

Expansion of Sikh State under Ranjit Singh

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Abstract – This present paper makes that how Ranjit Singh make Maharaja and conquest the most of the North-West frontier. This paper also tells about the quality of Ranjit Singh's army and his countries. This is also tells Ranjit Singh's relation with Britsher, Maratha, Afghans and other cities.

Key Words: Charat Singh, Smallpox, Sukherchakia, Lahore, Afghan, British, Maratha, Army, Court etc.

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EXPANSION OF SIKH STATE UNDER RANJIT SINGH:

During recent years great interest has been aroused in the study of the political history of the Sikhas. When turning the page of Indian history we see that from the earliest times. The Punjab has been the coak-pit of India. Every invader who turned his way to this country had first to enter the Punjab and no one who did not succeed in mastering this province could ever hope to with distinction further on. Three times, the field of Panipat has been the scene of memorable and epoch making battles. The reason for this is clear. Those who invaded India could not expect to get support from the natives, and had to keep themselves in touch with the recruiting-ground of the North-west frontiers.

The geographical position of India had made it an insular country. But when discovering of the 15th and 16th centuries joined it to Europe by a sea-route. The English began to increase their power and spread their influence primarily for self-Defence, which incidently invaded them in wars, which earned for them larger territory and established prestige. Looking back at the formation of the British India we find that the Punjab was the last great province annexed in India proper. When Britishers fought with other state for supremacy at this Ranjit Singh came to the stage in Punjab when he came on the stage no high tradition at his back. He was a product of the age, yet he was rich in personal qualities which always from the ground-work of all that a man peculiarly achieves.

Ranjit Singh was the son of Maha Singh, who was the chief of the Sukherchakia Misl. The founder of the Sukherchakia Misl was Budh Singh. After Budh Singh died in 1718, his son Charat Singh and Nawab Kapoor Singh joined their forces and fought several engagements with Abdali. Charat Singh's son was Maha Singh. They lived in Gujranwala, here in 13th

November 1780, Ranjit Singh was born. His mother, named Raj Kaur was daughter of a chief of Jind Gajpat Singh. As Raj Kaur was from Malwa region of the Punjab, she was also known by the name of Mai Malwain.[1]

Ranjit Singh was not quite literate. During his childhood, he got interested in hunting, Sword, Archery, horse riding rather than the primary education. He was a daring and ambitious person.[2]In his childhood, Ranjit Singh suffered from Small pox (it was a viral infection), which was epidemic during that era. Finally he recovered from the smallpox but side-effects caused damage to his left eye and spots on his face went for military practices along with his father Ranjit Singh was only 12 years old when his father Maha Singh died and he sat on the throne of Sukherchakia MISL. [3]He was too young to manage the political issues of the MISL. He Lakhpai Rai as in charge of issues of the MISL. He Lakhpai Rai as in charge of the estate because earlier he helped him to fight and win his first battle when he was only 12 years

Ranjit Singh had a wonderful common sense his whole polity was based on the doctrine of expediency. Everything that he did, and every success that he achieved, can directly or indirectly be ascribed to them. Marriage of Ranjit Singh and Mehtab Kaur whose also a great political settlement between Kanahiya and Sukherchakia Misl. After the marriage of Ranjit Singh, his mother-in-law Sada Kaur played a significant role in the politics of Punjab. She was a very brave, intelligent and capable women leader in Punjab history. He improved his army in every possible way. He took Europeans into his service to train his army according to the western methods. He showed great curiosity in assimilating the advanced military love of European countries and spent a large part of his time in parades and maneuvers.

Having assumed the leadership of the Sukarchakias, Ranjit Singh's first and chief desire was to gain possession of Lahore, which was regarded by Sikh as their political centre. There was a deep seated jealousy in the minds of leading Mohammedans of Lahore against the oppressive and harsh rule of the three Bhangi chiefs, who were then in possession of the city.[4] Ranjit Singh had already obtained a formal grant of the city from Zaman Shahi. The people of Lahore welcomed Ranjit Singh as a 'deliverer' when he took occupation of Lahore. Now Lahore being the political capital of Punjab.[5]

He struck coins and gave name to this point 'Nanak Shahi' and similarly gave the name 'Akal Shahi' of his seals. Now he promulgated himself a Maharaja.[6] Nawab of Kasur with Ramgarhia and Bhangi got really jealous of Ranjit Singh's capturing of Lahore, so they united their force at village Bhasin against Ranjit Singh but failed to give any right due to Gulab Singh Bhangi's death. After Bhasin revolted ; Ranjit adopted a very aggressive approach and fought many fights against his neighbors. In 1801, Ranjit Singh captured many cities like Sujampur, Nurpur, Pindibhetion and Dhan Pothohar. The area of Dhan Pothohar was known for its breed of horses. At the same time, Fateh Singh Ahluwalia and Ranjit Singh become friends by exchanging turbans when they meet at Taran Tara, until Fateh Singh Ahluwalia was alive.[7]

The Maharaja with the allied help of the Kanahyas and the Ahluwalia defeated the opposition of Bhangis and the Ramgarhias. His whole life was the record of constant war fare, as a result of which he made himself master of the all of the Punjab about the Satluj Kashmir and the frontier within a period of 30 years.[8] He gathered all the Misls to establish the Punjab as one state. During this process he faced lots of challenges. After Jassa Singh Ramgarhia's death, Ranjit took over the Ramgarhia's in the same way Ranjit Singh took over the Tara Singh Gheba properly after his death, because the other Sardar and Misldars were not powerful that they could beat Ranjit Singh in quarrel. So they willingly merge with the Ranjit Singh.[9]

Ranjit Singh conquered the Amritsar in 1805, A.D. which was ruled by the Mai Sukhan who was the widow of Gulab Singh. Ranjit Singh captured to Amritsar and gave a small Jagir to Mai Sukhan and Gurdit Singh.[10] By this means he won recognition until by degrees of the Maharaja of Lahore had consolidated the Punjab into the Lahore Kingdom.

In January 1806, the treaty of Lahore held between British, Ranjit Singh and Fateh Singh. After this treaty Maharaja Ranjit Singh returned back to Lahore when he secured the land of Punjab from Maratha's and British. They both Maratha's and British left their position along with their armies and move towards their respective places.[11] In feb. 1807, Ranjit Singh

got success on Kasur and after this, Ranjit Singh having settled the domestic quarrel between Rani Aas Kaur and Raja Saheb Singh of Patiala. Rani Aas kaur secured the designation of a separate reason for her minor son Karam Singh. For settle down this quarrel Ranjit Singh took 'arbiter's fee'. When he departed from Patiala, on the way he collected commendation from the chiefs of Sahabad, Kaithal, Kalsiya, Buria and others. Ranjit Singh's Dewan Mohkam chand also captured many small cities such as Jira and Madani. Ranjit Singh gave the Jira as a price to his Dewan.

During this period British and Maratha also showed interest in Punjab. Yashwant Rao Holkar entered in Punjab along with Lord Lake. The political connection with cis-sutlej chiefs made by Lord Lake but Cornwallis and Barlow had given up. After that Ranjit Singh though as Satej region was now opened for him. The chiefs Bhai Lal Singh of Kaithal, Bhag Singh of Jind and the agents of Patiala and Nabha Rajas become afraid of Ranjit Singh. So, they went to the British in the shake of protection. They met Mr. Seton in Delhi in March 1808, but they return disappointed and empty handed because British didn't want to ruin their relationship with Ranjit Singh. Tlist against Napoleon Isar Alexander, in July 1807, AD. British felt free from danger of Napoleon and Alexander after third cis-sutlej expedition.[12]

The British again took interest in cis-sutlaj before it come under supremacy of Ranjit Singh. Metcalf was sent Lahore, so that, he could take to Ranjit Singh for cis-sutlaj. On sixth May 1809, Mitacafe came to Ranjit Singh to do treaty of Amritsar. According to this treaty consisted to four articles and the area of Ranjit Singh were bounded by this treaty beside the cis-sutlaj.

As a result of this treaty, he was banned to expansion of his territory and Kingdom in east ward and which became the stone in the unity of all Sikh territories. After this treaty a chapter was opened in the history of the lion the Punjab and of the Sikh state.[13]

Ranjit Singh's and British came in contact with each other in 1800, but the treaty of Amritsar (1800) was the benchmark of their friendship. This friendship survived until (1845) first Anglo-Sikh war. Although this treaty banned him to become a solo being of Sikh's as he was banne up to Sind. But this could not stop him to conquer the Ladakh and Afghan territories. British took over the cis-sutlaj estates.[14] Ranjit Singh knew that English were dangerous as enemies and useful as friends. Henever broke the grab of his outer friendship. Exchanged presence and Dusbars, but in his heart he must have felt uneasy at the treatment accorded to in his aggressive military career.

For over decades, he fought a series of battle. He took Kohinoor from emperor of Kashmir (Shah Shuja) cleverly. Many fights were fought between Ranjit Singh and Pathans. In 1822, they fought fifth, ; Yar Mohammed Khan's brother Azim Khan (Governor of Peshawer), with the consent of the Darbar, turned traitor and raised a cry of Jihad against the Maharaja. The Maharaja dispatched a strong army. It was a desperate battle fought at Naushera in which the Akalis, under Phola Singh took the initiative while Ranjit Singh with Gorkhas and Najhs followed in a victory and death struggle.[15]

After some accepted some term, Maharaja come back in Lahore in December. In 1827, Syed Ahmed Shah Bareilly come all the way through the state of Sind with his army. His army, led by Barakzai Sardar, attacked Peshawar, and killed the Yar Mohammed Khan.

Ranjit Singh was initiated into the art of fighting by his father Maha Singh and into the art of diplomacy by his mother Raj Kaur and his mother-in-law the most distinguished Sikh chiefs were Sardar Fatheh Singh Kalianwala, Sardar Nihal Singh Atariwala, Sardar Babu Singh Sindhanwalia and his brother Atar Singh.[16]

The main power Ranjit Singh were his army and court. Ranjit Singh recruited European officers from various nationalist : Italians, Frenchmen, Americans, Englishman, Anglo-Indians, German etc.He recruited Europeans to train his army which become his third arm, occupied with steel.[17] Before Ranjit Singh reign the strength of the Sikh forces war cavalry but he replaced it by a disciplined and well-equipped army. In 1822, A.D. Generally Ventura was made in charge of this infantry. Ranjit Singh subjected to regulatory drill and discipline because he found that Indian armies suffered defeats due to lack of these.

By employing European officers in his army, he followed the Maratha tradition. Before Ranjit Singh soldiers of Punjab mainly depended on plunder and loot but Ranjit Singh gave fixed salary to his soldiers.

In the court of Ranjit Singh every cast and religion were include. Among Sikhs, the important position occupied by Lehna Singh Majithia, Sidhanwalia chiefs and Hari Singh Nalwa. Raja Dhyana and his son Raja Hira Singh, Gulab Singh and Suchet Singh, represented the Dogras at the court. Dewan Mokham Chand and Dewan Karam Chand were the Hindus, who served Ranjit Singh. Brahmins and Muslims also recruited in the court.

Thus, Ranjit Singh occupied the most of the North-West frontier. Maharaja Ranjit Singh was a born soldier and a political comet. He was the greatest military Genius that Punjab ever produced, and accidentally, one of the greatest that India produced. In his career of conquest, he led nearly thirty

expeditions living only about twelve to his generals to lead for him.

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