

Agro-ecology of Kashmir during Dogra State (1880-1950)

SUMMARY of THESIS

Submitted to
Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University
(A Central University)
Lucknow

BABASAHEB
BHIMRAO
AMBEDKAR
UNIVERSITY



प्रज्ञा शील करुणा
ESTABLISHED 1996

For the Award of Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
In
HISTORY

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Enrollment No. 451/15

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2019

Summary

Environmental History of India is now a well-established academic branch of History. Ecological histories of different regions of India were documented by historians. But Kashmir region did not receive adequate attention of environmental historians. This study is significant for not only its explorative nature but also its possible potential contribution for understanding the regional dimension of British colonial rule and its impact upon princely states of India. This study attempts to explore and document how agro ecological system of Kashmir were brought under techno-managerial strategies of the Dogra state aided by the British colonial rule, its impact upon physical ecology and impact it has generated on socio-economic conditions of Kashmir. In this work an attempt has been made to explore how the human action that affected nearly entire ecology of Kashmir region in the period under study. This study attempts to analyse the interaction between human and natural worlds around him and the subsequent human responses to environmental influences in this area.

Generally it is proposed by the environmentalists that human responded often to the rich ecology around him by altering their landscapes. As the population was increasing in the period under study, it was difficult to behold the environment untouched. Thus, humans started modifications in the ecology for own benefits which led to disturbance. This study will also help to identify the practices and policies of the State Government in Dogra period in order to achieve the sustainability of agriculture and other natural resources in the state. The present study will give a concise account of the general land use, cropping pattern, scientific techniques of horticulture and the agricultural operations being carried out during that period in the different agro-ecological regions of the Kashmir. In this work an attempt has been made to capture the human action that affected nearly all ecology of Kashmir region in the period under study. The study, we hope provide an information and inspiration for other scholars who are interested on the same field. By all means this study has a potential for more penetrating understanding on impact of British colonial rule on Indian society.

This study explores the trajectory of complex inter-relationship that Dogra State system and its interventions in the natural ecosystems of Kashmir, its implication to

the physical and socio-ecological forms. In the well-established field of environmental history in general and modern forest history in particular, the region of Kashmir remained an unexplored domain which this study seeks to address. Most of the studies on colonial/modern forest histories arrive at conclusion by an exclusive examination of silviculture and arboriculture and other conservation practices devoted to timber trees and very less attention had been devoted to non-timber forest products. The forest history of Kashmir represents a continuous efforts being made by Dogra Rulers under the guidance of European foresters, horticulturalists and other naturalists for maximization of unique and endemic products of the Valley. The scientific community engaged in forest conservation/horticultural crops, mainly came from England, Scotland, Germany and the role of French experts in Indian forest conservation had not been explored by existing studies. Forest history of Kashmir shows an active engagement of French in modernizing forest conservation at own level and promotion of horticultural crops at another level. Several varieties of timber species, breeding, grafting and other innovations were executed for optimum use of forest resources during the period of our study. Contrary to the Forest departments in other provinces of India, Kashmir forest conservation to a large extent is a successful enterprise taken together by the Dogra State and the British.

Objectives of the Study

- To understand the process of modernisation with particular reference to land management in modern Kashmir.
- To explore the impact of modernity and its impact upon natural resources of Kashmir.
- To explore emergence of horticulture and plantation based crops in modern Kashmir.
- To explore scientific, ecological dimensions of plantation economy in Kashmir.
- To document social background and dynamics of plantation system in Kashmir.
- To analyse the process of Kashmir and plantation economy becoming part of colonial economic process.

- To assess impact of plantation on socio-economic status of Kashmir in independent period.
- To assess the public policies related to natural resource management in Kashmir.
- To understand the ecological nature of agriculture in Dogra period.
- To explore the emergence of modern forestry in Kashmir.

Hypotheses

- Kashmir was brought under colonial economic process, if not directly but indirectly.
- This trend is visible in the technologies of territorial management particularly agro-ecological system of Kashmir.
- The people of Kashmir engaged with changes that are guided by indirect colonial rule.
- The natural resource base of Kashmir was brought under resource hungry colonial process.
- The landscape of Kashmir has been transformed for optimum utilization of its productivity.

Methodology

The present study is based on the source material comprising of published and unpublished material. Among the primary sources which include the archival material from the Jammu and Kashmir State Archives (Srinagar and Jammu) and the National Archives of India (New Delhi). Part of the material consists of non-official works like travelogues and diaries. Then there are a number of reports and gazetteers useful on modern history of Kashmir. Much of the statistical data is drawn from the Annual Administrative Reports of various Departments like Forests, Roads and Buildings, Finance, public Works, Industry and Commerce of the Jammu and Kashmir State and Census Reports as well, which is useful to have a clear vision of the position as it existed then in Kashmir. The Jammu and Kashmir Government records accessible in the Jammu repository and the Srinagar repository of the Jammu and Kashmir State Archives have been used in this study extensively. The records which explored in the present study are: official documents, reports, memoranda, and press cuttings from the

records of the Political Department, General Department, Education Department, Vernacular Department, Old English Records and Publicity Department. Moreover, some of the rare books and manuscripts available in the Government of Jammu and Kashmir Research and Publication Department Srinagar pertaining to our period of study are also used with an adequate scrutiny to eliminate all possible errors and generalizations. Besides this, to minimize the limitations of the official documents and reports non-conventional sources have been used. In the present study, a thorough investigation of census reports, official documents, private diaries, newspapers, and pamphlets has also been made to build this historical mansion on the sound foundation of facts, with the objective of shedding new light on the past, which involves both the addition of new explored facts and the (re)interpretation of the known facts. . The secondary data has also been used which is available in the form of books, magazines, journals, periodicals and websites.

Conceptual Framework

The princely states or the native states were representing a very peculiar political system developed in India through divergent ways. Keeping the size of these states in consideration, they were in no way negligible as they comprised about two-fifth of the area and one-third of the population of the erstwhile Indian Empire excluding Burma. Many of these states were considerable countries in their own right, as Kashmir with an area of 84,000 square miles was bigger than France. Each of the State was having its own regional history and cultural diversity along with interactions with the expanding British Empire. However when the British began to start the treaty system, the changes based on the western ideas were introduced with regard to the ownership of the land and collection of revenue. Moreover the essential elements of British paramountcy which included the appointment of resident at the princely courts, the regulation of successions and control over the foreign affairs of the state were being laid out. The colonial laws, rules and regulations were adapted to the princely states. The treaty of such kind was popularly known as Treaty of Amritsar signed on 16 March 1846 between the Maharaja Gulab Singh, the first Dogra ruler and the British which ultimately led to the creation of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. The British paramountcy was then recognised by the Dogra rulers and in turn agreed to pay tributes to them. Hence the colonial intervention in Kashmir was mediated

through Dogra rulers and there were certain colonial policies being resisted by the Dogra Maharaja's while some other policies were emulated which suited to their interest.

The British hand in state administration got much stronger only when Officer on Special Duty appointed in 1852 got changed in to Resident in 1885. The British were now able to intervene in the affairs of princely state with the twin objectives-protecting their empire from external aggression and alleviating the misery of Kashmiri's by reforming the administration. The British had started some policies regarding occupancy rights and the methods of revenue collection and calculation were systematized along with new areas brought under cultivation. Indeed the colonial rulers brought tremendous pressure on the Dogra rulers to deploy colonial political rationality that aimed to systematize, stabilize and regularize power relations in the society. The British promulgated and deployed a number of acts and regulations in order to check the long established administrative practices and to establish new rules of administration on the lines of Western European State. These new policies of governance on general administration, land, forests and education were brought into force. However, these regulations were not confined to British India but also extended to the princely states.

The situation was extremely transformed in the princely states by the establishment of colonial rule. The new ideas and concepts regarding the property and rights of land use were being imposed. Regarding the pastures and forests, the traditional privileges by the village communities were being probed by the colonial authorities. The regulations related to the forest and land revenue marginalized the pastoralists and shifted the balance towards agriculture. However, there are very few studies at the regional level which will shed their light on ecological impact of British colonial rule and can provide a detailed provincial analysis of man and environment relation in colonial India. The existing scholarships largely have not analysed the process and patterns of environmental degradation at the regional level and its implications on the level of empire. So, there is a need to bring regionally specific patterns of environmental history in order to highlight how regional patterns shape the colonial state's environmental interaction at the all India level. Encompassed by rich biodiversity and rich ecological niches which support large species of plants, the state

of Jammu and Kashmir had a great diversity of environmental regimes. Unfortunately the region remained out of the focus of environmental scholars and historians of the present times.

Chapterization

The whole study is divided into five chapters with a conclusion in the end. The first chapter starts with the historiography of environmental history across the world and gives a general overview of the concept. It highlights the contributions of eminent environmental historians with regarding to their scholarly observation in various parts of the world. The chapter also mentions the works of scholars in south and south-east Asia and the way in which the environmental history emerged in India and became a much needed subject, and how it received the focus and attention of the environmental historians is also mentioned in this part. Besides this, the chapter also contains, statement of the problem, methodology, hypothesis, objectives and review of literature regarding the present study.

The second chapter starts with giving the details about the geographical location and extent of the Kashmir following the physiographic details which mentions about the various peaks and mountain ranges surrounding the Kashmir. The Kashmir has a long history of drainage system in India, the river Jhelum with its principal river and the tributaries joining it at various points have been mentioned out. Further the detail has been given on the climate, demographic profile, soils, lakes, margs and the vegetation of the area of our study in this chapter.

The third chapter mostly deals with the horticultural operation in Kashmir during the period of our study and starts with the short overview of the fruit culture in India during the various periods. Providing the information about the various kinds of fruits grown in Kashmir, the chapter also throws light on the evolution of scientific horticulture in Kashmir which includes the practices of tree distribution, planting, nursery and entomological work. In the viticulture part, detail has been provided about the planting and production of wine in Kashmir along with the distillery work practised in the period of our study. Besides this, the chapter also throws light on the hop cultivation in Kashmir and about the various state gardens which were under the control of the government planted by fruit and arboriculture trees. In the end of the

chapter, detail has been provided about the introduction of scientific practices in the agricultural operations in Kashmir along with the agricultural training being imparted during the period.

The fourth chapter of the study deals with the complete history of the forests of the state, with a brief historical background of pre-colonial Kashmir and pays due attention on it right from 1890, when scientific forestry was introduced in the state. The chapter describes the various scientific practices being applied to the forest of Kashmir along with the lines of Indian forests. The first and foremost practice was the demarcation of the state forest, followed by the working plans, silviculture practices and exploitation as they give us a clear picture about the progress and development of Kashmir forests since 1890. Moreover, the problems like grazing and forest fires, faced by the Forest Department on bringing the forests on scientific lines are also discussed in this chapter. The way forest training and education given to the forest personnel for maintaining the state forest is also discussed in this chapter.

The fifth chapter contains the two parts; in the part one, economic aspect of the forest of the state has been pointed out and elaborated under major and minor forest produce. The major forest produce which includes the sleepers, timber and firewood and the way these contributed to the economy of the state is well articulated in this chapter. Besides this, various minor forest products found in the state has been listed out and the economy generated from these products right from the introduction of scientific forestry has been given in detail. Various industries which are based on the forests had also been discussed in the chapter. The second part of the chapter deals with the socio-cultural impact of the forests of the state. It includes the various policies which were employed by the Government for the maintenance of the forests and the reaction of the people towards it. The chapter also mentions the grazing rules framed by the Government and the forest offences which took place during the period of our study are also mentioned in it.