

**LADAKH AT THE REGIONAL CROSSROADS: IMPACT OF TRADE ON
SOCIETY AND POLITICS**

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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled “**Ladakh at the Regional Crossroads: Impact of Trade on Society and Politics**” submitted by me in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

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Introduction

Ladakh is the largest district of Jammu and Kashmir which is located in the north of the State. Ladakh is surrounded by Himalayan mountain ranges. It encompasses an enormous variety of landscapes. The most prominent feature in the physical topography of Ladakh is its mountain ranges, which stretches from south-east to north-west. This direction of the mountain chains decides the courses of the river as well as the boundaries of the natural divisions of the country (Cunningham 1997: 16). Ladakh is situated in the eastern part of the Kashmir valley. The height of its mountain peaks ranges from 17000 to 25000 feet. The human habitation is from 2700 meters to 4500 meters. A small difference of altitude in the district of Ladakh can make a lot of difference to the ecological diversity and these in turn affect the way people adapt to their environment (Hassnain 1975: 3).

The culture, economy and society of Ladakh has been shaped by a variety of factors- the fact that Ladakh's neighbours- Tibet in the east, China in the north, Kashmir in the west, Lahaul & Spiti (Himachal Pradesh) in the south and Central Asia, have transformed and influenced the culture and society that has developed in Ladakh over the years. Despite its forbidding terrain, Ladakh during seventeenth to early twentieth century was a vibrant trade centre where traders met and exchanged their goods and along with that ideas and new culture (Sheikh 2010: 132).

Ladakh was known by various names, among the earliest travellers such as, Fa Hien addressed it as Kia-Chha and Hiuen Tsang as Ma-Lo-Pho. A hazy picture of ancient Ladakh emerges from the travel accounts of the Chinese pilgrims, Fa Hien and Ou Kong who travelled through Ladakh in the year 400 A.D. Hiuen Tsang and Marco-Polo have also given some description of Ladakh. Mirza Hyder Doughtlat has provided a very interesting account of his adventures in Ladakh in his famous- *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* (Hassnain 1975: 4-5).

The travel accounts of Jesuit Missionaries like Azevedo, Clivera, Desideri have been published in many languages. One of the books which deals with their travel account is titled as "*Early Jesuit Travellers in Central Asia*" which was authored by Wessels in 1924 (ibid.5). Other important account about Ladakh has been given by Moorcroft

(1989) and Alexander Cunningham (1997) they have given a detailed account of the geography, climate, flora, history, religion and language of the people of Ladakh. There are Mughal sources as well which gives us information about history of Ladakh and its relations with neighbouring regions: The *Ain-i-Akbari* composed by Abul Fazl who served at the court of the Mughal Emperor Akbar, is one such important source, and other sources include the *Shahjahan Nama* written in the mid- seventeenth century by Inayat Khan who was the Royal Librarian at the court of the Emperor Shahjahan. It discusses about military and political relations between Mughal, Kashmir and Baltistan and Ladakh. Finally the travel accounts of Francois Bernier titled "*Travels in the Moghul Empire*", a Frenchman who lived in India from 1656 to 1668, describes the visit of a Ladakhi embassy to Kashmir during the reign of Emperor Aurangzeb (Mohammed 2007: 35).

Ladakh in the present day is known for its scenic beauty and rich culture which attracts people from different corners of the world but it is interesting to study how this culture changed and evolved over the years and what were the factors which contributed to it. Ladakh was the most important point for the transit trade during seventeenth to early twentieth century. It was so strategically situated that trade with all countries north to India had to come through it. It was neither a producing nor a consumer city but served as an entrepot of great importance.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Ladakh was not a production centre or an important market and despite its harsh terrain, Ladakh has always been a site where intermingling of people, commerce and culture took place. Ladakh played an important role in historical Central and South Asian regional trade as a trading entrepot that connected multiple geographic areas. Ladakh was a dynamic centre where local participation was based on roads and transactions rather than fixed production or consumption points (Fewkes 2009: 1).

Leh which is the largest District and the capital of Ladakh, emerged as a significant hub for trade interaction (Moorcroft 1989, Joldan 2006: 43). The trade was conducted between different countries and also within regions of Ladakh, and there was exchange of products between different regions. The trade within regions of Ladakh included goods which were brought from other regions and those which were produced within Ladakh. The trade was based on barter system (it is a system of

exchange where goods or services are exchanged directly for other goods or services of similar value without using a medium of exchange such as money) (Joldan 2006: 44, Datta 1973: 19). Ladakh is linked to other regions via multiple trade routes, to mention few of them:

The Western route linked Leh with Kashmir, the distance from Kashmir to Leh is around 254 miles. The three main passes between Ladakh and Kashmir are Namyki-la (13,000 feet), Fatu-la (13,240 feet), and Zoji la (11,300 feet). It was safe to travel during March till November and it remained closed in winters due to snowfall. This route was essential for the trade between Ladakh and Kashmir and was used by caravan traders (Cunningham 1997: 148-149, Joldan 2006: 45).

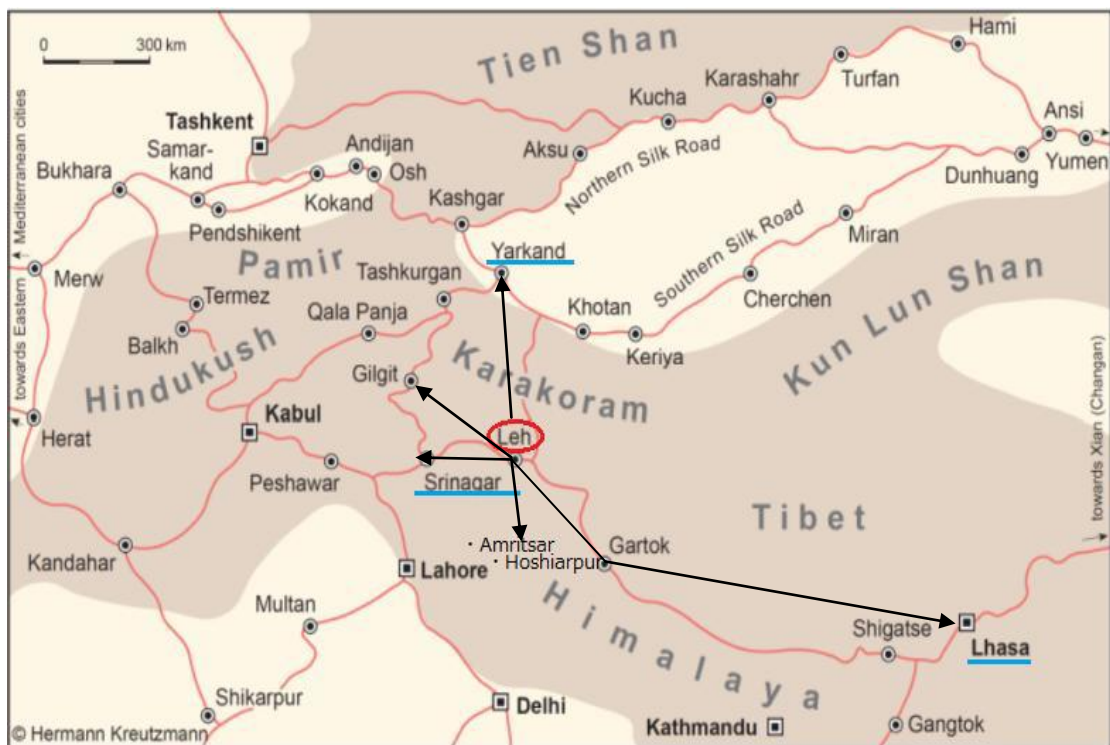
The South-western route linked Leh with Zanskar, Kishtwar and Jammu. The distance from Leh to Jammu is around 439 miles. This route was mostly closed by the end of October. From Jammu it proceeded to Kishtwar through Ram Nagar and Bhadarwah. From Kishtwar it took an easterly direction and after passing through the Chandra Bhaga valley it negotiated Umasi la and entered Padam, capital town of Zanskar. From Padam it moved towards Zanskar river and after crossing the river it joined at Lamayuru with the Srinagar-Leh road (Datta 1973: 10-11, Joldan 2006: 46).

The Southern road connected Leh with Kulu, Bashahr, Nurpur and other trade centres of Punjab. It passed through Mandi and Sultanpur, then capital of Kulu and after crossing the Rohtang pass, descended into Lahul. In Lahul after crossing the Bara Lacha pass, it entered Rupshu, from where after negotiating Lunga Lacha La (17,000 feet) and Thung Lang La (17,500 feet) it reached Leh. (Datta 1973: 11, Joldan 2006: 46).

The North-western road connected Leh with Skardu, the distance between Leh and Skardu is 236 miles. During the summer months when due to the melting of the snow, the waters of the Indus were swollen the travellers generally preferred ascending the Shyok river and then crossed the Hanu pass or Chhorbad la (17,000 feet) and descended into the Ladakhi district. This route was used by the Baltis who carried articles such as dried apricots, which were in great favour and demand in the cold countries of Ladakh and Tibet (Datta 1973: 11-12, Joldan 2006: 46).

The Northern route connected Leh with Yarkand, from Leh to Yarkand there were several possible routes all converging at Karakorum pass (5578 metres). The traveller's choice of route depended on the season. Some merchants preferred to carry their goods in winter, as river beds were frozen and easier to negotiate than the glaciated passes that were unavoidable in summer (Rizvi 1999: 28).

The South-eastern Road-It connected Ladakh with Tibet. The distance between Leh and Lhasa is about 900 miles. From Leh it followed the course of the Indus upstream, then through Gartok and Lake Mansarowar it enters the valley of Tsang Po and reached Lhasa (Datta 1973: 12, Joldan 2006: 48).



Map I

Source: Kreutzmann, 2013, *The significance of geopolitical issues for internal development and intervention in mountainous areas of Crossroads Asia*

Map showing different trade routes which connected Ladakh with other regions.

Products traded through Ladakh to Tibet, Yarkand, Khotan and Kashgar

There were various products which were being traded through Ladakh, most of the products were imported from Tibet and Yarkand, Khotan and Kashgar regions of Central Asia. These products were further sent via Ladakh to Kashmir, hill states like Kulu and certain areas of Punjab. Some other products like Corals, Salt and Saffron were exported via Ladakh to Tibet and areas like Yarkand, Kashgar and Khotan.

Tea is consumed by most of the population in Ladakh and a substantial quantity is therefore imported both for consumption locally and for the supply in Kashmir and Punjab. The teas from China were mainly imported through Lhasa, but the better quality once was brought by way of Yarkand. It was brought in square masses or lumps, consisting of leaves firmly compacted as if they had been wetted and in that state forcibly compressed. They were covered with coarse yellow paper, stamped with a seal in Chinese character. The compressed form of the tea in square bricks or blocks made it easy or convenient for transportation as it helped in reducing its bulk and weight (Moorcroft 1989: 350-351). Tea was also in great demand in Central Asia because the inhabitants of regions like Yarkand, Khotan and Kashgar developed a liking for tea which resulted in the increase of export of tea from India to these regions (Warikoo 1989: 59).

Borax and sulphur mines were found at Puga, on the Rulang-chu, a small stream which is full of hot springs. The annual export of Borax from Ladakh was 500 maunds or 16,000 lb. The annual import of Borax from Changthang was 2,500 maunds or 80,000 lb (Cunningham 1997: 239-245). It was mainly exported to hill states and Punjab. The traders from Rampur, Lahul and Kulu travelled till Puga and other regions to take borax (Joldan 2006: 57).

Another article which was prominent in the trading activity was salt. It was collected from the springs and lakes of Changthang, partly for consumption in Ladakh and partly for re-export to the hill states (Moorcroft 1989: 356). *Phuli* (local name of soda) was mostly available in Rupshu and Nubra districts and it was exported to Kulu and Kashmir. It was used for washing clothes and for dyeing wool (Datta 1973: 20). The traders from regions like Rupshu, Zanskar and Sham carried salt to distant

villages of Ladakh, and exchange it with articles such as grains, apricots etc. and earned profits (Joldan 2006: 57).

Dry fruits including apricots and raisins also known as currant were imported. These were imported from Baltistan and were of superior quality (Datta 1973: 20). About three hundred maunds were annually imported partly for consumption in the country, and partly for export along with those of native growth and are usually bartered for wool (Moorcroft 1989: 357). Dry apricots were exported to other regions including Tibet and India.

Carpets and Namdas- Carpets were imported from regions of Central Asia like Yarkand, Khotan and Kashgar into Ladakh and further exported via Leh to various regions. Namdas were imported from areas like Yarkand, Kashgar and Khotan into Kashmir via Ladakh which where were dyed, processed and then sold (Joldan 2006:58).

Precious stones such as Turquoise were brought from Lhasa and Coral were brought into Ladakh from India, and these precious stones were exported to other areas (ibid.60). Saffron used to be imported from Kashmir and then exported to Lhasa via Ladakh. Saffron was in great demand in Tibet, where the monks used it for the ritual ceremonies.

Yak Tails were brought from Yarkand and Tibetan areas and exported to Kashmir via Ladakh. Other articles like *kidakh* (scarf used by Ladakhis during ceremonies) were imported from Tibet into Ladakh and incenses which were mostly consumed in Ladakh (ibid. 61-63).

Pashm was one of the prominent items traded between Tibet, Ladakh, Kashmir and Yarkand. It was trade in this fine quality of pashm which was a crucial political as well as commercial link (Rizvi 1999: 50). It was this trade which led to the conquest of Ladakh by the Dogras in 1834. As correctly stated by Alastair Lamb “that it was the attraction of the Ladakh carrying trade, particularly in shawl wool, which brought the Dogras into this barren and mountainous region, and there can be equally little doubt that the conquest and the consequent exaction imposed upon this trade upset the long-established commercial framework of this area” (Lamb 1960: 65). Wool is known as *Bal* in Tibetan and Ladakhi language (Cunningham 1997: 239). It is mainly

supplied from Rudokh, Rupshu and Changthang and mostly exported to Kashmir (Moorcroft 1989: 346-347).

Ladakh's Trade relation with Tibet

During the seventeenth to twentieth century Ladakh's trade with Tibet was carried on under the guise of official religious missions in which the commodities exchanged were designated as 'tribute'. In addition, the envoys in charge of these missions were given facilities for some private trade alongside their official duties and also often the privilege of *begar* (free carriage of their goods by the people living along the route) (Rizvi 1999: 10). Each household had to supply a man and animals to fulfil the *begar* carriage obligations. The king, and nobles issued travellers with a pass called *lam-ig* which entitled them to demand *begar* services and to buy supplies from the villages they passed through. *Begar* was a heavy drain on the labour of a household especially as it was mostly levied during the summer months in the agricultural period. Villagers also had to supply attendants, food and firewood for traders and religious visitors. In addition *begar* labour was used for the repair of the tracks and the roads (Grist 1985: 50).

The main item of trade in the Ladakh-Tibet trade network was pashm, which was the raw material of shawl industry of Kashmir and it passed from western Tibet to Srinagar via Ladakh. This complex pattern of commercial activity had a profound effect on Ladakh's and Kashmir's economy. The Timosgang treaty was the first treaty which was signed between Tibet and Ladakh in 1684, after the conclusion of the war between Tibet and Ladakh. The background to the war is that the Ladakhi kings were followers of the Drugpa Kagyu School, and were allies of the Bhutanese rulers who supported the same sect. On the other hand, the Gelugpa were the dominant sect in Tibet. Some differences had arisen between Lhasa and Leh during the reign of Deldan Namgyal (1620-45) when both sides accused the other of discriminating against other sects. Deldan Namgyal wrote to Lhasa saying that in the event of war, Ladakh would side with Bhutan. The Lhasa government sent an army and the Ladakhis were defeated, the Ladakhi king then had to seek help from the Mughal army. Deldan Namgyal was asked to convert and was given the title Aqbat Mahmud Khan by the

Mughal governor of Kashmir (Hassnain 1975: 17). After this war was over, a peace treaty was signed which was called the Treaty of Timosgang.

The peace treaty of Timosgang (1684) significantly reduced the territory of Ladakh. According to the treaty it was decided that the Tibetans would supply pashmina to Ladakh, and Leh was supposed to supply this to Kashmir. Two missions were also set up under the same treaty: the Lopchak and the Chaba. The Lopchak was a triennial mission that went from Leh to Lhasa loaded with gifts from the king of Ladakh to the Dalai Lama as offerings on the eve of the New Year. The Tibetan counterpart of Lopchak was the Chaba mission, which brought animals-loaded with tea to Ladakh. Every year an official trader of the Tibetan government was to come to Leh with 100 loads of tea. Besides tea, they also brought musk pods, incense sticks, turquoise and medicinal herbs. The mission was so profitable that the Lhasa merchants were willing to pay their government for the privilege of conducting it (Rizvi 1999: 159-160).

The trade relation with Tibet shaped the political dynamics of Ladakh and trade had a great impact on political forces that got shaped in Ladakh. It was the pashm business and the desire to break into Ladakh-Kashmir monopoly of it, which induced Gulab Singh, the King of Jammu to invade Ladakh which therefore indirectly shaped the state of Jammu and Kashmir as it actually came into being and as it exists today (ibid. 50). This conquest of Ladakh disturbed the commercial setting of this area (Lamb 1960: 65).

Ladakh's Trade relation with Central Asia

Ladakh's place in the India-Central Asia trade was only that of a transit point (where the goods were exchanged), as it did not produce or consume much. Traders from Tibet, Central Asia and India gathered at Leh to exchange their merchandise and this commercial intercourse sustained the economy. Through these trade routes, it was not just goods but exchanges of ideas and culture which influenced and left a distinct impression upon the local society and economy. Leh town of Ladakh acquired a cosmopolitan character during the trading season when merchants from Bukhara, Andijan, Kashgar, Yarkand, Kabul, Badakshan, Tibet, Amritsar, Hoshiarpur, Kullu,

Nurpur, Bushahr and Kashmir arrived at Ladakh to sell their goods (Warikoo 2009: 9). Due to its strategic location, Ladakh enjoyed a central position in the network of trade routes and became a crucial gateway in the India and Central Asian exchange of men, materials and ideas through the ages.

The trans-Karakorum route linked Ladakh to Central Asian regions of Yarkand, Khotan and Kashgar, traders had to traverse mountain passes at Khardung la, Saser la, Karakorum and Suget. In this process, using Ladakh as an entrepot, commodities such as silk, carpets, cloth, silver, sugar, coral, turquoise, tobacco, animal hides, dried fruits, velvet, satin, brocade, *charas* (hashish) and drugs were further transported to Kashmir and Punjab. While in the other direction, commodities such as- ghee, honey, grain, dyes, cotton, shoes, pearls, spices, shawls were taken from Punjab and Kashmir to Ladakh and then exported to areas like Yarkand, Kashgar, Khotan and Tibet (Sheikh 2010: 156).

The trade interactions between Ladakh and Central Asia (Yarkand, Kashgar and Khotan) led to the formation of a new identity called Arghun. Muslim traders mainly from Kashmir and Central Asia who came to Ladakh for the purpose of trade, many of them married Ladakhi women and settled in Ladakh permanently. Their offspring are called Arghun, marriages between Central Asian and Kashmir Muslim traders and Ladakhi Buddhist women united families across religious and ethnic groups. These traders had close relations in towns throughout the region such as Leh, Srinagar, Yarkand, Khotan and Lahore. Thus, traders who married women in local families solidified social relations with the fathers, uncles and brothers of their spouses. Therefore, the roles of the family and kin group were important for social organisation of trade networks (Fewkes 2009: 76-77).

The Ladakhi Arghun trading families were not only the consumers of general mercantile goods but also purchasers of more expensive technologically advanced and internationally traded goods. The Ladakhi Arghun traders were elites within their community; these families were earning large amounts of money and spending their income. They were the purchasers of more expensive, technologically advanced goods and this consumer identity helped to shape the Arghun elite identity (ibid.107-109).

The Arghuns often retained family and trading relationship in areas outside Ladakh such as Kashmir, Yarkand, Skardu, Lahul and Tibet and this improved their chances in the competitive trading business. The entire trade is said to have operated on the basis of mutual trust. Everyone knew everyone else therefore it was essential to have and preserve a reputation for honesty. To a great extent the trade ran on verbal agreements with very few written transactions (Rizvi 1999: 234).

The linkage between trade and identity in Ladakh have been mainly argued under three schools of thought where in the first school of thought argues that origin of Ladakhi people is heterogeneous in nature, one of the pioneers of this school of thought is Moorcroft (*Travels in the Himalayan Provinces of Hindustan From 1819 to 1825*), he was a native of Lancashire and was educated at Liverpool for the profession of a surgeon. His conviction was that, the native cavalry horse of India could be improved only by an infusion of the bone and blood of the Turkman steed and establishing a commercial intercourse with the Trans-Himalayan districts, which should be highly advantageous to Great Britain. From his account we get a great deal of information about the people, culture and politics of Ladakh. He writes that “the population of Le, as of the country at large is of the Tibetan stock but a very considerable number of Kashmirians are domesticated at Le and a mixed race has originated from them and the women of the country, termed Argands. The Kashmiris and their descendants are engaged in commerce, and the lower orders follow the business of butchers, cooks, and petty retailers. There are also some Turani merchants, and in the lands of Chushut a colony of Balti Mohammedans is established” (Moorcroft 1889: 319-320). However the gap remains that there are no clear criteria of how the identities vary and what led to the variation. There is no direct linkage between trade and identity formation.

In contrast to Moorcroft's perspective, the other perspective argues the origin to be that of homogeneous in nature. One of the major proponents of this idea is Alexander Cunningham (*Ladakh: Physical, Statistical, and Historical*). His argument is centered on exchange of trade especially in the domain of wool, borax, sulphur and dried fruits. “The foreign trade of the country, in home produce is confined to four natural productions, - wool, borax, sulphur and dried fruits, of which only the first is of any consequences, and even that is not of sufficient importance to deserve more than a

slight notice” (Cunningham 1997: 238-239). He also mentions that “in Ladakh one meets with the coinage, as well as with the merchandise of all the surrounding countries. The golden tilas of Bokhara and Kokand, the Sycee silver and pierced copper coins of China, the thin silver pieces of Nepal, the copper dumps of Bisahar, the almost pure rupees of the Moguls of Delhi, the Nanak-sahi and Govind sahi rupees of Ranjit Singh and the broad rupees of British India”(ibid. 253-54).

Although we get important information from these sources, Cunningham’s account gives an impression of Ladakh-which is understood as homogenous. He failed to address the identity issue at large, as he argued it to be homogeneous particularly Buddhist in nature. This is a major caveat in the argument as it gives a more generalised understanding. For instance Martin Van Beek criticises Cunningham “In Cunningham’s account difference within Ladakh has been erased. They are all ‘Botpa’ speak Tibetan and are Buddhist. This equation of territory, race, language and religion is typical of European nationalist imaginings. There are no Muslims in Cunningham’s Ladakh, no Drokpa, Changpa, or Arghon which were mentioned in Moorcroft’s account. Cunningham presents Ladakh as an ideal typical nation-state”. (Beek 1997: 38)

Given these two major perspective, the alternative understanding to this issue of Identity is given by Janet Rizvi who tries to understand the pattern of origin of identity of people of Ladakh through the exchange of trade. Her study focuses on complicated pattern of trade in Ladakh, which shows how trade connections influenced the society or social of Ladakh. She highlights the point that for most part of its history; Ladakh has been a vital point of commercial activity along the trade routes between the Punjab and Chinese Central Asia. The importance of Ladakh as a trading centre in Asia has been due to its strategic location. She provides detailed historical information of the trade routes and how this impacted Ladakh’s relations with its neighbouring communities in her book *Trans-Himalayan Caravan: merchant princes and peasant traders in Ladakh* (1999). This book also provides important information of economic activities and the impact it had on society of Ladakh. Janet Rizvi points out that Ladakh does not seem an ideal place to travel through, as it is cut off from its neighbours by difficult high passes. However for political and other reasons, it was an important centre of trade and an entrepot for centuries. This book is a great contribution to Ladakh’s history and it tries to fill historical gaps.

Jacqueline H. Fewkes book, *Trade and Contemporary society along the Silk Route (2009)* presents various components of Ladakh's ethno-history of trade. She focuses on Ladakh since the eighteenth century and its status as a trade centre. She argues that Ladakhi identity was created through trade relations among various communities that settled in the region and thus formed a cosmopolitan Ladakhi identity. Her book gives a detailed account of the communities engaged in trade, and the Leh market which was cosmopolitan and a site of many languages. She also stresses on how trade led to formation of new identities like the 'Arghuns'. These groups were a necessary feature in the historical trading network, which later discontinued with the demarcation of borders. Jacqueline has combined historical, anthropological and archaeological methods of examination and has used ethnographic interviews as well as primary documents.

These trade interactions had a great impact on society and culture of Ladakh. It influenced the dress, food and drinking habits of its people. Machine made cloth brought by Indian traders, velvets, khotanese or Chinese silk fabrics and Yarkandi cotton cloths were increasingly used by the local people. Chinese brick tea imported from Lhasa and Yarkand was largely consumed within Ladakh. Similarly Yarkandi *Pilau* (rice cooked with meat and spices) became an important addition to the Ladakhi cuisine. Some items of Yarkandi dress such as *pichak tungyu* (conch handled knife) and *kosa masi* (long calf leather footwear with a separate pair of leather slippers) became a fancy item of Ladakhi dress. The use of Chinese teacups, jade articles from Khotan and Lhasa, Yarkandi, steamers and teapots was also introduced in Ladakh and Kashmir. Central Asian visitors and Arghuns who frequently travelled Xinjiang and Ladakh, introduced in Leh certain dance forms which were prevalent in Xinjiang (Warikoo 2009: 9-10).

The farmers who were mostly Buddhist in Leh and surrounding villages like Stok, Shey, Spituk, Chushot, Choglamsar and other villages situated along the trade routes started cultivating lucerne grass. The large scale introduction of a perennial variety of this grass called Yarkandi ol is the result of Ladakh's commercial intercourse with Yarkand. The farmers profited by leasing out their grass fields to traders (ibid.10). Due to trade interactions people in Leh had a working knowledge of Turki, the language of the Yarkandi merchants and women who brought in loads of alfalfa to sell as fodder for the caravan ponies also knew Turki language (Rizvi 1999: 210).

Some Turkish words have found their way into the Ladakhi language and are still used today. The art and wall paintings of Ladakh have been influenced by the art of Gandhara, Central Asia and Tibet. Art experts have written of the far reaching impact of Central Asia on Ladakhi murals and frescoes (Sheikh 2010: 159).

The commodities brought by traders to Ladakh indicate cultural influences and the reason for such a varied culture. The traders from Yarkand brought these commodities to emphasize their ethnic identity as Yarkandis. Thus these commodities display the historic contact between groups and the trade linkages (Fewkes 2006: 26).

Trade allowed cultural diffusion which led to the formation of a new identity group through historical interactions of different regions. In order to understand the complexity of present Ladakhi society, we need to examine the role played by trade and reflect on Ladakh's history. Today, Ladakh is considered incapable of surviving economically without funds for development; this is due to drawing of borders which cut it off from most of its ancient trading partners.

Ladakh played an important role in historical trade with Central Asia and Tibet as a trading centre that connected multiple geographical areas. The trade interactions had a lasting impact on Ladakh's politics and culture. The demand for transport and services created by trade made a significant difference to Ladakh's economy and it connected Ladakh to other countries. After the independence of India the trade routes were closed down due to political reasons such as safety. The Punjabi and Kashmiri traders who used to travel to Leh mainly for trade with Central Asia and Tibet also stopped coming to Ladakh. The twentieth century formation of borders has dramatically altered social life in all the regions associated with trade through Ladakh. The eventual full scale border dispute between India and China then sealed Ladakh's role in the twentieth century as a heavily militarized border zone. Thus the formation of borders in the region redefined Ladakh politically, as a part of Indian nation and as a new commercial zone.

In this aspect the major focus of the study is to look at the impact of trade on society and politics of Ladakh. It will examine identity as a social construct where in- the focus of this study is examining how trade shaped the heterogeneous identity of the people of Ladakh as well as the political forces that got shaped in Ladakh. Rationale behind the study is to fill up the existing gap in the literature. In doing so it will take

into perspective the impact of trade in identity formation and shaping of politics in Ladakh.

Research Problems and Questions

This study also looks at questions such as how did trade impact the society and economy of Ladakh? How did trade impact identity formation in Ladakh? Which were the communities that were involved in the Trans-Himalayan trade? What was the impact of drawing of national borders on Ladakh's role as a trading entrepot? Who are Arghuns? What factors shaped the identity of Arghuns? How did trade exchanges with Central Asia and Tibet influenced society and politics in Ladakh?

Research Method

The proposed study would apply a descriptive approach to examine the construction of identity through trade linkages. The independent variable for the study is identity of Ladakh while the dependent variable is Ladakh's historical trade relations. The study will be based on both primary and secondary sources of research material, primary sources would include- government documents while the secondary sources would include books, journals, newspaper reports and internet sources.

Chapterisation

Introduction will give a broad background of Ladakh's history and the role of Ladakh as an entrepot for trade during the seventeenth and early twentieth century and how this trade changed the society of Ladakh. So, in order to understand the present Ladakh we need to look into the past. The first chapter will look at the history of trade between Ladakh and Tibet. The *Lopchak* and *Chaba* trade will be discussed in detail and the role of Arghuns in this trade network.

The second chapter will discuss the various routes which connected Ladakh with Central Asia. It will also look at the various trading communities that were involved in this trade with special reference to the role of Kiraiyakash and the important trade commodities. The third chapter will examine how trade impacted Ladakh's identity based on socio, economic and cultural forces. It will focus on how ideas, culture, language and religion came into perspective with the exchange of trade relations.

And finally the fourth chapter would draw conclusions by arguing that the exchange of trade with Central Asia have influenced and shaped new social identities in Ladakh. And how trade linkages with Tibet, have contributed to the shaping of politics in Ladakh.

Chapter-1

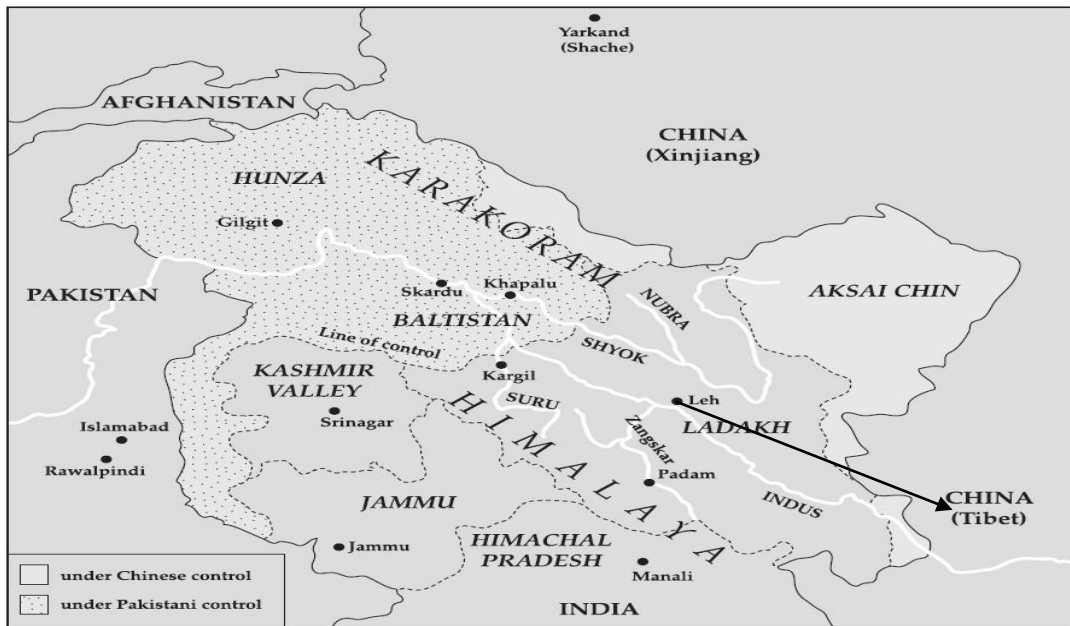
Ladakh's Trade Relations with Tibet

Trade is one of the most crucial activities of human societies which has contributed to the evolution of civilizations at various time periods. Trade in its earliest form involved barter, such system of barter has continued along with more developed trading activities, even to the present times (Rizvi 1999: 3). In the western Himalayas, despite the forbidding terrain of the enormous mountains like Karakorum and Hindu Kush, traders could not be deterred from crossing the overland trade that existed among various regions (Joldan 2006: 43). Leh, due to its strategic geographical position in the Western Himalayas became an important and active centre for commercial interactions (Moorcroft 1989: 346).

The Ladakh- Tibet trade connection is an old one. The inhabitants of Ladakh felt the influence of Tibetans as early as the mid-seventh century. The nomads of Tibet had good reason to have contact with the Mons and Dards (Aryan tribes), exchanging grains for animal products. The Tibetan nomads occupied the higher pasture ground for their animals and the Aryan tribes both Mons and Dards irrigated and cultivated crops in the lower plains. According to A.H. Francke the items produced in the fields of the Aryan tribes were exchanged with the produce of the flocks of the nomads. During this period of continuous transaction the nomads of Tibet inter-married with the Dard and Mon population and this led to the development of bartering system between these two groups (Joldan 2006: 43).

The south-eastern route linked Ladakh with Tibet. The distance from Leh to Lhasa is about 900 miles. From Leh it followed the course of the upstream, then through Gartok and Mansarowar it entered the valley of Tsang Po and reached Lhasa (Datta 1973: 12, Joldan 2006: 48). Gartok was 15 days journey from Leh and was situated on the Indus. It was the prime administrative as well as trading centre of Western Tibet. There were three possible routes which could be taken to reach it. The road going straight up the Indus via Chumathang and Upshi was the direct one. Traders usually preferred this route only in winter, so an alternative in other seasons was to cross the Taglangla to Debring, cross the Polakonkala and follow the river of Puga down the

Indus at Mahe above Chumathang. The other option was to take a detour north over the Changla to Tangtse, then crossing the Pangong range to Chushul and cut over to the Indus valley via the Tsakala the three routes converged at Thangra on the Indus, four days march from Demchok from where it took another five days to reach Gartok. Over a month's march after leaving Gartok, villages with settled populations were reached. The first major town was Shigatse, from where it was a well trodden road, via Gyantse and the Yamdrok Tso to Lhasa (Rizvi 1999: 33-34).



Map II

Source: Jonathan Demenge (2013), "Contemporary Publics and Politics in Ladakh, Himalaya", *The Journal of the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies*, 32: 7-11.

Map showing trade route between Ladakh and Tibet

The trade between Leh and Lhasa was carried by laden animals such as mules, donkeys, horses, yaks, dzo and occasionally goats and camels, but these could not be carried to all the places. At more difficult and narrow points, merchandise was carried by the Ladakhis on their backs. At greater height near the snowy passes, where horse and mule proved unserviceable the yak was most useful as a weight-carrier (Datta 1973: 14).

Trade between Leh and western Tibet mainly consisted of subsistence items like salt and barley between the agricultural areas of Ladakh and the high-altitude plateaux where the pashm was produced. There was a relationship of mutual need and dependence between the Changpas (nomads) and Ladakhis. The Changpas carried salt and sheep wool to Leh, Nubra and Chuchot and return with Barley obtained in exchange (Rizvi 1999: 71).

As far as the Changthang trade was concerned, there were two main groups of traders- Arghuns (descendants of Kashmiri and Central Asia traders who married Ladakhi women) who mainly dealt in pashm and wool. The other group was the Shamma, peasant traders from the Sham area, most of them dealt in limited amount of pashm but more largely in wool, salt and sheep. The Arghuns had houses in Rudok and were better placed than any other traders and benefitted the most out of this trade. They travelled with their servants for loading and unloading the animals whereas the Shammans lived a Spartan life on the trail, sleeping in the open (ibid. 78-97).

The inhabitants of Rupshu also carried salt to Zanskar and in return they took barley back. The people of Zanskar exchanged this salt for *Pattu* (woollen cloth), some cash and barley with the people of Suru. Blankets and coarse woollens or sack cloth (manufactured in Ladakh) which was used for bags for the conveyance of goods, was another important commodity that exchanged hands within the country (Datta 1973: 19).

The traders had to face severe weather and rough terrain which left them and their animals in a bad condition. In summer months the glacier waters blocked the passes and the valleys, which delayed their journey. Many traders also suffered from the effects of the great altitude. Abdul Wahid's account in his book *Caravane Tibetaine*, who was an Arghun trader gives a detail about the difficulties faced during the journey from Leh to Lhasa. It shows that even seasoned caravaneers could suffer from altitude sickness and other travel related discomforts. "The altitude weighed down our every movement and the north wind flayed us. The horses proceeded with dragging steps; we ourselves were close to exhaustion" (Rizvi 1999: 179).

Even Moorcroft (who was a British official) describes in his travel diary that the traders and the pack animals had to face great difficulties. "There was much snow on the northern face, the surface of which was mostly frozen over, but the crust was in

many places very thin and gave way beneath the weight of the cattle; they were constantly sinking and delayed our progress” (Moorcroft 1989: 411). Therefore, the difficulties of the routes, the severe weather, the high passes, insufficiency of resources and water on the route, high altitude sickness were the main causes of delaying of commerce.

The main items imported from Lhasa were pashm, wool, tea, silk, gold dust, jewellery, musk bags, *borese* (coarse woollen cloth), *kidakh* (strips of fine linen cloth used by the Ladakhis during ceremonies), incense sticks, yak tail. The items exported from Ladakh to Lhasa are, piece goods, coarse cloth, spices, sugar, indigo, copper vessels, currants and dried apricots, saffron, iron, rice, barley, ghee, felts, carpets, wooden slates, wooden boxes, shoes, *kimsa* (coloured leather), Ingots of silver (Ladakh Trade Report 1869).

The relationship between Ladakh and Tibet was defined in 1684 by the treaty of Timosgang. This treaty was significant as it ended the conflict between Tibet and Ladakh. The reason of this war, according to Tibetan sources was that, the Ladakhis were persecuting the Yellow hat sect of Buddhism and creating trouble in the border district of Tsang. On the other hand, Ladakhi chronicles assert that the Tibetans were persecuting the Red hat sect and Lhasa was at war with a Red sect incarnate who held spiritual and temporal sway over Bhutan (Datta 1973: 62).

The Ladakhi king declared himself in favour of the Reds and took his quarrel with Lhasa more seriously. War broke out in 1681, the Dalai Lama entrusted the command of the Tibetan forces to Ga-den-tshe-wang-pal-sang-po, a monk of Tashilhunpo monastery. Ga-den, finding little Ladakhi resistance easily reached near Manasorowar, where he entered into an alliance with Raja Kehri Singh of Bashahr. The Tibetans defeated the Ladakhis and took possession of areas as far as Nyoma and the siege lasted for about six months (ibid. 62-63).

The Ladakhi King Deldan Namgyal had to seek help from Ibrahim Khan, the Mughal governor of Kashmir (1678-1685). A force of 6000 men partly arose in Kashmir and partly called from Kabul under the command of Fidai Khan (son of Ibrahim Khan) crossed the Zoji-la and entered Purig where it was reinforced by troops from Baltistan (Petech 1977: 74). The reason why the Mughals decided to support was because they were aware of the fact that Tibetan possession of Ladakh will adversely affect the

flow of shawl-wool in Kashmir, which was deeply connected to the economy of the valley. In addition the Mughals were also bound in honour to protect their vassal from falling into the clutches of Tibetans. The Mughals assisted by the forces from Baltistan and Lower Ladakh defeated the Tibetan troops and pushed them to the traditional Ladakhi-West Tibet border at Tashigong (ibid. 63).

Ladakh had to pay a heavy price for Mughal's support, Deldan Namgyal promised to strike coins in the name of the Emperor and to repair the mosque constructed in 1667. The king was also required to send his younger son, Jigs-bral Namgyal as a hostage to Kashmir. Ladakh also had to pay a tribute to the Governor of Kashmir and Ladakh suffered territorial losses also (ibid. 64). Ladakh was asked to send a tribute to Kashmir every three years; Deldan Namgyal had to accept Islam and was given a title Aqbat Mahmud Khan. Most important was the concession to Kashmir of the monopoly of the wool export and transit trade, which was essential for the shawl industry, the main produce of Kashmir along with saffron (Petech 1977: 75).

After Ladakhi Kings submission to the Mughals, the Tibetan regent Sange Gyatso, who ruled the country after the death of the 5th Dalai Lama, was seriously concerned with the real danger for the Buddhist religion represented by Deldan Namgyal's conversion to Islam. He discussed the matter with the 6th Dugchen Rinpoche, since he was the head of the Brug-pa sect and wielded great influence on the Ladakhi royal house, the regent asked him to travel to Ladakh. He was successful in negotiating a treaty of peace (treaty of Timosgang) and persuaded Deldan Namgyal to return to Buddhism (ibid. 76).

The boundary between Tibet and Ladakh was fixed and it was decided that the traders will carry two hundred loads of tea and tea-bricks. It was also agreed that these trade missions will receive daily rations, beasts of burden, 25 riding horses, 10 men to act as servant, 15 baggage ponies (Francke 1926: 115-116).

The clauses of the treaty highlight the importance of this trade by mentioning that only Ladakhi traders were allowed to enter Tibet. The rules were very strict and only Ladakh had the monopoly to trade in Pashmina with Tibet, this is evident from the 2nd and 3rd clauses of the treaty (refer appendix IV). This also shows how beneficial this trade was, as the traders were provided with animals to carry their loads and

provisions free of cost. The fact that it was not just a trade mission but a trade cum religious mission is proven from two of the clauses of the treaty (5th clause) which mentions the quantity of the goods that needs to be sent from Ladakh to Dalai Lama as presents and 7th clause which mentions that the king of Ladakh had to keep aside some part of the revenue for religious ceremonies to be performed at Lhasa. The 5th and the 7th clause of the treaty also highlight the religious nature of this mission and prove how religion and politics was interlinked in Tibet.

Lopchak and Chaba mission

Ladakh and Tibet agreed to exchange some trade missions on the basis of reciprocity. These missions were to be commercial and religious in nature; the Dalai Lama was to send a merchant to Leh every year with a few hundred bales of brick tea. This was known as *Chaba* mission. *Chaba* literally means tea man or a tea merchant, the official title was the *Zhungtsong pa* which means the merchant of Dalai Lama. These merchants while passing through Ladakh enjoyed free transport and many other facilities. In return, the Ladakhi Kings who recognised the religious and spiritual superiority of the Dalai Lama were to send some presents and this was known as the *Lopchak* mission which means yearly salutation. These caravans on their way to Lhasa halted for a few weeks at important places such as Gartok, Kardum and Shigatse where they disposed of their goods and purchased articles such as musk, turquoises and brick tea. This was a profitable enterprise for the Leh officials and monasteries which had been granted monopoly under this system (Datta 1973: 65-66).

The leader of the *Lopchak* mission was usually a Buddhist of high standing like a monk or a noble who represented the Ladakhi king but most of the management of the *lopchak* mission was handled by Muslim traders. The *lopchak* benefited from free transport labour or compulsory transport labour (*ulag/begar*) which meant that the traders who took part in this mission gained a lot of profit. This mission was accompanied by private traders, other local leaders and monks. The monastery were given special privileges, Hemis monastery enjoyed free transport when travelling to Tibet on official missions (Bray 2010: 2).

The presentation of gifts was an important aspect of the two missions. Apart from the gifts mentioned in the treaty, which were presented to Dalai Lama the leaders of the mission were also suppose to present gifts to the monasteries en route (ibid.2).

Despite the quasi-religious nature and origin of the mission, its actual conduct was not restricted to Buddhists. It was in the hands of an Arghun family known as Radhu. The commercial fortune of this family was founded by Farooq Radhu, a descendant of Sheikh Asad Radhu, one of the many Kashmiris who over the centuries came to Ladakh to preach Islam. He was the first of his family to enter into the long distance caravan trades of Tibet and Central Asia. Even George Bogle reported that there were merchants of Kashmiri origin settled in Lhasa and all the other principal towns of Tibet and that they were not only engaged in the trade between Tibet and Kashmir-Ladakh, but had agents in towns all over India, and were doing good business as middlemen in the trans- Tibet, India-China trade (Rizvi 1999: 163-164).

Whenever the *Lopchak* mission was conducted by an Arghun family, it was accompanied by a Buddhist of good family as its titular leader, to handle the formal ceremonial and the actual presentation of gifts to the Dalai Lama and other Lamas. The mission's departure from Leh was marked by music and song, within Ladakh every time they arrived at a village they were greeted with the traditional ceremony of *kalchor* (involving symbolic offerings of *chang*, together with *tsampa* and other food items) (ibid. 169-171). On arrival in Lhasa, merchants travelling as part of the *Lopchak* mission were provided with official accommodation. These missions were the most essential expression of the ties between Tibet and Ladakh.

Various questions were raised regarding the nature of the two missions whether the *Lopchak* offerings amounted to tribute or part of a ritual exchange between two independent states. These missions were seen with suspicion by the British and it was disturbing from the British point of view because they thought that these gifts constitute a form of tribute which implies that Lhasa claimed some form of suzerainty over Ladakh. Ramsay, who was a British officer made a detailed investigation of the *Lopchak* and examined the documents which accompanied the mission to Lhasa. Ramsay was concerned at the political implication of the *Lopchak*. His first point of concern was that the Tibetans did not recognise letters of authority written by the

Wazir. So, all travellers from Ladakh to Tibet had to obtain a *Lam-yig* (passport) from the king of Ladakh (Bray 1990: 76-86). Their concern about the nature of this trade can also be reflected from a telegram from the resident in Kashmir.

“While the treaty is silent as to the exact significance of the presents carried by the Mission to the Dalai Lama, it appears from the form of receipt given at Lhasa that the Lopchak is considered by the Tibetan Government as a tribute-bearing embassy. This is further supported by the fact that the Tibetan counterpart of the Lopchak, the Chabba Mission which visits Ladakh every year- brings no official letters or presents in return with the exception of a complimentary scarf given to the Kashmir official at Ladakh, an act of ordinary civility in Tibet” (Department of Foreign Branch 1904: 2-3). The British officials were concerned about the nature of the Lopchak mission and they were also against *begar* and suggested that all forced labour in connection with the mission should be abolished.

Ramsay concluded that the reason for the exchange of letters between the representatives of the old Ladakhi Kings and the Lhasa authorities was certainly political and he pointed out that this state of affairs was incompatible with the government of India's status as paramount power. Therefore he recommended that the King should be pensioned off and sent into exile into Kashmir or Garhwal (Bray 1990: 87). Ramsay's career in Ladakh was cut short because of a bitter disagreement with captain Parry Nisbet who was his immediate superior. The government did not take any further interest in the *Lopchak* for another ten years.

Impact of trade on Politics of Ladakh

One of the major impacts of this trade is that, it attracted rulers of other areas which led to the conquest of Ladakh by Gulab Singh. After acquiring control over territories in the Western Himalayas, the Sikhs, the Dogras and the English became attracted to the commercial potentialities of Ladakh and Western Tibet. As a result, the trade in pashm or shawl-wool influenced the politics of Western Himalayan states and therefore, it becomes imperative to look at the attempts made by the British, the Sikhs and the Dogras to divert the flow of shawl-wool into areas within their respective spheres of influence (Datta 1973: 77).

By the first quarter of the nineteenth century three powers had risen in the Western Himalayas. On one hand, Maharaja Ranjit Singh after his conquest of Kashmir received tribute from Ladakh and enjoyed trade privileges. Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu though a feudatory of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, controlled Jammu hills and Kishtwar which were adjacent to Ladakh. On the other hand, the English controlled all the hilly tract lying between the rivers Kali and Sutlej. These powers after acquiring territories in the Western Himalayas became interested in the commercial potentialities of Ladakh and Western Tibet. In this process, shawl wool from Western Tibet became deeply interlinked with the economies of Ladakh and Kashmir (ibid. 86-87).

Here, it is important to note that after becoming a territorial power, British had become interested in the trans-Himalayan trade. In 1774, Warren Hastings; the then Governor General had requested George Bogle to send one or more pair of the animals called *Tus*, which were known to produce the shawl-wool. In 1799, the Board of Agriculture also asked the Court of Directors, if they could secure samples of shawl-bearing sheep of Tibet, in order to breed it in England. Thus, the arrival of the English in the Western Himalayas disturbed the long-established commercial structure and importance of this area. Shawl-wool of Western Tibet started flowing into channels other than the old ones and this caused anxiety to the rulers of Kashmir and Ladakh (ibid. 88-92).

The British merchant, Gillman sent an agent to Gartok to obtain a small sample of shawl. When the Ladakh Government came to hear of this attempt to break their monopoly, they protested to the Governor, or Garpon of Gartok who then issued an edict forbidding the sale of shawl to any but Ladakhis on pain of death. William Moorcroft who was a British official also travelled till Gartok and the main motive was to obtain the material of the finest woollen fabric (Pashm). The importance of the trade can be proven from the fact that Ladakhis were very careful and viewed any foreigner's entry in Ladakh with suspicion. They took strict measures to prevent anyone from breaking their monopoly over this trade (Lamb 1960: 58-59).

The British decided to encircle Tibet with states favourable to British interests. They settled their relations with Nepal in 1816 and gained control over the Himalayan districts of Kumaon and Garhwal by the treaty of Sugauli. In 1846, while handing

over Kashmir to Maharaja Gulab Singh, Lahaul and Spiti were separated from Ladakh and included into the Kangra district of Punjab. All these favourable geopolitical arrangements allowed the British to have access to Tibet easier (Gill 2000: 79).

After a report by R.B Shaw (an officer of British East India Company who had great knowledge of Northern borders of India) on the Leh route, the British opted for Leh route instead of Darjeeling or Nepal. The Ladakh route was taken for a number of reasons; one of the reasons was because of the long standing relations of the people of Ladakh with Tibet. Ladakh was directly under Kashmir which was a feudatory of the British (ibid.).

In the initial phase of expansion and subjugation of Kashmir by Sikh, the King or the Gyalpo of Ladakh offered Moorcroft who visited Ladakh in 1822, a treaty placing Ladakh under British protection and opening its trade to British subjects. British Government not only rejected this proposal but ensured that Ranjit Singh (Sikh Maharaja) was informed that such an offer had been made and refused (Lamb 1960: 60).

The third power in the Western Himalayas was the Dogra ruler Raja Gulab Singh; he also did not fail to grasp the potentialities of shawl-wool trade of Ladakh. Wool was in great demand in Amritsar and Nurpur and Raja Gulab Singh wanted to draw the wool directly from Ladakh through Kishtwar into territories under his control (Datta 1973: 93-94). Gulab Singh was tempted by the lucrative shawl-wool of Ladakh and he decided to conquer the Himalayan principality. By 1840, the Dogras established their authority throughout Ladakh and Baltistan and were ready for fresh conquests.

The Dogras adopted measures to ensure the supply of shawl wool from Western Tibet to Ladakh. Orders were issued to sell shawl-wool, as per old practice to the Ladakhis only. The traders of Bashahr and other British protected hill territories who tried to smuggle this commodity were severely dealt with (ibid.135). He also stopped the trade between Tibet and British Territory, the shawl imports at Rampur dropped in 1841 to a value of Rs 17,766 from Rs. 94,807 in 1840 (Lamb 1960: 66).

Sikh activity in Tibet was accompanied by the presence of Sikh troops in Lahul, Kulu and Spiti on the southern side of the Tibetan frontier between Ladakh and the Sutlej. Gulab Singh was trying to spread his influence into the Hill states under British

protection. In December 1841, the Chinese reacted to the Sikh advance, Zorawar Singh was cut off by a superior force of Chinese and Tibetans. This led to his defeat and his death along with his officers. Thus, the Chinese and Sikh came to terms, signing a treaty of peace (treaty of Chushul) at Leh in 1842. Under this treaty it was decided that the trade in Shawl, Pashm and Tea will be carried on as before, by way of Ladakh (ibid. 68-71).

Due to these events the British Government realised that trade on the British side of the Himalayan frontier was often dependent upon events in areas outside British Control. Therefore, the British wanted to secure some form of political and commercial settlements with the Chinese and Gulab Singh. The Anglo- Sikh War, which broke out in 1845, provided the British with an opportunity to secure such a settlement. Gulab Singh did not want to harbour any hostility towards British and as a result he was rewarded with recognition by the British as sovereign ruler of Jammu and Kashmir. With the Treaty of Lahore in 1846, all the hill possessions of the Sikhs between the Sutlej and the Indus including Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh were annexed by the British. Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh were given to Gulab Singh and it was to be under British protection and was obliged to pay a small annual tribute (ibid.72-73).

In the years immediately following the Afghan war (1839-1842), the British Indian Government noted that Russian commerce has penetrated the markets of Tibet, as it was extending into other regions of Central Asia. They realised that British trade should also try to compete with Russia in a market so close to the borders of British India. The British started exploring other routes, in order to avoid the excessive duties of the Kashmir Government. In order to maintain the supply of shawl wool to the Punjab weavers, a British official was stationed in Ladakh. A tariff agreement was made with the Maharaja of Kashmir (Hari Singh) in 1864, and in 1867 Cayley was appointed the first British Agent in Ladakh. But with these developments the importance of the shawl trade declined in relation to the possibilities of Central Asian commerce by way of Yarkand and Kashgar and which offered a natural field for British competition with Russian traders (ibid. 82-85).

Imports from Ladakh to Changthang during 1869

Names of Articles	Changthang Mds.s	Total Mds.s	Rate in Leh Rs.	Value ins Leh Rs.
Pushm	260 0	528 28	50 per maund	26,435
Wool (sheep's)	160 0	160 0	15 per maund	2,400
Tea, brick, green	431 24	431 24	180 per maund	77,688
Tea brick black	91 8	91 8	90 per maund	8,210
Borax	200 0	200 0	10 per maund	2000
Phulli (soda earth)	140 0	140 0	1-4 per maund	175
Salt	10,000 0	10,000 0	1 per maund	10,000
Sulphur	220 0	220 0	15 per maund	3,300
Saltpetre	84 0	84 0	10 per maund	840
Gold dust	450 tolas	3,610 tolas	13 per tola	46,930
Jewellery	1 box	10 boxes		24,200
Musk bags	450 in No.	450 in No.	10 each	4,500
Borese (Coarse woollen cloth)	125 thans.	125 thans.	15 per than.	1875
Zankos (")	75 thans.	75 thans.	8 per than	600
Pattu (")	50 thans.	50 thans.	8 per than	400
Kidakh (strips of fine linen cloth used by the lamas)	200 thans.	200 thans.	8 annas per than.	1000
Paper	200 sheets	200 sheets	20 per 100	400
Incense	4 boxes	4 boxes		200
Jadwar, Zadori (used as a medicine)	2 0	2 0	1600 per maund	3200

Table 1.1, Source: The National Archives of India, Ladakh Trade Reports of 1869, Foreign Department, Political A(May)

Exports from Ladakh to Changthang during 1869

Name of Articles	Changthang Mds. S.	Total Mds. S.	Rate in Leh Rs.	Value in Leh Rs.
Buzzazi (piece goods)	15 0	338 12	175 per md.	59,202
Coarse cloth	25 0	25 0	87-8 per md.	2188
Spices	15 0	418 9	40 per md.	16,729
Sugar	15 0	195 13	40 per md.	7813
Lakhi, red skin	6 0	444 17	62-8 per md.	27,777
Indigo	4 20	82 13	160 per md.	13,172
Copper vessels	2 0	3 20	100 per md.	350
Haberdashery (Needles, thread)	2 0	8 0	150 per md.	1200
Currants, dried	25 0	25 0	15 per md.	375
Apricots	100 0	100 0	5 per md.	500
Dates	2 0	2 0	40 per md.	80
Saffron	1 16	1 16	1600 per md.	2,240
Saffron leaves	1 0	1 0	160 per md.	160
Iron	2 0	2 0	30 per md.	60
Majeet, red dye	16 0	16 0	20 per md.	320
Rice	150 0	150 0	5 per md.	750
Barley	1430 0	1430 0	1-4 per md.	1788
Flour	1330 0	1330 0	1-8 per md.	1995
Ghee	56 0	56 0	20 per md.	1120
Silver	1 0	1 0	3200 per md.	3200
Otter Skins	19 in No.	8,863 in No.	4 each	35,452
Felts	2650 in no.	2650 in No.	2 each	5300
Carpets	151 in no.	151 in No.		850
Turquoises and corals	8 boxes	8 boxes		6800
Brocade	10 thans	41 thans	100 each	4100
Merino	10 thans	22 thans	50 each	1100
Broadcloth	7 thans	12 thans	150 each	1800
Cashmir	10 pairs	28 pairs	100 each	2800
Balti Chadars	15 pairs	15 pairs	40 each	600
Embroidered cloth	3 thans	3 thans	25 each	75
	45 thans	45 thans	6 each	270
Dariai	75 in No.	75 in No.	1 each	75
Wooden slates	75 in No.	75 in No.	2 each	150
Wooden boxes	85 pairs	85 pairs	1 each	85
Shoes	295 pieces	295 pieces		73
Kimisa(coloured leather)	55 pieces	55 pieces	5 each	275
Puttu Chadars	115 in No.	115 in No.	170 each	19550
Kurus, silver				

Table 1.2, Source: The National Archives of India, Ladakh Trade Report for 1869, Foreign Department

The above tables 1.1 and 1.2, of imports from Tibet to Ladakh and exports from Ladakh to Tibet indicate that in 1869, the number of goods imported to Ladakh was 20 while the number of goods exported to Tibet was 37. Out of which the value of imported goods like Pushm (Rs. 26,435), Tea (Rs. 77,688), Gold Dust (Rs. 46,930) and jewellery (Rs. 24,200) are relatively higher than other goods. Out of the exported items, value of piecegoods (Rs. 59,202), spices (Rs. 16,729), Indigo (Rs. 13,172) and animal skin (Rs. 35,452) are high.

Imports from Tibet into Ladakh (1910-1911)

Name of Article	Quantity	Value
1)Animals living for sale		
a)Horses, ponies,mules etc.	2	75
b)Cattle	4	100
c)sheep and goats	2,139	6,312
2) Apparel	6	240
3)Borax	530	5,295
4)Hides and skins	814	273
5)Jewellery and precious stone	23,360	7,040
a)Turquoises	4	246
6)Leather (unmanufactured)	30	600
7)Musk	35	1,348
8)Ghee	4,338	13,108
9)Salt	619	906
10)Piece goods Foreign	16	630
11)Stationery	126	20,164
12)Lhasa brick tea		
13)Wool	3850	1,06259
Raw including Pashm		450
Piece goods foreign Mds.	600	

Piece goods foreign No.		
14)all other articles of merchandise		545
Manufacture Mds.	790	
No.		
15)Treasure		990
Gold and gold dust Mds.		16258
Silver coin		

Table 1.3, Source:The National Archive of India, Trade Reports of 1910-1911, Foreign Department Frontier B, No.57-59)

Exports from Ladakh to Tibet (1910-1911)

Name of Article	Quantity	Value
!)Horses,ponies,mules etc.	2	100
2)Apparel	77	67
3)Cotton		
a)twist and yarn	6	1,155
b)piecegoods European	81	12,246
c)piecegoods Indian	9	3,649
d)piecegoods Foreign	1,287	
4)Dyeing materials		
a)Indigo	1	41
b)Madder	33	656
c)other kinds	1	885
5)Fruits and Vegetables	848	9,035
6)Grains		
a)Wheat and Flour	836	2,547
b)Rice husked	301	2,103
c)Gram and flour	1,588	4,629
7)Hides and skins	455	2707
8)Jewellery including precious stones		
a)Jewellery and beads	3955	7103

b)Turquoises	80	30
c)Coral		495
9)Leather		
Manufacture	4	7
10)Metals and manufacture of metals		
a)Brass and copper	3	275
b)Iron	1	4
c)Horse shoes		2
d)other kind of metals	1	90
11)Namdas	103	309
12)Carpets	38	570
13)Provisions		10
14)oil	14	270
15)Piece good European	18	18
16)piece good Indian	25	1,434
17)piece good Foreign	341	1,073
18)Spices	3	127
19)Sugar, Refined	30	616
Unrefined	4	65
20)Tea (Indian tea)	25	693
21)Tobacco	39	901
22)wool (piecegood European)	312	724
	548	3554
Piecegood Indian	41	778
Shawls Indian		
23)All other articles	2	870
Manufacture mds.	357	
No.		
24)Treasure	25	550
a)Gold and Gold dust	2	85
b)Silver	24	2400
c)Silver (Yambu)		64348
d)Silver Coin		

Table 1.4, Source:The National Archive of India, Trade Reports of 1910-1911, Foreign Department Frontier B, No.57-59

The above tables 1.3 and 1.4, of imports from Tibet to Ladakh and exports from Ladakh to Tibet indicates that during the year 1910-1911, the number of goods imported to Ladakh was 15 while the number of goods exported to Tibet was 24. Out of the imported items, value of sheep (Rs. 6,312), Borax (Rs. 5,295), Turquoises (Rs. 7,040), Ghee (Rs. 1,348), salt (Rs. 13,108), tea (Rs. 20,164), pashm (Rs.1,06259) and silver coin (Rs. 16258) are relatively high. Out of the exported items, value of European piecegoods(Rs. 12,246) , jewellery and beads(Rs. 7103), fruit and

Vegetables (Rs. 9,035), silver coin (Rs. 64348) are high. We can also see increase in the value of pashm imported during 1869(table 1.1) which was Rs. 26,435 to Rs. 1,06,259 during 1910-1911(table 1.3).

By the first half of the twentieth century the development of Indian communications network provided the caravaneers a faster, more secure and profitable route through Sikkim and Gyantse. Some of the traders in Ladakh moved their belongings and business to Lhasa and to Kalimpong to try their luck in direct trade between India and Tibet. The role of Leh as a trading centre gradually declined as there were other routes available which were faster and profitable. India became independent in 1947 and the Maharaja of Jammu, decided to join India and thus Ladakh became a part of India. In 1950, after Chinese occupation of Tibet, China announced the closure of its borders with India. The Sino-Indian rupture destroyed the economy of Ladakh and the trade was doomed and the Leh-Lhasa trade came to an abrupt end (Dollfus 1995: 47).

Therefore, it can be stated that Ladakh's trade linkages with Tibet have contributed to the shaping of politics in Ladakh. It is reflected in the main motive behind the Dogra invasion of Ladakh which was influenced by the pashm trade. This led to Ladakh becoming a part of the Dogra kingdom and eventually becoming a part of India after 1947. The pashm trade contributed to the prosperity of economy in Leh and Kashmir. The importance of wool trade was such that it had a decisive effect on Ladakh's political destiny. In overall assessment it can be said that Ladakh's pashm trade with Tibet was the primary factor that impacted Ladakh's political scenario. One of the significant manifestations of this phenomenon was Ladakh's transition from being an independent political entity to that of being politically controlled by the Dogras and thus, becoming a part of independent India with the accession of Dogra's power to India. Given this perspective on trade relations the following chapter will examine the other aspect of Ladakh's trade linkage with regions of Central Asia with specific focus on Yarkand, Kashgar and Khotan.

Chapter-2

Ladakh's Trans-Karakorum Trade

The Karakorum is a huge mountain range spreading between the borders of Pakistan, India and China, located in the regions of Gilgit-Baltistan, Ladakh and Xinjiang. It is the north-western extension of the Himalayas. The Karakorum Range is an abode to the highest concentration of peaks over 8000m in height including K2, the second highest peak of the world 8,611 m (28,251 ft). The range is about 500 km in length, and is the most heavily glaciated part of the world outside the Polar Regions (Sunshinegen 2013). The Siachen Glacier at 70 kilometres and the Biafo Glacier at 63 kilometres, rank as world's second and the third longest glaciers outside the Polar Regions. The Karakorum is bounded on the northeast by the edge of the Tibetan Plateau, and on the north by the Pamir Mountains. The southern boundary of the Karakorum is bordered, west to east, by the Gilgit, Indus, and Shyok Rivers, which separate the range from the north-western end of the Himalaya range proper as these rivers converge south-westward towards the plains of Pakistan (ibid.).

It is to note that within the geography of Karakoram, the Trans-Karakorum Tract is an area of nearly 5,800 kms along both sides of the Shaksgam River, is entirely administered by the People's Republic of China as a part of Kargilik County and Taxkorgan Tajik Autonomous County in the Kashgar Prefecture of Xinjiang Autonomous Region, but was claimed by Pakistan until 1963. It is still claimed by India as part of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan gave up its claim to the tract under a border agreement with China in 1963 with the proviso that the settlement was subject to the final solution of the Kashmir dispute (ibid.).

In this context, what makes Ladakh a nodal point is the fact that it has served as a historical connect that linked India with Tibet and Central Asia. Given its prime location, Ladakh acted as a nerve centre for trade across Tibet and Central Asia, which affected the polity and economy of Ladakh. This defined the relationships of Ladakh and Ladakhis with neighbouring countries and contributed to the prosperity of Ladakh's economy (Rizvi 1983:96). Ladakh was not recognised as a production centre or a key consuming centre because the commodities being traded were neither

produced in Ladakh nor consumed there (ibid. 103). Yet Ladakh played an important role in historical Central and South Asian regional trade, as a trading centre that connected multiple geographical areas (Fewkes 2009:1).

This makes it important to understand the crucial role played by geography in shaping human society. The physical location of a place influences the lifestyle of the people. The geographical conditions have significant impact on the culture and history of a country. Geography determines many aspects of people's sense of self, depending on the place where a person is born or grows up, he or she will have a different cultural identity, different nationality and so on.

According to Warikoo (2009: 1), Ladakh acted as an important transit point where Indian traders met their counterparts from Tibet and Central Asia. To explain, as Rizvi (1999: 11) states that the most vibrant trading stations were the towns roughly at the border between inhabited and uninhabited portions of the route where cultivation gave way to desert or mountain range. Here the merchants and caravan staff would pause to recruit and equip themselves for the rigours of the journey. Leh also played a crucial role as an entrepot in the Trans- Himalayan trade due to its location (ibid.). In view of this, Fewkes (2009: 40) posits that Leh town of Ladakh which is situated near important mountain passes, acted as a trading hub which gave traders access to various routes. These perspectives suggest that geographical location is a vital component in trade exchanges. And in case of Ladakh it is evident that geography played the key role in shaping of its trade linkages with Tibet and Central Asia.



Map: III, Source: Kreutzmann, 2013, *The significance of geopolitical issues for internal development and intervention in mountainous areas of Crossroads Asia*

Map III showing the central position of Ladakh which linked India with Central Asia and Tibet.

The trans- Karakorum routes linked Ladakh to Yarkand, Kashgar and Khotan regions of Central Asia, these were the routes used when traders wanted to travel from Leh to towns such as Kashgar, Khotan, Yarkand, Kargilik and other towns of the Xinjiang region (Fewkes 2009: 48). Janet Rizvi has argued that this route was preferred by the traders because there was no feasible long-term alternative. West of Ladakh, the passes over the watershed in Baltistan, Hunza and Chitral were either encumbered with glaciers, or else infested by bandits and slave-traffickers. To the east, Tibet remained secluded, while the high plateaux of Aksai Chin and Lingzithang were uninhabited and totally lacking in any kind of facility for caravans, or even grass for the horses (Rizvi 1983: 104).

Given the geographical connect; trade between Kashgar, Yarkand and Ladakh took place across the Karakoram pass further east of the Gilgit Agency, northern areas in the region of Ladakh. On several occasions the British attempted to divert that trade to pass through the Gilgit Agency, however their efforts always failed. Despite the extensive corruption of Dogra customs officials in Leh, the ease of the route across the Karakorum pass was of greater preference to the difficult and arduous route across the Mintaka and Khunjerab Passes, which linked the Gilgit Agency with Kashgar and Yarkand (Haines 2012: 71).

The Ladakh- Yarkand trade routes included two routes for use in summer and in winter. In spite of the bitter weather, many traders preferred to travel during the cold seasons. In summer, streams and rivers were torrents, swollen with melt water from the glaciers and made it impossible to negotiate (Rizvi 1983: 110). Those traders who opted to travel to Yarkand in winter would cross Digar La and follow the narrow valley of the Shyok River. After negotiating the Karakorum pass, traders start their descent towards Yarkand passing through Kugiar and Karghalik. The Central Asian and Indian traders used to bring their caravans to Ladakh in summer and start their journey homewards in the autumn. The summer route from Leh to Yarkand passed through Khardung La, Nubra valley, Saser La, Karakoram pass and the Suget pass. Yet another route ran across the Changla pass, the Chang Chenmo valley and

Lingzithang plains to join the Leh-Yarkand summer route at Shahidulla (Warikoo 2009: 2).

Most of the transport across the Karakorum was on pack- horses, especially the big-boned Yarkand breed. Double-humped Bactrian camel, the principal pack-animal whose load bearing capacity was almost twice that of a horse was also used on the northern part of the route, beyond the Karakorum Pass. Yaks were also used on the Karakorum route and were used for a specialized function, they were used to push through the snow and open a trail over the passes at the beginning of the season (Rizvi 1983: 108).

The Srinagar-Leh-Yarkand route was the most important and longest established thoroughfare between India and Yarkand, Kashgar and Khotan regions of Central Asia. Traders used this route as it was the easiest and best supplied route and remained open for two or three months longer than the Kulu route. The Kashmir government allocated a yearly sum of 1500 rupees for maintenance of roads and sarais along the Indo-Central Asian trade route. There were two big caravan sarais at Leh and Srinagar for accommodating the traders and Central Asian pilgrims. In addition, godowns, stables, dak bungalows and inns were established at various stages of the route where traders received shelter and supplies of grain and forage for the ponies at subsidized rates. The villagers living in and around a particular stage of the trade route in Ladakh were responsible for supplying pony and transport to traders and travellers (Warikoo 2009: 2).

Ladakh was a dynamic centre where local participation was based on roads and transactions rather than fixed production or consumption points (Fewkes 2009:1). Ladakh's relations with surrounding states were chiefly confined to political relations with Balti and Rudok, commercial ties with Yarkand and Kashmir and religious and commercial connection with Lhasa. The mass of people obtained their living by the transport of goods through Ladakh to and from Yarkand and Kashmir (Cunningham 1997: 241).

Ladakh's place in the India-Central Asia trade was only that of a transit emporium, as it only offered a place for exchange of goods produced elsewhere. Traders from Tibet,

Yarkand, Kashgar and Khotan regions of Central Asia and Kashmir, Amritsar, Hoshiarpur, Himachal Pradesh gathered at Leh to exchange their merchandise and this commercial intercourse sustained the economy of Ladakh. The bazaar space was an important cultural contact zone where exchange of a variety of forms of cultural expression and social interaction took place. This type of diverse international bazaar scene was not only found in Ladakh, but it was prominent in all the cities linked to Ladakh through trade routes (Fewkes 2009: 54).

David Fraser writes in the book *Trans Himalaya Unveiled* that “When business is at its height the bazaar is crowded with people who talk with the volubility of travellers after a long and tedious journey. Clothes of different cut and diversified hue add strangeness and colour to a scene that is entirely reminiscent of the ‘Arabian Night’”. (Fraser 1986:118-119)

The passage of lucrative trade between India and Yarkand, Kashgar, Khotan through Ladakh and Kashmir left a distinct impression upon the local society and economy. Due to the circumstances of trade a number of Central Asian, Hoshiarpuri and Kashmiri merchants got settled in Leh. Most of these traders married to local Ladakhi girls and became an important part of the Ladakhi society. Similarly some Central Asian merchants would stay back in Ladakh in times of political uncertainty in their homeland or owing to the closure of passes and married Ladakhi women. The result was that a new hybrid class of Arghuns, as already discussed in Chapter 1. To which, Warikoo (2009: 9) argues that the Arghuns were the offsprings of Kashmiri or Central Asian traders.

The Arghuns

Trade and exchange of a variety of goods and services across cultural lines have played an elemental role in human history. Merchants and traders play the role of cross- cultural brokers, who moved along the trade routes. Philip Curtin uses this term “Cross- cultural brokers” for traders who migrated from their original community to go and settle in a new town. These merchants settled down and learnt the custom, the language and the business of that town where they have moved to. They serve as cross- cultural brokers, influencing and motivating the exchange of goods and services between their home community and the society they have migrated and settled into along the trade route. These traders who went to other countries or regions

to trade without wives ended by marrying abroad, and this in turn diversified the process of cultural change which came about with such marriage ties. One such example is of eighteenth century Java, where in the intermarriage of Chinese merchants with local women which as a result led to the creation of a new mixed culture called *peranakan*. Given their origin they were partly Javanese and partly Hokienese from southern China. By the nineteenth century, it has been recorded that it had its own quarter in most Javanese towns, its own special status in Dutch colonial law, and its own occupational specialization in retail trade and petty commerce, though most of its cultural forms were drifting gradually toward the Javanese pattern. Similarly merchants from different regions acted as carriers of culture and Hindu merchants from India carried not only their religion but also a range of Indian secular culture to Southeast Asia. Later on, Muslim Indians carried Islam throughout island of Southeast Asia (Curtin 1984: 11-12).

In the late seventeenth and early twentieth century in Leh, based on the trading networks, a variety of social groups worked together. These groups, comprised of members from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds, and were bound together through both economic interactions and social practices such as intermarriage. Similarly the trade interactions between India and Central Asia led to the formation of a new identity called Arghun. These traders had close relations in towns throughout the region such as Leh, Srinagar, Yarkand, Khotan and Lahore. Their kin connections were the basis of a complex web of social network, which contributed to their political power and economic strength (Fewkes 2009: 77). The roles of the family and kin group were important for social organisation of trade networks.

The Arghun community, in particular, occupied a unique position within trade networks. This community formed the cosmopolitan elite, through both intermarriage and relationships to commercial goods, both as consumers and purveyors of elite materials that provided connections to other commercial and cultural systems (ibid.160).

The Ladakhi Arghun trading families were not only the consumers of general mercantile goods but also purchasers of more expensive technologically advanced and internationally traded goods (ibid.107). The Ladakhi Arghun traders were elites

within their community, these families were earning large amounts of money and spending their income. Their personal ties with their provincial neighbours accorded them other roles. Their commercial activity permitted them an intermediary function and their knowledge of land and of several languages as well as their business sense were recognized by all and acted as interpreter and guides for western travellers wishing to go to Tibet or Central Asia. Their status and wealth equalled that of local nobility and also enjoyed privileges reserved for aristocracy and for high-ranking religious Buddhists. The entire trade is said to have operated on the basis of mutual trust, this was made possible because there were relatively so few companies involved that there was business enough for all hence no need for competition. Moreover everyone knew everyone else therefore it was essential to have and preserve a reputation for honesty. To a great extent it ran on verbal agreements with very few written transactions (Rizvi 1999: 234).

Fewkes (2009: 105) discusses how the use of or the interaction with trading goods contributed to the construction of the Arghun social status as cosmopolitan elites through the creation of linkages to broader social and political trends.

The Ladakhi Arghun trading families were not only the consumers of general mercantile goods in the early twentieth century, but also purchasers of more expensive, technologically advanced, and internationally traded goods. This consumer identity helped to shape the Arghun elite identity within and outside of Ladakh. Fewkes (2009: 107) found in one of the Arghun families archives receipts for the private purchase of items such as a potato masher, a brooch, Ajax hot water bottles, Kiwi brand boot polish and Gillette brand razors. These were commonly purchased through large British dry goods companies with offices in major metropolitan areas such as Bombay and Calcutta; the orders were presumably based on catalog information, sent by mail, and items were shipped with invoices paid on receipt. Other evidence for similarly imported items is also present, such as notes written on the back of a “Neptune Navy Cut Magnum” box of cigarettes produced by the British-American Tobacco Company in London. These are luxury items that only wealthy members of Ladakh society would have ordered in the early 1940s. Elite families in Ladakh had access to goods that others did not have the financial or networking resources to own themselves.

The Ladakhi Arghun community had access to trade commodities which enabled them to read books, magazines and newspapers from around the world which gave them a sense of belonging to the global events. Ladakhi Arghun communities can be defined as cosmopolitan through recognition of their roles as cultural agents in segments of the trade system. Fewkes looks at three trading goods (synthetic dyes, charas and cotton piece goods) to show how the choices and decisions associated with trade helped to shape the global role of these commodities. Fewkes argues that the traders who were transporting and marketing these goods in Ladakh were the cosmopolitan decision makers who influenced global events (Fewkes 2009: 114-115).

Apart from Arghuns, there were other trading communities which were involved in this Central Asian trade and one such group were Muslim trading communities within the regions of Chinese Turkistan, Ladakh and Kashmir. There were also features of the trading network that were particularly Islamic. Many of the Central Asian Muslim traders and travellers were coming through Ladakh on their way to the Middle East as a part of their pilgrimage to Mecca, called the Haj. These families combined the religious pilgrimage with business, trading goods as they travelled to support themselves along the way (ibid.64-65, Rizvi 1999: 201).

The Hindu community in Ladakhi Central Asian trade networks came mostly from the Hoshiarpur and Amritsar towns of the British Indian Punjab. They were largely drawn from the Gaddi tribe of Punjab and were mostly from Himachal Pradesh (ibid.). These traders were not travelling for religiously motivated reasons but primarily for commercial purposes. There is some evidence that the Hindu communities trading in Central Asia were treated differently than other traders on the routes of the region. In 1870 Henderson observed that the few British Indian Hindus who were based in Yarkand were subject to local laws that restricted their style of clothing and modes of transportation, and they had to live in one particular section of the town and paid higher taxes than the Muslim of the region. While there is no other proof of most of the former points, interviews with surviving traders indicate that Hindu traders did live separately from the rest of the trading communities (Fewkes 2009:66).

The trans-Karakorum trade contributed to the prosperity of the economy of Ladakh by creating a demand for transport and services. It was by meeting this demand that large

numbers of people were enabled to bridge the gap between starvation and subsistence. This created a class of transporters known as *kiraiyakash*, it was derived from the Urdu word *kiraiya* meaning fee, fare, hire. These *kiraiyakash* who plied between Leh and Yarkand were both Yarkandis and Ladakhis (from Dras, Kargil and Nubra). Although Ladakh was largely a barter economy, every family needed cash occasionally, if only to meet the demand for the *malia* (that part of the land revenue which the government took in cash). The urgency of this need seems indeed to have been an important dynamic of the Ladakh economy in the pre-Independence period. Even those families which owned enough land to provide comfortably for the subsistence of all their members, were obliged to have a source of cash income for this purpose if no other. In areas within reach of the main trade route, the principal source of such cash was payment by the traders, first of all for the fodder, firewood and grain which they needed for themselves and their horses, and bought from the local people and second for the services of the *kiraiyakash* (Rizvi 1999: 241-244). There was demand for *kiraiyakashi* not only for the Karakoram crossing, but also to transport goods between Leh and Srinagar. Most of the transport in this sector was done by the people residing in the belt of the Dras-Kargil belt but some of the Purig subsistence traders did a bit on the side (ibid. 246).

The trading groups utilized kin groups as a strategy in trading interactions. The kinship structures of *kiraiyakash* families were central to their participation in the trade as their participation was linked to household functions, such as providing food and livestock to traders travelling through their village. The traders used kinship networks to increase trading opportunities (Fewkes 2009:76). The goods included in this long-distance trade were largely items of luxury with the prospective of yielding high profit to make the expenditure of money, effort and time worthwhile (Rizvi 1999: 188). The merchants from Yarkand, Kashgar and Khotan mostly preferred to come to Leh during the months of July, August and September, so that they can cross the Karakorum during the period when conditions were better as compared to other months. This timing also made it possible for them to meet other Indian traders in Leh, or at times to even travel further towards south via Kulu (ibid.201)

Traded Goods

The choices made by the Arghun community in the trade between Leh and Central Asia reflect the cosmopolitan nature of these traders. The choices they made were in a way related to social movements and by trading in products like synthetic dyes they were also indirectly being a part of the global cultural change.

Piece goods are finished fabrics usually sold to consumers in units of lengths. Piece goods were a high profile commodity in early twentieth-century trade through Ladakh. One of the surprising trends in the trade with Central Asia is the transport of a huge amount of cotton piece goods from Japan via Ladakh. This is indicative of consumer choices within Indian markets during the time period that reflect the cosmopolitan roles of Arghun traders (Fewkes 2009:115-116).

In the early twentieth century Japanese cotton piece goods had begun to enter Indian markets and its popularity in India grew steadily. One of the reasons for increasing popularity of Japanese piece goods was its low cost than all varieties of British piece goods by 1930, yet British piece goods continued to form the bulk of imported cotton piece goods because of protective tariffs on the British goods in India. Even after this, the presence of Japanese cloths was a proof of the cosmopolitan choices made by traders like Arghuns in Ladakh (ibid.).

Textiles in early twentieth-century India were a socially meaningful commodity. The imports of textile played a central role in India's struggle for independence as encouraging the use of *khadi*, and rejection of the British textile industry was symbolic. Japanese manufactured cloth appealed to consumers for similar reasons; artefacts of trade in Ladakh show that Japanese piece goods were named in Hindi to appeal to public sentiment. The decline in sales of British produced cloth, and subsequent rise in popularity of Japanese piece goods also shaped the context of textile production in Japan. The traders who brought these goods through Ladakh were a part of this political movement. Thus the choices made by trading communities like Arghuns were in a way related to larger social movements and resistance against colonialism (ibid. 117).

Apart from this, Yarkand horses were in demand in Kulu and the Kulu prices were about 25 percent more than those of Yarkand. Donkeys in small numbers also found their way to Ladakh, they were made use by Karaikashes, not for the transport of merchandise but as auxiliaries for the carriage of grain for caravans (Foreign Department 1911: 3).

Synthetic dyes produced in Germany, USA, India and England, were transported through British India, circulated in Ladakh's markets, and were sent to travel on to Central Asian markets. The role of cultural innovators in introducing synthetic dyes in Ladakh places the trading community like the Arghuns at the center of local processes of global cultural change. Monisha Ahmed writes about a change in Ladakh due to introduction of these dyes. Before widespread use of synthetic dyes, colour was a marker of a person's social status. She explains that synthetic dyes had widespread social impact as it gave "ordinary people" the opportunity to also dye their clothing, which caused elites to then start distinguishing themselves through the purchase and use of more expensive foreign cloths "such as brocade, velvet, and later machine-woven cloths," as symbolic statements of their elite status (Ahmed 2002: 108). Thus as the purveyors of synthetic dyes, these Arghun traders were agents of broad cultural changes in Ladakh that fuelled other market shifts in the area's trade. As traders in synthetic dyes, the Ladakhi Arghun community had material connections to economic forces shaping early twentieth century India, and contemporary discourses about science, technology, and power in the global arena. Therefore these Arghun traders were agents in broader historical narratives (Fewkes, 2009: 120-122).

Hides and Skins of animals from Khotan were exported in a small quantity to Kashmir. Namdas and Carpets made in Khotan and Kargilik were taken chiefly by Khotani traders to Kashmir where they are embroidered and then sold. But the namdas were famous in Ladakh for their durability and warmth and some along with carpets, were bought by local shopkeepers for resale locally (Rizvi 1999: 213, Foreign Department 1911: 3).

Another product which was traded in bulk was *charas*, this good was imported from Chinese Turkistan to British India. The trade of *charas* took place via Ladakh and it was controlled and managed by governments of Jammu and Kashmir, China and

British India. To ensure transport of *charas* from Ladakh to British India via Srinagar, traders were required to get permission and were asked to specify the details like invoice numbers, number of bundles and destination port. The permits were issued and recognised by the British Joint Commissioner in Ladakh (Fewkes 2009: 124).

Charas was a valuable commodity in the Ladakh trade networks of the early twentieth century. This good was easy to transport, as drug crops do not perish quickly or easily, are simple to process and would yield high prices in the South Asian markets. In the late nineteenth century, Punjabi traders from British India would come to Leh and meet with merchants who would offer valuable goods such as their gold, silver, and *charas* for the cotton goods and tea of the Indian traders. At the same time the licensing system of the *charas* trade meant that the traders who traded in *charas* required political contacts in order to maintain stronghold in the market. The license in a way ensured control over the market and acted as a guarantor of continued business communication with the Jammu and Kashmir and British Indian governments. *Charas* traders were thus, intimately linked to the colonial government. The *charas* trade was of high value in British India which is why the regulation of this trade was the main tasks of the British Joint Commissioner stationed in Leh (ibid. 127-128).

Cotton piece goods helped Arghuns and other traders to contribute in India's struggle of independence. Through the brokerage of synthetic dyes Arghuns were agents in the industrial application of the scientific revolution in Europe, shifting colonial economies in India. These trade networks provided the opportunity for exposure to various cultural spheres, which linked the Ladakhi traders to traders from various regions and countries (ibid. 164-165).

Apart from these goods, the main items coming from Yarkand were silk yarn, and some pashm. Silk came mostly from Khotan and Goma. These categories of goods along with *charas* until it was banned made up the vast bulk of the merchandise coming across the Karakoram from Sinkiang. Although the bulk of the imports from Yarkand consisted of goods bound for Kashmir and the Punjab, the traders also brought lesser quantities of merchandise specifically for sale within Ladakh, particularly varieties of hard-wearing cotton fabric known as *kham* and *chakman*,

which were much in demand for clothing among the Ladakhis and Tibetan (Foreign Department 1911: 3, Rizvi 1999:213).

Other imports which travelled no further than Ladakh were pearls, turquoise and coral, and a variety of silk from China known as *tawar* (satin) and *shahi* (imperial). There was also some import of foodstuffs from Yarkand: butter, oil, ghee, dried fruits, rice and maize. But there were certain exclusively Indian textiles that continued to be in demand north of the Karakorum, for example muslin, especially the superfine quality from Dhaka which was used for turbans. The most important category of exports from India to Yarkand was spices of different kinds: black pepper, turmeric, ginger powder, cloves, cinnamon and cardamom. Tea and western medicines also had growing demands. (Rizvi 1999: 213-214)

Historically, the flow of goods between Leh and the Punjab took two lines- via Kashmir and via Kulu. From Leh to Kulu, it was a 22 days march; it involved the crossing of four major passes- Taglang-la, Lunga- Lacha la, Bara- Lacha la and finally the Rohtang Pass into the Kulu valley. The Kulu route was also used for the import of Kangra tea into Ladakh, together with other commodities for local consumption in the Leh area. Transport between Leh and Kulu was in the hands of Lahuli pony men and Punjabis. Between Leh and Srinagar, the transport of goods was mostly in the hands of the people of the Dras-Kargil belt (ibid. 227-229).

Apart from the Yarkandis themselves the merchants involved in trans-Karakorum trade were- the Kashmiris, Ladakhi Muslim families of Kashmiri or Central Asian origin and the Punjabis from Hoshiarpur. These were all family businesses and whether the family's headquarter were at Srinagar, Leh or Hoshiarpur, usually one member or more would be stationed in Yarkand and others at Leh or Srinagar. Some of the Kashmiri and Ladakhi families had been in the business for many generations and acquired considerable property in Yarkand. They dealt in Yarkandi silk and carpets, but not charas (ibid.230).



Map IV , Source: Jonathan Demenge (2013), “Contemporary Publics and Politics in Ladakh, Himalaya”, *The Journal of the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies*, 32: 7-11.

Map showing trade route between Ladakh and Yarkand region of Central Asia

Imports into Leh from Yarkand during 1869

Names of Articles	Changthang Mds.s	Total Mds.s	Rate in Leh Rs.	Value ins Leh Rs.
Bhang	1025 34	1025 34	62-8 per md.	64,116
Pashm	268 28	268 28	50 per md.	26,435
Coarse cloth	72 20	72 20	87-8 per md.	6,348
Silk	127 1	127 1	400 per md.	50,810
Jade stone	0 28	0 28		700
Rewanchini	1 20	1 20	80 per md.	120
GillarPatar(seaweed)	6 0	6 0	40 per md.	240
Thread	0 36	0 36		56
Soap	1 36	1 36	40 per md.	76
Socks	15 in no.	15 in no.		68
Mushru(silk&cotton fabrics)	119 thans	119 thans		372
Carpets	358 in no.	358 in no.		2,518
Felts	3,159 in no.	3,159 in no.	2 each	6,318
Kimsan(coloured leather)	1879 in no.	1879 in no.	1 each	403
Broad Cloth	6 thans	6 thans	150 per than	900
Tawar(China Silk)	1 than	1 than	50 per than	50
Dariai(silk manufactured from Yarkand)	4046 thans	4046 thans		5496
Posteen	32 in no.	32 in no.		812
Chowris(Yak's tails)	603 0	603 0	1-8 each	905
Kurus, Silver	338 0	338 0	170 each	57,460
Gold Dust	3160 tolas	3160 tolas	13 per tola	
Jewellery	9 boxes	9 boxes		21780
Gold Thread	7 bundles	7 bundles		305
Embroidery ,gold	2 thans	2 thans	25 each	50
Caps	55 in no.	55 in no.	1 each	55
Knives,Chinese	15 in no.	15 in no.	2 each	30
Mamiran-i-Chini (drug)	30 tolas	30 tolas	1 per tola	30

Table 2.1, Source:National Archives, Foreign Department, Political A Branch, Consultation, May-1870, No.s 286-291, Ladakh Trade Report for 1869

Exports from Ladakh to Yarkand during 1869

Names of Articles	Yarkand	Total	Rate in Leh	Value in Leh
Koran, books	2,000 in no.	2,000 in no.	2 each	4,000
Guns, rifles	70 in no.	70 in no.		37300
Powder and Caps	80 boxes	80 boxes	5 each	400
Aniline dyes	15 0	15 0	20 each	300
Brocade	31 thans	31 thans	100 each	3100
Merino	12 thans	12 thans	50 each	600
Broadcloth	5 thans	5 thans	150 each	750
Cashmir,Pashmina	18 pairs	18 pairs	100 each	1800

Table 2.2, Source:National Archives, Foreign Department, Political A Branch, Consultation, May-1870, No.s 286-291, Ladakh Trade Report for 1869

The above tables 2.1 and 2.2, of imports from Yarkand to Ladakh and exports from Ladakh to Yarkand indicate that in 1869, the number of goods imported to Ladakh was 27 while the number of goods exported to Yarkand was 8. Out of which the value of imported goods like Bhang or Charas (Rs. 64,116) Pashm (Rs. 26,435), silk (Rs. 50,180) and silver (Rs. 57,460) are relatively higher than other goods. Out of the exported items, value of Guns, rifles (Rs. 37300), Koran,books (Rs. 4000) and Brocade (Rs. 3100) are higher than other goods.

Imports from Central Asia to Ladakh (1910-1911)

Name of Articles	Quantity	Value(Rs.)
1. Animal living for sale		
a. Horse, ponies, mules	635	33,375
2. Apparel	888	4518
3. Cotton		
a. Piece goods, Foreign	5	4571
Pieces	2424	
4. Drugs		
a. Charas	1942	2,28575
b. other kind (medicines)	2	1,088
5. Fruits and Vegetables	3	50
6. Hides and skins		
a. Hides of cattle	219	1,327
7. Jewellery and precious stones		
a. jewellery (Beads)	698	905
8. Leather		
a. manufactured	182	388
9. Numdas and carpets		
a. Namdas	13,658	36,153
b. Carpets	432	6,705
10. Silk		
a. Raw	1226	5,87,008
b. piece goods, foreign	2,024	8,907
11. Stationery	1	40
12. Wool		
a. raw including pashm	565	23,945
b. piece goods, Foreign	588	36,159
No.	100	
13. Yak tails	304	304
14. All other articles of merchandise		
a. unmanufactured Mds.	15	12,220
b. manufactured Mds.	2	2,765
No.	793	
15. treasure		

Names of Articles	Quantity	Value
a. Gold and gold dust Mds.		39,523
b. silver Mds.	1	3,776
c. Silver (Yambu) No.	2	
d. Russian Gold coin No.	207	20,700
e. Silver Coin No.	93,976	1,46,938
f. Miscellaneous No.		3,802
	21	277
Total		11,93,021

Table 2.3, Source: National Archives, Foreign Department Proceedings, Report of trade of Ladakh, Frontier B, Oct 1911, No. 57-59, Indo-Yarkand Trade reports for the year 1910-1911 (16-18)

Exports from Ladakh to Central Asia (1910-1911)

Name of Articles	Quantity	Value (Rs.)
1. Animals living for sale		
a. Horse, ponies, mules etc.	198	9,850
2. Apparel	10	6
3. Cotton		
a. Twist and yarn mds.	28	5,003
b. Piece goods, European	2,286	4,57,655
c. Piece goods Indian	25	3,653
4. Drugs material	329	13,792
5. Dyeing material		
a. Indigo	386	39,985
b. other kinds	205	35,872
6. Fruits and Vegetables	3	50

7.Hides and Skins		11,215	44,589
8. Jewellery including precious stones			
a. Jewellery		8	120
b. Turquoises		310	250
c. Coral		7	6,400
9.Leather			
a.Unmanufacture		671	40,531
b.Manufacture		4	313
10. Metals and manufacture of metals			
a. Brass and copper including utensils		3	175
b. other kind metals		2	250
11. Provisions			
a. other kinds		32	1,913
12. Silk			
a. piece goods, European		1,20,077	1,94,596
b. Piece goods, Indian		3,323	66,600
13. Spices		471	18,825
14. Stationery		13	500
15. Sugar			
a. refined		60	1,239
b. unrefined		9	140
16. Tea			
Indian tea		838	21,630
China tea		73	9,726
Lhasa tea		29	4,634
17. Tobacco		3	116
18. Wool			
a. Piecegoods European yds.		11809	23,655
Pieces		6	
b. Shawls	Pieces	2	100
19. All other articles			
Manufactures	Mds.	84	25738
	No.	474	

20. Treasure		
a. Silver	7	388
b. Silver (Yambu)	1	100
c. Russian gold coin	470	734
d. Silver Coin		17,122
Miscellaneous	48	166
Total		10,46,866

Table 2.4, Source: National Archives, Foreign Department Proceedings, Report of trade of Ladakh, Frontier B, Oct 1911, No. 57-59, Indo-Yarkand Trade reports for the year 1910-1911 (21-23)

The above tables 2.3 and 2.4, of imports from Central Asia to Ladakh and exports from Ladakh to Central Asia indicates that during the year 1910-1911, the number of goods imported to Ladakh was 15 while the number of goods exported to Central Asia was 20. Out of the imported items, value of horse (Rs. 33,375), Charas (Rs. 2,28,575), Turquoises (Rs. 7,040), Ghee (Rs. 1,348), salt (Rs. 13,108), tea (Rs. 20,164), Namdas (Rs. 36,153) and silk (Rs. 5,87,008), gold (Rs. 39,523), silver (Rs. 1,46,938) and gold coins (Rs. 1,46,938) are relatively high. Out of the exported items, value of European piecegoods (Rs. 4,57,655), hides and skin (Rs. 44,589), leather (Rs. 40,531), silk (Rs. 1,94,596), Indian tea (Rs. 21,630) and wool (Rs. 23,655) are high. We can also see increase in the value of charas imported during 1869 (table 3.1) which was Rs. 64,116 to Rs. 2,28,575 during 1910-1911 (table 2.3).

ANGLO-RUSSIAN RIVALRY

The Anglo-Russian rivalry was popularly known as the “Great Game”, a term which was popularised by Rudyard Kipling (*Kim* 1901). The Great Game was the strategic and colonial rivalry between the British and Russian Empire for ascendancy in Central Asia. It was a dispute for control and political hegemony between the British and Russian Empire (Duarte 2013: 30). Britain thought that Russia might invade

India, while Russia felt that Britain could threaten its important Central Asian domains. The main aim of British was to create buffer states, which would separate British India from Russian Central Asia (Share 2015: 1102-1107).

This rivalry was manifested in Ladakh and Kashmir as well, and both these powers tried to expand their commercial influence in these regions as well. The trade attracted the attention of the British and Russian imperial powers. Though the caravan trade between Central Asia and India was handled by pedlars and trading agents, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that the Russian ruling circles started taking interest in this trade. The setback suffered by Russia in its foreign trade with European countries during the Napoleonic wars and the continental blockade, induced the Tsarist government to pay attention to the extension of Russia's land trade with its neighbours in Asia (Warikoo 1989: 5). Plans were prepared for the establishment of a Russian commercial company which would exclusively deal with Asian States with its operations extending even up to Kashmir, Tibet and India (ibid. 56-57).

The Russian interest in the affairs of Kashmir can be traced back to the travels of various Russian and Central Asian travellers like Danibegov, Abdul Karim and Yefremov all these traders visited Kashmir in the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries. Yefremov was a soldier by profession; he travelled through Kashgar, Yarkand, Leh, Srinagar and Jammu. His travels in Ladakh, Kashmir bear some political importance due to the fact that after sailing from Calcutta to London, he reported about his experiences to the Russian Ambassador (ibid. 1-2).

Danibegov's journey was prompted by political considerations. His journey was undertaken while keeping the interests of Russian crown in mind, to ascertain the prospects for economic relations. Tsarist Russia under Alexander I began to show interest in far-off Asian lands. This interest developed largely due to the desire to form close political and economic ties with the countries, particularly India and Himalayan princely states like Kashmir and Ladakh. This objective brought Russia and the British Empire in direct confrontation (Tibet House). Both Yefremov and Danibegov have given a vivid picture of the area they passed through. While Yefremov described the route from Russia to Ladakh, Kashmir and India via Bukhara, Kokand, Kashgar and Yarkand, Danibegov returned to Russia via Kashmir, Ladakh, Eastern Turkestan, Semipalatinsk, Omsk fort, Novgorod and Moscow. Both, these

travellers proved to the Russian officials and commercial circles that neither of these two routes was inaccessible and they also highlighted the shawl trade in Kashmir (Warikoo 1989: 3).

Russia took active interest in developing commercial relations with Central Asia, Afghanistan, Punjab and Kashmir. Official diplomatic and trade missions were sent to Kokand, Bukhara, Punjab, Ladakh and Kashmir with the object of establishing an understanding with the rulers of these territories. One such mission was sent to Ladakh and Kashmir (ibid. 57).

The mission of Agha Mehdi in 1808 to Ladakh highlights the known rivalry between Britain and Russia as a result of common commercial interest. Agha Mehdi was sent by the Russian officials to study the trade routes to India. He was the son of a Jew originally from Persia, who settled in Kashmir. He was a shawl merchant and his mercantile reputation attracted the notice and patronage of some of the magnates of St. Petersburg, and he was introduced to the sovereign. His knowledge of the people and language of Turkistan, Kashmir, and the Punjab as well as his intelligence and enterprise, recommended him as a fit agent to be employed to extend the influence of Russia to the confines of British India, as well as to acquire information regarding the geographical and political circumstances. The purpose of this mission was to open commercial interactions with Ladakh (Moorcroft 1989: 385-86). He was successful in the first mission and was assigned a diplomatic mission. He was given two letters addressed by the Emperor of Russia to the ruler of Ladakh and Maharaja Ranjit Singh. However, Agha Mehdi could not reach Leh, he died while crossing the Karakorum mountains (Datta 1973: 97).

Similarly, Izzet Ullah was despatched by the British to Central Asia in 1812 on a fact-finding mission. The British also tried to acquire pashm-yielding goats from Ladakh so that they could rear them in Britain and starting their own production. The despatch of the Russian missions under Agha Mehdi to Ladakh and British efforts to procure the shawl-wool goats from Tibet and Ladakh proves that both these powers had started to expand their commercial and political activity beyond their respective domains. Britain started using Kashmir as a listening post and to monitor the Russian movements in Central Asia (Warikoo 1989: 204-206). Both the powers were trying to spread their influence but avoided direct confrontation with each other.

Since the indigenous agents failed to gather important political intelligence, the British decided to post officers who were experienced on the frontiers. Therefore in 1852 the Dogra ruler (Gulab Singh) of Kashmir agreed to the presence of a British officer in Kashmir during the summer season. In course of time this temporary recognised arrangement was given legitimacy and converted into a permanent British Residency in Kashmir (ibid. 216-217).

The urgency of exerting a firmer control over Kashmir's trade with Central Asia and also of posting an officer in Leh, was realised soon after Russia had made considerable advance into western Turkestan. Russia had established firm control over western Turkestan and began to realise the commercial and political advantages of their occupation of Central Asia. Russia posed a threat to British India and in order to monitor developments in Central Asia, a British officer was posted at Leh in 1867 (ibid. 217).

British were concerned about the Russian advance in Central Asia and they feared that Russia might invade from the north. The British tried to use commerce as a means to extend British political influence; they sent Douglas Forsyth who was a British official on a mission in 1870 to Kashgar. Forsyth was instructed to obtain full and dependable information about the prospects of trade, and detailed information about the resources of neighbouring countries, he was also instructed to collect information which might be of considerable interest. The mission was a failure, he failed to meet Yakub Beg (ruler of east Turkestan) who was away from the capital at the time (Choudhary 1996: 40).

The Russians were suspicious of Forsyth's visit and decided to extract commercial facilities from Yakub Beg. Under their pressure he was compelled to receive a Russian mission in 1872. The commercial treaty concluded by the mission provided free passage for Russian merchants, a two and a half per cent maximum import duty and Russian commercial agents in all towns (ibid. 40).

A second mission was sent under Forsyth in 1873, unlike the first one, it was undoubtedly a success. He concluded a commercial treaty at Kashgar. It provided for a low maximum import duty on trade, and the appointment of commercial agents with judicial powers. Besides, this mission of 1873 brought back a mass of geographical strategic and other kinds of very valuable information. According to the reports of the

second Forsyth mission there were comparatively easy passes west of the Karakoram. Through these passes, the British could rapidly develop trade and if necessary, send there a military force more quickly than the Russians could. Hence they preferred a more active policy on India's northern frontier. In 1877 Kashgar (in Xinjiang) had already fallen to the Chinese. A British officer in Kashgar as a commercial agent would have been very beneficial for them. But the increasing Russian trade reduced the Indian share of the Kashgar trade. Consequently the Chinese were able to counter the British demand for a commercial agent on the grounds that the trade was too small to justify it (ibid. 42-51).

In the second half of the nineteenth century British Empire in India encompassed the whole of Kashmir, Punjab and Sind. Russia too had consolidated its control over Western Turkestan and reduced the Khanates of Bukhara and Khiva as vassals. Tsarist Russia even imposed restrictions on the import of goods from British India into Russian Central Asia. The British government didn't take any actions against this because the Indian trade with Russian Central Asia via Bombay-Batum sea route was faring better than this route. That's why the importance of Kashmir-Kashgar-Kokand route declined and it came down to a secondary position at the close of the nineteenth century (Warikoo 1989:57-58).

The disturbed political situation of Central Asia in the post-Bolshevik revolution period badly affected the movement of trade. With the state take-over of private trade in Soviet Russia little scope was left for Indian trade with Soviet Central Asia (ibid. 212)

The Anglo-Russian rivalry intensified trade restrictions in the nineteenth century. These political constraints on trading network continued in the early twentieth century. In the 1940s local rebellions in Chinese Central Asia caused legal problems in Leh as traders on both sides of the boundaries could not travel to claim their good or communicate to their trading partners. Trade with Central Asia declined further with the 1949 march of Chinese forces into Yarkand to fight against regional rebel forces (Fewkes 2009: 40)

As the Chinese government re-secured the Central Asia region they also reasserted their international borders, and in 1949 the Chinese authorities stated in an official message to Indian government that the McMohan based borders was invalid as it had

not been universally ratified. This culminated in the 1962 border war between India and China and this led to the end of Ladakh's most lucrative trade with Central Asian regions. Ladakhis who had continued to trade in Central Asia and sometimes lived there for generations were forced to leave their homes. Traders from Kashmir and Punjab who travelled to Ladakh for the purpose of trade also stopped coming to Ladakh. The formation of borders has dramatically altered social life in all the regions associated with trade through Ladakh. The eventual full scale border dispute between India and China then sealed Ladakh's role in the 20th century as a heavily militarized border zone. Thus the formation of borders in the region redefined Ladakh politically, as a part of Indian nation and as a new commercial zone (ibid. 132-143).

The trade between India and regions of Central Asia played an important factor in shaping the society of Ladakh and in the political dynamics of Ladakh. This trade shaped the heterogeneous identity of the people of Ladakh and led to the formation of a new identity called the Arghuns who through their decision and interaction with trade goods were related to the larger global events and formed an important part of the Ladakhi society. Trade and exchange across cultural lines played a crucial role in the history of Ladakh and it was one of the most important reasons which brought change in Ladakh's society and politics. Ladakh's strategic location also incited great powers like Britain to use it as a listening post to monitor the activities of Russia in Central Asia and thus extending the Anglo-Russian rivalry to this part as well. However the drawing of borders then sealed Ladakh's fate as a border region and it became a part of India and Ladakh's role as an entrepot finally ceased to exist.

In an overall assessment, it can be stated that the exchange of trade with Central Asia influenced and shaped a new social identity in Ladakh. This exemplified in the origin of the Arghun community which is an output of the trade interactions between Ladakh and certain regions of Central Asia. These trade interactions had an impact on the culture of Ladakh, which will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

Chapter-3

Impact of trade on Ladakh's Social Identity

Ladakh has been a place where commerce, culture and people intermingled and it is because of this that the art forms and culture therefore reflect influences from many other places. For centuries Ladakh has been a place for the transmission of goods and ideas from different locations. The trade routes have been an important factor in determining the course of Ladakh's political and economic development. Leh was a key staging post and it hosted visitors from different regions. As correctly pointed out by Monisha Ahmed and Clare Harris, Ladakh's material culture reflects this cosmopolitanism whether in the form of raw materials, stylistic influences, or the physical presence of craft makers bringing their skills into the area and intermingling with local artisans. There is a mix of indigenous ideas with all kinds of external elements (Ahmed 2005: 11-16).

Historical Background

Ladakh is towards the centre of the inner Asian mass and has been the arena for many a cultural exchange over the years. Some of these exchanges date from about the fifth century. In order to have a better understanding of Ladakh's past, we should have a historical knowledge of Buddhist Central Tibet, Mughal India, Central Asia, Dogra Kashmir and Sikh Punjab and British India. The extent of Ladakh's relationship with these cultures varies, but this inter-relationship of Ladakh with its neighbours and distant powers helped in shaping the present day Ladakh (Wahid 1981: 13).

The history of Ladakh prior to the seventh century is obscure, because the written documents concerning this period are scarce. The early inhabitants of Ladakh were the Mon and the Dards (ibid. 14). The Dards occupied the lower areas of the Indus valley, an area which is popularly known as Sham. These people brought with them the type of Buddhism that had prevailed in Dardistan at the time of their migration. The Mons who came later from the Karja and Kulu side, occupied the Rong area with Gya as its capital. The last wave of immigrants rolled into Ladakh from Tibet side about the close of the 10th century. This wave introduced the Mongolian strand into

the racial mosaic of Ladakh which eventually became the predominant element in its population and brought with it the form of Buddhism that had by this time been established in Tibet by Indian teachers (Kaul 1992: 121-122).

It was during this time that the Mon constructed, or were at least the patrons of the artisans who constructed many of the castles that are found in various parts of Ladakh, most notably in Zangskar. The Mons were instrumental in the importing of motifs in Tibetan art which are based directly on the Indian tradition. In the seventh and eighth centuries a degree of Tibetanisation took place in Ladakh. This is shown by the fact that Chinese chronicles of those years refer to the areas east of Baltistan as Tibet and Ladakh is situated east of Baltistan. The inhabitants of Ladakh must have felt Tibetan influence even earlier, because the nomadic Tibetans of the Chang-thang had good reasons to have contacts with the sedentary Mon and Dard, exchanging their produce such as grain for animal products (Wahid 1981: 15).

By the mid-seventh century, during the reign of King Srong-Tsan- Gampo of Central Tibet, the nomads of Chang-thang entered into matrimonial relations with the Dard and Mon population and this led to the development of a system of barter and trading between these two groups of people. This early Tibetanisation was complemented by influence from Kashmir in the south-west. Kashmiri Buddhist bronze statues are to be found in the various monasteries and an eighth century influence continued to show up through the years in stylized wood carvings at the early monasteries at Lamayuru, Basgo, Alchi and other places (ibid. 15-16).

From the end of the ninth century, Central Tibetan culture began to make rapid gains in Ladakh. Thus, in order to understand the history of Ladakh, it is necessary to understand the early history of Tibet. From the early seventh century to the mid-ninth century, Central Tibet steadily emerged as a military power in the Inner Asian region. The ancient religion of Tibet was Bon religion which included ancestor worship, shamanistic practices and animistic worship. By the mid-ninth century the latent friction between the followers of Bon-Shamanism and Buddhism in Tibet began to rise in open rebellion. At this time Ralpacan (815 AD-836 AD) was the king, who was a follower of Buddhism. He initiated many reforms such as special taxes to support clerical institutions. Such changes were resented and resulted in the assassination of the King in AD 836. He was succeeded by his elder brother, Lang

Darma who was against Buddhism. But by this time Buddhism had gained a major foothold in the land and Lang Darma was assassinated in AD 842 by a Buddhist monk (Wahid 1981: 16, Petech 1977: 14).

The line of the first Kings of Ladakh, known as the Lha Chen Dynasty, was descended from Lang Darma. Lang Darma had a son named Od Srungs by his younger queen. It was the grandson of Od Srungs called, Skyid de Nyima Gon, who was forced to flee to western Tibet and subsequently consolidate his rule there. Here it is important to note that unlike Lang Darma, his descendants became followers of Buddhism. Upon his death, Nyima Gon's kingdom was divided between his three sons, the eldest of whom Lha Chen Pal gyi Gon occupied the area of present-day Ladakh (Hassnain 1975: 13). The rule of Nyima Gon's direct descendants continued until the fifteenth century. It was between the ninth and the mid-fifteenth centuries that the first texts on Tibetan Buddhism were copied in Ladakh. Most famous among those who were instrumental in this process is scholar-monk Rinchen Zangpo. The first Lamaseries were built during this period, the tradition of sending novice monks to various monasteries in Central Tibet was initiated in the early fourteenth century and this contributed in Tibetanising Ladakh (Wahid 1981: 16-17, Dollfus 1995: 35). Apart from the influences of Tibet, Ladakh was also influenced by other neighbouring regions like Kashmir and parts of Central Asia.

Political and Societal influences on Ladakh

Trade and cultural exchanges between different regions played an essential role in the development of human history. Trade is considered as one of the most important external stimuli to change. It has also been a significant source of change and development in science, technology and art. Even in the case of Ladakh, trade has been one of the most important factors of change and trade was one of the important reasons for the establishment of Islam in Ladakh. "Islam was not established either by conquest or by proselytism of zealous missionaries, but by caravan merchants who travelled between the trade routes" (Dollfus 1995: 38). Similarly, in case of Buddhism there was a two way exchange between Ladakh and Tibet. Tibet being the seat of Mahayana Buddhism became a source of spiritual guidance and growth of Buddhism in Ladakh. Therefore implications of trade can be understood in the following ways.

Influences from Kashmir

Ladakh's role as an entreport between major trading centres has attracted many powers and Ladakh had to face many invasions. In the fourteenth century, after the conquest of the Punjab and Ganges plain, the Muslims conquered Kashmir with which Ladakh maintained close commercial ties. In 1339, Shah Mir inaugurated the Shah Mir Dynasty and became the first Muslim ruler of Kashmir. Thereafter, the kingdom of Ladakh experienced repeated invasions under the mantle of 'Holy War' against the infidels. In 1405 during the reign of Sultan Sikandar of Shah Mir dynasty of Kashmir, an army led by the Rai Madari crossed the Zoji-la pass, accessing Purig to the west of the Kingdom. A few years later, Sultan Zain ul- Abidin (1420 AD-1470 AD) who also belonged to the same dynasty attempted to conquer Tibet. Numerous monasteries were plundered; statues and ritual objects were looted. In 1483 Sultan Hasan Shah who was the 9th ruler of Shah Mir dynasty of Kashmir sent Sayyid Hasa and Jahangi Magre to invade 'Little and Great Tibet'. Although these were done under the garb of 'Holy war' but the main purpose was loot, as they didn't take any measures to spread Islam in these regions (ibid. 35-36).

The next phase of political influence from Kashmir was during the Mughal rule. In 1638 Shah Jahan's Mughal troops invaded Baltistan, attempting an attack on the western part of the kingdom. In 1639, the Ladakhi King Senge Namgyal marched towards Purig in the west to recover the lost part of the Kingdom but he was defeated by Mughal force. The Mughal Empire claimed their suzerainty over Ladakh and demanded the tribute through Kashmir. Instead of accepting Mughal's suzerainty Senge Namgyal closed the trade route from Kashmir and this restriction lasted up to 1663 (Rizvi 1999: 53). The Ladakhi King decided to forbid Kashmiri merchants to enter his territory. Though the Kashmiri's were affected by this change of policy but largely it was Ladakh that faced the major impact to say so as, this act which was mainly aimed at weakening of Kashmiri trade rather had a negative impact on Ladakh's economy. This further ruined the economy as it destroyed its trading system (Dollfus 1995: 37). Thereby, it led to the damage of overall economy, as it was reliant or dependent on the trade exchanges.

In 1663 during the visit of Aurangzeb to Kashmir, the Ladakhi King Deldan Namgyal, agreed to an allegiance to the Mughals. What prompted King Deldan to do

so is that there was a fear that Ladakh would encounter an invasion by the Mughals. He agreed to pay tribute and promised the construction of a Sunni mosque in Leh, the recitation of the Khutba, the dissemination of Islam throughout the kingdom and striking coins in the name of the Emperor (ibid. 37).

Apart from political impact Kashmir also had a cultural impact on Ladakh's society. With the establishment of Muslim dynasty in Kashmir, very different influences began to penetrate Ladakh. When Kashmir became part of the Mughal Empire, Mughal styles of dress which were already in fashion in Kashmir were adopted by the kings of Ladakh. Mughal works of art were certainly prized and their influence has clearly affected Ladakhi and Tibet art in many ways (Snellgrove 199: 18). With the advent of Islam in Kashmir, Muslim scholars and preachers came to Ladakh. The chiefs of Purig invited scholars from Kashmir to impart religious education to their children. Kashmir introduced Central Asian dishes to Ladakh, and it has given some popular commonly used words to colloquial Ladakhi (Sheikh 2010: 144).

While Buddhism as a religion gained prominence in Ladakh mainly under the patronage of the King, trade and regional politics brought Islam to Ladakh. Consequently, Ladakhi muslims also played an essential role in the cultural development of Ladakh. During 1380s and early 1510s, many Islamic missionaries came to Ladakh to propagate Islam and proselytised the people of Ladakh. Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani (Persian Sufi of Kubrawiya order), Sayyid Muhammad Nur Baksh and Mir Shamsuddin Iraqi were three important Sufi missionaries who preached and spread the influence of Islam in Ladakh. Mir Sayyid Ali was the first one to make Muslim converts in Ladakh and is known as the founder of Islam in Ladakh. During this period several mosques were built in Ladakh (Howard 1997: 122).

The Ladakhi rulers invited Kashmiri Muslims to perform different jobs. These jobs included smiths to mint coins, interpreters, and they also worked as Munshi to write the king's Persian correspondence to the Mughal governor of Kashmir. King Jamyang Namgyal of Ladakh gave land to seven Muslim trading families of Kashmir. These Muslim traders were famous as palace or royal traders, and received trade privileges

for their service to the royal family. The offspring of these Kashmiri Muslims have now sub-divided into various families and have spread out across the region at present. Many traders from Kashmir settled down in Ladakh permanently, they entered into marriage unions with Ladakhi women. The Sunni Muslims of Leh town and other regions of Ladakh are their offsprings. These trade interactions also led to the establishment of a number of Islamic structures in Leh town. Through their works and religious practice both communities (Buddhist and Muslims) in Ladakh have contributed in the region's cultural development.

Influences from Tibet

Ladakh and Tibet had close political and spiritual relation. But there was a break in this harmonious relationship when Ladakh decided to support Bhutan. In 1679, a powerful Mongol-Tibetan army was sent by the fifth Dalai Lama to conquer Ladakh and to demonstrate his anger for Ladakhi support of the sovereign of Bhutan. King Deldan Namgyal was unable to repel the army and was forced to ask for assistance from Ibrahim Khan, the Mughal governor of Kashmir. The peace treaties signed in 1682 with Kashmir and 1684 with Tibet established new borders. The king of Ladakh was asked to convert to Islam and he promised to pay a heavy tribute, to repair the mosque at Leh. Besides lifting embargo imposed in 1638 by Senge Namgyal, trade in wool and goat hair, which was nearly 50% of total commerce became the monopoly of Kashmiri merchants. Kashmiri Muslims came to Ladakh and permanently settled in Leh and other neighbouring localities like Spituk, Phyang, Shey and Thiksey. Thus, the trade clauses of Ladakhi-Tibetan-Mughal treaties were the decisive factors for the establishment of the Muslim community in the Buddhist Kingdom of Ladakh (Dollfus 1995: 37-38). Ladakh had to pay heavy price for it and Ladakh suffered territorial losses as well.

Tibet used the close religious ties with Ladakh as diplomacy, when they sent a monk (Dugchen Rinpoche) who wielded great influence on the royal family of Ladakh to solve the issue with the King of Ladakh (Deldan Namgyal) and to persuade him to revert back to Buddhism.

Ladakh is an extension of the Tibetan plateau, and is separated from Tibet only by a matter of distance, some 1500 kilometres. Most of the Buddhist population of eastern and central Ladakh is of Tibetan racial stock, and the language which they speak is an archaic form of Tibetan. The religious influence from Tibet remained paramount, in spite of the distance between Ladakh and Central Tibet, involving a journey between three and four months (Rizvi 1983: 154). Tibet had a great impact on the religion of Ladakh, so a survey of the early Buddhism in Tibet which is related to Buddhism in Ladakh is essential for a better understanding of the history of Buddhism in Ladakh.

The ancient faith of Tibet was Bon religion, the people worshipped many gods (pantheistic), and they also worshipped spirits associated with the water, earth and mountains. It also included ancestor worship and shamanistic practices. Buddhism certainly reached Lhasa from India during the reign of King Srong-Tsan-Gampo in the 7th century A.D. and began to gain a hold from the following century onwards (Kaul 1992: 122). Thus, the royal descendants who established themselves in western Tibet, took up the task and started sending trained groups of scholars and artisans to India, mainly to Kashmir and the surrounding area of north-west India, in order to build up collections and translations of Buddhist literature and to import Buddhist cultic and artistic traditions. This state of affairs continued in Tibet itself up to the 12th century or so, when Buddhism disappeared from India and the Tibetans were left to develop into an art which is peculiarly Tibetan (Snellgrove 1997: 5).

Buddhism was introduced in Ladakh from India but it was in its Tibetan form that the religion came to stay until the present day. This occurred during the 11th and the following centuries. The Tibetan King Srong-Tsan-Gampo invited various scholars and monks from India and Indian monks came to Tibet and taught the people. One such scholar was Padmasambhava in the mid-8th century. The followers of this scholar were called the Nying-ma-pa. In the 11th century, an important teacher named Milarepa came to be regarded as one of the most profound teachers and the line of teachings carried down from him and his masters are known as the Ka-gyud pa teachings. Towards the latter half of the 14th century, there arose in Tibet a reforming school whose followers were called the Gelugs pa. In Ladakh a sub-order of the Ka-gyud pa called the Duk-pa and the Gelugs-pa order, gained prominence (Wahid 1992: 57). In the early fourteenth century during the reign of Lhachen Ngorup, the practice of sending novices to Tibet was introduced and this was a death-blow to the Bon faith

which had lingered on till that period, it also marked the end of the Indian form of Buddhism and Lhasa became the cultural centre of Buddhism (Srinivas 1998: 19).

The Kagyu sect was started by Marpa, who was the disciple of Naropa. Marpa visited India three times in order to receive religious teachings and he became famous as a translator, he also built Marpaling in Zanskar. Tsong Khapa who was the founder of Gelugpa sect in Tibet, sent two ascetics to Ladakh to spread the teachings of Gelugpa sect. This sect was also patronized by the King. These Tibetan reformers and ascetics were instrumental in spreading different sects of Buddhism in Ladakh and built many monasteries which continue to exist as important cultural and religious centres in Ladakh (ibid. 19-20).

The early-established system of novices being sent to monasteries in Central Tibet to get their higher qualification lasted till the 1950s, and was surely the most effective channels through which Tibet's religious culture was transmitted to Ladakh. All the Ladakhi monasteries were affiliated to one or other of the monastic orders of central Tibet of which the most important were the Gelugs-pa and the Drug-pa. Thus Ladakh and Tibet shared strong institutional links (Rizvi 1983: 156).

There was close cultural bond between Ladakh and Tibet which continued for centuries and this has eventually led to the development of several monasteries in Ladakh. Ladakh and Tibet has shared close religious ties and Ladakh has always looked up to Tibet for spiritual guidance. This was so, because Tibet became an important centre of Mahayana form of Buddhism and the abode of important Lamas who taught Mahayana form of Buddhism. While some Ladakhi monks went to Tibet and made Tibet their home, many others came back to Ladakh and played a significant role in dissemination of Mahayana form of Buddhism in Ladakh (Joldan 2006: 79).

The custom of going to Tibet for religious education which continued for many years, suddenly ceased when Tibet was occupied by the Chinese. The monks who had gone to Tibet from Ladakh to learn Buddhism had to come back. The monks who returned to Ladakh after Tibet was occupied by Chinese played a key role in spreading the teachings of Buddhism in Ladakh (ibid.86).

Ladakh has occupied an ambivalent position between Tibet and India. Tibet has had strong cultural impact on Ladakh. If we look at the language aspect, western Tibetan dialect is still spoken to this day by Buddhist as well as Muslims residents of Ladakh. In the field of literature, styles of literary Tibetan have had great influence in Ladakh. Tibetan religious influence on Ladakh has been paramount, as different orders of Tibetan Buddhism are followed in Ladakh (Snellgrove 1997: 6).

All the works of art in the gompas (monasteries) of Ladakh reflects the Tibetan style. There was a constant exchange of personnel between the monasteries of Tibet and Ladakh, Tibetan monks bringing the dogmas and traditions received at the centre of this religious empire, and Ladakhi ones travelling to the centre to absorb them (Rizvi 1983: 156-157). Tibet's influence can be seen on Ladakh's architectural culture as well, the palace of Leh and the monasteries belong to the same architectural tradition as the Potala (palace of Dalai Lama in Lhasa). The houses are also similar to the once in Tibet which are built in order to withstand similar climatic conditions, using sun-dried bricks and same basic pattern. Even the traditional dress of Ladakh, the goncha (men's traditional dress) is a variant of the Tibetan Chuba. The religious dance-drama performed in the gompas is imported from Tibet. The religious music used in worship also follows Tibetan style (ibid.161).

Folk songs, including war songs from the Gesar epic of Tibet and religious mask dances are popular in Ladakh even today. Every festival assumes a religious tone with the sounding of cymbals, clarinets and drums, which is similar to any Tibetan festival. Tibet's influence can be seen in the rituals as well, death rites of Ladakh are similar to those of the Tibetans. Offerings to lamas and monasteries are built for the departed soul and prayer flags and tang-kas (Buddhist paintings on cotton and silk cloth) are raised for the deceased. The actual date of cremation is decided by astrological calculation and the corpse is kept for forty-nine days during which Bardo Thodrol (The Tibetan Book of the Dead) is read. In painting, sculpture, murals and frescoes, one can see the direct and prominent influence of Tibetan art and culture. The monastic arts of tang-ka painting, religious masks, interior frescoes and temples of Ladakh maintain a classical grandeur similar to Tibetan religious art (Dhondup 1997: 71-72).

Medicine and Astrology practises have also been influenced by Tibet. The form of medical practise and treatment prevalent in Ladakh is actually a system incorporated from the Tibetan medical science, a science which has acquired considerable skill and sophistication in Tibet over the centuries (ibid. 72).

Influences from Central Asia

Unlike the interaction with Kashmir and Tibet, the trade relations of Ladakh with the regions of Central Asia didn't have any political influence but mostly cultural and religious influence. The trade interactions with the regions of Central Asia had a great impact on Ladakh's culture and religion. As Buddhism in Ladakh drew its influence from Tibet, similarly Islam got assimilated in Ladakh society as result of its trade linkages with Central Asia. This is evitable from the fact that the Arghuns whose roots can be traced to Central Asia follow Islam as their religion.

These Arghuns (who were the result of trade interaction with Central Asia) are the living proof of cosmopolitan character of Leh from the time of caravan trade. The presence of Arghuns indicates that Leh was once an important cross road of trans-Himalayan trade and economic centre. It also testifies how trade led to the integration of people and culture in the region. The vibrant trading activities allowed the intermixing of cultures and made Leh a diverse society. The Arghuns are also known as "half -caste", "half-blood" or "hybrid", this term is applied to all offspring of a Ladakhi mother converted to Islam and of a Muslim father (Kashmiri or Central Asian). The Arghuns continued to maintain direct realtions with members of their families in Kashmir, or residing in Tibet, or on the other side of Karakorum in Chinese Turkestan. Their personal ties with their provincial neighbours acquired them other roles. Their commercial activity permitted them an intermediary function. Their knowledge of the land and of several language as well as their business sense, were recognized by all and they were the interpreters and guides for the first western travellers wishing to go to Tibet or Central Asia (Dollfus 1995: 43).

The passage of trade through Ladakh and Kashmir influenced the dress, food and drinking habits of its people. Machine-made cloth brought by Indian traders, velvets,

otter skin hats, Khotanese or Chinese silk fabrics and Yarkandi cotton cloths were increasingly used by the local people, particularly the elite classes, as their dress material. Chinese brick-tea imported from Yarkand was largely consumed within Ladakh. Part of this tea was also sent to Kashmir. Similarly, Yarkandi *pilau* (rice cooked with meat and spices) became an important addition to the Ladakhi cuisine. The use of steamed dumplings of meat locally called *mok mok* also became common in Ladakh. The affluent section of Ladakhi society used to wear long leather boots that were imported from Yarkand. Some items of Yarkandi dress such as *pichak tungyu* (conch handled knife) and *kosa masi* (long calf leather footwear) became a fancy item of Ladakhi dress. The use of Chinese teacups, jade articles from Khotan and Lhasa, Yarkandi steamers and teapots was also introduced in Ladakh and Kashmir. Central Asian visitors and Arghuns who frequently travelled between Xinjiang and Ladakh, introduced in Leh certain dance forms such as tall-man, dragon, lion and boat (*kishti*) which were prevalent in Xinjiang (Warikoo 2003: 9-10).

The farmers in Leh and surrounding village situated along the trade routes took to extensive cultivation of lucerne grass. The large-scale introduction of a perennial variety of grass called Yarkandi *ol* is the result of Ladakh's commercial interaction with Yarkand. The agriculturists profited by leasing out their grass fields to traders and pony drivers to feed their ponies (ibid.10).

Ladakh served as a channel for the dissemination of Buddhism from India into Central Asia and China. It introduced musical instruments such as the use of the oboe and the kettle drum to Tibet. It served as a channel to carry Buddhist art from India to Central Asia and other centres on the silk routes (Sheikh 2010:132). The musical instruments used in Kashmir like the santoor, surnai, rabab, sarangi and tumbaknari are the same as those used in Central Asia (ibid.11).

Although the culture of Ladakh is largely similar to Tibetan culture, the food, language, art and dress of Ladakh have also been partly influenced by Central Asia. There are also many places in Ladakh that are associated with Central Asia and which are named thus, such as Horlam (Turki route), Horkhar (Turki fort), Hori Brangsa (Turki camp), Daulat Beg Uldi, Sultan Chhuskyur, Wahab Gilga, Chang Jinga, etc. These places are to be found on the Leh-Yarkand road. The 16,880 foot high Daulat

Beguldi pass is named after a wealthy Central Asian trader named Daulat Beg, who died during his journey to Ladakh (Sheikh 2010: 158).

Radishes and carrots were first introduced into Ladakh by Yarkandi traders and are still grown today. During the trade exchanges between Ladakh and Central Asia, many Ladakhis used to speak Turkish languages, particularly the resident of Leh, and the villagers of the Nubra valley on the Leh-Yarkand road. Some literate people also learned Persian. Some Turkish words have found their way into the Ladakhi language and are still used today. *Saragtuman* is a Turkish word for 'carrot' and *shapos* means 'quilt'. There are no equivalent words in Ladakhi (ibid.).

The art and wall paintings of Ladakh have been influenced by the art of Central Asia. Art experts have written of the deep and far-reaching impact of Central Asia on Ladakhi murals and frescoes. The ancient Khotan School of arts in Central Asia was particularly important. A fresco in Namgyal Tsemo in Leh depicts the influence of Central Asia on the dress and cultural ethos of Ladakh. Turki traders were fond of dance and music, and some of them even performed their traditional folk dances, especially at festivals and fairs. The *Horches* or Central Asian dance, is still performed by Ladakhis in Turkish costumes. Some of the other dance forms influenced by Central Asia are dragon dance, 'Amban and Boat' and the lion dance (ibid.159-160).

Jacqueline H. Fewkes explains how close examination of the household objects which were traded between distant regions or communities helps us to understand and gives a new perspective on cultural interaction and contact. The high mountain ranges did not stop trade or the diffusion of culture between regions. Rather, Ladakh was a cultural crossroads in Asia, a channel for interaction and trade and for thousands of years. At the intersection of these trade routes, Ladakh's towns such as Leh and Kargil were the centres of commercial activity where products were traded, taxed and transported. Markets also became the zone of cultural interaction. Traders from different parts of South Asia and Central Asia stayed together in caravan serais, the trading and tax posts also served as inns for traders during their journey. Thus the traders in Leh market interacted in many ways not just related to trade, but also through activities such as telling stories, praying and sharing meals. These interactions exposed them to new beliefs, ideas and language (Fewkes 2006: 21-22).

The commodities which were brought by traders to Ladakh during the early 20th century show cultural influences from afar. Some of artifacts of this trade are the carpets and household objects of silver and gold brought to Ladakh by traders from Yarkand, Kashgar and Khotan. Many of these merchandises are still present and displayed in the homes of the offspring of Ladakhi traders and are highly valued by people who are interested in antiques. These products are only a few examples of the many luxury products traded in Ladakh, and they symbolize only a small portion of the traded goods (ibid. 23).

These historical trade products are not just signifiers of past cultural contact. They also had deep meaning to those who produced them and those who sought to obtain them. For example, bronze plates made in various regions of Central Asia during the early 20th century are still valued by Ladakhi families. In addition to their association with a high socio-economic status, the Central Asians brought these plates to Ladakh to emphasize their ethnic identity as Yarkendis, Turkic peoples of Central Asia. These plates are preserved till date as Ladakhi Muslims use it during special events. Thereby, such artifacts display historic contact between these groups. (ibid.26).

These trade interactions led to the assimilation of new cultural influences to the existing once. The original language of Ladakh was Tibetan but in course of time, the local Tibetan dialect assimilated non-Tibetan words such as Kashmiri, Hindustani and Turki words (Dhondup 1997: 71). Ladakhi Buddhists and Tibetans have shared a common written language based on classical Tibetan. Tibetan was not the only 'international' language. From the 16th century onwards, Persian was one of the main languages of trade and diplomacy linking Ladakh with Kashmir and other parts of India, and Ladakhi kings employed Muslim scribes skilled in Persian to help communicate with Kashmir and India (Bray 2005: 3).

Trade led to cultural integration in Leh and the most significant example is the Leh palace itself, though it is built in a Tibetan style, the main designer of this palace was a Muslim. The architecture of Jamma Masjid built around 1666 by King Deldan Namgyal was also an example of the mixed style of Tibetan, Ladakhi and Central Asia, until it was reconstructed in 1990s. Not just the architecture, but also the

Ladakhi costume, is similar to one worn in Central Asia. There are many other examples of the cultural influences from Tibet, Kashmir and Central Asia in Ladakhi cuisine, music and language. The importance of trade can be judged by the fact that it not only impacted the economy of Ladakh but also had a significant impact on politics and society.

Trade allowed different cultures to interact with each other and it linked distant people and regions, which brought cultures closer through the exchange of material goods and ideas. The trade routes are important because of their impact on economy as well as their role in cultural diffusion. It is through these trade routes that religions, language, literature, art and ideas spread. Trade was also one of the reasons for the harmonious existence of these different communities because the conditions were such that these communities needed each other's cooperation for mutual benefit. But this situation changed once the borders were drawn and trade ceased between India, Central Asia and Tibet.

In an overall assessment, it can be thus stated that the trade exchanges of Ladakh with Tibet, Kashmir and regions of Central Asia such as Yarkand, Khotan, Kashgar had a significant impact on Ladakh's society. This can be attributed to the way Buddhism and Islam assimilated in the Ladakhi society. This religious and social impact was a result of Ladakh's interactions with Tibet and certain regions of Central Asia. Apart from this, Ladakh also experienced cultural impact. This is witnessed mainly in terms of architecture, dress codes and food habits of the people both Muslim and Buddhist which evolved with such interactions. These interactions ceased to exist once the borders were redrawn and Ladakh became a part of the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Impact of redrawing of borders

The redrawing of borders drastically changed Ladakh's society and the age old trade relations discontinued. At the time of partition in 1947, the Maharaja of Jammu decided to join India rather than Pakistan. The Kashmiri merchants present in Ladakh went back to Kashmir, as trade ceased to function. While those from Yarkand and Kashgar, where war had split their country were afraid to return to Xinjiang. They settled in Srinagar, but they were unable to obtain Indian nationality and many

accepted the offer of the Turkish government and immigrated there (Dollfus 1995: 47-48). The clubbing of these three diverse regions of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh together later complicated the political discourse.

The strategic location of Ladakh historically as a crossroad has contributed to its becoming ethnically diverse geographical regions. This gave impetus and direction to conflict in the region. The dynamics of regional and sub-regional assertions lies in the overlapping, multiple and layered identities, which determine the nature of politics in the state as well. The state of Jammu and Kashmir is not only religiously diverse, with three major religions of South Asia having their followers in the state but there are diversities based on regional, cultural, tribal, caste based and linguistic identities as well. The three major regions of the state are not only culturally and socially diverse but also in terms of their geographical terrains and their historical roots. The Hindus of Jammu and the Buddhist of Ladakh although constitute majority in their respective regions, viewed in the context of the Muslim majority character of the state, perceive themselves as minority. This sense of deprivation and minority status gave rise to sub-regional assertions and demands of autonomous councils in modern times (Wani 2013: 322-323).

The revolutionary land reforms carried out by Sheikh Abdullah further created a wedge between Ladakh and the State government, as the land was considered the property of monasteries, the land reforms were seen as an attack on Buddhism and this created backlash in Ladakh. Ladakh was unhappy about the shift of power and influence from Hari Singh to Kashmiri dominated administration. Ladakh as a whole which is a Buddhist dominated region, never identified itself with Kashmiris and felt alienated by the hegemonic power structure in the state. Ladakhi Buddhist started projecting themselves as a 'separate nation by all means- culture, race and language' (ibid. 326-327).

The decision of the government led by Sheikh Abdullah to impose Urdu in Ladakhi schools, to discontinue the scholarships, and to end the grants provided by the Dogra rulers for three primary schools run by Buddhists, Shias and Sunnis were also strongly resented. No allocations were made in the first budget in the direction of Ladakh's

development. These policies of the leaders of Kashmiri government provided an impetus for the politicisation of the Ladakhi Buddhists. The Buddhists were concerned and wanted to protect their distinct culture and religion, and they wanted to take an independent decision about their political future (Behera 2000: 2).

The secessionist movement in Kashmir which gained strength in the late 1980s was also followed by voices of separatism in Ladakh. An agitation was triggered by an argument between a Buddhist youth, Rigzin Jora, and four Muslims in the Leh market on July 7, 1989 (ibid.5). This led to a rupture between Muslims and Buddhists which gave rise to demonstrations, civil disobedience campaigns and violent acts led by the Ladakhi Buddhist Association in 1989. They started demanding for Union Territory Status, so that it releases Ladakh from Kashmiri administrative supervision. Demonstrations against Kashmiri domination and in favour of a free Ladakh, political repression and the arrest of charismatic leaders aggravated the problems. The situation improved after Indian Government promised to give Ladakhis the status of “Scheduled Tribes”, permitting them to benefit from quotas for administration and universities (Dollfus 1995: 49-50).

In January 1991, the Indian Minister of Home Affairs, Buta Singh, decided to grant Scheduled Tribes Status only to certain categories of Ladakhis excluding in particular the Arghun under the pretext that they have Kashmiri or Central Asian ancestors. This contributed to a worsening state of affairs between the two communities. All those who were excluded considered the measure to be discriminatory. It has also reinforced the view held by some Buddhist leaders of Ladakh who consider Muslims as “outsiders” and immigrants to whom Ladakhi identity is denied (ibid.51).

The Buddhist in Ladakh complained that the Jammu and Kashmir Secretariat had only one Buddhist employee. Out of 200,000 government employees only 2,900 were Ladakhis and there was no Buddhist among 18,000 employees of nine corporate sector units. The Buddhist also resented the neglect of the Bodhi Language and the imposition of Urdu as the medium of instruction in Ladakhi schools. Successive state governments were also accused of ‘Islamising’ Ladakh by encouraging Buddhists conversion of Islam with the hidden motive of disturbing Ladakh’s demographic balance. As a result of the agitation, the Buddhists boycotted the Kashmiri Muslims.

Kashmiri traders started to leave Leh and their restaurants and hotels were closed down. The entire Kashmiri officialdom fled from Leh, Nubra, Zaskar and Khalsi areas. The social boycott was extended to the Ladakhi Sunni Muslims also. The Buddhists avoided the Muslims areas and did not enter shops, restaurants and hotels run by Kashmiri and Sunni Muslims. Inter-religious marriages were not allowed and relatives of different faiths were not allowed to meet. Social boycott broke the centuries old ties between the Ladakhi Muslim and Buddhists (Behera 2000: 6).

The Ladakh Buddhist Association led a “Free Ladakh from Kashmir” movement and involved a three year social boycott of Kashmiri and Ladakhi Sunni Muslims, banning all types of interaction between the communities (Beek 2000: 14). The Buddhist believed that the state government used the Sunni Muslims as agents to the Kashmir government in the execution of all their evil designs (Beek 1998: 41).

They started demanding for Union Territory Status to assert their identity but later had to settle for Autonomous Hill Council, which they achieved in 1995. The Hill Council was acknowledged as a conciliation to provide a mechanism for self-governance by granting autonomy to Ladakh in administration, planning and economy (Behera 2000: 6). Even though the situations have improved, there is still a sense of insecurity. There are some signs that the harmonious existence of these communities and the mutual respect for each other’s religion which was present earlier has started to crumble.

Therefore we can conclude by saying that we see a stark difference in Ladakh’s society before and after redrawing of borders. Arghuns (the community) which was the result of trade interactions between Ladakh, Central Asia and Kashmir, were earlier considered as an important part of the society and played an important role in Ladakh. For example- they even took part in Buddhist ceremony of *smon-lam* celebrated at Potala palace in Lhasa after the New Year’s celebration. It was a Muslim family which led the religious cum commercial mission of *Lopchhak* to Tibet. Marriages between Muslims and Buddhists were very common during the 18th and 19th century. Muslim and Buddhists had good relations but after the drawing of borders and state formation the Buddhists started seeing the same Arghun community as outsiders and as a threat to their identity. As a result of which the harmonious existence of the existing communities have started to crumble and this makes it

imperative for the Ladakhis to take necessary steps in order to continue the past legacy of peaceful existence which was present during the period when Ladakh was an important trading centre.

Conclusion

The present study has tried to examine how trade shaped the heterogeneous identity of the people of Ladakh and its politics. The existing literature has adopted a more generalised understanding of the trade linkages in Ladakh. Wherein the literature has failed to take into account the direct linkage between trade and identity formation or how trade impacted the politics of Ladakh. In view of this, the present study has tried to address the literature gap by taking into perspective the impact of trade in identity formation and shaping of politics in Ladakh.

Ladakh has always been a place where people from different regions met and exchanged ideas and culture. The culture of Ladakh has evolved over the period of time and the trade connections with Tibet and regions like Yarkand, Khotan, Kashgar of Central Asia had a great impact on Ladakh's culture. Influence from these regions is reflected in Ladakh's architecture, art, language and even religion. The traders acted as cross-cultural brokers and brought their culture and religion to Leh along with their goods which later got assimilated with the existing culture of Ladakh. This led to evolution of Ladakh's unique cultural identity to which Ladakh owes its origin. Due to Ladakh's geographical location at the political and commercial crossroads, its neighbouring regions have been invading and trading with Ladakh for centuries and these connections also shaped the political dynamics of Ladakh.

Ladakh shared close religious ties with Tibet and it always looked up to Tibet for spiritual guidance. The trade in pashmina with Tibet had a lasting impact on Ladakh's politics. This trade attracted various powers to Leh and the main motive behind the invasion of Dogra ruler Gulab Singh in 1834 was to control these pashmina producing regions. The Pashmina trade induced Gulab Singh to undertake the conquest of Ladakh which therefore indirectly shaped the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Ladakh which was earlier an independent kingdom was invaded and ruled by Gulab Singh and later with the independence of India (1947), it became part of the state of Jammu

and Kashmir. So, trade in this case not only had an impact on Ladakh's economy but also on its politics.

This lucrative trade in pashmina also attracted the British government, who tried to control these pashm producing areas as there was great demand for this raw material. They even sent Moorcroft on a fact finding mission and the possibility of rearing pashmina goats in England. The British government was also concerned about the nature of the triennial mission between Tibet and Ladakh and tried to discontinue the Lopchak and Chaba mission because they thought it was a tribute bearing mission and this state of affairs was incompatible with the government of India's status as paramount power. Thus, it can be stated that Ladakh's trade relation with Tibet attracted many powers like the British and the Dogras which further impacted Ladakh's politics and ceased its future as a part of Jammu and Kashmir State. As per the discussion above the current study, has dealt with the question regarding the impact of trade with Tibet on Ladakh's economy as well as polity. The trade in Pashmina not just attracted attention of Dogra rulers but also of British rulers which in turn guided Ladakh's trade relations with Tibet. Ladakh which was earlier an independent kingdom ruled by an indigenous ruler lost its sovereignty and thus changed the political dynamism from an independent kingdom to a vassal state under the Dogra rulers and finally becoming a part of Jammu and Kashmir State. Hence, considering the above mentioned argument the first hypothesis is proved that Ladakh's trade linkages with Tibet have contributed to the shaping of politics in Ladakh.

The other important trading relation of Ladakh was with Central Asia, the second chapter has attempted to answer the research question, as to how trade impacted identity formation in Ladakh. This study has tried to look at the different groups which were involved in this trade and how this trade led to the formation of a new identity called the Arghuns, which continues to be a part of Ladakhi society. Most of the work on Ladakh argues the origin to be homogenous in nature and erases the differences existing within Ladakh. These accounts gives a very generalised understanding of Ladakh which is mostly Buddhist in nature and fails to mention about other groups like the Arghuns which were the result of trading interactions between Ladakh and Central Asia. The study has tried to fill the gap in the literature

by linking this identity to trade and their role in this trading structure, and this is where the study has engaged with the process of formation of a new identity called Arghuns. Arghuns as an identity was formed due to a prolonged interaction between the Kashmiri and Central Asian merchants with that of Ladakhi women. Arghuns are the living proof of this union between the traders and the Ladakhi women. This study highlights how these routes facilitated the exchanges of religion, culture and led to the formation of a new identity which is a blend of two distinct cultures. So, the above stated argument has proven the second hypothesis that exchange of trade with Central Asia has influenced and shaped a new social identity in Ladakh.

To elaborate more on this newly formed identity the study looks at how these traders from Central Asia and Kashmir married Ladakhi women and brought with them their cultural values and religion which later assimilated with Ladakhi culture and evolved into a unique culture of its own. Even though these Arghun Sunni Muslims are descendants of Kashmiris and Central Asians but they look totally different due to the hybridisation. With the redrawing of borders, the connections between Ladakh and regions of Central Asia ceased and these Arghun traders started looking up for other occupations and they were the first ones to open hotels and guest houses for the tourist. They form an important part of Ladakh's society and they look back to their trading legacy with nostalgia.

Earlier when Ladakh had open borders its art forms and culture reflected influences from many other places. The trade routes were helpful in promoting religious and cultural exchanges. It also led to the sharing of knowledge and ideas among different social groups. Religion like Buddhism and Islam travelled through these routes and it played a crucial role in dissemination of Islam in Ladakh. There is a mixture of indigenous ideas with external elements which has formed the unique culture of Ladakh. This blend can be seen in Ladakh's architecture which has influences of Tibet as well as Central Asia. Even the language of Ladakh which was originally Tibetan but in course of time, it got assimilated with Kashmiri, Hindustani and Turki words.

However these trade route links fractured with the re-drawing of borders. This is where the research question on re-drawing of borders have been attempted to answer,

the study has tried to understand the transformation in Ladakh's society and economy. The re-drawing of borders (1947) had a devastating effect on Ladakh's society. Nomads could no longer move freely, traders had to abandon their traditional life. Ladakh had to undergo dramatic changes due to the assertion of China in the early 1940s at the western frontier, then in the late 1940s with the partition and in 1950s occupation of Tibet by the Peoples Republic of China. It was no longer possible for traders to roam freely across borders, nomads to graze their animals across different countries and sedentary populations to continue their relationship as before.

The twentieth century formation of borders altered social life in all the regions associated with trade through Ladakh. The border dispute sealed Ladakh's role as a heavily militarized border zone and traders were replaced by army officials. With the closing of borders and formation of Nation States, people had to look for other occupation. As the borders were drawn resources were limited and with growing competition identities became more consolidated and people started distinguishing 'self' (Buddhist) from the 'other' (Muslims) and how all this factor led to the crumbling of the harmonious presence of the different groups in Ladakh. The formation of borders re-defined Ladakh politically as a part of the Indian nation and a new commercial zone.

Therefore, it can be well stated that trade has played a vital role in identity formation and has impacted politics in Ladakh. This is witnessed in case of Ladakh wherein the trade linkages between Ladakh and that of Tibet and regions like Yarkand, Khotan and Kashgar of Central Asia have greatly shaped and influenced Ladakh's socio-economic linkages as well as political dynamics.

APPENDIX-I

Telegram from the Resident in Kashmir, No. 2676, dated the 29th April 1904, stating that the Last Lopchak Mission started in September 1902 and returned in October 1903.

The Lopchak Mission is apparently an institution of very standing. Provision for the maintenance of trade relations between Kashmir and Tibet was made in the Treaty of 1842. Unfortunately no authentic copy of this treaty is available but in the transaction of a portion given by Mr. Paul the words "LO Chak" occur translated by Mr. Paul as "tribute". The Tibetan copy of the treaty which he quotes added that the "Lo Chak" was to be sent yearly. There is no absolute proof that the triennial mission of the present day is meant but the identity is not improbable.

While the treaty is silent as to the exact significance of the presents carried by the Mission to the Dalai Lama, it appears from the form of receipt given at Lhasa that the Lopchak is considered by the Tibetan Government as a tribute-bearing embassy. This is further supported by the fact that the Tibetan counterpart of the Lopchak, the Chabba Mission which visits Ladakh every year- brings no official letters or presents in return with the exception of a complimentary scarf given to the Kashmir official at Ladakh, an act of ordinary civility in Tibet(Department of Foreign Branch 1904: 2-3).

Source: Government Of India, Foreign Department, Secret E, Proceedings, December 1904,Nos. 37-46

APPENDIX-II

Letter from the Resident in Kashmir, No. 5695, Dated the 8th (Received 12th) October 1904.

Proposes (1) that the transport employed for the Lopchak Mission should be paid by the Kashmir Durabar (2) that all transport taken free by other person for purely private trade should be paid for by the person concerned and (3) that all forced labour in connection with the Chaba Lhasa on Jhung Chang Mission should be abolished.

It was difficult to get any idea at Lhasa as to the way in which the Tibetan Government regarded the Lopchak Mission, for the councillors whom we had to deal with were all new men and when Captain O' Connor approached them about it, expressed their ignorance. I did not like to press enquiries for fear of arousing suspicions, but I asked Captain O'Conor to keep the matter in mind and as he saw opportunity obtain information. I see no reason why Mr. Colvin's suggestions should not be carried out but I should not like to see the Mission discontinued altogether

F.E. Younghusband 5-11-1904

Source: Government Of India, Foreign Department, Secret E, Proceedings, December 1904,Nos. 37-46

APPENDIX-III

Letter from the Under Secretary to British Commissioner for Tibet frontier Matters

From,

The Under Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department

To,

Colonel F.E. Younghusband, British Commissioner for Tibet frontier Matters.

Dated Simla, the 9th May 1904

Sir,

I am directed to address you on the subject of the triennial Mission despatched by the Kashmir State from Ladakh to Lhasa, known as the Lopchak Mission

A copy of a note on the Mission written by Captain Ramsay in 1889, is enclosed for your information. Captain Ramsay had not seen the treaty of 1842 between Tibet and Ladakh when he wrote his note. In the Persian version which he quotes, given in the Gulabnamah, no mention of the Mission is made. In a Tibetan version, however it is distinctly stated that the people of Ladakh shall send "lo-chak" to the Dalai Lama every year.

The constitution of the Mission is fixed, free transport is provided between Ladakh and Lhasa by the respective Government for 260 loads with a proportion of riding ponies and riding yaks. The head of the Mission is generally chosen from among the Arghuns of the Ladakh who have the entrée into Tibetan territory, but a Buddhist dignitary of high standing may be placed, nominally in supreme command.

The last Mission left Ladakh in September 1902 in charge of Muhammad Sadik, son of Nazar Shah the Chief resident merchant in Leh and returned in October 1903. The next Mission is due to start in 1905.

The question of abandoning the Lopchak Mission has been considered in the past without any definite conclusion being formed. The Kashmir Durbar was averse in 1899 from discontinuing the despatch of what is practically a tribute Mission on the ground that it was based on treaty engagement with Lhasa. Little attention seems to have been paid to the Mission of 1902.

While there is nothing in the available versions of the Treaty of 1842 to indicate the exact nature of the relations existing between the Tibetan Government and the Kings of Ladak, the Language of the formal receipt given at Lhasa suggests that the Tibetan Government regards Ladakh as a vassal state.

I am, therefore to request that you will endeavour to ascertain whether the Tibetan Government attaches any political significance or other importance to the Lopchak Mission, and furnish the Government of India with a report on any facts in connection with this matter which you may be able to gather.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant, C.L.S Russell,

Under-Secretary to the Government of India.

Source: Government Of India, Foreign Department, Secret E, Proceedings, December 1904,Nos. 37-46

Appendix IV

Treaty of Timosgang

The clauses of the treaty of Timosgang are as follows:

“1. The boundaries which were fixed, in the beginning, when King Skyid Lde Nyima Gon gave a kingdom to each of his three sons, shall still be maintained.

2. Only Ladakhis shall be permitted to enter into Ngarees-khorsum wool trade.

3. No person from Ladakh, except the royal trader of the Ladakh Court, shall be permitted to enter Rudok.

4. A royal trader shall be sent by the Deywa Zhung (i.e. the Grand Lama of Lhasa), from Lhasa to Ladakh, once a year, with 200 horse-loads of tea.

5. A "*Lopchak*" shall be sent every third year from Leh to Lhasa with presents. As regards the quality and value of presents brought for all ordinary Lamas, the matter is of no consequence, but to the Labrang Chhakdzot shall be given the following articles,

(a) Gold dust - the weight of 1 *zho* 10 times.

(b) Saffron - the weight of 1 *srang* (or *thoorsrang*) 10 times.

(c) Yarkhand cotton cloths - 6 pieces. (d) Thin cotton cloth - 1 piece.

The members of the *Lopchak* Mission shall be provided with provisions, free of cost, during their stay at Lhasa, and for the journey they shall be similarly provided with 200 baggage animals, 25 riding ponies, and 10 servants. For the uninhabited portion of the journey, tents will be supplied for the use of the Mission.

6. The country of Ngaress-khorsum shall be given to the Drukpa Lama, Mee-pham-wang-po, and in lieu thereof the Deywa Zhung will give to the Ladakhi king three other districts (in Great Tibet).

7. The revenue of the Ngarees-khorsum shall be set aside for the purpose of defraying the cost of sacrificial lamps, and of religious ceremonies to be performed at Lhasa.

8. But the king of Ladakh reserves to himself the village of Monthser (i.e. Minsar) in Ngarees-khorsum, that he may be independent there; and he sets aside its revenue for the purpose of meeting the expense involved in keeping up the sacrificial lights at Kang-ree (i.e. Kailas), and the Holy Lakes of Manasarwar and Rakas Tal.

Source: Political Treaties of Tibet (821-1951)

APPENDIX V

LADAKHI LETTER OF AGREEMENT,

1842

Translations of the original letters written in Tibetan

Shri Khalsaji Apsarani Shri Maharajah; Lhasa representative Kalon Surkang; investigator Dapon Peshi, commander of forces; Balana, the representative of Gulam Kahandin; and the interpreter Amir Shah, have written this letter after sitting together. We have agreed that we have no ill-feeling because of the past war. The two kings will henceforth remain friends forever. The relationship between Maharajah Gulab Singh of Kashmir and the Lama Guru of Lhasa (Dalai Lama) is now established. The Maharajah Sahib, with God (Kunchok) as his witness, promised to recognize ancient boundaries, which should be looked after by each side without resorting to warfare. When the descendants of the early kings, who fled from Ladakh to Tibet, now return, they will be restored to their former stations. The annual envoy from Ladakh to Lhasa will not be stopped by Shri Maharajah. Trade between Ladakh and Tibet will continue as usual. Tibetan government traders coming into Ladakh will receive free transport and accommodations as before, and the Ladakhi envoy will, in turn, receive the same facilities in Lhasa. The Ladakhis take an oath before God (Kunchok) that they will not intrigue or create new troubles in Tibetan territory. We have agreed with God as witness that Shri Maharajah Sahib and the Lama Guru of Lhasa (Dalai Lama) will live together as members of the same household. We have written the above on the second of

Assura, Sambvat 1899 (17 September 1842).

Sealed by the Wazir, Dewan, Balana, and Amir Shah.

Source: Political Treaties of Tibet (821-1951)

APPENDIX VI

TIBETAN LETTER OF AGREEMENT, 1842

This agreement is made in the interests of the friendship between the Lhasa authorities and Shri Maharajah Sahib and Maharajah Gulab Singh. On the thirteenth day of the eighth month of the Water-Tiger year (September 17, 1842), the Lhasa representative Kalon Surkang, investigator Dapon Peshi, Shri Raja Sahib Dewan Hari Chand and Wazir Ratun Sahib, the representatives of Shri Maharajah Sahib, sat together amicably with Kunchok (God) as witness. This document has been drawn up to ensure the lasting friendship of the Tibetans and the Ladakhis. We have agreed not to harm each other in any way and to look after the interests of our own territories. We agree to continue trading in tea and cloth on the same terms as in the past, and do not harm Ladakhi traders coming into Tibet. If any of our subjects stray into your country, they should not be protected. We will forget past difference between the Lhasa authority and Shri Maharajah. The agreement arrived at today will remain firmly established forever. Kunchok (God), mount Kailash, Lake Manasarowar, and Khochag Jowo have been called as witnesses to this treaty.

Sealed by Kalon Surkhang and Dapon Peshi

Source: Political Treaties of Tibet (821-1951)

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