

The present chapter discusses the historical events of Jammu and Kashmir from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. The chapter briefly describes the formation of J&K state. It further shows how, owing to the geo-political strategic location of the region, the Colonial Government gradually started intervening in the affairs of the State. Finally, an effort has been made to spotlight the various reforms introduced in different spheres of administration that led to the consolidation of the Dogra rule.



Maharaja Gulab Singh

### Formation of J&K State:

Gulab Singh was born in 1792 CE in a Dogra Rajput family of Mian Kishore Singh, who held a jagir at Anderwah near Samba. He joined the Sikh court at Lahore and due to his bravery rose from a soldier to *Jagirdar* and finally in 1822 CE, he was made the Raja of Jammu by Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh was the builder of the powerful Sikh Kingdom. However, his death in 1839 CE gave way to political instability and the Sikh court at Lahore got engaged in a series of factional fightings. As the Sikh State of Punjab was located on a strategic position, the growing confusion at the Lahore court became a cause of concern for the British. All this led to the first Anglo- Sikh war in 1846 CE in which the East India Company stood victorious.

### Signing of the Treaties: Treaty of Lahore and Treaty of Amritsar (1846)

After the battle of Sabroan (Anglo-Sikh war, Feb 10th, 1846), Gulab Singh, the then Raja of Jammu, realized the dark consequences of war and facilitated negotiations between the Lahore Durbar and the British East India Company. Subsequently,

#### ➤ New words:

Geo-political: Relating to politics, especially international relations as influenced by geographical factors

Treaty: A formal agreement between two or more states.

in order to end this war, the Treaty of Lahore was signed on March 9th, 1846. It reduced the Sikh state to a British tributary. The company imposed a war indemnity of rupees one and a half crore. Being unable to pay the amount, the Lahore Durbar agreed to cede the territories between the Beas and Indus rivers, including Kashmir valley and Hazara which were earlier ruled by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1819 CE.

Meanwhile, Gulab Singh, the then Raja of Jammu, developed an association with the Britishers. The British were apprehensive of the critical situation in North-Western Frontier and wanted to establish political stability in this region. They found in Gulab Singh sufficient ability to act as a buffer between British Indian territories and the threatening Afghan and Russian advancement on the North- Western Frontier.

Consequently, a separate treaty called the Treaty of Amritsar was signed on March 16th, 1846 between the British East India Company and Maharaja Gulab Singh. Through this treaty, the British transferred the territories ceded from the Sikh State to Gulab Singh. In consideration of this transfer, he paid British Government Seventy Five Lakh rupees. Consequently, Maharaja Gulab Singh obtained complete control over the territories of Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh and Baltistan. Thus, the State of Jammu and Kashmir was formed.

## Dogra Rule Consolidated

Maharaja Gulab Singh took many steps for reformation and reorganization of the administration. However, due to his pre-occupation with the restoration of power, suppression of revolts by disorderly tribal chiefs, he could hardly find any time to introduce any major change in the administration. Some of his important contributions were the streamlining of the faltering economy besides certain reforms in finance, agriculture and revenue departments. The jagirdari system was reorganized and the revenue free grants were revoked. Maharaja Gulab Singh also controlled and

**Do you know?**

Early achievements of Gulab Singh:

- Expedition of Afghan controlled Kashmir in 1813 CE
- Invasion of Multan in 1818 CE.
- Put down the revolt led by Mian Dido in 1819 CE.

His continuous success led to his promotion from soldier to Raja of Jammu.

Shali system: It was a system in which the harvest of rice crop supplies from the field were directly supplied to the godowns of the money lenders

Indian Penal Code was prepared by T.B. Macaulay, who was appointed as the first law member of the Governor General's council. It was on the pattern of the IPC that Maharaja Ranbir Singh formed the Ranbir Penal Code



Maharaja Hari Singh

regularized the Shali system which was monopolized by the money lenders.

The reign of his successor Maharaja Ranbir Singh (1856-85) is considered as progressive and peaceful and celebrated for cultural excellence and composite social fabric. However, this period was marked by consistent colonial intervention in the internal affairs of the state which was effectively challenged by the Maharaja. His carefully devised policies made great improvements in the affairs of administration. Maharaja Ranbir Singh reorganized the state and introduced civil and criminal code of law in the form of Ranbir Penal Code on the pattern of Macaulay Code, for deliverance of regular, prompt and cheaper justice. Maharaja subdued the ever rebellious trans-Himalayan tribal territories of Hunza, Nagar and Gilgit. Further, the entire state was covered with the network of postal and telecommunication services in 1877 CE extending up to the frontier districts of Gilgit and Askardu.

After the demise of Maharaja Ranbir Singh in 1885 CE, his eldest son Maharaja Pratap Singh succeeded him and the political firmness was replaced by political adjustments and compromises. It was during this time that the British interference intensified in the state. Finally, in 1885 CE the appointment of British Resident established the British Government's firm foothold within the state. Despite the impressive reforms introduced by Maharaja Pratap Singh, he was viewed as incompetent for governance and was divested of his powers in 1889 CE by the Colonial Government. In order to discharge the duties of administration a state council was formed that was expected to exercise its powers under the guidance of the resident.

In 1925 AD, Hari Singh, the only son of General Raja Amar Singh (the third brother of deceased Maharaja Pratap Singh) formally ascended the throne of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Before ascending the throne as the ruler, Maharaja Hari Singh was appointed as the commander-in-chief and as an important member of the State Council.

He inherited a legacy brewing with social unrest and resentment. However, after his accession to the throne, Maharaja Hari Singh adopted a policy of moderation and proved to be more accommodative than the preceding Dogra rulers. Being much more liberal in his approach, he took a number of steps to transform the lives of his subjects. He began to assert himself by holding the Resident at arm's length and re-established the state's authority.

## Society, Economy and Culture

### Education for All

Eradication of illiteracy from the state and promotion of education received due attention. Maharaja Ranbir Singh, himself a Persian scholar, encouraged religious education through the study of classical languages- Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit. Institutions such as the *Raghunath* Temple *Pathshala*, a library and a *Mahavidyalya* were established. The Dogra court patronized all languages and scripts. Maharaja's unprecedented zeal for dissemination of knowledge resulted in the establishment of Ranbir Press in 1882 CE, perhaps considered as being the first press in the state. Maharaja Ranbir Singh believed in providing education for all classes of its subjects and founded a few state sponsored institutions.

During the reign of Maharaja Pratap Singh, efforts were made to bring the common people in contact with the western education. A school named Sri Ranbir High School based on western education was established in Jammu in 1885 CE and Sri Pratap College was opened in Srinagar in 1905 AD. To commemorate the visit of Prince of Wales, the Prince of Wales College (now known as Govt. Gandhi Memorial Science College) was opened in 1906 AD in Jammu. Education for agriculturists and artisans was also given impetus with the establishment of Amar Singh Technical Institute at Srinagar in 1923 AD. In order to impart education to all communities irrespective of caste and religion, free and compulsory education was made available to all. For this Maharaja Hari Singh set up a chain of

Factors responsible for British intervention in J&K:

\*British Free Trade in Kashmir

\*Growing pressure due to Anglo-Afghan war

\*To check the advance of the then USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) and Afghanistan on the north-western boundaries.

As a progressive ruler, Maharaja Ranbir Singh attempted to promote Hindu- Muslim scholarship and established translation bureau called ***Dar-ul-Terjumah*** where the Arabic and Persian works on Philosophy and History were translated into Sanskrit, Hindi and Dogri.



#### New Words:

Deplorable: Miserable

Ameliorate: Emancipate

educational institutions from Primary schools to colleges.

### Female Education

Like many other princely states, the state of Jammu and Kashmir was also backward in the sphere of female education. Hence, efforts were made to ameliorate the position of women through education. *Gurmat Kanya Pathshala* was the first girls school in Jammu region. Establishment of *Maharani Taradevi Mahila* College (Now Known as Government College for Women, Parade) with the efforts of *Mahila* Education Society in June 1944 AD was a great leap in this sphere. Besides, some mission schools and private sabhas also played an instrumental role in imparting academic and vocational education to women of this region.

### Women in Everyday Life

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century the inhuman social practices like sati, child marriage, prohibition of widow remarriage, female infanticide and immoral trafficking were prevalent in Jammu & Kashmir region. Females were considered inferior to males. The root causes of discrimination against women were educational backwardness, abject poverty and economic servitude. Widow re-marriage was considered as social taboo among Hindus. Hence, the forced widowhood was prevalent among them. All this made the position of women deplorable in the society. However, Maharaja Hari Singh on his accession to the throne took stringent measures to eradicate these evil practices and ameliorate the position of women.

- A special trust called *Dhandevi* Memorial Trust was created. This trust extended financial help to the girls at the time of their marriage out of *Dhandevi Kanya* Fund.
- To prevent child marriage, Maharaja passed Infant Marriage Prevention Regulation in 1928AD.



- Widow Remarriage Act and Property Regulation of 1931 AD gave liberty to the widows to remarry and live their lives according to their own will.

### From Hunger & Hardship to Reform: A Trajectory

The land was mostly owned by the Maharaja or the land owners. A large majority of rural population was landless and lived in abject poverty. They toiled on the lands of the land owners and had to pay such high taxes that hunger and starvation became more or less a regular affair. Everybody, including carpenters, weavers, craftsmen, boatmen, butchers, bakers, was taxed. Production of silk, saffron, paper, tobacco, wine and salt as well as the sale of grains was the monopoly of the state.

The Sahukari system and Forced labour (Begar) were the basic causes of the exploitation of the common masses and remained the pronounced features of this region till 20<sup>th</sup> century. The practice of Begar was most prevalent for meeting the requirement of supplies during the military campaigns and construction of routes towards the inaccessible and difficult terrains like Gilgit. These two evil practices- exorbitant rate of taxation and Begar remained the major grievances of the masses of Kashmir.

### Reform in Land Revenue System

About 80% of the total population was engaged in agriculture and peasants had the right to cultivate as long as they paid one half of the produce as Government's share. In 1889 CE, Walter Lawrence was appointed as Revenue Commissioner to reform the Land Revenue system. Some of the important steps suggested by Walter Lawrence are as follows: -

- \* The land revenue was reduced from half to one third.
- \* The peasants were granted occupancy rights.

#### New Words:

Begar: The cruel practice of forced labour prevalent in Kashmir during Dogra regime. It was mainly employed for the construction of Gilgit routes and transportation of ration for Dogra Soldiers to Gilgit and other far off places.

\* The Cooperative societies were set up which further helped in abolishing money lending system.

Further, during the reign of Maharaja Hari Singh, the passing of Agriculturist Relief Regulation of 1926 AD saved the cultivators from ruthless exploitation of money lenders; the Land Alienation Regulation (1933 AD) prevented peasants from getting deposed of their land and the Land Improvement Act (1936 AD) aimed at advancing loans to the agriculturists.

### Removal of Untouchability

Apart from the deplorable condition of the agriculturist class, the lower castes remained the most marginalized section of the society. The widely prevalent menace of untouchability in the Jammu region had made the lives of the Harijans miserable. The lower castes were not allowed to share public places and their entry in the temples was also banned. Arya Samaj became the most significant agency for initiating a movement against this evil. Further, Maharaja Hari Singh in October, 1932 made a formal proclamation by throwing open the doors of the state temples to Harijans for worship. This decision of Maharaja brought him unprecedented credit of being the first ruler of a princely state in India to take such a revolutionary step even before Mahatma Gandhi.

## Public Welfare Measures

### Establishment of Local Self Government

With the establishment of Regency in the state in 1885, a shift in the pattern of governance was witnessed and the princely rulers were required to offer more representation to people in the wake of rising national consciousness. In this context, the state government took initiative and passed Municipal Act of 1886 to give representation to the common people in the local bodies. Thus, Municipalities were set up in the capital towns of Jammu and Kashmir.

## Roads and Railways

The construction of roads and railways network was also taken up which connected the state to the outer world and led to the flourishing of trade and commerce in the state.

- Jhelum Valley Cart Road- 'the most wonderful mountain road in the world'-that linked Srinagar with Peshawar via Kohala and Muree was completed in 1895 CE.
- The work on Gilgit Road was started in 1890 CE which linked the state with Europe through Central Asia.
- Banihal Cart Road and Ladakh Road were also constructed
- Railway was also laid down between Jammu and Sialkote in 1905 AD.

All these measures improved the transport and communication system which helped in doing away with the isolation of the region.

## Irrigation

In order to save the state from frequent famines, several irrigation projects were taken up during the Dogra rule. Martand Canal, Pratap Canal, Basantarpur Canal and Upper Jhelum canal were opened up. The Ranbir canal was the largest one in Jammu province used to irrigate the entire area from Akhnoor to Ranbir Singh Pura tehsil. For free and potable supply of water, modern water boxes were established in both the provinces of the region. For generation of power, hydroelectric power plants were set up, one at Mohra, in Kashmir in 1902 and the other in Jammu.

## Public Health care

The modern medical facilities came into existence during the later period of the Dogra rule. The first dispensary in Srinagar was opened by Reverend Robert Clark in 1864. Next year, another dispensary was opened by Dr. Elmslie. Initially the Christian missionaries faced opposition from the Dogra rulers. However, in 1874 CE, Maharaja Ranbir Singh granted





Baba Jitto Temple, Jhiri

a site to the mission hospital on the hill called Rustam Garhi beneath the Shankracharya hill. This building came to be known as Drugjan hospital. In order to provide better health facilities, the state Government took initiatives to fight epidemics like cholera and small pox. Maternity hospitals and sanatoriums were established in both the provinces of Jammu and Kashmir. During the reign of Maharaja Hari Singh, Sri Maharaja Gulab Singh Hospital (SMGS) was established in Jammu and Sri Maharaja Hari Singh Hospital (SMHS) was opened in Srinagar.

### Sericulture and Horticulture

Strenuous efforts to revive the sericulture department were taken up during Maharaja Pratap Singh's reign. A cocoon rearing factory was established in Srinagar in 1907. Seeds for rearing silkworms were imported from Italy and France and were distributed among the Kashmiri peasants. Due to these efforts the state became the largest producer of raw cocoons in the world. Further, to improve the quality of indigenous fruits produced in Kashmir, experts were invited from Peshawar. All these measures further added to the economy of the region.

### Cultural Highlights

Maharaja Ranbir Singh was an ardent lover of architecture. He built a number of temples, shrines and *pathshalas*. A chain of temples was constructed from Jammu to *Purmandal* and *Utterbehani*.

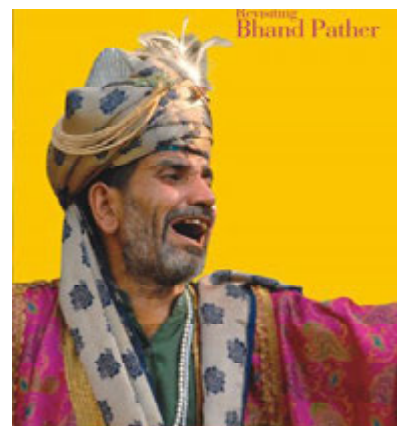
Taking cue from the annually visiting Ramleela and Rasleela companies from Mathua and Vrindravan, the state also patronized local theatrical groups both in Jammu and Kashmir region. The first native performing group was Raghunath Theatrical Company which was set up inside the premises of Raghunath Temple. In the later years of Dogra rule, the *Dogri Sanstha* established in 1943 promoted Dogra culture and initiated the process of performing original Dogri plays like *Baba Jitto*, *Sarpanch*, *Nama Gran*, etc.

**Baba Jitto:** 15<sup>th</sup> century folk tale of a peasant martyr whose sacrifice exposed the age old saga of exploitation of peasantry by greedy landlords who used to charge exorbitant land revenues.



Haran

During the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, Jammu region had active regional folk theatres like Tamachra, Bhagtain and Haran. Similarly, Bhands were the traditional folk entertainers of Kashmir. Some other effective oral story telling traditions such as Ladi Shah and DastanGoi remained instrumental in communicating the events of the past in simple & straightforward manner. These traditions both in Jammu and Kashmir region not only served the purpose of entertainment but also acted as an important instrument of expressing voice of the oppressed common folks in a subtle and satirical manner. These traditions, thus empowered the common people and helped them to understand contemporary situations in a better way. These art forms remained important for the socio-cultural and political life of the region.



Bhand

## Textual Exercise

### Q 1. Match the Column:

- |                 |                                    |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Gulab Singh  | Civil and Criminal code of law     |
| 2. Ranbir Singh | State Council                      |
| 3. Pratap Singh | Land Alienation Regulation of 1933 |
| 4. Hari Singh   | Regularised the Shali system       |

### Q 2. Fill in the blanks:

- 1 . - - - - - formed the state of Jammu and Kashmir.
2. The establishment of Raghunath Pathshala and library was done by - - - - -

3. - - - - - was the most inhuman practice where the peasants were forced to work without wages.
4. - - - - - was appointed as the Revenue Settlement Commissioner of Kashmir in 1889.
5. - - - - - passed regulations against untouchability and threw open the doors of temples for the lower castes.

**Q 3. True or False:**

1. Residency was established during the reign of Maharaja Ranbir Singh. ( )
2. Dar-ul- Terjumah was the Finance Department of the state. ( )
3. Gurmat Kanya Pathshala was the first girls school in Jammu region. ( )
4. The Agriculturist Relief Regulation was passed in 1926 AD. ( )

**Q 4. Answer the following questions:**

- a). Discuss the role of Maharaja Ranbir Singh in the field of education?
- b). Briefly describe the steps taken by Maharaja Hari Singh to ameliorate the position of women in the state?
- c). Write a short note on the cultural development in Jammu during the Dogra period with special reference to theatre and drama?
- d) Highlight the major public welfare works under taken during the Dogra period in Jammu and Kashmir.

**Q 5. Activity:**

- a). Visit any educational institution or library established during Dogra Rule and frame a report regarding the same.
- b). Ask your teacher to hold a discussion to elaborate briefly on the difference between Ranbir Penal Code and Indian Penal Code.

## CREDITS

### Institutions

The Alkazi Foundation for the Arts (Ch. 5, Fig. 11)

The Osian Archive and Library Collection, Mumbai (Ch. 6, Figs. 1, 8)

Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi (Ch. 8, Figs. 4, 5, 7, 13; Ch. 10, Figs. 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 9)

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### Journals

*The Illustrated London News* (Ch. 8, Fig. 15)

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