

## MULTAN AT THE TIME OF COLONIAL ANNEXATION

### Abstract

In 1818 Ranjit Singh raised a large army equipped with essential equipment and attacked Multan. Nawab Muzaffar Khan who was the governor of Multan from past thirty nine years fought bravely but failed to save Multan from the control of the Sikhs. Under Sikh period a number of reforms in Multan were introduced to generate revenue for the Sikh military state. Sikhs improved land revenue, built a number of inundation and perennial canals and appointed Sawan Mal and Mulraj as governors who were considered to be the most efficient officials of Ranjit Singh in revenue generation. Yet the British were able to conquer this part of the Punjab but not without great resistance from the locals. Therefore, it is of great importance to understand the internal situation of Multan which paved the way for the British to attack the region and local administration proved incapable to defend its boundaries from the conquerors. This study focuses on the socio-economic transformation and political situation that was prevailing in the Multan district at the time of British annexation in 1849. The focus of the study will be on the Sikh military recruitment policy. The Sikh policy towards religious and landed aristocracy in the district will also be highlighted. It will try to throw light on the role of *Pirs*, *Sajadanashins* and land lords during the period under study. In the end we will focus on the strategies and military imperatives for the annexation of Multan by the British as the Russian threat was looming large on horizon of Punjab's border with Afghanistan. This study is the result of the detailed scrutiny of the colonial archives in the United Kingdom.

The authors have tried to break new ground, challenging the viewpoint of previous writers, like Ashiq Durani, Ahmed Nabi Khan and Humaira Dasti, about the local history of the Multan in the first half of the nineteenth century. The research paper argues that it was owing to internal weakness in the administration and pro-British approach of few families in Multan that enabled the British to occupy Multan. Hopefully, this research and conclusions will help cast fresh light on this important issue and will inspire future researchers to tackle this issue on new lines.

**Key words:** Multan, Sikh, Annexation, Revenue administration, British, Afghanistan

### Introduction

The word "political control" has been a popular phrase mostly in developing countries where the political system is being used by divergent groups and authorities to usurp power. The fact of the matter is that power combined with socio-economic underdevelopment creates inequitable distribution of resources

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and allows various political groups to develop according to the needs of the time. Various socio-political groups and caste alliances manipulate political control. Multan was no exception to this rule.

Multan district is selected for analysis because during the colonial rule, it was the basic unit of government structure. The revenue settlement was made district by district, all reports were initially on a district basis and systematic preparation and publication of district gazetteers were made. The Multan district was the important unit of provincial government where policies were formulated at a higher level and translated in to action throughout the Punjab. Socially and religiously, Multan was divided into three major groups: Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus. The Muslims were in a clear majority but their living was mostly rural. On the other hand, most of the Hindus lived in the cities. The Sikhs, the second largest community in the district, were also engaged in land cultivation but many also belonged to military services. The Sikhs also lived in rural areas.

### **Brief History of Multan**

Much has been written on the provincial history of the Punjab but local history is generally overlooked by the historians. Same is the case with the local history of the Multan which was equally important socio-economic, religious and political centre from ancient time to modern period. It has remained throughout history as one of the most important region of South Asia and enjoyed great strategic and geographic importance. It was purposefully placed, on the main trade routes at the convergence of the Ravi and the Chenab rivers. It has been a rich and well-fortified city for thousands of years.<sup>1</sup>

Multan remained a part of great Mauryan Empire. The city was destroyed and sacked by White Huns. Hiuen Tsang, a Buddhist pilgrim visited Multan in October 641 A.C. and described the city as a pleasurable and thriving city.<sup>2</sup> He wrote about the magnificent statue of Sun god, which radiated in pure gold and was decorated by expensive gems. This statue of Pra-Halad (the sun temple) was an important source of Multan's prosperity by making it the centre of religious pilgrimage. The statue was brooken up by different invaders, got repaired and finally ruined. There are certain localities in Multan which have the word *sooraj* (sun) as prefix. Thus the conventional history of Multan is associated with sun-god and its worship. The origin of the city was connected with this name, but how old was the temple of sun- god is not easy to say.<sup>3</sup>

With the advent of the Arabs in South Asia, new socio-cultural contacts and affiliations were made. This multiculturalism was the result of the interaction of local communities with the Arab traders and travellers to Multan. At the time of Muslim invasion, Multan was a well administrated and walled city so that the traders did their trade without any fear or foul.<sup>4</sup> Muhammad bin Qasim was the first Muslim invader and viceroy from the Baghdad caliphate and later was followed by the Central Asians Muslims. For three centuries, Multan remained under the control of the Muslims while the rest of the Punjab was ruled by the Hindus. Multan maintained its position as a focal point of socio-political and religious transformation and at the same time as the place of worship where people from all over the sub-continent came to offer pilgrimage.

This was also the time when Multan became the centre of the Sufis as well as the heart of learning and pilgrimage. The desolation of Khorasan and Western Iran by Mongol hordes led a large number of virtuous and scholarly men and noble families like Gardezi, Syeds and Qureshis, to move to the surroundings of the city. Among the Sufis, Sheikh Bahauddin Zakaria was the most celebrated saint.<sup>5</sup> About the same time Pir Shams Tabriz from Sabzwar and Kazi Qutabuddin from Kashan came to Multan.<sup>6</sup> These esteemed men contributed greatly for the propagation of the message of Islam in this area. The shrines of the saints in Multan became a key point of attraction for a large number of devotees all the year round.<sup>7</sup> Babur captured India in 1526 and this was the beginning of Mughal rule in India. Multan became a province of the Mughal Empire.<sup>8</sup> After the death of Aurangzeb, the decline of the Mughal Empire, the Afghan King Ahmad Shah Abdali occupied Multan in 1752 A.D.<sup>9</sup>

In 1766, the wars between the Sikhs and the Afghans were fought and Ranjit Singh was able to annex Multan in 1818.<sup>10</sup> Maharaja Ranjit Singh proved himself to be a capable ruler. He was a great diplomat, a skilled fighter, a determined ruler and a crooked chief. After the devastation and collapse of Multan, there had been dictatorial rule of the Sikhs for years. The people were badly treated; their houses were set on fire and looted. All the houses in the fort were demolished and the Muslim were deprived of all their fundamental rights. They were physically abused and dishonored and several innocent persons including old and young were ruthlessly killed.<sup>11</sup>

In the early period of Sikh rule, Multan was in worst condition; the governmental machinery was not working and there was no peace and prosperity in the region. In 1821, after the appointment of Sawan Mal as *nazim* of Multan, a new era began. Sawan Mal satisfied the Maharaja with his efficient administration and got the districts of Muzaffargarh, Jhang, Dera Gazi Khan and Montgomery (present day Sahiwal) under his charge. In return, Raja demanded a huge amount as revenue from the Nazim who was able to satisfy his lust.<sup>12</sup>

### **Multan Under Sawan Mal**

A remarkable governor, Diwan Sawan Mal effected great improvements during his long reign (1821-1844). A productive revenue system was introduced and extensive measures were taken for agriculture improvement; peace and order was restored and equal justice was provided for all classes. As a result of new administrative reforms, cultivation, prosperity and population increased. Sawan Mal was also a talented man who was able to win the allegiance of the population of the region. After fifty years of colonial rule, Edward Maclagan, worked not only as D.C. of Multan but also as settlement officer in Multan, concluded that a population of Multan was much better economically than before.<sup>13</sup>

As Governor of Multan he displayed a tremendous capacity for hard work a brilliant grasp of revenue matters, a devotion of imperial justice. He improved law and order and by the revenue generation he added handsome amount to governments economy.<sup>14</sup> Sawan Mal kept his power tightly concentrated in his own hands and subjected subordinated officials to minute supervision. The Diwan's administrative methods were unsystematic in extreme. Boundaries of

governmental subdivisions were unclear and irregular, revenue settlements varied from place to place, being closely modified to local conditions. The Nazims indefatigable energy and mastery of detail remunerated, however for this lack of timekeeping.<sup>15</sup>

The primary unit of revenue management was the taluqa, eighteen of which existed with in Multan district at the time of colonial capture. By the East India Company in 1849, A Kardar and Muushi were appointed each. A Kardar received Rs. 15 to 30 per month. His financial records were sporadically observed and he was accountable to find for misinformation. The Kardar's main responsibility was the collection of revenue. His other duties, police and criminal justice were secondary to the principal one. Police power was essential to corce fluctuant revenue payers and was normally to keep up public peace so that agriculture might increase. Court cases yielded supplementary revenue in the shape of fines. As an outcome to their revenue purpose, Kardars heavy-handed zealously to preserve and extended cultivation.<sup>16</sup>

All thought little is known of administration below the taluqa level according to one report two Sikhs were stationed in dynamism village, and rural community to collect revenue.<sup>17</sup> Before observing the Sawan Mal's revenue administration, It seems suitable to understand the primary nature of agriculture settlements and land tenures in district. In Multan rural communities were settled near riverian tracts or close to well, the area irrigated from well water that was suitable for living, more or less belonged to one family group or cast. Even near the canals, residents units were just about wells which were almost supplement canal water.<sup>18</sup>

They have got that social class with a variety of placements. Among them some classes had those peaces of lands for grazed utility. Some people have had the big peace of lands for their jaggirs, from them some were religious families their predecessors short those peace of lands when they arose to power.<sup>19</sup> Big land lords settled Zamidars for the cultivation of their land. When a Zamidar, recognized as settlers him. He levied a fee as Haq-I Zamidari from actual production. When government planted colonists. The local Zamidar collect the payment. Where no one claimed Zamidari rights, Chakdars held openly from government and were answerable for the revenue.<sup>20</sup>

Cultivation was often approved by tenants. The produce left a Chakdar after subtraction of the shares of the cultivators and of the state was referred to as Kasur fractions. Normally the revenue required by the state was as so heavy as to make Kasar hardly significant the difficulty of collecting. In such cases chakdars were wont to allow tenants to disburse government the revenue direct and to transform Kasur to a set proportion of net produce, generally one twenties. Sawan Mal was a revenue grower on a huge amount, having tapered to pay nearly 2.2 million rupees yearly into the central bank account. Lahore Durbar accounts showed gross revenues of Multan to be just under thirty five lakhs. After inference of the sum remitted to Lahore and fixed cost of almost ten lakhs, a profit of 345,037 rupees remained. The actual intake may have been much greater. Under Sawan Mal the revenue claim diverse between one-sixth in the dry central, one fourth being the suggest. Commonly speaking one third was levied on sailab (river

flooded) land one fourth on good well tracts and one fifth or one seventh on poor wells. Political motives could manipulate the size of the demand, the terrible Joyah Rajputs on the Sutlej paid only one sixth for river lands.<sup>21</sup>

Development of agricultural assets constituted a critical attachment of revenue management. Major irrigation works were under taken by the state. The colonization of waste away was fostered. The authorities intervened to make sure that inactive or incompetently cultivated land was brought into full fabrication. Cultivators received considerable support. The Multan canals, although depicted by Herbert Edwards as many the construction of Muslims rulers, were significantly enhanced by Sawan Mal. In addition to constructing a Major Canal, named the Diwanwah in his admiration, from the Sutlej into the barren north-eastern portion of Multan district, the Nazim restored or gave expansion to many pre existing irrigation works. In all three hundred miles of channels where excavated during his administration.<sup>22</sup>

Sawan Mal promoted the colonization of waste lands by submission positive terms of measurement to persons who brought new land under agriculture. The previous barren region watered by the Diwan wah was matured by means of such incentives many wealthy.Hindus took out developing leases and such wells. One such rent was issued by Sawan's son and successor Mulraj in 1846 to a Chaudri Mohan lal. The annual rent on the well was set at twelve rupees limited of sugar and indigo, which were to pay one seventh of the net turn out. The primary compulsion for canal clearance would be nothing the first year and half rates there after.<sup>23</sup> These policies resulted in a great addition of farming. Indigo, introduced by Pathan rulers, became the most important cash crop under Sawan Mal as a result of better irrigation and light evaluation on new indigo lands. The Sardarwah canal alone came to yield yearly ago to 1000 hundreds of indigo, where as had realized less than 200.<sup>24</sup>

Anyway Sawan Mal planning proved an accomplishment as the Diwan tried to deal the failing law and order condition with firm hands. The Zamindar's were made to pay revenue on time and the Diwan's remittances to Lahore become regular. This created assurance and the Maharaja added step by step Dera Ismail Khan, Dera Ghazi Khan, Muzaffargarh and Jhang to his control.<sup>25</sup> However the worsening condition of the Muslim inhabitants was at the lowest condition. Sawan Mal was an unscrupulous person in the beginning he invited resourceful persons who could take certain areas on a fixed charter for a fixed period. Being encouraged Ghulam Mustafa Khan Khakwani.<sup>26</sup>

Head of Chaupanzai Khakwani Pashans showed his concern and soon he became the lease holder of vehari and Mailsi for Rs.35, 000 per year. The land was given to him for five years. He was a rich and resourceful person. His father Ali Muhammad Khan Khakwani was Kardar of Skanderabad during the period of Nawab Muzaffar Khan Sadozai. Ali Muhammad Khan was trusted servant of Nawab Muzaffar Khan and he had accompanied the late Nawab to Mecca and Madina during his Haj journey. Ali Muhammad Khan left a big property.His son Ghulam Mustafa Khan had enough money to spend on the development of lands in Vehari and Mailsi.He exctivated soon Haji Wah Canal from the river Sutlej which was for suitable for the land irrigation and to give him enough agricultural

products. Sawan Mal grew envious of it and he cancelled the lease after two years. This created disappointment among the enthusiastic and sincere workers to work for the promoting of the soil. Major Edward Herbert writes that a being a low bred man himself. Diwan Sawan Mal could not bear highly regarded. Pathans and an even a nobleman.<sup>27</sup>

He unnoticed the library and the religious independence of the Muslims. After some ten years of this Nizamat, Alexander Burns visited the city of Multan on 15 June 1831, he records in detail in his travelogue, "At Multan we first saw the practice of religion among the Sikhs, In veranda of the tomb of Shumsi Sabreeze, a "Gooroo" or priest of that persuasion had taken up his abode, since the conquest of the city, we found him stated in the ground with a huge volume in front of him and a place covered with cloth, like an altar at one end of the apartment the presence of a Sikh priest under the roof of a Muhammadan tomb will furnish a good commentary, it is barely tolerated. In this city which hold for up wards of 800 years, so high a Muhammad supremacy, there is now no public "Namaz" the true believer dose not lift his voice in public. The Eid and Muharram pass without the observances the "Ullaho Akbar" of the priest is never heard, the mosques are yet frequented but the pious are reduced to offering up their orison in silence. Such has been the state of theirs since Mooltan fall in 1818, and the number of Sikhs in confined to that of the garrison from four to five hundred men."<sup>28</sup>

Sawan Mal was a prejudiced Hindu. He selected Hindus and Sikhs on all important posts, he constructed several temples in Multan, and he overlooked the liberty and the religious freedom of the Muslims. He stopped the old grants of all the pirs and Makhdums; he loved money and never believed in the welfare of the people. He troubled all the property of the Multan Pathans. Who had migrated to Bahawalpur among Sikhs and Hindus? He even changed all the old Muslim names of different village into Hindu names, for example, Rampur, Gopalpur, Tarapur, Hariapur, Mangi Halti, etc. He tried his best to reduce the power of the Muslims in the Nizamat of Multan. He actually wanted to transform Multan to a Hindue state but failed. Sawan Mal continued ruling over Multan for 23 years.

### **Multan, Mulraj And East India Company**

After the murder of Sawan Mal his son Mul Raj was appointed as the Governor of Multan from Lahore Durbar. At that he had to face much troubled not only for management affairs but also to solve the disputed created by his own family. He had the ability to over come all these difficulties if East India company did not enter in his administrative affairs.

The geographically and strategically importance was greater than before for the East India company because it intertwined with the Afghan affairs and expansion of Russia became threat for it and Multan was a vital boarder city, so it is to administer to administer the affairs of Southern Punjab via Multan as a substitute to Lahore. This reality was fully understood by Ranjit Singh also, for that reason he gave absolute authority to rule over Multan as governor to Mul Raj. The British arranged full plane for the annexation of the whole Punjab and without capture of Multan, the annexation of Punjab would not be completed. Annexation of Multan was inevitable for them, the unsettling condition of Lahore Durbar was

supporting for them.<sup>29</sup> It was much humiliating for Mulraj, he was to bond for the explanation of his accounts before the Lahore Durbar.

After he defeating the Khalsa army in the first Sikh war (1845-46), the East India Company considered it inexpedient to swallow the Punjab in one gulp. Having shorn the Sikh kingdom of the Jullundur Doab and Kashmir. The company endeavored to govern the rump (known as the Lahore state) indirectly through a subservient Durbar.<sup>30</sup> A British battalion would remain at Lahore until the close of 1846 to keep up order while the Punjabi army was being proved and brought to heel. Mulraj had no grounds to fear a British presence at Lahore for he had established friendly relations with a company's representative previous to the current war.<sup>31</sup>

In March 1845, the Nazim at odds with the Durbar sought advice from Major broad foot the hawkish political agent for the North- West frontier on a course of action should troops from Lahore march on Multan. Broad foot clearly kept in communication with the Diwan for on the eve of war, he guaranteed the commander in Northern Sind that Mulraj would protect Sind with Multani troops next to the Lahore forces, "thus leading to the belief that he had succeeded in flaking the governor from his commitment to Lahore."<sup>32</sup>

From Mulraj's point of view the Sahibs were intervening in the domestic affairs. His annoyance ministered itself when one of the resident's assistants, John Nicholson appeared at Multan on an examination visit in April 1847. By late 1847, Mulraj's circumstances had become almost indefensible. In adding together with British pressures, he was overwhelmed by family dissensions. He was already alienated from a cousin, Davi Dyal by John Lawrence's account a clever, corrupt debauchee, who had ably represented Sawan Mal as vakil (lawyer) at Lahore.<sup>33</sup>

In November 1847, the Nazim determined to leave his post unless better terms could be obtained from Henry Lawrence. The resident had just returned from getting better in Simla but was due to depart shortly for England on sick leave. Learning that Mulraj desired an interview, the resident wrote, urging him to lose no time in coming to Lahore and encouraging him to persevere in office. Henry advised Mulraj that the Durabar would compensate him for defalcations of some Multani Kardars who had absconded in to Jang. Instead of being disheartened by the rebellious attitude of his subjects the Diwan should use troops against them.<sup>34</sup> Unfortunately, Mulraj, did not arrive until 2 December, a day after the resident's departure, and was obliged to deal with acting resident John Lawrence.<sup>35</sup> Having received no satisfaction, Mulraj determined upon resignation. On 18 December 1847, Mulraj notified that the Durbar of his resignation effective retroactively from beginning of the last Kharif harvest. He alleged that the timing should make no difference to the Sirkar since any Kharif revenue had been collected yet. The acting resident objected that a change of administration in ad of the collection of the Kharif revenue would cause the Durbar to lose much of its due. If Mulraj was in earnest, he night step down at commencement of the Rabi (Spring) harvest.<sup>36</sup>

At the acting resident's persistence, Mulraj agreed to stay in office till April 1847, the start of the next rabbi harvest. Upon again raising the question of a jagir, Mulraj was told that, at the same time as nothing could be certain,

praiseworthy servants of the sarkar were normally rewarded. unidentified to the Diwan, Henry Lawrence had recommended putting him on the board of regency a place that carried a jagir with it. The acting resident want to see all this with silent, partially to assure Mulraj's assistance in the shift of power and partially because the Government of India had not up till now accepted Henry's suggestion.<sup>37</sup>

On 17 June 1848 A.D. Lt. Herbert Edwards reached Kaweri (shujabad tehsil) situated on the left bank of the river Chenab. Mulraj having received no help from the Lahore Durbar, dispatched a strong contingent numbering 7000 soldiers and 10 guns under the command of Rang Ram. Lt. Edwards had already appealed to Nawab of the Bahawalpur, the Pathans and the Baluch Chiefs of different tribes for help. He succeeded in raising 5000 of different Muslim tribes. He had of more than 5000 soldiers including those of General Courtland. Thus a large army consisting of more than 15000 soldiers fought and pitched battle against the Multan army on the June 18, the battle lasted for nine hours (morning to evening) in which the Multan soldiers showed great velour's but 10 guns played a vital role and the artillery fire turned the tables. Lt. Edwards defeated Rang Ram who ran away in the evening leaving five hundred dead and about one thousand wounded. It was a great victory for Lt. Herbert Edwards. He became master of the whole territory between the Indus and the Chenab. Now he appeared at Shujabad on June 20, its Qiladar surrendered and the Bahawalpur army stationed in the fort for the maintenance of law and order.<sup>38</sup>

### **Mulraj And Colonial Administrator**

In fact, the war over Multan was a struggle between Lt. Herbert Edwards and Mulraj Nazim of Multan. Both were young bold energetic and were fighting for their respective just cause. Edwards after getting his commission in 1842 A.D. had started preparing for a political career. He cleared all the examination in Hindi and Persian and was later posted at Bannu.<sup>39</sup> While living amongst the Pathans he adopted their qualities of straight forwardness, bravery and love for leading a judicious and clean life. On the other side Mulraj was trained by his able father Diwan Sawan Mal, who started his career as an accountant and rose to the position of Nazim of Multan owing to sheer dint of hard work and ability, Mulraj had differed with the Lahore Durbar on principle as he had refused to accept their influence in the internal affairs of Multan under the lable of introducing a new trade system. A centralized style administration in Punjab proper could not co-exist with Mulraj's system without free trade principles. Government eliminated duties on many items and substituted consolidated customs lines at frontiers for multifarious town and transit duties.<sup>40</sup>

Although Multan was exempt from the new arrangements, local businessman pressured the Diwan to follow suit, while foreign merchants shunned the Multan route.<sup>41</sup> Decreased land revenue assessments in territories under the Durbar also wounded Mulraj by thrilling away cultivators.<sup>42</sup>

Mulraj argue against on the customs front by utilizing differences between his system and Lahore to stimulate caravans to come by away of Multan. Since Multani customs continued to be collected in installments along the way, duties were considerably lower at the boarder of Multan than at the Lahore state



frontier were customs for the whole country were collected in a lump sum. The Diwan setup a new customs poses that could be reached directly from Afghanistan without passing through Lahore territory. Then he publicized the fact that Afghan merchants after paying Multan border dues and crossing the Indus could immediately enter Durbar territory from the Multan side where there was no customs line, thus erasing internal Multan tolls and the entire Lahore customs, these tactics were so damaging to the Durbar's customs revenues that in October 1847, it commanded the Multan Nazim to adopt the new scale of custom duties and close unauthorized custom houses.<sup>43</sup>

Mulraj took no notice of the order, possibly because the terms under which farmed the revenue of Multan did not allow the Durbar to dictate customs policy.<sup>44</sup> When the resident lowered duties at Isa Kheyl ferry, Mulraj devised an ingenious stratagem. In March 1848, Herbert Edwards discovered an emissary of the Diwan persuading Afghan merchants to turn a side to a newly opened Multani ferry at Dubblee. The agent, who had been promised a raise in event of success, made effective use of forged Sirkari parwanas that denounce the imposters who had lowered the duties at Isa Kheyl and threatened all crossing there with severe chastisement. Edwards countered by sending officers to all Multani ferries in order to collect the Durbar share of the customs. In the case of a consignment of goods that would pay Rs. 10 to Lahore or Rs. 8 in Multan two at the Indus ferry one at Leia just east of the river and five at Multan city. Edward's man would take the two rupees difference between Lahore and Multan rates. This measure removed the incentive to use the Multan route without directly interfering with the Diwan's arrangements.<sup>45</sup>

So all new arrangements were not acceptable to Mulraj as it denied him a major portion of income and minimized his influence over the trading community which was the back bone of the society. In such circumstances a war started. Lt. Edwards had marched on Multan with the plea that his English colleagues had been killed by the dismissed soldiers of Mulraj. Lt. Edwards gathered around him a large army consisting of a major portion of the Pathans because he was clever enough to adopt their language with their style and even their dress. Thus he achieved an initial success against the insurgents.

It is important to note that this Khatri family was from Gujranwala (central Punjab) and had nothing in common with the people of the Multan (South Punjab) excepted that Sawan Mall as a Hindu and an expert to channelise the revenue system of Multan as he needed more income from the newly acquired province with the assurance for maintaining law and order in the region. Thus ultimately Sawan Mal was made Nazim who tried to establish a Hindu rule under the Sikh kingdom. He denied religious right to the Muslim and confiscated all properties of the Pathans who had left Multan after the war of June 1818 AD. With the passage of time certain Pathan families came back to Multan in search of a lively hood. Diwan Sawan Mal gave them jobs but did not give them back their ancestral lands. He even did not permit them to offer prayers in the mosques. Cow slaughter was also forbidden. The Pathan bore these indignities and served the Nazim for decades with the hope of getting back their ancestral lands and the restoration of their religious rights. During the revolt, they came to the conclusion that the new invaders (the British) were far better they hoped to get back all they

had lost. They decided to support the British in case of war. When they found out that their classmen of the Derajats region had already joined the English, they negotiated with Faujdar Khan, a veteran and an experienced Pathan Chief who was a trustee of lieutenant Herbert Edwards.

An opportunity arose when Mulraj sent Ghulam Mustafa Khan Khakwani as his agent to Edwards in May 1848, 'to ascertain whether the Diwan could expect to a fair trial if he surrendered.'<sup>46</sup> At the same time, Ghulam Mustafa Khan had treaty a mandate from the Pathan's to negotiate a separate peace with the British for the restoration of all their previous civil and religious rights. Ghulam Mustafa Khan crossed the Indus and went to Edwards. He carried out his mission and negotiated with Edwards on the behalf of Mulraj. He also developed complete understanding with Edwards to sport him in case of war against the Sikhs. The Muslim were in majority in Multan but economically poor. Trade and commerce was in the hands of Hindus. They had become land lords after grabbing the lands of the Muslim. Only a few trusted servants of Diwan Sawan Mal namely Ghulam Mustafa Khan Khakwani and Sadiq Mohammad Khan Badozai were allowed the retain their lands while the Pathnas belonging to Sadozai, Badozai, Malizai, Alizai, Babqr, Tarin and several other tribes had lost their lands because they had fought against Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Similarly Makhdoom Shah Mohammad Qureshi (Makhdoom of the Shrines of Hazrat Baha-al-Din Zakriya and Hazrat Rukh-al-Din), Makhdoom Syed Gilani and Makhdoom Syed Rajo Shah Gardezi were denied of their rightful claims. The property attached to these shrines had been confiscated. The Muslims living with in the four walls were also denied of their rights. Forty percent of Hindus dominated the sixty percent Muslims. Ran jet Singh never trusted the people of South Punjab. He had appointed a Khatri of the central Punjab to rule over Multan and its adjacent territory. Following on the footsteps of his master, Sawan Mal always trusted his Hindus fellow men of the Central Punjab. He even invited Hindus from Shikar Pur who were known as traders in Afghanistan to settle in Multan to promote trade and commerce Diwan Sawan Mal raised from an insignificant position to honor. He was greedy and tyrant. He never allowed the Muslims to progress in spite of the fact that the Ismailias and the Ansaris were known for their honest dealings in the trading community. They were discouraged and people from Shikar Pur (Sindh) were invited to trade an settle down in the Multan it was this anti-Muslim policy of Diwan Sawan Mal, which compelled the Muslims to sport the British before conquest of Multan by Lt. Edwards realizing the situation, Mulraj declared a holy were and mustered Sikh recruits from all over Punjab. Under his leadership Multan city resisted long and heroically.<sup>47</sup>

Before the fall of the Multan, the Muslims had realized that their timely change of allegiance would bring them the restoration of all the rights they had enjoyed during the Afghan period (pre-Sikh days).<sup>48</sup> The local Hindus sported Mulraj whole heartedly whereas the Muslims remained unconcerned. Lt. Edwards writes that it was a "Baniah's revolt" against the new policy of taxation. "These Khatri's became "mad" over the change of Government before the fall of Shujabad, the Khatri's of the town had liberally supported Mulraj with funds and supplies. One of them agreed to pay two months pay for his army."<sup>49</sup>

In the same way, the Hindu citizens of Multan unity sported him with a zeal for a holy war which rose higher. They tore down their own doors and shutters and gave them to the soldiers to be erected as traverses on the fortifications.<sup>50</sup> After the battle at Kaneri, the Multani Pathans defeated Mulraj and went over to Lt. Herbert Edward's. It was a great achievement of the international relations of Edwards. According to him he treated them nicely and gave them guarantee to get back what they had lost. All the Pirs and Syeds were shown respect so that they could manipulate their power over the Muslim inhabitants.<sup>51</sup>

After the fall of shujabad Edwards marched against Multan and advanced towards South of Multan city. He went from Ali-Wala Bagh to Suraj Kand on June 28 and from there he proceeded towards Saddu Sam a place near the railway station, along with a strong army consisting of more than 15000 soldiers and about 26 guns. All the Pathans including Ghulam Mustafa Khan Khakwani, Sadiq Mohammad Khan Badozai and Chiefs of Saddozai, Malizai, Alizai, Train and Babar tribes including the Makhdums, Pirs and Syed (Saintly persons of Multan) gathered around Lt. Herbert Edwards and general court land. On June 30, Sheikh Imam-ud-Din of Jhang also joined Edwards along with his 4000 troops. In the mean time, Mulraj was joined by a Sikh guru named Bhai Maharaja Singh who had declared a religious war, therefore, Mulraj succeeded in collecting 4000 men and 10 guns.<sup>52</sup>

The battle of Saddu-Sam was fought on, July 1848 AD in which Mulraj faced a humiliating defeat. He escaped to the city and closed the doors of the walled city as well as the fort. More than one thousand soldiers of the Mulraj army were killed whereas the total number of killed and wounded on the side of the British was the 281. Among the killed was some Pathan of note, Rahim Khan Saddozai, a relation of the Nawab of Dera Ismail Khan, including Hussain Khan Muzazai and Fateh Khan of Qasoor. Several of the Pathans chiefs recognized themselves in this battle by their reckless bravery; among them Ghulam Sarwar Khan Khakwani and Faujdar Khan Alizai showed great valour and were among the injured.<sup>53</sup>

The news of the victory of Saddu Sam made the English resident at Lahore very happy. Guns were fired at Lahore, Dera Ismail Khan, Bannu, Hazara and Pishawar. Now a contingent of the Sikh Durbar consisting of 5000 men, 10 guns and two mortars under Sher Singh. Attariwala, the Sikh Governor of Hazara, marched from Lahore and reached Multan on July 6 via Tulamba. He encamped at Suraj Kund (South-east of Multan). Edwards suspected the arrival of the Sikh contingent, therefore, he instructed Sher Singh to encamp at Suraj Kund, whereas he was at Tibbi at the South-west of Multan. He wanted to keep Sher Singh at a distance of a few miles. In the meantime Sir F. Currie, the British resident at Lahore dispatched an artillery unit consisting of 8000 trained troops under the command of general Whish who arrived at Mari-sital (Multan) on August 18. He reached the walled city on September 4. Mulraj flooded the moat with the river water and also repaired the rampart of the city and the fort. Lt. Edwards with the assistance of Court landt and Whish, the Daudputra army and Sher Singh besieged the town and the fort. On 4 September 1848, with a total strength of 32000 soldiers, 45 guns and 4 mortars to defend the motherland. The operation was launched on September 7 and an attempt was made on September 9 to capture the city and the

fort but the attack was repulsed with heavy losses on the British side.<sup>53</sup> The fighting took place on the South east of Multan near the temple of Ram Tirath. Gen. Courtlandt and Gen Wish made an other attempt from Kiri Jammundon side to capture the Dharam Shala and succeeded in taking it on September 12. While defending the city, Mulraj lost 300 men with in the wall enclosure but succeed in pushing back the English from the Walled city.

In the mean time an incident took place in Hazara in early August where a few sikh soldiers rebelled and killed colonial Canora, an American by birth, who was in the service of the Sikh Government, Sardar Chattar Singh Attairwala was Governor of Hazara under the supervision of Major James Abbot. The daughter of Chattar Singh decided to support the rebellious Sikh soldiers and conduct had long been suspicious, sided with his father and early in the morning of September 14, declared that this war was not a war between Mulraj and the Durbar but a strife for religion, and he who wished to go to heaven would die a martyr in defence of his faith.

It gave fire to the Sikh cause and the besiegers of Multan temporarily decided to away from Multan city and the fort Mulraj got time to consolidate his position and Sher singh went back along with his army to help his father and early in the morning of September 14, declared that his war was not a war between Mulraj and the Durbar but a strife for religion and he who wished to go heaven would die a martyr in defense of his faith. It gave fire to the Sikh cause and the besiegers of Multan temporarily decided to stay away from Multan campaign was suspended till the British succeeded in getting sufficient military aid. After four months, the British resumed the siege of Multan on 27 December 1848. Mulraj had strengthened the fortification of the city and the fort but this time the English deployed all the forces in capturing Multan. On December 27, the English attacked on the eastern side of Multan and captured Aam Khas Bagh in the suburbs where the shrine of Syed Shams Sabzwari is situated.

The English launched a fresh attack on December 29 and a fierce fighting took place near the Delhi Gate but the bravery of the Multan soldiers failed their attempt to enter the walled city. On December 30, the principal magazine in the fort which was stored 5000 mounds of powder, was blown up by a shell from a mortar, destroying the great jamia Mosque and its lofty tower which had been the pride of the ancient town. Five hundred of the garrison (perished in this explosion, later the English put more pressure on the side of Delhi Gate and Khuni Burj. The artillery fire caused two preaches on these side of the walled city and the English soldiers entered the city on January 1848. A fierce fighting took place in the streets of the walled city from morning to evening. At mid night Mulraj shifted from city to the citadel along with his remaining force. The city was captured on 3 January 1849 and a bloody struggle ended. All the Sikh soldiers fired with mortars and guns which caused great damage to the remaining old Muslim buildings, including the Jamia Mosque and the tomb of Hazrat Baha-al-Din Zakariya and Hazrat Rukn-al-Din. The destruction was so great that not a house in the walled city escaped the bombardment of the English shells.

Ultimately Mulraj surrendered on 22 January 1849. The British flag was hosted high on the fort and the Hindu raj under the Sikh kingdom came to an end.

Mulraj was taken prisoner Mulraj was taken prisoner to Lahore and later tried by Military court on the charge of murder of Vans Agnew and Anderson. He was given death penalty which was later commuted into life imprisonment. He was shifted to Calcutta from where he was taken to Benaras but on his way he died in August 1851, due to his long illness.

After the capitulation of the fort and the custody of Mulraj, management was passed on officially to Colonial administrators and the region was divided into division, districts and tehsils and Multan was made the head quarter of the division, the new arrangements brought a new phase of socio economic life to Multan.

### **Conclusion**

The general impression painted in the previous historiography on the history of Punjab was that Punjab did not resist much against the British incursion in the Punjab but this study has challenged this impression. Though the British had military superiority but the local administration of Multan made all sorts of efforts to defend their land. It also has discussed that Multan played an immensely important role in the socio-economic, cultural and political development of the region. Therefore, without studying the local history of Multan region, history of the Punjab cannot be understood properly.

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