Punjab and the Great Game

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by

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that work embodied in this dissertation entitled **"Punjab and the Great Game"** was carried out by me under the Administrative Supervision of Prof. Paramjit Singh Ramana, Dean, School of Global Relations and the guidance of Dr. V. J. Varghese, Assistant Professor, Centre for South and Central Asian Studies, Central University of Punjab. This work has not been submitted in part or full to any other University or Institute for award of any degree or diploma.

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(Maninderjit Singh)

CERTIFICATE

We certify that work entitled **"Punjab and the Great Game"** was carried out by Mr. Maninderjit Singh for the award of M.Phil. Degree under our supervision and guidance at the Centre for South & Central Asian Studies, School of Global Relations, Central University of Punjab, Bathinda.

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ABSTRACT

Punjab and the Great Game

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The conquest of the Punjab, its induction into the British Indian Empire and its transformation as the jewel of British crown, model agrarian province and sword arm of India is part of the eventful phenomenon of establishing British colonialism over the Indian sub-continent, alongside the British maneuvers to protect its borders from imminent attacks from across the north western frontier. This exploratory research "Punjab and the Great Game" is an effort to bring out the significance of Punjab as a strategic region, being geographically situated near to theatre of Great Game, in Anglo-Russian rivalry for commercial dominance in Central Asia and political primacy in Afghanistan by unraveling the intricacies related to it. Generally, in the history of empires, buffer states and smaller regions often receive scant individuated consideration as they are submerged in the narratives of empire. The present research by using the optic of great game attempts to understand the trajectory of tensions in the border region, and tries to foreground the implication and transformations of Punjab in this new light.

(Maninderjit Singh) (Dr. V.J. Varghese)

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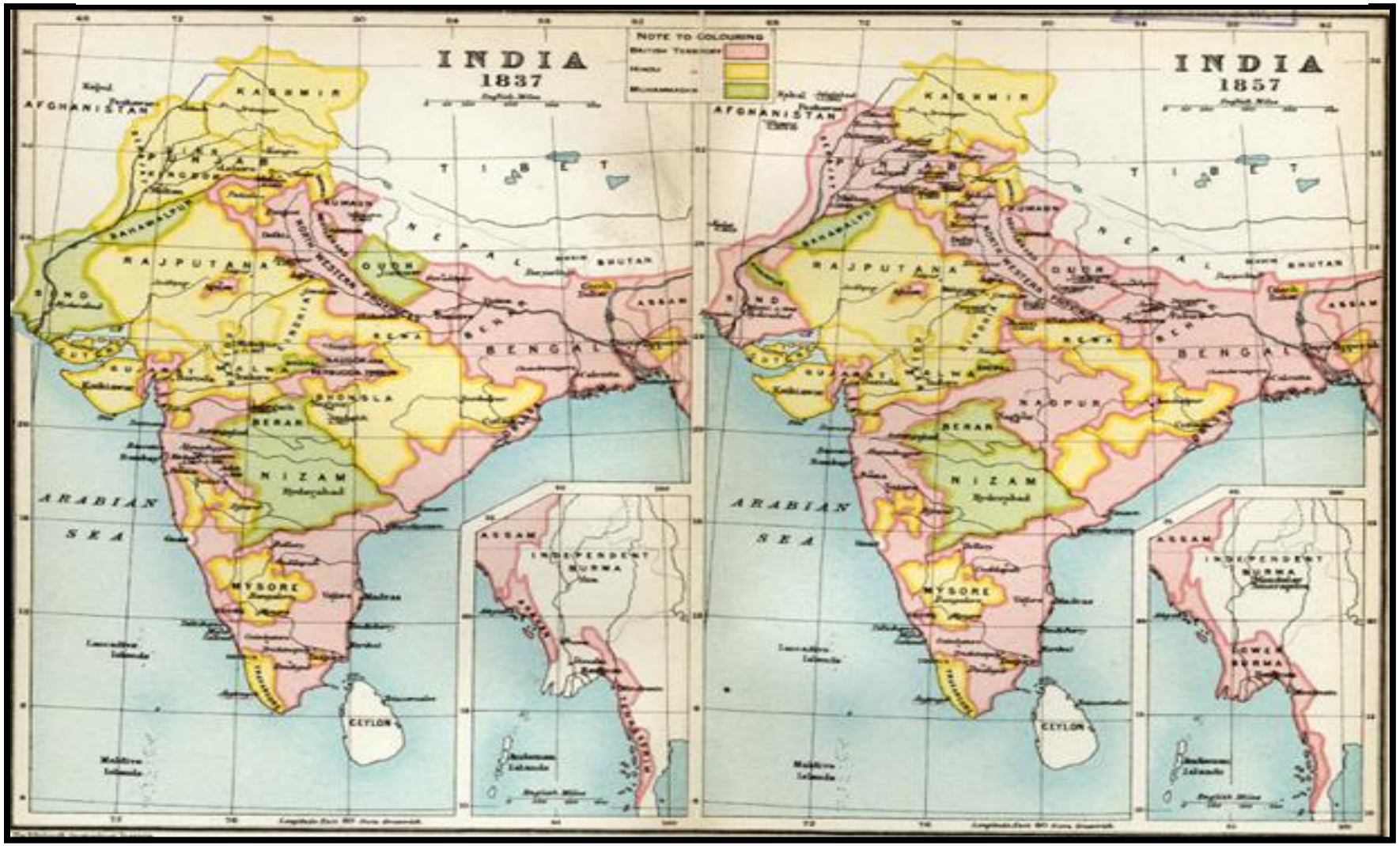

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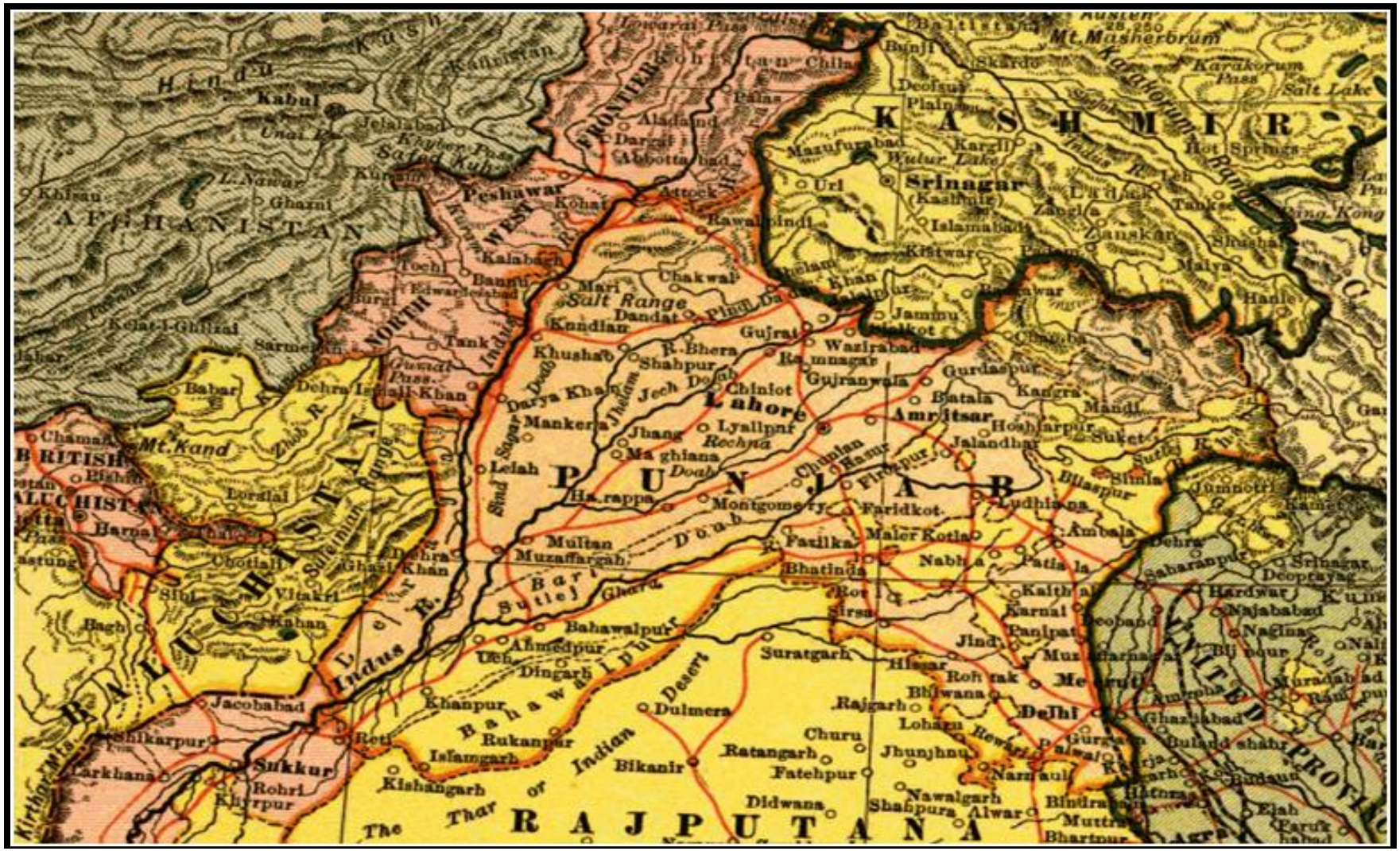

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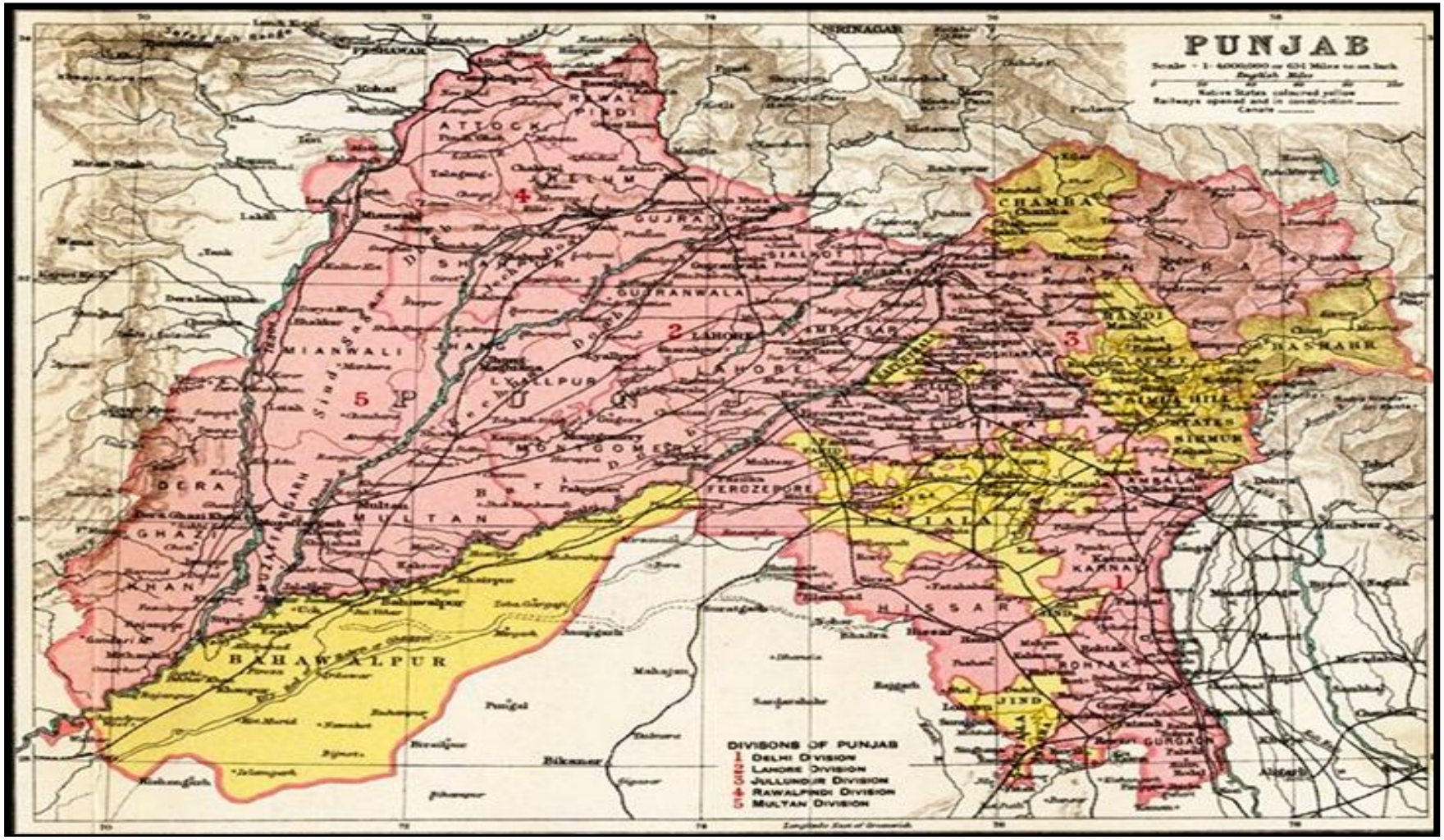

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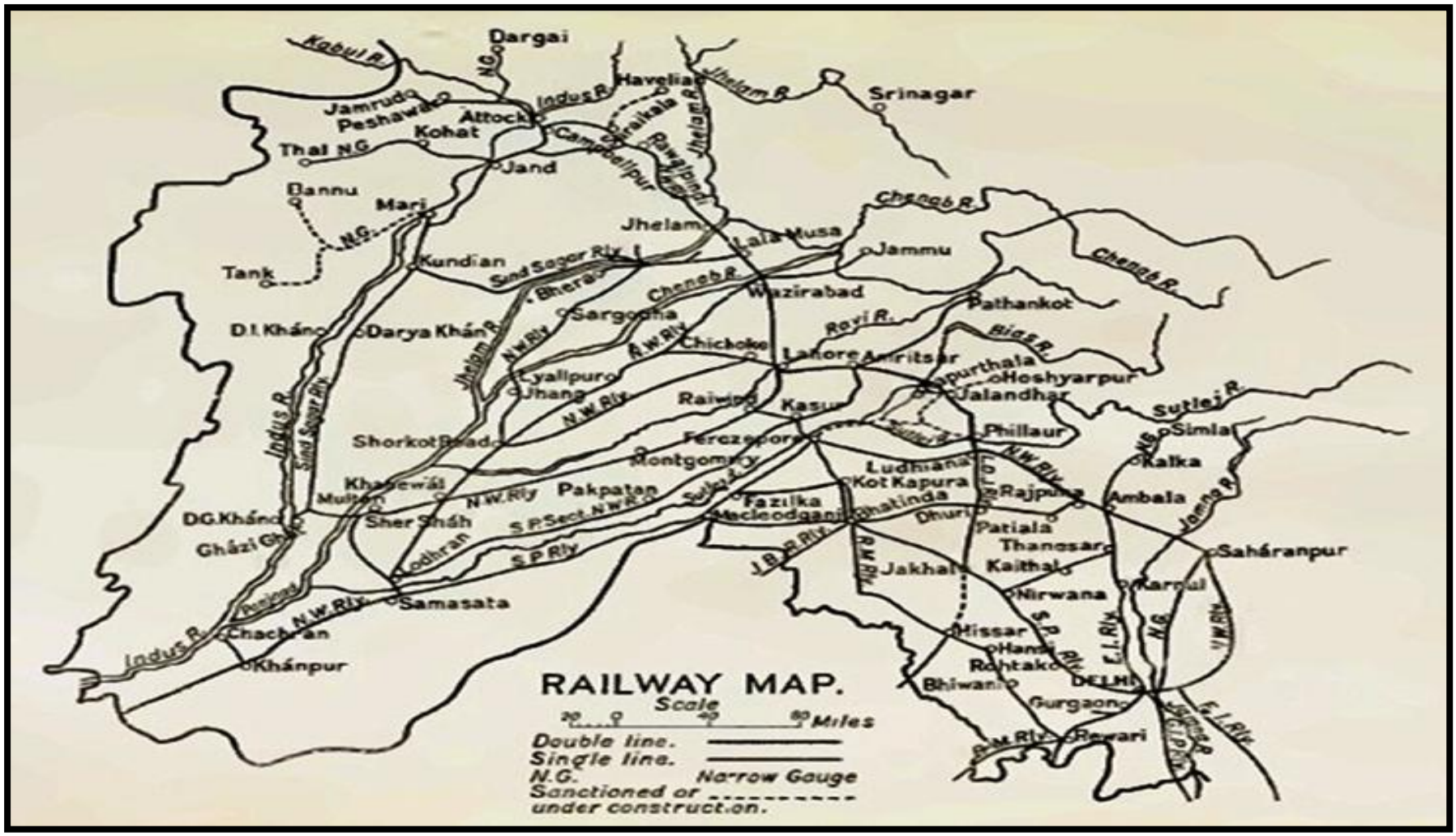

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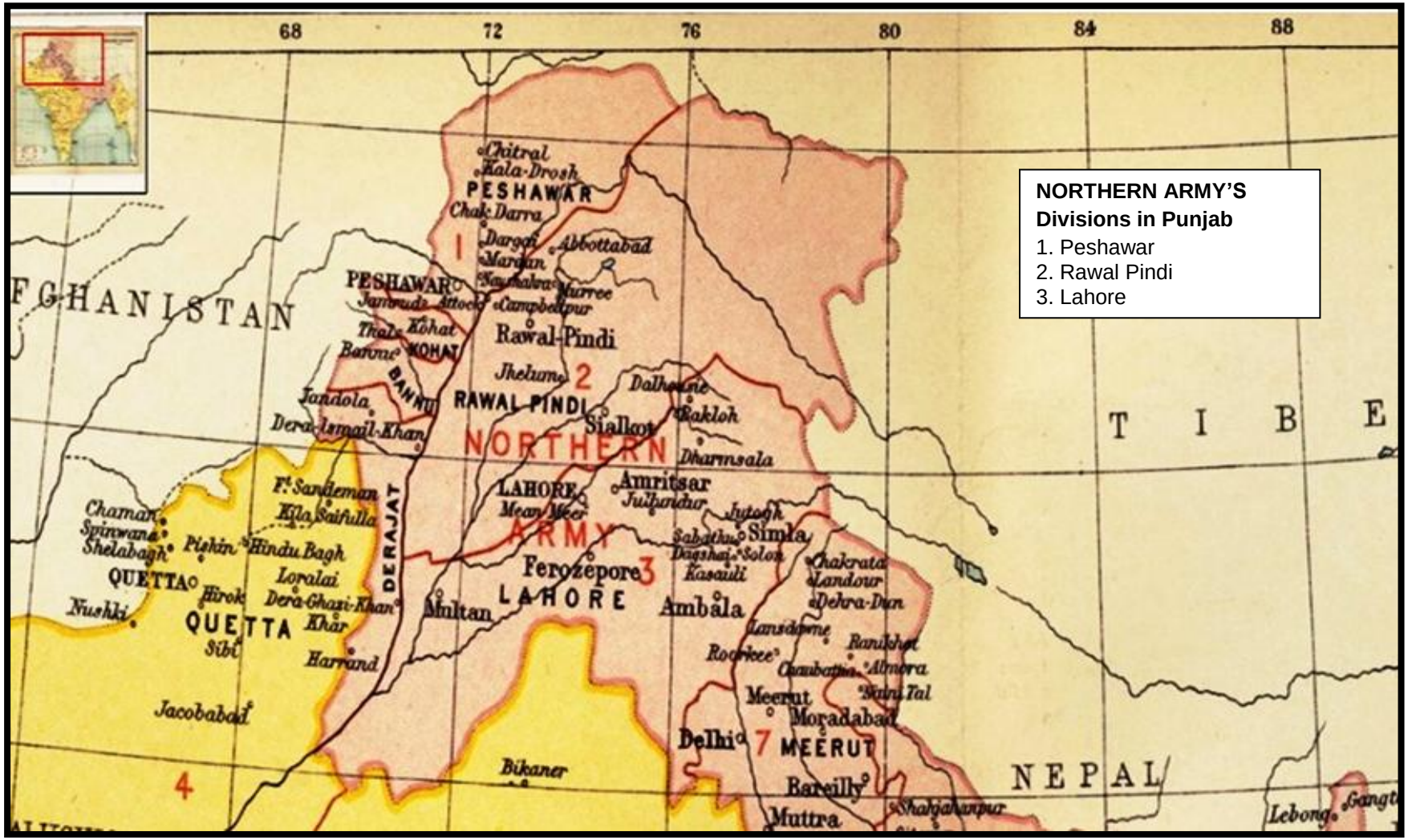

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INTRODUCTION

There is no dearth of studies on the compelling transformations of Punjab region under the British colonialism.[1] So also is the case with studies on the geo-strategic importance of Punjab in general and to the British Indian Empire in particular. However, the importance of Punjab as a strategic region in the Anglo-Russian rivalry in the nineteenth century which arguably led to the annexation of Punjab and thereby altered its subsequent history has not received much of an academic attention. In the history of empires, buffer states and smaller regions often receive scant individuated consideration as they are submerged in the narratives of empire. This exploratory study is an attempt to see the trajectory of tensions between the Czarist Russian and British Indian empires, usually referred to be as the 'Great Game', played out on the North Western Frontier, Central Asian and Persian regions and how it has transformed the history of Punjab.

Punjab, being situated on the north-western border, has geo-strategic, geo-political and geo-economic implications on the security of India from time immemorial and played a significant role in deciding the fortunes of the sub-continent. Its vast unguarded plains were the theatre of military conflicts between those who aspired to gain political control over the sub–continent, until the arrival of the Europeans. It is pointed out that from the beginning of 11th century to the end of 18th century, Punjab had been invaded as many as 70 occasions and ruled by a dozen successive 'non-Punjabi' dynasties (Major 1996: 1). Punjab's geographic position has been crucial in this connection. It was a landlocked region in the Indian sub-continent and it was clearly distinguishable from its natural boundaries (Talbot 1988: 11). It was a triangular piece of land, lying between the rivers Indus and the Yamuna. It was encircled by the Himalayan ranges in the

[1] Punjab here refers to the greater Punjab under the British. According to Imperial Gazetteer of India (1886), Punjab was state in "extreme north-western corner of the Empire and comprises the whole of British India north of Sindh and Rajputana and west of river Yamuna." Punjab was bounded on the north by Kashmir and the Hill States of Swat and Buner; on the east by River Yamuna, North Western Province and the Chinese Empire; on the south by Sindh, the river Sutlej and Rajputana; and on the west by Afghanistan and Baluchistan (Kalat or Khelat) (Prasad 1968: 6). See map 2.

north, Suleiman and Kirthar ranges in the west and river Yamuna in the east; and Sindh and Rajputana deserts in the South (Narang and Gupta 1956: 3-4). However, politically, the boundaries of Punjab were always in flux and it remained open to changes, expanding and contracting from time to time (Ibid: 1). During the reign of Mauryans and Kushans its boundaries were apparently extended beyond Hindu Kush Mountains. In the time of Delhi Sultanate, it got extended up to Peshawar and during the Mughals between Sutlej and Indus. Political boundaries of Punjab again expanded during the time of the Sikh power, it extended up to the Khyber Pass in west and Sutlej in the east apart from including the Kashmir. Under the British it comprised the area between Yamuna river and Khyber Pass, excluding Kashmir (Ibid: 2). The British Indian Punjab comprised the area lies between Sindh, Rajputana and west of river Yamuna, and touched the Suleiman ranges and Khyber Pass. Punjab remained as a gateway to India for all the invaders like the Greeks, the Mongols, the Afghans, the Persians, and the Durranis etc. who had plundered the mainland India by passing through Khyber Pass and by crossing the Indus near Attock (Singh 1998: 1). Therefore, the security of India has been directly intertwined with the defense of Punjab.

It is well known that the stability of political, social, and economic structure of any state depends heavily on the security of its frontiers. Over the centuries, security of Punjab and the Indian sub-continent had been depended on the north-western frontier. This was fully realized by Maharaja Ranjit Singh when he united Punjab through annexing the Multan, Peshawar and keeping the Pathan tribes of frontier region under his stern control. Subsequently, he held the fort of Jamrud and secured the route leading to Attock and the crossings on the river Indus, in order to prevent external incursions (Prasad 1968: 2-3). With the demise of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1839, however, Punjab became a turbulent frontier state generating security concerns for the British, which led to the annexation of Punjab and subsequent British administrative policies in the province including changes in its agrarian geography (Major 1996: 2, Singh 1983: v).

Two of its main geographical features- proximity to the Afghan frontiers and its extensive river system played an important part in shaping the course of Punjab under the British. The former was apparently one of the main factors in the British

Indian Army's decision to centre its recruiting activities in the province. Punjab transformed itself to contribute manpower and logistic support for imperial designs on the North western frontier apart from helping the British to conquer and police far flung overseas territories. Punjab occupied pivotal importance in the British scheme of things in India and the British Indian military became permanent source of employment for Punjabis (Ali 1989: 4). The British subsequently constructed the world's largest irrigation system in the region which has altered the agrarian and demographic maps of Punjab. Punjab as a result apparently experienced rapid and extensive economic growth from the development of canal irrigation accompanied by a process of migratory settlements in its western parts in the form of canal colonies (Talbot 1988: 11, Ali 1989: 3).[2] Punjab due to its geographic position assumes importance in the commercial dispensations too. All the trade which flowed out to Central Asia and Afghanistan and came into the subcontinent via North West Frontier passes through Punjab (Arrora 1930: 1). The Central Asian commerce crossed Indus at three points: 1) Attock to Peshawar and Kabul via Khyber, 2) Darya Khan to Dera Ismail Khan to Afghanistan via Gomal Pass and 3) at Shikarpur in Sindh (Ibid: 2). Though the British interests along these routes of commerce remained limited, they formed the commercial gateways connecting the sub-continent with the Central Asian regions.

It was not the intention of the British initially to incorporate the Punjab to the British India. They were seemingly more interested in the stabilizing and strengthening of Ranjit Singh's power in the Punjab as it served the purpose of a buffer state against a possible invasion of India by Napoleon through the North West and the ever present Russian threat. This has been testified by the series of treaties concluded between the British and Ranjit Singh, reinforcing their mutual friendship and cooperation. Some of the treaties were of commercial importance, which were having provisions towards opening up the Punjab rivers, particularly Indus and Sutlej for commercial purposes (Ibid: 4). After the annexation, the period between 1849 and 1947 brought relative political peace and stability along with the

[2] The British remained paternalistic to Punjab and were determined to transform Punjabi society in accordance with the dominant early Victorian ideals of utilitarianism and evangelical Christianity (Talbot 1988: 10).

vigorous economic growth in Punjab due to the British initiatives in the region due to its strategic, commercial, agrarian and military importance (Ali 1989).[3]

The present research seeks to examine the significance of the Punjab region in the so called 'Great Game', a power game between the empires of Britain and Russia in the 19th century with diverse military and diplomatic maneuvers in Central Asia in general and Afghanistan in particular. The beginning of the 'Great Game' is often traced to the accounts of the Anglo-Russian commercial rivalry in the 19th century. It was Captain Arthur Connolly who called the power struggle between the two mighty empires as 'Great Game' in 1840, though it was immortalized by Rudyard Kipling in his novel *Kim* (Kipling 2009). In this period, the Czarist Russia and the British were making attempts to annex the various Kingdoms and Khanates in Central Asia and Middle East and make them their protectorates. Russian empire's attempt to expand beyond a land locked country, to get access to warm water ports which were necessary for enhancing the operations of its navy and merchant fleets, was perceived as a threat by the British to their Indian Empire. Afghanistan becomes a buffer state in this rivalry resulting in attempts on the part of both the empires to enhance their influence in the Afghan region with smaller players and kingdoms getting implicated in the crossfire as the contesting empires viewed them as buffers or satellites in their power struggle. The dynamics of the 'Great Game' is explicated mostly within an empire-centric framework, leaving hardly any space for understanding the same from the perspective of the affected peripheries and buffer regions. Punjab is one such area which was implicated in the 'Great Game', altering its subsequent historical trajectory. The history of Punjab during the colonial time, its combat with the British and its eventual annexation has not been problematised in relation to the larger power struggle known as the 'Great Game'. The prosperous and mighty

[3] It is true that colonialism entered into different regions by using different keys, but alliance with the elite and creation of partners from the native society remained one of their core strategies across India. Their policies also varied across the country mainly due to the different conditions and alignments in each region. In Punjab they found that they had to base their political control on the support of the leading landowning groups. The new Punjabi society emerged towards the end of the 19th century was a result of this policy (Talbot 1988: 10).

state of Punjab, lying between Afghanistan and British Indian Empire, was at first used by the British to domesticate Afghanistan by establishing a puppet regime with the help of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and subsequently made part of the British Indian Empire in 1849 due to its pivotal strategic importance in foiling the Russian designs in the Central Asia. In this context, the attempt here would be to understand the connection between the incorporation of Punjab in the British Empire and the 'Great Game' from the perspective of the periphery. The research would also keenly explore the impact of this imperial conflict on the economy, society and polity of Punjab. The study explores the compulsions behind the making of Punjab as a 'model province' with peace and order, apart from mapping the trajectory of conflicts associated with the great game in the region. The study would also make an attempt to explore its connection with the Punjabization of Indian army and the response of Punjab at large to the British interests in the 'Great Game'. The study is largely exploratory and relied mainly on secondary literature and British narratives on colonial India.

The study is presented in three chapters apart from the short introduction and concluding sections. The Chapter 1 narrates the gradual expansion of British Empire in India and the development of their interest in the north western frontier region which resulted in the incorporation of Punjab in the British Empire. It also tracks the progress of bilateral relations between Punjab and British Indian Empire under the shadow of Great Game. The Chapter 2 presents the development and end of Great Game between two empires and their maneouvers in the states, lies in and around of Central Asia. It also accentuate the involvement and use of Punjab in Great Game particularly military use for imperial defense of frontier region either from Pathan tribes of north-west frontier region or to challenge the Russian progress in Central Asia. The Chapter 3 brings out the major transformation of Punjab during the colonial time in the shadow of the great game. It explores how it affected the polity, society and economy of Punjab. It also highlights the British attempts to modernize the Punjab and used it for imperial purposes. The concluding section will summarize the study.

Chapter 1

TOWARDS ITS 'NATURAL FRONTIER':
BRITISH EXPANSION AND ANNEXATION OF PUNJAB

The story of Punjab becoming part of the British Indian Empire, which is considered to be jewel of the British crown, is part of the eventful story of establishing British colonialism over the subcontinent. The British came to India, way back in the first decade of 17th century, as traders under the banner of English East India Company, a trading company established in 1599. As it is well known, they made their early settlements at Surat in Gujrat. It was the third among the commissioned voyages of British ships that brought the Captain William Hawkins on the coast of Surat in 1608 (Burke and Quraishi 1997: 5). He made an unsuccessful attempt to get permission from Emperor Janhangir to trade within India (Roberts 1921: 26). Thereafter, the British Company sent its emissary Sir Thomas Roe to secure a formal treaty with the Mughal Emperor Jahangir, with the sanction of English King James I. Though Thomas Roe was not able to achieve any significant breakthrough, he got some concessions from Prince Khurram (who later known as Emperor Shahjahan) to manage the affairs of the English factory and trade without any interference of local authorities (Chhabra 2004: 92). He advised the East India Company's officials not to waste money on military adventures as British came to India for trade, not to conquer rather to seek profit at sea in quiet commerce. Nevertheless, this policy was changed with the coming of Josiah Child as Director of the company in 1677 (Rawlinson 1948: 38, Kulkarni 1964: 34).

On the eastern side of peninsular India, the British established themselves at the Coromandel Coast. The British ambition here was something more than a factory. They wanted a territory which they could fortify and protect their mercantile in the East (Wheeler 1972: 47). Their search for the desired place in Coromandel area ended in 1639-1640, when Francis Day succeeded in buying a piece of land from Sri Ranga Raja, a Hindu Raja of Chandragheri, which later came to be known as Madras. It was considered to be the first territory which the British secured in India and build a fort, St. George fort over there (Roberts 1921: 37, Wheeler 1972: 49). Further upward in Bengal, British initially settled at Hooghly when they opened

a factory with the permission of Shah Shuja, the second son of Shahjahan in the second half of 17th century (Wheeler 1972: 150). However, after Aurangzeb became the Emperor in 1658 adopting tough policies against the British in Bengal and even in Gujrat, the company's profitable trade and commerce was affected. This state of affairs was not limited to Mughal's but Marathas were also attacking the Company's settlements and derived handsome amount of money from the British officials. Subsequently, the British shifted its Headquarter from Surat to Bombay (Roberts 1921: 37-42, Lyall 1929: 43). Thereafter, Company officials realized that they have to guard their own commerce. As a result, the traditional policy of Thomas Roe was relinquished, which was only applicable for 'peaceful times', not for 'state of anarchy' when central authority loosened up (Griffiths 1952: 56). Sir Josiah Child, who became the Governor General of Company in 1681 realized the need for the change of policy and after carefully analyzing and inspecting the situation, he declared the famous principle that company must "establish such a politie of civil and military power, and create and secure such a large revenue to maintain both… as may be the foundation for all times to come" (Kulkarni 1964: 37, Ibid: 57). Thus, subsequently Fort William was erected in 1699 around which the prime city of Bengal, i.e. Calcutta emerged (Rawlinson 1948: 11).

By the end of 17th century, British established themselves at three principal port cities- Bombay, Madras and Calcutta. They had successfully eliminated the threat from Portuguese and Dutch competitors whose position was now taken by the French, with whom the British were waging war throughout the 18th century almost all across the world (Rawlinson 1948: 19). Their rivalry for dominance on the eastern trade was effectively tested in Southern India between the years 1740-1763, basically during the War of Austrian Succession and followed by Seven Years War in Europe (Kulkarni 1964: 41). Besides French, the British were also started to mess up with local rulers and kingdoms in the second half of 18th century. First among them was Siraj-ud-Daula, the Nawab of Bengal, who was subdued in the battle of Plassey (1757). He was succeeded by Mir Jaffer who was put on the throne of Bengal by the British but later they replaced him with his son in law Mir Qasim. However, the latter removed the pro British advisers and also wanted to abolish the privileges of free trade to the British in order to consolidate

his hold in Bengal (Griffiths 1952: 73-74). Later, he made an alliance with Nawab of Oudh (Shuja-ud-daulah) and Mughal Emperor (Shah Alam) against the British. The Battle of Buxar (1764) in which the British took the trio, resulted in complete defeat of the native rulers and made the British, the masters of Bengal province (Bengal, Bihar and Orissa) and Allahabad. This transformed the fortunes of the East India Company from an association of traders to rulers, exercising political control over Bengal (Rawlinson 1948: 21-22).

In the Southern India although the British were able to get rid of French but new challengers emerged in Mysore in the forms of Hyder Ali and after his death, his son Tipu Sultan carry on the resisitance. British fought four Anglo-Mysore wars with them. In the first Anglo- Mysore war during in 1766-1769, the British forces attacked Mysore simultaneously from Bombay and Madras. However, they were defeated by Hyder Ali and forced to sign the treaty of Madras (Dodwell 1922: 275-76). The British captured Mahe, a port city of very importance for Mysore state, in 1778. This led to second Anglo–Mysore war in which Hyder Ali inflicted a severe defeat on the English forces compelling them to flee from Madras. On the death of Hyder Ali in December 1782, his son Tipu Sultan continued the war. He won at Bednore but failed to arrest the Manglore. However, this war ended inconclusively in 1784 with the signing of the treaty of Manglore, and both parties returned the conquered territories to each other (Mahajan 1961: 73-75). Thereafter, British under the Governor General Lord Cornwallis made an alliance with the Nizam of Hyderabad and Marathas, against the Tipu Sultan. The third Anglo-Mysore war started in 1789 and ended in March 1792, with the defeat of Tipu Sultan. This defeat cost him half his empire, which was divided between the allied states (Roberts 1921: 234-35). Though, Tipu Sultan was crippled and humiliated by the defeat, he started his intrigues with the French and Amir of Afghanistan, Zaman Shah to avenge his defeat from the British. In 1798, Lord Wellesley was appointed as Governor General and being a true imperialist he developed the new policy of Subsidiary Alliance with which the British enhanced the imperial hold over the territories of the native rulers. The Nizam of Hyderabad was first ruler to come under subsidiary alliance and subsequently other rulers like that of Travancore, Cochin, Awadh, etc. (Bakshi 1971: 3-4). After the Nizam came under subsidiary alliance in 1798, Wellesley pushed upon the Tipu Sultan to accept the subsidiary

alliance. Tipu Sultan however refused to surrender to his wishes, which led to fourth Anglo-Mysore War in 1799. Tipu Sultan died fighting at Seringapattam in the war. Thus, British annexed the Mysore Kingdom and placed their vassal on the throne of Mysore (Mahajan 1961: 100-01).

The British were facing challenges in their colonial expansion in central and western India from the Marathas who emerged as the strongest contenders for the throne of Delhi during the period from 1750 to 1761. However, the Maratha dream of settling themselves at the throne of Delhi was shattered by their defeat in the hands of Ahmad Shah Abdali in the third battle of Panipat in 1761 (Dodwell 1922: 249). Peshwa Baji Rao died after the loss of Panipat and was succeeded by his son Peshwa Madhav Rao. He started to consolidate Marathas again to the dislike of the British as they did not want to let them grow in strength again. Thus, British wanted to subdue them. They got the opportunity with the death of Peshwa Madhav Rao, when internal war of succession for the throne started. Raghunath Rao (younger brother of Peshwa Baji Rao) approached the British for help against the other Maratha chiefs who challenged him as he became the new Peshwa (Majumdar et. al. 1967: 668). He concluded the treaty of Surat (1775) with British whereby, he ceded the Bassein and Salsette to the British and a part of revenue of Surat and Broach in favour of their military expenses. Subsequently, the first Anglo-Maratha War started but Calcutta authorities of the Company intervened and hostilities were stopped for time being. Thus, the treaty of Purandhar signed accordingly in 1776, was not liked by the Bombay authorities that resulted in the continuation of the war. The British troops of Bombay lost the battle at Telegaon and signed the Wadgaon Convention which was not accepted by the Governor General Warren Hastings (Ibid: 668-70). Hasting managed to secure the prestige for the British by inflicting losses on Marathas at Ahmadabad, Bassein, and Gwalior. Thereafter, the treaty of Salbai (1782) was signed which confirmed the possession of Salsette by the British. Raghunath Rao was pensioned off and Madhav Rao Narayan became the new Peshwa (Ibid: 670). However, Madhav Rao Narayan committed suicide and was succeeded by Baji Rao II, the son of Raghunath Rao. He heightened the rivalries of Maratha leaders by setting one against another (Ibid: 691). However in 1802, Peshwa Baji Rao II and Daulat Rao Sindhia were defeated by Jaswant Rao Holkar at Pune. Thereafter, Baji Rao II

sought British help to get back the throne of Pune. He signed the treaty of Bassein whereby he came under the subsidiary alliance. Thereupon, Governor General Arthur Wellesley restored him on the throne of Pune in May, 1803 (Dodwell 1922: 372-73). For the Maratha chiefs like Bhonsle Raja of Berar, Daulat Rao Sindhia of Gwalior, and Yashwant Rao Holkar, treaty of Bassein was nothing short of surrender of Maratha pride (Bakshi 1971: 3). Therefore, it led to second Anglo-Maratha war. The loss of war made the Sindhia and the Bhonsle to accept the subsidiary alliance by concluding the treaty of Surje-Arjangaon (1803) and the treaty of Deogaon (1803) respectively (Dodwell 1922: 374). However war with Holkar started in April 1804 who initially kept himself aloof from war. Holker proved to be a fitting match for the British and gave stiff resistance to British troops under Lord Lake, Commander in Chief of British Army. The treaty of Rajpur Ghat was signed later in January 1806, according to which Holkar gave up all the claims on the Tonk, Rampura, Bundi, Kooch, Bundelkhand and places north of Chambal. But later Holkar got greater parts of its territories back due to policy of peace and non intervention adhered by Governor General Sir George Barlow (Majumdar et. al. 1967: 698-99). This policy change came as the Company's debt grew upwards since 1797, due to expansionist policy of Wellesley. In 1813, Lord Hastings readopted the policy of expansion with the aim of establishing British supremacy in India. On the other hand, Baji Rao II also wanted to get free from the British interferences. He tried to collect tribute from Gaekwar of Baroda, a feudatory of British, who refused to yield to his demand. In subsequent events, his chief minister Gangadhar Shastri was murdered on the instance of Peshwa's chief minister Trimbakji. Thereafter, the British resident at Pune, Elphinstone intervened and Trimbakji was arrested and put in the jail. However, he escaped from the jail and provoked the Peshwa against the British. Baji Rao II's troops attacked the British residency at Pune in November 1817. Thus third Anglo-Maratha war started in 1817. British forces defeated the Peshwa, who fled from Pune. Subsequently, Bhonsla Raja and Holkar declared the war on the British. However, they met the same fate as that of Peshwa. Lord Hasting annexed the territories of Maratha chiefs and pensioned off the Peshwa to Kanpur (Edwardes 1961: 491-93). This made them supreme authority in India having sway over the princely states in India and areas directly controlled by it up to the bank of river Sutlej; as on the

other side of Sutlej, the independent state of Punjab was ruled by Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

Punjab, the land of five rivers, had apparently declined into a state of anarchy with the receding power of Mughal Empire in the 18th century. The invasions of Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali dealt a mortal blow to the state structure. Even the Sikhs, who were reformed into a military brotherhood by Guru Gobind Singh towards the end of seventeenth century under the conditions of conflict with the Mughals got segregated into twelve *Misls*, by the closing years of the eighteenth century. In the meantime, Ranjit Singh emerged as the strongest among them and fully cashed in the situation of conflict by rendering assistance to Zaman Shah, the king of Afghanistan, who frequently invaded Punjab in the last decade of 18th century. In favor of his succor, Zaman Shah appointed Ranjit Singh as the *Subedar* of Lahore (Edwardes 1961: 496). Subsequently, Ranjit Singh proclaimed himself the Raja and annexed the territories of other *Misls* as Zaman Shah got entangled in consolidating his own position in Afghanistan. Thereafter, Ranjit Singh consolidated his position by conquering the North-West Frontier Province, Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh by 1836 (McLeod 2002: 77).

The British interest in the North Western Frontier area had its roots in the early nineteenth century due to the threat came across the borders. This was a result of the diplomatic manoeuvers of Tipu Sultan, the arch enemy of the British in the South, to Zaman Shah and Napoleon, with an aim of persuading them to attack the British in India (Lyall 1929: 194). Being alarmed by these initiatives of Tipu Sultan, the British began to focus on the North-West frontier region and vied to establish political relations with the states in North-west of India, in order to safeguard them from any possible attacks. They sent their envoy Munshi Yusaf Ali Khan with presents to the court of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, which established contact between Ranjit Singh and the British. He was called back slightly later as the threat of Zaman Shah receded (Chhabra 1976: 79, Singh 1955: 12). The British meanwhile opened up diplomatic missions with the Persian court and succeeded in getting an assurance regarding the security of its western border from a potential Persian invasion following the diplomatic mission of Captain John Malcolm (Bilgrami 1972: 19-20).

Things took a crucial turn following the British involvement in the second Anglo-Maratha war. During the course of this conflict, the Maratha chief Holkar entered the territory of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and reached Amritsar in 1805. While pursuing him Lord, Lake also crossed the Beas. The Maratha chief seeks out Ranjit Singh help against the British. But the latter turned down his request and advised him to conciliate with the British (Thorburn 1970: 4-5). In the meantime, Ranjit Singh signed a treaty of friendship with Lord Lake on January 1, 1806 and agreed to force Jaswant Rao Holkar to leave Amritsar. General Lake in turn promised that the English would never attempt to seize Ranjit Singh's possessions and property (Chhabra 1976: 80-81). This treaty has proved to be advantageous for Ranjit Singh as it freed him from the British interference in Punjab on the one hand and secured the friendship of them on the other. Thereafter, he consolidated his position in Punjab, and expeditions were even sent to the territories between Yamuna and Sutlej commonly known as Cis-Sutlej states (Thorburn 1970: 5).[1] He mediated in the dispute between rulers of Nabha and Patiala in 1806 as requested by the former along with the Raja of Jind. While going back to the capital Lahore, he occupied the Ludhiana, Raikot, Jagraon and Ghungrana. Again in 1807, he made successful campaign in Cis-Sutlej territories and secured tributes from Ambala, Manimajra, Ropar, Kalsia and Kaithal. He also annexed Naraingarh, Wadni, Zira and Kotkapura. Thereafter, rulers of Cis-Sutlej states approached the British Resident at Delhi for their help against Maharaja Ranjit Singh. But the British were cold and cautious in their response, apparently due to a stated policy of non-interference in local disputes, but more importantly due to the Company's

[1] Cis-Sutlej states were mostly Sikh principalities that became important in the early 19th century when their fate was in the balance between the British and Maharaja Ranjit Singh. They were called Cis- (Latin: "On This Side") Sutlej by the British because they were on the British, or southern, side of the Sutlej River. They had grown up during "the time of troubles" in the Punjab after the collapse of Mughal authority and the withdrawal of the Afghan chief Ahmad Shah Abdali in 1761. Under the threat of absorption into Ranjit Singh's kingdom, they appealed to the British, who established dominance over them by the Treaty of Amritsar (1809). The states survived until the independence of India (1947), at which time they were organized into the Patiala and East Punjab States Union (PEPSU). They subsequently were absorbed into the Indian states of Punjab and Haryana. Available at: http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/118617/Cis-Sutlej-states, (Accessed on 15 February, 2012).

friendship with Ranjit Singh (Chhabra 1976: 83-84). Hence, Ranjit Singh advanced further and interferences into Cis-Sutlej states was ignored by the British for the initial two years, even though earlier they assured them protection against any external attacks after annexing these territories from Sindhia after defeating him in the Second Anglo-Maratha war (Thorburn 1970: 5, Edwardes 1961: 496). This state of affairs however didn't last longer and Franco-phobia again swiped the British hierarchy which emerged out after the treaty of Tilsit between France and Russia along with Persia, during the Governor-Generalship of Lord Minto in India.

In 1803-04, Persia sought help against Russia from the French in Europe and British from India, after losing a war with her.[2] The British in India didn't respond to the call due to policy of retrenchment (Lyall 1929: 225) under Lord Barlow and also due to its alliance with Russia in Europe (Dodwell 1922: 486). The French however came forward to help Persia as they were already in war with Russia. Napoleon sent his envoy to Persia with the aim of forming an offensive triple alliance by incorporating Turkey, with the objective to materialize his scheme of Asiatic conquest, India being the prime target. The treaty of Tilsit, signed in July 1807, meanwhile brought Napoleon and Russian Emperor Alexander I together, after the defeat of latter at battle of Friedland in June 1807 (Lyall 1929: 225). Thus, with the alliance of two big European powers, Francophobia got reinforced and envoys were sent by Lord Minto to the kingdoms on and beyond the north-western border of British India. The motive behind the dispatch of envoys was the creation of effective barrier against the French inroads in the form of inner and outer layers of states- the inner layer contained Punjab and Sindh and the outer layer Kabul and Persia (Bakshi 1971: 23-24). As seen in the British narratives, Punjab occupied a crucial role in the scheme of defense as mapped out by the British in case of Russian and French adventures on to the British India. It was seen as a

[2] This was a conflict about the modern day Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia over which Persian Empire held suzerainty. However, in 1783 after death of Nadir Shah, the Heraclius the prince of Georgia changed the allegiance to Russian Empress Catherine by signing the treaty in 1783. Later Persian king Aga Mohammad subdued it (Boulger 1879:196-97). But Russian annexed Georgia in 1800 and subsequently Russian descent upon Persian provinces Erivan and Gilan in 1804. At Erivan Abbas Mirza army was defeated but at Gilan conflict dragged on then Persian sought the British help (Sykes 1915: 410-13).

state forming an inner layer of defense against a possible threat across the north-west frontier.

Sir Charles Metcalfe was sent to Punjab with the primary objective of securing defensive alliance against the French design and making the kingdom of Lahore as a buffer. There was a secondary intention too, that was to check the Ranjit Singh's aggressive plans towards Cis-Sutlej states (Chhabra 1976: 86) as the British military strategists began to look at Sutlej as a better frontier than Yamuna apart from appeal for help from the Cis-Sutlej states (Singh 1955: 13). Metcalfe met Ranjit Singh at Kasur on September 11, 1807 and discussed about the French machinations against the British in India (Chhabra 1976: 86). Initially, Maharaja and his advisors considered these apprehensions of the British as ridiculous, but later tried to drive leverage out of it by demanding recognition of his sovereignty over Cis-Sutlej states in return for alliance. Metcalfe informed him that he had no authority about this but would refer the demand to higher authorities (Thorburn 1970: 6). Ranjit Singh was shrewd enough to understand that the British desire to have alliance with him was primarily the necessity of British due to their hostilities with Napoleon in Europe (Bakshi 1971: 27). So, he tried to en-cash the opportunity and promptly crossed the Sutlej River while Metcalfe was still present in his territories (Majumdar et. al. 1963: 236). He annexed the Cis-Sutlej territories of Faridkot and Ambala, extracted tribute from Malerkotla and Thanesar, and exchanged turbans with the Raja of Patiala (Thorburn 1970: 7).

In the meantime, the danger of Napoleon disappeared with his involvement in dealing with Spanish insurrections and making preparations for subduing Russia,[3] which resulted in postponement of the idea of establishing close alliance with Punjab, Afghanistan and Sindh by Lord Minto. On the other hand, the British developed friendly relations with Russia, Persia and Turkey (Lyall 1929: 228). Thereafter, Lord Minto adopted a stern attitude towards Maharaja Ranjit Singh particularly for his interventions in the Cis-Sutlej area. In a note through Metcalfe,

[3] Napoleon wanted to subdue Russia to resurrect Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth that includes territories of Belarus, Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania. In 1812 Russian withdrawal from continental blockade of British commerce into Europe provided the required spark. Available at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_invasion_of_Russia#Causes, (Accessed on 20 January, 2012).

he advised Ranjit Singh to hand over all the possessions in Cis-Sutlej territories annexed by him since 1806 to their earlier rulers. The infuriated Maharaja ended the negotiations with the British. This led to Lord Minto dispatching troops under Lt. Col. David Ochterlony across Yamuna to establish a post at Ludhiana with an objective of coercing Ranjit Singh in his negotiations with Metcalfe (Bakshi 1971: 29-31). After reaching at Ludhiana, Lt. Col. David Ochterlony on February 9, 1809 issued a proclamation that Cis–Sutlej states were under British protection, and any aggressive schemes against them would be seriously dealt with (Singh 1955: 14). Ranjit Singh was perturbed by this and took an aggressive posture by assembling his troops on the banks of Sutlej near Phillaur- a town opposite to Ludhiana (Bakshi 1971: 31). However, later he changed his mind after analyzing his limitations and demand of the situation. He concluded the treaty of Amritsar on April 25, 1809 and relinquished his claim on the left bank of Sutlej except territories of 45 *parganas* in the south of Sutlej, which was held by him before 1806 (Singh 1955: 15, Majumdar et. al. 1963: 237).

The main effect of this treaty on Ranjit Singh was that his eastward expansion in Cis-Sutlej region was virtually blocked as the British government took the Cis-Sutlej states under its protection and paramountcy by making river Sutlej as the border between them. However, Ranjit Singh was given a 'carte blanche' by the British as far as the region to the west of the Sutlej was concerned (Singh 1982: 295). The positive outcome of this treaty for the British was the conversion of Punjab as a buffer between British India and the territories beyond the north western frontier of India. This treaty also struck a severe blow onto Ranjit Singh's desire to sovereign of all the Sikh states in Punjab and Cis-Sutlej states (Bakshi 1971: 35). Despite having signed the treaty under pressure, the pragmatic Ranjit Singh maintained cordial and realistic relation with the British through thick and thin. He didn't take any offensive action during their losses in Nepal war in 1815-16 and Burmese war in 1825. He even refused to succor the Bhonsla Raja of Nagpur in 1820, Nepal in 1824 and Raja of Bharatpur in 1825, when approached by them (Singh 1955: 16-17). On the other hand, British proved to be truly opportunistic in their dealing with Punjab. By 1827, they fixed their eyes on the territories on and beyond the north-western frontier of Punjab after consolidating themselves in India (Singh 1955: 17). They implicitly supported the Sayyid Ahmad

of Bareilly's Jihad against the Sikh state of Punjab in the north western frontier of Punjab, by ignoring his activities and preparations in their territories against its ally, (Majumdar et. al. 1963: 240-41). This danger to Maharaja Ranjit Singh's empire ended on May 8, 1831 with the defeat and fatality of Sayyid Ahmad at battle of Balakot (Ibid: 241). Ranjit Singh thereafter planned about conquering Sindh and Baluchistan, states contiguous to his empire in the south-west, across the river Indus (Singh 1955: 19). In 1831 he met William Bentick at Ropar and proposed partitioning Sindh between the two empires. Though the proposal did not find the favour of Bentick, they concluded a treaty of 'perpetual amity' (Chopra et. al. 1996: 240, Edwardes 1961: 497). The very next-day William Bentick sent Pottinger to negotiate a treaty with the Amir of Sindh, which was kept secret and was not disclosed to Maharaja (Majumdar et. al. 1967: 241). This was because of the fact that British had their own plans about Sindh and Baluchistan for extending their sphere of influence up to Afghanistan (Singh 1955: 19). They wanted to make these states as a buffer between them and the advancing Russia in Central Asia, as the outer layer of their defense wall (Chopra et. al. 1996: 240). Russia by then had already taken Persia into her sphere of influence after the treaty of Turkomanchi in 1828 (Bilgrami 1972: 64). Maharaja's intentions to conquer Shikarpur, a town on the west of Indus, also did not succeed. Shikarpur was strategically and commercially very important during those days, as it was considered as the gate of *Khorasan*[4] and important for the trade. However, he dropped the plan of annexing Shikarpur as he knew the graveness of continuing with the plan as British were much superior to them (Singh 1955: 22).

In 1835, British seized Ferozepur and converted it into a military cantonment in 1838 apparently to guard themselves against the Russian and Persian designs in Central Asia and Afghanistan (Majumdar et. al. 1963: 241). This was done under conditions of increasing Russian and Persian machinations

[4] According to encyclopedia Britannica, historically *Khorasan* was region that includes the territories of north-eastern Iran, southern Turkmenistan, and northern Afghanistan. The historical region extended along the Amu Darya in north (Oxus River) to the Caspian Sea in west and from the fringes of the central Iranian deserts in South to the mountains of central Afghanistan in east. Available at: http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/316850/Khorasan, (Accessed on 20 January 2012).

in Afghanistan by the mid 1830s (Chhabra 1976: 133). In 1836, Dost Muhammad (king of Afghanistan) sought British aid as he was sandwiched between Russia, Persia and the Sikh state of Punjab (Griffiths 1952: 96). He sent a formal letter to the new Governor General of India Lord Auckland, wherein he congratulated him in his arrival and discussed about his problems with the Sikhs, who had annexed Peshawar from him. However, Auckland maintained a stance of neutrality on his dispute with Ranjit Singh. Later, Auckland sent Alexander Burns in November 1836 to sign some commercial deals with Dost Muhammad. Dost Muhammad could not recapture Peshawar even in the battle of Jamrud fought by him against Ranjit Singh in 1837. He again pressed for the British help in recovering Peshawar from Ranjit Singh, but was ultimately refused by the British higher authorities as they did not want to turn against their 'trusted ally' in Punjab (Dodwell 1922: 490-92). This resulted in the failure of Alexander Burnes mission as Dost Muhammad completely lost faith in the British.[5] Thereupon, Dost Mahommad preferred Russian and Persian alliance, which necessitated the tripartite treaty between Auckland, Ranjit Singh and Shah Shuja, the ruler of Kabul. Although, Ranjit Singh knows that this will strengthen the encirclement of Punjab and he would be virtually caught in the middle, he signed the treaty on June 26, 1838 (Singh 1955: 26). However, he didn't agree to permit the expedition force for first Anglo-Afghan war to pass through Punjab to Afghanistan (Majumdar et. al. 1963: 245-46).

The demise of Maharaja Ranjit Singh turned the tide of this power dynamics. The death of Ranjit Singh on June 27, 1839 led the state he carved out rapidly falling into dilapidation. The British represented it as an epoch of anarchy in which intrigues and murders was a routine affair in Lahore Darbar (Lyall 1929: 260). The Dogra brothers (Gulab Singh, Dhyan Singh and Suchet Singh) were fighting against Sandhawalia brothers (Attar Singh, Lehna Singh and Ajit Singh) and the other nobles (Malik 1983: 132). Ranjit Singh's son Kharak Singh succeeded him and continued the same policy of friendship with the British. He was soon replaced with his son Naunihal Singh by the Sandhawalia Sardars. However, both Kharak Singh and Naunihal Singh died in successive incidents in

[5]Alexander Burnes mission was to sign a commercial treaty with the Afghanistan king, but the latter wanted a subsidy for maintenance of army and restitution of Peshawar to Afghanistan (Sykes 1915: 430).

November 1840. Then Sher Singh became Maharaja with the help of the Sikh army and Dhian Singh in January 1841 (Majumdar et. al. 1963: 250), but later he had to seek the help of Auckland against his subversive army (Robers 1921: 333). Though the British had taken note of the happenings in the Punjab, their intervention was delayed due to their involvement in First Anglo-Afghan War. However, after their disastrous evacuation in 1842,[6] they took full advantage of the intrigue within the hierarchy of Lahore Darbar. They connived with Dogra brothers (Dhyan Singh and Gulab Singh) for dismemberment of Punjab (Singh 1955: 32-33). But, Dhyan Singh as well as then Maharaja Sher Singh was killed by Ajit Singh Sandhawalia in September 1843. After this, Ranjit Singh's minor son Dalip Singh was placed on the throne with his mother Rani Jindan as regent and Hira Singh Dogra as the Wazir. Hira Singh was murdered in September 1844 and succeeded by Jawahar Singh, who was also assassinated in September 1845. Thereafter, Lal Singh became new Wazir with the support of the Sikh army, to whom the British also brought under their influence (Edwardes 1961: 499). He appointed Tej Singh as the Commander in Chief of the armed forces in September 1845 (Singh 1955: 58).

Sir Hardinge became the Governor General in 1844 and he augmented the British troops in Cis-Sutlej area along the Sutlej bank. The British then collected the pontoons near Ferozepur and an arms supply depot was set up near Raikot (Singh 1955: 59). These preparations of the British near Ferozepur and Ludhiana disquieted the Punjab army which already witnessed the annexation of Sindh in 1843. Taking advantage of these apprehensions of the Sikh army, the Dogra brothers fanned the anti-British feeling among them with the help of Rani Jindan as both wanted to divert the attention of the army from internal problems to the

[6] After placing the Shah Shuja on the throne of Kabul, the British army remained there and built a cantonment near the palace which was difficult to defend as surrounded by hills. In 1841, Afghans revolted and killed the Alexander Burnes, deputy of Sir William Macnaghten, and was a British envoy for Afghanistan. Later Macnaghten was murdered while negotiating with Afghans. Thereafter Afghans seized the cantonment and pushed the whole British force to evacuate the Kabul. On 6th January 1842, the 16000 marched out of Kabul to Jalalabad without any food but one Dr. Brydon reached the destination on 13th January, the rest were killed by the Afghans (Bilgrami 1972: 107-110, Hopkirk 1990: 257-268).

enemy across the Sutlej. All the prominent chiefs of Lahore Darbar had correspondence with the British officers on the other side of Sutlej, who desired to secure their own hierarchy with the destruction of the army (Khilnani 1972: 10-13). The representative body of the Sikh army (Punchees of Army) was challenging the orders and decisions of nobility of Lahore Darbar and started to frequently shift their loyalty to different contenders and nobles, in return of financial rewards (Majumdar et. al. 1963: 252-256, Khilnani 1972: 9-10). Subsequently, the British ceased the opportunity to seize Punjab and persuaded the Gulab Singh and Tej Singh, winning over to the British side during the course of their preparations to attack the British by crossing river Sutlej. The Sikh army assembled on the bank of Sutlej initially refused to cross the river as it knew the strength of the British army (Edwardes 1961: 499-500). However, Rani Jindan managed to convince the army to cross Sutlej to attack the British. On December 11, 1845, the Sikh army crossed Sutlej which paved the way for the first Anglo-Sikh War (Khilnani 1972: 14). The first battle between the Sikhs and the English was fought at Mudki on December 18, 1845 where the Sikhs were defeated as Lal Singh apparently acted under the guidance of the British and waited for the arrival of their main army under Hugh Gough. The English again won the second battle at Firozepur on December 22, 1845 due to the desertion of Tej Singh and Lal Singh from the battle ground with troops and guns (Singh 1955: 79-82). Thereafter, the Sikh army retreated across the Sutlej but came back as the British army waited for reinforcement instead of attacking the retreating Sikh army (Roberts 1921: 337). The Sikh army under Ranjodh Singh Majithia defeated the English at Buddowal on January 21, 1846. However, it was defeated at Aliwal on January 28, 1846. The decisive battle was fought at Sobraon on February 10, 1846, in which Sikh army was routed (Singh 1955: 84-86).

Thereupon, the British crossed the Sutlej and seized Lahore, the capital of Punjab. The war came to an end by with the treaty of Lahore, which was concluded on March 9, 1846. The Sikh state was made to surrender the valuable regions between the rivers Beas and Sutlej, i.e. Jalandhar Doab and also the entire hill country between Indus and Beas. The Lahore Darbar was also required to pay an indemnity of 50 lakh rupees for the ratification of treaty. As the Sikh state could not readily raise this sum, it ceded Kashmir. The Sikh army was forced to

reduce its size to 12000 cavalry and 20000 infantry. The guns that were used in war were made to surrender to the British. Later in a separate treaty that was signed on March 16, 1846, the Raja of Jammu, Gulab Singh purchased Kashmir from the East India Company. This treaty left behind a weak Sikh state with no capacity to resist the British in the future (Majumdar et.al. 1963: 272-73). Henry Lawrence was made the Resident in Punjab and Lal Singh the Prime Minister (Wazir). Lal Singh was exiled to British territories later on the December 4, 1846 on the account of instigating the Governor of Kashmir against Gulab Singh. Thereafter, another treaty was made with the Sikhs in December, 1846 known as the treaty of Bhairowal, whereby a pension of 150,000 rupees was awarded to Maharani Jindan alongside setting up a Regency Council of eight members and a British Resident at Lahore for administration, making the native kingship mere titular. It also made the Punjab government to pay 22 Lakh rupees to the British for maintenance of force structure in the pretext of preserving peace in the state. This effectively gave the East India Company control of the government until the Maharaja attained the age of sixteen (Roberts 1921: 339, Singh 1955: 93-99).

By the year 1847, Henry Lawrence a British Resident at Lahore became the de-facto ruler of Punjab and Tej Singh, his chief adviser, on whom he already conferred the title of Raja (Majumdar et. al. 1963: 275). He embarked on a mission of civilizing the Punjab with the help of his famous frontier officers such as George and John Lawrence, Abbott, Nicholson, Lumsden, Hodson and Edwardes. He tried to curb the practice of Sati, female infanticide, punishment by mutilation and other abuses but his interference in local customs, which was not liked by the nobles of Lahore Darbar (Roberts 1921: 340). Later, he incarcerated the Maharani Jindan in Sheikhupura on August 20, 1847, which also provided him the opportunity of grooming Dalip Singh according to their liking (Singh 1955: 102). In 1848, Lord Dalhousie replaced the Hardinge as Governor General and Frederick Currie succeeded the Henry Lawrence in Punjab as the latter had gone back to England on sick leave (Majumdar et. al. 1963: 276). The policy of Dalhousie was to incorporate all the princely states into the British dominion by all possible means. On the other hand, Currie already showed his resentment over placing the Dalip Singh on the throne, after the first Anglo-Sikh war (Singh 1955: 102). Thus, both were complementing each other and looking for excuses to fulfill their ambition of

annexing Punjab into British dominion. Within three months of their arrival, Punjab had gone in to flames following the rebellion of Mulraj, the Governor of Multan. Curie took the advantage of situation and made Mulraj as the target whose resignation was not accepted by the John Lawrence who was then acted as Resident in place of his brother Henry Lawrence until he took over the charge. He accepted his resignation which he had given due to inability to pay the increased yearly revenue of 30 lakhs and put Khan Singh as nominal Governor while the real power would really be enjoyed by British agent Mr. Agnew (Majumdar et. al. 1963: 276). In subsequent events, two British officers were killed by Mulraj followers. Then, Mulraj proclaimed a religious war and called the true Sikhs to join him. Lord Dalhousie under the advice of Lord Gough, commander-in-Chief of the British Army, postponed the action till winters (Roberts 1921: 341). In the meantime, rebellion spread to other parts of Punjab and the exile of Maharani Jindan further added fuel to the fire (Singh 1955: 113). Chattar Singh, the Governor of Hazara, also revolted against the British after the misconduct of Cpt. James Abbott to him. His son Sher Singh was sent to curb the rebellion in Multan, but he joined the rebellion along with his entire army in September 1848 (Edwardes 1961: 501). Later, the reinforcement came from Bombay and the British occupied the city of Multan by end of December. Subsequently, Mulraj surrendered on January 22, 1849 (Singh 1955: 137).

Lord Gough, the British Commander in Chief reached Lahore with the British army on November 13, 1848. He then proceeded to face the Sher Singh on the bank of Chenab, who left the Multan after the siege of Multan raised. The British and the Sikh forces fought near Ramnagar on November 22, 1848 in which Brigadier General Cureton and Lt. Col. Havelock lost their lives. The British under Lord Gough were defeated (Majumdar et. al. 1963: 285). Thereafter, Sher Singh retreated back to stronger position on the bank of Jhelum where the battle of Chillianwala was fought on January 13, 1849. He was joined by his father on January 16, 1849. In this battle, combined losses of British-killed and wounded were 2357 men and 89 officers (Roberts 1921: 343). The Sikh army then marched to Gujrat where ‘the battle of Guns’ was fought on February 22, 1849. In this battle, Gough used artillery primarily and then used infantry after silencing the Sikh guns (Ibid: 344). This battle was lost by Sher Singh and Chatar Singh and both

surrendered on March 10, 1849 (Singh 1955: 139). This war resulted in annexation of Punjab to the British dominion on March 29, 1849 by Lord Dalhousie. Dalip Singh was pensioned off and sent to England along with his mother Rani Jindan. The administration of the Punjab was entrusted to a Board of Commissioners.

The annexation of Punjab has two contradictory intentions and effects. As already pointed out, British were using Punjab as an inner defense wall against the Russian and Persian designs. Hence Punjab becoming part of the British India had allowed the British to deploy their own defense at the north western frontier. But on the other hand, the annexation of Punjab brought British India close to the boundaries of the Russian empire. The British would have let Punjab continue as a buffer state if the state had a powerful regime as it has under Ranjit Singh. The internal dissection and frequent wars for supremacy forced the British cede it to British India rather than allowing the trouble to continue in the border state to the advantage of its enemies across the borders. The annexation of Punjab thus extended the British territories in India up to the ‘natural’ frontiers of India towards the north-west. Besides Russia, after the destruction of the Sikh power there remained no active power, which could pose a threat to the security of the British Empire in India. The dynamics of Great Game has been a cause and effect of this crucial annexation.

Chapter 2

UNFOLDING THE HISTORY OF GAME: TRAJECTORIES OF THE 'GREAT GAME' AND PUNJAB

'Great Game' is one of the most commonly used metaphors in the troubled waters of contemporary international politics. The usage of this metaphor refers to the rivalry and competition between two or more states and the diverse games such rivalries unleash. As invented by Lieutenant Arthur Connolly, an officer of 6th Bengal Native Cavalry, it illustrates the Anglo-Russian rivalry and struggle for commercial and political supremacy in the land north of Hindu Kush Mountains (Akiner 2011: 391). Arthur Connolly in 1837 wrote to Henry Rawlinson[1] that "you've a great game, a noble one, before you." From the Russian side in the same year, Count Karl Robert Nesselrode (Foreign Minister from 1822 to 1856) described it as "Tournament of Shadows". But it was the Connolly's imaginative usage that became more popular and earned him more fame (Middleton 2004). As the concept of 'Great Game' was coined to describe the threat to the British Indian territory from the Russian Empire, it was played on the vast chessboard of deserts and mountains of Central Asia that expanded from Caucasus in the west to Chinese Turkestan in the East. This was played by many young officers and explorers of Britain and Russia (Hopkirk 1990: 2). Captain Charles Christie and Lieutenant Henry Pottinger were earlier British players[2] (Ibid: 68) whereas Captain Nikolai Muraviev was first player from the Russian side (Ibid: 77). The action of these officers had marginal influence on the outcome of events but still flared up

[1] Rawlinson was a Lieutenant and Conolly's fellow player in the Great Game. He was a soldier, archaeologist, explorer and historian. Later, he held the ranks of Major General, Knight and President of Royal Geographical Society (Middleton 2004).

[2] These players primarily used to spy and explore the region lying in North-West of British India and South East of Russia. In the start of this game, they used to travel these areas in disguise as doctors, priests, merchants etc but later British sent there officers on 'Shooting Leaves' and Russians for 'Scientific Expeditions' in Central Asia. They were also openly sent on to establish commercial and political links with the Khanates and small kingdoms lying between two Empires to checkmate the advance of each other. Active espionage was part of the game with both sides sending spies to each other's territory. The spies were suspected to be fomenting unrest among the native population on a reciprocal basis (Hopkirk 1990, Middleton 2004).

the tensions for a short while in those days. In this period Russia and Britain, came so close to each other in Central Asia, which increased the friction and amplified the antagonism (Middleton 2004). The period of 'Great Game' and the tensions it carried lasted almost a century, between the Treaty of Gulistan (1813) between Russia and Persia and the Anglo Russian Convention of 1907. This chapter will attempt to describe the trajectory of the Great Game as it unfolded with wars, assassinations, explorations, espionage and conspiracies.

PRECURSOR TO 'GREAT GAME'

The genesis of the Russian interest in India could be traced back to the reign of Peter the Great (1682-1725). He was approached by the Khan of Khiva in Central Asia to seek his help to suppress the savaged tribes of the region. Initially, Peter didn't respond to the call, but later sent Prince Bekovich with 4000 troops to help the Khan, and also with an intention of searching the gold around Oxus River and to explore the caravan route to India (Krausse 1899: 148, Hopkirk 1990: 15-16). This expedition met with disaster as Khan treacherously killed the Bekovich after ceremoniously receiving him (Hopkirk 1990: 19). Peter the Great, however, was not able to avenge this humiliation during his life time due to his involvement in Europe. He died subsequently in 1725 but by leaving behind a Will in which he instructed his successors to secure the possession of Constantinople and India for the Russian domination (Ibid: 20). He thought the possession of these regions were also essential to make the Russian empire a world empire. However, it was Empress Catherine the Great who after the hiatus of forty years started to show interest in Will of Peter the Great when she became Empress in 1760's. In 1791, A.M de St. Genie made a detailed plan for the invasion of India and presented before Catherine which was liked by the Empress (Krausse 1899: 149, Ibid: 21). But the plan never materialized as she was discouraged by her minister Count Potemkin.[3] However, she added Caucasus and Crimea to her empire, which extended the control of Russia over Black sea also (Hopkirk 1990: 21). This was

[3] This might have been due to pragmatism due to the Russian involvement in European politics. During that time, they were engaged in war with Sweden (1788-1790) and Turkey (1787-1792). Rebellions were happening in Lithuanian and Polish commonwealths and France remained another concern.

when the British officials perceived the danger from Russian control over Black sea and Caucasus region to their British Indian Empire. Henry Dundas, President of the Board of Commissioners for Indian Affairs, was first to show concern about allowing Russian to supplant Turks and Persian from the region, as Britain was already in an alliance with Russia (Ibid: 22).

After the subjugation of Anglo-Russian forces by the French at Bergen in Holland in 1800, the Czar Paul I, son of Catherine, turned to the side of Napoleon (Weiner 1920: 47). Thereafter, Paul I was eager to revive the plan aborted by his mother and tried to persuade Napoleon to join him in invading India. But Napoleon was unimpressed by his strategy (Hopkirk 1990: 27). Paul as a result decided to execute the plan alone and dispatched an expedition of 22000 men under Don Cossack with an immediate aim of freeing the Russian slaves from Khiva and Bokhara in Central Asia and seemingly with a larger aim of driving the British out of India and take control of the trade and riches of the Indian sub-continent (Ibid: 28). However, the expedition was called back from North of Aral Sea after the assassination of Paul I (Ibid: 29). The British were largely not aware of these Russian adventures in Central Asia as the nearest frontier was too far from the British East India Company's possession (Ibid: 30). Nevertheless, they were quite conscious of their vulnerability from North-West of India because of the Afghan inroads into the North-western India.

The origin of British concerns about the North western frontier arose towards the closing years of 18th century, with the letter of Afghan ruler Zaman Shah to Lord Wellesley in 1798. Zaman Shah in the letter proposed to Marques Wellesley, the Governor General, to jointly sack the Marathas from Central India (Fisher 1878: 115). This overture of Zaman Shah apparently frightened Wellesley as he was busy in dealing with the southern and central Indian states of Mysore, Hyderabad and Marathas (Tytler 1953: 77). The other reason which exacerbated the anxiety of Governor General was their ignorance about the designs of the Afghan king on India. There was also intelligence that all the anti-British native states, especially Muslim, looked for Zaman Shah's help against the former (Bilgrami 1972: 16-17). Later, the danger from north-western frontier aggravated further with the presence of Napoleon in Egypt and with the intrigue of his

emissaries in Persia and Oman (Kumar 1961: 9). The French nationals were already training the troops of native states like Hyderabad, Marathas, Nizam etc (Bilgrami 1972: 14). As pointed out already, Tipu Sultan had correspondence with Napoleon for his assistance for expelling British from India, apart from Tipu's army being trained by the French officials and supplied with European weapons (Lyall 1929: 194, Habib 2001). Such a compelling context forced Wellesley to look beyond the frontiers of India for its imperial defense (Kumar 1961: 9). Initially, Wellesley sent a Persian diplomat namely Mirza Mehdi Ali Khan to persuade Shah of Persia to keep a check on the Afghan ruler from moving against India and excluding French diplomats from Persia (Tytler 1953: 78, Ibid). A little later Wellesley's envoy Captain John Malcolm secured two treaties on June 28, 1801 of political and commercial nature from Persia (Bilgrami 1972: 19, Bakshi 1971: 18). The first among them was aimed at checking the looming danger of French invasion on India and the latter for promoting trade between British India and Persia (Kumar 1961: 12). However, these initiatives largely went in vain as Zaman Shah's threat vanquished with his dethronement from Afghanistan. Moreover, by the time negotiation got through in Persia, the threat of Napoleon also subsided with his defeat in Egypt (Bilgrami 1972: 22). This allowed Wellesley to turn his focus back towards the subjugation of native princes.

In subsequent years, the events took such a dramatic turn that Fateh Ali Shah, King of Persia, gone into the ambit of the French. This was seemingly a result of the British delay in supporting the Persian Shah in retrieving his territories- Georgia and Armenian capital from the Russian Czar, which the Shah lost to Russia in the Russo-Persian war of 1804-05. The Persian king in turn approached Napoleon for his help in materializing the same (Bakshi 1971: 19). Napoleon promptly seized the opportunity as the French were already in war with Russia in Europe and suffered heavy losses at the hands of Russians in the war at Eylau (Lyall 1929: 225). The treaty of Finkestein was accordingly signed between Persia and France, on May 14, 1807. France sent General Gardanne to Persia as head of military mission to train the Persian soldiers. In the meantime, Persia captured Khorasan at the confluence of Persia, Central Asia and Afghanistan and posed a serious threat to Heart in north western Afghanistan (Bilgrami 1972: 26, Bakshi 1971: 20). Meanwhile, Napoleon subdued the Russians at Friedland in

June 1807 and signed the treaty of Tilsit in July with Czar Alexander. The treaty, as pointed out already, transformed the belligerent empires into allies against the British (Lyall 1929: 225). Subsequently both the parties planned joint invasion on India through Persia (Tytler 1953: 79). The intelligence of this Franco-Russian rapprochement caused high level of anxiety in London and Calcutta that agents were sent from both the places, Sir Harford Jones and John Malcolm respectively, with an aim of reducing the French influence in the court of Shah (Hopkirk 1990: 34-35).

Alarmed at the situation, Lord Minto, who came to India in July 1807 as Governor General, tried to build friendships with the states in the north western area in order to consolidate the British position (Bakshi 1971: 21). He sent diplomatic missions to all the four states such as Sindh, Punjab, Afghanistan and Persia lying on and across the north western frontier of India to create strategic defensive barriers against a possible combined French and Russian invasion on India. John Malcolm was sent again to Persia after the gap of eight years. Metcalfe, Elphinstone and Captain Seton were sent to Punjab, Afghanistan and Sindh respectively (Lyall 1929: 228). Out of these four states, agreements were reached with Punjab in April 1809 and with Sindh in August 1809. Lord Minto focused his attention thereafter on Afghanistan and Persia which were the possible routes of attack across the north-west frontier (Bakshi 1971: 34 & 42). In the case of Elphinstone's Afghanistan mission, negotiations could not be completed due to the exile of Shah Shuja, the Durrani ruler, from Afghanistan after his defeat in Afghanistan's civil war, following which Afghanistan fell into a state of anarchy (Lyall 1929: 228).

In Persia, John Malcolm got cold response from Shah and he returned to India in rage after giving warning to him (Hopkirk 1990: 34-35). However, Harford Jones provided the much wanted breakthrough as Shah had already got annoyed with the French because of Franco-Russian treaty[4] in which there was no reference about the restitution of Persian territories back to him from Russia

[4] It was treaty signed between the Napoleon and Alexander I at Tilsit in 1807, after the defeat of later at Friedland. This treaty transformed the enemies into allies against the common foe i.e. England (Lyall 1929).

(Bilgrami 1972: 27). The negotiations ended up in an agreement between the British and him, whereby the Shah has agreed that he would never allow any army to invade India through the Persian soil (Adye 1897: 3). In return, it was agreed that the Shah would get a financial support of £120000 and military support of British troops against any external attack. The British also agreed to provide training to Persian troops under the supervision of Malcolm. As a consequence of this agreement, Malcolm was promptly promoted to rank of Major General and sent back to Persia under the insistence of Lord Minto as the former was already aware of Persia to some extent. Malcolm reached Tehran in 1810 with his selected officers to train the Persian army but with the hidden motive of exploring the region to gather the know-how about the military geography of the region which was required for the defense of north-west frontier of India (Hopkirk 1990: 36). Malcolm even dispatched two British officers, Captain Charles Christie and Lt. Henry Pottinger, to explore the terrain of Afghanistan and Baluchistan and commanded them to meet him in Persia while leaving from India to Persia (Ibid: 36 & 39). Besides these officers, the diplomats also collected valuable information related to these states which was required to take informed decisions concerning the security and stability of north western region to safeguard British Indian Empire (Bilgrami 1972: 40).[5]

Events took a different turn in the second decade of the nineteenth century when the French attacked Russia in 1812 and as a result the combined Franco-Russian danger vanished at least for the time being (Hopkirk 1990: 56). The war also led to realignment of alliances, Russia joined Britain in the grand coalition against the menace of Napoleon who was finally subdued at Waterloo (Lyall 1929: 228). In the same year, the Congress of Vienna redrew the map of Europe to bring balance of power but this left behind the ample scope for Russian expansion in Asia (Hopkirk 1990: 58-59). With the downfall of Napoleon in Europe and with the friendly Sikh power in Punjab, the British largely got its frontier secured at the North West. Hereafter, British adopted the policy of non-interference, at least for a

[5] Gathering information about territories and people was central to the British colonial enterprises of building effective systems of control (Edney 1999, Cohn 2002).

while, in the states beyond the Indus River and ignored the possibility of a Russian annexation of Persian territories as they had become allies (Prabhakar 1949: 31).

Enabled with such a transformed context, the British also tried to mediate the hostilities between Russia and Persia. Gore Ouseley, an ambassador to Persia, was successful in bringing both the parties to signing the Treaty of Gulistan in 1813. He let the Russians to gain more advantage from the treaty as Persia ceded Georgia, Baku, Sherwan, Shaki, Genja, Karabagh, and Derbent to Russia and agreed to abstain from positioning a naval fleet in the Caspian Sea (Sykes 1915: 414). In return, Russia agreed to support the claim of the designated heir apparent to all the competitors to the throne of Persia (Kaye 1874: 140). However, this treaty virtually brought the Russians 250 miles nearer to northern frontiers of India (Hopkirk 1990: 66). This warranted the British to strengthen their relationship with Persia further as a precautionary measure. In the very next year, a definite Anglo-Persian treaty was signed as negotiated by Henry Ellis and James Morier, press forwarding the earlier negotiations by Ouseley on November 25, 1814 (Kaye 1874: 144). The Persians however had their own intentions behind signing this treaty. The treaty was viewed by the Shah primarily as a measure to strengthen himself against the Russians (Bilgrami 1972: 55) as he hoped to try his fortune in war against the Russia after strengthening his position with the help of the British officers. The peace brought about by the treaty of Gulistan was thus temporary (Sykes 1915: 414). However, there was nothing left to disturb British relation with Persia as Napoleon was also vanquished from the scene. Now the British outright strategy was to strengthen the military resources of Persia to make impregnable barriers against any possible Russian invasion (Kaye 1874: 146).

But sooner things took a different turn as ‘Russian scare’, referred to as Russo-phobia, began to take roots in the British administrative circles. Sir Robert Wilson, a British general, sowed the first seeds of Russo-phobia (Hopkirk 1990: 62). In his book entitled *A sketch of the military and political power of Russia,* written in 1817, Robert Wilson claimed that Russia was planning to annex Constantinople and thereafter would turn to conquer India to fulfill Peter the Great’s death Will (Ibid: 60). To drive his point home, he pointed out that in the last sixteen years Czar Alexander had added 200,000 square miles to his empire in

Caucasus and in Central Asia, which represented an addition of 13 million new subjects. He also argued that the Czarist army of 80,000 strong soldiers ten years earlier had increased tremendously to reach size of 640,000 soldiers by then. Czar Alexander had thus become the greatest threat to Britain than Napoleon had ever been, he argued (Ibid: 61). Wilson also pointed out that Alexander could use his Caucasian possessions as spring board for advance on Constantinople or even on Tehran. He also pin pointed that Russians could emulate the plan of Arab invasion of Sindh through the Arabian Sea. But this was negated by John Macdonald Kinneir, the British traveler and diplomat and envoy to Persia, after carefully analyzing the vulnerabilities of their British Indian Empire and for him the only possibility of attack was through land route (Ibid: 62-70).

John Macdonald Kinneir compiled a detailed geographical intelligence based on information gathered by Christie and Pottinger, which the former published in 1813 under the title of *A Geographical Memoir of the Persian Empire*. Kinneir first looked at India's 3000 miles long unguarded and vulnerable coastline as not only British but Portuguese, Dutch, French, Danish came via sea route but also earlier used by Arabs in 711 AD when they subdue Sindh. However, he repudiated any danger from this quarter as the dominance of Royal Navy was by then preponderant in the Persian Gulf (Ibid: 70). Thereafter, Kinneir analyzed the several overland routes which might be used by the invader and came to the conclusion that whatever route an aggressor might opt would lead them to Afghanistan (Ibid: 73). However, Sir Robert Wilson, John Macdonald Kinneir and his likes were considered as scaremongers in the British administrative circles, as the Russian build-up in the Caucasus was interpreted as not posing any serious threat to their British Indian empire. Still the British mission in Tehran was gravely worried about Russia's expansion towards the East (Ibid: 67). The atmosphere of fear and tension silently continued.

In 1826, the hostilities again broke out between Russia and Persia with the Russian occupation of Gokcha under the leadership of General Yermelov, the Russian Governor General of Caucasus. This was a result of loopholes present in the treaty of Gulistan which left behind the claim over some territories between Gokcha and Erivan disputable (Sykes 1915: 416-17). In addition to that Shah's

morale was already high after death of Czar Alexander I and was also apparently enticed for war by his fanatical subjects due to ill treatment of its Muslim subjects by Russians in territories annexed from Persia (Dodwell 1922: 489, Sykes 1915: 417). Abbas Mirza, Prince and son of heir apparent Muhammad Mirza of Persia, attacked the Russians and recovered all the lost territories which totally surprised Yermelov (Hopkirk 1990: 110). Later General Count Paskievich, who replaced Yermelov, subdued the Erivan and Tabriz by crossing the river Araxes and forced the Shah to conclude the treaty of Turkomanchi (Dodwell 1922: 489). Czar Nicholas added the Erivan and Nakitchevan permanently to his empire and made Persia to pay 5 million Tomans equivalent to 20,000,000 Rubles (Popowski 1893: 83). Luckily for Persia, Russia was already at war with Turkey during that time; otherwise the terms and conditions might have been more severe at Turkomanchi (Hopkirk 1990: 111). This as well as the preceding events demonstrated the Persians that the British never seriously committed themselves to support Persia (Kumar 1961: 17) as they purchased out their withdrawal from the definite treaty of 1814 by giving 250000 Tomans for amendment of the subsidy article in the treaty[6] (Kaye 1874: 153, Bilgrami 1972: 55). The Shah now realized that British friendship and promises were of no avail and as a result the British influence in his court declined (Popowski 1893: 83). Thereupon, Russian focus got fully diverted towards Turkey with whom they were already at war. By the summer of 1829, Erzerum was subdued by Paskievich and thereafter within the span of two months Constantinople was just 40 miles away from Russian forces reach. But Nicholas halted Paskievich from further advancing and signed the treaty with Sultan of Turkey on September 14, 1829 at Edirne (Adrianople) and added Akhaltsikh, Akhalkallaki, Anapa, Poti to his empire (Hopkirk 1990: 115, Popowski 1893: 76). The Anglo-Russian relation began to really deteriorate from here onwards (Hopkirk 1990: 116).

Colonel George de Lacy Evans's book entitled *On the Practicability of an Invasion of British India* came to light during the surrender of Turkey to Russia in

[6] Article VI of this treaty stated that England would come forward to stop the hostilities, if any European Power in alliance with her engaged in war with Persia. If England failed to do so then it would support the Persian by sending troops from India or pay annual subsidy of 200000 Tomans for support of Persian Army (Kaye 1874:145)

1829 and the book again highlighted the Russian danger to the British Indian empire (Dodwell 1922: 489). This was his second book after the publication of *On the Design of Russia* in 1828. In this book, by drawing evidences and opinion of Russian and British travellers including Pottinger, Kinneir, Muraviev and Moorcroft he opined that Russia would soon attack India through Central Asia via Khyber Pass and avoid the Persian route as its line of communication would be vulnerable to Royal Navy stationed in the Gulf region. He also recommended that crucial passes of Hindu Kush must be thoroughly explored and advised to station an agent at Bokhara to keep a watchful eye on Russian advance from Central Asia (Hopkirk 1990: 117). This book had a telling impact on the hierarchy of British policy makers and Lord Ellenborough, President of the Board of Control of India, was one of them who became anxious after going through the book. Thereupon, he acknowledged in his diary that the British had to fight the Russians on the bank of Indus, which he later rectified by stating that "to defeat them before reaching the Indus lest the liberating army of Russia does have any impact on the native population" (Hopkirk 1990: 118, Choudhury 1996: 39). For this, the British required the detailed map of the area and the approach route as the available information in this regard was not only deficient but also inaccurate. Therefore, Ellenborough endeavored to gather the military, political, commercial, geographical intelligence about the countries encircling the India. Lord Heytesbury, a British ambassador to Russia, arranged the information concerning Central Asia. Nevertheless, he wanted first hand intelligence for which he used the young Indian army officers, political agents, explorers and surveyors, etc. in a big way to map the deserts, mountains, passes, rivers and other strategic features and to secure the friendship of these rulers (Hopkirk 1990: 118-119). Thus the Great Game had begun in full vigour.

MANOEUVERS OF GREAT GAME AND THE FATE OF PUNJAB

Subsequently, Ellenborough entrusted Lieutenant Arthur Connolly with an assignment of exploring Central Asia for the same reason. Arthur Connolly started his journey overland through Europe to the Indian sub-continent. He traversed around 4000 miles from Moscow to Sindh via Tiflis, Astrabad, Meshed, Herat, Kandahar and Quetta. He also made a failed attempt to reach Khiva but was

detained in between in the Karakorum desert by the four men sent by neighboring chief of Central Asian Khanate who considered him as a Russian agent, employed by Persia to spy the terrain in order to annex it to their empire (Ibid: 123-27). Somehow, he escaped from the danger without losing his life and return to Astrabad. After travelling through Central Asia and Afghanistan, he solved many geographical puzzles crucial to the seemingly emerging danger of Russian invasion of India through this quarter (Ibid: 123-29). According to Connolly, there were two possible routes, which the invading Russian army could take. First one was via Khiva, Balkh and crossing Hindu Kush to Kabul and Khyber Pass to Punjab; and another feasible route was through Herat from which they would proceed to Kandahar, Quetta and Bolan Pass to Sindh (Ibid: 130). Herat could be reached overland through Persia, which was already under the Russian influence or through Caspian Sea to Astrabad. It was now clear that whatever route the invading army chose, both would lead them to Afghanistan (Ibid: 131). This proved to be revealing as thereafter the British gave up the idea of making Persia a barrier to the Russian advance and focused on establishing the political and economic ties with Afghanistan and Khanates of Central Asia as the British policymaker's perceived that these Khanates separated from Russia by extensive deserts and inhabited by 'savaged' and 'warlike' tribes would halt her advance towards the east (Ibid: 131-32). The only requisite for achieving this was to have offensive and defensive alliances with these Khanates and provide them arms, ammunitions and instructors for the purpose (Popowski 1893: 84). The British continued to use their agents to explore the region between Indus and Oxus for commercial, political, and strategic interests being felt en-threatened by a possible Russian onslaught (Bilgrami 1972: 70).

Ellenborough was by then fully 'convinced' about the Russian expansionist urge and perceived that they would initially disguise their manoeuvres under the guise of trade and commerce to extend their influence in the weaker areas of Persia and Central Asia. Thereafter, he thought, Russian troops would follow under the pretext of providing security to their mercantile (Chopra et. al. 1996: 242). So, he wanted to check the advance of Russian merchants and a consequent foothold of them in the region by allowing penetration of British goods from India into the markets of Central Asia and Persia. He thought to use the river

Indus to transport goods northward as perceived by Moorcroft in the mid 1820s via Sindh and Punjab (Hopkirk 1990: 132). But the challenge was that both were independent states and were averse to this British idea. He had already recommended the conquest of Sindh as early in 1830 to the then Prime Minister Wellington in order to gain control over the strategically and commercially important sea port of Karachi (Bilgrami 1972: 71).[7] However, in the case of Punjab, he was apparently keen to establish friendship and make the state an ally. Ellenborough accordingly sent five dray horses via Indus to Maharaja Ranjit Singh in return of the present the latter sent to the king of England. There was an additional intention behind this move that was to check the navigability of river Indus. Lieutenant Alexander Burnes was accordingly dispatched to Lahore in January 1831 (Hopkirk 1990: 132-134). Burnes came to Hyderabad in Sindh via Indus and advanced to Lahore and thereby surveyed the Indus and settlements along its banks, apart from collecting enormous information of historical, geographical and strategic values.[8] Burnes passed on all the information to Lord William Bentick, the then Governor General of the East India Company, at Simla in August 1831. This was followed by the dispatch of Henry Pottinger to the Amir of Sindh to negotiate a commercial treaty, which was signed after overcoming initial hindrances because of experience of Amir with British, in April 1832. This British enterprise saved Sindh from being annexed by Ranjit Singh, even though the latter proposed to divide Sindh between them (Bilgrami 1972: 71, Mahajan 1961: 165).[9]

Although the British renounced its interests on Persia and limited their line of defense along Afghanistan, Russian machinations in Persia began to be seen as a serious menace to the cohesiveness of Afghanistan and eventually to the security of British Indian Empire. The Russian objective, after the treaty of Turkomanchi, was to use Persian resources to further their own interests (Kaye 1874: 154). Russia, thereupon, persuaded Persia to revive her long-standing claim over Afghan provinces in the east and in Central Asia as Persia lost some territories to Russia in the north-west (Lyall 1929: 255). In 1831, the crown Prince

[7] Panhwar, M.H. “Inevitability of the Conquest of Sindh by British in 1843.” Available at: http://panhwar.com/Article07.htm; (Accessed on 10 October, 2011).

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid.

of Persia, Abbas Mirza with Russian encouragement planned an expedition against the Khiva which was postponed due to the interference of British officer Captain Shee in the Persian camp. In the following year campaign against Herat was planned, which was again abandoned with the active role of British envoy John McNeill, but Khorasan was subjugated by the end of 1832 (Dodwell 1922: 489, Kaye 1874: 156). In 1833, Muhammad Mirza, son of Abbas Mirza seized Herat but had to return to Tehran due to death of his father at Meshed. Following year in 1834, King of Persia, Fateh Ali Shah died (Sykes 1915: 425-26). Thereafter, Muhammad Mirza, who was more inclined towards the Russians than the British, became the Shah of Persia. Consequently the Russian agent Count Simonich became more powerful than the British agent Ellis in the Persian court (Dodwell 1922: 190). On 25 February 1836, Ellis sent a confidential letter to Lord Palmerston, the then Foreign Secretary and an ardent Russophobe, in which he shared the information about the overtures of Dost Muhammad to the Shah of Persia to conquer the territories of Herat which was ruled by Prince Kamran and to divide between them. He also disclosed to the foreign secretary that similar overtures were also put forward by the ruler of Kandahar to the Shah. He also shared the intelligence regarding the rumours of a possible Russian agreement with Khan of Khiva (Habberton 1937: 9). The Persian king was meanwhile planning to annex Herat and Kandahar with the backing of Russia as the latter wanted to extend its influence in Afghanistan (Tytler 1953: 83). The allegiance of Persians to Russia and the divided state of Afghanistan made Palmerston anxious and he ordered Lord Auckland, Governor General of India, in a letter dated June 25, 1836 to send agents to counter the Russian influence in Afghanistan and Central Asia (Habberton 1937: 10).

Lord Auckland sent Capt Alexander Burnes on a commercial mission on November 26, 1836. He started from Bombay and traversed through Sindh and Peshawar and then via Khyber Pass to Kabul where he was received warmly by the Amir Dost Mohammad of Afghanistan on September 20, 1837. In reality, it was a political mission to secure a friendly alliance with Dost Mohammad against the advancing Russia in collaboration with Persia as neither Sindh nor Punjab was under the British. But negotiation failed as Dost Muhammad's objective was to recover Peshawar district from Ranjit Singh, which the latter added to his empire a

few years earlier. But the British intention was primarily to make Afghanistan a barrier to the Russian and Persian advance (Adye 1897: 4, Dodwell 1922: 491). Burnes visit to Kabul this time did not remain secret like his earlier adventure in Kabul and Bokhara as it was detected by the Russians (Hopkirk 1990: 152). Shortly, the Russian agent Captain Yan Vitkevich arrived in the court of Dost Mohammad whilst Burnes was still there in Kabul. Thereafter, Burnes left the Kabul in desperation and moved for India on April 25, 1838 (Singh 1982: 324).

The British were obviously perturbed by the way events unfolded in Afghanistan. Firstly, the Russians instigated Persian siege of Herat, which could be finally lifted only with the arrival of British Naval expedition in the Persian Gulf and their occupation of Persian island Karrack and with the effort of Lieutenant Eldred Pottinger to withstand one year-long siege of Herat (Fisher 1878: 132). Secondly, due to Dost Mohammad's hobnobbing with Russian agent, Captain Vitkevich, who promised him to provide Russian help in consolidating his position in the Afghanistan and also offered him to negotiate with Ranjit Singh on his behalf (Malleson 1878: 363, Singh 1982: 325-26). In addition to these events, the internal divisions of Afghanistan were also a matter of concern that provided ground for Persia and Russia to intermediate in the Afghan affairs. The British were visibly looking for new measures to safeguard their Afghan frontiers (Bilgrami 1972: 96).

Lord Palmerston and Auckland in such a compelling context wanted to settle the Afghan crisis permanently by putting it under the one sovereign ruler loyal and faithful to the British (Hopkirk 1990: 188, Anderson 1918: 17). They decided to replace Dost Mohammad with Shah Shuja, the dethroned Durrani ruler then staying at Ludhiana. Lord Auckland made Maharaja Ranjit Singh a party to play a leading role in this plot and signed tripartite treaty on 26 June 1838. Lord Auckland's primary intention behind involving Maharaja Ranjit Singh was to utilize the Sikh hostility towards the Afghans to his advantage, apart from the strategic reason of their proximity to Afghanistan (Tytler 1953: 106-07). Under this treaty, Shah Shuja accepted the Maharaja Ranjit Singh's control over Peshawar and Khyber Pass and renounced all the claims over territories either side of Indus even to his heirs and successors. However curiously before the commencement of the campaign, Maharaja changed his mind and refused to lead the campaign and also

denied passage to British troops through Punjab. But he agreed to permit Captain Wade (an agent for north-western frontier Affairs and Shahzada Taimur) to march towards Kabul through the Khyber Pass. He even consented to put some portion of his troops at disposal of Captain Wade to make military demonstration from Khyber Pass. He also agreed to permit the British troops to pass through his territories while returning from Kabul (Buist 1843: 81, Singh 1982: 325-26).

Later on 1 October 1838, Auckland declared a Simla Manifesto, in which he made public the British intention of removing Dost Mohammad from the throne of Afghanistan. He stated that as long as Dost Mohammad was on the throne "there was no hope that tranquility of our neighbourhood would be secured or the interests of our Indian Empire would be preserved inviolate" (Tytler 1953: 109-110, Hopkirk 1990: 190-91). He also projected Shah Shuja as the rightful owner of the throne and a loyal friend as compared to Dost Mohammad (Hopkirk 1990: 191). In December 1838, Lord Auckland gave orders that the force comprising the Bengal Column, under Major General Willoughby Cotton should assemble at Ferozepur fort, which was already annexed from Ranjit Singh by the British under the pretext that it was a Cis-Sutlej territory (Bilgrami 1972: 101). Lord Auckland and Maharaja Ranjit Singh inspected the forces ready for operation which were also known as the 'Army of Indus' at Ferozepur (Tytler 1953: 111). Soon the force marched towards Sindh where it was joined by the Bombay column led by Major General Sir John Keane (Anderson 1918: 17). Thus, the first Anglo-Afghan war started in 1839 with the crossing of Bolan Pass by the Army of Indus. In a very short span of time, the whole of Afghanistan was conquered by the expedition force and Shah Shuja was placed on the throne of Kabul (Popowski 1893: 86). However, in August, Sir William Macnaghten, chief political officer and envoy to Kabul, got the disturbing intelligence about the Russian attempt to subdue the Khanate of Khiva by sending expedition force under General Perovsky in response to British advance in Afghanistan and Central Asia (Tytler 1953: 121). Macnagthen in response sent Captain Arthur Connolly on a political mission to Khiva and Kokand. Later, Connolly proceeded to Bokhara where he was murdered along with Colonel Stoddart in 1842 by the ruler of Bokhara, Amir Nasarullah (Dodwell 1922: 504).

However, the real test in store for the expedition force was to survive the occupation of Afghanistan. Things had already turned against them with the demise of Ranjit Singh in Punjab in June 1839, even before they entered Kabul. Soon the empire fabricated by the Maharaja started to crumble and tribal unrest commenced in the north western region of Punjab. By 1840 Afridis, a Pathan tribe in North-West frontier rebelled in Khyber, which consequently put the safe passage across Punjab and line of communication in jeopardy. The Sikhs were unable to control the mayhem; which was later controlled by Mackeson, a British political officer, though for a short while with the increase in their annual subsidy given to them for the British Army's passage to Afghanistan (Elliot 1968: 21). Thereafter, the British interference in the internal affairs of Punjab increased to the extent that Mackeson even putting hindrance in the collection of taxes from Peshawar (Singh 1982: 327). So after 1840, Anglo-Sikh relationship deteriorated to such an extent that Macnaghten pressed Lord Auckland to restore Peshawar and all the territories on the right bank of Indus to Shah Shuja as to consolidate his position in Afghanistan by annulling the tripartite treaty (Schofield 1984: 83, Bilgrami 1972: 106).

The dethroned Dost Mohammad, who fled from Kabul to Kohistan in the North-West of Afghanistan, soon began to challenge the authority of Shah Shuja and the British forces from the north of Kabul. He was on the rampage in the south of Hindu Kush but surrendered to Macnaghten in November 1840 (Tytler 1953: 115, Elliot 1968: 21). In January 1841, Afridis again opposed the relief force dispatched under Brigadier Shelton, which ultimately had to fight their way ahead into Afghanistan (Elliot 1968: 22). Even Sir Robert Sale brigade had to fight with Ghilzais for getting its way back into Punjab through Khyber Pass in the spring of 1841 (Tytler 1953: 114). The picture further down in the Kandahar was same where Ghilzais and Durranis were hampering the movement of reinforcement and logistics of the British. However, Brigadier Nott, a garrison commander in Kandahar subdued them and put a garrison at Kalat-i-Ghilzai (Elliot 1968: 21-23). In November 1841, a religious revolution broke out in Afghanistan which resulted

in destruction of British garrisons in and around Kabul.[10] This was followed by massacre of British contingents at Kabul and even of those who were retrieving to India through Jalalabad (Popowski 1893: 86). Later, British sent Army of Retribution to avenge the killing of their forces and people. Maharaja Sher Singh contributed 15000 men into the Army of Retribution to open the Khyber Pass (Singh 1955: 29). They emancipated the hostages kept by the Afghans and burnt the Kabul city and bazaars. Thereafter, British forces got evacuated from Afghanistan as Ellenborough, the new Governor General, ordered them to do so (Tytler 1953: 119, Bilgrami 1972: 111). Thereafter, the British kept aloof from having any kind of ties with Afghanistan for some years until the subjugation of Punjab in 1849.

Subsequently, Lord Ellenborough planned to annex the Sindh, which he was advocating since 1830's. The main objective behind this was to control the great water highway of Indus and the roads leading to the passes. He was convinced that such a strategically important area should not be left in the hands of unfriendly powers, which failed to provide them support during their Afghan campaign. In addition to that, it would also restore the reputation of British and the morale of its army, which was tarnished by the Afghan debacle (Anderson 1918: 22, Rawlinson 1948: 71). Ellenborough with his ulterior motive authorized the General Charles Napier to negotiate the revisal of treaties at hand (Lushington 1844: 221) whereby all the territories leading to Bolan Pass would be left under the control of the British. Amir of Sindh, Mir Nasir Khan, though signed the treaty; his troops attacked the British residency, which provided the requisite opportunity to Napier to march upon Sindh. Napier defeated the Sindh forces at Miani, Dabo,

[10] British forces had made Kabul their home since arrival in 1839. Even their wives and children joined them. For their entertainment they used to play cricket, polo, skating etc. in which persons from Afghan Upper Classes started to join them. Subsequently they indulged in womanizing and drinking activities which caused great offence to the devout Muslims. This was exploited by Mullahs who raised the people for revolt against British. In August 1841, Major Henry Rawlinson, then stationed at Kandahar, warned that feeling against us, was on the rise since Mullahs were preaching against us from one end of the country to other. Even Eldred Pottinger noticed and reported that Afghan leaders in north of Kabul was preparing for uprising (Hopkirk 1990: 237-38).

Umarkot and Mirpur (Lyall 1929: 261, Dodwell 1922: 536-37). Sindh was also thus added to the British dominion in 1843.

In 1844 Sir Henry Hardinge succeeded Lord Ellenborough. He strengthened the frontier post in Cis-Sutlej territories, mainly at Ferozepur, Ludhiana and Ambala (Anderson 1918: 59). He had done this with the objective of establishing an advanced post of British army on the north western frontier and to secure the British dominion from the dangers emerging from Punjab, which was in turmoil after the death of Ranjit Singh. But this added to the Sikh fear of encirclement, particularly after the British annexation of Sindh (Schofield 1984: 83, Anderson 1918: 64). Consequently, Sikh forces crossed the Sutlej near Ferozepur in December 1845 and first Anglo-Sikh war took place which, as already described, was lost by the Sikhs. The territory of Kashmir and Jalandhar Doab was detached from the Sikh state of Punjab. The Sikh army was reduced in size and for almost two-years Punjab was administered under the superintendence of British Resident Henry Lawrence (Chopra et. al. 1996: 246). The British agents were stationed at Jalandhar, Peshawar and other strategic points on the Afghan border, to monitor the danger emerging from Central Asia (Bilgrami 1972: 113). In October 1846, insurrection of Sheikh Imam-ud-din in Kashmir was crushed by the British with the help of 17000 Sikh troops (Dodwell 1922: 553). Meanwhile in Punjab troubles were once again brewing up, after Lord Dalhousie assumed the office of the Governor General. The assassination of two British officers at Multan in 1848 provided the required spark leading to the second Anglo-Sikh war in 1849. This war led to annexation of Punjab and resulted in the extension of the British frontier up to Khyber Pass (Lyall 1929: 263). Thereafter, the rest of the 19th century saw a slew of small wars, largely concentrated on the north-west frontier where fierce Pathan tribes resolutely resisted the British rule, and the Great Game was played out in a bid to keep the Russian influence at bay.

The British saw the north western frontier region as an area inhabited by dangerous and warlike tribes who were known for their plundering instincts. The annexation of the Punjab in 1849 had brought the British Indian empire in direct proximity to Afghanistan and also into immediate contact with the north-west Frontier region inhabited by those warlike tribes who had been “accustomed for

ages to make plundering raids into Punjab" (Ibid: 290). The Punjab borders' crops and cattle's were temptingly very close to Pathan raiders (Ibid). The annexation of Punjab brought the British to two separate problems. The first being the imperial problem due to the rapid Russian expansion into the Central Asia towards the Afghanistan borders, particularly after their defeat in Crimean war (1853-56).[11] The Crimean war also dimmed the chances of an agreed Anglo-Russian policy for Central Asia (Thompson and Garratt: 1958: 499). The second problem was of local nature due to the 'savage' Pathan and Baluch tribes who were residing in hills and valleys between Indus and Afghanistan. They were posing considerable threat to the British trade interests in the region too, as the 'warlike tribes' were accustomed to drive toll from trade caravans apart from making incursions into the plains for their livelihood (Ibid: 500). The local problem was seen as of small-scale and as preventable as the tribesmen in the valleys between Afghanistan and Indus have neither the numbers nor the organization to penetrate far into Punjab unless supported by their Indian co-religionists or by invading Army from Central Asia. The British were confident that this problem could be fixed by establishing settled government on the near side of the passes in Punjab. Holistically speaking, however, these problems cannot be divorced from each other as the troubled North Western Frontier and Afghanistan impacted upon the British Indian trade with Central Asia and above all seemingly a great danger to security of British India (Ibid: 508).

The British relation with Afghanistan was always affected by the existence of turbulent Pathan tribes between Punjab and Afghanistan as the Amir of Afghanistan had nominal suzerainty over them (Ibid: 500). Therefore, the British felt the need for dialogue with Dost Mohammad, who had recaptured Kabul in 1842 (Bilgrami 1972: 114). The frontier tribes residing between Indus and Afghanistan looked towards the Afghan rulers with brotherly feeling, which was

[11] Crimean War was mainly fought on the Crimean Peninsula October 1853–February 1856, between Russians and British, French, and Ottoman Empire. It was caused by Russian demands to exercise protection over the Orthodox subjects of the Ottoman sultan. Available at: http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/143040/Crimean-War, (Accessed on 15 February, 2012)

allegedly exploited by Dost Mohammad to cultivate a feeling against the British. So, it was felt that for a safe and scientific frontier, British control over the tribal areas was necessary (Ibid: 115). The increased Russian activities in Central Asia and Persian threat to Herat also made Lord Dalhousie, before the start of Crimean war, to open negotiations with Dost Mohammad. The negotiations were led by a British officer Herbert Edwards, the then commissioner of Peshawar (Tytler 1953: 122). Herbert Edwards favoured active diplomatic relations with Afghanistan, which was supported by Lord Dalhousie but John Lawrence, who was the immediate superior of Edwards and the Chief Commissioner of Punjab, did not like this. John Lawrence advocated the policy of complete non interference beyond Indus and withdrawal of British frontier to Indus (Bilgrami 1972: 115). He also opined that Peshawar, Kohat, Derajatt be handed over to the Amir Dost Mohammed in order to make Afghans friendly towards the British Indian empire. Herbert Edwards, on the other hand, believed Peshawar to be the anchor of Punjab (Malhotra 1982: 12). In 1855, a treaty was concluded between Lord Dalhousie and Amir Dost Mohammad which was signed by Ghulam Haider (son of Dost Mohammed) and John Lawrence as Chief Commissioner of Punjab at Peshawar (Argyll 1879: 9). Subsequently, in October 1856 when Persia seized Herat, Dost Mohammad declared war on Persia in conjunction with the British. Shah of Persia was forced to retreat with a pledge not to interfere in Afghanistan (Tytler 1953: 122-23). The victory resulted in another treaty in 1857, according to which British not only reconciled with Dost Mohammad but also assisted him to extend his hold over Kandahar and Herat in subsequent years. The British also committed to pay him the annual subsidy of £200,000 sterling to be used for defense purposes (Popowski 1893: 86, Zadeh 2004: 16). In return, under the article 4, British officers were stationed at Kabul, Kandahar and Balkh or wherever Afghan forces were established against the Persians (Argyll 1879: 13). The treaties signed in 1855 and 1857 with Dost Mohammed, and his representatives formalized the British occupation of Afghan inhabited areas between Indus and passes. This friendship with the Dost Mohammad turned out to be fruitful during times of Mutiny when it became the cornerstone of security in the Punjab (Raja 1988: 12, Chopra et. al. 1996: 300).

Since the annexation of Punjab, Lord Lawrence as the protagonist of the 'Stationary School' insisted that in the north-west frontier of India the British should stand behind the mountains, which he strictly followed during his tenure as the Governor General. He also insisted to refrain from embroiling with the hostile tribes by whom these mountains were tenanted. He advocated that the British should have peace with the Afghans, and if there were fears of invasion from Russia or any other power then it would be much safer to take stance in that position rather than advancing the frontier onto the mountainous ranges (Harcourt 1897: 24). The policy of Lawrence was followed by his two successors, Lord Mayo and Lord Northbrook, even though the King of Afghanistan Sher Ali wanted defensive alliance against Russia because of the Russian expansion plans in Central Asia in the 1860's (Edwardes 1961: 545). But this policy was reversed by Lord Beaconsfield's (Disraeli) government in 1878, according to which the British wanted to advance into Afghanistan to secure a 'scientific' frontier. The two schools of thought, the 'Stationary School' and 'Forward School' thus differed in their approach on Afghanistan (Harcourt 1897: 24).

As already indicated, the British dominion had reached its limit in the Indian sub-continent till the base of Afghan mountains with the annexation of Punjab (Lyall 1929: 293). Whereas, the Russians were on an expansion towards the South-East largely due to political vacuum in Central Asia, the same way as the British Empire reached the north-western frontier of India by making use of the political situation in the sub-continent (Chopra et. al. 1996: 300). Khokand (1860), Tashkent (1865), Bokhara (1866), Samarkand (1868) and Khiva (1873) were subjugated by the Russians which brought them onto the bank of River Oxus**.** The Russian occupation of Central Asian Khanates pushed the Amir of Afghanistan Sher Ali to negotiate a definite treaty with Viceroy Lord Northbrook, but the Liberal government under Gladstone did not change the policy of non-intervention. However, the British approached the Russians for negotiations to keep some territories neutral in Central Asia between them in the same year as an Anglo-Russian clash looked very much possible in near future (Schofield 1984: 93-94, Edwardes 1961: 545, Chopra et. al. 1996: 300). With this aim, the British tried to mark the northern boundary of Afghanistan for which Russia loosely agreed to be the Oxus River (Schofield 1984: 93-94). Thereafter, the focus of the British was

directed towards maintaining the independence and integrity of Afghanistan (Lyall 1929: 294).

Subsequently, the non-intervention policy was relinquished, which was followed until the time of Lord Northbrook who resigned with the coming of Disraeli's Conservative party's government in Britain. Lord Northbrook was instructed to suggest the Amir Sher Ali that a British Resident should be stationed in Kabul and Herat, which the former was not keen to do (Chopra et. al. 1996: 302-03, Edwardes 1961: 545). Lord Lytton subsequently replaced him who was a true imperialist and a protagonist of Forward policy. On the one hand, he started pushing Amir Sher Ali for definite alliance which the latter earlier sought in 1873 but with a condition to accept British mission at Kabul. At the same time, he took the control of Quetta and Bolan Pass by an arrangement with the Khan of Kalat (Thompson and Garratt 1958: 515, Chopra et. al. 1996: 302-03). The occupation of Quetta disturbed the Sher Ali as it enabled the British to command the road to Kandahar and subsequently helped them to construct railway over there (Schofield 1984: 94, Edwardes 1961: 546).

In 1878, the events took such a turn that the second Anglo-Afghan war became imminent with the refusal of Britain to accept the treaty of San Stefano signed between Russia and Turkey. The British occupied Cyprus and sent an expedition of Indian troops to Malta. Russia replied this move by increasing pressure on India by sending envoy to Afghanistan, who was warmly received by Sher Ali (Edwardes 1961: 545). However, as the pressure was eased out in Europe with the signing of Berlin treaty, the envoy was recalled by Russia from Afghanistan (Chopra et. al. 1996: 303). Nevertheless, Lytton and Cranbrooke, then Secretary of State, wanted to use the opportunity to push their Forward Policy. Lord Lytton had viewed that "Afghanistan is a state far too weak and barbarous to remain isolated and wholly uninfluenced between two great military empires such as England and Russia" (Magnus and Naby 1998: 34). He added that "so we cannot allow Sher Ali to fall under the influence of any power whose interests were hostile to our own…A tool in the hands of Russia, I will never allow him to become. Such a tool; it would be my duty to break before it could be used" (Schofield 1984: 93-94).

Thereupon British send a mission to the "barbarious" Afghanistan under Neville Chamberlain, which was not received by the Amir and becomes the immediate reason for the start of Second Anglo-Afghan war in November 1878. The British forces entered into Afghanistan from three routes Kurram, Khyber and Quetta and by early 1879 they gained hold over Jalalabad, Peiwar Kotal near Kurram and Kandahar. Sher Ali sought Russian help, but it did not come through as the Russian interests changed due to the signing of Berlin treaty (Schofield 1984: 95). He had to leave Kabul for Petersburg but died at Mazar-e-sharif and succeeded by his son Yakub Khan who signed the treaty of Gandamak whereby all the commanding routes to enter Afghanistan were given under the control of British, apart from the Afghan ruler receiving the British envoy, Sir Louis Cavangiri (Magnus and Naby 1998: 35). This treaty not only allowed the British to keep their envoy to control the Afghan administration, but also the Afghan ruler had to surrender territories of Khyber, Kurram, Pishin and Chaman (near Kandahar) and full control of foreign affairs to the British (Schofield 1984: 96). However, Yakub Khan abdicated the throne after the murder of Cavangiri.[12] General Robert occupied Kabul in consequence to this and subsequently made Abdur Rahman new Amir of Afghanistan. In succeeding events Ayub Khan who had control over Herat attacked Kandahar and defeated the British forces decisively. In retaliation, a relief force was sent comprising 24th and 25th Punjab Infantry; and 2nd, 3rd and 15th Sikhs infantry and; 3rd and 5th Punjab Cavalry to recover the lost ground. Ayub Khan was defeated (Swinson 1967: 170-196). Punjab contributed significantly into the second Anglo-Afghan war. Overall the Punjab states of Kapurthala, Bahawalpur, Nabha, Patiala, Jind, Faridkot and Sirmour had contributed 3000 infantry, 1000 cavalry and 13 Guns. These contingents conduct earned them praise from the Viceroy Lytton even though they were primarily

[12] Three Regiments of Afghan troops rebelled against the Amir Yakub Khan because of non-payment of three months' salary. They entered Kabul in demand of their salary. They even extremely detested the presence of British mission in Kabul when they came to known about that. Amir agreed to pay only one month's salary but this was not enough to satisfy them. Then they thought to get the remaining from Cavangiri and gathered in front of the mission compound. He refused to give them anything which started the trouble. The people also joined them as instigated by Mullahs. Thus subsequently he was killed (Hopkirk 1990: 387-90, Swinson 1967: 170-71).

employed for duties of holding Line of Communication, garrisoning of posts and providing escort to convoys (Arora 1976: 254). In April 1880, Gladstone again came to power in England and replaced the Lytton with Lord Ripon who recognized Abdur Rahman (grandson of Dost Mahommad and nephew of Sher Ali) as new Amir of Afghanistan. He also granted him an annual subsidy but retained all the territories gained by the treaty of Gandamak. He also agreed to keep the British interest in matters of foreign policy. Lord Ripon withdrew British troops to Quetta but kept the control over Khyber and Kurram passes (Edwardes 1961: 547). After that British abandoned the policy of 'Forward School' of acquiring 'scientific frontier' along the Hindu Kush Mountains and concentrated largely on tribal territories of Punjab which constituted first line of defense on the borders of India. This subsequently led to demarcation of Indo-Afghan border by Sir Mortimer Durand during 1894-96 to check the Afghanistan king's interference in the tribal affairs. Furthermore, political agencies were created at Kurram, Malakand, Tochi and Wana between 1892 and 1896 where political agents were stationed to liaise with tribes for better defense of frontier (Majumdar et. al. 1963: 1005-07). These were created as Punjab frontier was too long and mountainous to be defended by military alone (Dodwell 1922: 451).

The Russians, on the other hand, apparently resumed their policy of expansion in Central Asia, which was in a sense a repercussion of Second Anglo-Afghan war. It resulted in the occupation of Merv in February 1884 by the Russians which was resented by the British as it lay only 130 miles from the Afghanistan border. In desperation the British put forward the idea of demarcating the Afghan-Russian border which was accepted by the Russians. A Border commission was accordingly appointed under General Peter Lumsden and General Zelenoi (Swinson 1967: 197-199). Against the spirit of the commission, however, in March 1885, the Russians took control of Panjdeh and Zulfikar pass, during the process of delimitation, from Afghans which brought Russians and British on the verge of war (Edwardes 1961: 547). During this crisis, native rulers of Punjab states came forward to render help for the imperial defense, but the offer was politely declined by the British authorities (Arora 1976: 254). The war was somehow averted as Russia gave back the control of Zulfiqar Pass to the Afghans, though kept the Panjdeh with them (Edwardes 1961: 547). Subsequently boundary

from Oxus River to Zulfiqar Pass was drawn and was accepted by Abdur Rahman and later by Lord Salisbury and Monsieur de Staal in September 1885 (Swinson 1967: 202). In 1892, a dispute again emerged between Russia and Britain with the Russian claim over the whole Pamir Range. The Russian agents visited the Chitral (a princely state in north of Peshawar and west of Gilgit) and subsequently the Russian foreign office and war office sought to extend Russian dominion over the whole of Pamir range. However as a result of negotiations and the signing of the convention of 1895, Russia accepted the Oxus (Amu Darya) as Southern limit of its empire (Dodwell 1922: 426).

Subsequent to the Panjdeh incident and after the demarcation of Russo-Afghan border, the British was focused on laying the railway network in north western India to connect this region to the mainland India to move troops rapidly in event of any aggression from the Central Asian side. The defense of frontier understandably took precedence over civilian and industrial matters (Swinson 1967: 205). During the Panjdeh episode, a commercial and political contact was established with Aman-ul-Mulk, the ruler of Chitral in the north western area. Though the relation worked smoothly for the British till the death of Aman-ul-Mulk in 1892, the internal dissection thereafter occupied much of the British attention to Chitral apart from offering them strengthening their borders against any possible Russian onslaughts. His death set off a war of succession between his sixteen sons and his brother Sher Afzal which provoked the British to interfere in this struggle. Aman-ul-Mulk was succeeded by Afzal-ul-Mulk (his Second Son) but he was killed by his Uncle Sher Afzal. He proclaimed himself as the ruler but later fled to Afghanistan as Nizam-ul-Mulk, the eldest son of Aman-ul-Mulk marched on the Chitral with the British support. He also had the support of the people of Chitral. Nizam-ul-Mulk became the ruler but he was killed by his younger brother Amir-ul-Mulk (Hopkirk 1990: 484-85, Swinson 1967: 208). Thereafter, Amir-ul-Mulk demanded his recognition as a ruler of Chitral from British which was delayed by the latter. So, he took the help of Umra Khan, the ruler of Swat, who later invaded Chitral. The British agent in Chitral Lieutenant Gurdon sent message about these happenings to Major George Robertson who was stationed at Gilgit. He hurriedly came there with only with 400 troops which included 99 men of 14th Sikh Regiment of Bengal Native Infantry. He removed Amir-ul-Mulk and sent an

ultimatum to Umra Khan to leave the Chitral. But situation turned against them when Sher Afzul joined with Umra Khan. Thereafter seeing the graveness of situation, Robertson and his men took shelter in Chitral fort. Sher Afzul and Umra Khan seized the fort for two months. However, they fled due to arrival of relief force from Gilgit under Colonel J.G. Kelly and 1st Division of 1st Army from Nowshera under General Sir Robert Low (Swinson 1967: 208-09). After defending the Chitral in 1895, British retained it to build a road from Peshawar to Chitral passing through Malakand and Dir as it was too close to Russian posts in Pamirs Mountains (Ibid: 234-35, Hopkirk 1990: 499).

PATHAN REVOLT AND END OF THE GAME

In 1897, Pathan revolt started in the north western India which was an outcome of the forward policy that proved unpopular among tribes. The British not only increased the taxes but interfered with their customs and culture apart from demarcating the 'Durand Line', which affected the age old cross border linkages between Pathans in Afghanistan and North West Frontier of India (Swinson 1967: 233). The revolt was started from the village Maizar in Tochi valley, where the escort contingent of Mr. Gee, a political officer, was attacked by Madda Khel Pathans while he was looking for a suitable place to set up a levy post. The escort contingent consisted of 1st Punjab Infantry, 1st Sikhs and 21st Punjab cavalry and 6th Bombay mountain battery (Elliott 1968 339, Mills 1897: 10-15). In the sudden attack 26 troops were killed and out of which 17 were Sikh (Mills 1897: 19). In a week's time, a Tochi punitive expedition force was composed which included 1st Brigade comprising 1st regiment of Sikh infantry, 1st regiment of Punjab Infantry, 1st regiment of Punjab cavalry and No.3 Peshawar mountain battery of Punjab Frontier Force and 2nd Brigade which includes 14th Sikh Regiment of Bengal native Infantry, 1st regiment of Punjab Cavalry (Ibid: 24). While advancing for Maizar, British troops burnt a village Sheranna, where it was reported 12000 Pathans gathered to give them resistance. Subsequently, they marched towards Maizar where all the fortifications and towers were destroyed. However the theatre of Pathan revolt shifted to Malakand and Chakdara where the British forces were again attacked and besieged by tribesmen (Ibid: 31-32).

In August 1897, under the influence of Fakir Saidullah (a religious priest, also known as Mullah of Mastun), tribesmen from Upper Swat, Buner, the Uttman Khel and neighbouring places rose against the British. The tribesmen attacked the British posts at Malakand and Chakdara simultaneously (Ibid: 35). The garrison of Malakand comprised 24th and 31st Punjab Infantry and 45th Sikhs regiment, apart from the Bengal lancers, the Madras Sappers & miners and Mountain battery with total strength of 3000. The troops at Chakdara included only two companies of 45th Sikh Infantry regiment and 11th Bengal lancers with a total strength of about 300. These forces took part in the defense of Malakand Pass and Chakdara (Mills 1897: 38). At Malakand, the British successfully repulsed the Pathan tribesmen but in the meantime they were joined by 35th Sikh and 38th Dogras regiment of Bengal Native Infantry (Swinson 1967: 237). Thereafter relief force was sent to Chakdara where the 45th Sikh Infantry regiment and 11th Bengal lancers, a cavalry regiment were defending the garrison from 10000 tribesmen (Mills 1897: 61-62). The Chakdara besiege was lifted by the Pathans as news of arrival of relief force reached. However, they lost almost 2000 Pathan soldiers in this campaign. After relieving the Chakdara, the British sent a punitive expedition in Swat Valley. They had just experienced small skirmishes at Landakai and Kotah before securing the hold of the entire Swat area (Ibid: 64-84).

In north western frontier adjacent to Peshawar, 5000 Mohmands tribesmen attacked the Shabkadar fort in August 1897, which was successfully defended by the available British force. But tribesmen set ablaze the Shankargarh, a cantonment bazaar. Shabkadar fort was 17 miles from Peshawar and hence promptly force under Lieutenant Colonel J Woon consisting 20th Punjab Infantry, 13th Bengal Lancers, 61 Field battery and Somersetshire Light Infantry reached the fort. Alongside, three and half companies of 30th Punjab Infantry were sent as reinforcement to support the army. Tribesmen were subsequently expelled but 20th Punjab Infantry lost 7 soldiers out of total loss of 12 soldiers in this campaign. Thereafter the British called reinforcement from Nowshera and Rawalpindi to increase the strength of reserves at Peshawar (Ibid: 87-97). In the meantime Kurram valley was taken over by the Pathan insurrection where Afridis moved from Tirah towards the Khyber Pass and secured the hold over Ali masjid to Landi Kotal on 23rd August 1897 (Ibid: 107). Subsequently, Orakzai (a Pathan tribe)

joined the revolt and moved towards Kurram Valley. They first attacked the Mahomedzai fort, situated near the foot of the Ublan pass. The British sent reinforcement from Kohat which includes 2nd Punjab infantry, 3rd Punjab Cavalry and Royal Scots Fusiliers. Tribesmen retreated with the arrival of these contingents from behind the scene (Ibid: 114-21). Subsequently, Orakzais attacked the Fort Lockhart, Saragarhi and Cavangiri at Samana Range; all were successfully defended except Saragarhi where 21 soldiers of 36th Sikh died while defending it (Ibid: 122-34). Thereafter a force which includes 20th Punjab regiment, 22nd Punjab infantry was sent from Peshawar against Mohmands, Afridis and Orakzais and all of them were subdued successfully (Ibid: 147, Majumdar et. al. 1963: 1012).

Thus by the end of year 1897, all the Pathan inhabited areas were under the control of British forces. Later Lord Curzon carved out the North West Frontier Province from Punjab by bringing all these areas under the British India and also reduced the troops in the forward post but improved the infrastructure by laying railway lines and roads to improve the connectivity. He also raised tribal levies to guard the frontiers (Majumdar et.al. 1963: 1016-17). Besides these changes in Punjab, Lord Curzon also sent an expedition to Tibet to counter the increasing influence of Russians in this area. After putting some resistance, the Tibetans signed a treaty in September 1904 at Lhasa (Dodwell 1922: 427) whereby two marts were opened at Gyantse and Gartok, all duties on trade to and from India were abolished and Chumbi Valley was to be remained under British control until indemnity of half millions was paid to the British by Tibetans though in installments. Tibetans also agreed not to accept agent of other states and lease the territory to other states without the British consent (Majumdar et. al. 1963: 1063). Thereafter, Lord Lansdowne, the then Foreign Secretary conveyed to Russian ambassador that the British would neither annex Tibet nor establish a protectorate over it nor control its internal affairs as long as no European power was intervened. This was in response to the Russian ambassador's memorandum, when the British expedition set out for Tibet, that this expedition would forced the Russians to take measures to protect its interests in those regions (Dodwell 1922: 427-28).

With dawn of 20th century, the Russia demanded that the Governor General of Turkestan should be placed in direct communication with the authorities of Kabul. In 1902, Count Lamsdorff even pointed out that he can't understand why the external relations of Afghanistan were exclusively managed by Britain. This was all due to Russian consolidation in the Central Asia as they now have Trans-Caspian and Orenburg-Tashkent railways lines. However, after the Russian defeat in Russo-Japanese war, a new convention was signed on August 31, 1907 by which Russia accepted Afghanistan as outside her sphere of influence and agreed to conduct her relations through the British Government; but both would have equal commercial facilities in Afghanistan. The British also assured the Russians of having no intention to modify the political status of the Amir of Afghanistan. In the case of Tibet, both nations agreed to conduct their political relations through China and that they would not seek any concessions in Tibetan territory (Dodwell 1922: 428-430, Edwardes 1961:547). This sounded the death of the Great Game, a game of tension between England and Russia and involving too many regional political forces.

The era of Great Game lasted almost a century in which the Russians rapidly expanded into Central Asia and by the closing years reached the Pamir Mountains whereas British had no significant advance in terms of territorial expansion under their actual possession, except the incorporation of Punjab into their Empire. However, the dynamics of Great Game enabled the British to fight two Anglo-Afghan wars during this period, which allowed them to keep Afghanistan in its sphere of influence. Ultimately, through coercive and diplomatic measures they were able to demarcate the boundaries of Afghanistan with Persia, Russia and India in an attempt to ward off the Russian menace. The delimitation of Indo-Afghan border legalized the British hold over the tribal territories, which was not liked by tribes like the Pathans. This led to Pathan revolt and its suppression through the use of military. Towards the beginning of the twentieth century, in order to control the 'unruly' tribal areas effectively, the British created a North West Frontier Province. In the course of this Great Game, both Empires sent their agents for exploration of Central Asian terrain and to make a political and commercial breakthrough with the states. It was not surprising that the work of Royal Geographical Society coincided with the British spy work in Central Asia. It

was experience and the fear of these agents of other country that flare up the tensions; which resulted in either the incorporation of these states into their Empire or interference in their internal and external matters by big powers. The highlighting point of the Great Game was that direct hostilities never broke out between Russia and England as tensions continued silently by implicating other forces and groups and in crucial ways foreshadowing the cold war.

Chapter 3
THE 'GAME CHANGER': POLITY, ECONOMY AND SOCIETY OF PUNJAB

The Great Game could be rightly regarded as the 'game changer' in the modern history of Punjab. Not only the earlier attempts of the British to use Punjab under Maharaja as a buffer state through friendly relations, but also the decision to make Punjab part of British India when it has fallen to chaos following the death of Ranjit Singh, was largely determined by the compulsions of the Great Game. Punjab's conversion as a garrison state (Yong 2005) with largest sum of British Indian army stationed in the province had been directly related to the Russian intervention on the cards. Punjab's transformation in diverse spheres and its progress as a model province had been related to the British attempts to keep it an 'orderly' province without any turmoil has also been related to this. The paternalistic approach of the British was directed at ensuring the support of the elite and insulating rural population from 'disruptive' external influences, alongside providing Punjab prosperity through expansion of agriculture and new avenues of employment. As pointed out, Great Game was played by the British for retaining their commercial primacy and political supremacy in Central Asia and Afghanistan regions with an apparent motive to secure their Indian Empire from threats emerging from places across the Hindu Kush. It was basically a spin-off of the endeavors made by the British in Central Asia and Afghanistan to isolate India from European politics, which led to the British interference in the internal and external affairs of states lying in the north western region of India. The interference gradually led to the incorporation of these regions into the British Indian Empire or brought under the British paramountcy. Punjab was one of the major states, which was annexed by British in 1840s along with Sindh to extend their commercial and political penetration in and across Afghanistan after their disastrous evacuation from Afghanistan in 1842. The British interference in the affairs of Punjab started concretely with signing of treaty of Amritsar in 1809 due to the combined, imagined or real, threat of a Franco-Russian invasion of India, which was proved to be a 'game changer' as far the polity, economy and society of Punjab were concerned.

COLONIZING AN ALLY: PUNJAB'S WAY INTO BRITISH INDIA

The British initially did not have much of an interest in bringing Punjab under its territorial control. They were happy to have arrangements from time to time with Maharaja Ranjit Singh and other players in the region to safeguard their interests in the region. As pointed out earlier, as a result of the negotiations at Amritsar between Charles Metcalfe and Ranjit Singh, the latter had relinquished his claim over territories subdued by him in the Cis-Sutlej region and agreed to never have any advance on the left bank of Sutlej. The British in turn agreed not to interfere in the affairs in north-west of the river Sutlej. This agreement however put an end to the dream of Ranjit Singh to consolidate the whole Sikh nation by bringing the entire region of Punjab between Yamuna and Indus under one ruler (Singh 1955: 15, Chhabra 1976: 86). Subsequently, almost for two decades the British didn't interfere in the affairs of Punjab as they were busy in consolidating their position in other parts of India, apart from their wars with Burma and Nepal. By the year 1827, the British secured their hold over their possessions in Indian sub-continent and were free from any major opposition in India. However, soon the developments beyond Hindu Kush Mountains had turned their attention towards the unexplored region of Central Asia where Russians were making advances and inflicted defeat on Persia and even on Turkey, which perturbed the British. These developments beyond Punjab had its repercussions upon the Anglo-Sikh relations in the subsequent years (Singh 1955: 16-17, Singh 1982: 347). The British felt threatened because of the Russian advances in the South East and thought of countering this by commercial penetration of superior British goods into the markets of these regions (Hopkirk 1990: 132). This idea of commercial incursion had emerged out from the reports by a number of British agents who explored the region beyond the Indus and gave positive reports about the prospect of Central Asian trade (Tytler 1953: 88-89). The hitherto neglected British commercial interest in Afghanistan, Sindh and Baluchistan was thus having such a political context. They wanted to establish trading relations with an intention of gradually converting it into political relations (Singh 1982: 349-50). As the British had their own designs about these territories, they checkmated Maharaja Ranjit Singh in their plan of subduing the Sindh and Baluchistan. It was in such a context in 1831, the British sent Alexander Burnes with gifts for Maharaja Ranjit Singh from King

William IV through Indus, with a motive of exploring the navigability of Indus, a pre-requisite for the commercial and military penetration of British into Afghanistan and Central Asia (Hopkirk 1990: 132-34, Singh 1955: 19). Alexander Burnes reported that there was "perhaps no inland country in this world," which possessed greater facilities for commerce than the Punjab as all its rivers were more or less navigable (Arrora 1930: 12).

The British thereupon negotiated treaties to facilitate the navigation along Indus and Sutlej rivers with the Amir of Sindh and the Maharaja of Punjab through their envoys, Pottinger and Claude Martine Wade. Maharaja Ranjit Singh was apprehensive about the British intentions, which they apparently projected as 'purely commercial'. Initially, he was reluctant to sign it but Wade cleared his "misgivings" and secured his consent for the treaty by convincing him the economic benefits of this project. The treaty[1] which was signed in 1832 and further modified in 1834 and 1839 opened up the two rivers of Punjab for commerce (Singh 1982: 354-55). Subsequently, Ranjit Singh got busy in the campaigns and administration of north-west frontier as Amir Dost Muhammad started a religious war against the Sikhs following the annexation of Peshawar by the former from the latter. The British took advantage of the situation by occupying Ferozepur in 1835, over which the British already accepted the Ranjit Singh's sway. Ferozepur was later converted into a military cantonment in 1838 (Singh 1955: 24). The importance of Ferozepur was highlighted by Captain William Murray, a British officer at Ludhiana, who said that "the capital Lahore (of the kingdom of Punjab) is distant only 40 miles with a single river to cross, fordable for 6 months in the year. The fort of Ferozepur from every point of view seems to be of highest importance

[1] This treaty, signed on December 26, 1832, opened the navigation of Indus and Sutlej to promote commerce between British Indian Empire and Sikh State of Punjab. Tariff is levied only for the passage of merchants whereas other duties and movements of goods were not touched upon. The Checking post for collection of duties was established at Mithankot and Harike. The merchants had to obtain passport from their respective authorities for crossing the rivers. A supplementary treaty was concluded with Maharaja Ranjit Singh for establishing a toll on the Indus November 29, 1834. On May 1839, it was amended to charge different rates for boats of different sizes and on the volume of the merchandise as it was kept same for all boats irrespective of size (Aitchison 1863: 240-50).

to the British government, whether as a check on the growing ambition of Lahore or as a post of consequence" (Mahajan 1961: 175, Singh 1955: 24). Maharaja Ranjit Singh reacted promptly by deciding to build a fort on his side of river Sutlej at Kasur (Singh 1982: 358). In the following year, the British even did not let Ranjit Singh to add the Shikarpur to his empire, which was considered as the gateway to *Khorasan* (a region that includes the territories of north-eastern Iran, southern Turkmenistan, and northern Afghanistan) and also considered to be important to industry and trade of Asia (Mahajan 1961: 175). This was resented by Ranjit Singh, his nobles and ministers, but he avoided confrontation with the British due to pragmatic considerations. He calculated that his reaction would lead to formation of a joint front against him by the Afghans and the British, as the British hands were free from any major involvement in India and the already offended Dost Muhammad was looking forward to recapturing Peshawar (Singh 1955: 22-23).

In the year 1836, Lord Auckland sent Alexander Burnes to Afghanistan to counter the Russo-Persian machinations against the British. The mission failed as the British were not positive about recovering Peshawar for Dost Muhammad from their ally Maharaja Ranjit Singh (Habberton 1937: 10-11). Dost Muhammad instead promptly reach out to the Russians which made the British anxious about security of north-west frontier and Afghanistan. This, as pointed out already, led to the British decision to replace Dost Muhammad with Shah Shuja in an attempt to place a friendly ruler in Afghanistan with the help of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The tripartite treaty signed with this objective made Shah Shuja to concede the perpetual control over Kashmir, Attock and Hazara Peshawar, Khyber, Bannu, Tank, Kalabagh, Derajat, Waziri territories and Multan to Maharaja Ranjit Singh (Singh 1982: 362). However, Ranjit Singh was made to renounce the claim over Shikarpur in return of compensation of Rs. 15 lakhs. In addition to that the British and the Sikh governments were entrusted with the power of jointly controlling the external relations of Afghanistan (Ibid 362-63). As evident, it was the Russian scare that has driven the British to the tripartite alliance and bought the friendship of the Sikh state of Punjab under Ranjit Singh in an attempt to bring Punjab, north western frontier and Afghanistan under their sphere of influence.

With the demise of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1839 and the state of Punjab falling into instability with heightened internal feuds, the British designs over Punjab changed. Not only, they started advocating the restoration of Peshawar to Shah Shuja, but even stopped the Sikh governor of Peshawar from collecting tax (Schofield 1984: 83, Singh 1982: 327). The British also started to gather war material in Cis-Sutlej territories particularly at Ferozepur cantonment and strengthened the garrison over there. In Multan, the British tried to purchase the grain without the consent of Diwan Sawan Mall. In resentment Diwan Sawan Mall ordered the people not to sell any grain to the British officers (Singh 1955: 27). But Maharaja Kharak Singh intervened and issued a letter to Diwan on August 19, 1839 to co-operate with the British and let them purchase the grain (Ibid). Later Sawan Mall started constructing a small fort at Mithan Kot as a precautionary measure as the British line of advance from Sindh to Afghanistan was near to his territory (Ibid: 28). In 1841, when the Sikh army conquered Iskardo and marched upon Tibet, the British Government resented this move and interfered in the expansion of the Punjab state. The British forced them to retreat to Ladakh and sign a treaty in October 1841 whereby Maharaja Sher Singh agreed not to extend his influence across Ladakh (Majumdar et. al. 1963: 1060). The political relationship between the Sikh state and the British by all indications was entering into a turbulent phase.

Despite these differences, the Sikh State of Punjab under Maharaja Sher Singh contributed more than 50% of troops in the First Anglo-Afghan war which was also acknowledged by Henry Lawrence in a letter to J C Marshman, an English journalist and historian, dated April 11, 1842 (Singh 1955: 29). While Maharaja Sher Singh co-operated whole heartedly in the Afghan war in the side of the British, voices to annex the Punjab state were heard from the British administrative apparatus. In addition to that, apparently the British were promoting internal dissection to destabilize Sher Singh as evident from the fact that the former were involved in corrupting the officers of Sher Singh against him with the promises of territories sliced out of his kingdom to them (Ibid: 32). Thus Raja Dhian Singh and Gulab Singh were encouraged towards the division of the Punjab state. Later Lal Singh and Tej Singh also joined the British machinations against Punjab. Thereafter British intrigues in Punjab reached a climax as these people

"betrayed the cause of Punjab" (Ibid: 32-33). In 1843, with the murder of Maharaja Sher Singh, his son Prince Partap Singh and Raja Dhian Singh by Sandhawalia Sardars, Lahore submerged into a state of anarchy. The situation got further deteriorated as the Sikh army's loyalty was purchased by slain Dogra chief's son Hira Singh against the Sandhawalia Sardars. Thus factionalism and disintegration came to the forefront in the state (Khilanani 1972: 8-9). The British were certain that such heightened political turmoil will make Punjab's way into the British Indian Empire. Ellenborough, the Governor General wrote to the British Queen on October 20, 1843 that "it is impossible not to perceive that the ultimate tendency of the late events at Lahore is, without any effort on our part, to bring the plains first and at somewhat later period hills under our protection or control" (Singh 1955: 41). Ellenborough also wrote to the Duke of Wellington that "time cannot be too far distant when the Punjab will fall into our management" as in the existing situation he saw the possibility of hills being ruled by the Dogra chief Gulab Singh and the plains by the Sikhs and eventually Multan breaking away (Singh 1955: 42, Edwardes 1961: 499).

Strategically, the Empire in which an alien minority rules cannot tolerate anarchy on its frontiers as chaos was never respecter of boundaries and cannot be held at borders (Chopra et. al. 1996: 301). The Russian scare in the back of their mind, the British did not want an instable frontier which would welcome external advances. Therefore, Ellenborough increased the strength of the British troops in Cis-Sutlej particularly at Ludhiana and Ferozepur. He also constructed a supply Depot at Basian near Raikot and also made arrangement for pontoons at Ferozepur to cross Sutlej (Singh 1955: 52-53). Sir Henry Hardinge who replaced Lord Ellenborough, increased the strength of troops and ammunitions further, from 17,612 to 40,523 and guns from 66 to 94 (Singh 1955: 50-51). After the annexation of Sindh, these preparations flared up the threat perceived by the Sikhs from the British 'encirclement' of Punjab which led to First Anglo-Sikh war in 1845-46 (Schofield 1984: 83). The War, as pointed out already, was lost by the Sikh army because of the treachery of the Prime Minister Lal Singh, the Commander-in-Chief Tej Singh and the governor of Jammu Raja Gulab Singh (Singh 1955: 56).

The consequent treaty of Lahore signed on March 9, 1846 crippled the Punjab state economically and militarily by reconstructing it. Governor General Hardinge was successful in reducing the Sikh army to 32,000 troops- 20,000 infantry and 12,000 cavalry; territories between Beas and Sutlej River were annexed- both in the hills and the plains; payment of one and half million was taken as war indemnity or Kashmir and Hazara had to be ceased by the Company; surrender of guns that was not captured in War; and control on the rivers Beas and Sutlej up to Mithan Kot where Sutlej confluence into Indus (Khilani 1972: 18). Later, Kashmir and Hazara was annexed by the Company and handed over to Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu (Rawlinson 1948: 73). By annexing the richest portion of Punjab Kingdom i.e. Jalandhar Doab and hill states, Hardinge rendered the Punjab state economically weak, apart from destroying its political existence. He also broke the military strength by reducing the strength of troops and by capturing the guns in an attempt to make sure that the British don't face any serious threat from them in the future (Khilani 1972: 18). Thus, the treaty of Lahore trifurcated the Punjab- hill tracts between Indus and Beas including Hazara and Kashmir were separated and placed under Raja Gulab Singh; plains between Sutlej and Beas including trans-Beas areas of Kulu and Noorpur were placed under Commissionership of John Lawrence; and the plains between Beas and Indus under Maharaja Dalip Singh. As Dalip Singh was an infant, Punjab was governed by Rani Jindan and his Prime Minister Lal Singh (Ibid: 24-25). As it happened in the case of many Princely states, in the guise of supporting the government of infant Maharaja Dalip Singh, Henry Lawrence became the Resident along with British troops till the year end at Lahore, which gave him space to keep the state under control and dictate it policies.[2] Subsequently, the treaty of Bhairowal was signed on December 16, 1846 whereby a Regency Council of 8 members was constituted which was headed by Henry Lawrence to oversee the administration. The treaty also allowed the maintenance of British garrisons in the state for another eight years (Roberts 1921: 339). Henceforth, Henry Lawrence became the real ruler of the Sikh state and the true successor of Ranjit Singh as J.C. Marshman depicted in 'History of India' (Khilnani 1972: 66). The Bhairowal treaty

[2] Residency has been an important instrument of colonialism in India, See for discussions from different contexts, Kooiman 2002, Ernst and Pati 2007, Varghese 2009 and Ramusack 2003.

bestowed upon the Henry Lawrence 'to look after the tranquility and peace of state during adolescence age of Maharaja Dalip Singh'. He was vested with unlimited powers in all matters of external and internal nature. Thus internal and external independence of Punjab state ceased to exist and it had been reduced to a just a political expression (Ibid). The political authority has been stolen from the state and the crown became hollow.[3] There were adjustments and balancing acts as part of the colonial expediency from time to time. On July 3, 1847 for instance, Hardinge instructed the Henry Lawrence to pay attention to the feelings of the people, to preserve the national institutions and customs and rights of all classes (Ibid: 67). Thereafter Henry Lawrence directed to his officers to extend equal rights to all the religions and align with none of them (Talbot 1988: 67).

Henry Lawrence viewed the existence of Punjab as a buffer between the "savaged" tribal regions of North of East India Company's territory as extremely beneficial (Khilani 1972: 68-69). Thus the hilly and turbulent frontier of Punjab caught the attention of Lawrence. He started the work of "civilizing" the Punjab's frontier society with the help of his famous staff of 'frontier officers'- his brothers George and John Lawrence, Abbott, Nicholson, Edwardes, Hodson and Lumsden (Roberts 1921: 339). Henry Lumsden raised an irregular corps of troops, both cavalry and infantry, known as the 'Guides' in 1846 to support the army by providing intelligence about the activities of tribes (Elliott 1968: 102). At Bannu, Edwardes changed the Sikh policy of collecting the revenue by introducing anti plunder regulations and peacefully collected the tax. Within short span of time, he successfully persuaded the tribes to destroy their forts, somewhere around four hundred in number in Bannu (Schofield 1984: 85). His rapprochement with tribes later helped him in the Second Anglo-Sikh war, when he marched upon Multan with tribesmen (Ibid). Even a Sikh regiment was raised in the southern Punjab in 1846 as the first Anglo-Sikh war brought out the fighting qualities of Sikhs especially as gunners and engineers (Elliott 1968: 103, Roberts 1921: 338). Besides these, crusade against social evils like punishment by mutilation, Sati and female infanticide was initiated (Roberts 1921: 340). The dominance of the British

[3] See (Dirks 1987) for a discussion on this hollowing process as it happened in South India.

over the tribal region was thus ensured through multiple strategies of coercion and persuasion by generating significant amount of consent from the dominated.

Different from Lawrence's policy of hollowing the crown and driving the administration from the back seat, apart from civilizing the tribal groups in the frontier, his successor Frederick Curie wanted to annex the Punjab. The idea received the support of the then Governor General Lord Dalhousie. He created the circumstances for the Second Anglo-Sikh war by removing Governor Mulraj from Multan which led to start of disturbances in Multan, subsequently spreading to other parts of the state. As narrated already, this war was lost by the Sikhs and subsequently Punjab was added to British dominion on March 29, 1849 (Singh 1955: 106-09). Maharja Dalip Singh was pensioned off in return for relinquishing his title, claim and right over Punjab and even of his heirs and successors. Later he was put under the tutelage of Dr. John Login and subsequently sent to England in 1854 after converting him to Christianity. The treasure of Lahore kingdom belonging to him was confiscated and valuable articles and jewels were sent to England. Even the famous *Kohinoor Heera*, which Maharaja Ranjit Singh apparently got from Afghan King Shah Shuja, was presented to Queen of England. Many of the historical and antique goods were sent to East India Company's Museum (Yadav 1976: 186-87).

After annexation the British intentions was to pacify the Punjab and integrate Punjab into the thread of British Empire. Thus Governor General Lord Dalhousie wanted to disarm the Punjab and turn its "warlike people" into peaceful business mainly into agriculture as farmers or peasants, under the established government of East India Company (Rawlinson 1948: 79). A Board of Administration with three members was constituted to govern the newly acquired province. Sir Henry Lawrence was its President and looked after the political affairs, which included negotiation with the Sikh chiefs, the disarming of the country and raising the new regiments of local people. Lawrence was assisted by his brother John Lawrence and Charles Mansel who took care of the settlement of land revenue and judiciary respectively. In 1851 Charles Mansel was replaced by Robert Montgomery (Roberts 1921: 345). The Board of Administration right from the beginning was focused on the subjugation and suppression of "warlike people"

of the Punjab and in totality, destruction of all anti-British elements from state with the help of 60000 soldiers and 15000 policemen. The first act that Board performed was liquidation of the Sikh army, concomitantly with the disarmament of the people (Ghai 1986: 18, Malik 1983: 180). All kinds of weapons were annexed from the people of Punjab, except in the Peshawar (Rawlinson 1948:79). The Sikh chiefs who abstained from taking part in war were let to settle in their hereditary village with a suitable pension according to their rank (Latif 1964: 573). Nearly 50000 of Sikh soldiers were disbanded and pensioned off. This would have led to unemployment and distress in the state, which would have further created problems of disenchantment and dissents for the British (Ghai 1986: 18, Malik 1983: 180). Therefore, Punjab Irregular Force (Piffers) was raised by Sir Henry Lawrence with three Mountain batteries, five regiments of Cavalry and five regiments of infantry and placed under the control of Board of Administration. Significant number of soldiers in the disbanded Sikh army made their way into the Piffers. It was primarily raised to protect the British subjects from attacks of marauding bands, to keep trade route trouble free and as far as possible to secure peace at borders and to maintain law and order in the frontier districts. To support them a chain of forts and garrisons were constructed along the border and were connected by the military roads (Latif 1964: 575, Elliott 1968: 103, Davies 1932: 22). Later in 1866, the title of Piffers was changed to 'Punjab Frontier Force' which was mainly recruited from Sikhs, Pathans, Gurkhas, and Punjabi Muslims (Elliott 1968: 103, Davies 1932: 240). In 1851 four battalions were added to Sikh Infantry which was raised in southern Punjab in 1846. Thus British succeeded, not only, in controlling the Sikh army but recruited them for their service (Eliott 1968: 1). In 1852 just after three year of the second Anglo-Sikh war, the Sikh regiment even volunteered to go to Burma and fight under the British flag (Ghai 1986: 22). The loyal 'Punjab Frontier Force' was proved even so helpful in crushing the mutiny of 1857 apart from Burmese war (Khilnani 1972: 171).

DOMESTICATING THE TRIBES: CONCILIATION AND POLICING

From the outset Lord Dalhousie wanted to make Punjab a profitable possession for the East India Company. So he wanted to stop at the left bank of Indus as he and John Lawrence considered the trans-Indus territories as bad

investment and “worst legacy” of the Sikh rule. However, later he retained it apparently for the sake of honor (Thorburn 1970: 288). The trans-Indus territories dominated by tribes became regular part of Punjab province in 1850 when these districts were formed into a Division under a Commissioner (Gupta 1976: 2-3). Of the frontier districts of the Punjab, Hazara, Peshawar and Kohat were brought under the Commissioner of Peshawar, and Dera Ghazi Khan, Dera Ismail Khan and Bannu under the Commissioner of Derajat. All the contacts with the frontier tribes were made through local chiefs who liaised with political officers and tribes (Schofield 1984: 87). Lord Dalhousie didn’t extend the boundaries of Punjab beyond the Sikh conquest and respected the independence of trans-frontier tracts. But soon the tribesmen proved dangerous which rendered the Guide Corps and the Punjab Frontier Force helpless in curtailing the tribal raids (Nijjar 1996: 62). The British had to intervene and respond to the challenge. The possible options were two: first, annexation of tribal areas into Punjab so that the frontier would be extended beyond Sikh frontier to western side of mountain and the other, a policy of non-intervention in tribal affairs except punitive action against the tribal raids. John Lawrence didn’t depend on force to preserve the border peace but was conciliatory to give allowances, subsidies, grant of land etc. to win over sections of tribes (Ibid: 63).

The Board of Administration first adopted defensive measures, which was followed by conciliatory steps to show the benefit of friendly relations to the tribesmen. The measures like permission to conventional trade, provision of medical treatment and other assistance to tribesmen were taken with a motive to pacify them and to promote friendly relations. The Punjab administration also prevented its officers from entering into tribal territories which was strictly followed for 25 years except in the time of punitive action, as they love their independence and didn’t like interference in their way of life (Dodwell 1922: 450). At the same time the tribesmen were allowed to trade within the British Indian Empire. Subsequently, various conciliatory methods were adopted including the abolition of all the frontier duties and capitation taxes. A system of complete freedom of trade was instituted and commercial integration was encouraged which was declined due to heavy taxes during Ranjit Singh reign as traders adopted southern route through Gomal Pass and Bolan Pass instead old route via Khyber Pass was

abandoned (Arrora 1930: xxiii, Davies 1932: 23). Even trade fairs were held for exchange of goods and commodities on regular intervals. The physical infrastructure which was necessary to promote commerce like roads from the passes to nearest bazaars was set up. Thus, Powindah trade (a trade carried by well armed *Ghilzai* tribe) increased in the Punjab which brought items from Afghanistan, Persia and Central Asia to sell in Punjab and in return, purchased the Indian items to sell in Central Asia and Afghanistan.[4] Steamer communication was established up to upper Indus. Hospitals and dispensaries were established at various points along the frontier to provide medical treatment to the tribesmen (Davies 1932: 23, Dodwell 1922: 451). Tribal *Maliks* (tribal leaders) and *Jirgas* (assembly of tribal elders who took decisions by consensus) were encouraged to come for settlement of their disputes in their own way within the British territory, in order to develop the peaceful relations with the tribesmen. Further, attempts were made to colonize wastelands in Punjab by families from across the borders as tribesmen had very limited fertile land to live peacefully from the cultivation of that, because of which they plunder the neighbouring Punjab plains and also used to take toll from caravan trade passing through their territory (Thompson and Garratt 1958: 500). Therefore, colonies of Afridis, Wazaris, Gurchanis, Bhittannis and Bugtis were created to make them agriculturists in Punjab and other parts of British India (Davies 1932: 23-30).

This was coincided by creation of strong policing, surveillance and judicial mechanisms to make the anti-social elements docile citizens through coercive measures. The creation of Punjab Frontier Force gave employment to many

[4] The major exports from Punjab were English cotton piece goods, silks of all sorts, Chintzes, European colored clothes, merinos, velvets, copper, tin, tea, cardamom, pepper, betel nuts, sugar, country muslin, indigo, dried ginger, borax, ammonium salt, potassium carbonate, turmeric, pewter, salt, steel, gun powder, and various medicines. Imports to Punjab included silk, horses, drugs, manna, wool, gold coins, furs, gold and silver wire and thread, Persian carpets, currants, turquoises, antimony, quince seeds, saffron, goat hairs, pistachio nuts, dried grapes, almonds, pomegranates, melons, grapes, pears, apples, asafetida, dried apricots, cinnamons seeds, sheep skins, camel hair, cloaks, drugs, madder, sheep wool, liquorices, rice, ghee, sarsaparilla gum, Arabic mint, Rhubarb and fruits (Arrora 1930: xxv).

soldiers, but many of the disbanded soldiers who were loyal to old regime apparently resorted to dacoity and robbery (Khilnani 1972: 175). To curb their "anti social activities" and to "protect the public from their menace," the local revenue collectors and Tehsildars were given the additional duty of policing in their Jurisdiction (Ibid). A separate police force was also created to support them. These endeavors of the British, justified for maintaining tranquility and peace, was further facilitated by a sound judicial system (Ibid: 176). The judicial system was projected as based on simplicity of courts, their cheapness, accessibility, promptness, exclusion of pleaders, and the recognition of Village Panchayats (Ibid). It is pointed out that the procedures were kept so simple that even a person could plead his own cause against his opponents and prosecute and conduct his defense (Ibid: 177). The Tehsildars were also given judicial authority in addition to police authority as they had local knowledge and insight into character of local people and local norms of justice (Ibid).

'MODEL AGRICULTURAL PROVINCE': PUNJAB'S MAKEOVER

In addition to such political, military and judicial measures aimed at keeping the conquered territory and people under its firm grip, the Board of Administration started to work on land settlement and revenue as initiated by John Lawrence. It is famously said that the British exchanged the sword of disbanded Sikh Soldier with plough (Ibid: 178). Elaborate attempts were made to know the territory and its people by collecting information through surveys and other measures in order to create a knowledge grid about Punjab. The settlement officers were appointed who noted down the economic condition of the cultivators, their habits, customs and the character and even the right of the every holder was recorded (Khilnani 1972: 179, Ghai 1986: 21). The land settlements were accordingly done with the actual holder. Through this, John Lawrence not only tightened the grip over the land tax but concomitantly suppressed the aristocracy or *Jagirdars*, as he didn't want that anyone intervene between the people and them. It also helped avoiding any aristocratic mobilization against the British (Malik 1983: 182). He also reduced the land tax to about quarter of the produce from half, though it has to be paid in cash (Roberts 1921: 345, Khilnani 1972: 179). Even though John Lawrence made efforts to support the peasants, but the transition from grain payment to cash

payment towards tax turned out to be worse for the peasants. They were unable to pay the tax as the market prices of the produced fell down drastically due to the increased production after the annexation. This caused the unrest among the peasants to the concern of Henry Lawrence. He pleaded to John Lawrence for temporary suspension of the new system of cash, but went unheeded by John (Khilnani 1972: 179-180).

The Board also supported the laying of canals to support farmers against the uncertainty of monsoons as the British wanted to make agriculture the main stay of the state. Bari Doab canal was the first project started by the Board in this regard, which was completed in 1859 (Rawlinson 1948: 83). Lower Jhelum and Chenab were followed this, which transformed the Jhang, Lyallpur and Shahpur districts and subsequently the 'canal colonies' emerged in the Western Punjab. The making of canal colonies, through a network of irrigation canals transformed around 6 million acres of desert like land had been crucial in the transformation of Punjab into one of the richest agrarian regions of Asia (Talbot 2007: 7). These colonies began to be populated mostly by the Sikhs from Central Punjab who were encouraged to resettle. Millions of Punjabi peasants immigrated to these colonies. Thus Canal colonies not only generated the employment opportunities for them in agriculture sector but also transformed the economy of the region. The massive migration and settlement also helped to change the demographic pattern of this otherwise Muslim majority region (Talbot 1988: 39-40). Punjab has emerged as the pace-setter of India's agricultural development and by 1920 it contributed as much as one tenth of British India's cotton production and one third of wheat (Talbot 1988: 39, 2007: 5).

Next to canals, the roads captured the attention of the Board. Roads were seen necessary not only for the movements of troops but also for transporting agrarian surplus and facilitating trade and commerce. For this purpose, the great arterial highway, Grand Trunk Road was extended to Peshawar from Lahore under the stewardship of Robert Napier. All the local roads were connected to this new highway which ultimately helped in linking the cantonments in the state and major cities/towns and commercial hubs. Even the prominent city Dera Ismail Khan was connected to Lahore to facilitate the trade between the Central Asia and

Punjab. The merchants from Kabul avoided the difficult route earlier as it entailed hardships and undue delays (Rawlinson 1948: 81, Khilnani 1972: 183). The transition of the state is clearly reflected in the trade statistics. By 1854, export had risen to £ 604000 from a meager £1010 in 1843 and imports to £ 629000 from £121000 during the same period (Arrora 1930: 25). In 1854, the imported goods includes Manchester cotton goods of £294,000, Silk from Persia and Central Asia of value £28000 and the exported good includes Wheat of value £ 66000, oil seeds of £ 137000, sheep wool of value £ 221000 (Ibid). The province was getting truly integrated into a larger capitalist economy.

In 1853, Board of Administration was dissolved due to difference of opinions between Henry Lawrence and John Lawrence. Upon the eviction of Henry Lawrence, John Lawrence becomes the first Chief Commissioner of Punjab. This opened a new chapter in the history of Punjab. John inherited all the powers and functions of Board of Administration into himself, even the defense and management of trans-Indus frontier districts except the district of Peshawar. He divided the Punjab into seven Divisions which were further divided into twenty seven Districts under a commissioner, who was down in the hierarchy assisted by the Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner and Extra commissioner. While for the post of Extra Commissioner both European and Indian were selected, but for the remaining positions only Europeans were made eligible (Yadav 1976: 185). He not only completed and perfected the entire project initiated earlier during the time of Henry Lawrence but also chalked out many more, ranging from imperial, military, political, economic to social. He initiated the construction of railways, roads, navigation of rivers, education including that of female, horticulture etc. (Malik 1983: 185-189). The colonial attempts to create dossier for administration got a fillip with the Census of Punjab held in December 1854. The province was also brought under the colonial communication grid with the extension of telegraph into Punjab that linked the imperial capital Calcutta up to Peshawar (Thorburn 1970: 185-87).

John Lawrence tried to improve the educational system which was considered to be “primitive and of religious” in nature (Chhabra 1963: 135). He created an education department in 1854. He arranged to open the 30 schools at

district headquarters, 100 village schools in rural areas and four normal schools as the earlier schools were having no proper premises and even the teachers were not given fixed remunerations. A cess of 1% on the land revenue was charged to support the education system. Persian and Urdu were promoted and as a result Punjabi rapidly felled in destitute (Chhabra 1963: 139, Thorburn 1970: 182). Female education also received the attention of the British since the annexation of Punjab, though the progress was slow and response was meager. In spite of 52 girls schools opened in the state, number of girl students was only 1168 in 1862. The British as a result embarked on a mission to generate interest among the people towards female education, particularly the Punjabi nobility was targeted in an attempt to convince them to provide education to their daughters (Chhabra 1963: 152-53). In 1864, Government College at Lahore was opened alongside another one at Delhi which was closed in 1877 because of financial consideration and also to have fully equipped college at Lahore. The Mayo School of Industrial Art was established in 1875 at Lahore. Subsequently, in 1881, Central Training College was established for the supplying trained teachers for English schools. In 1865, an association Anjuman-i-Panjab was founded with the aim to open an Oriental University. Though a university was proposed by Punjab Government, but it was finally opened only in 1882 at Lahore to affiliate the colleges and schools in the sates which were earlier affiliated to Calcutta University (Chhabra 1963: 140-45).

'PUNJABIZATION OF INDIAN ARMY' AND ITS COMPULSIONS

The constructive works started since the annexation to pacify the people of Punjab strengthened the British hands during the Crimean War and in the 1857 Rebellion (Rawlinson 1948: 81). By the time of the 1857 rebellion, the abundant harvest, flourishing trade supported by good judicial system had put the people in to comfort (Nijjar 1996: 71). Punjab largely didn't support the Rebellion but helped the British to suppress it. During the Rebellion, most of military centers and cantonments in Punjab were held by native troops of Bengal Presidency (Bengal Army). They were near about 36000 in number whose sympathies lies with fellow Mutineers. John Lawrence took timely action and with the help of 'Punjab Irregular Frontier Force' and disbanded these troops throughout the Punjab (Ibid: 70).

Thereafter, he recruited more troops from Punjab. The princely states of Punjab also provided troops to the British for the imperial defense of Punjab and Delhi. The Rebellion was suppressed by the year end and thereafter Delhi and Hissar were incorporated into Punjab. The rewards in term of territories were bestowed upon the rulers of princely states for their support. The troops raised during the Rebellion were recruited into the Bengal army (Thorburn 1970: 197-210, Nijjar 1996: 70-88).

The 1857 Rebellion has forced the British to focus more on the security of their Indian Empire from both external and internal dangers, for which many schemes were initiated. One of them was the reorganization of military system of India (Arora 1976: 253). Until the 1857, Bengal army comprised majority of soldiers from Oudh who proved most trustable and loyal instruments in the hands of the British for the conquest of various parts of India's including Punjab. But in 1857 these soldiers resorted to armed struggle to overthrow the British rule and Oudh was one of the major centres of the Rebellion. The uprising failed and most of the regiments of Bengal army were disbanded and many of the soldiers were exterminated (Singh 1983: v). In response to the rebellion, initially the British reduced the native troops and increased the strength of the Europeans in the army. In addition to that, they limited the artillery to be manned by only by Europeans. But these measures proved too inadequate and impractical and later these decisions were revoked as they had to guard its Indian empire from emerging threat of Russia, which was advancing through Caspian and Central Asia to the northern border of Afghanistan (Arora 1976: 253-254). Thereafter the British made Punjab, going by their experience of Burmese war and rebellion of 1857 and the loyalty they exhibited, the main recruiting base for the British Indian army (Singh 1983: v). The Rebellion also compelled the British to relinquish their plan of further annexation of territories of native states instead and in return, the princely states, including that of Punjab like Bahawalpur, Faridkot, Jind, Kapurthala, Malerkotla, Naba and Patiala, were made to contribute for the defense of the Empire whenever asked for. It was a plan to use the military resources of the native chiefs for imperial purpose with an intention enhancing their military

strength without increasing their financial burden (Arora 1976: 253).[5] In 1885 Mortimer Durand, the foreign secretary of government of India suggested to raise Imperial Service Troops as native states differed materially from each other and argued for using only selected states. He discussed about this with General Frederick Roberts (commander-in –chief), C.U. Aitchison (Lt. Governor of Punjab) and Viceroy Lord Dufferin (Allen et. al. 1934: 839). He further proposed that Punjab could be used primarily for this purpose as there was no doubt in the loyalty and co-operation of the chiefs of Punjab and also it was blessed with "brilliant fighting material suitable for north western frontier campaigns." His proposal received support from the Commander-in-Chief General Frederick Roberts and later approved by Viceroy Lord Dufferin. Subsequently, Major Howard Mellis visited the state of Punjab and submitted the report whereby the Punjab government was directed to negotiate with all the native princely states of Punjab for this purpose (Arora 1976: 256).

The Russian scare under the conditions of 'Great Game' augmented the Punjabization of the Indian army. At the end of second Afghan war, British were expecting a third war soon to be fought in North West frontier which may involve Russia too. The British wanted to strengthen their army with soldiers who were acquainted with the area and climate of the North Western frontier. As pointed out already, at the time of the 1857 rebellion the Indian army was dominated by the Bengal army and there were only about 30,000 Punjabis in the British Indian army (Omissi 1994, Mazumdar 2003: 11). The period 1875-1914 changed the composition of Indian army with massive recruitment from Punjab (Talbott 1988: 43). In the beginning of this period, the proportion of Punjabis was a just third of its strength but increased to three-fifth by the end of this period (Ibid: 41). Punjab had virtually become the nursery of the British Indian army till to the end of British rule (Mazumdar 2003: 10). The people of Punjab voluntarily joined the British military services to supplement their agriculture income and unsurprisingly the soldiers were mostly hailing from agricultural backgrounds (Talbot 1988: 42). The other

[5] In view of danger of Russia, Mortimer Durand added that "the safest game now is the bolder game of trusting the Native States and carrying them with us… If we cannot trust native troops and Native States to fight for us, up to a reasonable limit of defeat, we must be beaten whenever Russia advances" (Arora 1976: 256).

reason for recruitment from the region was due to a constructed theory of 'martial race' according to which Punjabis were considered as natural warriors as "warlike and hardy race" (Mazumdar 2003: 17, Talbot 2007). The theory gained further ground under Lord Roberts, Commander and Chief, during the period 1885 to 1893. He believed the martial instinct of the people of old recruiting centers like Bengal and Madras had been vanished due to the long "civilizing effect" of the British rule (Talbot 1988: 43). Another reason for this shift was the exemplary loyalty of state's population, especially Muslim and Sikh landowners, during and following the second Anglo-Sikh war (Omissi 1994, Mazumdar 2003: 10). The entrenched local hierarchies had also proved to handy for the British as the feudal lords and rural elites recruited themselves as officers in the army and later enlisted their rural followers as soldiers who naturally obey their village patrons (Talbot 1988: 44). Both on the ground of economy and military efficiency, it was sensible for the British to greatly expand the Punjabi contingent in the Indian Army whose major role by the end of 19th century was to police the frontier (Ibid: 43).

Nevertheless it is unlikely that the region would have assumed importance as a centre of colonial military recruitment, if it had not been near the Indian Army's main theatre of war in Afghanistan. Interestingly, it was happened after the 1857 Rebellion in which the soldiers from Punjab remained loyal to the British in suppressing their mutinous Hindustani counterparts. By 1870's, the proportion of Punjabis in the British Indian army began to grow swiftly as the threat of 'Great Game' assuming greater importance. The Russians has reached around 400 miles near to Punjab by 1870 posing greater threat to British India (Mazumdar 2003: 14). The terrain and climate of the Salt Range hills of the Jhelum and Shahpur districts and of foothills of Himalayas in the remote north eastern of Kangra was similar to that of the frontier. People recruited from these areas were best suited for fighting in the harsh terrain of north-west frontier in comparison to soldiers from Bengal and Madras as they hail from comfortable climatic zones. They could move as swiftly as any Afghan or Pathan tribesman across the narrow ridges and steep hillsides of frontier passes (Talbot 1988: 43). Since the soldiers serving on the frontier from more distant parts of India had to pay extra 'foreign service' allowances, recruiting from Punjab also proved to be economically beneficial as the Punjabi soldiers will be qualified only for the local service basic rate of pay

(Ibid). The British reliance of recruitment from Punjab increased progressively in high proportion. Punjabis were 19 percent in the British Indian army in 1880, but has increased to 40 percent by 1910, by the time the dust of Great Game settled (Mazumdar 2003: 18). The proportion had gone further up to 45 percent by the time the First World War was concluded (Ibid). The recruitment was mainly centered on the Punjabi Rajput clans of the Salt Range, Jhelum and Rawalpindi districts, the Hindu Dogras from Kangra, the Jat Sikhs from Central Punjab and the Hindu Jats from the 'famine tracts' of Hissar and Rohtak (Yong 2005). Punjab thus contributed manpower and logistic support for imperial conflicts not only in the North West Frontier and also helped Britain to conquer and police far flung overseas territories and proven their bravery in the freezing battlefields of Flanders in the First World War and the blistering North African desert in the Second World War.

CONNECTING AND COLONIZING: SECURITY AND COMMERCE

The security of the north western frontier of India with its rocky regions and fierce and freedom loving people claimed the constant attention of John Lawrence. So, he prepared scheme to cover the entire region with a network of railways and roads. His imperial vision saw that it would help them to mobilize all the resources, commercial as well as military in the time of trouble (Malik 1983: 185-189). In 1860's, Sindh and Punjab Railway started the construction of a northward line from Karachi to Multan and the Lahore-Delhi line. The railway line from Amritsar to Multan was completed by 1865 which was further extended up to Delhi by 1870 via Jalandhar Cantt, Ludhiana, Ambala, Saharanpur and Ghaziabad (Khosla 1976: 284).[6] The Punjab Northern State Railway built the Lahore-Jhelum line in 1878 and another railway line was laid across the Bolan Pass to help moving men and material during Second Anglo-Afghan War. Even the Multan-Kotri (a town near Hyderabad in Sindh) line was completed in the same year. Punjab Northern State Railway line was extended from Jhelum to Peshawar in 1883 and the Attock Bridge across the Indus was constructed. Subsequently, another line that connects Delhi to Samasatta was started in 1883 and was completed by 1899. It

[6] http://www.irfca.org/faq/faq-hist.html. (Accessed on 11 January, 2012).

passes through Bhatinda, Ferozepur cantt (cantonment) and Raiwind (Khosla 1976: 285).[7] The railway network allowed the integration of the region to the rest of the British India, facilitated movement of goods and people and more importantly proved to be enormously important in swiftly moving and troops and arms in case of exigencies. Unsurprisingly, along the railway networks the British established military cantonments and concentrated significant chunk of their forces in Punjab and virtually militarized the province due to the Russian scare.

When Punjab was annexed in 1849, navigation of Punjab Rivers was also an important concern before the newly established Board of Administration as the rivers could facilitate speedy, reliable, effective and cheap means of connection with sea. It was important from both military and commercial point of view. The river navigation was one among their high priorities. In September 1856, a report was submitted on the navigation of Punjab Rivers and a proposal was put forward for starting a steamer service (Arrora 1930: 32). A steamer service was started from Karachi to Multan, which was followed by other similar enterprises (Ibid: 33). With the river navigation, the large military station of Peshawar and Rawalpindi was easily and economically relieved and supplied with every kind of military stores. This also facilitated the transport of British manufactured goods to impulse the commerce with Kashmir, Central Asia and Afghanistan (Ibid: 34). The commercial importance of it was reflected in the words of Bartle Frere, Commissioner in Scinde (Sindh), when he stated in 1857 that "if the triumphs of Great Britain are to be permanent, they must be rendered so by a mutuality of interests, by the material and civilizing influence of expanding commerce. The great battle of the country for the tranquility of Central Asia must be fought at Manchester and Liverpool. If we would command Central Asia that dominion must be established by opening up a ready market for their raw produce and subjecting them by force of their own material interests."[8] The political advantage of the navigation of Punjab rivers was being able to strengthen every position of the frontier at shortest possible notice by means of steamers was quite apparent. This measure was thought to be an important intervention to 'civilize' the frontier tribes

[7] http://www.irfca.org/faq/faq-history2.html. (Accessed on 11 January, 2012).

[8] Extract from the speech of Bartle Frere, the Commissioner in Scinde, at General meeting of the Scinde Railway Company in February 1857 (Andrew 1857).

and to bring them to contended submission to the British rule. The Inland Navigation Department was established in 1862 with an intention to connect more areas through water transport (Ibid: 34-35).

British aspirations of trade with Central Asia through Punjab were a significant feature of the British diplomacy during the latter half of 19th century. Central Asia becomes a focus of international politics due to advance of Russians particularly in the 1860's which, as pointed out already, appalled the British (Gill 1985: 1-2). One of the measures undertaken by the British under Lord Mayo, the Viceroy, to combat the problem of Russian influence in Central Asia was through pushing commerce northwards. His basic motto in meeting with Amir Sher Ali at Ambala in 1869 was to secure a definite arrangement with the Amir by which the British wanted to ensure a strong and stable government in Afghanistan in return for facilities to do trade which was thought to be prudent measure instead of interfering in the Afghan domestic matters (Malhotra 1982: 14). The British also signed a treaty with Kashmir in 1870 which gave them exclusive right to trade through it with Central Asia (Gill 1985: 2). Thereafter, the entire trade of British India with Central Asia was carried through Punjab whether it was via Kashmir or Afghanistan (Ibid: 3). It led to emergence of three major trading entrepots - Delhi, Amritsar and Peshawar. Amritsar held a significant position as an entrepot in the Central Asian trade. The merchants of Central Asia and Tibet came to Amritsar via Peshawar and Leh, then proceed to Delhi to sell their products and vice versa. Thus, the merchants of Amritsar had trading relations and penetration into major cities of Central Asia like Kabul, Kandahar, Herat, Bokhara, Samarkand, Kashgar and Yarkand (Ibid: 2-4) In order to promote trade, British abolished all the frontier tolls earlier imposed by the Sikh state (Ibid: 8).

On the other side, Russia signed a treaty in 1873 with Amir of Bokhara for free flow of trade followed by annexation of Khiva in Central Asia. The British from their part gave military and financial help to the king of Afghanistan Sher Ali and made trade and commercial arrangements with him in 1874. The trade and cooperation took a back seat when Lord Lytton, the then Viceroy, adopted the 'forward policy', which led to the second Anglo Afghan War in 1878 (Ibid: 8-9). The trade to Afghanistan and Central Asia via Afghanistan consequently has fallen to

one-fourth. Subsequent viceroy Lord Rippon tried to improve the relations with Afghanistan but Central Asian trade declined with the imposition of heavy taxes by the Russians on Indian goods which further decreased with annexation of Merv by the Russians (Ibid: 9). Under the influence of Russians, the Amir of Afghanistan also imposed a new tax of 3% on Indian goods which were even further detained for weeks at custom houses. The export of Indian tea fell extremely as a tax of one rupee and three annas was imposed on a pound of tea valued only four annas (Ibid: 10). By 1888, the penetration of Russian goods into the markets of Central Asia and Afghanistan increased with the extension of railway network from that side up to Samarkhand. Subsequently situation got worsened when Amir put exporting items like fruits, ghee, tobacco and certain import articles like cotton products and sugar under state monopolies. The export of gold to India was banned (Ibid: 10). In 1894, when the Russians made Bokhara part of its custom zone, the Amir further increased the tax from two and half percent to five percent on incoming goods from India in the subsequent year. The trade from Punjab to Central Asia and Afghanistan via Peshawar hit badly and fell further due to the insecure conditions during the Pathan revolt of 1897 (Ibid: 11). The export to Afghanistan through Punjab fell to negligible, which used to be half of the external trade with the creation of North West Frontier Province (Ibid: 73). The British built roads and railway to compete Trans-Caspian Railway network of Russia, but once they were beaten in Central Asia, Punjab trade remained internally bound (Ibid: 75).

Ever since the annexation of Punjab, the British were also trying for social engineering in such a way to create supportive constituencies in the new province. The British were constantly searching for allies amongst the rural population. By supporting the Jat Sikh community in their military and agrarian endeavors the British won their confidence and made them a loyal (Ali 1989: 4). As the Sikh society was apparently more egalitarian than other communities has exhibited exemplary commitment and deification in British war endeavors particularly during Afghanistan wars (Talbot 1988: 43). They also made efforts to identify every important family in each locality and compiled and recorded their history in the district gazetteers and caste handbooks of Indian Army. Sardar Mangal Singh Ramgarhia, Sardar Shamsher Singh Sandhawalia, Pratap Singh Ahluwalia and

Sunder Singh Majithia had supported the British and earned higher ranks in Police service, Judiciary and even nominated to Legislative assemblies (Ibid: 50). Most of the leading Muslim families supported the British during Anglo-Sikh wars and 1857 Rebellion, so they were also able to develop close ties with the British. Hayat, Khattar and Tiwanas were prominent families who earned the higher ranks in Army and Civil Services. British also used the *Sufi Pirs* (religious priests of Muslims) to get the support from rural population in Western Punjab (Ibid: 51). Close alliance was forged with the princes and big feudal landlords who faithfully supported the British (Singh 1983: vi). Such supports were indeed coincided by strong repressive and surveillance measures. The signs of resistance to the British regime were dealt with an iron hand.

The transformation of Punjab under the colonial rule thus has been far-reaching in all spheres of its life. The compulsions of 'Great Game' made the British to make it an ally and later part of its empire to use it as a base for its operations aimed at the North Western frontier and the players beyond. The intersecting interventions of the British through political, coercive, diplomatic, commercial, paternalistic and employment windows made these changes possible. The Russian scare not only resulted in the militarization of the state but also measures to ensure order and stability in the province. The new economic opportunities opened up by the British enabled them to win their loyal community and the rural elite created through agrarian expansion found to be extremely useful as military contractors. The military and commercial requirements also provided the best possible rail and road infrastructure to the province ensuring 'order', which was not achieved without coercion and surveillance though.

CONCLUSION

This research “Punjab and the Great Game” has been a modest endeavor to see the happenings in and the vicinity of the north western frontier region of India during the early nineteenth century to the beginning of twentieth century and the unparallel transformation of Punjab during the same time, through the optic of ‘Great Game’. Though it relied primarily on secondary literature, the new optic allowed to see the otherwise known events, confrontations and makeovers in a different light, particularly when looked from the perspective of a periphery, i.e. Punjab. As discussed in the preceding chapters the ‘Great Game’ between the British and Russian Empires was played with diverse military and diplomatic maneuvers in Central Asia in general and Afghanistan in particular. Subsequently, Afghanistan became a buffer state in this rivalry which resulted in attempts on the part of both the empires to enhance their influence in the region with smaller players and kingdoms getting implicated in the crossfire as the contesting empires viewed them as buffers or satellites in their imperial struggle.

Punjab is one of such areas which were implicated in the ‘Great Game’, and getting altered its subsequent historical trajectory due to its geographical location on north-western frontier region. The mighty state of Punjab under Maharaja Ranjit Singh, lying between Afghanistan and British Indian Empire was at first used by the British to domesticate Afghanistan through diplomatic measures and subsequently made part of the British Indian Empire in 1849 due to its pivotal strategic importance in foiling the Russian designs in the Central Asia apart from the internal chaos in Punjab after death of Ranjit Singh. The incorporation of Punjab brought them to the ‘natural’ boundary of India, the hills beyond the Indus and concomitantly in proximity to the “fierce” and “savaged” tribesmen of north-western frontier region. As a result the problem of Punjab frontier’s security becomes simultaneously imperial and local; the British had to deal with Afghanistan to keep it away from Russian influence as well as to engage with the local uprisings from the tribal groups on regular intervals. The other local challenge was to integrate the newly annexed province by pacifying the people and thereby bringing stability and peace.

The British accordingly liquidated the Sikh army, disarmed the people of Punjab and turned its 'warlike' people to peaceful business mainly into agriculture as farmers or peasants. Many of the disbanded soldiers later made their way into the Punjab Irregular Frontier Force (Piffers) to protect the British subjects from attacks of marauding bands of Pathans, to keep trade route secure and to maintain law and order in the frontier districts. A chain of forts and garrisons, which were connected by the military roads, were constructed along the border to support them. As far as the trans-Indus territories were concerned, the British did not extend the boundaries of Punjab beyond the erstwhile Sikh state and respected the independence of trans-frontier tracts, with the unruly tribes being dealt with both conciliatory measures and coercion.

The British attempts to bring stability and order to Punjab was aimed at mollifying the general public of Punjab and the north-western tribal region, so that they would not pose any danger to them by joining the invading army of Russia or Afghanistan or Persia. The reforms initiated by the British in the form of canal system, land and revenue settlements, roads, railway, navigation of rivers, promotion of trade, and modern education have to be understood in such a context. The construction of canals and canal colonies was pushed in the western Punjab to support the new agriculture and imperial defense. The land in these colonies was primarily given to the Sikhs from eastern Punjab mainly ex-servicemen with an apparent motive to change the demography of the Muslim majority area. The settling of military men in these areas was also thought to be useful in case of danger emerging from across the Indus. The Board of Administration had also done the settlement of land and revenue and tightens the noose over aristocracy alongside creating new constituencies of support (Malik 1983: 182).

The laying of roads and railways facilitated the movement of troops and commerce. On these railways and road networks military cantonments emerged in Punjab. The navigation of rivers in Punjab especially Indus and Sutlej was undertaken with the aim of augmenting commerce upward to Central Asia and downward to Karachi. It also supported the war effort in the case of north western region. The British attempts to bring Central Asia under its commercial network

had also Punjab in the centre of the plan, as all the trade to Central Asia was carried through Punjab whether it was via Kashmir or Afghanistan, with Delhi, Amritsar and Peshawar as the major trading entrepots.

By 1870's, Punjabization of Indian army, started after the mutiny of 1857, acquired greater pace. Punjab became main recruiting ground for the British Indian army. The constructed theory of 'martial class' and the geographically conditioned physical features of Punjabis, alongside their loyalty, largely determined this crucial choice, particularly when a third war with Afghanistan with Russian involvement was anticipated. Army recruitment was also instrumental in increasing the social prosperity of rural population as soldiers sent remittances to their villages. Measures at ensuring the loyalty of the soldiers and the population of the areas they hail from, included heavy investment in physical infrastructure at a rate unprecedented in any other part of British India (Mazumdar 2003: 53-60). This along with agrarian expansion and the making of a market economy through new agriculture and commerce allowed the British social engineering through which they created supportive groups in Punjab apart from manufacturing community, reconfigurations and new identities- for instance the making of Jat Sikh community as chivalrous and agrarian. Such persuasive transformations were indeed coincided by strong repressive and surveillance mechanisms.

The long term implications of this interesting historical unfolding of the region are many. The modern urbanization of Punjab is largely interwoven with its history of 'cantonmentization' associated with the endeavours of the British to stockpile manpower and ammunitions in the frontier region due to the Russian scare. It is not surprising that by the 1920s seven cities of the Punjab were dominated by cantonments, where practically half its urban population lived (Mazumdar 2003: 62). The Punjabization of Indian army has taken many Punjabi soldiers abroad particularly during the world wars, giving them experience of transnational migration and overseas life. This has proved to be pivotal in fashioning the migration culture of Punjab as evident from the making of Punjabis as a transnational community through migrations and diasporic life (Talbot and Thandi 2004, Visram 1986, Mazumdar 2003). Punjab was also transformed well in advance in its tastes. It is pointed out that between 1890 and 1920, tea

consumption in the Punjab doubled and white European-style bread appeared even in villages, while the consumption of fruit and vegetables increased fourfold (Mazumdar 2003: 35). So also was the development of middle class social values and notions of gender (Malhotra 2001). The ‘general wellbeing’ and social control through loyal elite groups also apparently made Indian nationalist movement relatively weak in Punjab and Punjab remained fairly peaceful except the turbulence in connection with the Gurdwara reform movement of the 1920s (Yong 2005, Sharma 2009). The military-agrarian base of the Punjab Unionist Party, the popular political party during that time with its cross communal base, irrespective of the Kisan movements of the 1920s and 30s, remained supportive to colonialism soothing the disquieting voices (Talbot 2007). The present study suggest that the often highlighted Punjabi ‘exceptionalism’ and its making as the ‘sword arm’ of India has to be understood also in the context of the imperial rivalry and calls for serious studies on the same by deploying primary sources, particularly the colonial archive and the local resources from Central Asia, Russia, Persia and Punjab.

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