour, besides many horses.

Such contemporary accounts illumine the fact that Feroz Shah Tughlug was not successful in conquering Nagarkot and found a pretext to accept the Raja's submission and made a peace with him. This is even confirmed by latter works such as Jahangir's memoirs and also Shash Fateh Kangra.

After the submission of the Raja of Nagarkot, Firoz Shah Tughlug decided to visit the temple of Jawalamukhi. On reaching there, he, at first, thought of burning the idol, but after the conclusion of peace with the rajas of the region, the idea was given up. There existed a library containing 1300 books in the temple. The Sultan, out of his deep love for learning, took possession of these books and had some of them translated. The famous writer of the age, Izzuddin Khalid-Khani, translated them into Persian verse. The translation was named after the Sultan and called Dalail-i-Firozshahi.

The worst of the Mongol raids took place in 1398 A.D., under the leadership of Timur-i-Lang. In December of that year, he overran Delhi. From Delhi, Timur went to Meerut and from there to Haridwar. Marching along the foot of the mountains where it was easy to cross rivers, he entered the Shiwalik hills. It appears from his account that he invaded the Kiarda Dun valley of Sirmur.

At the time of Timur's invasion of India, Raja Alam Chand (1356-1406 A.D.) was the chief of Hindur (Nalagarh). After plundering lower Sirmur hills, he marched westward on his return journey along the foot hills and reached the frontier of Hindur, where he pitched his camp in the open field. Resistance was out of question, but Alam Chand repaired and provisioned his forts and made every preparation for defence. He then visited Timur in person and offered him a supply of provisions of which his army stood in great need. This offer the invader accepted, and his forces continued their march without inflicting any injury on the state.

Timur had heard of Nagarkot and wished to capture it, but does not seem to have penetrated so far into the interior of the hills. At that time Megh Chand (C. 1390-1405 A.D.) was the ruling chief of Kangra. Timur's march was strongly opposed. He fought many battles and took eight forts, but does not actually state anywhere that Nagarkot was one of them. Pathaknot and Nurpur, then called Dhameri, lay right in his way and must have suffered at his hands.

With the exception of one or two intrusions by the armies of Sher Shah Suri under Khawas Khan and Sikander Shah Suri in 1556 A.D., the condition in the hills almost remained calm. This was perhaps due to highly uncertain and chaotic political condition in Punjab and Delhi in those days.

In 1526 A.D., Babur defeated and killed Ibrahim Lodi and founded the Mughal rule in India which considerably changed the position of the hill states. Among the Mughal rulers, Akbar, the grandson of Babur was the first to plan the conquest of Kangra fort. When in 1570 A.D., Jai Chand came to the throne of Kangra, he, for reasons unknown, incurred Akbar's suspicion. An order for his arrest was issued which was effected by Raja Ram Chand of Guler. He was put in confinement at Delhi. His son Bidhi Chand, although a minor, regarding his father as dead, took over the rule of the state and revolted.

In 1572 A.D., an army under Khan Jahan Hussain Quli Khan, viceroy of Punjab, was sent to subdue the dominion, which had been bestowed, by the emperor as a Jagir upon Raja Birbal. Firmans to this effect were sent to the viceroy and the Amirs of the Punjab, commanding them to take Nagarkot from Bidhi Chand and to put it in the possession of Raja Birbal.

Mughal army from Lahore marched to the Kotla fort beyond Nurpur, snatched it from the Kangra forces and handed it over to Raja Ram Chand of Guler, to whose ancestors it had formerly belonged. Then the Mughal army marched to the Kangra fort and kept it under siege for three months. But Raja Jai Chand set at liberty soon after the siege and he resumed his position as the ruler of the state.

However, all these trouble-some situations induced Akbar to have a permanent settlement which was worked out by his minister Todar Mal in 1573 A.D. Probably after the 1572 A.D. expedition, Akbar had deputed his finance minister Todar Mal to Kangra, in order to create an imperial demesne by confiscating territory from the hill states. The portion of the demesne taken from Kangra seems to have included sixty-six villages of the valley, besides Rihlu, Cheri, Gharoh and Pathyar annexed from Chamba, with similar confiscations according to their means the territories of other hill states.

The hill chiefs had not yet become reconciled to Mughal supremacy. Soon after Bidhi Chand's accession in 1585 A.D., a secret confederation seems to have been formed under his leadership, embracing most of the states in the outer hills between Jammu and Kangra. In 1588-89 A.D. they all broke out in rebellion, and Zain Khan Koka, Akbar's foster brother was sent with a large force to bring them into subjection. He marched through the hills from Pathankot to the Sutlej. On their surrender thirteen of the hill chiefs accompanied him to Akbar's court to offer their allegiance. They included Bidhi Chand of Kangra, Basu of Mau (Dhameri- Nurpur), Anrudh of Jaswan, Raja Kalmuri (Kahlur-Bilaspur), and some rulers from Jammu hills. It is worth noting that the states of Chamba, Kullu, Mandi and Suket are not mentioned in the list, but we may surmise that all the states between the Chenab and the Sutlej were in revolt. On their submission, they were all shown consideration and their territories and honours were restored to them. But Bidhi Chand of Kangra had to leave his son, Tirlok Chand, then a boy, as a hostage at the Mughal court. To ensure the fidelity of the hill rajas, Akbar adopted the policy of retaining as hostages at his court, a prince or a near relative of the ruling chief from each state.

Still another revolt occurred in 1594-95 A.D., in which most of the hill chiefs of the territories between Jammu and the Sutlej, were involved. This was led by the raja of Jasrota and Raja Basu was one of the allies. Akbar sent a Mughal force under Sheikh Farid and Jagat Singh of Ambar to crush the revolt. They surrounded the fort of Mau and after two months it fell. Raja Basu was pardoned.

Raja Basu was of a turbulent nature and he again rebelled in 1602-04 A.D. Akbar sent Madhu Singh Kushwaha to punish him, but he escaped. In spite of all this, Raja Basu continued to enjoy a mansab of 1500 under Akbar and when Jahangir came to power, it was increased to 3500.

When Jahangir ascended the throne in 1606 A.D., the capture of Nagarkot fort was the first of all his designs. In March 1615, he commissioned Murtaza Khan,

Governor of Punjab, and Suraj Mal, son of Raja Basu of Dhamera-Nurpur, as second in command, to Shredue Kangra. Suraj Mal disliked the extension and consolidation of Mughal influence so close to his patrimony. He thwarted the plans of his chief and probably intrigued with the enemy. Murtaza Khan complained to the emperor. Suraj Mal sought intercession of Prince Khurram (Shah Jahan). In obedience to an imperial command he presented himself in the court of the Prince in March 1616, and convinced him of innocence.

In 1617 A.D., Suraj Mal was again appointed to command the Kangra expedition. He promised to reduce the fort within a year, but as soon as he reached the theatre of the war, he fell out with his associate in command, the trusted Shah Quali Khan Muhammad Taqi, and procured his recall by Shahjahan. Further, he disbanded the forces, broke out into revolt, allied himself with the hill chiefs, plundered the imperial territory and defeated the Imperialist Sayyid Safi Barha. The emperor sent Raja Bikramajit and Abdul Aziz first to subdue the revolt of Suraj Mal and then to capture the fort. On the approach of Raja Bikramajit, Suraj Mal prepared to give him a fight. But hard pressed by the imperial forces, he fled to Mau fort. The fort was captured by Raja Bikramajit. From Mau fort Suraj Mal fled to Taragarh fort, which belonged to Chamba. After a long siege, Raja Suraj Mal was defeated and he fled to Chamba where he died. His entire property stood surrendered to the Mughal emperor.

The siege of Nagarkot fort was now pressed with full vigour. A complete blockade was established. After a siege of fourteen months, the fort surrendered at last on November 16, 1620. The vast treasures collected in the fort fell into the hands of the imperialist forces. Thus, the fort passed from the possession of the Katoch princes, and for a hundred and sixty years, i.e., upto 1783 AD, probably none of them could ever go inside. A strong garrison was left behind which defied all attempts to make it surrender. It also seems certain that the whole state was annexed by the Mughals along with the fort. Only the district of Rajgir was assigned as a Jagir for the maintenance of the royal family. In January 1622 A.D., Jahangir visited Kangra in person.

During the reign of Jahangir, Raja Jagat Singh of Nurpur enjoyed royal favours. He held a mansab of three thousand Zat and two thousand Sawar. He was on good relations with the emperor's son, Prince Shahjahan. When Prince Shahjahan revolted against his father, Jahangir, Sadiq Khan, the Viceroy of Punjab, was ordered to suppress the revolt. Madho Singh, the younger brother of Jagat Singh, honoured with the title of 'raja', was despatched towards Kangra hills to assist in the operation against the fortified Maukot. He was, however, forced to surrender but was pardoned later, through the intervention of Nur Jahan Begum.

When Shahjahan ascended the throne in 1627 A.D., the Pathania Chief Jagat Singh was confirmed in his mansab. In 1634 A.D., he was appointed the thanedar of Bangash, in Kurzam valley and Kohat to tackle the rebels there. After three years, he was attached to the suba of Kabul. But after a year, he returned to Lahore. There he was received with honour by the Emperor and was again appointed as the faujdar of Bangash.

All the imperial favours, however, did not satisfy Raja Jagat Singh who was too keen to hold his sway over the entire Kangra hills. During his presence at the imperial

court, his state Nurpur was looked after by his son, Rajrup, who had also secured for himself the faujdari of Kangra. He, however, failed to discharge his duties properly and raised a standard of revolt against the Mughal hegemony, in connivance with his father, Jagat Singh.

Raja Jagat Singh, without disclosing his secret and ambitious alliance with his son, pretended before the emperor that he would suppress the revolt in case he was confirmed as faujdar of Kangra. In return he promised to pay an annual tribute of rupees four lakhs to the Mughal emperor. The request of Jagat Singh was acceded but on his return to the hills, he broke out into open rebellion against the Mughal rulers.

Emperor Shahjahan, on learning about the revolt of Raja Jagat Singh, dispatched a large army under the command of Prince Murad Baksh in 1641 A.D. Jagat Singh prepared to defend himself against the approaching Mughal forces, although outwardly he showed allegiance and obedience. When Prince Murad arrived at Pathankot, he was joined by Sayyed Khan Bahadur and Aslat Kahn. Jagat Singh had strongly fortified the three fortresses of Maukot, Nurpur and Taragarh located within his territory. He planned to defend the fortress of Maukot in the first instance, which was a fortified enclosure with dense forests around it. The fort of Nurpur, on the other hand, was being supervised by his officers. The Mughals on their part laid siege to both Maukot and Nurpur forts simultaneously. They made the position of Jagat Singh untenable and he was obliged to abandon Maukot and made his way to Taragarh.

The siege of Taragarh lasted about two months and in March 1642 A.D., Jagat Singh, finding himself helpless, sued for peace. Accordingly, he surrendered himself to the clemency of the Emperor along with his men. Upon his submission, Jagat Singh was not only pardoned but was also restored to his former honours. The fort of Taragarh, however, was garrisoned with the Mughal troops.

It appears that under the imperial orders, the outer fortifications of the Taragarh fort were demolished and only the buildings used for the residence of Jagat Singh's family were spared. Sayyed Khan Bahadur came to the prince Murad along with Jagat Singh on March 11, 1642 A.D. Jagat Singh was presented before the Emperor a week later, and his rank was restored. He passed the rest of his life in the service of the Emperor. In 1645 A.D., he was presented by the Emperor with a khilat, a sword with gold enamelled mounting, and a horse with silver-mounted saddle. He died in January 1646 A.D. at Peshawar.

In 1678 A.D., Aurangzeb issued an ordinance in connection with the demolition of all the Hindu temples in Chamba states. Raja Chatar Singh refused to obey the royal order and instead directed that a gilt pinnacle be put on each of the temples in Chamba as a mark of defiance of the Mughal authority.

Raja Chatar Singh is also reported to have formed a confederacy of the hill chiefs (of Guler, Basohli, and Jammu) to counter the incursion of Mirza Rezia Beg, the Viceroy of the Punjab, into the hills. The Mughal Viceroy was defeated by the confederate forces and the hill chiefs were able to recover their lost territories.

Like Kangra, though the Chamba rulers had remained tributary to the Mughals since the time of Emperor Akbar, the imperial authority was never tight on them. On the

whole, Chamba chiefs received generous treatment from the Mughal rulers. The chiefs, however, had to acknowledge Mughal suzerainty by regular payment of nazarana

The Mughal suzerainty also extended to Sirmur principality. Its rulers had cordial relations with the Mughal Court. During the reign of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb, the Sirmur chief Raja Subhag Prakash (1647-1659) was directed by the Emperor to intercept all correspondence passing through the territory of the state between Sulaiman Shukoh, then at Srinagar Garhwal, and his father Dara Shukoh. Through another firman, the Raja was directed to cooperate with the imperial forces under Raja Rajrup, the Raja of Nurpur and the son of Raja Jagat Singh, in his attack on Srinagar Garhwal. Several territories were conferred on the Sirmur chief, in addition to his own, as a reward for his services to the Mughals.

After the death of Subhag Prakash, his son Budh Prakash was confirmed over the Sirmur gaddi, through a firman dated 1078 A.H. issued by Emperor Aurangzeb, who recognised his succession in 1659 A.D. Similarly, his successor Medini Prakash, was also granted a khilat and recognised as the Sirmur chief in 1678 A.D., through a firman dated 20th Rabi, A.H. 1109 issued by Emperor Aurangzeb.

From various other imperial firmans, issued from time to time, it becomes certain that the Mughal domination over Sirmur continued till the death of Aurangzeb and the state remained dependent on the Mughal Court to check the encroachments on its territory by the adjoining Srinagar Garhwal rulers.

The Shimla hill chiefs appear to have enjoyed almost complete independence ever since their first establishment in the hills. They were apparently too insignificant to arouse the jealousy or attract the avarice of the Delhi emperors, and they had the wisdom, while fighting freely amongst themselves, to avoid giving offence to their all powerful Muslim neighbours, at whose mercy they would have been, had annexation been deemed necessary or desirable.

With the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 A.D., a period of decline set in which signalled the downfall of the Mughal empire. In the meantime, fateful events had occurred all around during 1738-1739 A.D. The Persian invasion of Nadar Shah had swept the Punjab and Delhi, and in 1747 A.D., the invasions of Ahmad Shah Abdali and his successors had begun. Since 1739 A.D. the Punjab was practically autonomous until 1752 A.D. and normally under Delhi and thereafter under Kabul. The hill chiefs also came under the supremacy of the Duranis though nominally. Taking advantage of the anarchy which prevailed in the plains, all the chiefs assumed their independence and recovered the tracts which they had been deprived of by the Mughals.

Towards the year 1745 A.D., the rulers of the hill states heard with alarm of the approach of the redoubtable Adina Beg, the Mughal governor of Jalandhar. Through sheer personal ability this man had risen from the ranks to the position of the governor of Jalandhar. Later on, he rose still higher and became the viceroy of Punjab in 1745 A.D. Towards the later part of the year 1745 A.D. he advanced to Guler, but Raja Dalip Singh could not fight against him, and submitted himself. In the course of a triumphant march/ through the hill territory Adina Beg received the submission of Ajit Singh of Jaswan, Tehir Singh of Mankot, Dev Dutt of Nurpur, Madan Pal of Bhaloria, Yadu Pal of Kutlehr, the Rai of Bangahal and several other chieftains; and with their cooperation he

advanced upon the Katoch raja. It appears that the other chiefs were jealous of the latter and since he would not readily come forward with an offer of submission, Adina Beg was easily persuaded to attack the refractory chief. Jaisinghpur and Bijapur were sacked and razed to the ground. Adina Beg intended to invade Mandi also, but apprised by Raja Dalip Singh Guleria of the threatened danger, Raja Shamsheer Sen deputed Mian Udhar Singh of Mandi, a friend of Dalip Singh, to convey his greeting to the subedar, and to assure the latter of his loyalty and devotion to the emperor. Partly as a result of this and partly because Adina Beg had heard of the impregnability of Kamlah fort, he expressed his delight in accepting the loyal assurances of Shamsheer Sen. Indeed, so pleased was he that he offered Bijapur to Mandi, and asked Shamsheer Sen to repopulate the ravaged area. After this Adina Beg returned to Jalandhar. He also put pressure on the Mughal officer of Kangra fort, but this effort was cut short by his death.

In 1758 A.D., Raja Ghumand Chand of Kangra was appointed by Ahmad Shah to the office of the governor of Jalandhar Doab and the hills between the Sutlej and the Ravi. Kangra fort was still held by the last of the Mughal officers named Saif Ali Khan. In 1775 A.D., Sansar Chand, the grandson of Raja Ghumand Chand, succeeded to the kingdom of Kangra. His chief ambition was to capture Kangra fort. An attempt was made but in vain. Then he sought the help of Jai Singh Kanheya, the Sikh chieftain, and in 1781-82 A.D., the combined forces again sieged the stronghold. The old Nawab was dying and on his demise, the fort surrendered in 1783 A.D., but by stratagem it fell into the hands of the Sikhs and with this ended the Muslim rule in the hill states.

The impact of Muslim rule, especially of Mughal Empire and its style, on the formation of later hill states can hardly be underestimated. For nearly two hundred years, from the time of their subjugation by Akbar (1556-1605 A.D.), the hill chiefs had been tributary of the Mughal Empire, but all accounts agree that the imperial authority sat very lightly on them. Their prerogatives were seldom questioned, and there was no interference in their internal affairs. Indeed, throughout the entire period of Mughal supremacy, the chiefs seem to have experienced liberal and even generous treatment. They were left very much to themselves in the governance of their principalities, and were allowed to function wielding power enjoyed by independent sovereigns. They built forts and waged war on one another without any intimation to the emperor, and sometimes even asked and received assistance in men and arms for this purpose from the Mughal viceroy. It would seem, however, that in the case of war between two states, the one, that got worsted, would sometimes appeal to Delhi for redress. Each chief, on his accession had to acknowledge the supremacy of the Mughal emperor by the payment of the fee of investiture, after which he received a *kharitahor* patent of installation, with a *khilat*, or dress of honour and other gifts from the imperial court. A yearly tribute called *nazarana* or *peshkash*, was exacted from the states and this amounted to four lakh rupees in the case of Kangra group during the reign of Shahjahan. In letters and other documents, the chiefs were addressed as *zamindars*, the title of *raja* being conferred as a personal distinction. There seems also much friendly intercourse between the chiefs and the imperial court, as is proved by letters and valuable presents received from the emperor which are still in the possession of some of the royal families. Some of the chiefs gained a high place in imperial favour, and were granted *mansab* or military rank in the army, and found promotion to their important offices in the administration. In one instance at least one fiazardous military

expedition was in large measure entrusted to a hill chief, Raja Jagat Singh of Nurpur, who, in 1645 A.D., was sent by Shahjahan with a force of 14,000 Rajputs, raised in his own territory and paid by the emperor, against the Uzbeks of Balk and Badakshan.

Yet even such marked tokens of imperial favour did not keep the hill chiefs loyal. Encouraged by the strength of their mountain fastness, they often broke out into rebellion and defied the power of the Mughals. The rajas of Nurpur were specially turbulent. One of them was even executed by Akbar and later Raja Basu, thrice rebelled against the same emperor. But especially notable was the rebellion of Raja Jagat Singh and his son Rajrup in 1641-42 A.D., when for six months they kept a large Mughal army at bay, and bravely defended the strong forts of Māo, Nurpur and Taragadh against an immensely superior force. Yet, in spite of this, in their unconditional surrender in March 1642, they were at once forgiven and restored to all their honours. During Shahjahan's reign, the Mughal empire reached the zenith of its prosperity and power and the authority of the central government was felt and acknowledged in every part of the western hills. The hill chiefs quietly settled down as tributaries by whom the imperial edicts were willingly accepted and obeyed.

When the hill states came in contact with the Mughal empire, they were transformed by reforms such as introduction of the Mughal-Rajput military technique, administration, art and literature. Tradition has it that major states introduced a fixed revenue assessment, partly in kind and partly in cash, and this is easy to believe when we remember that sometime before the middle of the 17th century, most, if not all, of the hill chiefs had acknowledged the suzerainty and supremacy of the Mughals and it is possible that the principles of land revenue assessment then in vogue in the imperial territory might, in some measure, have been introduced in the states which owed allegiance to the Mughal empire. Mughal currency came in circulation and Akbar's gold muhars were used for treasure hoards.

Those rajas, who wished to build new structures in their hilltowns, now looked to Mughal style of architecture to provide them with models. Many forts were built according to the principles of Mughal technique. Nurpur fort was commenced by Raja Basu who died in 1613 A.D. It was still not complete in 1622 A.D. when Emperor Jahangir, who was pleased with the site, granted a lakh of rupees for building good mansions worthy of the place. The old temple in the Nurpur fort ascribed to Raja Basu (1580-1613 A.D) has capitals and brackets showing marked similarity in design to those of some of the early Mughal buildings in the Lahore fort, and the ornamentation on the bases of its pilasters can be traced to the same source. Moreover, the design on certain of its panels, which must have formed a dado are also decidedly Mughal in style. There are panels on the outer walls, bearing realistic representation of ducks, peacocks, deer and parrots, and also hands of human figures quite naturalistically treated. The work bears close resemblance to the ornamentation on the early Mughal buildings in Lahore fort. Capitals, brackets, and decoration are all in the mixed Hindu-Mughal style which was in vogue in the reign of Akbar and Jahangir, The Kardar Kothi at Brahmaur in Chamba, which according to tradition was built during the reign of Prithvi Singh (1641-1664 A.D.), has wooden doors with carved figure panels which speak of the strong influence of Mughal art in the treatment of jamas, turbans, attitudes, and background decoration,

All such new buildings were adaptations from Mughal architecture designed to suit the requirements of the particular raja who caused them to be constructed. The pre-Mughal civil architecture of the hills was doubtlessly derived from a mixture of the styles prevailing in the plains. A variation of the simpler Tughluq style was more in keeping with the mountain-terrain where money was not plentiful and warfare constant. But the establishment of Mughal supremacy over the hills inevitably brought about changes because the Mughals had much closer contacts with the hill rajas than the pre-Mughal Muhammadan dynasties of north India. Apart from the fact that the architecture and art of the imperial court came to be regarded as the hallmark of good taste, the Akbar period style of architecture must doubtlessly have appealed to the hill rajas because it was a most agreeable mixed Hindu-Muslim style. As the building projects of the Mughal emperors were numerous, there was never any dearth of first class architects and masons in the country, as a survey of Indian architecture reveals. Consequently, it was not difficult for the hill rajas to have their new buildings designed in the Mughal manner.

7.3 Self Check Exercise

1. At the time of Timur's invasion of India, who was the chief of Hindur (Nalagarh)?
2. When Jai Chand came to the throne of Kangra?

7.4 Conclusion

The abortive campaigns and unpopular policies of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb, caused disintegration throughout his empire and central control was further loosened after his death in 1707 A.D. The decline does not, however, seem to have had the same strong impact on Pahari art as did the sack of Delhi in 1739 A.D. by Nadir Shah. After 1739 A.D., an abrupt change of style is noticeable in the hills apparently in the work of artists trained in the Mughal painting in the court of Muhammad Shah (1719-1748) A.D.). Such families of artists and scholars migrated in large numbers to seek employment with new patrons in the comparative safety and more settled conditions of life in the hills. The local hereditary chieftains, taking advantage of the declining Mughal empire to recover most of their ancestral territories, were now in a better position to extend their patronage to the newly arrived artists. The result was that by the middle of the 18th century A.D. an unprecedented art activity blossomed in practically all the hill states. Benefactors of the arts in Jammu were Ranjit Dev and his younger brother Balwant Singh (1735-1781 A.D.). Umed Singh (1748-1764 A.D.) and Raj Singh (1764-1794 A.D.) were the cultured patrons in Chamba. Ghumand Chand (1751-1774 A.D.) gave shelter to artists in Kangra; and in Bilaspur the reign of Devi Chand (1741-78 A.D.) produced some remarkable paintings. The Mughal costumes and textiles also greatly influenced the dresses of the hill people. This is clearly seen in the paintings and wood carvings of that period. Mughal period chogas are still extant in some old families in the hills. The refugee scholars brought with them Urdu language Arabic script. Many princes adopted Urdu as their court language. The records were maintained in Urdu.

7.5 Glossary

Delhi Sultanate: The Delhi sultanate was an Islamic empire based in Delhi that stretched over large parts of the Indian Subcontinent for 320 years.

7.6 Answer to Self Check Exercise

1. At the time of Timur's invasion of India, Raja Alam Chand (1356-1406 A.D.) was the chief of Hindur (Nalagarh).
- 2 Jai Chand came to the throne of Kangra in 1570 A.D.

7.7 Suggested Readings

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7.8 Terminal Questions

1. Describe hill states relationships with Delhi Sultanate?
2. What was the impact of Delhi Sultanate on the culture of Himachal Pradesh?

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Lesson - 8

Himachal and the Sikhs

Structure

- 8.0 Introduction
- 8.1 Objective
- 8.2 Guru Nanak and Hills States
- 8.3 Guru Gobind Singh and Kahlur State
- 8.4 The Battle of Bhangani
- 8.5 Battle of Nadaun
- 8.6 Guru Gobind Singh, the Mughals and the Hill Rajas
- 8.7 Maharaja Ranjit Singh and Kangra Hills
- 8.8 Self Check exercise
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- 8.10 Glossary
- 8.11 Answer to Self Check Exercise
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- 8.13 Terminal Question

8.0 Introduction

The rise and the development of the Sikh religion and subsequently the establishment of the Sikh rule in the Punjab under Maharaja Ranjit Singh, had a deep impact on the history of the Himachal Pradesh as well as the Rajas of the erstwhile Hill States in the region. During the fifteenth century, a new element was introduced in the political and religious conditions of Punjab and that was the rise of the Sikhs. The Sikhs were a new sect founded by Guru Nanak during the reign of the first Mughal emperor, Babur. It is also known as a tale of two dynasties. There can hardly be found a better example of the rise of a community of oppressed, depressed and disorganised people, who proved them to be equal to the occasion and have left indelible marks on the course of the Indian history.

8.1 Objective

1. To study the impact of Sikhs rule in the hilly states
2. To find out the reasons for the invasion of Sikhs in Himachal.
3. To analyse the impact of Guru Nanak on Hills States
4. To find out the relationships between Maharaja Ranjit Singh and Hills states

8.2 Guru Nanak and Hills States

The advent of Guru Nanak (1469) served as a socio-political necessity. The Guru was especially opposed to the polytheism of the Hindus, their caste system and the domination of the Brahmins. For Guru Nanak no country was foreign and no people were alien. That is why he travelled far and wide with a view to enlighten the humanity as a whole and to deliver to them his message of love, peace, devotion to God, social justice, religious tolerance and universal brotherhood of man.

To deliver his message of peace, good-will and brotherhood,¹¹⁹ Guru Nanak also toured the Himalayan region as far as Ladakh. This is corroborated by his third journey (udasi). Writers are not unanimous about the exact period of Guru's journey to the north. The Guru, however, is recorded to have visited the mountain states including Jwala Mukhi, Kangra, Kulu, Lahul, Spiti, Tibet, China, Garhwal and Sirmur, where he held debates with the disciples of Yogis, Gorakhnath and Machandernath and clarified the religious issues raised by them.

According to modern researches during the Guru's third journey, the first state visited by him in 1514 was Himachal Pradesh. It is stated that after passing through Gurdaspur and Pathankot in the Punjab, the Guru entered the Kangra hills. He visited the Mahamaya temple. From Kangra the Guru went to Chamba via Dharamsala, which was famous for its old Shri Lakshmi Narayan temple. It is also possible that he visited Brahmaur and the sacred Mani Mahesh lake. The Guru returned to Kangra from Chamba and visited the old temple of Jwala Mukhi.³

From Jwala Mukhi, Guru Nanak entered Kulu valley and visited Triloknath and afterwards proceeded to Mani Karan. A Sikh temple now exists near the place which is also famous for its hot springs. From here he came to Mandi and Suket and afterwards to Rawalsar. From Rawalsar, the Guru returned to Mandi and through Bilaspur, reached Kiratpur. The Guru also visited Pinjor and Joharsar tirath near Sabathu where a Gurdwara commemorates the visit. It is also probable that the Guru also visited Bushahr which is mentioned as Bisiar Desh in Sikh accounts."

According to the account given in these second udasi, which almost corroborates the above account, the Guru started from Sultanpur and passing through the areas of Jalandhar and Hoshiarpur, reached Kiratpur. Entering the hilly region at Kiratpur, the Guru proceeded to Bilaspur and then reached Mandi via Suket. At a distance of ten miles from Mandi is the famous khund (tank) of Skand Dhara called Rawalsar. The Guru went there and after that proceeded to Jwalaji. After seeing the ever bright flame (jyoti) there, he travelled on to Kangra via Nadaun. From there he proceeded to Baijnath which was then called Kirgram. Kir was the name of the tribe which had at one time established its ascendancy over that area.

From Baijnath the route led through Dulchi Pass to Kulu. While on his way to Kulu, Guru Nanak paid a visit to Mani Karan. One of the local legends says that the hot springs on which now depends the whole domestic economy of the people of the place, were brought into existence by Guru Nanak's blessings.

From Kulu, a route led into the Spiti territory through the Hamtu Pass. Guru Nanak took this route and entered the valley of Spiti. There is an old village called

Mulana. The Guru stayed there for some time, a fact which is confirmed by a strong local tradition. Some sacred possessions of the Guru are reported to be preserved and worshipped by the people of the village. Passing through the Shipki Pass, the Guru was able to enter Tibet and then proceeded along the Sutlej river to the Mansrover lake and the Kailash Parbat.

The visit of Guru Nanak to Kangra is further corroborated by the Adi Granth which mentions that Lehna became first acquainted with Nanak at Kangra, when he had gone to worship the Devi. None of the Sikhs had such faith and confidence in Guru Nanak as Lehna had and it was, therefore, that in preference to his own sons, Guru Nanak appointed him 'Guru' and named him 'Angad' i.e. the flesh of his flesh and the bone of his bone.

The fifth Guru, Arjun Dev (1563-1645 A.D.) wanted to complete the building of Harimander Sahib at Amritsar. One day, while sitting in his court, he said that in order to complete the work (of Harimander and the tank) more funds were required and suggested to his Sikhs to endeavour to obtain it from the hill chiefs. For this Bhai Kaliaana proceeded to Mandi State in the hills. The Raja went with his queen and army to visit Amritsar. There the Raja met the Guru."

The sixth Guru, Hargobind (1595-1645 A.D.) like Guru Nanak travelled the country up and down. On his way back to Amritsar, he accepted from the Raja of Kahlur (Bilaspur) a gift of a plot of land lying between the foothills of the Himalayas and river Sutlej. Modern researches also confirm the gift from the Raja of Kahlur received by the Guru.

On the new site the Guru built a town which was named Kiratpur sometime in 1634 A.D. and also shifted his head- quarters there in the Himachal foothills. The remaining years of his life were spent in this retreat. It is also said that in 1642 A.D., the Guru joined forces with Tara Chand of Kahlur and helped him to defeat the nawab of Ropar.' Guru Hargobind is said to have converted the Raja of Kangra and Pilipbhit to the Sikh faith. From Kiratpur he tried to influence the hill tracts. In this connection, Mohsin Fani narrates the following incidence:

'The inhabitants of the country of Raja Tara Chand of Kahlur worshipped idols and on one of the summit of a mountain, they had created the image of Narayana, where rajas and other eminent persons made pilgrimages. When Guru Hargobind went to that place, a Sikh named Bhairo, entered the temple and struck off the nose of the idol. The Raja complained to the Guru but Bhairo denied the charge. The servants of the Raja, however, declared that they positively knew the man. Bhairo replied, 'O Raja ask the God, if he tells my name, kill me'. The Raja said, "You block-head; how shall the God speak." Bhairo laughed and answered if God can not defend his head nor can he point out the man who had struck him, what benefit did they expect from him, and why do they venerate his strength? Bhairo's answer is said to have had a tremendous influence on the Raja and his followers.

Mohsin Fani further reports that from this time onwards, the disciples of Guru Hargobind increased considerably in the hills. The same author further informs that when the Guru died, a large number of them volunteered to burn themselves on his funeral pyre." The impact of Sikhism in the Kangra hills, however, seems to be a

temporary phase, and the relationship gradually changed as the subsequent developments indicate.

After Guru Hargobind, his grandson, Guru Har Rai (1645-1661 A.D.) succeeded to Guruship, Within one year of his assuming Guruship, he was compelled to leave Kiratpur with his family and retainers. Raja Tara Chand of Kahlur, in whose territory Kiratpur was situated, was having trouble with the Mughal emperor, Shahjahan. Guru Har Rai feared that in the operation against the Raja, the Mughal governor Najabat Khan may turn on the Sikhs as well. Then the Guru betook himself to Thapal (probably Taksal) situated within the territory of Raja Karam Parkash of Sirmur. He lived there for thirteen years.

It appears that the Sikh Gurus and their other associates were having cordial relations with the hill chiefs of Kahlur State at least till the period of Guru Gobind Singh. There is a reference in the Shashi Bans Binod about the cordial reception extended to Guru Ram Rai by the contemporary Kahlur chief, Raja Deep Chand.

Raja Deep Chand was a devoted follower of Guru Hargobind and his children also maintained close relations with the succeeding Gurus. The ninth Guru, Teg Bahadur, on the invitation of the Rani of Kahlur, participated in the ceremonies connected with the demise of the prince and offered his condolences to the Rani. Before leaving Kahlur, the Guru expressed his desire to set up his home somewhere in the hills. The Rani was too pleased with the thought and offered him the gift of three villages. It is claimed that the Guru politely refused to accept the land as a gift and finally paid cash for the purchase of some land."

Guru Gobind Singh and the Hill States of Himachal

We have already discussed how Sikhism founded by Guru Nanak, developed under its successors, mainly under the tenth and the last Guru, Gobind Singh. The Guru was born at Patna in Bihar in 1666 A.D. He was only nine years old when his father's severed head was brought to Anandpur (founded by Guru Teg Bahadur in the foothills of Shiwaliks) for cremation. The question of safety arose among the party member. who gave this responsibility to Gobind Rai.

As a measure of safety, the centre of their preaching was shifted from Anandpur further into the mountains at Paonta." As the Guru grew to manhood, he made it publicly known that he would welcome offerings in arms and horses, and more than the offerings, he would welcome able bodied men willing to join in his crusade against the Mughals. His appeal, as the subsequent events point out, met with a ready response. However, the activities of the Guru were misunderstood by the hill Rajas, particularly by the Rajas of Kahlur (Bilaspur) and Hindur (Nalagarh).

8.3 Guru Gobind Singh and Kahlur State

The relationship between the tenth Sikh Guru, Gobind Singh and the hill chiefs of Kahlur and Sirmur, forms an interesting chapter in the annals of Sikh history. The relationship is known on the basis of two battles of Bharani and Nadaun. In 1688 A.D., the Guru was back at Makhawal, Anamour. However during his absence, Raja Bhim Chand, HIMACHAL AND THE SIKHS who had succeeded Raja Deep Chand, improved

his position in the hill politics considerably, Being the head of an important state till 1685 A.D., he also desired to be acknowledged as a military commander,

According to the Tawarikh Gur Khalsa" and other Sikh traditional accounts, during the reign of Raja Bhim Chand, the Guru visited the Sirmur State. A rift cropped up between the Guru and Raja Bhim Chand of Kahlur on account of a white elephant, which was gifted to the Guru by Raja Man Singh of Assam. Raja Bhim Chand demanded the elephant which was refused. The Raja being annoyed, banished Guru Gobind Singh from his territory. Thereupon the Guru left Anandpur and encamped in village Mirpur, at Nahan. It was during his stay at Nahan territory that the Guru was invited by its Raja, Medini Parkash, with a request to settle down near Nahan. From Nahan, the Guru migrated to what is now known as Paonta Sahib.

Like his grand-father Hargobind, the Guru made it known that he would welcome offerings in arms and horses and more than that he would welcome able-bodied men to join his crusade" which was directed against the Mughal tyranny. The Guru's trouble, however, came from an unexpected quarter. He had been encouraged by the Rajput chieftains of the Himachal hills to believe that they would support him against the Mughals. But as soon as he started organising his army, Raja Bhim Chand of Kahlur (in whose territory Anandpur was located) turned hostile and successfully influenced the chiefs of several neighbouring hill states to help him in expelling the Guru from their midst. Perhaps they saw the Guru's growing power in the hills as a danger to their own domination in the hills.

On the occasion of the betrothal ceremony of Raja Bhim Chand's son (with the daughter of Raja Fateh Shah of Garhwal), the Kahlur chief sent his officers to Guru Gobind Singh to borrow the white elephant for the occasion. The Guru thought that the Raja wanted to take the elephant for him and therefore, refused to part with it. This caused bitterness in Bhim Chand's mind and he determined to take revenge. The relations became so strained that at last both resolved to take to arms. It was decided by the hill Rajas that the question should be finally settled as soon as the marriage was over. Meanwhile the invitation was received from Raja Medini Parkash of Sirmur to settle in his territory." With the permission of the Sirmur Raja, the Guru also built a fort at Paonta Sahib, 20 the remains of which are still existent.

8.4 The Battle of Bhangani

While the Guru was at Paonta Sahib, the marriage of the son of Kahlur chief with the daughter of Fateh Shah of Garhwal was settled. Since Fateh Shah was a friend of the Guru, the latter sent tambol (gifts) to the Garhwal Raja. When Raja Bhim Chand learnt about this he wrote to Fateh Shah reminding the latter about the old estrangement between him and the Guru and informed the Tehri ruler that the marriage would not take place if the friendship between the Guru and Fateh Shah continued. Consequently Fateh Shah had to return the wedding gifts, much to the displeasure of the Guru. The Guru was cut to the quick by this unprovoked indignity and threw down the gunlet (armour) when the Raja of Kahlur was returning after the wedding.

Guru Gobind Singh has also mentioned in his autobiography, the Bachitar Natak that Raja Bhim Chand fought with him without any cause.²¹ However, it appears that the bitterness between the Guru and the hill chiefs was also due to the fact that the

Guru's army also included some rebel Pathan deserters from the Mughal army. Some of them had joined the Guru merely for the sake of booty. Perhaps these were the people who were primarily responsible for the repeated outrages on the hill people, about which we get many indications in the Sikh accounts. Whatever may have been the real cause, a battle was fought at Bhangani, about 13 Kms northward from Paonta Sahib sometime in the year 1686 A.D.²²

The allies of Raja Bhim Chand were Raja Kirpal Singh Katoch, Raja Kesari Chand Jaswan-wala, Raja Sukhdev Chand of Jasrota and Raja Hari Chand of Hindur. As advised by Pamma, the Kahlur chief's family priest, the Raja formally declared war against the Guru. Bhim Chand collected all his confederate Rajas and with an emotional speech, appealed to them to help him in either killing the Guru or sending him in custody of Aurangzeb who would deal with him as he had done with his father, Guru Teg Bahadur.

On the side of the Guru, Mohri Chand, Gulab Rai, Sahib Chand, Hari Chand, Kirpal Chand, Prohit Daya Ram, Jaita, Rana Sanga, Jowaharji, Udaji and other veterans advanced to clash with the hill Rajas. Bribed by the hill Rajas, the Pathans, who had been employed on the recommendation of Pir Budhu Shah, went over to the enemy a few hours before the battle. Only Kale Khan and his hundred men remained loyal and also one Sadhu Kirpal Dass remained behind to live or die with the Guru.

On the mere basis of the Guru's account in his autobiography the Bachitar Natak, it is difficult to comprehend clearly the way in which the two armies had deployed themselves to fight this battle. It, however, appears that the armies on both sides were divided into units with separate leaders making their moves on the directions of Fateh Shah and the Guru, the supreme commanders of their respective armies ²⁴. The Guru himself selected an elevated ground and could see the whole of the force on the other side and could direct his men with an advantage denied to his opponents.

The units commanded by Guru's four cousins, the two Kirpals and Daya Ram, Sahib Chand and Diwan Chand, dashed to the field on horse back or on foot; some with bows and arrows, the others with swords and clubs. Of the unit commanders, only Sangho Shah remained behind, probably in readiness to reinforce the attack when necessary.²⁵ The Guru's bold move was rewarded when Mahant Kirpal hit Hayat Khan on the head and killed the Pathan deserter. This was followed by an utter confusion in the Pathan ranks. Now it was the turn of the hill troops of Gopal and Hari Chand to take the lead. The Guru sent Jit Mal who succeeded in fatally wounding Hari Chand and making him unconscious. He was the best commander on the side of the hill rajas. On regaining consciousness, Hari Chand again rallied to his side and fought bravely which encouraged Fateh Shah's men to continue the battle. It was only when the Guru succeeded in killing him that the battle ended in favour of the Guru.

In commemoration of the satis, probably the wives of the fallen heroes, there still exists a dome shaped tomb in a dilapidated condition at Bhangani. A stone inscription also exists on one of the tombs which is mostly worn out beyond legibility. It however, does indicate that the sati was a Rani and she burnt herself in 1686. Since the battle of Bhangani was fought in the same year, it can be fairly assumed that the monument is in commemoration of the Ranees of the fallen Rajas.

8.5 Battle of Nadaun

After the battle of Bhangani, the Guru returned to the Kahlur territory where he founded the village of Anandpur. He was now apparently living on friendly terms with Raja Bhim Chand of Kahlur and the occasion soon came when the Guru was called upon to give a practical demonstration of his friendship."

During the same period emperor Aurangzeb deputed one of the imperial commanders, Alif Khan to collect the annual tribute from the hill Rajas of Kangra, Jaswal, Dhadwal, Jasrota and others. The tribute was promptly paid by Kangra chief Kirpal Chand Kotoch who also advised Alif Khan to realise the dues from Bhim Chand of Kahlur, the strongest among the other hill chiefs, so that the others may also pay the tribute automatically. Accordingly an envoy was sent to the Kahlur chief but the latter refused to pay the tribute and instead started preparing for a war with the Mughal commander". He sought the military assistance of Guru Gobind Singh".

On the refusal of Bhim Chand to pay the arrears of the tribute, the Mughal forces marched to Bilaspur. A halt was ordered in the plain of Nadaun, Bhim Chand held a council of war in haste and it was unanimously decided to oppose the advancing Mughal forces. The allied Rajas (Kirpal Chand, Kesari Chand, Prithi Chand, Sukh Dev and others) brought their respective forces and opposed the Mughal forces desperately. The Rajputs fought well but could not hope to win against a powerful enemy. During the night, the Rajas again met and resolved to seek the assistance of Guru Gobind Singh and accordingly despatched an ambassador to Anandpur Sahib".

At first the Guru hesitated to enter into an alliance, but when he considered that the time was not distant when he himself would have to offer resistance to the enemies of the hill Rajas, he decided to offer assistance. Accordingly Diwan Nand Chand was ordered to take five hundred chosen men and before dawn, the Guru himself reached Nadaun with a considerable force. The arrows shot by the combined forces wrought havoc in the Mughal camp. Raja Dayal Chand, an ally of Alif Khan, was killed by an arrow despatched by the Guru and when his friend Kirpal Chand too was wounded, the Mughal army lost heart and retreated under cover of darkness.

Guru Gobind Singh writes in his Bachitar Natak about his participation in the battle of Nadaun to assist the hill Raja. Bhim Chand HIMACHAL himself led the forces invoking the name of Hanuman", Kirpal fought with great courage although he was surrounded on all sides. The people of Nanglu (sons of Raja of Kahlur) and Panglu (Rajputs of Chamba) Jaswan and the Guru advanced in order and on the other side Raja Dayal defended mightily.

Bhim Chand and the confederate Rajas of Himachal Pradesh expressed their gratitude to the Guru and pressed him to stay with them and enjoy their hospitality. The events narrated above make it clear that Guru Gobind Singh held no ill will against the Kahlur chief in spite of his treachery on numerous occasions. This is established from the facts such as:

1. Had there been any ill feeling in the mind of the Guru against Raja Bhim Chand, he would have pursued the defeated chiefs (in the battle of Bhangani) and would have attempted to annex their territories.

2. During his three years stay at Paonta, the Guru also attempted to defuse the enmity between the Sirmur and the Garhwal chiefs and the Guru's efforts were fully appreciated by the young chief of Sirmur.
3. Guru Gobind Singh would never have assisted Raja Bhim Chand against the attack by the Mughal forces at the battle of Nadaun. The Nadaun battle, on the other hand, indicates that the Guru considered it his sacred duty to give military assistance to any oppressed people, even if they were his opponents".

However, the Nadaun experience left the Guru in no illusions from the side of Raja Bhim Chand. This is apparent from the subsequent events.

Guru Gobind Singh and Sirmur

As stated earlier, Raja Medini Parkash, the ruler of Sirmur, invited the Guru in his state in 1695 A.D. The Guru accepted the invitation and set up his camp on the banks of Yamuna near Paonta. It is however, difficult to say whether the Sirmur Raja invited the Guru due to his deep reverence for the Guru and his mission or probably hecalculated that the presence of the Guru and his armed men will be useful for his state. The two neighbouring states of Sirmur and Garhwal had a long standing enmity. The Guru was allowed to build a fort there, which was perhaps the minimum which Guru Gobind Singh demanded before shifting to the place which the Sirmur chief had chosen for the Guru to settle down.

Guru Gobind Singh was destined to stay at Paonta for three years. His immediate task was to improve the relationship between the two rival states and at the same time to increase his military strength. The Guru succeeded in putting an end to the sored relationship between Nahan and the Garhwal states, which was on of his best diplomatic achievements. The Guru also made his position at Paonta secure (at least for some time) due to the conciliation he brought about between Fateh Shah and Medini Parkash.

Guru Gobind Singh and Mandi

The contemporary chief of Mandi during the period of Guru Gobind Singh was Raja Sidh Sen (1684-1727 A.D.). The sources concerning the state of Mandi do not refer to the participation of the chief of Mandi in the battles of Bhangani or Nadaun. It appears that the Sikh traditional accounts casually mention the names of all the hill rajas, including the Raja of Mandi, fighting against the Guru .

The traditonal accounts also refer to the visit of Guru Gobind Singh to Kulu and Mandi states. It is, however, clear that since the inception of the Khalsa army in 1699 up to the battle of Chamkaur, the Guru was never at peace as he was troubled both by the Mughals as well as the hill rajas. if we assume that the visit of the Guru have been actually undertaken, this particular Raja of Kulu (Raj Singh) came to power in 1719 and reigned upto 1731 A.D., whereas the Guru had died much before that date in 1708 A.D. Even in his autobiography, Bachitar Natak, the Guru has not hinted about his visit to Kulu and Mandi.

Regarding Guru's visit to Mandi, it is mentioned by Hutchison and Vogel that the Guru visitied Mandi and blessed its Raja, Sidh Sen. 38 On the departure of the Guru, the Raja was told to ask anything he wished and thereupon the Raja requested an

assurance that his capital would never be occupied by an enemy. The Guru gave utterance to the following couplet:

***'Mandi ko jab lootenge,
Asmani gole chhootenge.'*** i.e.

'When Mandi is plundered, heavenly cannons will be fired.'

The above couplet is still current in Mandi".

Hindur (Nalagarh):

According to the traditional accounts, Dharam Chand, one of the eight sons of the ruler of Hindur, sought the help of Guru Hargobind in the crusade against his father in 1618 in the war of succession for the Hindur gaddi. It was with the military assistance of the Guru that Sansar Chand, the Raja of Hindur was defeated and Dharam Chand was installed on the gaddi of Hindur in 1618 A.D.⁴⁰

Seven years later, (when Jahangir died in 1625 A.D.) Guru Hargobind sent his eldest son Gurditta to Hindur to establish a Sikh centre in the territory of Raja Dharam Chand. Upon his arrival, Gurditta was well received in Hindur and he was helped to establish a centre at the present site of Kiratpur which lay close to the border to Kahlur. Raja Dharam Chand found the Sikh Guru and his armed contingents very useful as he was able to defeat the Nawab of Ropar in 1642 A.D., with the help of Guru Hargobind.

When Guru Teg Bahadur returned to Punjab in 1671 A.D., he established his headquarters at two places; one, at Makhawal in Kahlur and the other at Kiratpur in Hindur.

For nearly a decade, the existence of the Guru's headquarters in two principalities did not create any complications. However, due to a general stir in the hills against the Mughals around 1670's, the chiefs of Hindur and Kahlur forgot their mutual differences and remained indulgent towards the Sikhs, particularly after the martyrdom of Guru Teg Bahadur in 1675 A.D.

With the change in Guruship at Makhawal, Bhim Chand did not remain immune to the new developments. The Guru's headquarters lay on the borders of his state and were in the vicinity of Hindur and the Mughal territory, Bhim Chand found an active ally in the chief of Hindur who was equally apprehensive of the growing strength of Guru Gobind Singh, close to the borders of Hindur,

The hill chiefs saw in the activities of the Guru, a threat to their own power. Consequently, almost a regular war was launched against the Guru. In fact Guru Gobind Singh's success during the three years that followed the battle of Nadaun, was phenomenal. His large congregations and rapidly increasing military strength seem to have unnerved the Mughals also. The Kangra faujdar and a few hill Rajas sought emperor Aurangzeb's directions to meet the growing threat from the Guru's side.

8.6 Guru Gobind Singh, the Mughals and the Hill Rajas

The Guru's assistance to Raja Bhim Chand and other hill chiefs (in the battle of Nadaun) had directly contributed to the defeat of Dilawar Khan, the subedar of Lahore.

A campaign was accordingly launched against the Guru under the leadership of Rustam Khan, the subedar's son. The Mughal army, however, met a disgraceful defeat from the Sikh forces under the command of Guru Gobind Singh.

Enraged at the defeat of the Mughal forces, the subedar of Lahore now sent another expedition against the Guru, under the command of his adopted son, Hussain, Alif Khan, Kirpa Ram and Chandan Singh (the Raja of Nurpur) were also sent along with Hussain as his lieutenants. Bhim Chand of Bilaspur and his ally Kirpal Chand Katoch, found good opportunity to expel the Guru from his headquarters. Both joined Hussain and offered their services for the subjugation of Anandpur and the capture of the Guru."

On receiving the news of the hostile attitude of the hill chiefs, the Guru gave orders for the defence of Anandpur. Diwan Nand Chand was placed in command of the garrison. When Hussain was marching towards Anandpur, Raja Gopal Chand of Guler, afraid of the cruelties of the fierce invader, met him on the way and offered a part of the tribute. However Bhim Chand and Kirpal Chand suggested the capture of the Raja and when Hussain laid siege to Guler, Gopal Chand escaped to the hills".

In the fierce battle that followed between the Guru and the Mughal commander, the latter was killed and the second Muslim attempt to capture Anandpur was also foiled by the Sikh forces. Soon after hearing about the defeat of the Mughal forces, Dilwar Khan again despatched a large army against the Guru. However, his passage was opposed by the Raja of Jaswan, in whose territory a decisive battle was fought and the Mughal forces again suffered a defeat and retreated to Lahore".

The two successive defeats weakened the Mughal administration on the hills. However, the obtrusive presence of the Khalsa at Anandpur obliged some of the hill chiefs to form a coalition against the Guru. The combination, though suggested by self interest, was dictated by helplessness of each individual chief against the solid defence of Anandpur.

After consulting each other, the hill Rajas sent an ultimatum to the Guru to leave the hills. The assistance of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb was also sought", since the expulsion of the Guru from Anandpur was not possible single handedly by them, particularly in face of the strategically advantageous position of Anandpur as well as the combative supremacy of the Sikhs.

Emperor Aurangzeb was at that time, engaged in the Deccan wars. However, on the receipt of the message from the hill Rajas, he sent orders for the suppression of the growing Sikh power. Adina Beg, the Mughal commander, along with Painda Khan, a brave Pathan as his lieutenant, started with 10,000 men against the Guru. The hill Rajas also brought their men to help the Mughal commander. In the battle that ensued, the allied forces once again fared badly, as Prince Ajit Singh, along with veteran warriors, committed tremendous slaughter in the ranks of the hill men and routed them completely.

The Mughal and hill chiefs' combined forces retreated to Bilaspur and resolved to make another effort to subjugate the Sikhs. This time, they were helped by a renowned warrior, Azmatullah, a leader of the Gujjars. The Guru's army was strengthened by

reinforcements from Malwa. The fortresses of Fatehgarh, Lohgarh and Anandgarh were garrisoned. The command of Majha Singhs was entrusted to Deva Singh and that of the Malwa Sikhs to Prince Ajit Singh. The hill army surrounded the Sikhs from all sides and though they fought with their usual gallantry, they were not able to hold their ground. Azmatullah was killed but the battle continued. In the renewed battle, the Sikhs had to face a retreat and the Guru was obliged to evacuate Nirmoh.

The Sikhs suffered a reverse in this battle and the Guru retreated to Basohli, in the dominion of Raja Dharampal, who was a sincere admirer of the Guru. Sometime later the Guru left Basohli with a view to reoccupy Anandpur. Back at Anandpur, Guru Gobind Singh again started to strengthen his position by improving the fortifications of Anandpur for the purpose of defence. Once again the Khalsa sangat started visiting Anandpur in large numbers. Apparently Guru Gobind Singh and his Sikhs were becoming more formidable a power than ever before. As the Guru's followers increased day by day, the problem of supply became more and more acute. According to Saina Pat, the Sikh horsemen rode into the neighbouring villages to levy contribution in kind from the reluctant hill men. The authority of the hill chiefs, particularly of Raja Bhim Chand, was openly defied.

Consequently, the hill chiefs were left with no alternative but to renew the conflict and to represent their plight to the Mughal government once again. The longstanding conflict between the hill Rajas and the determined Guru of the Khalsa was coming to its climax in the latter half of 1704 A.D.⁵⁰

Specific instructions were sent by Emperor Aurangzeb to the subedar of Lahore and the faujdar of Sirhind to aid the hill chiefs in their conflict with the Sikh Guru. Thus a formidable combination was formed against the Guru. The allied forces, however, failed to take Anandpur by assault. Fighting continued for several days, but without any success to the allies. The Mughal commanders finally laid siege to starve the Guru and the Khalsa to submission. When the situation became desperate, some of those present in the fort, became keen to evacuate the fort. The Mughal commanders in particular appear to have promised safe evacuation to the Guru in the name of the emperor, if the Sikhs leave Anandpur and settle down somewhere else. Consequently, the Guru evacuated Anandpur on December 21, 1704 A.D.

Thus the great scheme (of formation of a coalition which would have considerably facilitated the work of weakening the Mughal power) was never appreciated by the hill Rajas, in whose interests it had been conceived and adopted. As we have seen, the priestly dominated hill Rajas were instrumental in the ultimate defeat of the Guru and scattering the Sikh forces (with the help of the Imperial forces) during the last siege of Anandpur.

8.7 Maharaja Ranjit Singh and Kangra Hills

After the death of Aurangzeb, his successor Bahadur Shah occupied the throne. The new Mughal emperor was friendly towards the Guru as the latter had given him military assistance in the war of succession. The Guru accompanied emperor Bahadur Shah to the Deccan. It was during his Deccan visit that Guru Gobind Singh met Banda Bairagi at Nanded in 1708. He became an ardent devotee of the Guru who persuaded him to go to Punjab and fight against the enemies of the Khalsa.

As soon as Banda reached Punjab a large number of Sikhs gathered under his banner. In the first instance, Sirhind was sacked and a terrible vengeance was wreaked on the Mughal governor." Then came the turn of other territories like, Amritsar, Batala, Kalanaur, Pathankot and Lahore, which were all looted and sacked. Alarmed at the activities of Banda Singh Bahadur, the Mughal emperor, Bahadur Shah sent a large contingent of Mughal force under the command of Amin Khan to subdue Banda. The latter was besieged in the fort of Lohgarh and compelled to flee towards the hills in 1710 A.D.

After his tactical escape from Lohgarh, Banda did not lose heart as we find him issuing Hukamnamas to the Khalsa." Under Banda's instructions, the Sikhs gathered at Kiratpur in the Shiwalik hills. It was first decided to secure the sub-mountainous hinterland. Banda's first victim, therefore, became Raja Bhim Chand of Kahlur, the tormentor of Guru Gobind Singh.

Raja Bhim Chand of Kahlur, could not withstand the onslaught of a tireless Banda. Kahlur was captured and sacked." The town was looted and a large booty fell into the hands of the Sikhs." The defeat of Raja Bhim Chand demoralised the other hill chiefs of the Shiwalik hills. In order to avoid the devastation of their territories, they voluntarily submitted to Banda Singh Bahadur, offered him nazrana and assured him of their loyalty. The first among them was Raja Sidh Sen of Mandi and next was the Raja of Chamba both of whom submitted to Banda.

Meanwhile emperor Bahadur Shah was succeeded by Jahandar Shah and after some time he was ousted by Faurkh Siyar. The latter chose one of his best generals, Abdus Samad Khan to chastise Banda. Banda Bahadur came down from the hills to face the Mughal forces in 1715 and after a heroic resistance lasting for about eight months, Banda was captured and executed in June 1716 along with many other Sikhs.

The Sikh movement however, did not end with the execution of Banda Bahadur. Although the Sikh freebooters were relentlessly pursued and slain, yet the Sikhs now and then would create disturbance, plunder caravans and after looting the royal khazana, would flee to the hills and the impenetrable forests of Himachal Pradesh.

The Misal Period

The death of Banda Singh Bahadur left the Sikhs leaderless. However, soon they organised themselves in 65 roving bands and by the middle of the eighteenth century all these bands were amalgamated into Dal Khalsa with its two main divisions - the Buddha Dal and the Taruna Dal. By 1765 A.D. the two dals had been divided into twelve important commands, popularly known as the misals.

With the rise of the Sikh misals, a new phase in the relations of Sikhs with the Himachal Hill States was established. A contest now started among the various misals to occupy almost all the neighboring territories in the area of their operations. Of the misal chiefs, Sardar Jassa Singh Ramgarhia was quick to encroach in the hill areas and by 1770 A.D. the chiefs of Kangra (Raja Ghamand Chand), Nurpur (Raja Prithvi Singh) and Chamba (Raja Raj Singh) were made tributary to the Ramgarhia Sardar. The territories of Dipalpur, Datarpur, Amarpur, Haripur and Jaswantoo were annexed by the

Ramgarhia chief and now his possessions included almost the entire territory between the Ravi and Beas apart from vast areas in the Jullundur Doab.

The authority of the Ramgarhia chief in the Himachal hills, however was short lived as he was defeated by Sardar Jai Singh of the Kanhaiya Misal and the latter now assumed the sovereignty of the Kangra group of states. We are told that by 1775 A.D., Jai Singh Kanhaiya defeated the Ramgarhia chief in alliance with Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and the chief of Kangra and annexed the territories of Nurpur, Datarpur and Siba. The chiefs of these and other adjoining territories were made tributaries to the Kanhaiya chief. The fort of Kangra remained in possession of the Kanhaiya Sardar at least till 1786 A.D., when finally he was defeated by Sansar Chand and his allies. Jai Singh Kanhaiya vacated the fort and it was occupied by its legitimate owner, the Katoch chief Sansar Chand.

It will thus be seen that between the death of Guru Gobind Singh and the rise of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Sikh affairs in the hill states were based on expediency, safety in the hills and territorial ambitions. During the later half of the eighteenth century, the Sikhs had acquired a respectable military status thanks to the weakening of the Mughal hold over Punjab and Punjab hill states as well as the invasions of Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali from across the north-west. This provided them with the ample opportunity to organise themselves into misals who were finally absorbed into one single authority under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. With the rise of Maharaja Ranjit Singh at the close of the eighteenth century, the relations between the sovereign ruler of Punjab and the Himachal hill states assumed a new dimension. The reign of Ranjit Singh led to humiliating defeats of all the hill states and their annexation to the Lahore Durbar. These were ceded to the British government ultimately in 1846 after the defeat of the Sikhs and this also led to an end of their domination in the hills.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh and the Hill States of Himachal

The post-Abdali period saw the rise of Ranjit Singh of Sukarchakia misal, who was successful in liquidating all the warring misals and bringing them under a single central rule. The Maharaja gave the Sikhs half a century of stable, political power until the downfall of their power in the middle of the nineteenth century. During the period, the various chiefs of the Punjab hill states, taking advantage of the weakening of the Mughal and Afghan hold over the Punjab hills, assumed semi or full independence and continued to enjoy the same until about 1767 A.D., when most of these states could not remain immune from the growing Sikh influence.

It may be noted that the eastern group of states (between the rivers Sutlej and Ravi) consisted of nearly a dozen principalities, popularly known as the Kangra hill states. Of these the closest to the plains were Kangra, Nurpur, Guler, Jaswan, Siba, Datarpur and Kuthli. As mentioned earlier, Sardar Jassa Singh Ramgarhia collected tributes from the above mentioned states but by 1776, Jai Singh Kanhaiya replaced Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and succeeded even in occupying the Kangra fort. Modern researches reveal that Chamba also remained tributary to Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and Amar Singh of Phulkian misal.

During the period of chaos and confusion that followed immediately after the death of emperor Aurangzeb, and the ruthless persecutions of the Sikhs by the

governors of Punjab, on the one hand and Durrani invasions on the other; Raja Ghamand Chand, the grand-father of Sansar Chand Katoch, regained power of the hill territories lost by his ancestors earlier. In 1759, Ghamand Chand was appointed nazim (governor) of Jullundur doab between Sutlej and Ravi." He died in 1774 and was succeeded by his son Teg Chand. However, the latter died after a year and then the principality of Kangra passed on to his son, Sansai Chand in 1775 A.D. The early nineteenth century saw the rise of two most powerful chiefs: one in the plains of Punjab and the other in the hills of Himachal.

It may be recalled here that the Kangra fort passed on to Sansar Chand after the retreat of Jai Singh Kanhaiya in 1781. The fort had remained in Mughal possession for about a century and a half and subsequently it was retained by Kanhaiya misaldar for about a decade before it finally passed on to Sansar Chand, its legitimate owner. Soon after the formal possession of the Kangra fort, Sansar Chand embarked upon an operation of expansion in the adjoining hill states which included Chamba, Kotlabar, Suket, Mandi. Apart from these, the States of Jaswan, Kahlur, Guler, Siba' and Datarpur also acknowledged the leadership of Sansar Chand." Thus by the third quarter of the eighteenth century, Sansar Chand was at the pinnacle of his power. In the words of Amar Nath 'Sansar Chand around 1800 A.D. was holding afloat the banner of 'none but I'67.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh and Kangra

In 1803, Sansar Chand, in continuation of his plans of aggrandisement, made two attempts to occupy parts of the fertile Doab of Jullunder but was repulsed by Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his confederates. Next year Sansar Chand again invaded the plains and was successful in capturing Bijwara and Hoshiarpur. However, on Ranjit Singh's approach, he was compelled to retreat. Unaccustomed to the use of fire arms, Sansar Chand's forces failed to defend his acquisitions in the south against the troops of Lahore.

By 1804 A.D., the Gurkhas had penetrated the petty Simla Hill States." Amar Singh Thapa, one of the ablest Nepalese commanders, had swept the Himalayan foothills and had established his supremacy over Chamba, Nurpur, Kotla, Jasrota, Basohli, Jaswan, Mandi, Suket and Kulu. He now knocked at the doors of Kangra, which but for the timely intervention of Ranjit Singh, would have fallen to the Gurkha arms.

Ranjit Singh had already ousted Sansar Chand from Hoshiarpur and Bijwara. Meanwhile the disaffected hill chiefs," whom the Katoch chief had oppressed systematically and brought under his subjugation, appealed to the Gurkha commander for relief from the grip of Sansar Chand." In May 1806 A.D., their combined forces defeated Sansar Chand at Mahal Mori. Amar Singh now advanced to Kot Kangra and laid siege to it.

The fertile valley of Kangra now became a scene of struggle between Sansar Chand and the Gurkhas, which led to utter chaos in the hill state. Sansar Chand thus became helpless against the rising tide of the Gurkhas and sent frantic appeals to Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The latter was also too eager and was only waiting for this sort

of an opportunity to take possession of the Kangra fort. He demanded the possession of the fort as a price for driving out the Gurkhas from the Katoch territories.

Sansar Chand, however, was not willing to sacrifice the Kangra fort and therefore he approached Jaswant Rao Holkar for similar help but of no avail. Due to the worsening situation, Sansar Chand was left with no option but to appeal again to the Maharaja for help. Maharaja Ranjit Singh did not hold a high opinion about Sansar Chand but at the same time he never wanted the Gurkhas to annex the Punjab hills. Consequently, Ranjit Singh despatched a Sikh force under the command of Diwan Mohkam Chand, one of his ablest commanders, along with Sardar Fateh Singh Kalianwala. As soon as the Gurkha commander, Amar Singh Thapa, heard about the approach of the Sikh forces in the Kangra hills, he proposed to the Maharaja to accept a large nazrana and not to give any military assistance to Sansar Chand. Since Sansar Chand agreed to cede the fort after the defeat and expulsion of the Gurkhas, the Gurkha offer was turned down.

The Maharaja instructed Diwan Mohkam Chand to make sure that the fort of Kangra was taken possession of prior to any help to Raja Sansar Chand. The latter, however, promised to hand over the fort only after the expulsion of the Gurkhas and offered his eldest son Anirudh Chand as a hostage. Meanwhile the Diwan had to be recalled without his having accomplishing the task of freeing the Kangra valley from the Gurkha menace as the relations between the British and Maharaja Ranjit Singh had meanwhile, become strained.

The Diwan left the valley after leaving detachments at Bijwara and Nadaun. Sardar Fateh Singh Kalianwala too remained in Kangra and resumed operations against the Gurkhas. He cut the Gurkha line of communications and thus contributed effectively towards the subsequent defeat and retreat of the Gurkhas.

In 1809 A.D., the Gurkhas again pressed their long continued siege of Kangra. This time, before appealing to Ranjit Singh, Raja Sansar Chand approached the British for help but the latter declined as his territory lay outside their sphere of interest." Thus, again Sansar Chand appealed to the Maharaja for help and agreed to hand over the fort if the latter helped him in expelling the Gurkhas.

Meanwhile, Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who had been relieved of the British threat after the conclusion of the Treaty of Lahore (April, 1809 A.D.), accepted Sansar Chand's request. The agreement was formally made between the two parties with the mediation of Nathu, the wazir of Chamba state and the Raja of Guler. The treaty was signed at Jwala Mukhi on July 20, 1809. This time Sardar Desa Singh Majithia also accompanied Diwan Mohkam Chand. Soon after their approach, the Sikh officers effectively dealt with the Gurkhas by cutting off their line of supply.

The Gurkhas gave a thorough fight along the Ganesh Ghati but could not withstand the Sikh offensive. After two severe engagements, the Gurkhas were defeated. The Nepali commander and his defeated forces retreated further till they crossed the Sutlej, abandoning their conquests on the right side of the river. It is also stated that the Gurkha commander arranged for his retreat by paying one lakh rupees to Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Thus ended the Gurkha menace in the Kangra hills for ever.

The retreat of the Gurkhas and the annexation of Kangra fort, which was formally handed over by Sansar Chand to the Sikhs on August 24, 1809, led to an easy capture of the adjoining territories." Sardar Desa Singh Majithia, who had played a prominent part in this victory, was appointed the qiladar of the fort as well as the nazim (governor) of the Kangra and the adjoining hill states.

From that day onwards, the Maharaja's hold over the hill areas continued increasing till he finally subdued the major part of present Himachal Pradesh, as we shall observe soon. After the capture of Kangra by Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Sikh influence became supreme in all the hill states which were annexed to Lahore Durbar, one after the other in the subsequent years.

In 1815 A.D., Ranjit Singh despatched the Sikh forces to extract tributes from the hill chiefs. In the winter of 1815, the Maharaja divided his forces into two parts and ordered them to reassemble at Sialkot. The chiefs of Nurpur and Jaswan, however, failed to welcome the Maharaja. A heavy fine was imposed on Umed Singh, the chief of Jaswan, who being unable to pay, surrendered his principality and accepted a small jagir. The chief of Nurpur, Bir Singh, also met with the same fate.¹ In 1818 A.D., the chief of Datarpur, Govind Chander died and his principality too was annexed. The new successor was given a jagir for his subsistence by the Maharaja.

Finally came the turn of Siwan whose chief agreed to marry his daughter off to Raja Dhian Singh, the Maharaja's minister. Thus Siwan was saved from direct annexation and it remained attached to Dhian Singh. In 1825, the Sikh forces encircled the Kotla fortress and captured it after a siege lasting for two months. The chief was given a jagir of two thousand rupees and the fortress was annexed to Ranjit Singh's kingdom.

Meanwhile Sansar Chand in alliance with Raja Kishan Singh of Suket, tried to conquer Mandi but the chief of Mandi received timely assistance from the Maharaja. The Suket chief was imprisoned and his forces were compelled to retreat. Sansar Chand's protests to Ranjit Singh did not yield any result because of the latter's skilful diplomacy and superior tactics.

Sansar Chand, whose power was once dreaded by the adjoining hill states and who had dreamt of a supremacy extending from Jamuna to Jhelum, sank into the position of an insignificant dependent. William Moorcroft, who visited Kangra in 1823 met Raja Sansar Chand in reduced and desperate circumstances.

Raja Sansar Chand died in 1824 A.D. During this year Maharaja Ranjit Singh was at Dinanagar. A nazrana of rupees two lakhs was demanded from his son Anirudh Chand as succession fee to the Kangra seat. The young chief demurred and consequently Faqir Azizuddin (Maharaja's most trusted foreign minister) was sent to Nadaun with a Sikh cavalry to realise the amount.

Anirudh Chand being alarmed at the approach of the Sikh forces, accompanied the Faqir to Jwala Mukhi, where the court was held and paid rupees one lakh whereupon the balance was remitted. Prince Kharak Singh exchanged turbans, in token of his brotherhood, with the new heir of the tributary.⁹⁴

Maharaja Ranjit Singh and the other Hill States

As we have already observed, soon after the fall of the Kangra fort in 1809 A.D., the various other hill chiefs, who were earlier tributary to Sansar Chand, met with the same fate. Maharaja Ranjit Singh was very ambitious and was bent upon destroying the hill states through diplomacy and warfare. The duplicity of Sansar Chand, the Gurkha attack and the aid given by Bilaspur and other chiefs to the Gurkhas, paved the way for fulfilling the aims of Maharaja Ranjit Singh without much difficulty.

Even before the fall of Kangra fort, Diwan Mohkam Chand was assigned the task of reducing Pathankot in 1807 A.D. The Diwan captured Pathankot easily and moved on to Jasrota, Chamba and Basohli and compelled their chiefs to acknowledge the authority of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. That Chamba state became a regular tributary to Lahore Durbar is also known from subsequent events. The small state of Bhadarwah (an off-shoot of Basohli) had long been tributary to Chamba but in 1820 its chief refused to continue the tribute.⁸⁶ Accordingly, Nathu, the wazir of Chamba" state (who was in good books of Ranjit Singh and had rendered important personal service to him during invasion of Kashmir in 1814) was directed to proceed towards Bhadarwah but was defeated. It was only with the help of Ranjit Singh (in 1821) that the state was compelled to pay tribute to Chamba, then under the control of the Sikhs.

The State of Nurpur too was annexed by Sardar Desa Singh Majithia, on behalf of Ranjit Singh soon after the fall of Kangra. As already stated, in 1812, the Maharaja came in person with an army to Dinanagar in 1812 for extracting tribute from the hill Rajas. The chief of Nurpur was called upon to pay rupees forty thousand.⁸⁹ In the autumn of 1815, the Maharaja summoned all his Sardars and other tributary chiefs to a great military assembly at Sialkot. The Rajas of Nurpur and Jaswan did not turn up and consequently a heavy fine was imposed on each of the two chiefs which they found impossible to pay.

In case of Nurpur, its Raja, Bir Singh, found himself unable to pay the enhanced demand even to the extent of mortgaging and selling his family idols etc. The state of Nurpur was thus attached to Lahore Durbar. A jagir was offered to the Raja which he refused and escaped towards Chamba. After a period of ten years of self-exile, Bir Singh made another attempt to gain the fortress of Nurpur and laid siege to it. When the news reached Lahore, Maharaja despatched a force under Desa Singh Majithia and on the approach of the Sikh forces, Bir Singh fled towards Chamba, whose chief promptly delivered him to Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The Nurpur chief remained confined in the Gobindgarh fort at Amritsar for seven years." Thus all attempts on the part of Nurpur chief to regain his territory met with a complete failure.

In case of the state of Mandi too, its chief, Raja Isri Sen was compelled to pay a nazrana of Rs. 30,000/- to Lahore Durbar since 1809 and the same continued to be realised till 1815 A.D. During this period, Zalim Sen, the brother of Mandi chief, out of ill-will against Isri Sen, went over to the court of Ranjit Singh and sought the latter's assistance in securing the Mandi seat for himself. The Maharaja espoused the cause of Zalim Sen and a tribute of one lakh was imposed upon Isri Sen to retain possession of his territory.

In 1816 the Maharaja sent jamadar Khushal Singh to Mandi for collection of the annual tribute. The Mandi chief quietly retired into Kulu territory with his retainers in a bid to oppose the Sikhs with the help of the Kulu wazir. Later, however, he returned to Mandi and after bribing Khushal Singh, obtained a reduction in the annual tribute to rupees fifty thousand. This arrangement continued till the death of the Mandi chief in 1826 A.D. During this period Sardar Lehna Singh was stationed at Mandi with a Sikh force to keep a watch over the hill Rajas.

The next chief of Mandi, who succeeded Isri Sen was Zalim Sen who had to pay one lakh rupees as succession duty to the Lahore Durbar. Zalim Sen continued to pay rupees seventy five thousand till his death in 1839 A.D., after which the state administration passed on to Raja Balbir Sen, who too continued as a tributary chief on the same terms and conditions.

In case of the state of Bilaspur, it has already been stated that in 1805 A.D., its chief Mahan Chand invited the Gurkha leader to invade Kangra whereupon Raja Sansar Chand was obliged to seek military assistance from Maharaja Ranjit Singh in expelling the Gurkhas. After the Gurkha retreat, the claim of Bilaspur was disallowed by the British government. The state was brought directly under the British control. In 1819, Sardar Desa Singh Majithia, the governor of Kangra, invaded the right bank of the Sutlej, where the Sikhs were powerful. When the Sikh forces crossed Sutlej, the British intervened and forced the Sikhs to retire. The state of Bilaspur, however, continued to pay a tribute to Lahore kingdom for the territory on the right bank of the Sutlej."

It will thus be seen that during the entire medieval period, the Mughals, the Afghans and the Sikh misaldars claimed a shadowy supremacy over the hill states of the present Himachal Pradesh. The various hill chiefs were never completely subject to any of the above powers during the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. It was only during the rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh that all the big and small hill states succumbed to the mighty military pressure of the Lahore Kingdom."

The only hope for the hill chiefs for their deliverance from the Sikh dominance during Ranjit Singh's rule, rested towards the Katoch ruler Raja Sansar Chand of Kangra. The latter, however, miserably failed in his political moves. In an attempt to exert his supremacy over the adjoining hill states, he incurred their wrath. Some of the hill chiefs, fed up with the ambitious designs of Sansar Chand, rallied round the Raja of Kahlur and invited the Gurkhas.

The unwise policy of Raja Sansar Chand was responsible for the Gurkha havoc in the Kangra hills. They looted and plundered the valley and compelled the Katoch chief to seek protection from Maharaja Ranjit Singh. It was Sansar Chand's unwise policy which brought final subversion not only of his own state but also of all the adjoining hill states of Nurpur, Jaswan, Siba, Suket, Mandi, Chamba, Kulu, Haripur (Guler), Datarpur, which were all reduced and annexed to Lahore Durbar by the well organised Sikh forces.

8.8 Self Check exercise

1. Who was appointed as nazim (governor) of Jullundur doab?

8.9 Conclusion

The relationship of the hill chieftains of Himachal Pradesh with Maharaja Ranjit Singh are important not from the point of view of their quality or nature but because of the adverse effects they produced on the territorial possessions of the hill chiefs. There is also no denying the fact that the hill states did not possess a unitary government or a singular defensive system. Their mutual jealousies and animosities had weakened them so much that any attempt on their part to resist the Sikh pressure met with complete failure. Maharaja Ranjit Singh's insistence on payment of tribute or surrender of the hill states, made the position of the hill chieftains vulnerable and quite often they were obliged to seek protection from the Marathas, Gurkhas or the British. Of these three, only the British made full use of the opportunity and finally succeeded in subjecting them to their political control. This was, however, possible only after the lamp of Lahore kingdom was dimmed in the smoke of civil warfare, intrigues and the Anglo-Sikh Wars.

8.10 Glossary

Mirasdar: An aristocratic landowner in India

8.11 Answer to Self Check Exercise

Ans.1. Ghamand Chand was appointed nazim (governor) of Jullundur doab between Sutlej and Ravi."

8.12 Suggested Readings

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8.13 Terminal Questions

1. Describe the relationship of Maharaja Ranjit Singh with Hilly States?
2. What were the reasons for the eviction of Sikhs in Himachal?

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Unit-III

Lesson - 9

The Gurkhas and the Himachal Hills

Structure

- 9.0 Introduction
- 9.1 Objective
- 9.2 Anglo-Gurkha conflict and the Himachal hills
- 9.3 The British annexation and Himachal
- 9.4 Himachal and the British: 1815-1845
- 9.5 Self Check Exercise
- 9.6 Conclusion
- 9.7 Glossary
- 9.8 Answer to Self Check Exercise
- 9.9 Suggested Readings
- 9.10 Terminal Question

9.0 Introduction

On the decline of the Mughal empire, the Gurkhas' of Nepal, having made themselves masters of the whole of that country, conceived an ambitious military programme of bringing the entire western Himalayas under their sway. In the first quarter of the eighteenth century, Narbhupal Shah ascended the throne. He was the tenth ruler of the Gurkhas starting from Dravya Shah. He was a very ambitious and courageous man. He found that eastward from his mountain home lay the prosperous valley of Nepal which was divided at that time amongst the three principalities of Bhatgaon, Kathmandu and Patan.

9.1 Objective

1. To study the condition of hills states during Gorkha War.
2. To find out the reason behind Gurkhas invasion on Hilly States
3. To analyse the result of Gurkhas' invasion on Hill State

Prithvi Narayan Shah, who ascended the Nepal throne in 1742 A.D., turned his organising power and will to the task of militarising his people. He patronised the hardy mountaineers around his town and formed an army more numerous and better-led than any of those of his neighbours commanded. With the assistance of many other mountain chiefs, Prithvi Narayan Shah gained possession of all the mountainous regions which surrounded the valley of Nepal.

By the close of the eighteenth century, Nepal ruler Bahadur Shah sent the Gurkha army under the command of Damodar Pandey towards the west and the various principalities were conquered one after the other and before 1787, all the Chaubisi principalities were absorbed by the Gurkhas. In 1790 A.D., the Nepal ruler planned the invasion of Kumaon and sent the forces under the command of Amar Singh Thapa and others, who took possession of Almora after defeating its chief. In the following year, the Gurkhas made great preparations for the invasion of Garhwal. The Gurkhas, however, never penetrated beyond Langur Garh, which for a whole year defied their efforts to reduce it. Meanwhile, the news of a Chinese assault on the Gurkha possessions in Nepal obliged the Gurkha troops to retreat. However, the Gurkhas had so impressed the Garhwal ruler with a sense of their power, that he agreed to pay a yearly tribute to the Nepal government.

In 1803 A.D., the Gurkhas made another massive attempt westwards. Their soldiers were now sent towards Garhwal under the command of Amar Singh Thapa and others. Pradhyuman Shah, the weak Garhwal chief, retired to Dehra Dun without opposing the Gurkhas. The Gurkhas however, followed him to Dehra Dun and forced him to seek refuge in the plains. In the battle that followed, the Garhwal chief was killed (1804) and his brother retired to Kangra. The Gurkhas now established themselves as far as the Yamuna in the west.

In 1805, the Gurkhas got another opportunity for expansion. Between the Sutlej and Yamuna were a number of petty chiefs trying to impose authorities over one and other. The ambition of Raja Sansar Chand in particular, had already made his neighbours either into his vassals or his enemies. He had conquered the land of the chief of Bilaspur. Raja Sansar Chand's action against the Kahlur aroused keen resentment among the other Hill States and smarting under the many wrongs they had endured at his hands, as well as fearing for their own possessions, the chiefs formed a coalition against Raja Sansar Chand. They sent a united invitation, through the Raja of Kahlur, to the Gurkha Commander, Amar Singh Thapa, to invade Kangra.

The hill chiefs further promised to aid Amar Singh Thapa, with their own contingents whenever the latter crossed the Sutlej. Their invitation was wholly acceptable to the Gurkhas, for it was in keeping with their expansionist designs. Thus it was the small state of Kahlur which provided Amar Singh Thapa with the opportunity he sought. Accordingly, with an army of 40,000 men, Amar Singh Thapa crossed the Sutlej at Bilaspur where he was joined by the various contingents from the hill states of the Kangra group, the Bilaspur troops and Basohli, whose united forces numbered about 10,000. Along with the forces of other states, Chamba sent a force to assist the Gurkhas, under the command of Wazir Nathu.

The Gurkha forces then advanced into the heart of the Kangra state and laid siege to the fort, where Raja Sansar Chand had taken refuge. The fort was invested for four years, but all the efforts of the Gurkhas met with no success. The continuous siege of the fort greatly effected the agriculture and economy of the surrounding territories. For four years, the Gurkhas plundered and laid waste the country."

For more than three years, this state of anarchy continued. In the fertile valley of Kangra 'not a blade of cultivation was to be seen, grass grew up in the streets of

Nadaun.' Meanwhile, the supplies were smuggled in from Palam, but the Gurkhas cut these off by blockading the river gate of entrance into the fort, and the Raja and the garrison were without food and subsisted for four months upon little else than the leaves of vegetables.

At last as a last resort, Raja Sansar Chand, in 1809 A.D., appealed to Maharaja Ranjit Singh for help. Sansar Chand, it is said had already rejected one offer of aid from Maharaja Ranjit Singh, out of preference for a treaty with the Nepal ruler. However, the continued siege by the Gurkhas, left no chance for Sansar Chand to withdraw from the fort of Kangra with some semblance of dignity. Seeing no hope of relief from the misery and distress which had come upon his country, Sansar Chand sent his brother to Maharaja Ranjit Singh at Lahore to ask for his help. This was readily promised but on the condition that the Kangra fort should be surrendered.

In May 1809 A.D., Maharaja Ranjit Singh marched from Lahore. Meanwhile Sansar Chand also reached Jwala Mukhi in disguise to conclude the treaty with Ranjit Singh. For nearly a month, negotiations went on at Jwala Mukhi between Maharaja Ranjit Singh and Sansar Chand, regarding the conditions on which help should be given. The Maharaja demanded the surrender of the fort before proceeding to expell THE the Gurkhas but Sansar Chand declined to agree. At length, by the mediation of Wazir Nathu (of Chamba) and the Raja of Guler, an agreement was reached. The two rulers met inside the temple of Jwala Mukhi, Sansar Chand made the treaty with Ranjit Singh, signed (it is said), in blood, whereas the Maharaja, with his hand over the sacred flame, took an oath to do him no harm.

Meanwhile, Amar Singh Thapa, on coming to know the ence of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, offered a large sum of wealth to Ranjit Singh, if he withdrew his army. However, Ranjit Singh had an eye on the Kangra fort. According to the agreement, he defeated the Gurkhas who retreated across the Sutlej.¹⁰ Ranjit Singh moved on to the fort of Kangra in the month of August, and to guarantee the cooperation of Sansar Chand, he took Sansar Chand's son as hostage. The Gurkhas were in no position to check Ranjit Singh's advance. They were forced to withdraw to the left bank of the Sutlej and Amar Singh Thapa returned to his headquarters with a grievance against the Sikhs."

After his retirement from Kangra in 1809 A.D., Amar Singh Thapa put his pressure against the Raja of Hindur (Nalagarh) but the advance of the British troops that year to Ludhiana saved Palasia from being captured. Amar Singh Thapa now established himself at Arki, in the small state of Baghal, whose chief was driven into exile. Sometime afterwards Amar Singh sent a force under his son Ranjor Singh to attack Sirmur. Its ruler Karam Parkash was defeated and fled. Thus Nahan and Jythak (in Sirmur) became important Gurkha posts in the years immediately ahead.

By the year 1810, the Gurkhas had conquered Hindur, Jubbal and Pundar. After some resistance, the fort of Nagana, belonging to the Thakur of Balson, was also captured. At this juncture, the Thakurs of Kotgarh, Balson, Theog and other petty states, requested the Bushahr chief for help against the growing menace of the Gurkhas. The Raja of Bushahr, foreseeing a threat to his own state, despatched a strong force of 10,000 under his wazir to check the Gurkha advance.

In May 1811, Amar Singh Thapa marched personally from Sabathu with a large force. He captured Nagana and advanced on to the valley of the middle Sutlej, near Rampur, the capital of the state of Bushahr.

Meanwhile, the untimely death of Ugar Singh, the chief of Bushahr, eased the task of Amar Singh Thapa, who took advantage of the minority of the new ruler, Mohinder Singh and marching with a large force took possession of Rampur Bushahr. The Rajmata, with her infant son took shelter in the deep forests. Amar Singh Thapa took possession of Rampur and remained there with his forces. It was only in 1812 that Amar Singh Thapa, perhaps finding his possessions too remote, agreed to leave the Rampur prince all the country north of Sarahan mountains and beyond the Sutlej in return for payment of a tribute of Rs. 12,000/- annually. Thus the Gurkha conquest of the country between Yamuna and Sutlej was complete.

9.2 Anglo-Gurkha Conflict and the Himachal Hills

Amar Singh Thapa remained with his forces at Rampur till at least up to 1813 A.D. after which he retired to Arki, his earlier headquarters. Shortly afterwards he was to face a new challenge from the British who finally succeeded in defeating the Gurkhas and stripping them of all their possessions in the Himachal hills. The conflicting interests of the Gurkhas and the English made an 'open appeal to arms inevitable.' The English decided to expell the Gurkhas from all the Hill States east to the Sutlej, with the help of the local chiefs.

As the hill chiefs were already fed up with the incessant inroads of the Gurkhas, they immediately consented to extend all help to the British. The British, on their part, promised the hill chieftains, them restoration of their lost territories soon after the expulsion of the Gurkhas. A joint military operation was planned under the command of Major General David Ochterlony.

David Ochterlony entered the foot hills of the Himalayas in the direction of Nalagarh which surrendered on 5th November, 1814. This was followed by the surrender of Taragarh, a small hill fortress in the neighbourhood. These were garrisoned by the British and a depot was established at Nalagarh.¹⁵ Meanwhile, Amar Singh Thapa was also determined to resist the British advancement in the region. He moved with his whole force from his headquarters at Arki and took up a position on a lofty and almost inaccessible ridge of mountains which was defended by several forts of considerable strength.

The chief of Bilaspur, whose territory lay on both sides of Sutlej, was an ally of great importance to Amar Singh Thapa as nearly all the supplies of Amar Singh's army were drawn from Bilaspur territory. Apart from this, Arki, his former headquarters, supplied the rest of his communications with the other positions. An attempt was made by Ochterlony to attack Amar Singh's position at Ramgarh, but the Gurkhas attacked with great force and consequently the British forces led by Lieut. Col. Thompson, Major Macleod and others suffered considerable loss.

Ochterlony, who had now been promoted as a Major General, changed his strategy and decided to place himself between the principal position of the Gurkhas and Bilaspur, in order to cut off the supplies. He succeeded in winning over the local chief to

his side and with his aid constructed a road from Khandri to Nahar. Amar Singh promptly countered this by abandoning all his posts on that ridge. General Ochterlony, therefore, marched on 16th January, 1815¹⁸ with the reserve across the Gambar river to a position on the road to Arki. Lt. Col. Cooper was left with a battalion at the former post of Nahar.

Being hard pressed, Amar Singh Thapa quit his position for Malaon and left only small garrisons in Ramgarh and other outposts of that range. The British, however, with their superior forces and shelling power, were able to reduce many important Gurkha posts such as Ramgarh, Jorjori and the fort of Taragarh.

Apart from the Himachal front, the British, soon after the declaration of the war against the Gurkhas (Nov. 1st, 1814) also started military operations in other parts of the Himalayas. Four separate divisions of troops were put into operation in different areas. The principal columns were under Major General Rollo Gillespie and Major General Ochterlony. Gillespie moved from Saharanpur to Dehra Dun and Kiarda Dun. When Bal Bhadra Thapa, (the commander of the Gurkha forces at Dehra Dun) heard of the approach of the British army, he abandoned Dun and moved to a small fort of Kalanga, which was besieged by the British. Several attempts were made to reduce the fort. In one of the attempts Major general Gillespie was mortally wounded. However Major Mawbey, was finally able to capture the fort.

British army reaches Nahan

After the capture of Kalanga fort, the British army was directed to advance forward towards Sirmur and to reduce Nahan, its capital. The territory at that time was under the control of the Gurkhas, under the command of Ranjor Singh Thapa, son of Amar Singh Thapa. On the approach of the British forces Ranjor Singh abandoned Nahan and took up position at Jythak, on a ridge overlooking Nahan.

The British army under Major General Martindell,²¹ reached Nahan on 19th December, 1814. Nahan was occupied on the Christmas day of 1814 and soon after that, preparations were made to attack Ranjor Singh's position at Jythak. Gen. Martindell sent out two strong detachments to attack Jythak from north and south. Both the contingents were however, defeated and driven back with heavy losses.²³ Consequently for more than a month, Martindell did not dare to confront the Gurkha forces again.

Meanwhile the Britishers acquainted themselves with the sentiments of the inhabitants of the northern districts, particularly of those of the Jubbal. By February 1815, Fraser, the Political Agent, learnt that the

elders of Jubbal were at last stirring up and needed arms and men. An irregular army which was sent towards Jubbal, was joined by two chief men of the state, Dangi Wazir and Primoo.

The British irregulars, joined by the forces of Dangi and Primoo, surrounded the small fortress of Chopal, which at that time was one of the strong holds of Jubbal and was garrisoned by about one hundred Gurkhas.

A negotiation was initiated by the British party with the commander of the fort; and after some demure and threat, he surrendered with his party and all were received into the British pay, according to capitulation.

Gradually the British forces were increased to about 800 irregulars. Many soldiers were recruited from the State of Jubbal by Wazir Dangi. The entire force now was directed against the petty forts of the enemy in the north, in alliance with the troops of the Raja of Kulu, who also joined these troops and commenced operations against the Gurkhas.

After reducing capital, the combined forces of the British and the Jubbalians marched towards the Rawingarh fort, on the banks of river Pabar. Rawingarh was another strong-hold of the Gurkhas, under the command of Ranjor Thapa. In the siege of Rawingarh, the British THE GURE forces were assisted by the two wazirs of Bushahr, Tikam Das and Badri Das, apart from the wazir of Jubbal, who had earlier assisted in the reduction of Chopal. After the conquest of Rawingarh, it was occupied by the Fraser's irregulars.

In the north, the Gurkha forces, under the command of Kirti Rana, were occupying Hattu range. The Bushahr troops led by wazirs Tikam Das and Badri Das, were joined by the Kulu forces in 1815. The joint forces hard pressed Kirti Rana and surrounded him at Sarau-ka Tibba. On the evening of next day, he surrendered to the wazirs of Bushahr on the condition that the lives of his forces were to be spared and they were to be handed over to the nearest British General. It is stated that Kirti Rana was compelled to surrender due to the treachery of his other troops stationed at Sirmur, Garhwal and Kumaon.

The whole campaign proved to be completely successful and Gen. Ochterlony was able to compel the Gurkha Amar Singh Thapa to sign a treaty at Sagauli on 28th Nov. 1815. It will thus be seen that Amar Singh Thapa had steadfastly refused to listen to the solicitations of his followers, and submit. However, the news of the fall of Kumaon and some desertions in his army left him with no choice but to surrender. A convention was thus entered into, by which Amar Singh Thapa and his son Kazi Ranjor Singh Thapa (who was then defending the fort of Jythak against Major Gen. Martindell's force) were to be allowed to return with their followers and private properties to Nepal leaving all the rest of the hill country, from Kali to Sutlej, in the hands of the British.

9.3 The British Annexation and Himachal

After the conclusion of the Anglo-Gurkha War in 1815 A.D., twenty 32 Simla Hill States passed under the British paramountcy. As already stated, the British had promised to the hill states, the restoration of their territories after the expulsion of the Gurkhas. It was on this promise that the hill states had given all the required assistance to the British in defeating the Gurkhas. To begin with, the British appeared to be less interested in acquiring the hill states and with this end in view, a conference of the hill chiefs under General Ochterlony was held at Plassia.

As a result of this conference the territories held by each chief was determined. After negotiations, prior to the Gurkha occupation, possessions of many chiefs were approved and confirmed. The chiefs whose states were restored to them included

Sirmur, Bilaspur, Hindur, Jubbal, Bhagat, Keonthal, Kotkhai, Baghal and Bushahr. The chiefs of these states were granted sanads, which thus came under the British overlordship between 1815 and 1819 A.D." It appears that the exigencies of their position to submit to a more powerful neighbour, the superior chief was recognised as the overlord of the inferior ones. It is, therefore, not surprising that the thakurais of Kumarsin, Balson, Kuthar, Tharoch, Mangal and Dhami were constituted as separate chiefships and granted independent sanads, while the thakurais of Khaneti and Delath were conferred upon Bushahr and those of Koti, Madhan, Ghund, Theog and Ratesh upon Keonthal.

The Grant of Sanads to Hill Chiefs

The British granted sanads to the chiefs of the Shimla hills to confer lands upon their legitimate chiefs in perpetuity, 'from generation to generation and with all internal rights'. In lieu of these grants, the rajas of the Shimla region were required by the British government to fulfil some obligations and conditions.

The hill chiefs, after their submission were granted sanads through which they were given their hereditary lands. It is interesting to note that as the Mughals did not, in general resume the lands of the chiefs, the British also did not try to resume the lands of the chiefs in Himachal." As under the Mughals, the chiefs were required to give military assistance, whenever the British asked for it.

One of the most important conditions laid down in the sanads to the chiefs who submitted during the period 1815-19 A.D., pertained to the issue of begar. Out of the twenty states, sixteen were asked to supply begarees to the British government³⁷. The number of these begarees differed from the highest range of hundred to the lowest of five.

Apart from the supply of the begarees, the princely states of Himachal, which came under the domination of the British Paramount Power, were also required to pay the nazrana or peshkash in cash". The government also kept the right to overthrow any heir from his British throne if he was found to be a faulter in the fulfilment of the obligations laid down in the sanads. It was also necessary for the new chief of any state to get the recognition from the British Government³⁹. The chiefs of Himachal Pradesh were also required to promote the welfare of their people, to improve the conditions of their lands and cultivation, to redress grievences and to keep the public roads safe. The Rajas of trans-Sutlej states were required by the British Government to keep the traders and bankers secure within their territories. In the sanads that were granted during 1846-48, we find this obligation among the important ones prescribed by the British Government.

It is also worth noting that no Raja was given the right to settle conflicts with any other Raja. If any time, the conflict arose between two or more Rajas, the Rajas of these trans-Sutlej States were required to seek arbitration of the British courts". Again, the military assistance was one of the important obligations laid down in the sanads, under which every chief was required to supply his sepoy and soldiers to the British government.

Consolidation of the British Rule

After the revolt of 1857, a new series of sanads were issued by the British Government to the erstwhile princely States of Himachal Pradesh. The only difference we find after 1857 is that this time no state was brought under the British paramountcy. The sanads during 1857-1929 were issued to those twenty three states which were already under the protection of the British Government. The sanads of this period vary from that of the earlier ones which were issued during the period from 1815 to 1848. The sanads of the period included issues like grant of territories, annexation of lands, postal conventions, grants of titles and khilats etc⁴³.

Change in the British Policy

It may be recalled that the hill chiefs of Himachal Pradesh had extended all help to the British in the Anglo-Gurkha War, with the hope that their lost territories would be restored soon after the expulsion of the Gurkhas. However, once the British gained a foothold in the Himachal, they changed their policy even though they had given certain guarantees to the hill chiefs through the sanads issued to them. No doubt, the rulers of Bhagal, Hindur, Bilaspur, Bushahr and Sirmur, which had come partly or wholly under the Gurkha rule, were restored to their legitimate rulers. But a complete restoration of their territories was not permitted.

In accordance with their changed policy, the British retained possession of some of the important portions under the pretext that they were compelled to do so in the interest of the hill chiefs to enable them to maintain their guarantee of protection not only against the foreign enemy but to retain these chiefs in their territories also. The British Government thus modified the original policy and was determined to retain some of the favourable military positions".

Territorial Aggression

The British restored most of the lands to their legitimate heirs but in some cases, some portions of lands were resumed from their chiefs. In case of Raja Mohinder Singh of Bushahr, the Govt. retained the forts of Rawin, Salegan, Hattu and Baghee, with the lands attached to them, through the sanad dated 8th February, 1816.

The British Government issued peculiar types of sanads to those rulers from whom some portions of their territories were taken possession by the Government. In these sanads, the Government mentioned only the territories which were restored to the Rajas and not the portions of territories which were consumed by the Government as in cases of the states of Keonthal and Baghat."

The British, through two sanads, dated 6th Sept., 1815 and 11th Sept., conferred on the Raja of Keonthal, the parganah of Collhanj, Bethook, Gootee, Khond, Kyaree and eight other parganahs. It is clear from these sanads that there were some other parganahs also which previously were parts of the Keonthal State and which were not given to the Raja through these sanads. However, the names of the territories that were taken hold of by the Government, were not given".

In case of Rana Mohinder Singh, the Raja of Baghat, the British, through a sanad of 4th September, 1815, conferred the 'Pergunnahs Kusowlee, Bhooj, Bewal and Golee Masil'. It was also laid down that, he must be cautious in not encroaching beyond the

ancient and fixed boundaries of the aforesaid four Pergunahs any of the other Pergunnah⁴⁸. THE GU It is clear from the sanad that previously the Raja of Bhagat had some more lands and only some of them were restored to him by the British and those which were consumed were not mentioned in the sanad.

From the Raja of Sirmur, Raja Fateh Singh also, the British took hold of some territories, A sanad dated 21st Sept., 1815 A.D.,⁴⁹ was granted to him through which the Government detached some land namely, the forts of Monee and Juggatgarh and Dun Kyadrah and the districts of Jaunsar and Banwar Moolakee".

Thus we find that although on the British Government granted the thakuraees on the legitimate heirs 'in perpetuity', if the raja of any thakurai failed to fulfil the conditions like giving military assistance, constructing roads, improving conditions of people and cultivation and try to encroach upon the territories of others, the British were at liberty to dispossess him and in his place settle any other male member of the royal family. The Anglo-Gurkha War no doubt helped in the restoration of the hill states to their legitimate rulers, but still hill chiefs continued resenting and complaining against the occupation of some of their territory by the British as is evident from the correspondence between the Political Agent and the hill chiefs of Sirmur and Keonthal etc., during this period.

9.4 Himachal and the British: 1815-1845

After the conclusion of the Anglo-Gurkha War, the British, as noted above, guaranteed independence to the hill chiefs in their internal affairs as well as security against foreign aggression. Gradually, the British departed from this practice in several ways. This departure from the declared policy was stated to be due to mis-rule, oppression of the people and non-fulfilment of the terms of the treaties and sanads by the hill chiefs.

Meanwhile the British acquired a few footholds, particularly in the Shimla Hill States or the territory east of the Sutlej. The hill chiefs, during this period, were mostly busy either settling their own internal affairs and conflicts with the native rulers of dealing with the Sikhs and their occasionally undesirable and exorbitant demands for tribute or marriages. The relations of the British with the Hill States during the period 1815-1845 A.D. centered mainly around issues like complaints about the retention of territory; exchange or aquisition of territory; asylum to the hill chiefs; intervention on the side of the hill rulers; problems of succession and the British intervention and secret communications with the British".

(i) Complaints

After the conclusion of the Anglo-Gurkha War in 1815, the British had to deal with conflicts or complaints arising out of the hill territory retained by them after the war. This is known from the correspondence between Sir George Russell Clerk, Political Agent of Ambala and Ludhiana and the ruler of the State of Sirmur.

The British Government annexed the Kiadra valley from Sirmur to meet the expenses of the British troops stationed at Nahan. On January 5, 1820, the the Raja of Sirmur appealed to the Governor General for the restoration of Jaunsar-Bawar, Kalsi and Kiadra Dun to him. The Governor General asked George Russell Clerk to report

officially on the Raja's offer to take the Kiadra valley and also the give a history of the managements.

The proposal of the Raja was turned down after a series of correspondence and consideration between the Political Agent and the Government of India, in so far as the parganas of Jaunsar and Bawar were concerned. However, the British agreed to the cession of Kiadra Dun valley and Geogre Russell Clerk was authorised to transfer the Kiadra Dun in full and perpetual sovereignty' to the Raja of Sirmur" in September, 1833 through a sanad.

The Raja of Sirmur, Fateh Parkash also laid claim to the territories of Jubbal, Utraj, Ramgarh, Pundar, Morni, Pinjor, Humer and Ganjari. However, his claim to most of these territories was not accepted and these were allowed to be occupied by their respective chiefs.

(ii) Acquisition Or Exchange

The British Government soon modified its original policy with some territory for forming the hill station of Simla, exchanged some areas with the rulers of Keonthal and Patiala. In 1863-64, Solan was acquired as a rifle practice ground for troops stationed in the hills on a payment of Rs.500 per annum from the ruler of Bhagat.

(iii) Asylum To The Hill Chiefs

The British also came into contact with the hill rulers when the latter fled to the British territories because of the fear of the Sikhs or some other reasons. Raja Bir Singh, for instance, refused to compromise his honour and had to leave the state of Nurpur and sought refuge ultimately in British territory at Simla and Sabathu. Similarly, Charhat Singh, when expelled from his principality by Maharaja Ranjit Singh, sought asylum in the British dominions across Sutlej. The ruler of Mandi, Raja Balbir Sen, also wrote to Col. Tapp, Political Agent at Sabathu, when Ranjit Singh sent forces against him.

(iv) British Intervention

The British at times found opportunity to intervene on behalf of the hill chiefs for restoration of their jagirs or withdrawal of the external forces from a particular state. In 1833 A.D., after the death of Anirudh Chand of Kangra (who had fled to the British territory after having refused to marry off his sister to the son of Raja Dhian Singh), it was at the request of the British Government (conveyed through Col. Wade at Ludhiana) that Maharaja Ranjit Singh recalled his two sons, Ranbir Chand and Parmod Chand Katoch and granted them a jagir of Rs. 50,000 in Mahal Morian. Again, it was on the intervention of the British that the Sikh forces sent by Maharaja Ranjit Singh (under Desa Singh Majithia) were withdrawn from Bilaspur".

(v) Succession Issue

The British also, at times, intervened in the issue of succession. The British intervened in the affairs of the State of Bilaspur during the rule of Raja Kharak Chand. Their intervention covered two aspects: (1) improvement of administration, and (2) Succession issue. Similarly on the demise of Raja Ajit Singh of Kulu, Erskine, the Superintendent of Shimla Hill States, made an inquiry into the succession of the fief of

Shangri. Apart from this the principal of escheat was applied in case of 168 the states of Bhagat and Jubbal, which were, however restored to Mohinder Singh and Puran Chand respectively, on the report of Sir George Russel Clerk in 1842.

(vi) Secret Communications

Occasionally, the British also came into contact with the hills chiefs when the latter sent secret letters to them. In 1845 A.D., when the Sikh forces frightened Raja Balbir Sen of Mandi and Raja Ugar Sen of Suket, they (the Rajas) sent a confidential agent to Mr. Erskine, Superintendent of the Shimla Hill States, tendering their allegiance to the British Government. They also appealed to the British to give them protection against the Sikh invasion. As a result of their request, Mr. Erskine visited Bilaspur where the two chiefs confirmed their allegiance personally to the British on 21st February, 1846.

Himachal after the Anglo-Sikh Wars

By the middle of the eighteen twenties, the British had become the undisputed masters of India. The only parts of the country yet lying outside their jurisdiction were Sind and Punjab. From 1826 A.D. onwards, although the British policy towards Maharaja Ranjit Singh began to change outwardly, every respect continued to be shown for the treaty of Amritsar, 1809.

Henceforth, a feeling began to grow in certain sections of the British officialdom that 'Ranjit Singh had become master of the Punjab almost unheeded by the English.' Captain Murray, British Political Agent at Ludhiana till 1823 and thereafter British Political Agent at Ambala, was guided by some such motivation when he advocated that Ranjit Singh was not to be premitted to strengthen his hold south of the river Sutlej. As his hands were always tied with one problem or the other, Ranjit Singh had to deal with the British pressures under extremely tight circumstances. When the final crisis arose, he was already a weak and dying man. The situation further deteriorated under his weak successors.

After the death of Ranjit Singh (1839 A.D.), the Sikhs fought with the British at Mudki and Ferozshah in December, 1845 A.D., at Aliwal in January 1846, and at Sabraon in February, 1846 A.D. "The rulers of the hill states of Himachal, were tired of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's policy of annexation and extinction. They, therefore, sympathised with the English. They were in fact looking for an opportunity to regain their lost territories from the Sikhs, and some of them even entered into secret correspondence with the British.

In the autumn of 1845, when the Sikh forces invaded the British territory by crossing the Sutlej some of the hill chiefs joined on the side of the English and rendered valuable support to them in expelling the Sikhs from the territories or posts earlier held by them." The other rulers however, did not join the British either due to their internal problems or due to lack of will and resources.

The Treaty of Lahore (1846) and Himachal

The last battle between the Sikhs and the British was fought at the battle-field of Sabraon in February, 1846, in which the former were defeated. On March 9, 1846, a treaty of peace was signed between the English and the Khalsa Durbar by which all the

Sikh territories below the Sutlej and between the Beas and Sutlej were annexed. A huge war indemnity was imposed on the Sikhs, a part of which was paid by ceding to the British, the hill districts between the Beas and the Indus including Kashmir and Hazara.

The hill chiefs of Himachal, after the conclusion of the Anglo Sikh War, expected a generous treatment from the British which was earlier accorded to them on the conclusion of the Anglo-Gurkha War. However, this was not to be so. Soon after the conclusion of the Anglo- Sikh War, the British did not restore the ceded hill territories to their legitimate chiefs and instead retained the portion between Sutlej and Ravi as their own territory. The rest were restored to Maharaja Gulab Singh of Jammu. Thus the hill states of Kangra, Guler, Jaswan, Datarpur, Nurpur, Suket, Mandi, Kulu and Lahul and Spiti, came under the British control.

In the State of Bilaspur, Raja Jagat Chand was confirmed in the possession of the territory on the right bank of Sutlej". Raja Narain Singh of Kuthlehr was 'awarded a life grant of Rs. 10,000 in addition to the jagir of a like value, and it was afterwards confirmed to his heirs in perpetuity, subject to a nazrana of Rs. 1188.'

The period between 1846 and 1857 A.D., may thus be termed as a period of expansion of British rule in Himachal Pradesh. Under the terms of the treaties the hill states were restored to their rightful chiefs, who in turn were required to fulfil some obligations and conditions in lieu of this favour. Some of the conditions and obligations vary from the conditions laid down in the treaties signed during the period between the Anglo-Gurkha War and the Anglo-Sikh War, but some were similar in Nature.

The chief of Nalagarh, Raja Ram Singh, was granted a sanad on 29th October, 1846. Through this sanad, the British Government gave him the fort of Malaon, with its dependent villages and two guns and ammunition. He was the only cis-Sutlej chief who showed loyalty to the British by waiting on the Governor-General at Sarai Lashkari Khan, on the eve of the Anglo-Sikh War.

The British Government conferred the lands of Suket on Raja Ugar Sen, the chief of Suket state, as a token of friendship in recognition of his loyalty towards the British. The Raja was to have all the administrative powers within his boundaries. The Raja of Chamba, Raja Sri Singh, was also granted the territories of Chamba by the Government. However, in case of Chamba, a different type of problem cropped up with the transfer of territory to the Raja of Jammu.

The river Ravi divides the state of Chamba into two parts. It was to be decided whether the British were to include, the whole of the state in the transfer or only the portion to the west of Ravi. Finally, an agreement was reached by which "Gulab Singh acquired taluqa Lakhanpur in exchange for the cis-Ravi portion, and Chamba surrendered all claim to Bhadarwah, on condition that the territory to east of Ravi should be restored, thus preserving the ancient integrity of the state.

According to the new sanads which were issued by the British during the period from 1846 to 1857 to five states, three were asked to pay nazrana Raja Balbir Sen of Mandi, Raja Sri Singh of Chamba and Raja Ugar Sen of Suket were asked to pay annual tributes. However, the Rajas of Bilaspur and Nalagarh were exempted from the

payments of nazrana. It was perhaps because both these states were already under the British protection from the time of the Anglo-Gurkha War, i.e. 1815 A.D.

Disaffection Grows Among Kangra Hill Chiefs

The British policy of retaining the territories of the Kangra group of states, led to great disappointment as the hill chiefs of these territories had expected that after the conclusion of the Anglo-Sikh War, their territories would be restored to them. It is therefore, not surprising to find that during the Second Anglo-Sikh War, these states became anti-British in their attitudes and some even openly supported the cause of the Sikhs.

Thus, soon after the conclusion of the Anglo-Sikh wars, we find a shift in the British attitude towards the hill chiefs. Instead of having a casual and intermittent relationship, the British now got themselves consolidated as the paramount power. The salient features of the British overlordship included granting of sanads through which the hill chiefs were given possession over their lands but were required to fulfil certain obligations. These included payment of nazrana, military assistance and supply of begarees etc. Henceforth their rights to settle their own conflicts ceased and they were required to seek British arbitration regarding and dispute over their territories or succession issues etc.

Transfer of Power

The revolt of 1857 led to several changes in the British policy towards the Indian states. One of the important changes was the extinction of the East India Company. On 1st November, 1858, a proclamation was issued by Queen Victoria, which assured the princes that the Imperial Crown had taken over the treaties and sanads issued by the East India Coy. and it had no desire to extend its territorial possessions and that the dignities, privileges and authorities of the princes and states would be maintained and remain undiminished.

With the transfer of power from the hands of the East India Company to the British Crown in 1858, the Simla Hill States, like other states of India, came under the protection of the Crown of England. 'who stood forward as the unquestioned ruler and paramount power in all India and was, for the first time, brought face to face with the feudatories.'

The theory of the British Crown serving as the sole link between the Central Government and the Indian States was systematically developed by the British statesmen so that the whole of India gradually came to be considered under a single charge. The sovereignty of the smaller princelings like those of the Simla Hill States, 'vanished almost to the point of nothingness'.

To neutralize or at least to isolate any mass movement or national upsurge, the British Government devised a way whereby it could always keep the feudal chiefs on its side. A Chamber of Princes consisting of 120 members was created as a deliberative consultative and advisory body on February 8, 1921. The Simla Hill States were represented by the six rulers of whom five were members in their own right', while the sixth was the elected representative of Chamba, Mandi, Suket, Bilaspur and Sirmur.

After the Queen's Proclamation and the evolution of a new British policy towards the Indian States, there was a change in the de treatment accorded to the Himachal hill chiefs. Many of them were treated very liberally. Many hill chiefs were invited when the Delhi Darbar was held in 1878, and the Coronation Darbar at Delhi in December, 1911. Meanwhile, the British also contributed to the development of many Hill States. The hill chiefs continued to remain loyal towards the British during the First World War and many of them rendered valuable service to them both with men and materials. Later when the Chamber of Princes was formed in 1921, by virtue of 11 gun-salute, Chamba, Mandi, Suket and Sirmur became members of the Chamber, whereas Raja Bhagat Chand of Jubbal became an elected representative of the Simla Hill States in 1921 and again in 1933.

Meanwhile, at the national level, the struggle for political and constitutional rights and independence gained momentum. After the Second World War, when the Labour Party came to power in England, a mission of three cabinet ministers was sent to India (March, 1946) which interviewed many big and small states as well as the leaders of the Indian political parties. The Cabinet Mission recommended a federal type of government for the whole of India, including the Indian States. Accordingly an interim Government was formed under Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru on 2nd September, 1946. On 28th April, 1947, the representatives of the states joined the Constituent Assembly. Following the advice of Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel and Lord Mountbatten, all states, with a few exceptions, decided on 25th July, 1947, to accede to the Indian Union in accordance with an instrument of accession. Accordingly States as well as Simla Hill States, along with all other Indian States (except Hyderabad, Kashmir and Junagarh) acceded to the Indian Dominion by August 15, 1947.

9.5 Self Check Exercise

1. In the north Gurkha forces, under whose command were occupying the Hattu range?
2. When Himachal Pradesh Became part C state?

9.6 Conclusion

On the eve of Indian Independence, the modern area of Himachal Pradesh, was almost equally divided between British Indian territory and the territory of Indian States. The latter was again equally divided between the Punjab Hill States and Simla Hill States. After independence, Himachal became a Chief Commissioner's Province. The new centrally administered unit was named Himachal Pradesh. With the Constitution becoming operational on January 26, 1950, Himachal Pradesh became a Part 'C' State and on November 1, 1956 it became a Union Territory. Statehood was granted to Himachal Pradesh on January, 25, 1971 whereby it became the eighteenth State of the Indian Union.

9.7 Glossary

British Indian Ocean Territory

The British Indian Ocean Territory has been under continuous British sovereignty since 1814. BIOT is close to the very centre of the Indian Ocean, mid-way between Tanzania and Indonesia.

9.8 Answer to Self Check Exercise

1. The Gurkha forces, under the command of Kirti Rana, were occupying Hattu range in the north.
2. Himachal Pradesh became a Part 'C' State on 26th January 1950.

9.9 Suggested Readings

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9.10 Terminal Questions

1. Give a brief account of Gurkhas invasion on Hills States?
2. How was the condition of Himachal during the time of Gurkhas invasion?

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Lesson - 10

Himachal under the British Reorganization of the Hill States

Structure

- 10.0 Introduction
- 10.1 Objective
- 10.2 Hill States Reorganization
- 10.3 Self Check Exercise
- 10.4 Conclusion
- 10.5 Glossary
- 10.6 Answer to self Check Exercise
- 10.7 Suggested Reading
- 10.8 Terminal Question

10.0 Introduction

After Gurkha war in 1815 A.D, it was decided to secure the cooperation of the liberated hill chiefs by an offer to them with a guarantee of future independence on the condition of their taking part with the British in the event of any subsequent incursions by the Nepalese. All the hill rajas accepted this offer and it having been resolved to restore to each the territories held by him prior to the Gurkha occupation, a conference of the chiefs under Major General David Ochterlony was held at Palasi. The objective of this conference was to determine the territories held by each chief prior to the Gurkha occupation. As a result of this, the states of Sirmur, Bilaspur, Hindur, Jubbal, Baghat, Keonthal, Kotkhair, Baghal and Bashahr were restored to their rightful owners. The chiefs of these states were granted sanads, confirming them and their heirs forever in the possession of their territories. It was also considered expedient to sever the connections which subsisted prior to the Gurkha invasion between the more powerful chieftains and their dependents in all such cases where the latter could prove that their dependence consisted of not more than a general recognition of superiority. But in the cases of chiefships which had been compelled by the exigencies of their position to submit definitely to the dominion of a more powerful neighbour, the superior chief was recognised as the overlord of the inferior ones. Thus, the Thakurais of Kumharsain, Balsan, Kuthar, Tharoch, Mangal and Dhami were constituted as separate chiefships and granted independent sanads; while the Thakurais of Khaneti and Delath were conferred upon Bashahr and those of Koti, Madhan, Ghund, Theog and Ratesh upon Keonthal.

10.1 Objective

1. To understand the relationship between the British and ruler of Hills States
2. To analyse the impact of British rule on Hills State
3. To find out the policies of British territory on hills states
4. To find out the result of british reorganization of hill states

10.2 Hill States Reorganization

The dates of the sanads granted to these states are as under:

- | | | | |
|-----|-----------|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. | Bilaspur | Raja Mahan Chand | 6 th March, 1815 |
| 2. | Baghal | Raja Jagat Singh | 3 rd September, 1815 |
| 3. | Kuthar | Rana Bhup Singh | 3 rd September, 1815 |
| 4. | Baghat | Rana Mohinder Singh | 4 th September, 1815 |
| 5. | Bhajji | Rana Ruder Pal | 4 th September, 1815 |
| 6. | Dhami | Goverdhan Singh | 4 th September, 1815 |
| 7. | Mahlog | Thakur Sansar Chand | 4 th September, 1815 |
| 8. | Beja | Thakur Man Chand | 4 th September, 1815 |
| 9. | Keonthal | Rana Sansar Sen | 6 th September, 1815 |
| 10. | Sirmur | Raja Fateh Parkash | 21 st September, 1815 |
| 11. | Balsan | Thakur Jog Raj | 21 st September, 1815 |
| 12. | Nalagarh | Raja Ram Saran Singh | 20 th October, 1815 |
| 13. | Jubbal | Rana Puran Chand | 18 th November, 1815 |
| 14. | Sangri | Raja Bikramjit Singh | 16 th December, 1815 |
| 15. | Mangal | Rana Bahadur Singh | 20 th December, 1815 |
| 16. | Darkoti | Rana Surtes Ram | 1815 |
| 17. | Kunihar | Thakur Magan Deo | 1815 |
| 18. | Kumarsain | Rana Kehar Singh | 7 th February, 1816 |
| 19. | Bashahr | Raja Mohinder Singh | 8 th February, 1816 |
| 20. | Tharoch | Thakur Jhobu | 31 st January, 1819 |

Under the sanads, the hill chiefs were put under certain obligations in return for the protection. They were to allow free passage to the British merchants and their goods, they had to furnish a certain number of begar labourers and also had to construct twelve feet wide roads in their territories. The bigger states were bound to join the British army with their armed retainers and hill-porters when called upon to do so at the time of war. The chiefs were also required to promote the welfare of their people, to

improve the condition of their countries and cultivation, to redress grievances and to keep the public roads safe. By the fourth article of the sanad of 1815, the Raja of Sirmuras bound to consult to British government before appointing a dewan. In 1872 this clause was cancelled at the request of Raja Shamsheer Prakash. Some rulers were asked to abstain from encroaching upon the possessions of the others. Bashahr was the only state from which was exacted a tribute of Rs. 15,000 annually by the British government, after the restoration of the states to their respective chiefs.

The British, however, did not keep the promise made to the hill chiefs. No doubt, the legitimate rulers-Mahan Chand, Jagat Singh, Ram Saran Singh, Puran Chand, Mohinder Singh and Fateh Prakash were restored their states, but a complete restoration of the territories was not permitted. The British retained possession of some of the important portions of the country under the pretext of guaranting protection to the hill chiefs not only against the foreign enemy but also to help them in retaining their ancient principalities. As such, the British government modified its original policy so as to retain all the favourable military positions to whosoever belonging. It was also declared that all the lands belonging to those ruling families which had become extinct, or the right to possession of which was disputed among different parties, would cede to the British authority. Moreover, many of the hill chiefs were asked to pay huge sums in the shape of gold and coins to meet the expenses of the war.

At the time of confirming the ancestral possessions of Raja Ram Saran Singh of Hindur (Nalagarh), the British retained the fort of Malaun and the six villages surrounding it for use as a military post. In exchange the Raja was granted the Thakurai of Bharauli in the neighbourhood of Balsan and Kotkhai. The fort was, however, returned to the raja in 1846 A.D. by a Sanad in recognition of his fidelity during the Sikh war. Thus, Bharauli returned again into the possession of the British government who sold it for Rs. 8,500 to the rana of Balsan, whose territory it adjoined.

The territory of Keonthal was dismembered by the British after the conquest and a portion comprising nine parganas, estimated to yield a revenue of Rs. 21,000, was sold to the Raja of Patiala for one lakh and fifty thousand rupees. In consideration of this alienation the remainder of the Keonthal state was excused the payment of tribute. Punar, a pargana of Jubbal state was retained by the British and later on by a sanad, was granted to Rana Sansar Sen of Keonthal. The sanad is dated 5th April, 1823 A.D., though the transfer was authorised in 1816. In 1830, twelve villages were acquired by the British government for creating the hill station of Shimla, and in exchange Rawin Pargana was granted to the Rana of Keonthal.

During the Nepalese war, Rana Mohinder Singh of Baghat was unfriendly in his attitude towards the British. Consequently on the conclusion of the war, five parganas yielding a revenue of Rs. 14,000 were taken from him and sold to the Raja of Patiala for one lakh and thirty thousand rupees. The remaining four parganas were restored to Rana Mohinder Singh and his heirs.

Bharoli, which consisted of three parganas-Subathu, Siwah and Bharoli, was retained by the British, as the family to which it originally belonged was extinct, and its possession was claimed by Keonthal and Baghat, then in disgrace; and also because it

was considered to afford a very important military position for securing an undisturbed command of the lower hills.

Kotguru (Kotgarh), or, as it was originally termed Sandoch, and Rawin on the left bank of Pabar river, were among the first of the British territorial acquisitions in the inner hills. The retention of Kotgarh was due to the fact that it contained some good military posts, including the fort of Hattu. The tract originally belonged to the rana of Kothhai who had made it over, for management to the raja of kullu, because it was some distance away from Kotkhai-proper, and difficult to administer owing to the hostile temper of the people. the Raja of Kullu very soon ignoring the right of its proper owner, incorporated Kotgarh into his own dominion. It remained a part of Kullu state for ten years. It was then seized by Raja Ugar Singh of Bashahr, who succeeded in killing the Raja of Kullu during the struggle for its possession. The victor refused to give the Raja's body to his relatives except on the condition that all claims of Kullu on Kotgarh be withdrawn. The tract of Kotgarh, however, remained a part of Bashahr only for forty years after which the whole of the state was reduced by the Gurkhàs. After the expulsion of gorkhas, the Kullu troops crossed the Sutlej and took possession of the Kotgarh tract, occupying the strong forts of Hattu, Silajan and Baji situated therein. As Kotgarh did not originally belong to Kullu, and had been wrested from that state by Bashahr forty years before the Gurkha invasion, and as the British guarantee promised the restoration to the chiefs of such possessions only, as they had been expelled from by the Gurkhas, the Kullu Raja was held to have no right on Kotgarh. A small force was sent from Subathu to compel him to evacuate the area, which he did on its arrival in the neighbourhood. Kotgarh was then formally taken possession of by the British government, the three forts of Hattu, Silajan and Baji were garrisoned and a part of the then newly- raised Gurkha battalion permanently cantoned in the area.

Rawin had originally been a fief of Garhwal, but its eastern portion had been overrun by the Bashahris, some time previous to the Gurkha invasion. This tract, along with Rawingarh fort on the left bank of Pabar river, was retained for some years as a British possession, and then transferred to Keonthal in exchange for the land on which the hill station of Shimla was built.

When the Gurkhas were expelled from the hills in 1815 A.D., Karam Prakash was the ruling chief of Sirmur. But he was prevented from succession on the grounds of his notorious profligacy and imbecility, and the chiefship was bestowed on his eldest son, Fateh Prakash. Under a Sanad dated 21st September, 1815, the British government conferred on him and his heirs in perpetuity his ancient possessions with the following exceptions. The fort, and the pargana of Morni were given to the Mir of Kotaha to whom these originally belonged. The Kiarda Dun was restored by a sanad in 1833 A.D. on payment of nazrana of Rs. 50,000. A tract of hill country to the north of the river Giri was made over to the Rana of Keonthal, and the parganas of Jaunsar and Bawar (now in Dehra Dun district) were annexed to the British dominion.

By a sanad, the territory of Kotkhai was returned to Rana Ranjit Singh and his descendants. Rana Ranjit Singh died in 1821 A.D. and was succeeded by his son, Bhagwan Singh. From that period onwards this Thakurai presented such a scene of anarchy and confusion, owing to the vicious disposition and deficient understanding of the ruler, as well as to the tyranny and rapacity of the wazirs, that to protect the

inhabitants from further oppression, and to prevent the contagion spreading to the neighbouring states, the British government was forced in 1828 A.D. to cancel the grant, and to annex the territory to its possession. Out of the revenue, a sum of Rs. 300 was granted to the Rani and Rana Bhagwan Singh was allowed Rs. 1,300 per annum.

The British had no design to annex these hill states. The chiefs were guaranteed independence in their internal affairs as well as security against foreign aggression. Though non-intervention in the internal affairs was declared to be a basic principle of the British policy yet before long it was found that it could not be strictly maintained and had to be departed from, in practice, in several ways. This departure from the 'declared policy' was due to misrule, oppression of the people and non-fulfillment of the terms of the treaties and sanads, by the rulers.

After the war and during general restoration the territory of Jubbhal was confirmed to Rana Puran Chand and his heirs by the sanad dated 18th November, 1815. Upon his reinstatement on the Jabbal gaddi, the imbecility of Rana Puran Chand worsened and his administration fell into disarray. His mean and selfish officials enriched themselves at public expense. The Rana also failed to supply the promised quota of begar. In spite of repeated warnings from the British government, he took no pains to improve his affairs. At last the British government decided to interfere and placed the administration in the hands of Dangi wazir. Dangi was a wise administrator who made many improvements, but his career was cut short by death, with the result that the administration relapsed into disorder a second time. The condition of the state became critical, and the British government again interfered. Rana Puran Chand, in 1832 A.D., abdicated in favour of the British government, who appointed a tahsildar to administer the state. The Rana was given an annual allowance of Rs. 4,400. Shortly afterwards, he repented his action and asked to be reinstated, protesting that British administration was corrupt. After a lengthy correspondence it was resolved, in 1840 A.D., to restore the state to the Rana but he died before the order could be effected.

His heir, Karam Chand, being a minor, the state continued to be administered by the British government till 1854 A.D. when the young Rana was given his full powers. Karam Chand's reign was one of harsh suppression. He levied begar out of all reason, and thrice squeezed his subjects of their money, till his action brought him into conflict with the British government.

In Bilaspur, Kharak Chand succeeded to gaddi in 1824 A.D. After sometime his wrath fell on some of his own officials, many of whom were caused to be publicly hanged for no apparent fault. He confiscated the jagirs of the most of his collateral Mians and persecuted them from pillar to post. Such continuous tyranny and oppression resulted in open civil war in which the raja's chief opponent was Mian Jangi. The Raja now enlisted a force of nearly 300 Rohilla Pathans to put down the open rebellion and many skirmishes took place between the Mians and Rohillas. Seeing this William Murray, Political Agent, with three companies of 1st Nasiri Battalion, visited Bilaspur in 1827 A.D. to quell the disturbance there. He discharged the mercenaries. Then he reinstated Mian Miri and Sansaru in authority. Murray admonished the Raja who promised to improve his behaviour.

But the affairs of the state and the habits of the raja did not improve. On the death of his wazir Sansaru in 1832 A.D., the administration deteriorated. Therefore, George Russell Clerk, Political Agent, Ambala, also visited Bilaspur in 1832 A.D. Clerk advised Kharak Chand to have Bishan Singh, son of Sansaru, as his minister and tried to reconcile him with his kinsmen. The Raja promised to follow his advice. During the last years of his reign, Kharak Chand made peace with the Mians and returned to them their jagirs.

Kharak Chand died issueless in 1839 A.D. Information was sent to the Political Agent at Ambala, who came at once. Two of the ranis were ready to become satibut were dissuaded by George Russell Clerk who promised them a liberal maintenance. After satisfying himself that none of the widowed Ranis was enceinte, he recommended to the government in favour of Mian Jangi, who was duly installed as the next Raja and was re-named Jagat Chand in April, 1839 A.D. Raja Fateh Prakash of Sirmur was thinking of pressing the claim of his sister, one of the Raja's widows, but Clerk considered her claim inadmissible as she had no child.

Later, one of the two Sirmuri Ranis of Kharak Chand made it known that she was pregnant and a son named Garabh Chand was said to have been born to her in November of the same year. Jagat Chand, however, affirmed that the child was surreptitiously brought forth and this view was accepted by the British government. But the Rani did not accept this and with the help of her brother Raja Fateh Prakash of Sirmur, she invaded Bilaspur and succeeded in ousting Jagat Chand from his newly acquired chiefship. Jagat Chand, there upon fled to Hindur (Nalagarh) and informed the Political Agent, who came with a force and restored Jagat Chand to power. The Rani fled to Subathu. An explanation of the Raja of Sirmur was called for by the British government. He was fined Rs. 25,000 which he paid to exonerate himself.

During the eighteen-thirties the conditions in Keonthal state were also not satisfactory. The Governor General expressed a desire to have a full report on the general character of the Keonthal ruler on a complaint made against him. There were three complaints against the raja, viz. (1) appointment of Giaru wazir who was shrewd and knaveish, (ii) keeping of a woman of infamous character as his concubine, and (iii) his attempt to excite a revolt in Theog. The chief of the Keonthal state was considered ill-qualified for rulership, and he was deprived, for the time being, of the management of the territory, in expectation that a reform in his life and agreement of the territory, in expectation that a reform in his life and conduct would thereby be effected. His possessions were restored to him in 1840 A.D. under the impression that this mild and conciliatory measure would more speedily accomplish the object the British government had in view in his temporary exclusion.

Rana Mohinder Singh of Baghat died on January 11, 1839. His state was considered as escheat to the British government. He left behind a brother and his wives. They claimed the restoration of Mohinder Singh's chiefship. In November, 1842, Vijay Singh, the younger brother of Mohinder Singh and the widows of the deceased ruler petitioned to the government. Thereupon Maddock, the Secretary at Calcutta, asked George Russell Clerk, the Political Agent, to report upon the petitions. Though Colonel Tapp and after him, Mr. Erskine, the Political Agents of Shimla hill states, were in favour of a continuation of the escheatment of the state, George Russell Clerk strongly

opposed it. In the fact of a strong plea for Vijay Singh, the government accepted Clerk's recommendation. Maddock informed Clerk that Vijay Singh was to be restored to the chiefship of his late brother, and added that it should never have been withheld because Mohinder Singh had died without any nearer heir. Further, Clerk was to introduce the new Baghat chief to the Governor General at Kasauli on November, 21, 1842. Writing to Erskine on December 12, 1842, Clerk requested him to pay to the new ruler the revenue collected by the government from the date the state lapsed till the date on which it was restored. Erskine, the Political Agent, Shimla hill states, did the needful.

Rana Kehar Singh of Kumharsain died without issue to the 11th May, 1839. According to the strict letter on the grant, his territory lapsed to the paramount power. But in consideration for the previous attachment of the later Rana to the British interests, and because of the fact that there had been no succession in this family since the conquest of the hills by the British, and, with the view of preventing the appearance of too great an eagerness in the government to take advantage of escheats in these regions, the grant was ordered to be renewed in favour of Pritam Singh, a collateral heir, on the payment of a nazarana equal to one year's revenue, or on a proportionate addition to the tribute.

However, before his favourable decision was made known to the party concerned, a revolt took place which was supposed to have been instigated by Pritam Singh. Therefore, pending enquiry, as to the degree of his involvement in the revolt, and his fitness to rule, the management of the territory was undertaken by the Political Agent.

There was much to palliate the insurrection of the people of Kumharsain. An unpopular individual was set over them as collector of revenue by the Political Agent. Besides rumoured fraudulent conduct in the management of the finances, positive hatred was engendered against him owing to his supposed improper connection with the ladies of the Rana's family. This led to the collector's incarceration and the subsequent tumult. It was considered to have proceeded from these causes which in a great measure palliated what at first appeared as an outrage against the paramount power.

By a sanad, dated June 23, 1840, the territory was restored to Pritam Singh, with hereditary succession to the heirs, male or female, lineally descended, implied by the words Nyslun bad Nyslun, Buttanun bad Butanun, which were inserted in the renewed sanad. The chief agreed to the British government terms to prevent sati within his state, and to abolish infanticide, which was believed to be frequent in the Kumharain state.

In 1838-39 A.D. an insurrection broke out in Tharoch, the cause of which was that on the death of Thakur Karam Singh in 1819 A.D., the chiefship was conferred on Jhobu and his heirs by a sanad of the same year. The title of Jhobu had not been questioned till 1838 A.D., when Ranjit Singh, his nephew, set up his claim, and formed a strong party in his own favour. A lengthy correspondence ensued. Jhobu was compelled to abdicate in favour of Shyam Singh, his son. But the arrangement did not last long owing to the incompetence of Shyam Singh, and the intrigues set on foot by both Jhobu and Ranjit Singh. In 1841 A.D. it was found necessary to depose Shyam Singh, after which the state was incorporated with Jubbal. Tharoch continued to be under British

management until April 1843 A.D., when Ranjit Singh's claims were finally acknowledged and a sanad dated June 27, 1843 was granted to him conferring the rulership on him and his heirs to perpetuity subject to the usual conditions of military service.

Fateh Prakash was installed, on 28th September, 1815, on the gaddi of Sirmur. He was six years old at that time. During his minority the administration was carried out by his mother Guleri Rani under the supervision of Captain G. Birch, Assistant Agent to the Governor General at Nahan. The latter came to Nahan in July, 1815. It was not long before Captain Birch was forced to interfere actively in the internal administration of the state. On July 30, 1815, he wrote to David Ochterlony suggesting the dismissal of certain officials of Sirmur who, by their character, were unfit for any position of trust. Birch formed a council to help the Rani in administration and removed and expelled Kishan Singh, the diwan, from the state. As no other person could be considered fit for the post of diwan with the consent of the Rani, he appointed his own Munshito the post.

This had visibly good effect, as the Rani with the help of the new officials, introduced several reforms in the police and other branches of administration. Serais were constructed, stealing and gambling were checked and several other improvements made. The revenue of the state increased. Captain Birch himself prepared a scale of state expenditure for public establishments. He also reformed the form of customs and duties. He rejected the tenders offered for the farm of Nahan, not because the highest offer was too low, but principally because a radical change was required in the system which could only be effected by retaining the collection in the hands of British officials. Grain and cattle were exempted from taxation and steps were taken to promulgate the abolition of tax on the capture of elephants. Och-terlony also stopped levy of the phant biahleri or benefice, the levy to meet the expenses of marrying the raja's children.

In 1827 A.D., Raja Fateh Prakash attained majority and the government of India granted him full administrative and revenue powers. The same year he was present in the Durbar held by Lord Amherst, the Governor General, at Shimla. In view of the vastness of the state, he was accorded the precedence to begin the first seat amongst the chiefs of Shimla hills, the fact being notified to the raja by John Erskine, Superintendent, Shimla states, by a letter dated 20th May, 1827.

The Kiarda valley of Sirmur state was annexed by the British government to meet the expenses of the British troops stationed at Nahan. Captain G. Birch suggested to the government that grants of land be made in the Kiarda valley to Gurkha soldiers in lieu of their pensions, but the proposal was declined for the time being. The valley had very fertile soil, but due to its neglect by the rulers it remained mostly uncultivated. Birch, therefore, began to seek the best means of bringing it under cultivation and of improving the status of farmers. He offered taqawi advances to prospective farmers, who would come forward to cultivate in the valley. The scheme proved very successful.

On 5th January, 1820, the Raja of Sirmur represented to the Governor General for the restoration of Jaunsar-Bawar, Kalsi and Kiarda Dun to him. He was prepared to pay a nazarana of Rs. 1,75,000 for Jaunsar-Bawar and Rs. 50,000 for Kiarda Dun. The Governor General asked George Russell Clerk to report officially on the Raja's desire to take back the Kiarda valley and also to give a history of the management. After a series

of correspondence and consideration between the Political Agent and the government of India, the government turned down the proposal of the Raja of Sirmur as far as the parganas of Jaunsar and Bawar were concerned, but agreed to the cession of Kiarda Dun valley only. George Russell Clerk was authorised to transfer the Kiarda Dun "in full and perpetual sovereignty" to the Raja of Sirmur upon a payment of Rs. 50,000 by the chief in the Ambala treasury. So Kiarda Dun passed to Raja Fateh Prakash by a sanad issued by the Governor General on 5th September, 1833, subject to the following conditions:-

- (1) Rights of the people to be respected, and justice impartially administered.
- (2) No transit duties or customs to be levied.
- (3) Roads to be made, and the existing ones to be kept in repair.
- (4) Protection to travellers and merchants by efficient policing.

The other occasion on which the British came into contact with the rulers of hill states lying between the Sutlej and the Ravi was when the latter fled into the British territory because of the Sikhs' threats or some other reasons. There are examples of rulers like Raja Bir Singh of Nurpur and Raja Anirudh Chand of Kangra who refused to compromise their honour and had to leave their states and ultimately sought refuge in the British territory.

In the autumn of 1815 A.D., a great assembly of the Sikh army was held at Sialkot, to which all the sardars and hill chiefs were summoned. The Rajas of Nurpur and Jawan failed to attend, and a fine, which was beyond their ability to pay, was deliberately imposed on them. Jaswan surrendered his state. Bir Singh of Nurpur went to Lahore to reconcile with the Sikhs but Maharaja Ranjit Singh was not in a mood to accommodate. Consequently a Sikh force was sent to Nurpur to attack the state. The Raja fled to Chamba and raised an army there to recover his state but was defeated. He then fled in disguise by mountain paths into the British territory to the east of Sutlej. In the later part of 1816 A.D., he was at Ludhiana, plotting against Ranjit Singh. On a complaint from him, the government asked him to go elsewhere. He then settled in Arki, the capital of Baghal state in Shimla hills (but according to G.T. Vigne, at Subathu and Shimla) and there he lived for ten years. He returned to Nurpur in 1826 A.D. to resume his activities against the Sikhs.

In 1827 A.D. Raja Anirudh Chand of Kangra visited Lahore. Ranjit Singh demanded from Anirudh Chand the hand of one of his sisters in marriage for Raja Hira Singh, son of Raja Dhian Singh, the minister. He regarded the proposed alliance as an insult to his family honour. He returned to Kangra and from fear of the wrath of Ranjit Singh, he secretly sent away his movable and valuable belongings across the Sutlej, preparatory to flight. When a year was over, Ranjit Singh at the instigation of his minister, started for Nadaun to hasten with the marriage, if necessary by force. On hearing this, the Raja sent his family across the Sutlej, and when the Maharaja reached Adinanagar, he himself fled into the British territory. He came to Arki and then proceeded to Hardwar and married his two sisters to the Raja of Garhwal. He died in 1831 A.D. His two sons, Ranbir Chand and Parmodh Chand returned to their native

state in 1833 A.D. on receiving a jagir through the intervention of the British Agent at Ludhiana.

On the demise of Raja Ajit Singh of Kullu in 1841 A.D., Mr Erskine, the Superintendent of the Shimla hill states, made an inquiry about the succession of the chief of Sangri and reported in favour of Ranbir Singh. The Sikhs and Ajit Singh's Ranis also admitted the claim. Raja Balbir Sen of Mandi and Raja Ugar Sen of Suket, frightened by the forces dispatched against them by Maharaja Ranjit Singh, 'sent a confidential agent, in 1845 A.D., to Mr. Erskine, superintendent of the Shimla hill states, tendering their allegiance to the British Government and requesting protection against the Sikh invasion. This was granted, and the two chiefs on 21st February, 1846, visited Mr. Erskine at Bilaspur and confirmed their allegiance in person.

After the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Sikh Kingdom fell into great disorder. The Sikh government plunged into war (1845-46 A.D.) with the British and soon reaped the harvest of its imprudence. Battles were fought at Mudki and Ferozpur in December, 1845, A.D., at Aliwal in January, 1846 A.D., and at Sabraon on February 10, 1846. The hill chiefs were tired of Ranjit Singh's policy of annexation and extinction. They, therefore, sympathised with the British.

In fact, some of them were looking for an opportunity to regain their lost territories from the Sikhs, and some were already in secret communication with the British. In the wake of Anglo-Sikh wars, while on the one hand they expelled the Sikhs from their territories or divested them of the posts they held, on the other, they lent valuable support to the British in their campaign against the Sikhs. Shamsheer Singh of Guler raised a force from among his retainers and turned Sikhs out of Haripur fort. Bir Singh of Nurpur laid a siege to the fort of Nurpur. But he was not fortunate enough to witness the success of his aims. He died before the walls of the fort. The only consolation granted him was that his enemies had been avenged. Raja Narain Pal of Kuthlehr also expelled the Sikhs garrisons in the state and captured all the forts except Kamlagarh, which the Sikhs did not surrender till the war was over. During the war, he along with the Raja of Suket, sent a confidential agent named Pandit Sibu to Erskine to tender their allegiance on 21st February, 1846. The rulers of other hill states did not seem to have rendered much active service to the British because, either they remained busy with their internal problems or their rulers were minor in certain cases or the states being only nominal, lacked the will and resources.

The Sikhs were defeated in the battle of Sabraon on 10th February, 1846. The Punjab hill chiefs were also expecting similar generous treatment from the British which was accorded to the chiefs of Shimla hill states on the conclusion of the Anglo-Gurkha war in 1815 A.D. But the British decided otherwise. On the 9th March, 1846, the Treaty of Lahore was signed between the British government and the Sikhs. By this treaty the Sikhs ceded to the British all territories to the south of the Sutlej, together with the extensive Jalandhar-Doab, lying between the Sutlej and the Beas. A heavy war indemnity, amounting to one and a half crore of rupees, was paid by the Lahore Durbar, fifty lakh rupees in cash and the balance by ceding to the British the hill districts between the Beas and the Indus including Kashmir and Hazara. Instead of restoring the ceded territory to the hill chiefs, the British retained the portion between the Sutlej and the Ravi as British territory, and disposed of the rest to Maharaja Gulab Singh of Jammu

with the result that the hill states of Kangra, Guler, Jaswan, Datarpur, Nurpur, Suket, Mandi, Kullu and Lahaul & Spiti (though Lahaul & Spiti fell under the territory sold to Maharaja Gulab Singh of Jammu, but was exchanged for another territory) came under the direct control of the British.

As the chiefs of Mandi and Suket had tendered their allegiance, to the British government at Bilaspur on 21st February, 1846 and as their territories had ceded to the British government by the treaty, these chiefs were granted separate sanads on 24th October, 1846. These instruments granted to the two chiefs their respective possessions with full administrative powers in perpetuity. The chiefs were required to pay fixed tributes to the government in half-yearly instalments. They were further required to prohibit transit duties, to construct roads not less than twelve feet wide in their respective states and to keep them in proper conditions, to join the British army with their troops and hill-porters on the breaking out of a disturbance, to refrain from alienating or mortgaging any portion of their territories without the knowledge and consent of the British government, to refer disputes with other chiefs to arbitration in the British courts, to stop the practice of slate-dealing, sati, female infanticide and the burning or drowning of lepers, to abstain from encroaching on the territories of the other chiefs, and to adopt measures for the welfare of the people. The government reserved the right to remove an incapable ruler from the gaddi and to appoint such other nearest relation of the Raja to succeed him as may be capable of the administration of the state and be entitled to succeed. The Raja of Mandi was also required to demolish the forts of Kamlahgarh and Anandpur and to abide by the rules to be laid down by the government for the levy of duties on iron and salt mines situated within his state.

A sanad, similar to the one given to the Raja of Suket, was granted to the Raja of Bilaspur on 21st October, 1847, confirming him in his possession on the right bank of the Sutlej, which the state held since 1809 A.D. on the terms of allegiance and tribute to the Sikhs. The British government waived off its claim to the tribute, but required the Raja to abolish transit duties in his country.

10.3 Self Check Exercise

1. When the Gurkhas were expelled from the hills in 1815 A.D., who was the ruling chief of Sirmur?
2. When the Sikhs were defeated in the battle of Sabraon?

10.4 Conclusion

On 16th March, 1846, a separate treaty was concluded at Amritsar by the British government with Maharaja Gulab Singh. This treaty put him in possession of the entire hill country and the British dependencies between the Ravi and the Indus, including Kashmir, Ladakh, Gilgit and Chamba but excluding Lahaul. In return, the Maharaja was to pay Rs. 75,00,000. In the same year, a question arose as to whether under the Treaty of Amritsar, it was intended to make over the whole of Chamba state, trans and cis Ravi to Kashmir? The Raja of Chamba had been a tributary to the Sikh government and objected to be in that position under Gulab Singh. These difficulties were settled by an arrangement made by Colonel Lawrence, between the Kashmir and Chamba states and the British government. By this arrangement Kashmir, retained Badrawah and

acquired Lakhanpur and Chandgraon, while Chamba, on both sides of the Ravi, became independent of Kashmir and transferred its allegiance to the British government. A sanad confirming the Raja of Chamba in his possessions, was granted to him on 6th April, 1848, on the usual conditions of annual tribute of rupees twelve thousand to be offered by the state.

10.5 Glossary

Sanad: an Indian government charter, warrant, diploma, patent or deed: A letter having the force of an edict or ordinance in India.

10.6 Answer to the Self Check Exercise

1. When the Gurkhas were expelled from the hills in 1815 A.D., Karam Prakash was the ruling chief of Sirmur.
2. The Sikhs were defeated in the battle of Sabraon on 10th February, 1846.

10.7 Suggested Reading

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10.8 Terminal Question

1. What do you understand by the British Reorganization of the Hill States?

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Lesson - 11

Himachal under the British Reorganization of the Hill States after first Anglo Sikh War

Structure

- 11.0 Introduction
- 11.1 Objective
- 11.2 Relationship between British and hill states
- 11.3 Self Check Exercise
- 11.4 Conclusion
- 11.5 Glossary
- 11.6 Answer to Self Check Exercise
- 11.7 Suggested Readings
- 11.8 Terminal Question

11.0 Introduction

After the first Anglo-Sikh war, when the British retained the territories of the Kangra group of states, the Kangra hill chiefs had become greatly disappointed. They were expecting that like Shimla hill states, their territories would be returned to them. Therefore, they all became disappointed. During the second Anglo Sikh war, they, instead of rendering support to the British, lent awilling ear to the Sikh leaders of revolting against the British, and who, in case of success against the British, promised the restoration of their possessions. First, the wazi of Nurpur, Ram Singh, and then Parmodh Chand of Kangra along with Rajas of Jaswan and Datarpur, broke out in revolt. A force was sent against them under Mr. Lawrence the Commissioner, which swept through the country and soon suppressed all opposition. The rebellious chiefs were captured and banished to Almora and detained there as political prisoners. Parmodh Chand died there in 1851 A.D. However, Ram Singh, the wazir of Nurpur, proved to be a difficult person to deal with. He created a lot of trouble and it was only after great difficulty that he was brought to book. He was banished to Singapore where he died. His name is however, still remembered in the hills, and his exploits are sung by the hill bards.

11.1 Objective

1. To understand the relationship between the British and ruler of Hills States
2. To analyse the impact of British rule on Hills State
3. To find out the policies of British territory on hills states

11.2 Relationship between British and hill states

It is obvious from the above account that the relationship between the British and the rulers of the hill states entered a new phase with the success of the British in the Anglo-Sikh wars. Instead of the Sikh it was now the British who became the paramount power. Their contacts with the hill chiefs were now no longer casual and intermittent. Constant supervision was carried out over them through political agents and commissioners. Disputes and conflicts arising out of succession or maladministration were now referred to and settled by the British over-lords and chapters.

In 1857 A.D. a great upheaval took place in the country. It has been called 'Sepoy Mutiny' by the English historians. But the Indian scholars proclaim it 'The First War of Independence'. It originated from the political, social, economic, religious and military grievances that had been accumulating for quite some time, and needed only a spark to take an explosive turn. This was provided by the mishandling of the 'greased-cartridge' affair. The trouble began first at Barrackpur where the discontentment of the sepoys was marked by the out-break of incendiary fires. They openly revolted. This disaffection spread to the north as well and incendiary fires also broke out at Ambala.

It was on 12th May, 1857 that Sir Henry Barnard's son, who was acting as A.D.C. to his father, galloped into Shimla from Ambala bringing the news of the Mutiny to General Anson, the Commander-in-chief. The news of the Meerut and Delhi massacres reached Shimla on the night of the 13th May. At that time the 1st and 2nd Fusiliers and the Gurkha regiment known as the Nasiri Battalion, were stationed in the hill cantonments along with the Commander-in-Chief and his staff. The entire staff was instantly ordered to march to Ambala, preparatory to moving on to Delhi. But the Gurkhas refused to move. There was a regiment of the guards at Kasauli the headquarters were at Jutogh. The Kasauli guards, numbering about 80 men, revolted and marched off with a large sum of government money to join their friends-in-arms at Jutogh, where a bad feeling had already been evinced. After some time, a rumour came that the Gurkhas regiment stationed at Jutogh had mutinied, and that some of the Gurkhas were coming to loot Shimla. Accordingly, William Hay, the Deputy Commissioner, sent a message to the mutineers at the cantonment through Main Ratthan Singh, uncle of the Raja of Mandi, who was at that time with him, to the effect that he was close at hand and ready and willing to hear what they had to say, and as far as lay in his power to redress their grievances. His mission did not succeed.

The European inhabitants of Shimla were seized with a panic. Many English women and children became nervous, and some of the English army officers also failed to show the courage expected of them. Thus, there was quite an orderly exodus from Shimla town to the neighbouring hill states. Some took refuge at Junga, the residence of the Rana of Keonthal, others stayed with the Thakurs of Koti and Balsan states, while the rest sought safety in the hill cantonments of Dagshai, Subathu and Kasauli. They received much kindness from the hill chiefs. Shimla was deserted, its residents and visitors were wandering in the neighbouring hills for safety, betraying a feeling of insecurity and panic, altogether new to the hill people and most destructive and panic, altogether new to the hill people and most destructive to the British prestige.

Hill chiefs remained loyal to the British. Fifty well-armed soldiers from Bilaspur were stationed, at first near, and subsequently in the Boileauganj Bazar, Sixty Sirmuri soldiers under the command of Kanwar Bir Singh, the uncle of the Raja of Sirmur, were posted in Bara Bazar. and sixty men furnished by the Ranas of Keonthal, Dharni and Bhaji were stationed in the immediate neighbourhood of the Deputy V Ranas of Keonthal, Dharni, Koti and Jubbal with about 250 follow Commissioner's house. Besides, Main Jai Singh of Baghal, the ers were in Shimla to render their services at a moment's notice. In a few-weeks time order was restored, people returned to their houses, surprised to find their houses and property intact, for not withstanding the dire confusion, it was astonishing that no robberies took place, scarcely even a petty theft, though in that chaos the opportunities for the laws of *meum et tuum* were so numerous, houses having been left open and unprotected.

Taking advantage of the worsening law and order situation at Shimla, there had been some disturbances in Nalagarh state, which, it was apprehended, might, extend to the Ropar tehsil. Fearing, lest the arms should fall into the hands of the Gurkhas and disaffected persons, the people of Malaun seized them and refused to allow the party in charge of the armoury to proceed. The Deputy Commissioner of Shimla, Lord William Hay, at once deputed Mian Jai Singh, brother of the Rana of Baghal to the disturbed locality. He was able to restore order in the area with his native wisdom.

About this time one Ram Parshad, a bairagi of Subathu, was suddenly arrested on a charge of being the writer of certain seditious letters. He was conveyed to Ambala and executed. On the 10th of June news reached Shimla that the Jalandhar troops had mutinied, and on the 11th, that a portion of them were crossing the Sutlej at Makowal and heading towards Pinjaur. Captain D. Briggs, Superintendent Hill Roads, at once started for Nalagarh with the intention of preventing the mutineers entering the hills. Within 24 hours the Rana of Baghal furnished 150 matchlockmen, the Raja of Bilaspur 250, and the state of Nalagarh which had lapsed to the British government, had furnished a few months earlier 100 men. Before Capt. Briggs reached Pinjaur, the mutineers had passed through Nalagarh. They took 200 rupees from the tehsildar, and would have probably pillaged the palace but for the adroitness of some of the relatives of the late Raja.

In Kangra the 4th Native Infantry stationed in the forts of Kangra and Nurpur was disbanded. These were entirely precautionary measures. Throughout the Kangra hills the mass of population exhibited a friendly feeling towards the Europeans and a spirit of loyalty towards the British government. In the Nurpur region the hill people signalled themselves by capturing the fugitive mutineers of the Sialkot Brigade. It appears strange in the background of the fact that in 1848-49 Nurpur was the principal scene of Ram Singh's rebellion. The Raja of Chamba afforded protection to the English ladies and children in the sanitarium at Dalhousie. He also captured thirty of the Sialkot mutineers and made them over to the local authorities of Kangra. Raja Ram Singh of Siba and Raja Jodhbir Chand of Nadaun went in person to meet the Commissioner, Trans-Sutlej States, and to tender offers of assistance as soon as the mutiny started.

At the request of the Commissioner, Trans-Sutlej States wazir Gashaon of Mandi supplied 125 matchlock men to the local authorities of Hoshiarpur and sent some 50 men to escort him to Jalandhar. The wazir, in compliance with the expressed wishes of

the Chief Commissioner, had made arrangements for furnishing a large number of men, if any need had arisen for their services.

Early in June an attempt was made in Kullu to excite the people to rise in rebellion against the British. This movement was organised by one Partap Singh, who pretended to be the rightful Raja of the principality of Kullu. He gave out that all the Europeans in Punjab and Hindustan had been massacred, and, appealing to the religious feelings of the people, he called upon them to revolt in his favour. This rising was promptly detected and suppressed. Partap Singh and his accomplices were captured and tried by a commission of three, the Deputy Commissioner of Kangra, and his two assistants. Partap Singh and his principal adviser, Bir Singh were condemned to death and executed. The others were punished with various terms of imprisonment. A large dump of gun powder and arms found in his fort, most of which seemed to have been long buried there, was destroyed.

Though Raja Shamsher Singh of Bashahr acted in a way hostile to the British, yet it cannot be ascertained with the material at our disposal as to how far his sympathies were with the rebels or how much he was inclined to be independent. Surely, he kept back his tribute, offered no aid, treated officials travelling through his territory with discourtesy, and refused ordinary supplies. Lord William Hay, the Deputy Commissioner of Shimla (also the agent for the Hill States) proposed to send a force to Rampur to coerce him but there were no troops available. Consequently nothing was done until after the great revolt, when Lord William Hay recommended that the Raja be deposed and the state taken under the direct management of the Superintendent, Shimla hill states. This was, however, not deemed advisable by Sir John Lawrence, the then Chief Commissioner of the Punjab and the Raja's behaviour during the great revolt was overlooked. In short, most of the hill chiefs remained loyal and helped the cause of the Imperial power. The sepoys stationed in the hill cantonments could not succeed in establishing their own authority, like their counterparts in Awdh and Rohilkhand. The recognition of their services during their revolt the hill chiefs were suitably rewarded by the British government. Raja Hira Chand of Bilaspur was honoured with a salute of 11 guns and a valuable, khilat and other gifts. Rana Sansar Chand of Keonthal and Rana Kishan Singh of Baghal were rewarded with the title of Raja and valuable khilats. Thakur Jograj of Balsan was created a Rana, and presented a valuable khilat in public durbar. Raja Goverdhan Singh of Dhami was rewarded by the remission of half the tribute of his lifetime.

The revolt of 1857 A.D. brought about important structural changes in the administration and the policy of the British government in India. The most important result was the extinction of the East India Company. India was brought under the direct rule of the British Crown. On 1st November, 1858, a proclamation was issued by Queen Victoria which assured the princes that the Crown had taken over the treaties and sanads issued by the East India Company and had no desire to extend its territorial possession and that the dignities, privileges and authorities of the princes and states would be maintained undiminished. As a result of this, the failure of the policy of annexation in case of revolt, misrule was abandoned. Lord Canning, the first Viceroy, laid down two great principles which the British government followed during the ensuing period in their dealings with the states. The first was that their integrity should be

preserved by perpetuating the rule of the princes, the second, that their power to adopt heirs in accordance with their religious laws and customs was recognised by the sanads granted in 1862 A.D.

After the Queen's proclamation and the evolvement of a new policy towards the Indian states, there appeared a more benevolent change in the treatment meted out to the rulers of the Shimla and Punjab Hill States. The rebellious attitude of Raja Shamsher Singh of Bashahr was overlooked. Raja Ran Singh, son of Raja Jai Singh of Jaswan was permitted to return from Almorah and was restored in 1877 A.D., the jagir held by Raja Ummed Singh. Mian Devi Singh, son at Raja Jagat Chand of Datarpur, was allowed to return, but his jagir was not restored. The pension of the Raja of Nurpur was doubled in 1861 A.D. The Imperial prerogative was exercised in many ways after the revolt by the bestowal of honours, salutes and grants of territorial possessions. When the Delhi Durbar was held in 1877 A.D., some of the hill chiefs like Raja Hira Chand of Bilaspur, Raja Shyam Singh of Chamba, and Raja Bijai Sen of Mandi, were also invited to grace the occasion. The hill chiefs were also invited to attend the Coronation Durbar of Delhi, in December 1911. The prominent among those who attended the Imperial Durbar were Raja Amar Parkash of Sirmur, Raja Amar Chand of Bilaspur, Raja Bijai Sen of Keonthal, Raja Bhim Sen of Suket, Raja Bhuri Singh of Chamba, Rana Bhagat Chand of Jubbal, and Rana Dilip Singh of Baghat.

After 1858 A.D. the intervention into the affairs of the states became frequent. for various reasons, viz., to settle disputed succession, to suppress inhuman practices, mal administration, etc. Therefore, the Political Department started exercising greater control and supervision. The succession as settled and confirmed by them, reduced the chances of conflicts and consequent troubles. Had the succession not been settled by the British, there would have been the possibility of trouble in Chamba in 1870 A.D. when Gopal Singh ascended the throne. Mian Suchet Singh, the rival claimant, continued to press his claim for many years, both in India and England but always with the same results. Similarly the question of regency in the case of minor successors would have created great difficulties in the successful functioning of the administration in the hill states, had the British, through their Political Agents, not exercised their own judgment in the selection of wazirs, regents etc. The appointment of superintendents further minimised the possibility of trouble. The principle of deposing the ruler in case of mismanagement or oppressive rule was applied in the hills only in the cases of Suket and Bhajji. Raja Ruder Sen of Suket succeeded his father in 1876 A.D. but was deposed in 1879 A.D. when his rule had become quite oppressive and had created great disaffection. During Dusht Nikandan Sen's rule, the Suket state gave trouble and the government was compelled to interfere in state affairs. It was decided in 1902 A.D., on account of the Raja's attitude and the not-altogether-satisfactory state of affairs, that a close supervision be exercised over the administration of the state, and the Assistant Commissioner to Kullu was attached as Political Assistant to the Commissioner of Jalandhar to look after the affairs of Suket, Rana Bir Pal Singh of Bhajji was also deposed in September 1940 for similar reasons. According to Birpal Singh, it was because he had begun to take a lively interest in the national movement led by Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress, that the Political Department of the Government of India decided to get rid of him, and encouraged internal plots and intrigues, which eventually led to his undoing. According to his critics, however (and there were quite a

few in the state), he became neglectful of his duties as a ruler, was often in an inebriated condition, and was guilty of some acts towards his subjects that did not speak well of a balanced mind. But it goes to the Rana's credit that he was ever ready to face enquiries into the allegations made against him.

The rule of Raja Karam Chand of Jubbal was harsh. Therefore, the British government restricted his powers during 1859-1862 A.D. In Chamba, the misconduct of Raja Gopal Singh brought upon him the census of the government in 1873 A.D., and consequent upon that situation, he abdicated making over the state of his son Shyam Singh, then only eight year old. The rule of Raja Shamsher Singh of Bashahr was not satisfactory in any respect and in 1886 A.D., his son Taka Raghunath Singh, having attained majority, was given the administrative charge of the state. But Taka died in 1896 A.D. After his death the Raja attempted to resume his powers, but the government interfered, and Rai Sahib Mangat Ram, a state official, was appointed as the manager of the state. He held this office upon 1914 A.D., when Raja Padam Singh succeeded to the gaddi. In Keonthal, during the reign of Raja Balbir Sen, there were internal disorders and therefore, in 1899 A.D., it became necessary for the government to appoint a manager to carry out regular settlement. In Baghal state the British government interfered twice, once in 1875 A.D. when Raja Kishan Singh died and there was a dispute for succession. The government settled the case in favour of Dhian Singh, son of Main Jai Singh. Again, there were some complaints of oppressive assessment of land-revenue and of insufficient grazing lands. Matters eventually became so serious that in 1902 A.D., the Superintendent, Hill States, had to intervene. In the year 1905 A.D., trouble again broke out. The Superintendent was obliged to interfere once again. Raja Bijai Chand of Bilaspur also caused some trouble. The disturbing affairs reached a climax in 1901-02 and the Raja was called upon to appoint a wazir approved by the government and to submit to certain conditions which his conduct had rendered it necessary to impose on him in the interest of the administration of the state. These conditions were not accepted by the Raja who refused to return to the state from Banaras, where he had been staying for sometime past, and the administration of the state was placed in the hands of a manager appointed by the government. In 1908 A.D., however, the Raja consented to the conditions laid down by the government, and was permitted to return from Banaras. His powers were then restored to him. Similarly, Hira Singh of Kumharsain was of weak intellect and therefore, the government appointed a manager in 1914 A.D. to administer the state.

Under the British Crown, some of the hill states, such as Chamba, Mandi, Bilaspur, Bashahr, Jubbal, Sirmur, etc., made remarkable progress in various fields. It was, in fact, the result of the efforts made by officers or superintendents, appointed by the British government either on the request of the ruler or otherwise. Sri Singh of Chamba when he came of age and took the reins of government in his hands, found that the administration had become much disorganised during his minority rule, and it would not be possible for him alone to restore order. Therefore, in 1862 A.D. he asked the Punjab government for the services of a British officer. Major Blair Reid was appointed superintendent. In a short time, he effected important and far-reaching reforms. All the useless servants and hangers-on around the court were dismissed; the troops, chiefly Purbiahs and Pathans, whose allowances were in arrears, were paid up and discharged; debts of long standing were liquidated, and thus the state finances

placed on a sound footing. He paid great attention to the road and building works, postal service, medical service, education and revenue. The departments of police, judiciary, forests, etc., were organised. Mr. Blair Reid was succeeded by Mr. R.T. Burney, who did much to further improve the state. On 7th October, 1879, Mr. Burney was succeeded by Captain C.H.T., Marshall, who retained charge till November, 1885. Hop-cultivation was introduced in 1880 A.D. under European supervision, and the industry prospered and proved remunerative, both to the cultivator and to the state.

Mandi also made some progress under the guidance of British officers and superintendents. To improve upon the existing means of communication in the state, Bijai Sen, under the supervision of E.W. Purkis, an engineer, got constructed a new road from Mandi to Kullu by Dulchi pass, with a suspension bridge over the Uhl river, a tributary of Beas, at a cost of Rs. 40,000. A cart-road from Baijnath to Mandi, and a road from Mandi to Sikandra was also constructed. On the death of wazir Uttam Singh in 1888 A.D. when the Raja asked for the services of a British officer, J.J. Mayenard was appointed. He effected many improvements in the administration. He drew out instructions for the guidance of the courts. The civil and criminal suits were defined and classified. Rules for the hearing of appeals and revisions were modified and the period of limitation fixed. He also drew up a note regarding begar or labour, and framed rules regulating and defining the rights of agriculturists in forests. During the minority of Raja Bhawani Sen (1903), Mr. Millar, I.C.S., was appointed superintendent of the state. When on October 7, 1905, the Raja was invested with administrative power by Mr. H.A. Anderson, I.C.S., Mr. Millar then left the state. Similarly, Mr. Gordon Walker was appointed superintendent of the state in 1913 A.D. when Raja Joginder Sen was a minor. British officers like Collin Garbet and H.W. Emerson introduced land settlement of the state. In Suket state also when Raja Dusht Nikandan Sen (1879 A.D.) was minor, Mr. Donald was appointed to the office of wazir in 1884 which office he held till 1891. In the same year Mr. C.J. Hallifax, I.C.S. was appointed councillor and remained in charge till May, 1893. They carried out many improvements in the state.

Bilaspur also made many-sided progress. In 1886 A.D., the old administrative sub-divisions of the state were re-organised, and the old names were discarded in favour of tehsils and thanas as in British territory. In 1887 A.D., Hindi and English schools were opened, and the forest department was organised while in 1888 A.D. a suspension bridge was built across the Sutlej some way above Bilaspur, Raja Bijai Chand (1888-1903 A.D.) tried to administer his state on the British model. But, as he received no assistance from his officials in carrying out his plans, he became disgusted and made over the administration to Lala Hari Chand, who was appointed wazir. He himself proceeded to Banaras. It was Mian Amar Chand and many experienced officers, whose services were secured from the government, and they carried out many reforms. In a few years all debts were cleared, criminal, civil and revenue courts were established, a school and a hospital were built, a police force was organised and British system of administration introduced in every department of the state.

During the period under review the Sirmur state made commendable progress. Raja Shamsher Prakash's policy was to Anglicise the administration of the state. He established regular police, judicial and revenue courts, a district board and a public works department, and gave Nahan a municipality, Dispensaries, schools and post

offices were opened and an attempt was made to develop the iron mine at Chehta. But that proved unremunerative. He also established a foundry at Nahan in 1867 A.D. For this enterprise he obtained an engineer from England. The land revenue of the state was also settled and proprietary rights conferred on the farmers. The forests were protected and became a source of revenue.

Raja Shamsher Prakash organised state forces. He appointed Mr. Watt to train and drill them properly. On his request to the British government, a retired Colonel of British Indian Army was appointed as commanding officer in 1872 A.D. During the second Afghan war, he, in early 1879 A.D., had offered his personal services on the staff of General Robert, but the offer was politely declined by the Government of India. In the following year, however, the Rajain common with other Punjab chiefs, sought permission to send a contingent to Afghanistan where two hundred men, under Colonel R.C. Whiting, the commanding officer of the Sirmur state forces served with distinction in the campaign. In 1888 the Raja raised a body of Imperial Service Troops, consisting of five infantry troops with thirty sappers along with two companies of pioneers. These were subsequently formed into Imperial Service Sappers and Miners and served with distinction in the Tirah campaign of 1897-98 A.D. under the command of Major Bir Bikram Singh. In 1899 A.D. the state entered into an agreement for the control and discipline of its Imperial Service Troops when serving beyond its frontiers, and in 1900 joined the other Punjab states supplying Imperial Service Troops in an agreement for the mutual surrender of deserters, other than officers, escaping from one state to another.

British officers also contributed to the development of other hill states in certain cases the chiefs such as Maharaja Jai Chand of Kangra, Raja Bhim Sen of Suket, Raja Joginder Sen of Mandi were educated and trained by the Britishers themselves, and naturally, they proved to be better rulers. During the minority rule of the various rulers of different states, the work of administration was looked after by British officers. Thus, they got an opportunity to introduce their own innovations, which resulted in the improvement of the administration and the general development.

The striking feature of this period was the introduction of land settlement in the hill states. These settlements were made entirely on the British-India model. In the beginning these were summary settlements but later on permanent settlements were carried out. In some hill states and in the area ceded to the British, the reforms were conducted by the British officers, but in others by the officers who had already worked under the government of Punjab or India. Proper measurement of land was made, classification of soil done and its produce was evaluated on the basis of which the revenue assessment was fixed. The basis of assessment was changed from "net produce" to "rental assets". Records of rights and proper township and field maps were prepared.

Forest settlements were also made. Working plans were prepared for the protection and extraction of the forest wealth. For this the Raja of Bashahr leased his forests to the British government for a period of fifty years. By a supplementary agreement, executed in 1871 A.D., he also leased his rights to waif and drift timber. The terms of these leases were embodied in a single agreement in 1877 A.D., which, besides securing to the Raja an annual payment of Rs. 10,000 in consideration of the

rights conceded by him, made a more definite provision for the conservation of the forests. The agreement of 1877 A.D. terminated in 1927 A.D., and, in 1929 A.D., a fresh agreement was made but, with effect from the 1st of November, 1928, and to remain in force for twenty five years. Under the new agreements more definite provisions for the conservancy of the forests were made, and the annual payment to the raja was raised to Rs. 1,00,000.

In 1864 A.D. the Raja of Chamba had also leased all his forests to the government. The lease was renewed in 1872, 1884 and 1905. In 1908 A.D. the control of the state forests was, as an experimental measure, restored to Chamba for a period of five years on certain conditions, the provisions of the lease of 1905 A.D. being held in abeyance for that period. The experiment was successful; and in 1913 A.D. the Government of India sanctioned the permanent restoration to the Raja of the control of his forests, subject to the continuance of the existing conditions. In 1885 A.D. the Raja of Mandi leased to the British government the rights to collect, drift and waif timber in the river Beas within the Mandi territory for a period of five years on a payment of Rs. 500 a year. The lease was renewed periodically for varying terms with slight modifications.

The forests of Jubbal were in the charge of an Extra Assistant Conservator of Forests deputed from the Punjab. After the Gurkha war, the hill chiefs were required to furnish a quota of begar in proportion to the revenue they raised from their territories. It was not possible for them to meet this requirement. They often failed to do so and the British authorities on the spot had to use rigorous measures before they could obtain the necessary begar labour. The government was not blind to the hardship and injustice which this system caused to the hill chiefs and their subjects. Therefore, the Governor-General-in-Council decided to abolish the system, i.e., of claiming a quota of begar from the chiefs. For this purpose negotiations were opened with the hill chiefs and it was finally decided that they should commute their quota of begar labour into money payment. The money thus raised was to be spent on hiring labour and carriage by mule.

In order to develop an identity of interests between the ruling chiefs and the paramount power, the latter gave up the policy of isolating the states. It permitted them mutual consultation and tried to give a new importance to the princes in the existing set-up of administration. The princes too were emboldened by this change in policy and felt freer to voice their feelings against the Political Department. Consequently, a permanent consultative body of the princes known as Chamber of Princes, also known as Narendra Mandal, came into existence in 1921. It enabled the princes to assemble together and to discuss matters of common interests covering their relations with the paramount power and the British India. The Viceroy acted as the president and a chancellor and a pro-chancellor were elected by the member princes from among themselves. In the beginning there were 108 permanent members and 12 additional members elected by the rulers of 127 non-salute states. By virtue of 11 gun-salute states Chamba, Mandi, Suket. and Sirmur became the members of the Chamber of Princes. Raja Bhagat Chand of Jubbal was elected a representative member of the Shimla hill states in the Chamber of Princes in 1921 and again in 1933. Raja Durga Singh of Baghat also represented the Shimla hill states as an elected member in the Chamber of Princes from 1924 to 1933.

The people of India had been struggling for a very long time for political and constitutional rights and, finally, for complete independence. In the eighties of the nineteenth century A.O. Hume, a retired English civil servant, feeling an undercurrent of unrest among the masses brought into existence in 1885 the All India Congress with a three-fold object, viz., (1) to blend Indians into one nation, (ii) to secure their mental, moral, social and political uplift, and (3) to strengthen the bonds of India with England. A great number of prominent leaders took active part in the movement.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi threw his heart and soul into India's struggle for freedom and took the reins of the Indian National Congress in his hands. He became the greatest national leader and popularly came to be known as Mahatma Gandhi. He started massive resistance movements like non-cooperation movement of 1922, civil disobedience movement of 1930 and quit India movement of 1942 against the foreign rulers.

Himachal Pradesh also played an important part in the struggle for the independence of India. In early decades of this century the Indian National Congress and Praja-Mandals started their activities in the hill areas now forming Himachal Pradesh. Mahatma Gandhi also visited Shimla in the years 1921, 1931, 1939, 1945 and 1946. In 1945 he stayed in Manorville, the residence of Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur, and in 1946 at Chadwick in Summerhill. In 1945 and 1946 Jawahar Lal Nehru, Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, and other prominent leaders of Indian National Congress also visited Shimla to attend the Shimla Conference. The Muslim League Leader, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, also attended the conference. These leaders came to Shimla on the invitation of the Government of India to have talks with the Cabinet Mission sent by the British Government to speed up the question of the independence of India. At that time Lord Wavell was the Viceroy of India and the Conference was held at the Viceregal Lodge (Rashtrapati Bhawan) now housing Indian Institute of Advance Studies, Gandhi did not attend the meetings but stayed on in Shimla. This conference ultimately led to independence of India and withdrawal of the British from the country in the year 1947.

After the transfer of power on August 15, 1947, there was an agitation in some of the states for more amenities and for the grant of responsible government. When this was going on, another development crept up. The rulers and their advisers had for sometime been thinking of regional federations of states. Besides other states, Raja Durga Singh of Baghal and Raja Joginder Send Mand had drawn up a scheme for Shimla hill states and Punjab hill states Union.

11.3 Self Check Exercise

1. When Raja of Chamba leased his forests to the government?

11.4 Conclusion

The rulers discussed among themselves and prepared a provisional plan for the integration of their states into a Union. This proposal had the support of certain popular leaders of their states. In the meantime, the Ministry of States, Government of India, invited the rulers to a conference at Delhi on 2nd March 1948. The Secretary of States for Government of India suggested to the rulers and representatives of the people that

the states should be integrated into a single unit and administered by the Government of India through a Chief Commissioner or Lieutenant Governor. The rulers accepted the suggestion. Their spokesmen were Raja Durga Singh of Baghat and Raja Joginder Sen of Mandi. It was also decided that the new province would be named Himachal Pradesh. An agreement along these lines was drawn up and signed by the rulers on March 8, 1948. These states were therefore, integrated as a Chief Commissioners province on April 15, 1948. Its status was subsequently raised to that of a Lieutenant Governor's province with a legislature and ministry.

11.5 Glossary:

Proclamation: Public Statement, Announcements

11.6 Answer to Self Check Exercise

Ans.1 The Raja of Chamba leased all his forests to the government in 1864 A.D.

11.7 Suggested Readings

Ahluwalia, M.S, History of Himachal Pradesh, New Delhi

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Yadav, K. C. The Rise of Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh, New Delhi, 2008.

Thakur Laxman S. (Ed) Where Mortals and Mountains Gods Meet, Shimla, 2002.

Verma V., The emergence of himachal Pradesh: A Survey of Constitutional Development, New Delhi, 1995.

11.8 Terminal Questions

1. Give a brief account of Himachal under the British reorganization of the Hill States after first Anglo Sikh War?
2. What do you understand by the British reorganization of the hill states?

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Lesson - 12

Begar System in Himachal Pradesh

Structure

- 12.0 Introduction
- 12.1 Objective
- 12.2 Nature of Begar
- 12.3 Reet
- 12.4 Self Check Exercise
- 12.5 Conclusion
- 12.6 Glossary
- 12.7 Answer to Self Check Exercise
- 12.8 Suggested Readings
- 12.9 Terminal Question

12.0 Introduction

Begar system was prevalent in the erstwhile Shimla and Punjab Hill States of Himachal Pradesh since time immemorial. Begar means forced labour or employing anyone without remuneration. Describing beggar or forced labour in the hills, Satyanand Stokes wrote, "Begar was the system by which the transportation of each state was carried on". Begar system of British India was different from that of Begar system of Punjab Hill states. In British India, people supplied beast of burden, carts and labourers etc. to the governing powers. In Shimla and Punjab Hill States, compulsory service of subjects to their chiefs or government was given. The beggar system had also been prevalent in the state of Kangra, Chamba, Mandi and in the Uttranchal hills on the same basis as it was in the Simla Hill States.

12.1 Objective

1. To understand the system of Begar
2. To find out the System of Reet
3. To analyze the impact of Reet on society
4. To study the impact of Begar on Society

12.2 Nature and Kind of Begar:

- The obligation of beggar system was part and parcel of the revenue system.

- It was obligatory to every household to supply an able-bodied man to labour for the state.
- The beggar system was well suited to the contemporary agricultural society where the financial conditions of the people were not sound.
- Samuel Evan Stokes has mentioned, beggar was the system by which the transportation of each state was carried on from one village to the next.
- The state materials and the luggage of the officials were carried from one village to another until they reached their destination.

Types of Begar System:

1. Athwara Begar:

In this type of Begar, people rendered personal beggar to the ruler.

Eg:

- Cultivation of the Chief's land.
- Supplying firewood to durbar.
- Provide grass for cattle and horses.
- Provide leaves for spreading in cattle sheds.

2. Batrawal Begar or Hallah ka Begar:

- In this system, Begaris carried stone and wood for constructions or repairs of State buildings, bridges etc.
- This system was prevalent in Bushahr State, Balsan and Rewingarh.

3. Jaddi-Baddi or Hela-Mela Begar:

- Begaris brought grass, fuel and did other labour on the occasion of marriage or deaths in the ruler's family and the installation of a new ruler.

4. Touring Begar/ Begar of camp arrangement of the chief and his family:

- Begaris were employed for carrying loads and camp arrangement of the chief and his family while touring the state.

5. Begar for Political officials and high officials:

The camp arrangement of political officials and other high officials.

This has two sub-categories:

1. It was compulsory for the begaris to provide beggar free of cost in connection with dak bungalow.
2. Services to be provided to administrative officials touring the Shimla district.

6. Begar for State Guests:

- Begar was provided for carrying luggage and other requirements of state guests.

7. Gaonsar Begar:

Begaris carrying the baggage of tehsil, police and other state officials from village to village on their tours.

Three types of services were provided under this:

1. The residents of the village had to arrange for the carriage of the state and government dak to the next village;
2. They had to repair village roads when called upon to do so;
3. They had to supply unpaid coolies for the purpose of transport of certain state officials.

8. Road Begar:

- Repair of roads and bridle tracks were done by begaris in their respective territories.
- It was not used for the construction of new roads.
- This was undoubtedly an important beggar.

9. Shikar Begar:

- Performed during the visits of high officials or friends of the ruler.
- Often, a large number of beaters were engaged at a time for this purpose.
- On occasion, when the viceroy went out for shooting, he used to distribute bakshish to the beaters which was equivalent to a daily wage.
- It was prevalent in keonthal, Balson, kotli, Sirmaur and the other Shimla Hill States.

10. Mule Begar:

- Some shopkeepers and others kept mules in many states for trade purposes.
- They supplied mules to the state according to the requirement.
- In Keonthal, they had to provide mules for 15 days in a year.

11. Religious Begar:

- The religious begar consisted of labour in connection with the ceremonies and celebrations of festivals of the local deities.

Different Types of Begar in Kangra:

Among the agricultural classes of kangra, there were gradations of begar well recognized.

1. Pund-Begar:

- The meanest and most onerous kind of forced labour was to carry loads known as Pund Begar.

- Those agricultural classes that did not wear the Juneo (thread of caste), were all liable to this obligation.
2. Satbahuk-Begar:
- A lighter description of begar was termed Satbahuk, and consisted in carrying messages, letters and any parcel which could be conveyed by the hand.
 - The fulfillment of this duty implied no degradation and involved no great sacrifice of personal comfort.
 - It was therefore, reserved as the special province of those classes, who although occupied in agriculture, were privileged to wear the Juneo.
3. Begaru Begar:
- The third kind of begar was to provide wood and grass for camps, and under native rulers this labour devolved upon Chumars and other outcast people, whose supposed impurity alone saved them from carrying loads.

Begar System in Kullu

In Kullu, the begar system was more or less similar to that prevalent Jaddi Baddi or Hela type of begar.

- A. Anderson, Deputy Commissioner, recorded in 1898 that the number of people on begari attending the palace were about 1,211 and the turn of each to attend the palace came once in about 150 weeks.

For the special occasions, such as weddings and funerals 50 begaris were allowed for 10 days at a time.

Gaonsar of begar was practiced during tours of state officials. Sometimes, more than twenty begaris were employed.

In Kullu from each house grass rope, charcoal, vegetables etc. according to the occupation of the householder was exacted yearly, in addition, each house had to provide a man to work the Raja house for seven days roughly once in every 2 and a half years.

Begar System in Lahaul

In Lahaul, three types of beggars were frequent:

1. Begar for travelers and officials: Under it, the begairs were employed for carrying loads of many travelers and officials on tour. It was too heavy because of a few reasons. The demand for the begar occurred within the six months of the summer, the time within which all fieldwork and trading journeys had to be done.
2. Road begar: Each kothi or group of kothis supplied begaris for repairs of certain length of highway.
3. Mule begar: This begar involved supplying of horses for the travelers over Bara Lacha and Shinkal by the ten kothis and within the kothis by the different holdings.

Begar System in Suket and Mandi

In Suket and Mandi states, the begar was of the three kinds:

1. Phutkar Begar: It consisted in trifling services rendered to the dauber, such as carriage of dak etc.
2. Phant or Jhamret Begar: It involved the repair of village roads in which begaris were ordinarily employed for 10 days. It included Baddi Jadi begar given on the occasion of marriage or funeral in the ruling family and on the tours of British officials.
3. Pala Begar: The begari had to perform state services for a fixed period, varying in different parts of the state from 2 to 4 months in a year. In lieu of their services, the begaris were paid bare which consisted of 2 seeds kham of rice, 1 pao kham of dal and 4 tolas of Guma salt. This was the most burdensome form of begar. The people whose occupation was agriculture were liable to Pala begar.

Begar System in Chamba

The Begar forms in Chamba state were five in a number called panj haqq and were as follows:

1. This begar was similar to the begaris employed for carrying loads and shikar of the chief in Shimla Hill States. If the Raja was on tour in the state, the begaris would have to be in attendance for any work that was necessary, whether ordinary service of shikar. The begaris who carried loads on these occasions were remunerated at the rates fixed for travelers, but other forms of service were unpaid.
2. This begar was more or less same as Gaonsar begar. The only difference being that the begaris were used for carrying the baggage of the Superintendent, Punjab Hill States or some other high British official on duty in the state.
3. It was similar to Jaddi Baddi or Hela begar. The begaris did labour on the occasion of a marriage or death in the royal family.
4. This begar was similar to batrawal. The begaris carried stones and wood for the repair or construction of the palace;
5. This was road begar and involved the repair of roads and bridges within their wizarat. However, all state officials in the parganas, the subordinate staff such as jhutyars; the persons holding the post of Akkar; the zamindars and the sasan attached to the temples were exempted from this begar.

Besides these a form of Athwara begar was also prevalent in the Chamba state.

In this way, the system of begar was almost universal in native states of Himachal. Each kind of begar played a separate part in the state economy. But as soon as the cash economy (Apple and Potato) of hill people began to develop, they found this unpaid labour oppressive and all kind of begar began to be commuted into cash.

Who were exempted from Begar?

- Brahmins, influential Rajputs, state and village officials and respectable men of lower grade were exempted from begar.
- The rich Bania families secured commutation of begar into cash.
- The burden fell mainly on the people of the lower classes such as Bahri, Chamar, Lobar, Koli, Rehr etc.
- Soldiers of the Indian army who were subjects of their states were exempted from begar in 1840.

Social and Economic Implications of Begar System;

Social implications of begar:

1. The exploitation of farmers and artisans: All classes who cultivated the soil were bound to give up, as a condition of tenure, a portion of labour for the exigencies of state or government. This practice had become so inveterate that even artisans and other classes not connected with the soil were obliged to devote a portion of their time to the public service.
2. The rich and strong escaped the poor and the weak had to bear a double burden. Brahmins some certain classes of Rajputs, state and village officials and influential and respectable men of lower grade were exempted from the begar. The rich bania families secured commutation of begar into cash.
3. Rajputs and Brahmins also had to give begar: There seems no such provision in the Shimla Hill States as that prevailed in the mandi state that those classes who were exempted from begar particularly that of fixed days in the year, had to perform other services instead, such as, the Rajputs were expected to give military service, Barhmans were expected to assist the state festivals, to work in the ruler's kitchen on special occasions and always pray for the long life and prosperity of their chief, and shopkeepers and traders had to help with the distribution of supplies and preparation of accounts on the occasion of state entertainment.
4. Large joint families: The burden of begar too was heavily imposed by the state which consequently encourage the continuation of large joint families. The states had always discouraged the partition of families in their own interest. This ensured that a man could be easily available for begar when it was his turn to render service.

The beth system as compared to begar, was more oppressive as the bethu was confined to serve only his master and to work at a particular place of the choice of his master who normally forced him to construct a thatched hut in the fields.

5. Rise of polyandry: Brothers were compelled to live together and the independent character of hill woman constrained them to have a wife in common, for the sake of their domestic peace since the hill woman was not ready to tolerate a rival in her house. Thus, another result of begar system was that it became one of the causes for the rise of polyandry.

It enabled a family of brothers to get the full benefits of several sources of livelihood and protect the in a dangerous country when the husband was away. Polyandry was directly encouraged by the state through penalties exacted on partitions.

6. Property: When a set of brothers divided moveable property one half of a share of the whole was appropriated by the state, and divisions of immovable property were refused official recognition.
7. Corruption: The begar system was also a source of corruption such as bribe in society. The families having only one male adult, would often bribe the patwari or lambardar to get an exemption from rendering begar.
8. Idleness: Another implication of the begar system was that it fostered the habits of idleness. The object of the begar was to do as little as possible because he had to receive nothing for the work and one could not blame him for his work. Thus, the state got nothing and apart from the economic wastage the effects were demoralizing for all concerned.

Such be thus were virtually cut off from the rest of the world for all practical purposes because of their nature of work. Their work was confined to a particular place.

Economic implications of begar:

The whole economic life of the hill states seems to be dependent on this system. It affected adversely the small peasants.

Poor people were more affected: The zamindars were not affected so adversely because they generally sent their bethu and other substitutes instead. It fell heavily on poor people. When it was imperative for them to work in their own fields during the crop season, they had to go for rendering begar.

When the people had no opportunity to earn money from outside labour, the begar system suited well because they had a lot of time to work as a begari. But as soon as the opportunities to earn money from outside labour increased for them a great financial loss. With the rise in the rates for casual labour a month spent without payment means a considerable loss, which was often more than the amount of the monthly earnings. It interfered seriously with a man taking quasi-permanent labour. Thus, in a household containing two able-bodied men. One would easily go on to some forest work in Bushahr and Chamba. But as soon as the second brother was called upon to do his period of athwara begar, the first had to come to the home and he could rarely afford to go to the forest work.

Economically, Bethus were very important. They were engaged in the most important economic service by providing all the necessary labour to till the land. The land of the big Zamindar and the Basa land was cultivated by them. The Zamindars and the rules depended upon them for cultivation because there was no other laboring class which could be engaged to do this work.

Abolition of begar system in the Shimla Hill States:-

The British started building cantonments sanatoria, hill resorts and hill stations. Further, many high British civil and military started visiting Shimla and other place in the hills. This needed a huge begar.

In 1827, The Governor-General, Lord Amherst visited Shimla for caring the baggage of his entourage from kalka to Shimla 17,000 coolies were not enough.

The people of hill states continued to suffer under the begar system. Their wages were extremely low. To add to their woes, many a time, they were forcibly dragged from their homes and fields, and often detailed for several weeks quite away from their places. This really caused them great hardship and misery.

William Edward, who was Superintendent of Shimla Hill States from 1847 to 1852, observed that for the public service, "15,000 to 20,000 man had or more than one occasion to be collected together from great distances.

William Edward, Superintendent, Hill States, viewed begar as nothing short of an insupportable and fearful system of serfdom. He passed an order to promote education in the Shimla hills so that those who sent their children to government schools could be exempted from begar. The concession was much appreciated and the attendance in the Shimla school increased.

Edwards got a notice displayed at dak bungalows outside Shimla that the coolies or porters were not to be supplied by the government officers to any private parties, either in Shimla or while travelling throughout the district.

However, Edward's measures were resented by the British travelers who found it difficult to procure coolies at the rates fixed by the government. The demand for porters increased and Edwards scheme was abandoned by his successor, Lord William Hay.

Due to the spread of education, the people became aware of their oppression under the begar system. They started to make complaints against this oppression to their respective settlement officers and requested that cash be levied in place of personal begar.

The continued oppression of Athwara-Begar on the part of the rules and other officials, led to rebellions in many hill states such as in Kuthar in 1895, keonthal in 1901. Theog in 1910-28, Khaneti in 1906, kumarsain in 1920 and Dhami in 1937.

In Keonthal state people of four northern parganas, namely Matiana, Shilli, Rajona and Chandra revolted in 1893, against the oppressive system of athwarau and stopped providing begar.

In 1910, the kanets and kolis of the state presented a petition to the settlement officer at Junga against athwara begar, requesting the abolition of athwara at Junga.

The issue was begar in kotgarh was taken up by S.E. Stokes, who was a missionary and settled in kotgarh formed a sort of vigilance committee and made a representation to Col.Elliot at the time Superintendent of Hill States in Simla district, and achieved some success.

In June 1921, when the Superintendent of Hill States visited kotgarh, the villagers refused to render the begar.

Once the anti-begar agitation had shifted to Simla, a series of meeting between the government, represented by the Deputy Commissioner, and Stokes was held.

In September 1921, The British Government gave in and begar was abolished in Simla district.

In Mandi, the system of pala begar was abolished with effect from 1 January 1917, the only casual form of begar was retained.

In Bhajji, beth had been commuted into cash in 1929.

The begar system was one of the potent causes for the organization of Praja Mandals in the Himachal hill states.

The British Government evolved a model policy on begar and beth by introducing reforms in this system in October 1944 through which unpaid forced labour was finally prohibited in the Simla Hill States.

The begar system had been already abolished in Chamba, Mandi and Kangra in 1884.

Finally, begar paid or unpaid was prohibited within the territory of Himachal Pradesh in May 1948.

12.3 Reet/Rit System in Himachal Pradesh.

In the Shimla Hill States and many adjoining countries such as Mandi, Kullu and Kangra, an obnoxious custom namely Reet was prevalent since time immemorial.

Definition of Reet Marriage:

It is difficult to give any precise definition of Reet. To some it was a form of marriage but to others, it was the payment usually made on the occasion. Therefore, Reet may be defined as a form of marriage without any ritual or ceremony and was contracted by paying a price.

What is Reet Money

Under this custom, girls and young woman were allowed to go for sums usually ranging from Rs.100 to 500 but sometimes going up to Rs.2,000 by the parents or other guardians in the case of unmarried girls and by husbands in the case of married ones. Thus, the amount paid was known as "Reet money."

After the payment of this money, the first marriage was ipso facto annulled and concubinage with the second man became a marriage. There was no limit to the number of woman, that one might get under Reet could be dissolved as easily as it was contracted. From this it is clear that woman was treated as a chattel, a commodity to be brought and sold time and again.

The Reet was prevalent among the kolis, Chanals, Chamars, and other tribes which formed the lowest rung in social stratification. In most of the Hill States, if not at

all, it was also prevalent among the Kanets. However, Reet was not observed among the high caste Brahmins and Rajputs.

Evil results of Reet Custom:

There were many evil results of “Reet” custom; domestic ties became loose and marriage came to have a very insignificant position in the stability of society. Indiscriminate relations of a woman with many men often resulted in her catching syphilis and in return, she transmitted the disease to many persons.

While highlighting the bad results of the custom, the “Bombay Chronicle” commented: The effects of such lax relationship, whether on the character of sex-relationship or on racial advancement were disastrous. Since marriage is purely mechanical, being based in a money bargain, it is not regarded as a sacred human relationship with the result that the condition which obtain there are hardly distinguishable from general promiscuity.

When a person was in need of money. He regarded his wife as forming a portion of his in disposable property, and could always raise a sum by in during some person to take her off his Lands and to pay t him the fixed as Reet. This was generally an easy matter, as from the demand for females in these hills, woman, until she lost her charm from age or dies ease, was always a value able and marketable commodity.

The custom of Reet was atrocious as the woman were made saleable property. It led to disastrous results, not only as regards the woman themselves, but the people generally among whom it was prevalent. Many persons carried on with impunity scandalous traffic of woman, for instance, a person’s residing in the Shimla Bazar after proceeding into the hill states could arrange with a father to give him his daughters nominally in marriage on the payment of a certain specified sum of Reet which was considered as granted for marriage expenses. Then the purchaser returned with his cargo to Shimla and perhaps starved the woman until they abscond to other parties, who were prepared to receive them and to pay to their original owner the sum due as Reet.

Moreover, if their owner could not dispose of the women in this manner, he was able to gain a profit by turning them into the bazaar to go in their livelihood by prostitution.

However, due to the lexy of British administration, no rule was framed against the custom of Reet and these early measures to eradicate this social evil proved to be a failure. Therefore the Reet system continued in the latter half the 19th century.

In 1927, in baghat, bushahr, and Jubbal, the custom of Reet was prohibited on paper. Nalagarh, Mahlog and Kuthar had agreed to adopt the rules framed by the Sub-Committee of the chiefs.

Further, baghal and Bhajji had also agreed to introduce the draft rules but they were under the minority management.

Therefore, the Governor in Council was averse to introducing the rules there. The question of introducing the rules in these states was to be postponed until their rulers attained maturity and assumed full ruling powers.

In a nutshell, the position, therefore, was that is eight of the Shimla Hill States out of twenty seven, the Reet custom was illegal, or the states were prepared to make it illegal, at any rate in theory by 1927.

After 1928, the Government ceased to take interest in the matter and the hill chiefs did not earnestly enforce the draft regulations.

12.4 Self Check Exercise

1. Which type of beggar was Cultivation of the Chief's land?
2. When begar paid or unpaid was prohibited within the territory of Himachal Pradesh?

12.5 Conclusion

However, workers of the Himalaya Vidiya Parbandhani Sabha and religious organizations such as the Arya Samaj etc. continued to preach against the Reet custom. Thus, the result of the above precious little done by anyone was obvious: the pernicious custom of Reet with its concomitant scourge of venereal disease continued unabated. The Reet custom had been an extremely complex is borne out by the fact that it was being practiced among some backward tribes for few years after Himachal was granted full statehood on 25 January 1971.

12.6 Glossary

Begar : Compulsory labour, usually without payment

12.7 Answer to Self Check Exercise

1. Type of Cultivation of the Chief's land was Athwara Begar.
2. Begar paid or unpaid was prohibited within the territory of Himachal Pradesh in May 1948.

12.8 Suggested Readings

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12.9 Terminal Questions

1. What was the beggar system? How does it effect on hilly states?
2. Describe Reet ? Was it a social evil in the society? Comment.

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Unit-IV

Lesson - 13

Popular Uprisings and Social Reform Movements

Structure

- 13.0 Introduction
- 13.1 Objective
- 13.2 Uprising Against the British and the hill Rajas and the Praja Mandal Movement.
- 13.3 From Revolt of 1857 to Transfer of Power
- 13.4 The Praja Mandal Movement
- 13.5 Self Check Exercise
- 13.6 Conclusion
- 13.7 Glossary
- 13.8 Answer to Self Check exercise
- 13.9 Suggested Reading
- 13.10 Terminal Question

13.0 Introduction

There had been a number of social reform movements, popular uprisings and constitutional agitations within the princely hill states of Himachal Pradesh beginning at least from the middle of the nineteenth century. These can be studied under two broad headings:

1. Uprisings or agitations against the British and the hill Rajas; and
2. Social reform movements.

13.1 Objective

1. To analyze the social reforms movement in Himachal Pradesh
2. To find out the impact of Praja Mandal Movement in Himachal
3. To understand the relationships between British Rulers and Hills States

13.2 Uprising Against the British and the hill Rajas and the Praja Mandal Movement.

Wazir Ram Singh Pathania

The first popular uprising against the British during the middle of the nineteenth century was led by Ram Singh Pathania, son of the last wazir of Nurpur in the Kangra

hills. It may be recalled here that on the conclusion of the First Anglo-Sikh War, the treaty signed at Lahore (9th March, 1846 A.D.) led to the transfer to the British government of the hill territories between the Beas and the Sutlej. The Kangra Hill States were under the illusion that all the chiefs of the hill states would be reinstated in their respective principalities by the British government. However, it turned out to be different.

The disaffected hill chiefs were approached by the Sikh leaders in the early summer of 1848 A.D. and were incited to join the rebellion which was then maturing. The hill chiefs were promised that their states would be restored in the event of the British being expelled from the Punjab. An attempt was made by Ram Singh Pathania to throw off the British yoke. He entered into treaties with the other rulers in the Kangra hills' and raised rebellion against the British.

The British, on the other hand were conscious of the strategic importance of the Kulu-Kangra region and as such they took the earliest possible opportunity to annex these. The British Government, while taking over these regions and territories was confident of the fact that all the Rajput chiefs of the area were deeply anti-Sikh and would, as such, welcome the British with open arms. However, the Rajputs of Himachal were quick to realise the altogether different intentions of the imperialists. Therefore, the British authorities had to face stiff resistance both from the local population, led by Ram Singh Pathania, as well as the officials and the garrisons of the Sikhs posted there².

At this crucial juncture, the British officials, particularly, Erskine³, instigated the hill Rajas to rise against the Sikhs, on the false promise that for this they will be adequately compensated. Therefore, during 1846-47, some hill Rajas, did help the British against the Sikhs probably coming under the false notion that they will enjoy greater autonomy under the latter than they had enjoyed under the rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his successors. The Raja of Nurpur was one of them. But to the surprise of the Raja, the hereditary wazir of Nurpur, took up the cause of the Sikhs.

To punish the Nurpur Raja, the British decided to annex the territory of the Raja against an annual pension of Rs.20,000 only and that too only on the condition of leaving his hereditary residence and staying across the river Sutlej. The negotiations between the Pathanias and the British continued for more than a year but Mian Sham Singh and his son Ram Singh, refused to accept the humiliating terms.

After collecting a large number of people from the neighbouring hills, Ram Singh Pathania crossed Ravi and threw himself into the unoccupied fort of Shahpur'. He proclaimed Jaswant Singh, son of Bir Singh, as the Raja of Nurpur and Ram Singh as his wazir. When the news of the uprising reached Hoshiarpur, the British despatched a force which hastened to the spot and attacked the fort of Shahpur. The British pressure compelled the mutineers to vacate the fort and take up another position on a wooded range of hills, close to the town of Nurpur.

The British now sent additional reinforcements under J. Lawrence, the Commissioner and Mr. Barnes, District Officer. The new shelter of Ram Singh was stormed and he was compelled to flee to Rasul in Gujrat'. During his period of struggle, Ram Singh was joined by about 400 men from the adjoining villages, including some Rajputs of his own caste.

The struggle was renewed in 1849 A.D. Ram Singh persuaded Raja Sher Singh (son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh) to give him two Sikh regiments of five hundred soldiers to make a renewed effort to achieve his mission. Ram Singh took up position on the heights on Dula or Dala or Dala Ka Dhar, a ridge, which overhangs the Ravi and faces the plains, the quarter from which an assailing army must proceed. From the operational point of view, the place was very strategic.

To counter the moves of Ram Singh, a British force under Brigadier Wheeler was sent and the battle continued for many days. The place was captured by the British with a heavy loss on both sides. Many young officers of the British army were killed, including John Peel, a nephew of Sir Robert Peel and Robert Brown.

Wazir Ram Singh was finally arrested due to the treachery of a Brahmin, whom Ram Singh trusted as a friend, as also due to the betrayal of the Rajas of Jammu and Guler, who helped the British. As during his anti British campaign, so also during his trial, Ram Singh never compromised with the British at any cost. The statements he made in defence of his action, were bold and frank, befitting his Rajput heritage. He openly confessed to the British: 'as an old servant of the Khalsa Sarkar, whose salt he had eaten'. G.C. Barnes, in his judgement delivered on 21st April, 1849, therefore awarded death sentence to Wazir Ram Singh.

On receiving the instructions of the Board of Administration, Punjab, Mr. D.H. Macleod held the trial of Wazir Ram Singh and pronounced his judgement on 25th July, 1849. Mr Macleod recommended that Ram Singh may be imprisoned outside Punjab for life. The Board, however, submitted the case for final orders of the Governor General, stating that Ram Singh was the 'life and soul of the disturbances in Nurpur' and that both Ram Singh and his father Sham Singh, were the foremost in encouraging the 'unquiet spirits of the country' even at the time of the anti-British revolt at Kangra in 1846. It was finally recommended that Ram Singh be imprisoned for life and that he was to spend his remaining life under the iron bars beyond the high seas. He was sent to Burma and kept imprisoned in the jail in Moulmein. He died there on 11th November, 1856.

During the same period when Wazir Ram Singh Pathania of Nurpur revolted, the Rajas of Kangra, Jaswan and Datarpur also rose in rebellion. They were however, defeated sometime in November, 1848. Parbodh Chand, the Raja of Kangra, was apprehended by the British at Sujampur Tira, captured and sent to Almora as a political prisoner, where he ultimately died in 1851 A.D. The Rajas of Datarpur and Jaswan also met with the same fate. The forts of Amb and Kharot were blasted by the British cannons".

13.3 From Revolt of 1857 to Transfer of Power

The next important phase of the Himachal history begins with the great revolt of 1857 which originated from a number of socio-political reasons and came to surface with the mishandling of the greased cartridge affair. There had already been a growing resentment and dissatisfaction brewing among the Himachal chiefs which arose out of the non-restoration of their territories by the British after the Anglo-Sikh Wars.

Generally, the people of Himachal Pradesh were far less advanced socially and politically than their counterparts in the plains. This was coupled with the fact they were

subject to all sorts of economic exploitation by the native rulers or their agents. The presence of some Christian missionaries also led to mistrust and suspicion among the Himachalis, particularly those of the Shimla Hill States.

During the revolt of 1857, some of the Himachal Hill States also participated in the general upheaval by with-holding the tribute. Raja Shamsheer Singh of Rampur Bushahr was the first to act in a hostile way to the British and refused to pay tribute.

When the British came to know about the defiant attitude of the Raja of Rampur, Lord William Hay, the Deputy Commissioner of Simla and Agent for the Hill States, proposed to send a force to Rampur and recommended the deposition of the Raja and taking over his State under the direct control of the British. Nothing was done, however, as no troops were available. The proposal was however, not accepted by Sir John Lawrence, the then Chief Commissioner of Punjab and 'the Raja's behaviour during the great revolt was overlooked.

In 1857, a battalion of the British army, mainly consisting of the Rajputs and the Gurkhas, was stationed at Jutogh (Simla). Troops were also stationed at Dagshai, Kasauli, and Sabathu. The Gurkha regiment, known as Nasri Battalion, refused to comply with the orders of the Commander-in-Chief, General Ason, who was being pressed hard for help by Sir John Lawrence, the Commissioner of Punjab.

Subedar Bhim Singh revolted against the British along with his platoon at Kasauli. The soliders of Kasauli guard, numbering about 80, marched away with a huge sum of government money to join their fellow soliders at Jutogh. The two units unitedly revolted against the British and the British residents of Simla ran helter skelter.

The revolt, however, was soon crushed. Subedar Ram Singh was awarded the death sentence, but he managed to escape and took shelter at Rampur, where, on hearing the failure of the revolt, he committed suicide. The revolt was checked due to the timely help rendered by the Raja of Keonthal, who gave shelter to the panic stricken English men and women at Simla and Junga.

Order, however, was restored soon with the help of the Simla Hill Chiefs, most of whom remained loyal to the British during the revolt.¹⁵ There were some disturbances in the State of Nalagarh too. Fearing, lest the mutiny might extend to Ropar tehsil, and lest the arms etc., should fall in the hands of the Gurkhas and other disaffected people, a group of people of Malaon seized them and refused to allow the party in charge of the armoury, to proceed. Mian Jai Singh, the brother of the Rana of Baghal, was at once deputed by Lord William Hay, the Deputy Commissioner of Simla, to the disturbed locality. It was with the help of Mian Jai Singh that order was restored in the area.

During early June, an attempt was made in Kulu by one Partap Singh¹⁶ (who pretended to be the rightful Raja of the state) to excite the people to rise in rebellion against the British. The uprising was, however, detected and suppressed. Partap Singh and his followers were captured and tried by a commission, consisting of the Deputy Commissioner, Kangra and his two assistants. Partap Singh and his close associate, Bir Singh were condemned to death and executed.

The British, as a precautionary measure, disbanded the Kangra 4th Native Infantry¹⁷, in the forts of Kangra and Nurpur. On June 10th, it was reported that

Jullundhur troops had mutinied and on the 11th news came to Simla that a portion of them were crossing 'Sutlej at Makhawal and heading towards Pinjor. Capt. D. Briggs, Superintendent of Hill Roads, immediately started to Nalagarh with a view to prevent the mutineers from entering the hills. He was assisted with the troops. supplied by the chiefs of Bilaspur, Baghal and Nalagarh. Before Captain Briggs could reach Pinjor, the mutineers had passed through Nalagarh.

The hill chiefs on the whole, remained loyal to the British and helped them with money and material in supressing the revolt. The revolt also failed due to the fact that the sepoys stationed in the hills failed to establish their supremacy unlike their counterparts in Oudh and Rohilkhand. In some areas, the people also helped the British in capturing the mutineers, although there are also instances of certain individuals who were charged with instigting the mutiny.

In the Kangra hills, the mass of population, exhibited friendliness and a spirit of loyalty towards the British Government. In Nurpur, some hill people helped the British by capturing the fugitive mutineers of the Sialkot Brigade. As already stated even the Raja of Chamba arranged for protection of the British ladies and children in the sanitarium of Dalhousic. He also captured thirty men of the Sialkot mutineers and handed them over to the local authorities at Kangra.

Among the hill chiefs who gave active assistance to the British in checking the mutiny, mention may be made of the chiefs of Keonthal, Koti, Balson, Bilaspur, Sirmur, Baghal, Dhami, Bhajji, Jubbal, Chamba, Nurpur, Mandi, Siba, and Nadaun. In recognition of their services during the revolt, some of them were suitably rewarded by the British with the salute of guns, khilats and honorary titles apart from several gifts.²⁰ In short, the nature of mutiny in Himachal hills is more or less akin to the revolt in Punjab, where most of the chiefs remained loyal and helped strengthening the hands of the imperial power.

13.4 The Praja Mandal Movement

The struggle of the common hill people against the oppressive and unjust rule of the Princely States in Himachal Pradesh, led to several protest movements. The main objective of the people's struggle was the democratisation of the administration and introduction of social reforms for the people living in the hill areas. The hill people's struggle was thus directed with a specific object of throwing off not only the British yoke but also the rule of terror, high-handedness, slavery and feudalism of the various hill chiefs.

Thus in the hills of Himachal Pradesh, there were two types of movements going on simultaneously:

1. The Praja Mandal Movement
2. The Social Reform Movement

Both the movements contributed much to make the people of the state politically and socially awakened for active participation in the national struggle. It will be appropriate here to discuss briefly the role of the Praja Mandals²¹ established in the various Hill States of Himachal which launched several agitations and reform

movements beginning from the first quarter of the present century, particularly after the formation of the 'Riyasti Praja Mandal'.

Rampur Bushahr:

Before independence, Bushahr was included in the Shimla Hill States and was placed under the supervision of a Superintendent, Shimla Hill States, Shimla and the Political Agent, Lahore respectively. The high-handedness of the feudal chief of Bushahr, together with the negative attitude of the British authorities, encouraged the people of the State to raise their voice against the excesses of the native ruler under the guidance of Pt. Padam Dev and others.

The Himalayan Riyasti Praja Mandal was formed after a decision to this effect was taken in 1938, at a session of All India States Peoples' Conference, held at Ludhiana. The former took up the responsibility of directing the activities of the political and social workers in the various hill states.

The Praja Mandal formed in the State of Rampur Bushahr and other small states in Shimla region, was given the name of Simla Riyasti Praja Mandal. The main organisation held public meetings at various places whereby people were encouraged to refuse to pay the unjust taxes and perform Begar to the rulers of these states.

The lawful and genuine grievances of the depressed people of Rohru, led by Pt. Padam Dev,²³ were placed before the political agent during the latter's visit to Rampur. The resolution included twenty-five demands for the socio-economic uplift of the people of the area.²⁴ The resolution not only gives an insight into the efforts of the Praja Mandalists to educate the people for protection of their fundamental rights and civil liberties, but also gives an indication as to how the depressed and the neglected hill people began to register their protest against the excesses of the states' rulers.

The Simla State Praja Mandal chalked out several programmes for the general uplift of the people of the hill states as is known from the letters it issued from time to time to its organisers for general guidance. A pamphlet was also circulated by Bushahr Prem Sabha, Simla²⁶ through which the State was asked to hand over the power to representatives of the people. The people of the state were further directed not to render Begar and struggle unitedly for their fundamental rights. The chiefs of the Simla hill states on their part retaliated and Praja Mandal workers were not allowed to enter the states by the Ranas of the small states like Ghund, Theog, Balson, Bhagal, Bhajji, Beja, Darkoti and Keonthal on the ground that the policy of their state was that no man from outside the state be allowed to fight the case of their people.

Due to unrest among the low caste people in these states resulting from the encouragement and instigation by the Praja Mandal members, the British authorities lost no time in warning the rulers of the various states confidentially about the possibility of further unrest and agitation. The administration of the Bushahr state was disturbed greatly due to the propaganda of the workers of the Bushahr Praja Mandal led by Pt. Padam Dev. The enquiry conducted by S.S.Dhawan, an All India State People's Conference representative, laid down certain rules for the Kolis (low caste people) whose status as 'Adna Malik' (inferior owner) of land was not disputed. The decision of the Political Agent in favour of the Kolis, encouraged the latter to struggle against the

excesses of forced labour of Begar by Ranas, State officials and Zamindars of high caste.

One of the major demands of the Praja Mandalists was setting up of an executive council (consisting of members in whom the public may have confidence) so long as the Representative Assembly is not set up. The executive committee of 5 members set up by the Political Agent was not accepted and the Praja Mandalists²⁷ carried on their demand for a Representative Assembly. They continued their satyagrah till Oct. 1947 when it was decided to contest the elections for Vidhan Parishad. In the Parishad, the Praja Mandalists led by Satya Dev Bushahri, won all the seats.

The demand for a representative government in Bushahr, as had already been declared by its chief, Raja Padam Singh before his death in April, 1947, however continued. The Praja Mandal leaders called upon the Council of Regency for a session of the assembly failing which it was threatened that satyagrah will be launched and taxes will not be paid. The State Praja Mandal also called upon the States Ministry of Government of India for interference, ²⁹ and due to their mounting pressure, the state India and became a part of Himachal Pradesh on April 15, 1948. The Simla Riyasti Praja Mandal" thus finally succeeded to achieve its goal for the establishment of a responsible government and democratising its administrative machinery.

The Himalayan Riyasti Praja Mandal was formed to coordinate and direct the various activities and political workers in the various hill states. Finally one organisation called 'Himalayan States Regional Council', with its headquarters at Simla was formed. The latter was affiliated to the All India State People's Conference. The various Praja mandals formed in small states like Jubbal, Theog, Koti, Bhagat (Solan), Mehlog, Madhan, Khaneti, Throch, Kunihar, Dhami, Balson, Kumarsain, Arki, Kuthar, Bhajji, Beja and Rawingarh etc., naturally became its members.

The various Praja Mandals began to encourage the hill people to refuse to pay unjust taxes, to fight against cruelties and not to perform Begär.³² The people were further told neither to give recruits for the British army nor money towards the war funds. Thus a sort of civil disobedience movement was launched which led to arrests of several Praja Mandàlists.³³

Dhami Firing Tragedy:

Soon after the formation of various Praja Mandals, the Dhami" Praja Mandal (being very much influenced by the political activities of the Simla States Praja Mandal) decided to test its strength. It passed resolutions asking for abolition of Begar, reduction of land revenue by fifty percent and grant of civil liberties. The resolutions further demanded the establishment of a responsible government in Dhami and removal of restrictions on the state subjects.

The people of small state of Dhami united and formed an association named 'Prem Pracharini Sabha Dhami State' in 1937. Initially, this organisation worked for the social uplift of the masses but after two years changed into a political organisation under the name 'Dhami Riyasti Praja Mandal' (13th July, 1939) and shifted its centre from Dhami to Simla for political activities.

The Dhami Praja Mandal under its leader Sita Ram presented a charter of demands³⁵ before its ruler Rana Dalip Singh, which however, was rejected. Later a deputation led by Bhag Mal Sahota marched towards Dhami on July 16, 1939 for the realisation of their demands. The Dhami Rana arrested Bhag Mal near 'Ghana Ki Hatti'. The confrontation between Praja Mandalists and the Dhami ruler led to Dhami firing tragedy resulting in the death of two persons and injuries to many others.

The Dhami firing tragedy proved a turning point in hill people's struggle for social and political reforms. The national leaders, Pt. Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi, were informed about the tragic happenings who condemned the firing and directed the Standing Committee of the Congress and All India States Peoples Conference to hold an inquiry. The Enquiry Committee" presided over by Lala Duni Chand Advocate, gave a number of suggestions.

Whatever the other results of the Dhami firing tragedy may be, it can not be denied that the tragic event exposed the miserable conditions not only in Dhami state but in other hill states also. The event occupies an important place in the growth of social and political consciousness amongst the hill state rulers and the British imperialism.

Kunihar:

Like Dhami, the people of Kunihar (Arki), a small state in Simla hills, raised their voice against the excesses of the ruler. Inspired by the Simla Praja Mandal, they established Kunihar Praja Mandal in 1939 which, however, was not recognised and its workers were arrested. A deputation of the Kunihar Praja Mandal led by Pt. Padam Dev, presented a charter of demands before the Kunihar Raja on 8.7. 1939 demanding the release of the arrested workers, 25% reduction in the land-revenue, official recognition of the Kunihar Praja Mandal and the formation of an administrative reforms committee for the introduction of social, economic and political reforms in the state.

The Kunihar Rana sensing the mood of the people and finding his position very weak, accepted the demands for the smooth running of the administration in the state. The revolutionary activities in the adjoining Dhami State and the meagre resources of the state had made the position of the raja helpless. The Praja Mandal leaders thus succeeded in achieving their goal of a responsible government in Kunihar without much struggle.

Mandi and Suket:

The erstwhile state of Mandi remained a centre of revolutionary activities since the early years of the twentieth century. The exploitation at the hands of the local rulers and their contacts with the Punjab revolutionaries (who had been taking active part in the national struggle for independence against the British imperialism) made the people of Mandi conscious of their rights both politically and socially.

As early as 1909 the cultivators of Mandi exhibited their discontentment and protested against the maladministration of the Raja's minister, Jiwa Nand, who had been compelling them to sell their produce to the government (the Raja). The people of Mandi also resented the system of Begar which was applied even at a time when the farmers were busy in their own cultivation.

To get their grievances redressed, the agitators, numbering about twenty thousand, led by Shoba Ram of Sarkaghat, assembled at Mandi and made a strong protest against the autocratic rule of the Raja. Finding himself helpless, the Mandi ruler Bhawani Sen sought the help of the British. The agitation was ruthlessly crushed with the help of the British forces and its prominent leaders were sentenced to long term imprisonments. The repression let loose by the state, aided by the British government, however, failed to demoralise the people.

Meanwhile, the members of the Ghadar Party, some of whom had taken shelter for safety in Mandi and Suket, further inspired the people of the state for revolutionary activities. The one month long strike by the Sewa Dal (later Praja Mandal) workers in 1936 led to the arrest of its several leaders including Swami Purna Nand, Baldev Chand, Ram Chander and Mahashay Hari Sukh."

The new set of revolutionaries included even Mian Jawahar Singh and the Rani of Khairgarhi of Mandi. The agitation against the state exploitation continued under leaders like Swami Purna Nand and Daulat Ram Sankhyan. The office of the Himalayan Hill States Regional Council was also set up in Mandi under the presidency of Swami Purna Nand. The latter was invited by the Mandi ruler, Zalim Sen in connection with the formation of a ministry but the offer was turned down and the struggle continued for the merger of Mandi in Himachal Pradesh. National leaders were also informed about the deplorable condition in Mandi.

Although India had attained its independence in 1947, the Chief of Mandi continued its hold over the state and let loose a reign of terror. Several workers including Padam Nabh were arrested. When the Praja Mandal workers assembled near Balh Rati Thana to protest against the arrests, they were fired. Two persons died on the spot and several others were injured. Finally, the Raja agreed to form a ministry which included the Praja Mandal leaders also. The so-called ministry of Praja Mandal, however, lasted for only 40 days and its members were ultimately successful in achieving their aim of the merger of Mandi state in Himachal Pradesh in 1948.

Suket:

As elsewhere, the Suket state was also noted for its inefficient system of administration. The officials of the State were corrupt and tyrannical. The Court and the Darbar itself was infamous for receiving bribes by way of Nazar and Bhaints. The will of the Darbar was the fundamental law and the most hated Begar or forced labour was also prevalent in the state. The oppressive policies of the Darbar led to widespread discontentment and uprisings. This discontentment and resentment continued to grow in the State till it finally led to a Satyagrah.

Like the Mandi state, the people of Suket, under the inspiration of the leaders of the Ghadar Party of Punjab, made notable contribution in the national struggle for freedom and actively participated in putting an end to the authoritarian and autocratic regime of Raja Laxman Sen in their state. Encouraged by the Punjab revolutionaries, the people of the state, as early as 1924, agitated against the excesses of the state authorities by refusing to render forced and unpaid labour of Begar.

The Praja Mandal was established in the state in 1945 under a revolutionary leader Rattan Singh and its workers agitated for the restoration of their democratic rights. The Suket ruler, Raja Laxman Sen, with a view to satisfy the people, accepted their demand of a responsible government by forming a 'Rajya Sabha'. However, the rules adopted for the election of this Rajya Sabha were rejected by the Praja Mandal.

The Suket Satyagrah:

A civil disobedience movement was launched in the Suket State (in Karsog tehsil of Mandi) which was one of the erstwhile Princely States among the East Punjab Hill States. The movement popularly known as Suket Satyagrah," was launched under the patronage of Praja Mandal party in February, 1948, which finally led to the merger of Suket with the Indian Union. The Suket Satyagrah is particularly interesting as it helps us in understanding the pattern of political awakening in the hill states of Himachal Pradesh leading to the end of the process of integration of the hill states with the Indian Union.

One section of the Praja Mandalists was now determined to take solid and effective steps to force the issue of integration of the hill states with the Indian Dominion. With this aim, a Himalayan Prant Provisional Government, with its headquarters at Simla, was established under the presidentship of Shiva Nand Ramaul. The other members of the Provisional Government were Sada Nand Chandel of Bilaspur, Pt. Padam Dev of Rampur-Bushahr and Mukand Lal of Suket. The Provisional Government had the sanction of All India States People's Conference.

The leaders of the Provisional Government met at Suni on Feb., 8, 1946 and resolved to launch movement to secure the merger of the Himalayan States with the Indian Union. The State of Suket was selected as the first target by the leaders because the climate and circumstances were very favourable there for such a movement." On February 16, 1948, a forty-eight hours notice was served to the ruler of Suket Raja Laxman Sen, to hand over the State administration in the hands of the people for its merger with the Indian Dominion.

When no response was received to this ultimatum, a non-violent movement was started on February 18, 1948 in two prongs. One column consisting of one thousand strong satyagrahis, under the leadership of Padam Dev, marched from Tatta Pani on Suket border and second group marched from Behna village in the Indian territory. When the news of this march reached the oppressed people of the state, they also joined the satyagrahis in large numbers.

The satyagrahis met hardly any resistance from the State forces or police as it was completely demoralised due to the overwhelming response which the satyagrahis received from the subjects of the state as well as others. The limited resources at their disposal also prevented the state police from dealing strongly with a mass movement of such a magnitude. Consequently the police posts fell to the satyagrahis and the tehsil headquarters were also taken over without much resistance.

On the 5th day (February 23, 1948), the satyagrahis of both the columns joined at Karsog. They camped at Jaidevi, about eight miles from Sundernagar, the capital of the state. By now, more than three fourths of the territory had been occupied by the

satyagrahis in the name of people's government. The police posts captured included those of Phernu, Kotli, Karsog, Pangana, Nihari and Jaidevi. Meanwhile the people of the Dehar tehsil also rose in rebellion and half of its territory was also liberated.

With the intensification of the satyagrah, the local officials saw their safety in pledging their loyalty to the people's government. The recalcitrant elements were either suppressed or their leaders, mostly police and high executives, were imprisoned by the people. In this way Suket fell. The state finding itself unable to resist the onslaught, appealed for help to the government of India, but the latter advised the State to sign the instrument of merger.

The satyagrah was called off on the suggestion of the Ministry of States, Government of India and the administration of the State was handed over to the Administrator sent by the Centre on March 8, 1948.

Needless to point out that the Suket satyagrah created greater awakening among the people of other hill states whose rulers also took the cue from this movement and hastened to sign the merger instruments. By April 15, 1948, these states were taken over by the Government of India, which ultimately led to the formation of a centrally administered unit known as Himachal Pradesh.

Bilaspur:

Before independence, the people of Bilaspur State were ruled over by Raja Anand Chands who succeeded in 1928. The people of Bilaspur, like other hill states, were paying heavy and unjust taxes and rendering the services of unpaid labour, Begar. The earliest protest movement against the excesses of the state authorities was started by the farmers of the Bahadarpur pargana who refused to supply fire-wood to the revenue staff working in their villages. The people also raised their voice against the unjust and high rate of Nazrana; fishing license and rude behaviour of the revenue staff, some of whom were accused of molesting the village ladies. The state however, suppressed the agitation with a heavy hand and arrested a number of its prominent leaders.

To free themselves from the grip of Raja's personal rule, the people of Bilaspur, formed some social organisations like the 'Sewa Samiti', 'Sanatar Dharam Sabha' and 'Anjuman-i-Mussalmin'. Although the purpose of these organisations was social and religious uplift of the masses, yet the meetings of these organisations were also utilised for discussion on political matters.

In 1945, after their return from All India States People's Conference at Udaipur, some young workers like Daulat Ram Sankhyan, Narotam Das Shastri and Devi Ram Upadhyay, organised the 'Bilaspur Rajya Praja Mandal' with its headquarters at Simla.

Namol Tragedy :

The workers of the newly organised Praja Mandal lost no time in rallying the people and launching a formal agitation against the state authorities and for the protection of their fundamental rights. The workers, led by Pt. Padam Dev, Sada Ram, N.D.Shastri, Daulat Ram, Shyamanand, Thakur Dutt Shastri and others, marched from Simla to Bilaspur state to present their case before the Raja. But on the state boundary,

they found their way barred by a force of about three hundred strong with Raja Anand Chand at its head. The processionists were attacked and beaten mercilessly.

The agitation for a democratic set up in Bilaspur, however, continued. On 21.12.1946, the Bilaspur Praja Mandal leaders submitted a memorandum to the Raja requesting the latter to end the policy of repression and to introduce reforms in the state, failing which a satyagrah will be launched. A report was also sent to the All India States people's Conference about the atrocities of the Raja and the deteriorating situation in the state.

The Merger:

After the merger of the Suket state (February, 1948), several other hill states followed suit and signed the merger documents but the Raja of Bilaspur refused to merge his state in the newly formed Himachal Pradesh and on the contrary declared himself as the king of 'Azad Kahlur'. The Bilaspur people waited for another eight months. When nothing came out of negotiations, the members of the Praja Mandal decided for an open civil disobedience movement. A march was organised from Simla. The processionists entered the state only to be stopped near the Sutlej bridge and attacked by the state forces.

Meanwhile, Sardar Patel sent his representative and called for the ruler. Realising that his days were numbered, Raja Anand Chand signed the merger document on 12.10.1948⁵⁹ and his state was integrated with the Union of India as a Part 'C' State. On the State's merger, the Raja was appointed as the first Chief Commissioner by the Government of India and he continued as such up to April 1, 1949. The final merger of Bilaspur state was executed in 1954 when it became one of the districts of Himachal Pradesh.

Chamba:

The people of Chamba, like other hill states, were entirely at the mercy of the state officials and suffered silently the excesses of the state. As in case of the other hill chiefs, the Chamba Raja was chief source of all administration and enjoyed supreme judicial powers. In day to day administration, however, he was assisted by a Wazir, who ranked next to the Raja and during the latter's absence, exercised supreme executive and revenue control. The cultivators of the state were exploited by several revenue and other officials like Wazir, Ugrahikas, Drabiyals and Kardars etc.⁶⁰ The peasants were compelled to render unpaid forced labour, Begar.

Agrarian Revolt:

The first sign of revolt in Chamba against the excesses of the State is noticed in Bhattiyat Wizarat, as early as 1895-96 when the cultivators refused the payment of land revenue, unjust taxes and the rendering of Begar. When the state officials, under the direction of the ruler, rounded up several agitators and punished them, the matter went up to the British Government, which held an enquiry through the Commissioner of Lahore. Taking the side of the ruler, the enquiry committee reported that the inhabitants of Bhattiyat were at fault and created undue disturbance. Needless to say that the state officials put down the rebellion with a heavy Hand.

The agitation subsided but the subjects of Chamba continued to suffer under the autocratic rule till the early years of the twentieth century. In 1922, the Chamba state subjects, working in Lahore and other towns of the Punjab, represented to the British Government for the protection of their fundamental rights and realisation of their lawful demands. When the pressure mounted, the British government directed the ruler to set up an Advisory Council, with a view to satisfy the people and to establish direct link between the Government and the state subjects.

With the formation of 'Chamba People's Defence League' in 1932, the people's struggle against the mis-rule in Chamba took a formal shape. The organisation not only supported their demand for grant of civil liberties but also educated the state subjects about their economic rights. Another social organisation called 'Chamba Sewak Sangh' emerged on the scene in 1936 with the aim of the general uplift of the people. Being a social organisation, it was recognised and allowed to carry on its social activities.

With the passage of time, this organisation diverted its activities in political field by pleading the cause of depressed classes and forced the state administration to redress their grievances like reduction in the rate of land revenue, abolition of Begar, democratisation of administrative machinery and the establishment of a responsible government.

Due to its political activities, the 'Chamba Sewak Sangh' was now banned by the state authorities and its prominent leaders like Daulat Ram Gupta and others were arrested and sentenced to long term imprisonments in jail. The state also passed 'The Chamba Registration of Association Act' in 1939 to suppress the activities of the 'Sewak Sangh'.

The people and workers of the Sangh, however, continued their agitation from outside the state by forming a 'Chamba Riyasti Praja Mandal'. Its delegates also attended the All India States People's Conference session at Ludhiana in 1938.

The Praja Mandal thus helped the people of Chamba state in uniting them in the form of an organisation with a view to carry on the struggle. Resolutions were passed for the grant of fundamental rights and civil liberties. Sensing the mood of the people, the state authorities revoked the 'Registration of Societies Act' towards the end of 1944. The Praja Mandal carried on its agitation for the grant of responsible government in Chamba state till its ruler Raja Lakshman Singh signed the merger document and ceded his state to the Indian Government on March 8, 1948 after which Chamba became a separate district of the new political and administrative entity known as Himachal Pradesh.

Kangra and Sirmur:

Kangra: Before its merger in Himachal Pradesh (1.11.1966), Kangra was a part of Punjab and before that it constituted as one of the Punjab Hill States. Being a part of Punjab, it remained a centre of revolutionary activities and played a prominent part in national struggle for freedom. The revolutionary activities in the Punjab naturally made the people of Kangra area bold, courageous and industrious.

The people of Kangra have the unique distinction of fighting against the British imperialism. They actively participated in the Anglo- Sikh War (1846) and India's First

War of Independence (1857) against the British. The British authorities crushed their revolutionary activities and took them under their direct control by dethroning the rulers of these areas. 67The people of Kangra hills were the first to revolt for the protection of their fundamental rights and getting their justified demands accepted by the State authorities. In 1920-21, the Kangra people, led by Thakur Pancham Chand, Lala Bashi Ram 68 and others, boycotted the foreign goods. Their most popular leader was, however, Baba Kanshi Ram of Dada Siba, known as Pahari Gandhi, who spread the message of nationalism among the people of the area. Several conferences were held and processions were taken out under the leadership of Babu Kanshi Ram.

In 1927 a conference was held at Tal in Sujanpur-Tira which was addressed by Baba Kanshi Ram. In this conference, oaths were taken by a large number of workers for the freedom of the country. The people were lathi-charged and beat mercilessly by the British forces. Political meetings were banned and several leaders, including Baba Kanshi Ram were sentenced to long term imprisonments. They were released only in 1930 under the Gandhi-Irwin Pact.

Meanwhile, some other prominent leaders like Comrade Hazara Singh, Pt. Amar Nath Sharma and Kanhaya Lal Butail formed the people's organizations in the state in the form of Praja Mandals. These leaders had close links with the national leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel. Through their inspiration and encouragement, the Praja Mandal leaders of Kangra were able to associate the masses in various satyagrahs till they finally achieved the goal of liberating the motherland from the yoke of British imperialism in 1947.

Sirmur:

The erstwhile state of Sirmur had been one of the most politically awakened areas than most of the other group of states now forming a part of modern Himachal Pradesh. Being close to the plains of Punjab, it was greatly influenced by the revolutionary activities of the political workers of Punjab, many of whom had migrated from the plains and settled there.

During the revolt of 1857 the Sirmur chief Shamsheer Parkash (and his Regent Kanwar Surjan Singh) had rendered valuable assistance to the British and their services were not only appreciated by the Political Agent but they were also honoured with Khillats. During the First World War, the Sirmur chief Raja Amar Parkash also offered his personal services to the British. The next chief Raja Rajinder Parkash, who occupied the Sirmur gaddi in 1938, attempted to suppress all political activities in his state with an iron hand.⁷³ The people, however, continued their struggle for the introduction of democratic institutions.

A secret organisation had already been formed in 1920 under the leadership of Chaudhary Sher Jang who had been involved in the 'Train Dacoity Case 74. The Sirmur Praja Mandal's was organised in Sirmur in 1937 to carry on the struggle in an organised way. Apart from its president, Chaudhary Sher Jang (who had joined the Praja Mandal after his release from the Ahmadgarh jail), the other prominent leaders included Pt. Shiva Nand Ramaul,⁷⁶ Devinder Singh, Nahar Singh and Harish Chand. The state used all tricks to put down the movement. In a bid to crush the political activities, its leaders were charged falsely in a murder conspiracy and sentenced Devinder Singh,

Harish Chand, Nahar Singh and Jagnandan to death. The session Judge, Yashwant Singh Parmar, however, discharged the accused. Parmar's judgment displeased the ruler and the latter transferred the case to a special tribunal which convicted the accused.

The Pajhota Andolan:

Apart from the Parja Mandal, some kisan leaders, inspired by the ongoing Quit India Movement (1942), formed a Kisan Sabha for the protection of the economic interests of the cultivators. The workers of the association led by Lakshmi Singh, Vaid Surat Singh and Chu Chu Miano etc., organised protest movements in the form of satyagrah and non-cooperation movement. Their main demands included: (i) Improvement of farmers condition by providing agricultural facilities (ii) Democratisation of administrative machinery, and (iii) The establishment of a responsible government in Sirmur.

The Kisan Movement started under the leadership of Vaid Surat Singh in October, 1942 is popularly known as the Pajhota Andolan. The background of the andolan was provided by the economic exploitation of the peasants during the second world war. During war, the Sirmur chief issued orders for the compulsory deposit of ten maunds of food-stuff's in the State Depot. In addition, the rates of potato crop was fixed between rupees three to three-fifty per maund in the State Societies, whereas the market rates were rupees sixteen per maund. It was thus a worst type of exploitation in which the peasants were forced to sell their produce to the State agencies.

The Pajhota Andolan was so well organised that the state. imposed a Martial Law in the Pajhota area. The people were hunted down, harrassed and beaten in several villages⁸³. The entire village of Koti Bhawga was looted, plundered and then set to fire. When the satyagrahis assembled to extinguish the fire, they were fired by the military commander of the state.

The andolan was crushed by the state forces with a heavy hand. About seventy people were tried as accused by one-man-tribunal. The tribunal acquitted seventeen, awarded life imprisonment to fifty-two and two years sentence to three persons.

The Pajhota Andolan was both agrarian as well as political in nature. Its political tone found ready assistance and sympathy from the Praja Mandal leaders. In all probability, the leaders of the Kisan Sabha only wanted the redressal of their grievances directly by the ruler but the latter's powerful advisors misled him into a false belief that the agitators were bent upon humiliating him. Naturally, things became worse when Raja Rajinder Parkash, instead of attending to the genuine grievances of the people, used the state's police and military in supressing the agitation.

To revert to the Parja Mandal activities, the demand for self government in Sirmur gathered momentum around 1945 when the leaders of the Himalayan Hill States Regional Council and Simla Riyasti Praja Mandal attended a big conference at Nahan on 24-25th August, 1945 and passed resolutions asking the Sirmur chief to associate people in the state administration. Due to mounting pressure from the Praja Mandalists, the ruler announced the formation of a Rajya Parishad.

13.5 Self Check Exercise

1. Who led the first popular uprising against the British during the middle of the nineteenth century in Himachal?
2. The Kisan Movement was popularly known as?

13.6 Conclusion

The State, however, through a clever move, debarred several voters on the basis of one year's continuous stay in the state. The Praja Mandal leaders sent reports to All India State People's Conference for further guidance in the state agitation. It was decided by the Praja Mandal to boycott the constitutional reforms of the Rajya Parishad. The campaign for a democratic set up and removal of the ruler continued till March, 13, 1948 when finally the goal of merger of Sirmur state in Himachal Pradesh was achieved after the merger document was signed in the presence of about thirty thousand people. The unpleasant chapter of the despotic and autocratic rule of the hili chiefs was thus closed mainly due to the efforts of the Praja Mandal leaders and workers.

13.7 Glossary:

Praja Mandal Movement: Praja Mandal Movement was a part of the Indian Independence movement from the 1920s in which people living in the princely states, who were subject to the rule of local aristocrats rather than the British Raj, campaigned against those feudatory rulers, and sometimes also the British administration, in attempts to improve their civil rights.

13.8 Answer to Self Check Exercise

1. The first popular uprising against the British during the middle of the nineteenth century was led by Ram Singh Pathania.
2. The Kisan Movement started under the leadership of Vaid Surat Singh in October, 1942 is popularly known as the Pajhota Andolan.

13.9 Suggested Readings

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13.10 Terminal Question

1. What was Praja Mandal Movement?
2. Give a brief account of different social reform movements in Himachal Pradesh?

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Lesson - 14

Constitutional History of Himachal Pradesh

Structure

- 14.0 Introduction
- 14.1 Objective
- 14.2 Constitutional Development
- 14.3 Self Check Exercise
- 14.4 Conclusion
- 14.5 Glossary
- 14.6 Answer to Self Check Exercise
- 14.7 Suggested Readings
- 14.8 Terminal Question

14.0 Introduction

Himachal Pradesh was established in 1948 as a Chief Commissioner's Province within the Union of India. The province comprised the hill districts around Shimla and southern hill areas of the former Punjab region. Himachal became a part C state on 1951 with the implementation of the Constitution of India. Himachal Pradesh became a Union Territory on 1 November 1956. On 18 December 1970 the State of Himachal Pradesh Act was passed by Parliament and the new state came into being on 25 January 1971. Thus Himachal emerged as the eighteenth state of the Indian Union.

14.1 Objective

1. to understand the constitutional development of Himachal Pradesh
2. to analyze the emergence of new Himachal
3. to study the role of local rulers in the development of Himachal
4. to study the history of Himachal Pradesh 1948-71

14.2 Constitutional Development

Constitutionally, Himachal Pradesh has had a very precarious but eventful career. The Pradesh was constituted as a Chief Commissioner's province on 15th April, 1948, after the merger of some thirty erstwhile princely hill states. Behind this merger lay the valiant struggle by the people and the Praja Mandals against the feudalism under which they had suffered for centuries. The crowning events of this long drawn struggle were the Solan Conference of the representatives of Praja Mandal and the princes held on 26th January, 1948 and the Suket Satyagraha when Praja Mandal

workers, along with thousands of people, marched into Suket state on 18th February, 1948, capturing one police post after another. Representing a fascinating part of the mightiest mountain ranges on the globe, Himachal Pradesh continues to be the “abode of gods” with peace and tranquility, which made it the “tapasthali” of saints and sages, largely intact.

The state’s rapid march on the road to development has not diluted its cultural identity and the people still have abiding respect for their rich traditions. The “devbhoomi” has come a long way from an amalgamation of little-known feudal kingdoms to a modern state. The rugged “uncultivable” hill slopes have been transformed into money-spinning orchards, roads have penetrated the mountains in all directions, opening the nature’s hidden splendours to the world.

Numerous turbulent rivers and nullahs criss-crossing the hills have been bridged and some of the big rivers have already been impounded to generate electricity. Efforts are on to harness the vast hydel potential to make the hill state a “powerhouse” of the country. The spectacular achievements of the state, with a difficult topography and varied climatic conditions, have belied the general belief that the people of hills were destined to live in misery and poverty.

The history of the state has been as old as mankind. In fact, it was one of the centres of man’s evolution as evident from the archaeological find in Shivaliks of more than a million-year old fossils of Ramapithecus and a half-a-million-year-old palaeolithic tools. The erstwhile rulers of the princely states claimed descent from the heroes of “Ramayana” and “Mahabharata” and traced their lineage to the sun and the moon. The name of “Trigarta” as Kangra region was known in earlier times, finds repeated mention in the Sanskrit literature, particularly the Mahabharata and the Puranas. King Susharman, the founder of Trigarta, allied with the Kaurvas during the great war.

Himachal Pradesh first came into being as a centrally administered territory on April 15, 1948, by the integration of 30 small princely states. Only five of these states had some size, while 13 of them were less than 100 square miles, three were even less than 10 square miles in area.

When Bilaspur was merged with it in 1954 it had an area of 28,192 sq km. These states presented a picture of stark poverty, illiteracy and all-round backwardness. In states like Mandi and Sirmaur some sort of assemblies were in place but they had no real power and the rulers were in complete command.

The Shimla hills were controlled through a political agent and the Panjab hills through a resident. Since their powers were largely undefined, the rulers were not free even in handling the internal administration of their respective states. The situation changed dramatically after Independence but the formation of the hill state was preceded by some political turmoil as the feudal rulers were not willing to transfer power to the people. With the British no more at the helm affairs, they were no longer in a position to suppress the popular sentiment.

A plan was made to form a union of states and accordingly a constituent assembly was convened at Solan from January 26 to 28, 1948, under the chairmanship of Raja Durga Singh of Bhogat. The Punjab hill states did not participate in the

assembly and it was confined to Shimla hill states only. A decision was taken to constitute a union of states, named Himachal Pradesh by the assembly. However, Praja Mandal leaders like Dr Y.S. Parmar and Pandit Padam Dev had other ideas. They foiled the move by apprising Mr Sardar Patel, the then Home Minister, of the real intentions of the princes. They favoured a consolidated hill province by amalgamation of the states and immediate transfer of power to the people. The Government of India supported their viewpoint and refused to recognise the union.

With the coming into force of the new Constitution, it became a Part-C state but it still had to contend with the old bureaucratic setup as the advisory council, comprising three erstwhile rulers and six representatives of the people, had no real power. Important matters were not put before the council and even where the council was consulted, its recommendations were not implemented.

The relentless battle waged by Dr Parmar inside and outside Parliament for democratisation of the administration led to passage of the Government of Part C States Act providing for a democratic government of a limited character in the state. Subsequently, a 36-member Vidhan Sabha was created in November 1951 and the first popular government headed by Dr Parmar assumed office on March 24, 1952. The Chief Commissioner gave way to Lt Governor and Major-General Himmat Singh was the first incumbent to the upgraded office. Subsequently, Dr Parmar managed to convince the Centre of the incongruity of keeping Bilaspur as a separate Part C state and it finally became a part of Himachal Pradesh on July 1, 1954.

The travails of the infant state were, however, far from over as the Justice Fazl Ali Commission, set up by the Centre to look into the reorganisation of state, recommended its integration with Punjab by a majority verdict in September 1955. The recommendation came as a bolt from the blue for the people who had struggled for a separate hill state all these years. They fought yet another battle and succeeded in convincing the Centre about the necessity of Himachal Pradesh continuing as a separate state. The commission had also stressed that in case Part C states were not willing to merge with larger states, they should be put under Central rule.

Dr Parmar and other leaders did not hesitate in making way for the return of bureaucratic rule in the larger interest of the people and maintaining a separate identity of the hills.

Thereafter, the state was governed by a territorial council, a corporate body in which the elected members had no role and the administration was virtually run autocratically under the Lt. Governor. Eventually, in 1962 when the territorial councils were turned into Vidhan Sabhas all over the country Dr Parmar once again took over the reins of the administration. The reorganisation exercise turned out to be a blessing in disguise as the Boundary Commission appointed by the Centre for the purpose recommended that hill areas of Kangra, Nalagarh, Lahaul-Spiti, Kullu and Shimla in Punjab be integrated with Himachal Pradesh. These areas were transferred on November 1, 1966, to more than double its area to 55,673 km.

However, the integration of new areas created a plethora of problems as the higher services were not under the control of the state and rules of business necessitated frequent references to the Centre which exercised strict control over

budget. The leaders soon realised that there could be no end to the woes of state until it was granted full-fledged statehood. Yet another movement was launched with the passing of a unanimous resolution on January 24, 1968, demanding statehood in the assembly. The act to provide statehood to Himachal Pradesh was passed on December 18, 1970, and Himachal Pradesh became the 18th state of the country on January 25, 1971. The three decades of statehood have seen tremendous development on all fronts mainly due to the fact that Himachal Pradesh has remained politically a highly stable entity.

A little prior to the constitution of Himachal Pradesh as a Chief Commissioner's province, the States Minister, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, in a letter dated March 18th, 1948, had stated: "In the final stage the area is sufficiently developed in its resources and administration, it is proposed that its constitution should be similar to that of any other province. The ultimate objective is to enable this area to attain the position of an autonomous province of India."

Full of self-confidence by this assurance, Himachal Pradesh apparently was on a good wicket from the start. But, there were to be many a slip between the cup and the lip, and, the Pradesh had to pass through some very difficult phases before it could attain its proper status. At the time of its inception, the total area of Himachal was 27,018 sq. kms. with a population of 9,35,000.

As a Chief Commissioner's province, Himachal's administrative set up was not fully democratic though the Chief Commissioner had an advisory body consisting of three erstwhile princely rulers and six representatives of the people. That Council was merely an advisory body and had no real powers. There was widespread resentment against the bureaucratic rule and a constitutional battle was waged inside and outside the Constituent Assembly for democratisation of administration in these Centrally Administered Areas. This led to the passage, in September, 1951, of the Government of Part 'C' States Act, which conceded a responsible Government of a limited character to Himachal Pradesh, along with some other Part 'C' states, under a Lieutenant Governor. Elections to the thirty-six member Legislative Assembly, created under the new Act, were held in November, 1951. The Congress Party won twenty-four seats and the first popular ministry headed by Dr. Yashwant Singh Parmar was sworn in on March 24th 1952. A little earlier, on March 1st, 1952 the Chief Commissioner had been replaced by a Lieutenant Governor.

The popular ministry convinced the Centre of the incongruity of keeping Bilaspur as a separate Part 'C' State. As a result of this, on July 1st, 1954, Bilaspur was merged with Himachal Pradesh. The same year also witnessed the formation of the States Reorganisation Commission (with Fazl Ali as its Chairman and H. K. Kunru and K.M. Pannikar as the members) to go into the question of a reorganisation of the states in India on linguistic bases. Various organisations, people, Himachal Pradesh Congress Committee and the Pradesh Government submitted detailed memoranda to the Commission justifying Himachal's separate identity and claiming for the integration of Punjab hilly areas with it.

The majority verdict of the States Reorganisation Commission recommended Himachal's integration with Punjab though its Chairman dissented and recommended its

retention as a separate entity for its development and stated: "In small states, the administration will be more accessible to the people and there will be a livelier sense of local needs."

The people and their representatives were shocked at the verdict of the States Reorganisation Commission. They knew that what had been achieved in the last few years would come to a naught and a frightful era of dominance by Punjab would start in case of a merger. Time had come for starting a grim battle for the retention of the Pradesh as a separate entity on the map of India. No sacrifice was considered to be too great for this. The Pradesh Cabinet unanimously decided to forego its democratic rights to keep Himachal separate. The Ministry gave in writing that if the only course open to remain separate was to surrender the legislature, it was prepared to resign. So, this course was soon adopted. The battle was fought under the leadership of Dr. Y.S. Parmar, the indomitable champion of a separate status for Himachal Pradesh. Ultimately, he was able to convince Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, the Prime Minister of India, of the necessity of a separate Himachal Pradesh. But, the Pradesh had to pay a heavy price for this concession. It lost its assembly and popular ministry and reverted to the old pattern of a bureaucratic rule.

On November, 1st 1956, the wheels of democracy took a back turn in this Pradesh and it was made a Union Territory under an Administrator with the designation of a Lieutenant Governor. An unbearable period of travails again began for the Himachalies, who had no say in the running of their affairs and had to suffer the bureaucratic rule. The Territorial Council formed under the Union Territories Act tried to do its best with the limited powers it enjoyed, for, it could administer only the departments of Health, Education and Animal Husbandry but only upto the district level besides controlling the village roads. The Territorial Council passed a resolution unanimously for the restoration of the democratic set-up in the Pradesh. The people throughout the Pradesh also held meetings for the democratisation of administration. Thus a prolonged and peaceful struggle by the people convinced the Government of India that the representatives of the people must be given the responsibility of managing their own affairs. Announcing the new decision of the Government of India, late Lal Bahadur Shastri, then Union Home Minister, said in his speech in the Parliament in 1963, "It is better not to take half-hearted measures, it is better to delegate whatever power we want to the representatives of the people to run their own Government. After the passage of the Government of Union Territories Act, 1963, the Himachal Territorial Council was converted into a Legislative Assembly and a popular ministry headed by Dr. Y.S. Parmar came into existence. He was sworn in on July 1st, 1963. The question of the reorganisation of Punjab cropped up in 1965. The Punjab hill areas having received only a scant regard for their needs from the plains-oriented Government and looking with admiration at the progress made by Himachal on account of the advantage of having its own Government, the people of Punjab hill areas strongly demanded their integration with Himachal. Exhaustive memoranda were sent by the Pradesh Government, the Chief Minister and the President of the Himachal Pradesh Congress Committee to the Hukam Singh Committee and the Punjab Boundary Commission, laying claims for the integration of Punjab hill areas with Himachal Pradesh. Linguistic and cultural affinity besides the similarity of development problems and administrative viability were cited in support of this claim.

On the recommendation of Punjab Boundary Commission, the Government of India, while reorganising Punjab into two separate states of Punjab and Haryana, decided to integrate the Punjab hill areas of the districts of Kangra, Shimla, Kullu and Lahaul-Spiti, Nalagarh area of Ambala district, parts of Una tehsil of Hoshiarpur district, and of Pathankot tehsil of Gurdaspur district with Himachal Pradesh. The integration came about on November 1st 1966, and Himachal's territorial area increased to 55,673 kms. with a population of 28,12,463 (1961) Census). The present population of the Pradesh is 51,11,070 (1991 census).

Denial of due status to it was a great eye-sore to the people of Himachal Pradesh but finally the Pradesh did acquire a proper shape and identity. The integration led to a sizeable increases in the area of Himachal Pradesh and it became larger in size than Punjab or Haryana or Kerala. Due to an immense potential for development, its economic dependence on Centre was in no way greater than that of most of the other states of the country. Feeling deeply for the handicaps inherent in the denial of a proper and full constitutional status, as a full-fledged state, to the Pradesh in the Union of India, the people and their representatives started a new struggle for attaining a full statehood.

The Pradesh Congress Executive Committee had, as early as July 5th, 1965, through a resolution, demanded that the final stage of the constitutional development of the Pradesh, as envisaged in Sar dar Patel's letter of 1948, should be implemented and Himachal made a state of the Indian Union.

On January, 24th, 1968, the Himachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly passed a unanimous resolution which stated: "This house earnestly feels that it is high time for Himachal Pradesh to be recognised as a full fledged state and to that end, it strongly urges that the Central leadership and the Union Government concede the demand of the Pradesh for statehood by bringing about the necessary legislation without further loss of time."

The Himachal Pradesh Congress Committee and the Government took up the matter with the All India Congress Committee and the Government of India. Personal contracts were also established with the Central leaders by Pradesh leadership and for this purpose a Negotiating Committee was appointed by the Pradesh Government. Private member's resolutions demanding statehood for Himachal Pradesh, discussed both in the Rajya Sabha and the Lok Sabha, received overwhelming support. The arguments advanced regarding economic viability of the Pradesh were widely appreciated. Besides, the development and administrative progress made by the Pradesh was commended. Another point which appreciated and supported the cause of better administration in the smaller states won many adherents. It was felt that in the smaller states, the contacts of the people with their government were closer and they had a greater sense a participation in their administration. The inherent weaknesses of a Union Territory set-up also stood exposed and, in a way, it was conceded that no area should normally be relegated to the permanent status of a Union Territory. These 'words' to the Centre had also a right to become 'majors' sooner or later. A process, in this regard was needed to be initiated for the upgrading to the Union Territories.

The Central Government and the leaders fully appreciated the arguments advanced in favour of granting the statehood while sym pathising fully with the popular

aspirations of the people of Himachal Pradesh for this. They understood their peculiar problems and were all sympathy and support for their cause.

On July 31st, 1970, the bill for the grant of statehood was introduced in the Parliament. In the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, member after member, not only belonging to the Congress Party, but also to the other political parties and the independents, supported the bill. While Himachal's progress and specialised needs received full-throated appreciation, glowing tributes were also paid by the parliamentarians to the manner in which the peaceful struggle for the achievement of statehood was conducted by the people and leadership of Himachal Pradesh. It was also emphasized that the struggle was unique because not a single unpeaceful act was witnessed and no aggressive language heard. On December 18th, 1970, the State of Himachal Pradesh Act was passed and the newer state was inaugurated by Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, in Shimla on Jan. 25th, 1971. With this, the emergence of Himachal Pradesh as the eighteenth of the Indian Union under the able leadership of Dr. Y.S. Parmar, brought to a close that protected period of struggle which had started in the middle of this century.

In 1957, the Government of India considered in principle to sanction IAS cadre for Himachal Pradesh but then it was given up. Later on the Ministry of Home Affairs decided to re-open the question. They decided to organise common IAS/IPS cadres for Delhi-Himachal Pradesh, a scheme of joint cadres. The joint Delhi-Himachal Pradesh cadres for the IAS and the IPS were thus created, and were controlled and operated by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

In order to give some semblance of control over local affairs, the Parliament passed in December 1956, the Territorial Council Act, 1956. According to the provisions of this Act, a Territorial Council constituted on the model of a district board was set up in Himachal Pradesh. This Act introduced a type of government which may be termed diarchy. It signified a government by two rulers. As a new system of administration introduced in Himachal Pradesh by the Territorial Council Act, it meant a two-fold division of the sphere of governance of the Union Territory, each being administered by different sets of individuals appointed in different ways and bearing different relations to the Territorial Council and the Lieutenant Governor.

In 1965, it was decided to constitute separate civil and police cadres for the Union Territories. On the basis of the language spoken and understood by the people, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh and Andaman and Nicobar Administrations were grouped together as the regional language in all these territories was Hindi and also because the Administration could not have separate cadres on account of the small number of posts involved. Therefore, Delhi-Himachal Pradesh-Andaman Nicobar (DHANI) cadres were created on December 1, 1965.

In 1965, too, the question of the re-organisation of Punjab on linguistic basis was re-opened. This provided a long-awaited opportunity to the Punjab hill people as also to the people of Himachal Pradesh to pursue vigorously the objective of their unification. November 1, 1966, saw the fulfillment of the long cherished desire of the hill people as the hilly areas of Punjab-Kangra, Kullu, Shimla, Lahaul and Spiti, the sub-division of Nalagarh,

(Ambala District), part of Una tehsil (Hoshiarpur District), and Dalhausie and Bakloh (Gurdashpur District)-were merged with the Himachal Pradesh on this day. Its area increased to 55,673 square kilometers.

Upon this integration all the members of the Legislative Assembly representing the hill areas in the Punjab Vidhan Sabha were declared to be members of the Himachal Pradesh Vidhan Sabha. In January, 1967, two more ministers, Bakshi Pratap Singh and Lal Chand Prarthi, from the new areas, were added to the three members Cabinet of Dr. Yashwant Singh Parmar.

The integration besides fulfilling the age-long desire of the hill people to have a rule of their own elected representatives, gave the Pradesh a proper shape and identity. But in the wake of the integration came numerous problems like the integration of the services and the removal of the disparity in laws, rules and the tax structure. The invidious distinctions in respect of those in the two areas, which were governed differently prior to the integration, had been an eye sore to the people and the government of the Pradesh. The government pledged to bring about uniformity and took all steps to speed up the progress. While some matters, which the Pradesh government could decide by itself, were finalised, the others due to some constitutional factors, had to be sent to the Government of India for approval, which caused some delay in the settlement of such matters. Some relief in taxation rates and fees was provided to the new areas, but, the old areas had to be burdened to the extent of about Rs. 15 Lakhs for this.

With the interaction of the hilly areas of the Punjab in Himachal Pradesh, about 8% of the entire staff of the Punjab government was passed on to Himachal Pradesh. The most difficult problem that came up was the re-organization and unification of the services with different pay scales and working conditions. The Punjab Reorganization Act, 1966, provided that the service conditions of the integrated staff could not be adversely affected. Himachal Pradesh, being a Union territory, could not do much to bring about the required uniformity. This resulted in many difficulties. Most of these problems were, however, solved gradually with the help of the Central Government.

The Administrative Reforms Unit in Himachal Pradesh was set up in December 1964. The functions assigned to this Unit were :

- (1) to study the Administrative machinery of the Government with a view to suggesting reforms;
- (2) to conduct detailed work studies in the field;
- (3) to examine cases involving creation of new posts;
- (4) to attend to general enquiries from government of India concerning administrative machinery and;
- (5) to examine proposals for the installation of telephones.

The main emphasis of the task undertaken by this Unit was on economy and on promoting administrative efficiency in all branches of the Administration, and to take the requisite initiative in the matter of identifying problem areas for detailed study and, of course primary responsibility of various reforms.

When it was going on the Secretary, Administrative Reforms Commission, Government of India, in his letter of December 29, 1967, asked the State Department of Administrative Reforms to undertake a study of the organisation, structures and procedures of the Himachal Pradesh Administration as a whole and to suggest a general reorganisation with a view to securing maximum efficiency and economy. The following items in particular were included:

- (1) District reorganisation which would include
 - (a) Reorganisation of boundaries of districts,
 - (b) The set up of different departments in the districts,
 - (c) Relationships with superior formation and delegation;
- (2) The reorganisation of field officers of different departments at the Supra-district level;
- (3) The reorganisation of the offices of the heads of departments, with special reference to their staffing requirements at officer level;
- (4) the relationships of the Secretariat with heads of departments;
- (5) a review of the schemes of different departments to avoid overlap and to effect stream-lining; and
- (6) a review of the relationship of the Himachal Pradesh Administration with the Government of India and its mechanics.

After a preliminary survey and discussions with the Lieutenant Governor and the Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh as well as with key officers, the detailed organisational studies of the suggestion of the Commission were conducted by the State Administrative Reforms Unit. The Department prepared an ex-exhaustive report and submitted it in June 1968 to the Central Administrative Reform Commission with the following proposals.

- (1) The basic aspects of the Machinery of Government viz.
 - (a) the grouping of subjects into departments
 - (b) the charges of secretaries
 - (c) the portfolios of ministers
 - (d) the roles of the Administrator, the Chief Minister and the Chief Secretary:
- (2) financial administration;
- (3) planning administration;
- (4) Personnel administration;
- (5) inter-departmental structures;
- (6) arrangements for administrative reforms; and
- (7) the relationship of the Himachal Pradesh Administration with Government of India.

The Central Administrative Reforms Commission accepted the suggestions and included them in their 'Report of the Study Team-Administration of Union Territories and

NEFA, brought out in September 1968. These recommendations were implemented one by one after 1971.

In 1968, the Chief Minister, Dr. Yashwant Singh Parmar, took the case of Statehood to Himachal Pradesh with the Central leaders and the Government. By June, 1970, he succeeded to win over them and on July 31, 1970 the Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, informed the Parliament that 'the government had decided to grant Statehood to Himachal Pradesh'. On December 18, 1970, The State of Himachal Pradesh Act 1971' was passed and the Statehood was inaugurated by the Prime Minister on January 25, 1971, on Girja Maidan (Ridge) in Shimla. With this S. Chakravarthi, I.C.S. assumed the office of the first Governor of Himachal Pradesh.

On the attainment of Statehood in 1971, the State got its own I.A.S. and State Administrative Service called Himachal Administrative Service (H.A.S.) cadres and its own Public Service Commission. This led to the fifth re-organization of the services in twenty three years. Such continuous addition in the services and their frequent re-organization had resulted into an immense inflation of their numbers. As against some fifty gazetted and some 3,000 non-gazetted regular employees, their number increased to about 1,500 and 64,000 respectively by March 1973. Thus, the number of all categories of employees of the State Government rose to about 1,52,000.

The main functions of the Himachal Pradesh Public Service Commission is to help in the recruitment of State Administrative personnel. For this purpose, it conducts competitive examination. In the case of certain other categories of jobs, the candidates are selected on the basis of interview only. The Commission also helps the state in the framing of rules regarding recruitments, promotions, transfer, leave and pension of its administrative personnels. The State Government may request the Commission to conduct an inquiry against an official or to seek advice in matters of disciplinary action against its officials. The functions of the Commission are of great importance for the successful and efficient functioning of the administrative machinery of the Pradesh.

To train its employees in the art of administration, the government established the Himachal Pradesh Institute of Public Administration in June, 1973, in Fair Lawn near Mashobra. Upto that time Himachal Pradesh had to depend upon institutions in other parts of the country for imparting training to its officers. Till late they used to be trained the Training Institute for the Union Territories Civil Services, New Delhi.

For a successful implementation of policies and programmes of the government and to bring speed, efficiency and integrity to it the Prime Minister accordingly addressed a letter to the Chief Ministers on April 25, 1975, stressing the importance of streamlining and activating the administration and introducing strict discipline all around. To devise ways and means and measures to achieve the objects in view, a conference of the Chief Secretaries was, therefore, held on the 7th and 8th May, 1976, at Delhi. The conference made various recommendations about the various facets of administration and personnel policies. Another conference of the State Secretaries of the Departments of Personnel and Administrative Reforms, was subsequently held on the 9th and 10th December, 1976, which also made recommendations in the same directions.

In accordance with these recommendations, the Himachal Pradesh Government issued various orders/instructions to streamline the administration for providing better and speedier services to the public. All the important communications of the Government of India and the orders and instructions issued by the Himachal Government were compiled in a booklet entire, 'Compilation of Orders and Circulars' published by the Department of Personnel (Administrative Reforms) in 1977 for ready reference and guidance of all concerned.'

The election to the Parliament in March, 1977, brought a change of government at the Centre. Janta Party came to power and formed the government at the Centre. The Central leaders expressed that since the Congress Government in the States had lost the mandate, fresh elections to the State legislatures should be held. As a result of this, the State Legislative Assembly in Himachal Pradesh was dissolved and the President's Rule was imposed on April 30, 1977, which remained in force upto May 21, 1977. Mr. J. Kamath, I.A.S. was appointed Advisor to the Governor. He joined his duty on May 2, 1977. Elections to the Assembly were held in June, 1977. Mr. Shanta Kumar, the new Chief Minister, took the oath of office on June 22, 1977.

14.3 Self Check Exercise

1. When Himachal Pradesh was established?
2. When Bilaspur was merged with Himachal Pradesh?

14.4 Conclusion

The history of present day Himachal Pradesh in the post-independence era has been outlined below:

The Chief Commissioner's province of H.P. came into being on 15th April, 1948. H.P. became a part C state on 26th January, 1950 with the implementation of the Constitution of India. Bilaspur was merged with Himachal Pradesh on 1st July, 1954. Himachal Pradesh became Union Territory on 1st November, 1956. Kangra and most of the other hill areas of Punjab were merged with H.P. on 1st November, 1966 though its status remained that of a Union Territory. On 18th December, 1970 the State of Himachal Pradesh Act was passed by Parliament and the new state came into being on 25th January, 1971. Thus H.P. emerged as the eighteenth state of Indian Union. Himachal Pradesh has come a long way since then. It has seen a number of full-fledged governments which have led the state towards economic self-reliance.

14.5 Glossary

Statehood: the status of being a recognized independent nation

14.6 Answer to Self Check Exercise

1. Himachal Pradesh was established in 1948 as a Chief Commissioner's Province within the Union of India.
2. Bilaspur was merged with Himachal Pradesh on July 1st, 1954.

14.7 Suggested Readings

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Verma V., The emergence of himachal Pradesh: A Survey of Constitutional Development, New Delhi, 1995.

14.8 Terminal Questions

1. Give a brief account of emergence of New Himachal?
2. Describe the constitutional development of Himachal after 1948 to 1971?

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Lesson - 15

Artistic and cultural heritage: Temple style, Buddhist architecture, School of Pahari Painting

Strutcture

- 15.0 Introduction
- 15.1 Objective
- 15.2 Temple Style
- 15.3 The Buddhist Monasteries
- 15.4 Pahari Painting
- 15.5 Self Check Exercise
- 15.6 Conclusion
- 15.7 Glossary
- 15.8 Answer to Self check exercise
- 15.9 Terminal Question
- 15.10 Suggested Readings

15.0 Introduction

Himachal Pradesh is an important state in Northern India, which is known for its scenic mountain towns and picturesque valleys. The state is home to diverse cultures, and subsequently has strong influences of Tibetan, British, and Mughal art and architecture. The native architecture of Himachal Pradesh is determined mostly by the climatic conditions and vernacular materials. The use of locally available stone rammed earth, mud, bricks, and wood is done in accordance with the local construction techniques that help provide structural stability in the earthquake-prone state.

The 'Kath- Kuni' is a traditional construction technique that involves laying courses of wood and rubble masonry alternatively. This not only helps to distribute the weight of the building evenly but also helps to form a thick layer of cavity walls that provide excellent thermal insulation in extreme weather conditions. This technique is widely used throughout the state for the construction of various typologies of buildings.

Various art traditions flowed into Himachal Pradesh due to the migration of a number of different peoples (like the Shakas, Kushanas, Gujjars and Hunas etc.) from Central Asia and the Indian plains. Perhaps the most significant of the art-traditions is the one relating to the temple architecture. At the same time, it is also true that the temple architecture of Himachal Pradesh possesses a certain characteristic of its own resulting from several factors such as special raw-material, climate and religious trends.

15.1 Objectives

1. To understand the Cultural heritage of hilly states
2. To Study the different style of architecture in hilly areas
3. To collect information about Pahari Painting
4. To analaze theartitecture development of Buddhist Architecture in the hilly state

15.2 Temple Style

The temple architecture of Himachal Pradesh has several varieties, depending mostly on the geographical conditions. Excluding the Buddhist temples and monasteries, the four important varieties are:

- (a) The classical stone Nagara type, having curvilinear or flat-roof temples;
- (b) The pent-roof (with alternate courses of wood and stone) or indigenous hill style;
- (c) The pagoda style, consisting of from two to five super-imposed roofs, each one a little smaller than the one below it; (2) and
- (d) The Indo-Mughal style

Even in the above mentioned four types, we notice a considerable regional variety of design and craftsmanship. Originally, the temple comprised of a square sanctum and a square or rectangular pillared porch both covered by a flat roof. In the centuries to follow, improvements and additions were made and the temple architecture attained a definite concept. It now constituted a mulaprasada or the shrine, an antarala and its vestibule, and the mandapa or the assembly hall. The main shrine has inside the garbhagriha and is surmounted by a high tower called the shikhara having at its top either a kalasha (finial) or an amalaka

I. The Nagara style temples

The nagara style temples are very common in Himachal Pradesh. Most of these temples consist of a single cella in which the idol is housed and have an anteroom or mandapa. These temples are entered through an ornamental porch usually supported by two pillars. A peculiar feature of the nagara temples (such as in Chamba and Kulu) is the umbrella shaped canopy or covering of wood or zinc placed over and around the amalaka stone which forms the top of the shrine.

In some cases, the canopy in nagara style temples is carved out of stone slabs to protect the building from heavy snowfall. It thus appears that the nagara temple originated in the plains and was introduced in the hills, including those of Himachal Pradesh, at a comparatively later date with slight modifications necessitated by the geographical conditions of the area.

The earlier examples of the nagara type temples only consisted of a square cella, a small portico and a low platform. The form of shikhara is either rounded or curvilinear and has at its top either a kalasha (finial) or an amalaka, that is a circular ribbed stone disc. The nagara type temple is basically a style of the plains. However, when the style was introduced, the hilly regions also influenced the architecture of the nagara style. In

the Himalayan hills, a nagara type temple is a tower like conical formation built entirely of the stone and partially decorated with carvings.

The finest specimen of the nagara type is 8th century rock-cut temple complex at Masrur in Kangra. The Jagatsukh temple near Manali also belongs to the early eighth century and is one of the earliest specimen of the Partihara style.

Besides Kulu district (Manglor, Bajaura, Mukraha, Manikaran, Sultanpur, Chakki, Sarsai, Jagatsukh and Naggar), the nagara style temples are found in Brahmour (Manimahesha and Narsinghji temples) and in Chamba, where Lakshmi Narain temple is most outstanding among the complex of six temples, indicating the earliest instance of the introduction of Vaishnavism in the valley.

In the Kangra valley, the most outstanding temple in nagara style is that of Baijnath. Built in 1204, it is one of the finest monuments and a unique example of the post-Gupta traditions. (1) The temple has much in resemblance with the famous Orissa temple, so far as design and form are concerned. (2) In Mandi, the Trilokanath and Panchvaktra are two nagara style temples of outstanding architectural importance. (3) Another most frequented shrine built by Raja Ajbar Sen (the founder of the new Mandi township, is the temple of Bhutnath.

The old Bilaspur town is also credited with having possessed some of the magnificent nagara style temples, which portray rich tradition of Indian art. These were built between seventh and twelfth century A.D. Likewise, nagara style temples can also be seen in the Hamirpur (4) and Shimla districts.

II. Pent-roof/Chalet type temples

The earliest among the main groups, are the pent-roof shrines. These are made of stone and wood and are simple in design and structure. Although the pent-roof and pagoda type temples are stylistically different but the general features of the two types are such that their plan, structure and decorative motifs are almost the same. The main difference lies in their construction and in their number of roofs.

The pent-roof style temples are scattered all over the Himachal Pradesh. They are mostly found in Chamba(5) (Brahmaur, Chhatrari and Mirkula)(6), Shimla (Hatkoti and Jubbal)), Kulu, 2) Sirmur, and Mandi(2). These temples are fine examples of indigenous art, imagination and skill. Some of these are of great interest owing to elaborate wood work which has been carved to embellish their ceilings, doors, pillars and facades.

III. Pagoda type temples

The temples with pyramidal tiered roofs give the appearance of a pagoda. it is a tower-like storeyed structure of stone, brick or wood, associated usually with the Buddhist temple complex. The free standing pagoda type temple generally consists of from two to five super-imposed roofs directly over the garbhagriha.

Regarding the origin of the pagoda style temples, various views have been expressed by the art historians. It is generally believed that the pagoda style originated in the plains. These type of temples are mostly found in Nepal, China, Burma and in the

Scandinavian countries, noticed first by Fergusson in his History of Indian and Eastern Architecture.

As already mentioned, the architectural features of the pagoda style temples bear similarity to the pent-roof styles as well. The main difference, however, is in the number of super-imposed roofs. The pagoda type temples, of which 42 examples have been cited so far, are mostly square or rectangular in shape and have an open or closed verandah running round the shrine in a clockwise direction. In most cases, the entire structure is made of wood. The doors, windows and pillars are richly carved.

The multi-storeyed Shiva temple of Nirmand (Kulu), now in ruined condition, is stated to be the earliest of the pagoda type temples in Himachal Pradesh. Apart from Nirmand temple, the other fine specimens of pagoda style temples in the state are found in Nagar (Tripurasundari Devi), Dalas (Jogeshwar Mahadeva), Dhungri near Manali (Hidamba Devi), all in Kulu District; Mandi,(28) Shimla (29) and Kinnaur.(30) With the exception of Dakhani Mahadeva temple of Nirmand, all the other pagoda temples were built between fourteenth and nineteenth century A.D.

IV The Indo-Mughal style temples

A mixture of dome and nagara type temple, which existed in Himachal Pradesh in the medieval times, is known as the Indo-Mughal style. The examples of the Indo-Mughal style temples are Syam Sen (1664-79) Kali temple on Tarna hill, Shiva temple at Tira-Sujanpur (built in 1793). These temples are having onion domes and cusped arches.

One more style which is a mixture of sloping (pent-roof) and pagoda type temple, is known as Sutlej valley style. We have some examples of this style in Kulu district at Nithar (Dhavasewari) and Bahu Mahadeo etc.

The Himachal temples, as elsewhere, have been and are most beneficent institution. Apart from a place of worship, which offered solace, comfort and satisfaction to the devotees, these temples enriched the life of the people in various ways such as in the fields of learning, music, fine arts etc. They not only provided succour to the architect, the carpenter and other servants of the temple but also directed their activities towards civilized existence and overall welfare and happiness of the community. In Himachal Pradesh, the sacred mountain peaks particularly, infused a unique spiritual enthusiasm which is reflected in the various art forms including of course, the temple architecture.

The Heritage architecture of the state is a unique blend of its multicultural societies and communities, which is illustrated using the following examples.

1. Viceregal Lodge : Architecture of Himachal Pradesh

This historic monument in Shimla which served as the summer residence of the British Viceroy from 1888- 1946, displays the unification of the English Renaissance and the Victorian architectural style. Post-independence it was served as the Rashtrapati Nivas till 1960, after which it was converted into the Indian Institute of Advanced Study. The use of local sandstone and light blue sandstone render a greyish look to this magnificent building. The facades on all four sides are adorned with columns, arches, and mullioned windows. With great ornamental detailing, this mansion has lavish

interiors with teak staircases and flooring. The use of Kashmiri linings on the walnut ceilings and the walls adds a final Himachali touch to the mansion.

2. Tabo Monastery : Himachal Pradesh Monuments

This monastery located in the Lahaul and Spiti district of Himachal Pradesh is one of the most spiritual UNESCO World heritage sites in the world. Founded in 999 A.D. by the Buddhist King Yeshe O'd, this is the oldest functional Buddhist Monastery in India. Constructed using mud and brick, the complex of the monastery is home to various chapels, stupas, and ancient cave meditation centers. Influenced by both Indian and Tibetan cultures, the wall paintings in the monastery have a unique regional character in themselves.

3. Hidimba Devi Cave Temple | Architect in Himachal Pradesh

Dedicated to the Hidimba Devi and having references in the Mahabharata, this temple is built on a huge rock amid thick deodar trees in Manali. Built entirely out of wood, this temple has a ground floor and a three-floored roof. The sanctum of the temple is covered by a roof 24 meters high and built-in pagoda style. The uppermost part of the roof is decorated with motifs of Buddhist characters that give it a multicultural identity. The temple base is made of whitewashed mud covered with stone, using vernacular techniques of construction. In 1967, this temple was a Monument of National Importance.

4. Masroor Rock Cut Temples | Architecture of Himachal Pradesh

The Masroor Rock Cut temples are monolithic structures carved out of a 2,500-foot high natural sandstone rock. These Indo-Aryan temples of rare antiquity are built in the Nagara Style of Temple Architecture and are located in the Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh. The mandapas and sanctums of all the temples are fully craved, predominantly with open lotuses. The walls remain bare, and it is estimated that the temple complex and ornamentation were never fully completed. Though the major temples in the complex are in a surviving form, many sculptures and reliefs have been lost due to the earthquakes.

5. Kangra Fort | Architect in Himachal Pradesh

Located in the outskirts of Kangra, this fort is the largest fort in the Himalayas and probably the oldest fort in India. Built out of granite this fort has witnessed everything from grandeur, invasion to evolution. The fort complex is guarded by high walls and heavy ramparts and is home to various temples. The fort was conquered by the Delhi Sultanates, the Mughals, and the Sikhs multiple times because of which the architecture of the fort is highly influenced by their architectural styles. The combination of all these styles has led to the evolution of a unique typology of Kangra art and architecture, which is highly influenced by the indigenous climate and materials. Today the Fort stands as a storehouse of arts related to Katoch rulers, Jains, Mughals, and Sikhs.

6. Kalka Shimla Railway Line

The Kalka Shimla railway line is a narrow-gauge railway in Himachal which covers a total length of 96km and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This railway line was set up by the British and is lined with 18 stations that have a unique architectural heritage

attached to themselves. The stations along with their rest houses are beautiful gabled structures built out of timber. Set amidst the picturesque valleys of the Himalayas, they have influences of both British and Indian architecture, and are an absolute delight to anyone who visits them.

7. Bhimakali Temple

This 800-year old temple complex located at the center of the Sarahan Village is an iconic symbol of the Bushahr royal family. It is one of the few specimens of the 'tower temple' typology in India. Built entirely out of stone and deodar wood, this complex holds a main temple dedicated to Goddess Bhimakali, a few smaller temples, a guest house, an old royal palace, and twin towers. The entire temple complex is adorned with elaborate wood and silver carvings on the facades, intricately carved wooden brackets for balconies, and wooden chimes that produce soothing sounds as they oscillate to the wind

15.3 The Buddhist Monasteries

Himachal Pradesh served as a rendezvous of the Indo-Aryan and the Mongolian races. The migrants, who mostly came from Ladakh, Gilgit and western Tibet, believed in Lamaism, (2) which was essentially Buddhism in mixed form. It is not surprising therefore, that the Buddhist religion and culture predominated in several areas of the state, mostly in Lahul, Spiti and Kinnaur. Besides, the Buddhist influence on the religious front is well marked on the entire way of living, including the temple architecture.

The Buddhist viharas or monasteries are, however, quite different that are found through the length and breadth of the Himalayas have been classified into three categories :

- (1) Tak-phu: A monastery which lies in a cave. All rock-cut temples of the Buddhists belong to this category,
- (2) Gompa: This type of Buddhist monastery is suggestive of a solitary place, and
- (3) Lhakhang (Du-khang or Tsug-lag-khang) points out to a Buddhist temple near some village which mainly served the purpose of a meeting room or an academy.

In Himachal Pradesh, Buddhism appears to have first entered Lahul in the eighth century A.D. and later also became popular in Spiti and Kinnaur, where a number of monasteries (known as Gompas) exist. Every Gompa is in the charge of a senior Lama under whom the juniors work.

The Buddhist monasteries in Lahul and Spiti and Kinnaur are mostly flat-roofed. They have some rooms and corridors. The walls are decorated with frescoes painted in traditional Tibetan style with themes taken from the Buddhist lore. The Chapel is situated in the centre and as the door opens, one can see the metal and clay images of Buddha, Padma sambhava, Alokitesvara and a few other deities placed on a raised platform. (36)

Some of the famous Buddhist monasteries in Himachal Pradesh are Kangyur monastery, Kanam() (tehsil Puh, district Kinnaur); Buddhist temple, Puh(); Nako),

Gelugpa-Tabox"), Dhankar and Kee monasteries (in Spiti); Shashur, Kardang and Gurughantal monasteries (in Lahul).

The famous Buddhist scholar Padma-sambhava is associated with a number of Buddhist shrines throughout the length and breadth of the Himalayas, including Himachal Pradesh. In the Nako monastery (called Lob-dpon-zhabrjes) his foot prints on the rock are held as a sacred record of his visit.

Besides Lahul, Spiti and Kinnaur regions, there are three more places in Himachal Pradesh where we find the Buddhist temples. These are:

- (i) Bhima Tila or Buddhist stupa at Chetru (Kangra);
- (ii) Lamaist temple at Riwalsar (41) in Mandi district; and
- (iii) Trilokanath temple at Tunde in Lahul.

Of all the Buddhist monasteries in Himachal Pradesh, the famous monastery of Tabo in Spiti, is one of the largest in area. The walls of the shrine are covered with paintings. There are also very good wood carving of the standing Buddhas with attendants. One of the inscriptions in the Tabo monastery records its foundation about one thousand years ago. All other halls of the monastery are decorated with paintings and frescoes. The plan of the monastery is a combination of Tibetan and Indian art in its proper setting. (42)

15.4 Pahari Painting

The Pahari painting or the Pahari art belonged to the mountains which developed in the hill states of the Punjab and the adjoining hills extending from Jammu to Garhwal during the late medieval period. (43) The output of the Pahari school was mostly the work of individual artists who lived in these remote and isolated hill states and produced whatever pleased their patrons.

The main source of inspiration to the Pahari painters was provided by the devotional poetry of the saints of the Bhakti movement between eleventh and the sixteenth century. Next to the Mughal School or Shahi Qalam, it was the Rajput painting which dominated the scene. The Rajput paintings can be divided into two groups: (i) Rajasthani and (ii) Pahari.

The Rajasthani group covered the entire state of Rajasthan and Bundelkhand, with its main centres at Jaipur, Bikaner and Udaipur. The second group known as the Pahari Qalam developed in the wide area around the Shiwalik hills running through Jammu, Basohli, Nurpur, Kangra, Haripur, Guler and the mid-Himalayan areas like Bhadrwah, Chamba, Kulu and Garhwal. In Himachal Pradesh, the chief centres of this school were at the courts of the Rajas of Nurpur, Kangra and Chamba. The Sikh school of painting which flourished under Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1803-1839 A.D.), is also an offshoot of the Pahari Chitrakala.

The emergence of the Pahari art of painting is attributed to two reasons: (i) Political and (ii) Religious.

1. Political

Emperor Aurangzeb's indifference to all forms of art and the political confusion that followed the decline of the Mughal Empire did much to impede the progress of the art of painting. The reign of Emperor Aurangzeb marks the decline of the art of painting. It continued to exist, though not flourish, as the Mughal nobles and the Hindu rulers still patronised it. During the later Mughals, Nadir Shah's invasion of northern India and the conquest of Delhi gave a shattering blow to the tottering Mughal Empire. Politically it led to large scale migration of the artists trained in the Mughal School to the hill states which ultimately led to the emergence of a new style of painting. At times the artists also moved from one state to the other in search of liberal patronage. (44) There are also instances when the Hill States exchanged painters as well as paintings as gifts or gave them as a part of dowry on the occasion of wedding ceremony of a Princess.

The political upheavals thus led to the migration of artists to the Kangra, Ranjit Deo and his younger brother Balwant Deo of Jammu, Raja Goverdhan Chand of Guler and Prithpal Shah of Garhwal etc. The predominance of the Mughal style however, is clearly visible in the works of the migrant artists.

2. Religious

The most important source of inspiration to the Pahari painters was the Bhakti movement, which witnessed the rise of a popular faith Vaishnavism. It was a doctrine of personal and passionate devotion towards Lord Krishna-the most popular among Hindu gods. The Radha- Krishna cult which began around eleventh century held its sway till the sixteenth century and inspired a number of mystic poets like Surdas, Keshavdas, Mirabai and others who wrote their poems in devotion to lord Krishna.

It is not surprising therefore, that during the eighteenth century, the artists began to lose royal patronage and were compelled to migrate to western Himalayan States then ruled over by the Hindu chiefs who welcomed these artists and took keen interest in their works. Needless to point out that the Hindi literature and the Hindu religion was the main source of inspiration, which finds full expression in the Pahari paintings.

The devotional poetry of the Bhakti saints provided inspiration to the Pahari painters in the Himachal hill states. Love was the main theme of the artists which was symbolised by Krishna and Radha as lover and beloved. The earliest known miniature of the Pahari school is an illustration of Bhanudatta's Rasamanjari by painter Devidas during the reign of Raja Kirpal Pal of Basohli. This work produced around 1694, although individualistic and based on folk art, is greatly influenced by the Mughal and Rajasthani schools.

The Kangra School

In the hills of Himachal Pradesh, the most important school of painting that flourished during the late eighteenth century is called the Kangra School. Kangra became the chief centre of Pahari art during the rule of Maharaja Sansar Chand (1775-1823). The Maharaja became the new patron of the immigrant artists, most of whom were trained in the Mughal school of pictorial art. The approach of these artists, however, was more realistic and natural with a more sober and pleasing colour scheme.

Maharaja Sansar Chand was a great lover of art and extended his hand and has many artists in his employ. He has a large collection of pictures, but the great part represents the feats of Krishna and Balram, the adventures of Arjuna and subjects from the Mahabharata, it also includes portraits of many of the neighbouring rajas and their predecessors. Amongst these latter were two profiles of Alexander the Great, of which Rai Anirudh Chand (son and successor of Sansar Chand) gave me one....The Raja could not tell me whence the portrait came, he had become possessed of it by inheritance'.

It is certain that right from the year of his possession of the ancestral Kangra fort in 1786 A.D., the Kangra style of Pahari painting remained at its climax for about the next two decades. By 1805 A.D., Maharaja Sansar Chand not only established his supremacy over all the adjoining states (51) but he also emerged as the greatest ruler in the western Himalayan states, known for his unique love for art and patronage of artists.

Chief characteristics of Kangra style

The Kangra style of painting is a synthesis of the indigenous Mughal and Rajasthani schools of art. It combines in itself what is best in literature, art and music. The keynote of the Pahari paintings is the feminine grace which is so characteristic of the Indian womanhood. The themes of these paintings, as already pointed out, are inspired by the Bhakti movement, Hindi literature and Hindu religion.

In the words of Coomaraswamy, 'What Chinese art achieved for landscape is here accomplished for human love. Here, if never, and nowhere in the world, the western gates are opened wide. The arms of love's are about each others necks, eye meets eye, the whispering Sakhis speak of nothing else but the sound of Krishna's courtship, the very animals are spell bound by the sound of Krishna's flute and the animals stand still to hear the ragas and raginis. This art is only concerned with the realities of life; above all, with passionate love-service, conceived as the means and symbol of all Union.'

'The focal point of the Kangra School', according to V.S. Agarwala', consists in the flaming beauty of woman. The life of an Indian woman as lived in the idyllic land of love and expressed through the twelve months, the six seasons and the twenty four hours of the day provides the rich texture of Pahari paintings.... Woman in these paintings alone is real. The man lives and shines under the light as a moth captivated by the warmth of the flame. We do not gather any lasting impression of the male beauty in the Kangra paintings. But the woman's body, the delicacy of her form, the radiance of her face and indescribable loveliness of her life are subjects in which Kangra painters excel.'

The Kangra paintings produced under the patronage of Raja Sansar Chand are noted for a 'high sense of refinement, impressive in composition, rich in tone and in tints of colour'.(") A good number of the paintings collected by Percy Brown originate from Kangra and most probably once formed a part of Sansar Chand's collection. (5) The greatest master of Kangra school was Mola Ram, who belonged to Garhwal and flourished at the close of the eighteenth century. According to all estimates 'his colouring is extremely beautiful and his representation of animals, plants etc., has remarkable delicacy of touch and charm.'

Apart from Kangra, the Pahari art of painting which flourished at the close of the eighteenth century, included the hill states of Guler, Chamba, Mandi, Suket, Bilaspur, Nurpur, Arki and Kulu. The Guler style flourished under its great patron Raja Goverdhan Chand (1744-1773 A.D.) and Parkash Chand (1773-90). Most of the paintings produced under Raja Goverdhan Chand, however, are devoted to the Krishna legend. Although the best paintings originated under the patronage of Raja Sansar Chand, the small state of Guler enjoyed the status of being older than Kangra in Pahari art.

The themes of Pahari paintings

The most favourite subject of Pahari style was undoubtedly the Krishna cult. The hill painters, however, also successfully painted the Shiva in his various forms (especially the Mandi artists). The other important themes which attracted the Pahari painters were the Hindu epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata, Bhagwat Purana, Nala Damyanti and Hammira Hatha etc. The Ragmala and Baramasa were also very popular both with the Rajasthani as well as the Pahari painters.

The Pahari paintings got their individual names after a particular state (e.g. Basohli, Guler, Kangra, Chamba, Mandi, Bilaspur, Jammu, Kulu and Garhwal Qalam) where these were executed. However, despite the differences in various styles, depending on the tastes of the rulers and talents of the artists, these paintings unequivocally stand for common links in the area extending from Jammu to Garhwal, including almost the whole of modern Himachal Pradesh.

Prominent Pahari Painters

Apart from the greatest master painter of Kangra style, Mola Ram (who originally belonged to Garhwal), some other prominent Pahari artists of the late medieval period were: Golu of Nurpur,⁽⁶¹⁾ Angad of Sirmur,⁽⁶²⁾ Pt. Seu and his two sons, Manku and Nainsukh of Guler⁽⁶³⁾. Fattu and Krishna Lal (both sons of Manku) of Kangra ⁽⁶⁴⁾ Ranjha and Nikka of Chamba ⁽⁶⁵⁾ and Sanju and Bhagwan of Kulu (") who were patronised by Raja Dyadhatta, Goverdhan Chand, Sansar Chand, Dalip Singh and others.

The Rumals and Murals

Apart from miniature paintings on paper, the Pahari art was also tried successfully on walls and cloth. The remnants of the murals are still visible in Arki, Kulu, Bilaspur, Mandi, Nadaun, Nurpur, Tira-Sujanpur, Chamba, Damtal and Dada-Siba etc.) The aesthetic urge of the Himachalis also finds expression in folk paintings which are very popular even to this day in the Shiwalik foot-hills, notably in the Nalagarh region. Decorative patterns are developed on the walls of their dwellings by the women with effortless movement of finger-tips on the wet coating. The connubial paintings are locally known as 'Kandeo' or 'Kamdeo! The various symbols used in folk paintings include parrot, fish, sun, moon, stars, swastik and floral patterns etc.

Chamba Rumals

The paintings embroidered on cloth are named as Rumal, which was mainly the work of the female artists. These rumals were meant for covering of gift articles on

metal or bamboo-trays and baskets etc. The embroidery in textiles although was known throughout Himachal Pradesh, Chamba was specially famous for this pictorial handicraft known as the Chamba Rumal.

The Chamba Rumal probably originated during the last half of the seventeenth century and continued till the early years of the present century. It has considerable impact of the pictorial art of the miniatures, especially Basohli and Kangra Qalam. During the first quarter of the nineteenth century, when there was political hold of Maharaja Ranjit Singh over the Punjab Hill States, there seems to be a considerable influence of colourful Sikh style of painting on the Chamba art including the Chamba Rumal.() The Chamba Rumal was a typical work of art which was done by the skilful housewives with a view to provide an artistic sheet on the offerings or as presents and gifts.

Apart from the Rumals, the technique was also exercised on other pieces of cloth used as cholis (blouses), cover for hand-fans or even scarves. Sometimes a Dorukha technique was also adopted wherein the embroidery was done on both sides to give it a similar and positive effect. The Rumals, apart from their artistic value, are a true reflection of contemporary architecture and local flora and fauna.

Pahari Bronzes

The Pahari bronzes discovered from various parts of Himachal Pradesh, are well known for elegance and delightful rendering the contours.(3) There is a fine blending of Gandhara and Gupta elements in early bronzes whereas those of the medieval period depict art traditions blended with Gandhara, Kashmiri and Pratihara elements.

The national museum at New Delhi has a fine collection of the Pahari bronzes- the earliest dating back to 6th-7th century A.D. The bronze images include a variety of Gods and Goddesses such as Shiva, Vishnu, Shakti, Ganesha, Umamaheshwara, Mahishasuramardini, Durga etc.(75) Shaivism being the predominant religion in the hilly areas, several images of Shiva and his consort were fashioned by the artists of Himachal Pradesh for being worshipped by the devotees.

15.5 Self Check Exercise

1. What is the 'Kath- Kuni'?
2. Describe Kangra School of Painting?

15.6 Conclusion

Houses in Himachal Pradesh are constructed in the form of '**Kath-Kuni**' style. This style has both religious and cultural influences. In these traditional houses in Himachal Pradesh, the walls are made of stones and timber woods alternatively. Pahari painting grew out of the Mughal painting, though this was patronized mostly by the Rajput kings who ruled many parts of the region, and gave birth to a new idiom in Indian painting. Some local antecedents have also been suggested, as a vivid Kashmiri tradition of mural paintings flourished between the 9th and 17th centuries, as seen in the murals of Alchi Monastery or Tsaparang.

15.7 Glossary

The Indo-Mughal style

The Mughal Empire, an Islamic empire that lasted in India from 1526 to 1857 left a mark on Indian architecture that was a mix of Islamic, Persian, Arabic, Central Asian and native Indian architecture.

15.8 Answer to Self Check Exercise

1. The 'Kath- Kuni' is a traditional construction technique that involves laying courses of wood and rubble masonry alternatively.
2. In the hills of Himachal Pradesh, the most important school of painting that flourished during the late eighteenth century is called the Kangra School.

15.9 Suggested Reading

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15.10 Terminal Questions

1. Describe architecture heritage of Himachal Pradesh?
2. What do you understand by School of Pahadi Painting?

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Assignments (Compulsory) ICDEOL, H.P. University
M.A. History 3rd Semester **Core Course - HIST 332**

History of Himachal Pradesh from Pre-Historic Times up to 1971

Maximum Marks =20

Note: Attempt four (04) questions in total. One question is compulsory from each unit. All questions carry equal marks.

कुल चार प्रश्न कीजिये। प्रत्येक इकाई से एक प्रश्न करना जरूरी है। सभी प्रश्नों के अंक समान हैं।

Unit-I

1. What is regional History? Why it is necessary to study?
क्षेत्रीय इतिहास क्या है? इसका अध्ययन करना क्यों जरूरी है ?
2. Define the survey of sources of Himachal Pradesh?
हिमाचल प्रदेश के स्रोतों के सर्वेक्षण को परिभाषित करें?

Unit-II

3. How Kangra Trigarta kingdom played an important role in the history of Himachal Pradesh?
हिमाचल प्रदेश के इतिहास में कांगड़ा त्रिगर्त राज्य ने कैसे महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाई?
4. Explain the reasons for the rise of Sikhs to power in Himachal Pradesh?
हिमाचल प्रदेश में सिखों के सत्ता में आने के कारणों की व्याख्या करें?

Unit-III

5. Describe the British Gorkha war?
ब्रिटिश गोरखा युद्ध का वर्णन करें?
6. What is meant by beggar and reet?
बेगार और रीत का क्या अर्थ है?

Unit-IV

7. Explain the Prajamandal Movement in details?
प्रजा मंडल आंदोलन का विस्तारपूर्वक वर्णन कीजिये.
8. Explain School of Pahari Painting and Buddhist architecture?
पहाड़ी चित्रकला स्कूल और बौद्ध वास्तुकला का वर्णन कीजिये.

