PART I: INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER-1

GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

A

Crescat E Fluviis or ‘Strength from the Waters’ was the essence of the Panjab.1 Derived from the Persian word ‘Panjāb’ or five waters, it implied the land of the five rivers.2 Referred to as Sapt Sindhu since the earliest times, the term ‘Panjāb’ gained wide usage and popularity from the time of Akbar onwards.3

The political boundaries of the region have been fluid, making the demarcation of the geographical boundaries difficult. The region represented by the term Panjāb, in the first half of the nineteenth century, coincided territorially with Ranjit Singh’s Panjāb. It was bounded by the Himalayas in the north, the Thar desert in the south, the river Indus on the west and the Sutlej on the east.4 The princely states of Patiala, Nabha and Jind and those of Malerkotla and Faridkot, not forming a contiguous territory in the Cis-Sutlej area existed simultaneously with Ranjit Singh’s Panjāb. The changing political conditions in the Panjāb manifested themselves in the changing geographical boundaries. The area was exposed to many invasions from the northwest. It was also open to many travellers., who brought with them...

multiple cultural influences. The Panjab could not but be eclectic in its vision and attitude. All these factors of climate, and foreign influence affected the manufactures as also the sartorial styles and preferences of the people of the Panjab. A brief mention of these would provide the context to the study.

After the annexation of Panjab to the British empire, a reorganization of territories was undertaken. Peshawar, Kohat and Hazara were included in Panjab in 1850 and the western boundary of the province moved beyond the Indus, towards the west. The ever-fluid political situation was reflected in the changing political boundaries of the region, when in 1858 the areas of Delhi, Rohtak, Gurgaon and Hissar were included within the boundaries of Panjab. Another change in the political boundaries was affected in 1862 when Ambala and Karnal were included. Towards the end of the century, a reshuffling of the territorial units took place, so that by 1900, there were 31 districts and 6 divisions in the region.

Physiographically, four zones can be demarcated in the Panjab. These would include the Himalayas, the Sub-Montane region, the Salt Range and the Great Plains, bringing forth a vast range in the climatic conditions.

The Himalayas in the north, including the districts of Kangra, Shimla and Chamba were sparsely populated due to the extremes in climate. In this zone, the majority of the population was rural and pastoral. The people belonged to diverse ethnic groups which included Rajputs, Brahmins and the menials of the hills. Kashmir formed an important part of the Himalayan region, which came under the control of Ranjit Singh in the first quarter of the 19th century. Due to its geographical and climatic conditions, Kashmir

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\(^1\) ibid., pp. 94, 100.
\(^3\) ibid., p. 2.
was the largest producer of woollen products. This included the famous ‘pashmina’ shawls. With the arrival of Ranjit Singh on the political scene of Kashmir, the manufacture and trade of pashmina received a great fillip.

The foothills of the Himalayas including the Shivalik ranges, constituted the Sub-Montane region. This included the low hills of Nahan, Kangra and the areas of Hoshiarpur, Gurdaspur and Jammu lying to the east of Jhelum. Geographically, the region received adequate rainfall and was watered by numerous streams. The richness of the land and abundance of rainfall made agriculture the main subsistence for the people of the region. A few pastoral groups also existed in these low hills. The climate was an important factor influencing the social and cultural life of the people. For example, it was its geographical setting, that limited trade with Sialkot, the lone urban centre in the region. Sialkot was famous for the manufacture of cloth like susi, lacha and lungi. Ganesh Das in his ‘Char Bagh-i-Panjab’ mentions that susis of all varieties and fine qualities of lachas and lungis were being woven in Sialkot. The other district of Gurdaspur, where a small community of Kashmiris had settled, was famous for its coarse pashmina, its shawl weaving and the manufacture of lois. Common khaddar cloth, handsomely woven, was exported to Kangra from Gurdaspur.

The third major physiographic division of the Panjab was the Salt Range. This included the areas of Hazara, Peshawar, Rawalpindi, Kohat, Jhelum, Bannu, Shahpur and Dera Ismail Khan. Different in the quality of its soil from the Panjab plains, the region extended from the right bank of

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8 Details of various textiles have been dealt with later in the study.
12 District Gazetteer Gurdaspur (1914), pp. 139-141; *Imperial Gazetteer of India* (1908), Vol. II, p. 65.
the river Jhelum to the river Indus. The northern districts of the Salt range received abundant rainfall. Precipitation decreased in the Peshawar valley, and in the districts of Rawalpindi, Jhelum and Bannu. As a consequence, cultivation was inferior in quality. In the absence of meaningful agriculture, trade and commerce took precedence with the people. The population was a homogenous mixture of Pathans, Rajputs, Awans; Gakhars and Khattars. The majority was Muslim in origin.

Peshawar and Rawalpindi were the two major urban centres, with Peshawar being the major transit point for all the trade routes between Central Asia, Kabul and the Panjab. Climatic conditions, thus, were indirectly responsible for trade being a major alternate means of sustenance. The region was a major producer of salt. Silk and cotton textiles were other major productions. These were exported widely and also found markets within the province. Apart from other manufactures, Peshawar and Hazara were famous for their cloth, especially lungi or the check-patterned cotton cloth. Hazara on the other hand, was also famous for its abundant produce of wool. Rough terrain and a cold climate must necessarily have influenced the process of manufacture involved in the production of various goods.

The remaining part of the Panjab, consisted of the Great Plains which included within themselves, the extensive rivers and the area of the doabs. The plains traversed by the five rivers, were highly cultivable. The plains consisted of two rather dissimilar tracts, of the eastern and the western plains. The northern part of the eastern plains included certain areas of

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15 ibid., p. 4.
Ambala, the districts of Ludhiana, Jullandhar and Amritsar and also certain areas of Sialkot and Gurdaspur, while the southern part included the districts of Delhi, Gurgaon, Karnal, Hissar and parts of Rohtak and Ferozepur. There was considerable rainfall in the northern half. Rainfall declined gradually towards the south with the extreme southeast of the region becoming a dry belt adjoining the Thar desert. This dry and arid area was socially and culturally closer to Rajasthan, with the majority of its population being cultivators. The populace belonged to diverse ethnic backgrounds and included Jats, Rajputs, Kambohs, Gujjars, Ahirs, Meos, Khanzadas, Bishnois, Arains, Baniyas, Khatris and Aroras. In the north, east and south the Hindu presence could be felt. It was a predominance of Muslims in the north, west and northwest. The Sikhs were settled mainly in the central and western portions of the region.

The western plains on the other hand included the districts of Lahore, Multan, Jhang, Montgomery, Muzaffargarh, Dera Ghazi Khan, Shahpur, Gujranwala, and parts of Gujrat. The backbone of the economy was agriculture, which was carried out mainly in the vicinity of the rivers. The rainfall was highly inadequate but alternative irrigational arrangements existed as an aid to good agriculture. The population, majority of which was Muslim, included agriculturists as well as pastoral groups of Biloch, Pathan, Jat, Rajput, Gujjar and Sayyid ethnicity.

In addition to agriculture, manufacture, trade and commerce were greatly encouraged as subsidiary occupations in the plains. There were a number of large towns and urban centres including Multan, Lahore, Amritsar, Ludhiana and Delhi. Among other products, Multan, Lahore,
Amritsar and Ludhiana were famous for manufacture of lungi cloth. Lahore and Amritsar were also known for woollen products including shawls. Amritsar, in fact, is mentioned for its trade with Kashmir in shawls and saffron. Coarse cloth and inferior silks were also manufactured at Amritsar. Multan was known for its white cloth, chintz, rich lungis, gulbadan, brocades and tissues in silk. Daryai, dhoopchaon, khes and sufi were among the variety of its textiles. In fact, khes from Multan and Gujrat were produced in enough quantity to be exported to other districts. Gujrat in the Chaj doab was known for its shawls and embroidery while Bhera also in the Chaj doab, traded in cotton cloth. Gujranwala in the Rachna doab was known for its shawl edgings, silk and cotton scarves. Pakpattan and Kamalia in Montgomery manufactured high quality cotton fabrics and prints, which found markets in Amritsar, Lahore and Multan.

The numerous references to the manufactures of Sindh Sagar doab included lungis, gulbadan and chintz from Mankera and khes from Leia. Ganesh Das mentions dyed red cloth or salu as the famous product of Sahiwal. Jhang on the other hand was known to export white cotton cloth to Afghanistan. In the Bist Jullandhar doab, Rahon was famous for its white

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26 *District Gazetteer Shalpur* (1897), p. 186.


29 *District Gazetteer Dera Ismail Khan* (1884), pp. 142-143.


31 *District Gazetteer Jhang* (1884), pp. 129-130.
khes and Bajwara and Kunja for white turbans. Sultanpur was known for chintz and coarse cloth, while Phagwara was famous for coarse cloth. Sirsa, Kaithal and Rohtak were manufacturing cotton cloth of various kinds along with khes and woollen wrappers. Patiala was famous for silk and susi while Sunam was known for its cotton textiles. Among the many products being exported from the Panjab were cotton, silk and woollen textiles and shawls.

With the advent of the British in Panjab, the production of textile and handlooms suffered a setback. English Manchester cloth became popular. In fact such was the popularity that English checks and tweeds started being copied by the local weavers, for local use.

Owing to the geographical diversity, a vast range was seen in the climate of the Panjab. It ranged from the bitter cold of Kashmir to the hot and dry climate of the southeast. The rough terrain and harsh climate of the northwest presented a sharp contrast to the extremes in the climate of the plains. The climate of the Panjab presented greater range and extremes than most other regions of the country. Large human settlements have always grown on banks of rivers. In the Panjab too, after its early Harappan cities, great masses of people settled in urban centres on the banks of the five rivers.

The vast range of its climate and population led to a variety and range in occupation in the Panjab. This in turn led to the development of a rigid caste system and a strict code of social hierarchy. It would be of interest to

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36 H. Steinbach, The Panjab, pp. 87, 90.
37 Imperial Gazetteer of India (1908), Vol. II, p. 117.
see how this intricate web of factors affected costume, its range and its styles.

B

The Panjab lay on the trajectory of many foreign incursions from very early on in History, but they intensified with the coming of Islam to India. The Panjab experienced something akin to a ‘ripple effect’. Foreign influences left their mark in the form of receding concentric circles. The epicentre of this wave lay in Ghazni, Kabul and still further in Central Asia.

In 1738, with the crossing of Nadir Shah into the Panjab, the much-weakened authority of the provincial governors of the Mughal kings, collapsed without much resistance. In the ensuing three decades, the province witnessed selfish intrigues and attempts for independence on the part of the provincial governors who sought to be free of the Mughals. Lacking in the energy needed for successful control, Lahore fell to the Durrani troops. It was incorporated into the dominions of Ahmad Shah Abdali who appears to have been the weakest to control the Panjab. His intent was plunder. Administration and consolidation were not the main interests. This state of affairs lasted till 1765. In this free for all, the populace, as well as the local governors were pretty much left to fend for themselves. The Afghans, when they retired, left the country in a state of lawlessness and disorder.38

At this point of chaos, a new force, gradually but surely gaining in numerical strength and political importance, appeared on the horizon. These were the Sikhs, who were fast emerging as the avowed enemies of the Mughals. Transforming themselves from a band of harmless devotees into determined opponents of the Mughals, the Sikhs joined hands under Guru

Gobind Singh and later Banda Bahadur. In his famous assembly at Anandpur in 1699, Guru Gobind Singh had instituted the Khalsa. Those Sikhs who adopted the five K’s were baptized as the Singhs of Guru Gobind Singh. These five symbols, which included amongst others, the kachh and kesh were gradually absorbed into the religious and cultural milieu of the Panjab. The kachh, and the pagri, individual items of clothing otherwise, became important religious symbols peculiar to the Sikhs.\textsuperscript{39}

The 18th century in the Panjab was a period both of flux and confusion. Plunder, pillage and exactions by the powerful, became the order of the day, whether they were by the Mughal governors of the Panjab or by invaders like Ahmad Shah Abdali. Almost every creative activity in the Panjab was brought to a standstill. Lands were deserted; trade, commerce and industry failed to function. The peasant, the artisan and the labourer in the countryside all sorely needed protection.\textsuperscript{40} The general populace, those who could, took refuge in the hills.

The oppressed gradually grouped together and stoked the latent fire of ritual, to set seal on their union. These united bands, the misls, under their leaders, the misldars displayed their capacity for united action in secret associations and isolated acts of depredation. This cause for unity was espoused by most Sikh leaders. The nucleus of open defiance grew rapidly in number. This defiance was strengthened by the glue of the new faith of Sikhism that they chose to profess.\textsuperscript{41}

With this newly acquired confidence, the misldars cornered the Afghan governor of Lahore, almost making him a prisoner within the walls


\textsuperscript{41} Gazetteer of the Punjab - Provincial Volume (1888-89), p. 81.
of the city. A significant victory came in 1763, when Zain Khan, the governor was killed and Sirhind was destroyed. This was a significant step forward. A coin was struck, declaring political independence. From mere plunderers, the Sikhs had transformed into a distinct body with clear, well-defined aims.

This system lasted for a good thirty years and then, what the traveller Forster had predicted in 1783, happened. The prediction was that “...some ambitious chief led on by his genius and success and absorbing the power of his associates, display from the ruins of their commonwealth the standard of monarchy.” Even before the establishment of the empire of Ranjit Singh and its royal splendour, the people in Panjab had been exposed to grandeur. The presence of the Mughal governors and their officials, complete in their legendary finery of office, jewels, costumes and other paraphernalia had permeated into the social milieu of Panjab.

The political map of the Panjab at the close of the 18th century presented a cobbled of small sates. These included the following: Twelve Sikh chief-ships which had their territories in the plains of the central Panjab and along the foot of the hills extending from Kangra to Jammu like Lahore, Amritsar, Gujranwala, Jullandhar, Kapurthala, Patiala, Nabha, Jind etc.; a number of hill states ruled by the Rajput princes like Mandi. Suket, Basohli, Jaswan, Nurpur etc.; chieftainships of the martial clans of the Panjabi Muslims like the Pathans of Kasur, Sials of Jhang as well as the Biloches and Awans of Khushab and Sahiwal; certain areas ruled by the Pathan Nawabs on behalf of the kings of Kabul, like Multan, Dera Ghazi Khan, Peshawar etc. 

\[42\] George Forster, *A Journey from Bengal to England through the Northern part of India, Kashmir, Afghanistan and Persia and into Russia by the Caspian Sea*, 2 Vols.; Languages Department Punjab, Patiala, 1970 (reprint), henceforth referred to as *A Journey from Bengal to England*, Vol. 1, p. 295.

\[43\] Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar III. Foreword.
The Panjab was still vulnerable to any foreign invasion and the only way to stop its complete disintegration was to bring all the petty states under one strong rule.

In 1797, Zaman Shah of Kabul ‘moved from his native land and spread owl-like a shadow over the Panjab’.\(^{44}\) Suffering initial defeat, the Sikhs, however, harassed the retreating Afghan armies. 1798 saw the return of Zaman Shah and the seizing of Lahore by him. He was, however, neither able to use the possession of Panjab to his own advantage, nor make arrangements for the permanent occupation of the country. News of impending danger from Persia, led Zaman Shah back to defend his home territories. Faced with the difficulties of transporting his artillery back to Peshawar, Zaman Shah requested the young sardar of the Sukarchakias, Ranjit Singh to ensure this. Ranjit Singh’s headquarters were at Gujranwala on the road from Lahore to Jhelum. With his political astuteness, he was quick to perceive the opportunity that had presented itself. He foresaw how the power and prestige ensuing from the possession of the provincial capital of Lahore would enable him to realize his dream of welding together the \textit{misls} into one whole unit under his leadership. It was a mighty task, which a 19-year-old unlettered Jat youth undertook to achieve. Ranjit Singh, the grandson of Charhat Singh Sukarchakia, who was gifted by nature with qualities of leadership and a penetrating political vision, became one of the best-known rulers of the Panjab. With the help of his mother-in-law, Mai Sada Kaur, who was the virtual head of the Kanhaiya \textit{misl}, Ranjit Singh proceeded by force, fraud or conciliation to extend his power. During the first seven years, Ranjit Singh heading the confederacy of the Sukarchakia, Ahluwalia and Kanhaiya \textit{misls}, systematically controlled the independent Sikh chiefs between the Jhelum and the Sutlej. Attempts were also made

\(^{44}\)Khushwant Singh, \textit{Ranjit Singh}, p. 31.
periodically to control the Mohammedans of Jhang and Multan. Ranjit Singh worked hard to give a garb of unity to the Sikh sardars. Unable to unite because of their mutual jealousies, the Sikhs felt it might be better to be joined together in one commonwealth — under the head of one able sardar. And this head was Ranjit Singh.45

By 1805, the system of joint confederacies came to end. The next step in the rise of Ranjit Singh came when the British armies in pursuit of the Maratha, Jaswant Rao Holkar arrived on the banks of the Beas. A treaty was signed between Ranjit Singh and the British. The Sikhs i.e. Ranjit Singh and Fateh Singh Ahluwalia were now bound not to provide help to the Maratha. In return, the British would respect Sikh territory so long as no cause for offence was given. 1805 thus, had a deep impact upon the mind of Ranjit Singh. It taught him to avoid conflict with the British. Ranjit Singh tried to encroach upon the Cis-Sutlej states. The uneasy concern and panic of the people of those areas pressurized the British into seeking a solution. Threats of impending Franco-Russian invasions from the northwest were also major pressures felt by the British who wanted to keep most of the areas within India, quiescent and happy. This led to the negotiations conducted with Ranjit Singh by Metcalfe. Ranjit Singh conscious of the military superiority of the British and the incipient possibilities of rebellion amongst his own chiefs, wisely decided to settle his relations with the English once and for all. In 1809, Ranjit Singh signed the treaty of Amritsar with the British.46 The terms included no encroachment by Ranjit Singh on the left bank of the Sutlej. In return the British promised not to meddle in Ranjit Singh’s domain, especially in the territories to the north of Sutlej. This understanding, reached by the treaty, was respected by Ranjit Singh till the end of his life.

45 Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar III. Foreword.
Barred from extending towards the east, Ranjit Singh turned his attention towards the west of Sutlej for the expansion of his territories and he was successful in absorbing the old trans-Sutlej misls into his domains. Ranjit Singh seized the fort of Attock on the bank of the Indus. A battle in 1813 between the Sikhs and the Afghans left Attock in the charge of Ranjit Singh who extorted the Koh-i-noor from Shah Shuja, then a refugee at Lahore. He succeeded in capturing Kashmir in 1819. In 1820, he led his armies towards Dera Ghazi Khan. 1821 was spent in consolidating the conquests west of the Jhelum.

During this period several European military adventurers also came to the court of Lahore to train Ranjit Singh’s army, including French generals Court, Allard and Avitabile. In the process of establishing his kingdom and court, Ranjit Singh followed the example of the Mughal court to a great extent. A copy of the Ain-i Akbari was present in his personal collection, pointing towards his source of inspiration. Even though Ranjit Singh was rather plainly dressed himself, he was very particular in maintaining court etiquette, complete with all the nuances of court setting, hierarchy and attire.

The Anglo-Sikh relations had entered into an extremely cordial phase. Ranjit Singh met the Governor-General William Bentinck at Ropar in 1831. The meeting at Ropar has been described by many eyewitnesses as the ‘Panjab’s field of cloth of gold’. No great business was conducted but written assurances of perpetual friendship were made to Ranjit Singh. In 1832, a treaty providing the British, free navigation of the Indus and the Sutlej, was signed. From this moment onwards, the Maharaja stopped entertaining all suspicion and distrust of the British. It was a real friendship he felt for them. When Sir Henry Fane, the commander of the British forces

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48 James Skinner has provided an account in his Military Memories of Lieutenant-Colonel James Skinner, by Bailie Fraser, 2 Vols., 1851. As quoted in Khushwant Singh, Ranjit Singh, p. 172.
in India, visited Panjab on the occasion of the marriage of Nau Nihal Singh. He was given a royal reception by the Maharaja. "When the two personages met, their elephants were brought side by side, and Sir Henry, stepping from his own elephant on to that of the Maharaja, gave him a cordial English shake of the hand and took his seat beside him." A tripartite treaty was signed between the Sikhs, the British and the Afghan Shah Shuja of the Saddozais in 1838 by which Shah Shuja was to be restored to the throne. At this juncture, preparatory to the campaign against the Afghans, the British Governor-General Auckland visited Ranjit Singh at Ferozepur, Lahore and Amritsar. Ranjit Singh was at this stage feeble and worn out. A greater power than his own, for whom he showed signs of ostensible esteem, had set bounds to his ambition on the west, as it had already done on the south and east. His eventful life ended in 1839 at the age of fifty-nine.

Ranjit Singh’s life and career had been an absolute success. He left behind a powerful kingdom as a replacement of the wavering, factious groups of chiefs that he inherited. The army was transformed from a rough undisciplined mass to a large, well-drilled army with three hundred guns. He had the wisdom to avoid a conflict with the British without any loss to his dignity. His failure was in the inability to leave behind stable political institutions. Military despotism could not promise permanence.

The national and democratic instincts of the Sikhs, which were concentrated in the Khalsa, could not be curbed by the people or the king. Inordinate power had been given to his favourites by Ranjit Singh. The troubles after his death arose out of this. Important figures at court were the three Dogra brothers Gulab Singh, Dhian Singh and Suchet Singh of Jammu, Jamadar Khushal Singh, the Sandhanwalia Sardars, Fakir Azizuddin, Bhai

S.M. Latif, History of the Punjab: From the remotest antiquity to the present time, Eurasia Publishing House, New Delhi, 1964 (reprint), henceforth referred to as History of the Punjab, p. 476.

Ibid., p. 492.
Govind Ram, Ram Singh and Misr Beli Ram. The internal administration was better off than the contemporary governments of neighbouring independent states, despite the fact that there were no regular courts of justice and trade was hampered by duties and state monopolies. The attention of the government functionaries was mainly directed towards the realization of revenue. Oppression was punished and the system of government such as it was, was considered suited to the untamed tastes of the people.

Maharaja Kharak Singh, the successor of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was a weak, almost imbecile character. He came to the throne with Dhian Singh Dogra as his wazir. The importance given by Kharak Singh to Chet Singh, a man of no great capacity led to the triggering off of many intrigues. Kharak Singh’s son Nau Nihal Singh in collaboration with Dhian Singh completely sidelined his father. In the midst of all this, Kharak Singh died. Shortly after, Nau Nihal Singh, with several members of the Dogra family, was killed in an accidental collapse of a gateway. The struggle for power now shifted to Sher Singh, another son of Ranjit Singh and the unborn child of Nau Nihal Singh, supported by the Sandhanwalias and Gulab Singh Dogra respectively. A Council of Regency, headed by the mother of Nau Nihal Singh was formed. During this period, before the take over by Sher Singh – the army taking advantage of the situation went on a general plunder of the Panjab. Murders of obnoxious officers and vendettas marked the day. Violence erupted at Lahore, Kashmir and Peshawar. Even when the situation was brought under control, the army, like a brute who had tasted blood, realized its own potential for calling the shots. In this tussle for the control of Lahore, both the opposing parties of Gulab Singh of Jammu and Sandhanwalias were ironically united in their aim of ousting Sher Singh and supporting the claim of the youngest son of Ranjit Singh, Dalip Singh. In 1843, Maharaja Sher Singh was killed. Dalip Singh came to the throne with
Lehna Singh Sandhanwalia as his wazir. The infighting ultimately resulted in the death of the Sandhanwalia sardars. Dalip Singh was kept on the throne but with Hira Singh as his wazir. The new regime sought to pacify the army by raising its pay. But the army had realized its power, and the situation from this point onwards, till the second Anglo-Sikh war, essentially centred around army battles and intrigues.

The British, watching the events at Lahore, were aware of the only logical ending of the tragedy that was being enacted out. A quiet massing of the troops was being accomplished at Ferozepur. The attitude of the British was defensive and yet pacific, till they were attacked. The Khalsa Panchayats resolved to go to war in November 1845. Mudki, Feroze Shahr, Aliwal, Sabraon were sites of important battles. The British were victorious and marched straight to Lahore. The terms of the treaty included war indemnity of one crore rupees; cession of full sovereignty to the British of the area between Sutlej and Beas; disbandment of the army; and no change in the Lahore territory, except with the concurrence of the British government. The British presence at Lahore was to continue for sometime till matters settled down. However, a fresh treaty in 1846 stipulated that the affairs of the Lahore durbar would be managed by a Council of Regency, whose members were fixed by the British Governor General. A British force stationed at Lahore would ensure obedience. British expenses were to be met by the Lahore durbar. This arrangement would terminate in 1854 when Dalip Singh attained the age of sixteen. Simultaneously, a treaty was signed with Gulab Singh by which he was given independent charge of the areas of Jammu and Kashmir.

For a brief period there was quiet on the Panjab front. Due to a variety of reasons, the Sikh soldiers were harbouring resentment and

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feelings of vendetta. Disaffection spread among the Sikhs and the standard of revolt was raised by them against the British. The opposing armies of the British and the Sikhs clashed at Chilianwala and Gujrat in 1849. The British faced initial setbacks. However, the Sikhs were defeated in the subsequent battles. The Sikhs surrendered at Rawalpindi and the Panjab was annexed to become a province of British India. The proclamation of March 1849 declared,

...when Ranjit Singh was dead and his wisdom no longer guided the Councils of the State, the sardars and the *Khalsa* army, without provocation and without cause, suddenly invaded the British territories...Governor-General...generously spared the kingdom which he had acquired a just right to subvert, ... the Governor General is compelled to resolve upon the entire subjugation of a people whom their own Government has long been unable to control, and whom no punishment can deter from violence, nor acts of friendship can conciliate to peace. Wherefore the Governor-General has declared, and hereby proclaims, that the kingdom of the Panjab is at an end; and that all the territories of Maharaja Ranjit Singh are now and henceforth a portion of the British empire in India.\(^5\)

Maharaja Dalip Singh renounced his sovereignty and left for England. All forts were dismantled, the army was disbanded and given pensions. The promising out of the army, were taken into British service.

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The British government had now to provide a new administration. Order had to be literally created out of chaos. People had to be handled tactfully, old prejudices removed and new laws and regulations established. All this was accomplished peacefully, despite the existence of disbanded army personnel and unemployed Sikh bureaucracy.

An elaborate system of government was worked out by the British to manage a group of people who had just been deprived of power. The administration was carried out in a sagacious and prudent manner by combining the political, financial and judicial features in a Board of administration consisting of Henry Lawrence, John Lawrence and Robert Montgomery. The Board members were together in charge of the overall functioning of the province. The Board placed the revenue system of the province on a sound basis, developed resources of the region, dug canals and laid roads. The Grand Trunk Road was connected between Peshawar and Lahore and the Bari Doab Canal was commenced. A Panjab Frontier Force was set up and a general disarmament of the public took place. Schools, dispensaries and jails were set up, a uniform Code of Civil and Criminal Law and Procedure was adopted, the currency was reformed and a regular system of settlements and taxation was commenced.\(^\text{54}\) The Board of administration was, however, abolished in 1853 and John Lawrence was appointed as the Chief Commissioner of the Panjab. A Judicial and Financial Commissioner was appointed under him. They were able to exterminate thuggee, introduce tea cultivation in the Kangra district and bring in efforts to reduce female infanticide and marriage expenses. Between 1853 and 1856,

all the measures adopted earlier were completed or perfected and the reforms were consolidated.⁵⁵

Thus, when the mutiny broke out in 1857, Panjab was experiencing the novelty of reforms and the feeling of peace and safety in the province. In the first few days of the revolt it became amply clear that Panjab did not sympathize with the movement even though certain sections of the troops sided with the mutineers. John Lawrence had summed up the causes of the mutiny as, “It had its origin in the army itself; it is not attributable to any external or antecedent conspiracy whatever, although it was afterwards taken advantage of by disaffected persons to encompass their own ends. The immediate cause was the cartridge affair, and nothing else.”⁵⁶ Panjab had been recently conquered and peace had come to reign in the area after a long period of time. Trade was flourishing and there was general prosperity and no great desire for change. The next few years after the mutiny were spent in establishing order and restarting the projects, which had been temporarily stalled.⁵⁷ In the beginning of 1859, Panjab was placed under a separate Lieutenant Governor. John Lawrence was the first Lieutenant Governor of Panjab and was succeeded by Robert Montgomery. The railway began to ply between Amritsar and Multan in the same year, which also saw the admission of water in the Bari Doab Canal. A great famine struck the areas south of the Sutlej in 1860, which led to great loss of men and material. The Police was reformed in 1860-61 and the Penal Code was introduced in Panjab in 1862. Judicial reforms were carried out, preliminary surveys and reports were made. The first Exhibition of Arts and Manufactures in the Panjab was held at Lahore in 1864. This included the collection of products

⁵⁵ ibid., pp. 126-135.
⁵⁶ S.M. Latif, History of the Punjab, p. 582.
⁵⁷ G.L. Chopra, Punjab under the Lawrences, pp. 136-147.
of the Panjab and Kashmir. D. McLeod succeeded R. Montgomery as the Lieutenant Governor in 1865 and the office of the Judicial Commissioner was abolished and a Chief Court was created. In 1867, special efforts were made to develop the trade with Yarkand and Kashgar. A severe drought hit the eastern and southern parts of the province in 1868-69, which resulted in a famine south of the Sutlej. Even though relief work was carried out and there were brief spells of rain, the drought continued with increasing severity. The Government helped the people recover from the calamity by advancing loans and remitting taxes. 1870 saw a new Lieutenant Governor H. Durand take charge, who however died prematurely and was succeeded by H. Davies. The Panjab Laws Act, Punjab Local Rates Act and Canal and Drainage Act were codified in 1871-72. Other regulations were also passed for judicial administration. In 1872, a group of Kukas caused disturbance in Malerkotla, which was promptly curbed. In 1874-75, the judicial and executive functions of the province began to be separated. The Prince of Wales visited the Panjab in 1876. Another drought was predicted in 1877 but relief measures were undertaken in time. R Egerton became the Lieutenant Governor in 1877 and in 1878, the war with the Afghans began. The states of Patiala, Jind, Nabha, Kapurthala and Faridkot joined hands with the British. The years of the war were years of scarcity. Trade towards the west was affected due to the war. However, because of the war, certain sections of society like the moneylenders became prosperous, the railway was started towards Kohat and Peshawar and employment was generated. With the close of the war all the stalled projects began to be revived. At the end of 1881, an Exhibition of Industrial Arts was organized at Lahore with the two fold objective of “...ascertaining the progress made in this respect since the last Exhibition in 1864, and of encouraging the production of

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58 This exhibition was catalogued by Baden-Powell in his *Handbook of the Arts and Manufactures of the Panjab*. 
genuine native work of original oriental designs. Specimens of indigenous art and industry, and works chiefly of a domestic character, bearing the mark of the individuality which only hand labour can bestow....were brought together.”59 R. Egerton in his inaugural speech mentioned, “In a frontier province like this, where, in former times, the professions of arms and agriculture chiefly occupied the attention of the people, it is essentially desirable to foster arts and manufactures, for, in a period of peace and security, ... these have an opportunity of development which did not in former times exist...” 60 C.U. Aitchison became the new Lieutenant – Governor in 1882. The Sirhind Canal was opened in 1882 adding to the completed works of the Bari Doab Canal, Western Yamuna Canal, Chenab Canal etc. Direct railway communication was completed with Peshawar and further reforms were carried out in judicial administration. The Panjab University Act was passed in 1882. The boundary between Russian-Turkistan and Afghanistan was fixed in 1884. The British Government organized the most extensive mobilization of the army under peaceful conditions in Ambala, Gurgaon and Delhi in 1885. The Panjab Chief’s College was established in Lahore in 1886, for the education of the sons of the ruling elite. The Mayo School of Art at Lahore, had already been set up to give instruction in drawing and designing, as also a Veterinary School at Lahore. The Panjab Public Library was set up in 1885. Its object was “to aid the intellectual progress of the people of all classes by placing within their reach all that is best in the literature of the west and of the east.”61

From the last decade of the 19th century Indians were allowed to take the Civil Service examination. Efforts were made to induct women in the medical profession to serve the female population and The Lady Aitchison

60 Ibid., p. 601.
61 Ibid., p. 686.
hospital was established at Lahore. The success of the scheme led Lord Dufferin to comment, “It was inexpressibly gratifying, for it shows how, even in the unchanging east, where improvement is so readily supposed to knock vainly at the gates of cast-iron tradition, if only sympathy, kindness and practical good sense inspire the effort, the doors fly open and joyfully admit the train of blessings that follow the advance of all sound and well-considered national progress.”62

The jubilee of the British Queen was celebrated in 1887; convicts were released from prison, charitable and public buildings were inaugurated and social entertainment was carried out. Maharaja Dalip Singh was given a royal pardon by the Queen. Prince Albert Victor who visited Lahore in 1890, said about the Panjab that “…there is no province in India that can boast, as the Panjab can, that it is the bulwark of defence against foreign aggression, or that can be termed with the same significance, the guard-room of our Eastern Empire…”63

Apart from the British province of the Panjab, the geographical area of Panjab also included a number of princely states. The royal states of Patiala, Jind and Nabha were known as the Phulkian states and were the most important Cis-Sutlej states in the Panjab. The appellation Phulkian is derived from Phul who was a vassal of the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan.64 The famous houses of Nabha, Jind, Baddukhan, Bhadour, Patiala, Malod, etc. were founded by the descendants of the children of Phul. Bounded on the north by Ludhiana, on the east by Ambala and Karnal, on the south by Rohtak and Hisar and on the west by Ferozpur and the Faridkot state.65

62 ibid., p. 607.
63 ibid., p. 616.
64 Lepel H. Griffin, The Rajas of the Punjab being the History of the Principal States in the Punjabs and their Political Relations with the British Government, Languages Department Punjab, Patiala, 1970 (reprint), pp. 2-5.
65 Imperial Gazetteer of India (1908), Vol. II, p. 293.
Patiala was Panjab’s largest princely state in population and revenue and had a total area of 5,942 square miles. The ancestor of the Patiala family was Rama, the second son of Phul. Ala Singh, the third son of Rama, was the immediate and real head of the Patiala house. He spread his authority to the entire region east of Barnala, which subsequently became the princely state of Patiala. In 1753, a mud fortress was built at Patiala, which was later converted into the Qila Mubarak. Ala Singh was succeeded by his grandson Raja Amar Singh who was granted the title of Raja-i-Rajgan Bahadur, by Ahmad Shah Abdali in 1767. Raja Amar Singh greatly increased his territory. Raja Sahib Singh became the next head of state after Amar Singh. During his reign, Maharaja Ranjit Singh crossed the Sutlej and captured some areas belonging to Patiala and the other Cis-Sutlej chiefs. After the death of Raja Sahib Singh, Raja Karam Singh came to the throne who supported the British during his reign. His son, Raja Narinder Singh, sided openly with the British during the Anglo-Sikh wars and the sepoy mutiny and was handsomely rewarded. Raja Narinder Singh created modern Patiala and brought a semblance of order during his reign. He built the Moti Bagh palace, the Moti Bagh Gurudwara, the Sheesh Mahal palace and the Samadhi of Baba Ala Singh. These monuments are a veritable record of the social and cultural history of that period. The next ruler Maharaja Mohinder Singh instituted the Mohindra College and sanctioned the Sirhind canal project. Maharaja Rajinder Singh followed his father. During his period, Patiala was connected to Bhatinda and Rajpura by

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68 ibid., p. 46.
71 Gursharan Singh, History of PEPSU, p. 4.
railway. He built the Baradari palace and garden. He initiated cricket and polo in Patiala and the highest cricket ground was built at Chail. It was during his reign that an army contingent was sent to fight in support of the British, in the Afghan war. Maharaja Bhupinder Singh, the next ruler was an astute politician and able administrator and gave Patiala political prominence in India. He designed and built the second Moti Bagh Palace and also instituted medals and orders. Maharaja Yadindra Singh was the last ruling prince of Patiala. He transformed Patiala into a city of gardens and constructed a new Moti Bagh palace.

Jind, another constituent of the Phulkian states, had a total area of 1,299 square miles and its territories extended over three tehsils of Sangrur, Jind and Dadri. The ancestors of the state of Jind descended from the eldest son of Phul, Trilokha, who had two sons Gurditta and Sukhchen. Gajpat Singh, the son of Sukhchen received the title of Raja from the Mughal emperor Shah Alam and established Jind as an independent state. Gajpat Singh was succeeded by his son Bhag Singh, who declared his loyalty to the British. He acquired the territories of Ludhiana, Morinda, Basia etc. Fateh Singh became the next ruler but did not live long and was succeeded by Sangat Singh who too died very young and without an heir. Consequently, the state fell into the lap of Sarup Singh, the eldest relative of Sangat Singh who was formally installed in 1837. Jind sided with the British during the Anglo-Sikh wars and retained its powers and independent status even after the annexation of the Panjab. The Raja of Jind was the first
person, European or Indian, to stand against the mutineers in 1857 and his contingent collected supplies in advance for the British troops marching towards Delhi, besides rendering excellent service during the siege. For his support he was suitably rewarded with cash, territory and an honorary title.  

After Sarup Singh’s death his son Raghbir Singh ascended the throne. He was an able and enlightened ruler who worked tirelessly for the prosperity of his people. He was succeeded by his grandson Ranbir Singh who received the title of Maharaja in 1911. It was under his leadership that the Jind state acceded to the Indian Union in 1947.  

The third constituent of the Phulkian states was Nabha, with a total area of 947 square miles. The ancestor of the Nabha house was Gurditta, the elder grandson of Phul. Hamir Singh, the son of Gurditta was the founder of the Nabha state. He inherited the estate of Kapurgarh and Sangrur. He founded the city of Nabha in 1755 and gradually increased his possessions. Hamir Singh declared himself independent and exercised the right of striking coins. Hamir Singh was succeeded by his son Jaswant Singh. Under Jaswant Singh, many of the territories seized earlier by Raja Gajpat Singh of Jind were recovered. Nabha was taken under British protection in 1809 along with the other Cis-Sutlej states to ward off the danger of Ranjit Singh. Jaswant Singh was succeeded by his son Devinder Singh. It was during his reign that the Anglo-Sikh wars were fought. As Devinder Singh could not come up to the expectations of the British, the British Government confiscated nearly one-fourth of his possessions and he was deposed from the state. Devinder Singh’s successor was his son Bharpur Singh, who actively helped the British in the suppression of the

78 ibid., pp. 375-377.
79 Gursharan Singh, History of PEPSU, p. 5.
80 ibid., p. 5.
82 In 1774, Raja Gajpat Singh of Jind captured the town of Sangrur from Hamir Singh.
83 Gursharan Singh, History of PEPSU, p. 6.
mutiny of 1857. For this, he was rewarded with an increase in his possessions. Bharpur Singh was succeeded by Bhagwan Singh who, however, died without an heir. As there was no near relative to claim the chief ship of Nabha, Hira Singh of the princely state of Badukhan was installed in 1871 as the next ruler by the other Phulkian chiefs. Hira Singh helped the British in suppressing the Kuka outbreak in Malerkotla and also during the Afghan war. He was succeeded by his son Ripudaman Singh, who was however, forcibly abdicated from the throne by the British. After the deposal of Ripudaman Singh, the Nabha state was entrusted to an administrator appointed by the British Government. Maharaja Pratap Singh assumed powers in 1938 and ruled Nabha till 1947.

The ruling house of Faridkot shared a common ancestor with the Phulkian states. Situated to the south of Ferozepur district, the Faridkot state had an area of 637 square miles. The founder of the Faridkot state was Sangar who founded the village of Chakran in Kot Kapura district. His son Bhallan expanded his area of control to include Kot Kapura, Faridkot, Mari, Mudki and Muktsar. His successor Sukha added a number of estates to the existing area. After the death of Sukha, his three sons divided the estate amongst themselves. The second son, Hamir Singh, got the area of Faridkot as his share. Sardar Hamir Singh was, thus, the first independent chief of Faridkot, and made it his capital in 1763. He enlarged the town, built a fort for its protection and induced traders and artisans to people it. He was succeeded by his younger son Mohr Singh who, however, was an incapable

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87 Punjab States Gazetteers, Phulkian States: Patiala, Jind and Nabha (1904), pp. 342-300; Slate Gazetteer Faridkot (1904), pp. 3-4.
88 Their ancestor Brar was twelve generations before Phul.
89 Gursharan Singh, *History of PEPSU*, p. 8
90 State Gazetteer Faridkot (1904), pp. 3-4.
chief. As a result, many of his territorial possessions were seized by the neighbouring rulers. Subsequently Gulab Singh, the grandson of Mohr Singh was installed as the chief. Farid kot was occupied by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1807 but was restored to Gulab Singh in 1809 in accordance with the treaty of Amritsar. Gulab Singh was succeeded by his son Attar Singh who died soon after and was succeeded by his uncle Sardar Pahar Singh. The new chief was very efficient and expanded his territory. Pahar Singh helped the British during the Anglo-Sikh War and was rewarded with increased territorial possessions and the title of Raja. He was succeeded by his son Wazir Singh who like his father supported the British in the Anglo-Sikh War and in the mutiny of 1857. For his services he received many rewards including the honorary title of Burar Buns Raja Sahib Bahadur. He was succeeded by his son Bikram Singh who beautified the town of Faridkot with stately palaces and gardens. He was succeeded by Balbir Singh, Barjinder Singh and Harinder Singh. In 1947, Faridkot acceded to the Indian Union.

The Kapurthala state was next in importance to the Phulkian states, with a total area of 645 square miles. The state actually consisted of three detached portions of territory. The principal was an irregular strip of land on the eastern bank of the Beas while the others were in the area of Phagwara and Bunga, to the west of Hoshiarpur. Kapurthala is situated between the town of Jullandhar and the river Beas and was probably founded by Rana Kapur, a Rajput immigrant from Jaisalmer at the beginning of the eleventh century.

Sadho Singh a Jat from the Kalal or distiller caste belonging to the village of Ahlu was the probable founder of the Kapurthala family. Little

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93 Ibid., p. 7.
is known about his descendents except that Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was fifth in succession from Sadho Singh. Jassa Singh acquired a great reputation as an able administrator. He was the supreme commander of the Sikh confederation during the 18th century. He captured a number of areas including Hoshiarpur and Kapurthala where he resided till his death. As Jassa Singh had no male issue, the Ahluwalia chief ship of Kapurthala was passed on to his cousin Bhag Singh who undertook a few expeditions against the rival Sikh chiefs, notable among them being the Sukarchakia house. After Bhag Singh’s death he was succeeded by his son Fateh Singh whose first act was to form friendly relations with Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He accompanied Ranjit Singh in his expeditions and was even present during the signing of the treaty of Amritsar in 1809. When Ranjit Singh marched to Multan and Kashmir, Fateh Singh looked after the administration of Lahore and Amritsar. However in 1825, Ranjit Singh advanced on Fateh Singh’s territories and confiscated his Trans-Sutlej estates. Fateh Singh was unable to regain his territories and remained at Kapurthala till his death. He was succeeded by his son Nihal Singh. The British confiscated Nihal Singh’s territories south of the Sutlej, as he did not render help in the first Anglo-Sikh war. During the second war, Nihal Singh arrayed himself with the British and received the hereditary title of Raja for his services. He was succeeded by his son, Randhir Singh, who supported the British with his men during the mutiny of 1857. Randhir Singh was suitably rewarded with an honorary title of Raja-i-Rajgan. He was succeeded by his son Kharak Singh and grandson Jagatjit Singh. Jagatjit Singh was honoured with the title

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95 ibid., pp. 452-465.
of Maharaja in 1911. He continued as the ruler till August 1947, when Kapurthala state acceded to the Indian Union.99

The rich, tumultuous and varied texture of Panjab’s history in the 19th century absorbed within itself many multicultural strands. The ability to absorb, personalise, change, adapt and transform were an essential part of Panjabi character. This spirit of eclecticism reflects itself in every area of Panjab culture – including religion, language and above all, costume.