CHAPTER-I

GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF KANGRA

1. Geographical Description of Kangra

The district of Kangra of present day Himachal originally comprised of the hill territories that were directly governed by the British. It was situated between the Ravi and Sutlej rivers and extended from the town of Shahpur, near the Ravi on the west to the present day borders of the autonomous area of Tibet in China. The northern border extended up to Ladakh and the southern limits of the district reached the plains of the Bari and Jalandhar Doabs of Punjab. Kangra district was the northernmost of the five districts of Jalandhar Division. It comprised an area of 9,978 square miles. Barnes, the first British settlement officer estimated it to be approximately 8,000 square miles. He divided the area into two parts in his description provided in the first settlement report (1850). Barnes noted that, ‘Kangra Proper comprises all the lower hills, and covers a surface equal of 2,700 square miles. The second division consists of a wild and mountainous region, including the provinces of Kulu, Lahaul and Spiti and occupying an area not less than 5,000 square miles.’ The district was made up of several ranges that run parallel to each other. In between are longitudinal valleys that run generally from north-west to south-east. The heights of these ranges and valleys increased gradually as they moved away from the plains and came nearer to the Great...
Himalayas at the northern boundary. Towards the Punjab plains, the border chain of hills run uniformly from Hajipur on the Beas to Ropar on the banks of the Sutlej. This range encloses the valley of Jaswan Dun presently situated in Una district. The next range, the Chintpurni hills lies to the north of the Jaswan Dun and runs parallel to it till it reaches the Sutlej. Lyall’s description of the area was more detailed. In his report he explained that Kangra had three natural divisions and not just two as mentioned earlier by Barnes. These were as follows:

(I) The Outer Himalayas and Sub-Himalayan areas made up Kangra Proper, excluding taluqa Bangahal. This was an area of 2,360 square miles, and had a population of 270 per square miles.

(II) The Mid-Himalayan area were the taluqa of Bangahal and tehsil Kulu (excluding Lahaul and Spiti), which had an area of 2,329 square miles. The population was only 43 per square mile.

(III) The trans-Himalayan territories consisted of Lahaul and Spiti. This region covered 4,299 square miles and had a very scanty population of 2 persons per square mile.

Lyall also mentioned that the taluqa of Bangahal did not fit into any of the divisions. Half of it outside and half inside the lower Himalaya. The impressive range of mountains to the north of Kangra was its most significant geographical feature. It is, perhaps, for this reason that it finds detailed description in the Kangra

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5 Kangra DG, 1924-25, p. 2.
6 Barnes, Kangra SR, 1850, p.1.
7 Kangra DG, 1924-25, p. 2.
8 Ibid; p. 2.
9 J.B.Lyall, Kangra Settlement Report (Completed in 1872, jointly published version of settlement made by G.C.Barnes and J.B. Lyall, Lahore, 1889 has been used. Hereafter as Lyall Kangra SR, 1872.), p.15.
Barnes had named the Dhauladhar range, the 'Chamba Range.' Cunningham's account refers to it as the first part of the 'Outer' Himalaya. He suggests that the range began on the right bank of the Beas, where that river left Kulu area and turned sharply towards Mandi town. The Dhauladhar, interestingly, divided taluqa Bangahal into two. The north called Bara Bangahal, is separated from Kulu on the east by Bara Bangahal ridge. Lahaul is to the north, across the mid-Himalayan range, and to the west lies Chamba on the other side of the Manimahesh range. The Ravi originally in Bara Bangahal and the river is fairly large by the time it enters the territory of Chamba. Bara Bangahal with an area of 290 square miles, had only one village situated at the lowest point of valley about 8,500 feet above the sea. This village was home to about forty families around 1872. It would be important to point out that the rapidly rising Dhauladhar range acted as a barrier to rain-bearing clouds. This ensured that the lower area got a fairly high annual rainfall. These mountains were also very rich in timber, pastures, herbs, slates, and numerous other natural resources. Barnes description of the valley of Kangra, as it lay at the foot of the Dhauladhar might be worth quoting. He wrote: 'Below lies the plain, a picture of rural loveliness and repose; the surface is covered with the richest cultivation, irrigated by streams which from perennial snow, and interspersed with homesteads buried in the midst of groves and fruit trees.'

'hundred canals, filled with clear water, intersect the area in all directions, and convey the blessing of irrigation to every field. Trees and plants of opposite zones are here intermingled. The bamboo, the pipal and the mango attain a luxuriance not excelled in Bengal; while pines and dwarf oaks, the cherry, the

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10 Kangra DG, 1924-25, p. 3.
11 Lyall, Kangra SR, 1872, p.16.
12 Ibid; p.16.
13 Barnes, Kangra SR, 1850, p. 2.
barberry, and the dog rose flourish in their immediate vicinity. Among cereal productions, rice and maize alternate with wheat, linseed and barley; and three-fifth of the soil yield double crops in the course of the year. Every house is enriched by a hedge of bamboos, fruits trees and other timber useful for domestic wants. Sometimes a cluster of five or six house occurs and here a grain-dealers shop and extensive groves denote the head-quarters of the township. These scattered homesteads, the pictures of sylvan elegance and comfort, relieve the monotonous expense of cultivation, and lend an additional charm to the landscape.¹⁴

A better description of Kangra Valley in the mid-19th century would be difficult to build.

1.1 Rivers

The main river of the Kangra is the Beas. Most of the streams of the area flow in to the Beas. It originates in Kulu and after flowing through Kulu and Mandi, the Beas enters Kangra Proper at Sanghol, in taluka Rajgiri. Thereafter, it follows a south-westerly course, and after cutting across the Jawalamukhi range enters the valley of

Nadaun.\textsuperscript{15} In winter when the temperature is low, the river too is at its lowest. After the month of February the water in the river increases as the snow begins to melt. July and August are a time of floods. Most of the important tributaries of the Beas as it flows through Kangra Proper, come down from the Dhauladhar. The first is the river Binnun, that originates in the mountains above Baijnath. Then in the Neugal stream which join the Beas at Sujanpur-Tira. After that the Ban Ganga. Passing below Kangra fort; the Gaj; the Dehra a tributary of the Gaj and the Chakki join the Beas. All these tributary streams emerge from the snowy range north of the Kangra Valley. Each of these, in turns receives the water of numerous small rivulets. In fact, even the tributaries are themselves the centre of a separate system of drainage.\textsuperscript{16} In addition to the above tributaries, there are two streams, the Kunah and the Man that join the Beas near Nadaun. Yet another rivulet the western Sohan, flow in to Beas near Talwara.\textsuperscript{17} A point worth noting is that the tributaries' coming in to north to join the Beas, as well as numerous smaller steams which flow in to them are all used for irrigation purposes. The Awa and Neugal were of the greatest importance for agriculturists in the Palam Valley. The Ban Ganga and the Gaj first irrigate the upper valleys of Kangra and Rehlu and then descend to water the flatter area below Haripur called the Hal Dun. The Man and Kunah have rather deep channels and do not serve useful purposes for irrigation.\textsuperscript{18} As far as the question of navigation of the Beas is concerned, Barnes informs us that even in winter, 'a small fishing punt can go with safety the whole way down the river from Sujanpur-Tira'. He further notes that, 'the highest point on the river where a ferry boat is used is Sanghol below the town of Mandi

\\textsuperscript{15} Barnes, \textit{Kangra SR}, 1850, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid; p. 5.

\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Kangra DG}, 1924-25, p.11.

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid; p.11.
where Kangra Proper begins. Two other rivers of significance may be mentioned though they did not contribute in any important manner to the economy of Kangra. The river Ravi touches the edge of the Kangra district. It emerges from the snowy mountains that separated the Kulu and Bangahal areas of Kangra district from the princely state of Chamba. To the east, Kangra Proper touched the Sutlej. In the upper course of the river, a reasonably large area of Kulu, stretching over lies on the bank of Kulu contributes several tributaries. On the border of Kangra and Independent State Kulur, there were only two regular ferries over the river. Boats and inflated skins were the means of crossing, and the river was too large and rapid to be fordable at any season.

1.2 Climate

The low lying part of Kangra have a shorter and less severe hot weather and higher rain fall than the adjoining town plains. The cold weather, on the other hand, is a bit harsher.

Lyall refers to the mean temperature of the town of Kangra in 1870 as shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table No. 1.1</th>
<th>Mean Temperature of the town of Kangra</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. to Feb.</td>
<td>March to May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52.9°C</td>
<td>70.0°C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Kangra District Gazetteer, 1924-25, p. 31.

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19 Barnes, Kangra SR, 1850, p. 5.
20 Ibid; pp. 5-6.
21 Ibid; p. 6.
23 Ibid; p. 31.
The mean temperature of inhabited part of the Dhauladhar slopes was recorded at about eight degree lower while that of the lower southern part of Kangra Proper was much higher. In the immediate vicinity of the towering Dhauladhar the amount of rainfall received was quite considerable. It often fell with such force that landslides were common and caused much destruction. A particularly graphic description is provided by the Kangra District Gazetteer of ferocity of nature on one occasion. It notes that, ‘a remarkably heavy storm during the night of 21st September 1917, resulted in the ‘Black Bridge’ on the cart road between the upper and lower stations and other bridges being washed away, iron girders of even twelve inches in depth being twisted in to most fantastic shapes by the impact of enormous boulders. On this occasion, the rain gauge with a capacity of 14 inches overflowed within the 24 hours. A description of the geography of Kangra would be incomplete without reference to the most destructive earthquake that occurred in April, 1905. It was estimated that in Kangra area as many as 18,314 persons lost their lives while 8,283 plough cattle were similarly lost.

2. Historical Background of Kangra

The ancient history of Kangra (earlier known as the kingdom of Jalandhar or Trigarta) is not of immediate concern to us here. Nor do the political fortunes of the medieval rulers of Kangra have a direct bearing on the major issues of research in this thesis. It would therefore, be more appropriate to recount the historical development that occurred a few decades prior to the establishment of colonial control over the Kangra area.

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24 Ibid; p. 31.
25 Ibid; p. 31.
The most important ruler of Kangra of the immediate pre-colonial period who still occupies a much signified position in local history was Raja Sansar Chand. It was on the death of his father Raja Tegh Chand in 1775 that Sansar Chand came to the throne.\(^{27}\) He was only ten years old when he became the ruler. This was a time marked by confusion and disorder in the hills as well as in the plains.\(^{28}\) Though the Afghans had taken control of the Punjab, their systematic rule was not fully

\(^{27}\) J. Hutchison and J.Ph. Vogel, *History of the Punjab Hill States*, (first published in Lahore, 1933; rpt. Shimla, 1982), Vol-II, p.176. Raja Sansar Chand was born in January, 1765 A.D. at Bijapur, then the place of residence of the family. A marble slab on the wall of the old palace records the date.

\(^{28}\) Ibid; p.176.
established. Barnes remarked that, ‘the same vigour of character which secured the territory was not displayed in the measures adopted to retain it’. Ostensibly, there existed an Afghan Viceroy at Lahore, but in many areas the old Mughal officials remained in practical control. Saif Ali Khan, the last of the Mughal qiladar, still held his own in Kangra fort. From the mid-eighteenth century, the Sikhs began to emerge as a power in their own right. Under their various leaders, they were to be found engaged in extending their area of control.  

Among the first to invade Kangra was Jassa Singh Ramgarhia. Chamba, Nurpur and some other states also became his tributaries. However, Jassa Singh was defeated in 1775 in the struggle for domination in Punjab by Jai Singh Kanheya another Sikh chieftain. The supremacy over some of the hill states now went to Jai Singh. The states west of Kangra probably become his tributaries. Barnes writes that a document issued under seal of Jai Singh Kanhaya, dated 1776 A.D. reveal that the tribute of the Chamba Principality was fixed Rs. 4,001 a year. It was later, in 1781-1782 that Jai Singh laid siege to Kot-Kangra.

Saif Ali Khan, the qiladar of Kangra fort was mortally sick and this probably attracted Jai Singh to capture the fort. Barnes writes that Saif Ali Khan died during the siege, and garrison in the fort surrendered to the Sikh Sardar. But Barnes remarks do not match with those of Hutchison. The latter believed that Jai Singh was invited by Raja Sansar Chand to help him capture the fort, and in 1781-1782 their combined forces besieged the stronghold. Forster, who passed through this area in March 1783,
on his way from Bilaspur to Nurpur and Jammu stated that the fort was still possessed by the Mughals.\textsuperscript{34}

Irrespective of whether there was an alliance between Sansar Chand of Kangra and Jai Singh Kanehya or not, Jai Singh remained in control of the fort till 1786. It was only after he was defeated in the Punjab that Jai Singh was compelled to surrender that fort to Sansar Chand in exchange for territory on the plains that the latter had conquered. After taking possession of the fort, Sansar Chand revived the tradition of claiming supremacy over the eleven principalities of the Jalandhar circle. The smaller chiefs were made tributaries and compelled to attend his court on certain important occasions.\textsuperscript{35}

During the early years of his reign, Sansar Chand resided quite often at Amtar near Nadaun, on the left bank of the Beas. In latter years he seems to have resided at his other places at Sujanpur-Tira and Alampur.\textsuperscript{36} Sansar Chand attained considerable fame during his life. Gulam Muhaiuddin in his \textit{Tarikh-i-Punjab} describes the reign of Sansar Chand:

‘for many years he passed his days in great felicity. He was generous in conduct, kind to his subject, just as Nushirvan, and a second Akbar in the recognition of men’s good qualities. Crowds of people of skill and talent, professional soldiers and others, resorted to Kangra and gained happiness from his gifts and favours. Those addicted to pleasure, who live for the gratification of others, flocked from all quarters and profited exceedingly by his liberality. Performers and story-tellers collected in such numbers, and received such gifts

\textsuperscript{34} Kangra DG, 1924-25, p. 69.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid; pp. 69-70.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid; pp. 70-71.
and favours at his hand, that’s he was regarded as the Hatim of that age and, in
generosity, the Rustam of the time.’ 37

So many paintings of that age are concerned about Kangra. Lambagraon,
Guler, Nadaun and other places, found in the Lahore Museum.38

Between 1803-04, Sansar Chand made two attempts to capture Hoshiarpur and
Bajwarah. He was driven back by Ranjit Singh a rising authority in Punjab who
brooked no rivals.39 Thereafter, Sansar Chand directed his attention to the hills. In
1805 A.D. he attacked Kahlur (Bilaspur), half of whose territories lay on the right
bank of the Sutlej. He captured the pargana of ‘Bati’ that adjoined his own district of
Mahal Mori. Because Kahlur was unable to resist on its own, it appealed for the help
of the Gorkha army that had by this time over-run the hills between the Gogra and
Sutlej a distance of more than 300 miles from their own border.40 The Gorkha
commanders willingly responded and crossed the Sutlej. At Mahal Mori in May, 1806
A.D. the Kangra army was utterly defeated and fled to Tira. Here existed fortified
places belonging to the raja. However, the Gorkha forces advanced up to Kot-Kangra
while maintaining their communication with Bilaspur on the Sutlej.41

The occupation of the area by the Gorkha forces and its harsh consequences,
live even today in popular memory. Oppressive Gorkha rule forced the inhabitants to
flee to adjacent territories like Chamba and the plains of the Jalandhar Doab. To make
matters worse, other hill Chieftains, angered by Sansar Chand’s previous oppressions,
too made inroads in to Kangra territory. Thus, state of confusion and disorder

37 Gulam-Muhaiuddin, Tarikh-i-Punjab as quoted in Hutchison and Vogel, History of the
39 Ibid; p.182.
40 Barnes, Kangra SR, 1850, p.10.
41 Ibid; p. 10.
continued for three years. It is said of this time that, 'In the fertile valley of Kangra not a blade of cultivation was whelped in the streets of Nadaun.\(^{42}\)

Out of desperation, Sansar Chand appealed to Ranjit Singh for assistance. In August 1809, the Sikhs fought their first battle with the Gorkha army. The Gorkha soldiers had been weakened and their army had been decimated by disease. Still, it was only after a stiff resistance that the Gorkha forces were forced to retreat to the other side of the Sutlej.\(^{43}\) The first war between the British and the Nepalese began in 1813, and it was only after two years of war that the Gorkha were successfully driven back to their original frontier on the Gogra by the British.\(^{44}\) The encounter with the Nepal army had left Sansar Chand entirely dependent upon Ranjit Singh. An agreement was arrived at between the two at Jawalamukhi. By this agreement, Sansar Chand was guaranteed all his hereditary domains and conquests. He did not have to fulfill any condition of service. However, Ranjit Singh kept for himself the fort of Kangra and sixty-six villages from the valley that had been always allotted for the maintenance of the garrison. Gradually, however, Ranjit Singh deviated from the agreement and encroached upon the Katoch ruler's independence. Finally, in 1828 A.D., Shortly after Sansar Chand death the Sikhs took over entire country.\(^{45}\)

William Moorcroft who visited the Kangra court in 1820 has provided an interesting account about Sansar Chand. J. Hutchison and J. Ph. Vogel tell us in their book that Sansar Chand was at that time about fifty four years old. While Moorcroft mentioned in his book that he was a tall, well-formed man, about sixty. He was most powerful raja from the Sutlej to the Indus river. From the Sutlej to Kashmir region

\(^{42}\) Ibid; p. 10.

\(^{43}\) Ibid; p. 10.


were his tributaries. He possessed their annual revenue of thirty-five lacs of rupees. Sansar Chand complained to Moorcroft how he crushed by Ranjit Singh for his libration. Moorcroft further says that now he was poor, and in danger of being wholly depended to Ranjit Singh. All these conditions he want protection of the British government, and in the event of a rupture with the Sikhs, it has find him a zealous and useful partisan. With the entry of the Sikhs under Ranjit Singh in to the hills, Sansar Chand of Kangra was not the only ruler to be reduced to a subordinate position. The Sikhs also captured the petty states of Hamirpur, Nurpur, Jaswan, Datarpur and Siba. Thereafter, in 1825 they moved to Kotlehr which too was made subservient to the Sikh kingdom. Raja Narain Pal of Kotlehr, however, rose against the Sikhs during the first Sikh war. For this the British awarded him a life-grant of Rs. 10,000, in addition to a jagir of a similar value that he already had. More specifically from our point of view he was also allowed three-fourth of the forest income with in his jagir.

Sansar Chand died in December 1823 A.D., after a reign of 47 years. As a soldier and administrator, he is still remembered by the common people even in areas that were beyond the boundaries of the kingdom. Under him the kingdom of Kangra grew greatly in power and prestige. For twenty years he dominated the hills and for some time a rival to Ranjit Singh himself. His aggressive policies however, became

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47 Ibid; p. 131. Sansar Chand died in the end of 1823, and was succeeded by his son. Anirudh Chand, with the concurrence of Ranjit Singh; but in 1828, the raja refused to give his sister in marriage to the son of the Sikh. Dhyan Singh a protégé of Ranjit Singh was obliged to fly his country; and place himself and family under British protection. The boundaries of the Katoch dynasty then became part of territories of Ranjit Singh.

cause of his final downfall. There was little that he passed down to his successors.\textsuperscript{49}
The death of Ranjit Singh in 1839 was followed a few years latter by a conflict with British in March 1846, a British army occupied Lahore. The British obtained possession of the Jalandhar Doab and the hill tract between the Sutlej and the Ravi.\textsuperscript{50}

After the first Sikh war, therefore, the hill tracts between the Sutlej and Beas were ceded, under the treaty of 9\textsuperscript{th} March 1846 to the British government. Kangra was now subject to direct British control. The process of establishing proper administrative control over the territory of Kangra was not an easy one.\textsuperscript{51} To begin with, a native Infantry Regiment (41\textsuperscript{st}) was sent to garrison the fort of Kangra. At the same time a detachment of eighty men, under an European officer was posted at Kotla. A large number of troops were also stationed at the fort of Nurpur, and orders were issued to raise new regiment from the ‘martial’ population of the hills. Thus a considerable amount of military preparation was needed to ensure that the Kangra area remained peaceful and did not resist British occupation. For purposes of civil administration, the entire hilly tract between the Sutlej and Ravi excluding Jaswan Valley was constituted into a separate district and placed under the charge of Assistant Commissioner.\textsuperscript{52} During the early British rule, there was some amount of resistance. Only after the final defeat of the Sikhs on 21 February 1849 did proper peace become possible in the hill region. The insurgent Chiefs were banished to Almora; Ram Singh (Nurpur) was transported to the penal settlement at Singapur.\textsuperscript{53} There he died in 1851, childless and in exile. After that, Ludar Chand son of Sansar

\textsuperscript{50} Barnes, \textit{Kangra SR, 1850}, p.13.
\textsuperscript{52} Barnes, \textit{Kangra SR, 1850}, p.13.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid; p.15.
Chand's brother Fateh Chand succeeded to the jagir granted by Ranjit Singh. Ludar Chand was followed by Partap Chand, who succeeded to the family title in 1851, on the demise of Raja Parmudh Chand who was without issue. He died in 1864, and since then his son Jai Chand had been the head of the Katoch clan. At the time of his succession, he was a minor and the estate was run by the Deputy Commissioner of Kangra as the court of wards. In 1918 the distinction of Knight Companion in the most eminent order of the Indian Empire, with the title of Maharaja, was conferred upon him, in recognition of his devoted loyalty and his distinguished services to government, especially during First World War.54

After the annexation of Kangra the head-quarters of the civil authorities were fixed at Kot-Kangra. A garrison was placed inside the fort because this gave greater prestige and authority to the new rulers. It gave a sense of continuity as the centre of local authority, 'the centre where orders emanated and where supplicants repaired for redress.'55 For financial purposes, the district had four divisions or pargana. While naming and delimiting those divisions, care was taken to retain their historical character and the local loyalties of the people. Therefore, Nurpur and Haripur parganas demarcated the area of the old principalities. Kangra by and large, represented the area that was directly under the jurisdiction of the fort. Nadaun, Barnes observed, was the only innovation because of the 'inconvenient size of the Katoch dominions.'56

Further, each pargana was divided into smaller units called taluqas. Even these taluqas had a very ancient origin. Barnes makes a very interesting

55 Barnes, Kangra SR, 1850, p.15.
56 Ibid; p. 15.
differentiation between the hill and the plain *taluqa*. This also partly explains the remarkable historical continuity on finds in hill societies. Barnes noted that:

‘a *taluqa* on the plains is liable to constant alteration, and the ruler of today effaces the marks set up by his predecessor; but the bounds of a hill *taluqa* remain unchanged as the physical features which suggested them. Each *taluqa* has its peculiar characteristics’.

Nevertheless, even the *taluqa* did not represent the smallest recognized units of the revenue administration. There existed several smaller divisions within the *taluqa* that truly represented the terrain in different parts of the *taluqa*. These smaller divisions varied in size depending on the nature to the land. In the areas of Nadaun, Kotlehr and Mahal Mori, these subdivisions are called *tapas*. The *tappa* was also used in the mountainous parts of Guler. According to Barnes, in Nurpur the sub-division of *taluqas* were called ‘*mugdias*.’ He wrote, ‘Every circuit, by whatever name it is known is an aggregation of independent hamlets; and these are in reality the elementary portion of the whole system. The size of these hamlets is very variable; some are assessed as low as five rupees; others again, pay yearly revenue of two to three hundred rupees. They have each their separate boundaries, which are as jealously watched and maintained as these of larger and more powerful communities.’

Kangra *pargana* was sub-divided into a hierarchy of smaller units like *taluqa*, *mauzas*, and *tikas*. Here, too, physiographical features played an important role. The *mauza* did not always correspond to a specific number of habitations. The *mauza* varied in size. Some *mauzas* consisted only of one *tika* while others, like *mauzas* Dhatwal in Hamirpur consisted of 133 *tikas*. Like the *mauza* the next smaller unit, the

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57 Ibid; p. 15.
58 Ibid; p. 16.
tika was equally a creation of geographical circumstances. It consisted, very often only of one or two clusters of houses and a few acres of cultivation ...........

3. Geographical Description of Kulu

The Kulu Sub-Division of Kangra District situated towards the north-east was demarcated by a ridge running in northern southern direction. It rose from the Pir Panjal (Mid- Himalaya) range that tapered towards Mandi District of Himachal Pradesh. The sub-division was bordered on the north by Ladakh in Kashmir. To the north-west lay Chamba District and to the east were Bara-Chhota Bangahal area of Palampur tehsil of the district of Kangra. Mandi District confined it on the south-west,

and its boundary continued towards the south right up to its junction with Sutlej river. What was especially interesting about Kulu Sub-Division is that it consisted of tracts of territory that were quite different from each other. For administrative purposes there were two tehsils called Kulu and Saraj. It was, in fact, Barnes in his settlement report that:

‘there are two natural divisions. The one comprises a rich and comparatively level tract along the banks of the Beas, the valley near the source of the river, is about six miles wide, covered with cultivation and interspersed with the houses of the peasantry. The second division of Kulu is entirely mountainous. It is intersected by a spur from the snowy range, which forms the watershed line between the Sutlej and the Beas. The people are most robust and manly than the inhabitants of the valley and the crops are entirely unirrigated.’

The area of Kulu had a very different appearance from that of Kangra Proper. There were no low hills to be seen and in almost all parts of Kulu high mountains rose sharply and enclosed the valleys. At a later date another settlement officer, while describing the sub-division, had written somewhat differently. He chose to regard Kulu and Saraj as one tract. The other two divisions of Kulu were identified as Lahaul and Spiti respectively. In the entire Kulu Sub-Division, there were two main valleys that were fairly broad. These were the Beas, called the Kulu Valley, and the Spiti Valley. The Spiti tract was a very elevated one as a whole and had some of the highest

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62 Barnes, Kangra SR, 1850, p. 61.
63 Lyall, Kangra SR, 1872, p. 73.
inhabited areas. There was, for example, the village of Losar located at a height of 13,600 feet.  

3.1 Rivers

As the Beas flows through Kulu Valley the mountains rise on either side at a distance of one or two miles. Gentle slopes come down from the base of these mountains to the banks of the river. These slopes are virtual plateau that are well and carefully cultivated. They are watered by canals that have been excavated along the side of mountains gorges. All this creates a landscape that gave to Kulu Valley the reputation of being among the most beautiful parts of the western Himalaya. The Beas originated from the Rohtang (13,325 feet above the Sea level) and as it descends rapidly to the Kulu side of the pass, other streams join it. It follows a southward direction to Larji which is a distance of sixty-three miles. At Larji it leaves the

65 Lyall, Kangra SR, 1872, p.73.
The river flows through the centre of the valley in a deep bed and is joined at intervals by its tributaries. These, too, have cut deep and narrow passages in the mountains. They, nonetheless, irrigate the sides of the valley which they flow through. Irrigation channels are cut from these streams at the points at which they leave the mountains. These are then used to irrigate a large area of the valley plain. Even the area that cannot be irrigated is nevertheless, very rich.

Apart from the Beas there are several other streams that flourished through Kulu Valley. Among these were the Parbati river which is the largest tributary of the Beas; and the Sarwari; the Hurla that, rises in the lower spurs of the range that divides Spiti from Waziri Rupi. It joins the Beas just opposite Bajaura. The river Larji descends to the Beas from the western flank, while the Tirthan originates in the snow range between Spiti and Saraj. The Arni and the Bishna rivers rise in the southern spurs of the Jalouri range in Saraj. On the other hand the Kurpan is a large stream that joins the Sutlej opposite Datnagar in Bushahr. Though the Kunrad is not an important stream, it demarcates Saraj from Bushahr and enters the Sutlej opposite the hamlet of the Sha, in Bushshr. The Solang, rises at the foot of the peak, on the Rohtang range, joining its water with those of the Beas at Pulchan. In the Solang Valley there is only one village. It is famous for its deodar – tree said to be the largest in India. The mountainous terrain of Kulu and the numerous and rapid streams provided ample resources for the regions, farmers and shepherds. But such a landscape also posed serious problem for communication. Crossing the fast flowing mountain streams was

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a considerable problem and this was overcome by the indigenous methods of building different kinds of bridges. Entirely local techniques were used to construct these bridges. Among these were the Sangha and Jhula bridges.

*Jhula Bridge in Kulu*

Another system of traversing the river was by a kind of ropeway. The persons skilled in this technique were to be found in the Rai-San Valley area. They are, even today still quite famous for their expertise in this technique. Even after the development of a modern road network, in many parts of Kulu the old technique of making ropeway is still in practice. Sangha bridges could at times cover a
considerable span. If it was well built, they last from thirty to forty years. A *Jhula* bridge was made with ropes of birch or willow twigs. *Jhula* bridges were not found in place throughout the year. They were usually put up for the convenience of villages separated by some river. There were sometimes very flimsy constructions and not very convenient or safe to use. According to Harcourt, Cunningham, quotes in his report a trip under the name of, ‘through Kulu and Lahaul, to the Chu Mureri lake in Ladakh, during the months of August and September 1846’, having witnessed women in Ladakh sit down in the middle of one of these structures, and actually scream with terror.\(^69\)

**3.2 Important Passes**

Among the important passes there is the Bara Lacha Pass that stands almost 16,500 feet above sea level. It is in Lahaul and lies on what was earlier the trade route to Ladakh. It is the easiest to cross this pass when there is virtually no snow. The Shingo-la, also called Zanskar Pass, is situated at the head of the Zanskar ravine. The Kunzum Pass is on the road, connecting the upper Chandra Valley to Losar in Spiti. The Rohtang Pass is the one that links Kulu to Koksar in Lahaul, and lay on the main trade route. Above Prini in the upper Beas valley lies the Hamta pass. The Malana Pass, is between the villages of Naggar and Malana. The Bubbu Pass with a height of about 10,000 feet above the sea is located on the old trade route. An important point about this pass was that it lay on the boundary that demarcated Mandi state from the British occupied territory of Kulu. The Jalouri Pass lies between Manglore and Kot in Saraj, on the road that connected Shimla to Kulu.\(^70\) Many of the high passes that connected Kulu with different adjoining areas were closed during winter due to snow.

\(^{69}\) Ibid; p. 22.

\(^{70}\) Ibid; pp. 22-26.
The trade that passed through these passes was, therefore, dependent upon the climatic conditions. Infact the geography and physical environment of the entire region deeply influenced the nature of economic activities that were pursued.

4. The Historical Background of Kulu

Lack of a recorded historical tradition is the greatest drawback for scholars attempting to write a long term history of Kulu.\footnote{J. Hutchison and J.Ph. Vogel, \textit{History of the Punjab Hill States}, Vol-II, p. 413.} We are, however, concerned here with the colonial period and the developments immediately preceding it. For this purpose adequate records are available and one need not resort to a recounting of ancient myths of origin.

It was during the 17\textsuperscript{th} century that the Kingdom of Kulu appears to have been consolidated under Raja Jagat Singh. He was a contemporary of the Mughal Emperors Shahjahan and Aurangzeb.\footnote{Gazetteer of the Kangra District: Part II to IV: Kulu, Lahaul and Spiti, (Compiled by A.H.Diack, Civil and Military Gazette Press, Lahore, 1898. Hereafter \textit{Kangra DG, 1898.}) p. 20.} The Ruler of Kulu remained in regular touch with the imperial government of the Mughals and this fact is established by several \textit{farmans} that refer to Raja Jagat Singh as the ‘\textit{zamindar} of Kulu’. The emergence of Kulu as a clearly established state is supported by the observation in one of the \textit{farmans} of Aurangzeb in which Jagat Singh is regarded as being ‘well-established in his royal ways’. As \textit{peshkash} the raja sent hawks and falcons to Delhi, and sent his son as a hostage at the Mughal court.\footnote{J. Hutchison and J.Ph. Vogel, \textit{History of the Punjab Hill States}, Vol-II, p. 461.} Jagat Singh’s successor Bidhi Singh captured Lahaul. He also conquered Dhau and Kandi from Bushahr and added it to his territory in
Outer Saraj. Man Singh was the next ruler and in his time Kulu Kingdom reached the height of its strength.\textsuperscript{74}

In the reign of Jagat Singh Kulu state seems to have moved from being a chieftaincy to a former Hindu Kingdom. While this tradition is explained by a very popular myth, in reality the surrender of the Kulu state by Jagat Singh to Lord Raghunath seems to represent the emergence of an explicit monarchical form of government supported and approved by Brahmanical norms. The grants given to Damodar the Brahman who facilitated this transition, are representative of the ascendancy of Brahmanism.\textsuperscript{75}

The period of the political decline of the Mughal Empire in India is marked by a reordering of the power centres in the Indian subcontinent. This was accompanied by the rise of two important powers who played a crucial role in the political history of Himachal. These two powers were the Gorkhas and Sikhs. The late 18\textsuperscript{th} and early 19\textsuperscript{th} century saw the Gorkha armies capture large parts of the Himalayan region. They had advanced from Nepal and conquered all the hill country up to the Sutlej. For a short time during this period the Kulu region was subordinate to two superior powers. They paid tribute to the Gorkha conquerors for Shangri, and to Sansar Chand for Kulu.\textsuperscript{76} Unlike many other rulers of Himachal the Kulu rulers seem to have got off lightly. After paying their tribute they do not seem to have been interfered with. The geographical remoteness of Kulu in high mountains was its protection, as it had been before.

\textsuperscript{74} Kangra DG, 1898, p. 20.


\textsuperscript{76} Kangra DG, 1898, p. 22. Moorcroft mentions in his travels that he heard that Ghamand Chand Katoch Raja of Kangra, father of Sansar Chand, invaded Kulu
The defeat of the Gorkha army at the hand of the Sikhs and the gradual supremacy of Ranjit Singh over the mountain area has already been referred to earlier. The Sikh ruler demanded a tribute of Rs 40,000. Subsequently, another demand was made but could not fulfilled by the Kulu Raja. As a result an army under Diwan Mokam Chand crossed the Bajaura pass and encamped in the Kulu Valley. The Sikhs are believed to have demanded an annual tribute of Rs 50,000 to which the raja would not agree. The Sikhs then advanced, and plundered the capital town, Sultanpur, and the raja fled to the mountains. It was only after collecting and paying a huge amount of money that the raja was able to bribe the Sikhs to leave the country.\textsuperscript{77}

A second Sikh force was sent into the hills in 1839 under General Vantura. It first invaded state of Mandi. The raja was captured and sent to Amritsar. Thereafter, Kulu was attacked on the pretext that it had attempted to support Mandi. Kulu offered no resistance and with the intention of protecting Sultanpur and his place from plunder, the raja allowed himself to be taken prisoner.\textsuperscript{78} He was promised the \textit{waziri} of Parol as his \textit{jagir} if he agreed to surrender his Kingdom. The Sikh army then moved to the \textit{waziri} of Saraj but found that the people had abandoned the village and fled to the forests. After plundering whatever they could, the Sikh handed over the \textit{waziri} on \textit{ijara} (revenue farming) for an annual amount of 32,000 to the raja of

\textsuperscript{77} Lyall, \textit{Kangra SR}, 1872, p. 73. Moorcroft mentions, that in 1820 A.D. Sobha Ram, \textit{wazir} of Kulu, complained to him of having had to pay Rs. 80,000 to Ranjit Singh for allowing Suja-ul-Mulk, the ex-king of Kabul, to pass through Kulu on route to Ludhiyana. This was probably only one of the offences imputed to Kulu by Ranjit Singh, but the \textit{wazir} mentioned, it as the only one to make out that Kulu had suffered for compliance to the English. Suja-ul-Mulk in his \textit{diary} abuses the Kulu people and says they treated him in hospitably.

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid; p.78.
The new dispensation in Saraj now discarded the old system of revenue assessment in favour of cash collection. In Kulu Proper, however, the Sikhs had retained an armed force and placed a *kardar* to look after the revenue administration. The revenue from upper Kulu was collected in grain. Subsequent to the agreement arrived at in March 1846 between the British and the Sikhs after the first Sikh war, the hill territories between the Sutlej and the Ravi and the Jalandhar Doab were ceded to the British. Kulu along with Lahaul and Spiti now constituted a *tehsil* of Kangra district. However, Thakur Singh (first cousin of Raja Ajit Singh of Kulu) was allowed to retain his *jagir* of Waziri Rupi with sovereign powers. The rest of the principality including Lahaul, was placed under an Assistant Commissioner and incorporated in to district of Kangra. Spiti was detached from Ladakh and made part of Kulu.

Thakur Singh died in 1852 and was succeeded by Gyan Singh who was his illegitimate son. Though the British renewed his *jagir*, Gyan Singh was given the title only of *Rai* instead of raja. The government withdrew all his political powers and also reserved the right to fell and sell timber in the *jagir*. All the *Rai's* of Waziri-Rupi who succeeded there after exercised only limited authority and were subjected to the administrative control that the colonial government chose to exercise upon them from time to time.

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79 Ibid; p. 79.
80 *Kangra DG, 1898*, p. 25.
81 Lyall, *Kangra SR, 1872*, p. 79.
84 Ibid; p. 473.
5. Geographical Description of Lahaul

The territory of Lahaul was bound on the south by the Bara Bangahal taluqa of Kangra Proper and on the east by the waziri of Spiti. To the north was the Ladakh province of Kashmir and on the west it was bounded by Chamba State. Lahaul an area of 2,255 square miles that was made up the valley of the Chandra and Bhaga rivers and also the main Chandra-Bhaga Valley as it is known after the junction of the rivers. These lower down formed the main Chandra-Bhaga Valley the name by it is known after the junction of the rivers at Tandi, till the point of it reaches Rauli at the border with Chamba. The low part of Lahaul was controlled by the state of Chamba and was known as Chamba-Lahaul, while the upper portion as far as the sources of the Chandra-Bhaga on the Baralacha Pass was called the British Lahaul. The latter area had previously been conquered by the Kulu rulers. The western part of the high uninhabited plain of Lingti, and the mountain ranges adjoining it to the north-east of the Baralacha Pass – called Tsarab was also part of Kulu but attached to Spiti. Lahaul was strategically thus located where three Kingdoms – Kulu, Chamba and Ladakh met. Because of its location, the area had always been subject to the control of one or more of the neighbouring Kingdoms, Lahaul is separated from Kulu by the Pir-Panjal range and communication is usually carried out through the Rohtang and Hampta Passes. Lyall commented about the Lahaul area that ‘The scenery of Lahaul is almost oppressive from its grandeur, and it is wild and desolate, for the villages and cultivated lands are mere specks on these vast mountain slopes. But there is

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85 Diack, Kulu SR, 1898, p. 2.
86 Ibid; p. 2.
something pretty and smiling about the near view of the villages, especially in Pattan and lower part of Gara.\textsuperscript{89}

\begin{center}
\textit{Confluence of Chandra and Bhaga River at Tandi in Lahaul}
\end{center}

The rivers in Lahaul were usually crossed by means of suspension bridges that could span 50 to 150 feet. These were made of thick ropes of twisted birch twigs. Three ropes formed the footpath while two served as hand-rails. They hung above, one on either side, and were attached to the footpath by numerous small side ropes that were fastened at intervals of a foot or two. A well-built bridge of this kind could be used even by sheep and goats. This is also made safe if the sides of the bridge were covered with wicker-work and flat slabs of stone were placed on the footpath. However, at times when a high wind was blowing, many of them became dangerous to cross. In the Tibetan language such suspension bridges were called \textit{Chugzam} and in Hindi they are called \textit{Jhula} or \textit{Awa}.\textsuperscript{90} On the trade route from Kulu to Leh the

\textsuperscript{89} Lyall, Kangra SR, 1872, p. 102.

\textsuperscript{90} Ibid; p. 102. The proper \textit{Jhula} as it is usually understood is a different kind of bridge, which was very not commonly used in Lahaul. It consisted of a seat in a loop hanging from a wooden saddle. This saddle rode on a cable made of a thick grass rope, and was pulled, across by a gay line. The \textit{Ghararu} was another name of this kind of bridge, which was used in crossing the Sutlej; and Ulh and other rivers.
Chandra and Bhaga rivers were bridged with *Sangha* bridges. These were passable by cattle and horses. It appears that these bridges were built after British control was established over the region.

About the climate of Lahaul it was observed that 'the air is very dry but pure: meat once dried will keep for any number of years.' Lyall observed in his report that there was very little sickness of any kind. He further noted that there were no cases of goitre in the area. Because of its trans-Himalayan nature, the influence of the monsoons was not fully felt though in July and August there were a few showers of rain in the lower part of Lahaul. Habitations were, and still are located at very high elevations. The uppermost village in Rangloi is Purana Koksar, and in Gara it is Darcha. Both these villages are about 10,800 feet above the valley in Gara. For instance Kangsir is on 11,345 feet. The average elevation of the cultivated and inhabited part of Lahaul observed by Lyall was a little less than 10,000 feet. Lyall does not mention that General Cunnigham had estimated this at above 11,000 feet. In the upper part of Rangoi, in *Kothi* Koksar the villages fields are covered with snow till as late as the end of May. However, in the lower half of Pattan the peasants can sometimes manage to sow and reap two crops in their fields during the spring, summer and autumn. During a severe winter some villages get completely buried in snow. Avalanches were known to occur in spring and summer. Lyall writes in his

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91 *Ibid*; p.103. The *Sangha* bridge was made up of whole trunks of pine or cedar that were built into the embankments on either side of the river. That were placed in double or triple tiers with each supported by a prop on the end of the tier below. Two long trunks were then placed upon the ends of the highest tiers to connect them on either side. The long trunks formed the pathway.
report of 1872 that a ‘glacier slipped and utterly buried a village at the mouth of the Yucha Valley not many years ago.’

6. The Historical Background of Lahaul

It appears very likely that Lahaul was at an early time part of Ladakh. The fact that the name Lahaul is derived from ‘Lho-yut’ or southern district seems to reinforce this possibility. However, the distinct traditions of the Lahaulis suggest that the two areas have for long been separated. It has been further argued on the basis of linguistic research that the area of Lahaul was inhabited by an aboriginal tribe that was similar in many ways to the Munda-speaking tribes of Bengal and Central India. An early historical reference to Lahaul was made by Hiuen Tsiang, who is believed to have visited Kulu during his travels in India between 629 and 645. He mentions that Lo-u-lo lies north to ‘Kiu-lu-to’. But it is a bit difficult to explain why he says that ‘Lo-u-lo is situated 1800 or 1900 li (360 or 380 miles) away from the middle of Kiu-lu-to.’ In reality the first village in Lahaul is only 44 miles from the Sultanpur town, the capital of Kulu. Despite this mistake, however, and irrespective of its cause Lahaul seems quite clearly the country being referred by Hiuen Tsiang. Another interesting point that needs mention is that according to Lyall the name of Lahaul was used only by people of Kulu and by Indians in general. The Lahaulas and Tibetans called the country Garzha. The origin of the name ‘Lahaul’ is uncertain. The Tibetan ‘Lho-yut’, that Lyall describes as ‘Lho-yut’ means, as earlier stated, south country. During the early years of its history Lahaul was ruled by several petty chiefs called Jo, all of

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92 Ibid; p.103.
93 Ibid; p.105.
95 Ibid; p. 476.
whom were of Tibetan origin. The isolated nature of area ensured that Lahaul enjoyed a great degree of political freedom, and the only indicator of subjection was the yearly tribute that its rulers paid to Ladakh, Chamba or Kulu at different points of time. Harcourt, on the other hand, has argued that Lahaul was a province of the Kingdom of Guge. The Guge country was situated in the upper Sutlej valley that is now a part of the Tibetan region. But the argument that Guge exercised control over Lahaul may not be correct. Guge probably never held territory in the Chandrabhaga Valley, though Spiti was usually part of that Kingdom. When the country was conquered by Sengge Namgyal, King of Ladakh (1590-1635), Spiti and Zanskar were made over to his youngest son but even here there is no mention of Ladakh. Quite possibly, in the confusion prior to the reconsolidation of the Ladakh Kingdom by Chovang Namgyal, Lahaul managed to became independent. It was for a short time governed by Thakurs or petty barons who lorded over small clusters of villages. Four or five of these families remained influential till the establishment of British rule under the colonial rulers too, they remained in possession of their original territory. This was held by them as jagir and was conditional to payment of tribute or nazrana.

The mid-seventeenth century witnessed Ladakh being invaded by an army from central Tibet that was then under Mongolia. The Ladakhi King, Delegs Namgyal (1645-1680) approached the Mughals for help from Kashmir. With Mughals help the invaders from Tibet were defeated at Basgo and driven back. Taking advantage of this retreat, the raja of Kulu, Bidhi Singh (1672), took advantage of the opportunity and brought upper Lahaul under his control. Thereafter, he annexed the country from

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96 Ibid; p. 39.
97 Ibid; p. 479.
98 Lyall, Kangra SR, 1872, p. 106.
Chamba as far as Thirot that marked the boundary between Kulu and Chamba. Bidhi Singh’s name is found mentioned in Lahaul in documents and inscriptions more frequently than that of any other Kulu ruler. Hutchison and Vogel noted that, ‘at least sixteen records bore his name’. Man Singh (1688-1719) who succeeded Bidhi Singh was faced by resistance from the leading family or jo of Barbog in Lahaul. This family, that owed allegiance to Ladakh was, therefore, deprived of all power. Though these families were all of Tibetan origin, under Hindu influence they began to call themselves Rajputs, and to claim that their ancestors entered Lahaul from Bangahal. From about 1670 onwards Ladakhi influence came to end in Lahaul. The rulers of Kulu and Leh entered into a trade agreement. This trade exchange lasted for a long time till the Sikh occupation of Kulu and Lahaul caused disruption.

In 1700 A.D. Raja Man Singh of Kulu strengthened his grip over the country. He built the fort at Gondla and also married a daughter of the Gondla family. Later during the reign of Raja Pritam Singh we learn that a Lahaul contingent assisted Kulu in the war against Mandi at Bajaura though ostensibly they fought under the banner of Gyephang Lha-the, the spirit of the great peak that looks down upon the Kulu Valley. Despite this association of Lahaul people with Kulu however, we learn that when Moorcroft passed through Lahaul in 1820, he still found four villages in the Chandra Valley that continued to pay tribute to Ladakh. This was perhaps more in order to maintain time honoured connections and to preserve the peace for purpose of keeping alive relations. In Moorcroft’s time the Kulu revenue headquarters in Lahaul were located at Tandi. There was a storehouse, called kothi where grain was deposited as revenue. It was at Keylong that Moorcroft met Dharm Singh, the Thakur of that place,

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100 Ibid; p. 481.
101 Ibid; p. 481.
and the principal man in Lahaul.\textsuperscript{102} With the annexation of Kulu by the Sikhs in 1840-41, Lahaul too was annexed and ruled by them in their usual extortionate manner. With the cession of most of the hill areas in 1846 to the British, both Kulu and Lahaul came under direct British rule. This resulted in an entirely new administrative dispensation that altered the basis norms of governance. This also resulted in an increased influence of mainstream Hindu culture and ideas. The Thakurs, who were the dominant social group adopted Hindu customs and connections. Lower Lahaul, however, remained under the state of Chamba.

An interesting point worth mentioning is that a Moravian Mission of German origin was established at Keylong in 1858. It became an important means of introducing some new ideas and methods of cultivation in Lahaul. Apart from this, the Moravian Missionaries managed to carry out some useful historical and linguistic work in the area.\textsuperscript{103}

\textbf{7. Geographical Description of Spiti}

The area occupied by Spiti is entirely enclosed by very high mountains that rise on an average to 18,000 feet, or more above sea level. These ranges separate Spiti from not only \textit{Waziri} Inner Saraj and \textit{Waziri} Rupi, but also from the Lahaul area which is itself quite isolated. Even Tibet on the east is separated from Spiti by a range and high mountains. It was perhaps, the state of Bushahr that was relatively convenient to access from Spiti.\textsuperscript{104} The Spiti mountains are clearly higher than these of Lahaul. To the north is to be found a peak range of 23,064 feet, and many other peaks along this line are considerably over 20,000 feet. These impressive mountain ranges surround

\textsuperscript{102} Ibid; pp. 482.
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid; pp. 482-83.
\textsuperscript{104} Kangra DG, 1898, p. 71.
Spiti from all sides and make access extremely difficult. This also prevents the Indian monsoon from entering the area, thereby making it rather cold and dry.\textsuperscript{105} Spiti has several rivers that flow through it. The most important one of these is the Spiti river, which has many tributaries that have an increased flow of water as the snow melts during the summer months. The main tributaries are the Pin on the right bank and the Sampa, Shilla and Lingti on the left. The water of these is heavily laden with silt as there is little vegetation to hold the soil. Because of the considerable height of Spiti Valley, and the virtual absence of rainfall, vegetation of all kinds is very scanty. In the upper reaches of the valley hardly a tree is visible. There are, however, some dwarf willows that grow wild in a few places on the river bank but these are more in the nature of bushes than trees.\textsuperscript{106}

\textit{A View of One of the Spiti Valleys}

\section*{8. Historical Background of Spiti}

It seems that Spiti, was during the course of its long history, a part either of the Kingdom of Ladakh or of some other state of Tibet. A description of Spiti has also

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid; p. 72.

\textsuperscript{106} Ibid; pp. 72-73.
been provided by Egerton the Deputy Commissioner of Kangra in 1864 in his *Journal of a Tour through Spiti*, who toured the area. Harcourt mentioned in his book that, the earliest reliable notice of Spiti occurs about the year 1055 A.D. when the country was apparently under the rule of Tibet, of which Lhasa was the seat of government; and when Tibet fell, in 1262 under the sway of the Kubla Khan, ‘Spiti shared the same fate’. There were also certain periods when it was able to achieve independence. From 1720 onwards Spiti appears to have remained a province of Ladakh. Its remote location, however, meant that the inhabitants were largely to govern themselves. This did not mean that Spiti was entirely free from external intervention or invasion. Lyall tells us that Gerard mentions that in 1776 the Bushahris held the fort of Dankar for two years. He further says that, Moorcrofts and Trebeck mention a foray that had been made just prior to his visit by a large body of armed men from Kulu. Lyall again says, that the people of the Spiti area were not warlike and paid a small tribute to all the surrounding states by way of blackmail to escape being plundered. Spiti was therefore, always at the mercy of its neighbours, especially Ladakh, Bushahr and Kulu. Wherever their country was invaded, the inhabitants abandoned the villages and fled to the higher mountains that were difficult to reach. They remained there till the danger had passed. Subsequent to the occupation of Kulu by the Sikhs in 1841 Spiti too was invaded. The people abandoned their houses and monasteries and fled to the mountains while the houses and monasteries were plundered, Spiti was not the kind of area that Sikhs would have wanted to permanently annex. It therefore, remained a province of Ladakh. In 1840 the mountain area of Punjab from the Ravi to the Indus,

109 Ibid; p. 106.
including Ladakh and Spiti, were transferred in perpetual sovereignty to Raja Gulab Singh of Jummu. In the same year, however, Spiti was exchanged for some other territory and added to Kulu because the British wanted a secure road to the wool producing areas of Chang-Thang in Tibet. \(^{111}\)

In 1846 the boundary between Spiti, Ladakh and Tibet was drawn up by Cunningham. For the first three years after 1846 the task of revenue collection was farmed out to Mansukh Das who was the *wazir* of the raja of Bushahr. In 1849, Major Hay the Assistant Commissioner of Kulu took charge of Spiti and submitted a detailed report. \(^{112}\) From this time, Spiti became the part of Kulu Sub-Division and came under direct control of British.

\(^{111}\) Ibid; pp. 486-88.