



Indians And Their Activities In The Emirate Of Bukhara In The Late 19th And Early 20th Centuries

Ibrohimov Nozimjon Ikhtiyorovich

Lecturer at Bukhara State Pedagogical Institute, Uzbekistan

Abstract

The Emirate of Bukhara, one of the ancient states of Central Asia, occupied a significant position in the region due to its geographical location, political structure, and economic relations. Particularly in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, international trade, especially economic and cultural ties with India, held great importance for Bukhara. The article focuses on all aspects of how the populations of these two states influenced trade relations. The settlement of Indians within the emirate's territory and their trade and usury activities are discussed in detail.

Keywords

Usury, agent, spy, trade relations, product, protectorate, colony, export, import, geopolitics, "lyunka," "pari," "patta," "nauzugur," rasta, bazaar.

Introduction

Among the diverse, multifaceted people of Bukhara, immigrants from India (non-Muslims) stood out sharply by their appearance. Typically, men wore short, tight, thick robes with small patterns, tied with thread, and narrow trousers. They wore black square skullcaps either plainly or over freely flowing hair. Women wore various costumes and jewelry characteristic of their communities. Consequently, almost all European travelers who visited Bukhara and other cities of Central Asia in the 19th and early 20th centuries considered it their duty to dedicate at least a few lines to this ethnic group in their travel diaries.

English political agent A. Byornis, who visited in the 1830s, noted that about 300 Indians from Shakarpur lived in 19th-century Bukhara. A little later, Hungarian Turkologist and British citizen Vambery reported that there were about 500 immigrants from India in the Bukhara Emirate. According to researchers, in the second half of the 19th century, the number of Indians settled in the Bukhara Emirate sometimes reached 800 people. Moreover, this number is given without considering Muslim Indians.

In the Turkestan region, in the lands of present-day Uzbekistan, immigrants from India settled in the cities and villages of the Syrdarya, Fergana, and Samarkand regions. In 1893, 26 Indians (20 men and 6 women) lived in the Russian part of Samarkand. They stayed in the markets of the Khiva Khanate for short periods. These immigrants were mainly from the western and northwestern parts of India.

In the second half of the 19th - early 20th centuries, there were 6-8 thousand Hindus in Central Asia (excluding Indian Muslims). The maximum duration of their stay here did not exceed 10-15 years. The colonists were mainly men, and they did not have the right to marry local women. The Indians tried to settle compactly, often in a single caravanserai. In Bukhara, they occupied two caravanserais: Saray-Karshi and Saray-Hind. In Tashkent, Indians lived in a caravanserai

located in the central market in the old part of the city. If there were no caravanserais nearby, they settled in the same area, forming "Indian rows" (in Old Margilan in the 1880s) and "Indian neighborhoods" (in Namangan in the early 19th century). The memory of the "Indian dwelling" is still preserved in Kokand. By establishing national colonies in their permanent settlements, they created safeguards against possible attacks on their property.

There was a social stratification in society, limited by castes. Among the representatives of Indian communities were their own intellectuals. Libraries were well-stocked in large colonies. Skilled scholars of books fulfilled orders from their compatriots and local clients. Servants attended to the elite and the wealthy. There were also those from the lower classes (coolies and others) who had become completely impoverished.

Externally, Indian buildings in Turkestan did not differ much from the dwellings of the indigenous population, but indirectly indicated their owners' desire to preserve their national taste.

Indian emigration in Central Asia and Uzbekistan was formed, in particular, from representatives of national entrepreneurs engaged in trade and usury, as well as bankrupt Indian peasants and artisans.

Through the mediation of Indian immigrants, a vast array of products was brought to Uzbekistan from India: tea, indigo, spices, semi-precious stones, muslin, cashmere scarves, brocade, sandalwood, and others. In the second half of the 19th century, they effectively monopolized the Bukhara tea market. The tea imported from Russia could not compete with theirs. Therefore, one of the first actions of the Russian administration after occupying the region was to integrate it into the entire Russian customs system. As a result, the position of Indian merchants was severely undermined.

In the 1880s, Indian merchants conducted large-scale operations with imported goods only in the Bukhara Khanate. In 1887, there were 10 major wholesale merchants here. The main type of their commercial activity was grain trade. Additionally, they engaged in providing credit to peasant farms for cotton and grain harvests. The Indians purchased cotton for delivery to cotton ginning plants. The acquisition of wool, fabric, yarn, and thread also captured their interest.

Agriculture and horticulture became more widespread among Indian immigrants. Indian jewelers, who had settled in the territory of modern Uzbekistan since ancient times, opened small workshops here. Carnelian seals with various images and suras from the Quran were especially in demand.

Some immigrants from India engaged in other types of business besides trade and usury. For example, in 1896, the Indian Bay Balagulev, in partnership with A. Ya. Epifanov, built a cotton ginning plant in the village of Mashad, Namangan district. A similar plant in Andijan was built in 1907 by Peshawar Akub-Sheikh Nurkhanov. Among the Indians were cooks, bakers, confectioners, barbers, and even teachers. At the beginning of the 20th century, Indian laborers arrived in Turkestan.

Due to the significant number of Hindus in the Bukhara Khanate, secret surveillance was conducted over them among the local population. Public control over their activities and income was carried out by a special official with the title "Yasaul of the Hindus." When a Hindu died, his property could not pass to his heirs and was transferred to the emir's treasury. They



even observed sick Hindus so that they could await their death and prevent them from secretly transferring money to their heirs.

In the Bukhara Emirate, the right of non-Muslim Hindus to openly practice their religion was restricted. They could not build temples, create idols, or organize religious ceremonies. Prayer rooms were only allowed inside caravanserais, and the "sacred cow" was also kept there. A number of daily restrictions were imposed: riding horses within the city was prohibited; living outside specially designated areas was forbidden; marrying Muslim women and taking them as slaves was banned; and only clothing of a certain style was prescribed.

In the 1870s, Indians occupied a unique position compared to immigrants from other Asian countries in terms of their role in the economy of Turkestan. The majority of them were engaged in usury, which led the Russian colonial authorities to approve a number of special legal norms exclusively for Indians. On October 27, 1877, the Turkestan Governor-General K.P. Kaufman issued a circular "On the Prevention of Exploitation of the Local Population by Indian Immigrants." This was an attempt to combat their usurious operations. The circular's regulations prohibited Indians from acquiring land property from the local population for debts; only the debtor's movable property could be sold to collect debts, excluding everyday items; impoverished debtors were not to be arrested and instead were required to pay off their debt annually, not exceeding one-third of their income. To completely undermine the status of Indian landowners, a law was enacted to force the sale of land plots they had previously acquired.

In rural areas, the confiscation of Indian-owned lands was accompanied by compensation for their value. Special decisions of regional councils determined the period within which the Hindu owner had to sell the land. If he failed to comply with this decision, the land plot was subject to mandatory sale through administrative procedures, with the proceeds returned to him after deducting the costs associated with the sale.

Initially, administrative restrictions on Indian monetary debtors were adopted temporarily. However, in 1886, their main provisions were approved by the Russian State Council and gained legal status.

After the events of 1917, a small number of Indian families, who had nearly forgotten their native language, chose Turkestan as their permanent place of residence. Immigrants from India remained in the Bukhara Emirate until 1920.

In 1920, the Provisional Government of Emigrant India briefly relocated from Kabul to Tashkent, later evolving into a socio-political national movement. It was led by Indians Muhammad Ali, Abdul Majid, and Abdul Fazl. Their residence occupied a portion of the old Main Post Office building on Pushkinskaya Street.

Muslim Hindus who remained in Uzbekistan gradually began to assimilate with the local population. Several such families still reside in the old city part of Tashkent. In the 1970s, Indologist L. Eremyan met a woman of Indian ethnic origin. According to her, her Punjabi father crossed the border in 1915 in search of a better life, converted to Islam so that the local population would accept him more readily, and stayed to live there.

References

1. Расуль-заде П. Н. Из истории среднеазиатско-индийских связей второй половины XIX — начала XX века. Ташкент, 1968.

2. Байкова Н. Б. К вопросу о русско-индийских торговых отношениях в XVI-XVII вв. // Труды Института востоковедения АН УзССР. 1956. Вып. 4. С. 75-94.
3. Она же. Роль Средней Азии в русско-индийских торговых связях (перв. пол. XVI - втор. пол. XVIII в.). Ташкент, 1964.
4. Дмитриев Г. Л. Правовое положение выходцев из Средней Азии (вторая пол. XIX-нач. XX в.) // Материалы по истории Средней Азии. Ташкент, 1966. С. 63-64.
5. Он же. Из истории индийских колоний в Средней Азии (втор. пол. XIX-нач. XX в.) // Страны и народы Востока. М., 1972. Вып. 12. Кн. 2. С. 234-248.
6. Он же. Этнографические сведения об индийских выходцах в Средней Азии. Сб. работ аспирантов ТашГУ. 1964. Вып. 254. С. 214-220.
7. Он же. свтор. пол. XIX-нач. XX вв.) // Научные труды ТашГУ. 1964. Вып. 238. С. 142-155.
8. Он же. Правовое положение индийских выходцев в Средней Азии (втор. пол. XIX-нач. XX в.) // Научные труды ТашГУ. 1967. Вып. 293. С. 63-69.
9. Он же. Из истории индийских революционных организаций в Средней Азии (1919-1921 гг.) // Научные труды ТашГУ. 1967. Вып. 314.
10. Матвеев А. М. Из истории Совета интернациональной пропаганды на Востоке (1919-1920 гг.) // Научные труды ТашГУ. 1977. Вып. 533. С. 106-107;
11. Он же. К вопросу о ростовщичестве в Бухарском ханстве в XIX в. // Там же. С. 48.
12. Низамутдинов И. Г. Об индийском ростовщичестве и его формах в Бухарском ханстве (XIX — нач. XX вв.) // Научные труды ТашГУ. 1978. Вып. 556. С. 37-44.
13. Пугаченкова Г. А. Искусство Гандхары. М.: Искусство, 1982.
14. Ibrohimov, N. I. (2025). Trade Routes Connecting the Bukhara Emirate and India In the Second Half of the 19th-Early 20th Centuries. Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Research Fundamentals, 5(05), 133-136.
15. Ibrokhimov, N. I. . (2023). TRADE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE EMIRATE OF BUKHARA AND INDIA IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY - THE BEGINNING OF THE 20TH CENTURY. Oriental Journal of History, Politics and Law, 3(06), 9-15. <https://doi.org/10.37547/supsci-ojhpl-03-06-02>
16. Ibrokhimov, N. . (2024). TRADE RELATIONS OF BUKHARA EMIRATE WITH INDIA IN THE XIX CENTURY. Oriental Journal of Social Sciences, 4(06), 164-171. <https://doi.org/10.37547/supsci-ojss-04-06-18>
17. Ibrohimov Nozimjon Ikhtiyorovich. THE EMIRATE OF BUKHARA AND INDIA BETWEEN TEA TRADE IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH AND EARLY 20 TH CENTURIES. (2025). American Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Sciences, 35, 118-121.