

Evolution of Cultural Landscape along the Mughal Road in Jammu and Kashmir: A Geographical Overview

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ABSTRACT

Geographical study of historical routes are of immense value, as such studies offer an important insight into the past geographies of an area and provide answers to many questions like what importance a particular route had and what advantage does it had over others. In this context, the study of historical routes enjoys great significance. Road connectivity is the backbone of any society as they play a significant role in the flow of people, information and goods. Roads are source of interaction among different societies of the world which influences the culture, economy and political setup in these societies. The past era which was marked by scarcity of road connectivity, the only few routes found obviously attained a significant position. Their distinctive position had a positive impact on both the route itself and on its adjoining areas. The present paper is an attempt to study some important and interesting aspects of Mughal route which was very popular during medieval period and was frequently used by Mughal emperor on their way to valley of Kashmir. Also an effort has been made to reconstruct the evolution of cultural landscape in the forms of Sarais, Forts and Mosques etc along the Mughal road. The present study also makes an attempt to understand the underlying factors for the significance of the route in past, its fading importance in subsequent periods and also its revival in present time.

Keywords: *Historical Routes, Mughal Road, Valley of Kashmir, Sarais, Forts.*

Introduction

Jean Brunch has rightly stated that highway and horses are two basic facts of human geography. Roads constitute vital unit of a society and can be considered as its lifelines, as they connect people in different parts of the world, makes possible the flow of goods and information. The valley of Kashmir is connected with the rest of the world by a number of routes. Among these "The Mughal Road" is one of the most important routes to the valley. It is also called by the name of "The Old Imperial Road". The route initially started from the plains of Bimber, later onward the route passed through the Shiwaliks or the Jammu Hills (1000-3000) meter above mean sea level, which are formed by the deposition of unconsolidated conglomerates brought down by the antecedent Himalayan Rivers. After crossing these low hills, the road entered the relatively narrow as well as broad valleys, following the course of river in these areas. From these valleys the route once again enters the toughest and rugged terrain of Pir Panjal ranges of the Middle Himalayas.

After ascending Pir Panjal which have a steep upward slope, the road again descends down the gentle slope of the Pir Panjal to the Kashmir side from where it passes onward to a little hilly topography of Kashmir through various lush green forests, alpine meadows, gorges, spurs and snow clad peaks.

Climatic conditions along the whole route also varies greatly like lower Shiwaliks or Jammu Hills have the tropical type of climate where as on the way valleys between Pir Panjal and the Jammu Hills have also tropical climate. Beyond these a temperate type of climate is mostly prevalent up to the Kashmir valley.

Objectives

The present study was initiated with following objectives in view:

- i) To find when and why the Mughal Road became popular.
- ii) To identify the major Halting stations along the Mughal Road.
- iii) To study the cultural features associated with The Mughal Road.
- iv) To assess the factors responsible for degradation of the route after Mughals.
- v) To evaluate the present scenario and importance of The Mughal Road in Jammu and Kashmir.

Methodology and Sources of Data

Geographical study or field work is based on both secondary and primary data. The secondary data has been collected from both published and unpublished work of various agencies of government and private organizations while primary data was collected from the local respondents with the help of questionnaires and personal interviews.

Historical Significance

During medieval period, in the late 16th Century when Yakub Khan came to the Throne of Kashmir, he became cruel to the Hindus and the Sunnis who then sent a representation to Akbar for help. Akbar promised them the help and dispatched Mirza Qasim in 1585 A.D with a force to Kashmir via Rajouri. Mughal forces faced setbacks at the hands of Yakub Khan. But later on, in 1586-87 again the Mughal forces attacked Kashmir by the same route and captured it. This route was later on frequently used by the Mughal Emperors to visit Kashmir. Akbar was pioneer in the usage of this route to Kashmir and was well followed by his successors thus the route came to be known, popularly as "The Mughal Road". Prior to Mughal reign in Kashmir, during the rule of Afghans, this route was called "The Salt Route" as it was merely used for transporting 'Salt' to Kashmir valley.

The Mughal Road runs from Bhimbar to Kashmir via Nowshera, Chingas, Rajouri (town), Thanamandi, Bahramgalla, Poshiana, Pir Gali, Aliabad, Hirpur,

Shopian, Khanpur and then to the final destination i.e. Srinagar (Kashmir). Thus Mughal Road passes through present districts of Rajouri, Poonch, Shopian, Anantnag and Pulwama. The length of Mughal Road from Bhimber to Kashmir was 141 miles and duration of the Journey from Bhimber to Kashmir was of 7-12 days on horse.

Evolution of Cultural Landscape

Mughal basically belonged to Central Asia and their culture was quite different from rest of the world. India as well as its neighboring countries like Afghanistan and Pakistan has very remarkable imprints of Mughal culture. In Jammu and Kashmir, the cultural imprints can be observed along the major route of Mughals. Mughals on their way to Kashmir used to travel in caravans consisting of both men and women folk. The mode of transport used to be horses and elephants. Since journey to Kashmir was very lengthy and tiring so the Mughal emperors develop a number of places on their way as halting stations. Ali Mardan Khan, an Iranian Engineer of Mughal period divided Mughal Road into fourteen paraves (halting stations) from Lahore to Srinagar which was 246 miles long route. But the actual Mughal road originated from Gujarat town which was 70 miles away from Lahore and 176 miles from Srinagar. Main halting station constructed on this road were Gujarat, Bhimber, Saidpur, Nowshera, Chingus, Rajouri, Thanamandi, Bheramgala, Poshiana, Aliabad Sarai, Hirpur, Shopian, Ramu and Khankpura. The interval between each station was 10 to 15 miles keeping in view the geographical condition of the area. In Jammu and Kashmir 11 major halting stations exist along the Mughal Road except Gujarat, Bhimber and Saidpur. Ali Mardan Khan constructed Baradaris, Hamam, Masjids, Sarais, and Forts on these halting stations while the natives constructed their houses around these stations with the help of local Rajas and Mughal Governors. In this manner, small townships on almost all the halting stations had emerged during Mughal period and this road had become the centre of hustle-bustle. All these places were centers of socio-economic interaction which later on developed as the major cultural features and flourished along the road as the major centers of human activities. Among the major cultural features developed by the Mughals (Sarais, Masjids Mosques, Terraces, Forts and gardens) few were destroyed or encroached by the residents yet maximum are still in good condition but need renovation for the restoration of the glory of past.

The Mughal Emperor Akbar was fascinated by the beauty of Kashmir to the extent that he set a trend for his successors to visit the valley. He developed splendid Sarais along the Mughal road. A number of cultural features were also developed by Emperor Jahangir who was so much obsessed by the beauty of Kashmir that he had spent thirteen summers of his life in Kashmir and even he died on his way to the valley. The period of Jahangir is marked by the construction of

lovely Mughal gardens. Magnificent Chinar trees planted throughout the valley with the ruins of cascades and summer houses, all owe their origin to Mughal vogue. The other cultural features developed by him also include Shahabad Sarai, Aliabad Sarai. At Bahramgalla there is a waterfall and a very fine spring. According to the orders of Jahangir, a terrace was erected there to sit upon, also he ordered that a stone table should be placed there, on which the day and the date of his visit should be recorded. Most of these cultural features were developed to make comfortable accommodation for emperor himself, ladies and children in his caravan as it was not safe for them to be in the cold climate on the way. The major cultural landscape developed along The Mughal Road can be summarized below:

1. Nowshera: Nowshera is a large tehsil of district Rajouri, which lies on Mughal Road. On the bank of Manawar Tawi at Nowshera, Mughal emperor Akbar had constructed Qilla Noor Mahal in 1586 which was later renovated by Jahangir with the help of Iranian Engineer Ali Mardan Khan. Just after 10 kilometers from Nowshera is another Sarai of Mughal namely Sarai Anayatpura which was constructed by then Raja of Rajouri Mast Wali Khan to receive Jahangir in 1620. The Sarai in Nowshera Teshil was built by Akbar as an inscription on the western gate way records. This Sarai is a more spacious and differs from others in its general layout. It comprises of two enclosures one within the other. The outer most enclosure has double storied bastions at the corner and is crowned by crenellated battlement. It contains a row of alcoves internally and has machicolations. An imposing gateway in the middle of western wall provides an access to the Sarai. It is the only gateway to Kashmir which contains square stone pillar surmounted by bracket with pendant, a feature invariably found in Mughal buildings of Agra and Fatehpur Sikri. The residential complex lies in the south west corner of the enclosure wall. It consists of a quadrangle of arched cells facing a common courtyard and is similar to Sarais of the same period. Above the eastern door way of the Sarai facing river side palatial complex is seen in deplorable condition. Opposite to main gateway lies a Shahi Masjid, which is still under use. Office district administration and local people occupy the Sarai and in close vicinity of PWD rest house remains of Hamam could be noticed.

2. Chingus Sarai: Chingus Sarai is situated on the stretch between Nowshera and Rajouri lying about 130 kilometres away from Jammu city. Chingus Sarai served the Mughal caravans for about two centuries till the downfall of the Empire. The Sarai was an important halting station as realised by the architecture and the built of the structure. The word 'Chingus' derives its meaning from Persian language meaning 'gut' or 'intestines'. In 1627 A.D., Emperor Jahangir while travelling via Mughal road fell seriously ill and passed away at a village known as Khanpur in Rajouri. Queen Noor Jehan who was accompanying the Emperor decided to take the

body to Lahore for burial to avoid possible succession tussle among the heirs. To avoid any possibility of decomposition of the mortal remains of the Emperor Jahangir during transit, the viscera were removed out of the body and buried within the confines of the transit camp. After the burial of entrails, this Sarai came to be known as Chingus Sarai. Since then village Khanpur became Chingus. The dead body was then rested on an elephant in a way to conceal the death of the Emperor and taken to Lahore for burial. It is believed that the doctor who removed the entrails was also buried inside the Sarai. The Sarai complex has a small mosque in the centre. In the corridor of the mosque is the burial place of the entrails of Emperor in the form of a tomb made up of marble. This magnificent structure is a beautiful maze of symmetrical residential cells surrounded by thick brick wall enclosure. The fort was supposed to cater to large armies, numerous stables and feeding rooms inside the brick walls.

3. Muradpur Sarai and Masjid: Muradpur Sarai and Masjid yet another halting station of Mughal Emperors along the Mughal road, lies just 7 Kms from Rajouri Town on Jammu Poonch High way. Here the medieval Sarai overlooking the green fields is surviving with lower portion of its enclosure wall having a bastion at the corners. The enclosure wall measuring about 30 metres on one side is made of rubble stones in lime surkhi mortar. It contains residential cells and about 1 Km from this building and on the bank of Manwar Tawi river lie remains of a Masjid and projected cell of assembly hall. The Masjid is of imposing dimension with courtyard in front raised on higher level. It is now full of vegetation and in utter ruins.

4. Rajouri: Rajouri town lies on The Imperial Mughal road leading to Kashmir. Mughal remains scattered on either bank of river comprises of forts, palaces, sarais, mosques and gardens etc. These buildings are now occupied by Civil Hospital, Police and Forest departments and almost stand renovated leaving only a portion of these in original position. The ruins of a small mosque in the market are still present. The garden situated on the slope of a plateau is the most interesting of all the Mughal remains in Rajouri. A double storied *Baradari* stands in the middle of west wall overlooking the river. The garden had bastions at the corners. The main entrance to the garden was on the south side but there also exist, two entrances in the west wall and one in the north wall. But nowadays it has been encroached by the local inhabitants and converted into a residential cum commercial hub.

5. Nainsukh Sarai Fetehpur and Saj Sarai: Both Sarais were architect of Mughal along the Mughal road around which a prominent human agglomeration developed which later on caused an encroachment and deplorable end to these Sarais in the form of relics.

6. Thanamandi: Thannamandi is to the north of Rajouri along the Mughal Road. It was a major halting place before entering Kashmir valley through Rattan Shah

Pass. Here Mughal rulers constructed a magnificent Sarai which is notable for its ornamental carvings. Like other edifices this sarai also comprises of two enclosures viz. a cellular quadrangle and a plain walled area popularly known as "Am-Khas". The first apartment contains 6 cells on all four sides and has two rectangular dalans on higher level opposite to each other in the northern and southern walls. All the cells open to the courtyard through arched alcoves. Each dalan contains three chambers internally connected. The Sarai is entered through imposing gateway which consists of a large dome shaped chamber in the middle with positions in front and behind and recessed arches at the sides. The enclosure of the Sarai has octagonal bastions at the corners. The second enclosure is now in utter ruins.

7. Behramgala: Behramgala is a glen track within the main Pir Panjal series of mountains from Peer Panjal Pass to Rattan Shah Pass in Poonch district. The place is also known as Panjsrain valley. The area was named as Panjsarain by Mughals after they constructed five inns (Sarais) on Mughal road at Rattan Peer, Chandimarh, Poshiana, Gungadian and Peer Pass for the convenience of Mughal caravans. It may be said here that Mughal road used by Mughals also falls in the same area. As per Tuzk-e-Jahangeri at the time of Mughal invasion on Kashmir in 1586 AD via Salt road, (later on Salt road was renamed Mughal road), this track was governed by local Sardar Bheram Naik who welcome Mughals and helped them in capturing Kashmir. In reward, Emperor Akbar who visited Kashmir in 1587 AD through this track and halted at Behramgala-Chandimarh, designated Bheram Naik as Sardar of this track. The Emperor also directed him to construct five sarais in this principality from Rattan Peer to Peer Pass. Emperor Jahangir who visited this place for the first time in 1612 AD was quite impressed with this place. He named the waterfall located near Behramgala after the name of his wife as Noor Chamb, which later on became Noori Chamb. Jahangir had halted at Behramgala thirteen times while going to Kashmir. He also got five sarais constructed in this area and renamed the tracks as PanjSarain. The Mughal caravans of Emperor Jahangir used to halt at this track for weeks together for recreation. At this very place the Emperor fell ill seriously in 1629 AD and took his last breath in Rattan Shah Forest. With the death of Jahangir, the Royal glamour attained by this area started vanishing.

8. Pir Panjal Pass: Pir Panjal Pass also known as Peer Ki Gali is a very famous station on Mughal road at an altitude of 11,500 feet (3505 m) above the mean sea level. The Pir Panjal Pass remains the easiest line of communication from Kashmir towards central part of Punjab and was the shortest possible route between Srinagar to Lahore known as Mughal Route. As per the British Physician Francis who had accompanied Emperor Shahjahan during his visit to Kashmir in 1644 AD writes that the royal Mughal Carvan met a Muslim Faqir at Pir Pass who was famous for his spiritual deeds. It is possible that this Faqir was Pir Abdul Karim who was

buried exactly at Pir Pass after his death by his followers. Presently a Ziarat of Pir Abdul Karim is the only structure available at Pir Pass which is the main attraction for the tourists, travellers, passengers and tribal families who reach Pir Pass from Poonch Rajouri or come from Kashmir valley through Mughal Road.

9. Aliabad Sarai: Aliabad Sarai is the next halting station from Pir Gali, which forms a part of a string of magnificent shelters built along the Mughal Road by Emperor Nur-ud-din Jahangir between 1605-1627. The Aliabad Sarai is about 50 X 40 meters and its gate is an imposing 7 meters high. The dome above the gate has caved in but the roof on the rest of the spacious complex is still there. The stone door sill is glazed like shining glass. Inside there are rooms behind arched doorways to north, east and west. The royal apartments are in the north heralded by a 4 meters high arched *Darwaza*. Ever since the Mughals stopped coming here the most regular occupants have been the Gujars. The Gujars have removed stones to have direct access to some rooms from outside. Some stones and wooden beams have been removed and the lattice windows in the royal apartment are broken. The mortar from the stone walls is also coming out. For all the damage, the building remains a majestic example of the architecture of Mughal times. A little above the Sarai are some graves surrounded by wilting mazar posh, Irish lilies that are planted in cemeteries in Kashmir. Earlier people from SW Kashmir would bring the dead to bury them here, as close as possible to the Ziarat on Pir Gali. Above the Sarai is a Gujar doka- a flat thick mud roofed hut. This is the traditional style that houses in Rajouri and Poonch were made before prosperity made them switch to concrete. The importance of this Sarai in the cultural landscape during the Mughal reign can be well understood by Vigine, "*A Sarai is like all the caravan Sarais of the east, a large square building, uncovered in the centre, with deep niches which may be turned into rooms for separate parties around the walls inside. These walls are from 15-20 feet in thickness and there is a flat roof on which a person can walk around the whole square. The architecture is usually sarasenic. A bazaar, in which flour and other necessities were purchased, is attached to the sarais.*" Down sloping along these mountains are relatively plain regions of Dubjian, Hirpur, Sukh Sarai, Nandan Sarai and Shopian. Shopian used to be a small village surrounded by forest that was called as Shah Rah or the Kings Highway. Vigine quoted "I concluded it a name given by Mughals. The word Shopian is combination of two Turkish words "Tsn" means water or the torrent and "Paien" - below or beneath, or at the foot. The Shopian river known as Rambiarra flows beneath it, its western bank being a perpendicular wall of indurate clay; whilst on the eastward of the village are some masses of shingly conglomerates. Shopian is five and half miles from Hirpur. The old name of the district in which Shopian situated was Buta. The district abounds in adobes secured in the frame of wood for prevention against the effect of earthquakes.

10. Ramu and Khanpura: Ramu and Khanpura were also major halting stations along the Mughal road towards the Kashmir side. These stations have lost their glory with the passage of time and lack of proper care and maintenance.

As stated earlier all these places were major halting stations of the Mughal Emperors on their way to Kashmir and had enjoyed well flourishing times as important cultural features during Mughal era. All these cultural landscapes still exist in today's time but their conditions are deplorable. Among these halting station some ones, in the time of Mughal reign were major centre of economic and social activities. But as the Mughal Emperors after Shahjahan, who had visited Kashmir only once, abandoned their frequent visit to Kashmir, the Mughal Road also was not frequently used and the halting stations also suffered. Some travellers like Vigin who travelled Kashmir by this road, once quoted in his travelogue that (according to local sources he had come to know that) "the general aspects of the places show that it have been large in the times of Mughals." At another place talking about Shopian he quoted that "It is now comparatively speaking a miserable place, bearing the impression of having once been a thriving town". The Mughal sarais of Rajouri has been renovated to the personal use by the local people. All these studies reveal that usage of Mughal road has a direct influence on the evolution and flourishing, rise and fall of the cultural landscape along it.

Journey and Perceptions

The travel to Kashmir from Bhimbar by Mughal Road is always a fascinating and adventurous journey. The visitors' right from Mughal Emperors to the common masses have always been impressed by the variation in terrain, climate and biodiversity along the route. The various heart-catching valleys, picturesque landscape, mighty milky rivers, crystal clear lakes, lush green forest, alpine meadows and snow covered peaks are always a source of excitement to the perceptions of the visitors. Of all the visitors, Mughal Emperor Jahangir impressed by the natural beauty throughout the route had visited the valley of Kashmir thirteen times. In his autobiography Tuzuk-I-Jahangiri, he made a mention of Pir Panjal the tough part of the journey to Kashmir and said, "Of the roughness of the pass and difficulties of this road what shall I write? At another place he was highly astonished to see a wonderful fall at Hirpur and wrote, "I hastened there to see it. What can be written in its praise? The water pours down in three or four gradations. I had never seen such a beautiful waterfall. Without hesitation, it is a sight to be seen very strange and wonderful". Some types of perceptions are made by Vigin on highway to Kashmir by this route. At one place in his travelogue he quoted, "The snowy Pir Panjal is visible from the neighbouring ridge, but there in nothing picturesque in the appearance of village (Bhimber) itself. Its cottages are unhewn

stone, mud and wood and contain two or three small Musjids". Another fact is that no one can remain untouched by any feeling when he/she see The Pir Pinjal range. It is a very catching and majestic range about which nothing in words can be said. "The view from Panjal in the direction of the plains is magnificent. The different ranges which I had crossed on the way to Bhimber and even the points, when I have passed them were visible in the distance. I looked down upon the roofs of Pohisana where I had slept and could distinguish.

Rise and fall of the Mughal Road

During medieval period Mughal Road from Bhimbar to Kashmir via Rajouri-Poonch was an important route by which Mughal caravans traversed in to the valley of Kashmir about 428 years ago. The route for several decades enjoyed an important status and consideration as was frequently used for the flow of people, goods and commodities. Trade through the route was also carried on. As a result this route gained due attentions of the Mughal Emperors. This consideration to the Mughal road via Rajouri-Poonch started from the time of Akbar who was the pioneer among the Mughal ruler to use this route when they conquered Kashmir in 1585 A.D later on during his rule Akbar visited Kashmir three times and every time the route's maintenance got due attention and also many cultural landscape especially Sarais for halting purpose were constructed along the road.

The period of Jehangir can be called as golden age in construction, development and maintenance of Mughal road, since Jehangir was highly fascinated by the beauty of Kashmir and had visited Kashmir for thirteen summers by this route. Since his reign route recorded the period of its maximum usage and as a result its better management was quite oblivious. After Jehangir, the visits to Kashmir by the successive Mughal Emperor reduced drastically. Sahjahan who came to throne after Jehangir, visited Kashmir only once and after him the Aurengzeb never goes beyond the boundaries to Kashmir. Thus the usage of Mughal Road suffers from many rise and fall throughout the time. But after Aurengzeb Mughal Road to Kashmir was never used by the Mughal Emperors, as a result it was completely abandoned except usage by some local people. Thus the Mughal road which was once on the peak of its usage and this period can be called as its glorious period comes to a halt. Later on certain other factors also accounted for the fading of the significance of this route. An Important reason was the instability in the political scenario of Panjab prior to the independence of India. Since any instability in an area always effects the condition in the adjoining area. Instability in Panjab caused a strategically fall in the usage of Mughal Road as it remained no more safe to the travellers. Another reason which added to the decline in the usage of Mughal Road was the set up of state of Jammu and Kashmir on the political map of India as an independent identity.

Because after this event a new route to the valley of Kashmir via Banihal pass was started which serves as the connecting line between Jammu and Kashmir since then, simultaneously the old Mughal Road on the other hand gets out of use and becomes an obsolete route.

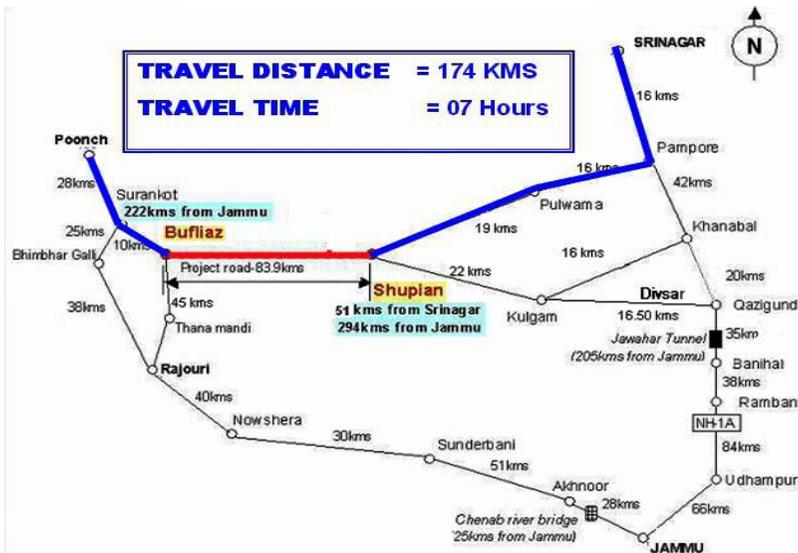
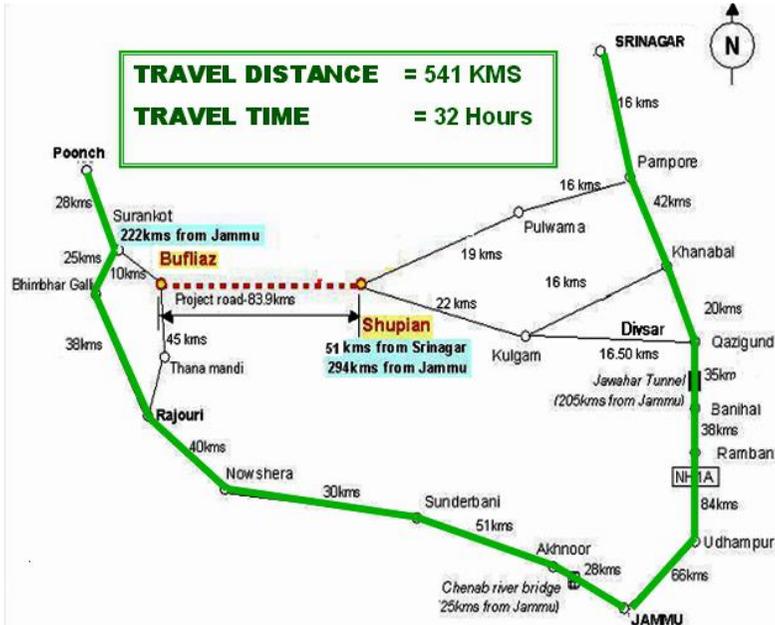
Revival of Mughal Route in Jammu and Kashmir

The Mughal Road historically was crossed by the armies of Mughal Emperor's Akbar, Jahangir and Shahjahan. Now after a period of 428 years, the Mughal Road will come alive once again an alternative route linking the border territories of Jammu and Kashmir to the rest of the states. The Srinagar – Jammu NH1A via Banihal is the only link which connect the valley of Kashmir with rest of the nation. The basic problem lying with NH1A is that during winter due to heavy rains and snow fall the route get blocked and remained so far several weeks together and it cause adverse effect in the transportation of goods, people and commodity. Heavy traffic congestion on this NH throughout the year is also a major challenge. To cater these problems, government started noble efforts to revive the historical Mughal road to provide an alternate route to the valley via twin districts of Rajouri and Poonch. The solution of the problems was initially under taken in 1969, under the chairmanship of then chief Minister Jb.Shiekh Mohd. Abdulla a project was conceived to revive The Mughal Road in Jammu and Kashmir as a linking Rajouri-Poonch border belt of Jammu division directly with the Kashmir valley at Shopian in Pulwama district through shortest possible route and called this project as "The Mughal Road". Post 1989, the area become hotbed of militancy and construction work on the road here was almost unthinkable till 1996. The project was revived by then Chief Minister Dr. Farooq Abdullah. But efforts of Chief Minister Janab Mufti Mohammad Sayed paid off and defence minister and Prime Minister not only cleared the project easily but also promised full funding for it. The central govt, has provided Rs.79.50 crores for the project. The construction of the prestigious project was started in October 2005 simultaneously in Buffliaz and Shopian sides, with a target of completion in March 2007 and an estimated cost of INR 255 crores. The road cuts through *Hirpora Wildlife Sanctuary*. Initially, there was serious opposition to the construction of the road by vested interests on the excuse of fragmentation of wildlife and inhibit movement of animals, especially the endangered Markhor goat in the region. Also, opponents claimed the road will get early snowfall in winter and hence will not serve as an alternate route to existing Jammu-Srinagar highway. Finally Supreme Court gave conditional permission for the construction of the road. The construction work was to be completed in December 2008; however, it got delayed for a number of reasons including the Amar Nath land row. Officially the road was opened for the first time on July 12, 2009 for inspection by a Standing

Committee of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Council. It was supposed to be thrown open for light vehicles in October 2010 but the law and order situation arising in Kashmir in 2010 once again marred its timely completion. Double lane road has already been completed as of August 2012. A fresh deadline of 31 July 2013 was fixed for completion of the road, which has not been achieved yet.

Importance of Mughal Road In Present Context

The significance of The Mughal Road lies as a highway of great historical importance across the Pir Panjal ranges, apart from serving as an alternate highway between Srinagar and Jammu would help in, greater inter regional culture and economic exchanges. The geographical isolation of the specific area, which discourages people to people contact, will end and greater economic activities between the regions would follow especially in respect of Poonch and Rajouri districts which remained out of direct contact with valley for last 64 years. Mughal Road once completed would reduce the distance between Poonch and Srinagar from 541 kms to 174 kms only that is a reduction of 25 hours travel time. Also it will facilitate the twin boarder districts of Rajouri and Poonch with better medical and educational facilities available in Kashmir valley. The state which has been suffering from the problem of terrorism and in this context the movement of force to the different part of state especially valley needs to regularized throughout the year. In this context the Mughal road will be of great importance. The Mughal Road no doubt will definitely help in going new heights in the trade and commerce in the state and the overall economic development will be obvious. Also opening of Mughal Road will provide avenues for tourism industry in the state to boom and attain new horizon.



Source: Making of Mughal Road

Conclusions and Suggestions

The chronological study of various event and happening in past in Historical Geography helps us in the reconstruction of the past. The studies of routes in the context of Historical Geography are quite rewarding in the sense that they bring into

light many unknown facts in past. The study of past routes can give glimpses of the architectural styles of the structures built during different periods. Besides it can also give insight into taste and needs of the travellers. The present study that is 'The Mughal Road in Jammu and Kashmir; A geographical overview' has investigated. The Mughal Road, one of the routes to the valley of Kashmir. From this study it is also concluded that a route or a road as a phenomenon is susceptible to the political, economic, administrative and historical changes throughout the time. The development of the route and its usage has positive effect on the socio-economic and cultural condition in the area in which it exist where as when it is not in use, it too has a negative effect in the same area. From the above study another conclusion that can be made is that an overall development can be expected in that area in which revival of such historical routes is undertaken. Along the Mughal Road the glory of all historical monuments likes Sarais, Masjids, and Gardens etc. which were developed by the Mughal emperors should be declared as a 'State Protected Monument' by the Government of Jammu and Kashmir. Since the revived Mughal Road is fair weather road only. Government should take earliest and result orientated efforts to make it all weather roads so that socio-economic and cultural mingling of the masses along both end of the road should not be hampered any more. Also concrete efforts should be made by the concerned authorities to cater the tourist potential along this historical route by keeping the natural beauty and glory of the landscape in its best.

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