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## **The Valley of Karnah: A Historical Analysis**

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### **Abstract**

*The present research paper is an attempt to give a historical overview of tehsil Karnah, largest tehsil of district Kupwara consists of 60,129 populations as per census 2011 of which 34,472 are males and 25,658 are females. The objective of the present research is to explore and understand the historical background of tehsil Karnah. The area selected for the purpose of study includes the valley of Karnah from ancient to till independence.*

**Key words:** *Karnah, historical background, ancient, Independence*

### **1. Introduction**

Present Karnah is situated north east of Kashmir valley from main headquarters of Kupwara district. Karnah is ninety kilometre away crossing sadhana gali. It is said that sadhana the famous Bollywood actress of yester years at the pinnacle of her career was invited to Kupwara post, India Pakistan war of 1971 to enhance the morale of the army. She visited this pass to change the name forever. Topographically the valley of Karnah is in the laps of Karnoo Mountain and Shamasbari Mountain. It was the largest tehsil before independence of india, comprising of wadi-e drawaha, wadi-e leepa and wadi- Karnah, that is why present border of the valley touches to drawaha through shamasbari and pharkiyani, leepa through damar de gali and reshiyani gali in west nahala qazinag and kishanganga where meets, make a border to muzuffarabad. During the regime of Maharaja Ranjit Singh under Lahore darbar whole Karnah including three wadies granted tehsil. Thereafter administration passed from ranjit singh to gulab singh then hari singh but tehsil remain same as

tehsil Karnah. During the raids of qabali localized name (pakthere) line of control (Loc) demarked in Karnah purely on political bases. As a result fertile parts of northern Karnah like deawaha, sharda, leepa, ashoke-kote, qaginag, lub graham got separated from present Karnah and are now known as landi patti meaning narrow strip. Thereafter the keran valley was detached from it and finally Karnah valley shrunk to an area of just 11 sq miles comprising the valley of tithwal and gabrah.

The north of the valley of Drav was situated the famous sharda university. This place is situated at a height of 6500 feet above sea level. Today it is called mai sharda (mother sharda). A fort had been built close to this university which later on became a seat for the propagation of Buddhism. Sharda University was rated one among the best and top university of the country at this point of time and this became the seat of Buddhist learning. Scholars and students of Buddhist philosophy flocked to the place from various parts of the country (India). Thus owing to sharda as the famous seat of learning, Karnah valley became known to scholars. Two routes used to be adopted, that continue to exist today. One route lay along the banks of kishen Ganga through the drav valley, passing by sharda, and entered tilel valley. The second route passed through leepa valley and going along nakot hattian reached Uri and then to Baramulla and Kashmir valley. For these interacting routes Karnah valley remained a seat of different cultures, Infact a melting pot of these cultures. Many scholars after completing education and training at Sharda University proceeded along these routes and chose to settle down at various destinations. This is the reason why the place names of many villages in Karnah valley go after different saints. For example, sadhupura (sudhpoor), Bhatpora, kaltha (kalath), prada (pradha), dhani, gomal, tud (taad). In most of these areas, Buddha statues have been excavated besides some plates. We have also available to us traces of the arrival of pandavas in Karnah valley in mythological times on the nallah kaji nag, stands a bridge called pandavpul (Pandav Bridge) connecting village tad with prada. The

pandavas had cut the stone beam for use in building this bridge from Moji forests. But for some unknown reason, these beams could not be put to use and still remain at Moji jungle. It is believed that during their stay in the Karnah valley, the pandavas had made some arable land in the pradah forests. These lands are still maintaining their Sanskrit names such as awarav, nadir, thakri, shakhri etc. it is also said that lord Krishna visited this valley once as he wanted to see the pandavas. The place where he met with them is called helmat. The river kishen Ganga get its name thereafter. It is also believed that ramachandra ji also visited this place once.

The footpath connecting Kashmir valley to Karnah via chowkibal passes through the middle on sadhana gali (Nastachun pass). The legend that two witches had taken their abode on sadhana gali pass called ‘Anhi’ and ‘Dori’. Anhi means the blind and dori means the deaf. Both of them were carnivorous. Therefore people generally moved along this pass in large carvans. The fear continuous in the mind of the people of Karnah up to this day. There is another legend related to these witches, it is said that baba Abdullah ghazi, accompanied by three hundred seventy (370) of his disciples, crossed through this pass. One of the witches caught hold of the last person to cross the pass and devoured him. A loud cry was raised and the news was brought to baba Abdullah ghazi. He pierced the belly of the witch with his staff and bodily extracted the disciple out of it. His curse turned the witches into two boulders that still be seen in Shamasbari Mountains.

### **The name Karnah**

There is mythical evidences how the Karnah valley gets its name (as per Richard chase) who conducted research on myth, he said myth discovered our past neither half nor partial but a concrete truth in the long run. so we have to relive on myth and tales that shows how the name Karnah originates. In kalhan’s Rajtrangani urdu translation chapter 4 geography-e- kadeem clearly mentioned the

name Karnah extracted from 'karnoo' mountain but here question arise how the mountain got name as 'karnoo'. It is an old saying a strong and powerful raja ruling area of Karnah named as 'Raja karn' and he was called Gabar (karn Gabroo) a dardeian word, because of his muscle powers. A village Gabra establish on raja's name. he built his fort as a headquarter on top of mountain that is why mountain called karnoo so it is clear because of raja karn name of Karnah tehsil originates.

### **Early inhabitants of Karnah**

According to the historic reference the inhabitanicies in Karnah started from 1300 B.C. when whole area covered by dense forests and pastures, people from other areas came here for grazing their cattle in this way area turned into 'Bhaak'. According to other reference the first inhabitance of Karnah were run away soldiers of many kings, at that time whole Kashmir was full of water including Karnah that is why these run away soldiers settled down in upper reaches, it is because of that water Karnah was called 'BHUR' bhur was famous in zarla literal meaning of bhur is 'ZAR' means wealth. There was a famous city called zarla city.

### **Bamba sultans**

Karnah remained a part of bamba sultans of muzaffarabad for a long time when bamba sultan muzaffar khan of pukhali established his principality in 1644. In that time, gabra was an important place of Karnah and its territory was spread upto drava and sharda in north, lipa to maragali in the south and tithwal to shamasbari. Molvi hashmat ali wrote tariekh –e-jammu and Kashmir that in 1790 muzaffarabad was ruled by sultan mehmoood khan. After his death muzaffarabad principality was divided by the decendents of sultan. Then Karnah came under the rule of his son nasir ali khan. He got his palace constructed at the foot of Karanu Mountains. After nasir ali his son mehraj-ud-din and grandson mansoor ali khan became

the sultan of Karnah. Then his son sheer Ahmad khan took over as ruler of Karnah. He was a strong personality and fought a number of battles with Punjabi and Dogra forces. In 1819 when maharaja ranjit Singh conquered Kashmir, sheer Ahmad did not surrender and started the resisting Punjabi forces. Then the ruler of Karnah, sultans of muzaffarabad and rajas of Uri and kathai revolted against the maharaja ranjit Singh forces. To crush this revolt sardar hari singh nalwa was appointed the governor of Kashmir by Punjab darbar in 1821. Nalwa alongwith Punjabi forces moved towards Ilaka pahar and crushed the revolts of khakha and bamba tribes because there was no unity among the local rajas. C.E. bats writes in the 'Gazetteer of Kashmir' that owing to differences among local rajas, hari Singh nalwah captured all these principalities like kathai, Uri, Karnah and muzaffarabad. But raja sheer Ahmad khan did not accept the defeat and continued struggle against the Punjabi forces.

In 1846, during the reign of maharaja ranbir singh, sheer Ahmad khan again appeared in Karnah revolted against the Dogras and captured the whole area of Karnah in the north of kishen Ganga and dogra forces were stopped at chogal. Moiz din with the help of Dogras chased sheer Ahmad khan and his son mohd azeem khan was injured, then sheer Ahmad khan again left Karnah with his family. Thereafter mohd azeem khan appeared before the court of maharaja ranbir Singh and requested for the release of jagir Karnah. The demand was not accepted and maharaja allotted a small village yaripura in Kashmir to raja sheer Ahmad khan with restriction that he will not go to his native principality Karnah. Then raja sheer Ahmad khan and his family migrated to yaripura and spend his last days of life there. His desire was that after his death his body be buried at gabra in Karnah but when he died maharaja did not allow his burial at gabra and he remained buried at yaripura.

## **During Independence and after**

As we know that Kashmir was princely state after the partition Kashmir was not yet decided to join India or Pakistan. The tribal people had marched through miles to reach the borders of Jammu and Kashmir state. The raids small and big had tested baited decoyed and dispersed the force guarding the security of the state. These raids grew into a regular warfare. On 22 Oct. 1947 a large force of armed raiders entered muzaffarabad in 300 Lorries and began looting and burning. After the sack of muzaffarabad the invaders continued their progress along the Jhelum valley road towards Srinagar bringing death and devastation to the inhabitants of villages and towns on the way. On the fateful day 22 Oct. brigadier rajinder Singh was attending to his official files at the Srinagar cantonment when the news reached that a large scale invasion had taken place in muzaffarabad and that the raiders were on their way to Srinagar. Rajinder Singh guarding the rear single handed, kept up a steady fire. It was here that enemy bullet hit him. He was soon encircled by the raiders and killed. With no opposition now from the state forces the raiders surged forward. For at that critical hour in the history of Kashmir when the marauding invaders were a few miles from the capital, the national conference took up the task of defending the city and surrounding districts against invasion. Sheikh Mohd Abdullah flew to New Delhi to personally appeal to the Indian cabinet to despatch armed forces to help Kashmiris repel the invaders. On 27 Oct. the first batch of Indian troops under the command of lieutenant colonel D.R.Rai flew to Srinagar. On 14 Nov. Indian troops entered Uri, without much of a battle. With its recapture the first and most hazardous phase of the Kashmir campaign has been completed.

## **Capture of tithwal**

General thimayya who was in command of the Srinagar division projected an offensive directed towards muzaffarabad on the

western border. Brigadier Sen was to advance from Uri along the domel road, while brigadier harbux to tithwal- a point hardly 18 miles on the northern flank of muzaffarabad. Starting on the night of 17-18 may from Handwara, 40 miles north east of Uri, brigadier harbux Singh's column made good progress, and on 23 may, entered tithwal covering 40 miles in six days through difficult Roadless country.

The capture of tithwal signified a major blow to the raiders as it was dangerously close to muzaffarabad, their main base, and it disrupted their main line of communication with their forward bases in the north and north east. Supporting the direct attack on tithwal, another column simultaneously advanced towards trahgam, 20 miles north-west of Handwara. Notwithstanding tough opposition, they pushed on and then striking towards tithwal, finally ended up by capturing nastachun.

## **2. Objective of the study**

The objective of the study is to explore and understand the historical background of the Karnah valley

## **Methodology**

The present study is purely based on secondary source of data. The data gathered from different books and other relevant materials to interpret the historical background of the valley of Karnah.

## **3. Conclusion**

The valley of Karnah lies in the west of district Kupwara and around one ninety kilometre from the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir. The valley of Karnah was the largest tehsil of muzaffarabad and was the main trade centre before partition. After independence it became a part of Indian Territory. The valley of Karnah has great historical importance but we have not found any

chronological history of Karnah. The valley had ruled by many rulers and remained the seat of Buddhist learning. There is also evidence of arrival of pandavas in Karnah. Bomba sultans ruled on Karnah for very long time. Therefore the valley remained a seat of different cultures, infact a melting pot of these cultures. So the attempt has to take to explore and understand the historical background of the valley of Karnah.

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