
Research

CROSS LOC TRADE BETWEEN INDIA AND PAKISTAN- CONTOURS AND DYNAMICS

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Abstract

The once economically prosperous region of Kashmir has ended up being decelerated in trade and trade relations as a fallout of the Indo-Pak conflict post partition. This phenomenon has had costs transcending the economy and the society at large. The partition has led to the division of families, local culture has been affected and the economy has suffered a great deal. The paper is an attempt to put cross-LoC trade in the larger framework of the conflict between India and Pakistan. While historicizing the conflict-ravaged economy of erstwhile united J&K, the paper discusses complementariness of patrilineage and trust, which constitutes a very important aspect of cross-LoC trade since 2008. The paper attempts to highlight the common bottle necks which have been placed in conducting trade between the two divided parts of Kashmir. Besides, the paper also points out that the policy of banning trade between patrilinear families is bound to have an adverse effect on the economic future of the region and cross LoC trade itself.

Keywords: Kashmir, Cross LoC Trade, Conflict Economy

JEL Classification: F51, D74, P48

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Short Trade History of Kashmir

Kashmir has historically been a great trading place for two important reasons. One, its uncommon climate and topography produced a unique set of goods, especially in the context of trade with plains in the West and the Southwest. Due to Kashmir's geographical proximity to Central Asia and linkage with Silk Routes, its goods would easily reach Central Asia via Lahore, Sialkot, Rawalpindi and the West Punjab. Fur, skein silk, carpets, Yarkandi felts, woolen homespun, etc were exported to Central Asia and in return salt, sugar, cotton, metal, petroleum products, etc were imported. Trade would be handled by peddlers and trading agents in caravans. These caravan traders acted as a medium of exchange of art, culture, ideas and technology, etc (Warikoo, 1996). Kirra (2013) enumerated the mainly used routes from where trade would take place:

- a) The Imperial road from Bhimber to Srinagar leading over Pir Panjalpass.
- b) Route following river Jhelum and leading to Muree.
- c) Route over Zoji-la to Ladak and thence to Lhasa and Yarkand.
- d) Route over Burzil-la to Gilgit, Hunza, Nagar and Shinshinaki republics.

River Jhelum played an important source of transportation and trade. Completed after ten years in September 1890, Jhelum was a primary source for timber and other exports like dried fruit and vegetables. Karachi was the principal market for the exports of Kashmir (Mayfield 1955). However, the first vehicle, a private horse-drawn carriage, crossed over Banihal Cart road in 1916 linking the two provinces. It remained a private road of the then princely ruler of Jammu and Kashmir –Maharaja Pratap Singh (1885-1925) –and special permit was required to traverse it till July 1922, when the road was thrown for public use (Bamzai 2007).

Historicizing the Conflict- Formation of LoC

In 1947, at the partition of the subcontinent on the basis of *two nation theory*, India took over Muslim majority Kashmir forcouple of authoritative reasons; a proof for its secular ideology and a renunciation of 'Muslim Pakistan's communal politics' (Rai 2004).

Consequently, substantial inter-religious feud, orchestrated by the Maharaja and influential Hindus and Sikhs, took place in Jammu province, which resulted in extermination of no less than two thirds of Muslim population. Although the massacre remained inconspicuous, it harbingered the infamous tribal intervention that took place on 22nd October, 1947 (Snedden, 2012). The ‘massacre’ also motivated Jammu Muslims to defend themselves and to form an organized peoples’ militia, the *Azad Army*, opposed to the Maharaja’s autocratic rule. The Azad Kashmir movement, led by the Azad Army, wanted J&K to be free from maharaja’s control. On 4th October, an unsuccessful attempt was made to create an alternative government for J&K. On 24th October 1947, taking advantage of the tribal intervention, which boosted the physical and military strength, senior Muslim Conference politicians formed a Provincial Azad Government (Snedden, 2012). Since then, Kashmir became the heart of contention between India and Pakistan.



The Map of Jammu and Kashmir, Source: Alastair Lamb. *Kashmir; a Disputed Legacy, 1846-1990*, Oxford University Press, Karachi, Pakistan, 2006. Page no. 8

In August 1948 the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) adopted a resolution calling on India and Pakistan to reach a ceasefire agreement in Kashmir (Bose, 2003), following which an internationally supervised process could be set in motion whereby “the future status of Jammu and Kashmir shall be determined in accordance with the will of people” (Dasgupta, 1968). After the ceasefire finally came into effect on 1 January 1949, UNCIP adopted another resolution on 5 January, announcing that “the Secretary-General of the United Nations will, in agreement with the Commission, nominate a Plebiscite Administrator who shall be a person of high international standing” (Dasgupta, 1968).

On 27th July 1949, the Cease-fire Line was ratified under the Karachi Agreement, thereby splitting the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir into two parts. One-third of the erstwhile princely state administered by Pakistan, known as ‘Azad’⁴ (Free) Kashmir or Pakistan Administered Kashmir (PAK), including the part where provincial government was formed, and Gilgit Baltistan. The remaining two-thirds, that include the regions of the valley of Kashmir, Ladakh and Jammu, collectively called Indian Administered Kashmir (IAK), are controlled by India. The ceasefire line has since been supervised by a tiny – compared to the Indo-Pak army deployment in the area – force of the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP). It still monitors the line, which was renamed the Line of Control (LoC) —a 742-kilometer de facto border (Bose, 2007) —after the Karachi agreement in 1972. The finality of LoC is not established as both the nations claim the entire state of J&K; yet both accept its reality for pragmatic purposes (Shofield, 2010).

Human Mobility Across Line of Control

Post partition, the historic routes of Jehlum valley and the silk roads were closed leading to an inevitable reliance on the dangerous Srinagar-Jammu National Highway. While the former implication denied Kashmir’s access to South and Central Asian markets, the latter strengthened economic dependence on limited Indian economic markets (Dabla, 2012). Equally, the blockade of silk routes resulted in paralyzing the economic structure of PAK which acted as a significant transit circuit of Valley-Central Asia trade.

The LoC not only divided the territory, but also villages and even individual houses, thus putting on end to any human movement. However, emotional bonds, common cultural heritage and attachment with the birthplace continued to appeal people with the result “illegal” movement of families across the LoC remained a regular feature of life thereafter. People have been going across the border despite hostile topography which sometimes results in casualties (Shah 2012) on both festive and tragic occasions. Apart from celebrating festivals together, evidences show that people still marry across LoC (Bakhtiyar, 2013).

A welcome measure was initiated by the two governments in 2006 when Chakan-Da-Bagh was turned into a border crossing point renamed Raah-e-Milan for cross-LoC bus, Karwan-e-Aman, as part of a slew of measures aimed at promoting people to people contact between the two countries. The cross-LoC travel was and still is facilitated by both the governments by providing entry permits, which allow a person to visit and stay on the other side for 45 days. However, the cross-LoC bus service, the only ‘legal’ means of contact for displaced families across the border, drops off every time tension between India and Pakistan steps up (The Hindu, 2013).

After the ceasefire in Kashmir on 1 January 1949, a simple *Rahdari* permit system was devised for travel between divided Kashmir but it was discarded a few years later and the bus service was suspended in 1965 (Akhtar, 2012) following the Indo-Pak war. This goes without saying that there has been no short-term or long-term ‘legal’ connection between the divided families from 1965 (suspension of bus service) to 2005 (restoration of bus service). Moreover, after the restoration only members of the divided families are permitted to travel. Even amongst those families, only close relatives across the LoC are issued travel papers (Chari and Rizvi, 2008). Also, the cumbersome process of the applications takes an extraordinarily long time because of highly complex procedures, including close scrutiny by security and intelligence agencies on both sides of LoC. Likewise, people in IAK are even devoid of telecommunications facility with viz-a-viz traders across the LoC (Yusuf 2009).

During the time of Indo-Pak hostilities in 1965 and 1971, mines were planted along the border in cultivated lands and pastures,

around infrastructure and even houses, to obstruct movement across the LoC. In late 1980s with the rise of militant movement in the IAK, profound mining was accomplished on Indian side of the border to stop and check cross-border infiltration (Mahapatra, 2011). Most mines are supposedly removed but some that skidded in rain and snow didn't stop to haunt people. More than 2,000 landmine victims had been recorded between 1947 and 1989 in the Rajouri-Poonch sector (Kashmir Times, 2002) among whom 62% belong to Poonch district alone (Unequal Citizens, 2014). The movement of families across the LoC has decreased dramatically due to lengthy clearance procedures and security concerns, but desperate attempts to cross the line are not uncommon.

Divided Families- Causes and History

Before 1971, there are many instances of people crossing the LoC by foot. But post 1971, year of tightening of the border, physical movement of people came to a halt. Even the very limited communication facilities stopped after 1989 insurgency in Kashmir (Mahapatra, 2011). Borders were marked and remarked following the wars in 1947-1949, 1965 and 1971. The segregation took place to such an extent that women lost their husbands, mothers didn't find themselves with their daughters and sons and sisters and brothers were separated for ever (Shekhawat, Mahapatra, 2009).

Due to the 1947 Jammu massacre, half of the refugees of the erstwhile principality found shelter in Sialkot, a nearby district of Pakistan, so that they would be able to return home after plebiscite was held (Snedden 2012). Later in 1965, Indian army started 'Operation Clearance' to liquidate infiltrators which resulted in heavy casualties and loss of property of local Muslims on IAK side. It is estimated that as compared to the 1947 migrations, relatively larger fraction of Muslims (from Rajouri) took asylum in PAK (Bhatia, 2011). More than 5,000 families also migrated from different areas of IAK to PAK in 1989 due to insurgency (Pakistan Today, 05 February, 2012).

Majority of the divided families are dispersed over Rajouri and Poonch districts on the IAK side, and Rawalakot and Bhimber on the PAK side. People, living in these areas, claim that divided families constitute more than 60 percent of the total population in PAK (Chari

and Rizvi, 2008). While the number of divided families in the Kashmir Valley is fewer, there are large numbers –six to seven thousand (Sharma, 2009) –of divided families in Kargil and Skardu districts. Outside Kargil district, divided families disseminate throughout Ladakh, especially, Turtuk region, since it was captured by India in 1971, and has families more recently separated (Chari, Chandaran, Akhtar, 2011).

Patrilineage – The Concept

Patrilineage is a line of descendants through the male line. Patrilineage is a ‘descent group reckoned through only one parent, either the father (patrilineage) or the mother (matrilineage). A lineage may comprise any number of generations but commonly is traced through some 5 or 10’. Generally speaking, it is a consanguineal male and female kin group, each of whose members is descended from the common ancestor through male forebears. Nevertheless all the male members should be present in decision making meeting, but the power of decision is attributed to the head of the family alone. Since ‘the Line’ was drawn arbitrarily in Kashmir, blood relations fell apart across it which created a deep void in families affected. Consequently, to fill that void, the intra-Kashmir trade could prove quite instrumental, and heal the wounds of the history. The trade is not simply trading of commodities alone; it fills the communication, cultural, ethnic and religious gap created by the conflict.

Partilineage among Gujjars and Paharis:

Pir Panchal region is considered home to the Gujjar Tribe in Jammu and Kashmir State. Gujjars are partly nomadic and mostly Muslims. Their language, Gojri, is the second major language after Kashmiri in the state (Behera, 2006). Although their scattered inhabitations and houses also exist in Kashmir valley, Jammu, Udhampur, Kathua and Doda district on IAK side of LoC; a sizeable Gujjar population lives on the PAK side of LoC particularly in Mirpur, Bhimber, Kotli, Plandri, Rawalakot, Bagh and Muzaffarabad district.

After the Pahari-Punjabi speaking Rajput Muslims, Gujjars are the second largest ethnic group in Pakistan administered Kashmir. Due to the formation of 223 km LoC in 1947, this tribal community

remained a main victim of these contested lands (Choudhary, 2007). There is hardly any Gujjar family in Jammu province or north of Kashmir Valley which didn't suffer from the division and wars in 1947 or 1965 (Choudhary, 2011). During this period, About 17,000 families of Gujjar tribes have migrated from IAK to PAK (Choudhary, 2007).

Pahaad in Urdu lexicon means mountain and Pahadi means the one who is a mountain dweller or who lives in the hills. Their language is known as Pahadi or Pahari and they identify themselves as the Pahadi Speaking People (PSP). Pahari language is spoken by hundreds of thousands of people on both sides of the LoC (Adfar Shah, 2013). Although there is little dissimilarity between Paharis and Gujjars in terms of their socio-economic backwardness, paharis assert their distinct linguistic, ethnic, and cultural entity (Bukhari, 1992). Since Paharis are greater in number than Gujjars, this ethnic group has largest number of divided families over and across the LoC.

The Political Economy of Cross LoC Trade:

Probably the only positive aspect of the otherwise devastating 2005 earthquake in Kashmir region was that the human sufferings, not created by wars, compelled the two nation states to coordinate with each other for rebuilding processes. Acting on the humanitarian momentum, the two nuclear powers corresponded to launch a cross-LoC bus service in 2006 for divided families. Since this was the first opportunity for many Kashmiris to meet separated relatives until afterward the beginning of the conflict, the service received massive appreciation in Kashmir and provided the right forum and environment for recommencement of trade across the LoC (Saeed, 2010).

In 2008, during the Amarnath land controversy, street protests became uncontrollable for Indian government. Spatially lengthened blockade of the Jammu-Srinagar highway by some Hindu fanatics in Jammu critically hit indispensable supplies in Valley. Consequently in August 2008, thousands of Kashmiris took a march along Jhelum Valley Road-connecting Srinagar with Muzaffarabad. The emblematic protest towards LoC coupled with slogans like '*Kashmir Ki Mandi, Rawalpindi*' (Jillani, 2012) indicated that trade links with Muzaffarabad in PAK be restored (Sengupta, Mahmud and Choudhary, 2012). The

death of more than 100 protestors, resulted out of clashes between Indian forces and civilians, placed grave political problem for India on both domestic as well as on the international front. Among many possible processes of restoring peace in IAK, the set-up of cross-LoC trade appeared one possible form of compensation of consoling people in valley by Confidence Building Measure (CBM) (Sengupta, Mahmud and Choudhary, 2012)

The unique Case of Cross LoC trade

In October 2008 the cross-LoC trade was initiated, though 'in haste' (Jillani, 2012) as a political CBM between India and Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir (Chandran, 2013). The two governments' agreement of not imposing trade tariffs on goods eased trading process. However, New Delhi and Islamabad have 'arbitrarily'² made an indicative list (Parrey, 2010) of 21 items for trade across the LoC that are intended to stimulate local economies on both sides notwithstanding any role to economic forces of supply and demand in trade. Although the items were doubled in 2011 and trade was extended to four days and 100 trucks instead of 25 from each side allowed to cross LoC per week, there are many impediments and deficiencies regarding communication, currency, infrastructure, number and nature of the trading items, access to traders across the line and days of trading etc. Above all, the trade takes place via barter system and not via monetary system. Also, the trade is neither treated as international trade and nor domestic trade. Exports are called 'traded-out' goods and imports are named as 'traded-in' goods. The trade would have died in its infancy were not the sentiments of people attached to it. The cross LoC trade entails in it much more than a commodity exchange; the trade between the divided Kashmiris has a great human aspect to it.

The Dynamics and Contours of Cross LoC Trade:

Owing to the complex procedures and trust deficit, traders who joined at initial stages with much fanfare couldn't survive for long (Qadri, 2013). A chunk of respondents (39 percent from both sides) have alleged that highhandedness of custom staff on the corruption is the biggest problem in barter. Seventy eight percent of the respondents from PAK have expressed dissatisfaction with the custom clearance system while 67 percent from IAK also said so

(Perception survey by CPDR, IRF, 2012). The lack of vivid system of valuation also provides the ground for allegations of *hawala*⁵ transactions (Parrey 2010). The Uri traders have been particularly accused in this connection followed by the traders who are trading through Poonch. Chandaran (2013) further substantiates Parrey's statement while adding that the truck services started through Chakanda- Bagh, thanks to the capacity of the local traders, and the enthusiasm of big traders outside J&K, the cross-LoC trade was seen more as a proxy trade. Ali (2012) makes a mention that higher the customs duty on a product, the more incentive there was for wholesalers to divert their trade via the LoC route. According to the trade modalities agreed on the 22nd of September 2008 meeting, Pakistan and India agreed that the 'flow of trade, list of items and modalities would be reviewed every quarter by the Trade Facilitation Officers.' However, no review of the trade list has been undertaken so far (Ali, 2012). The trade principles are challenged as several items in the list could be sold at a better price domestically or they are available at cheaper rates within the importers market (Yusuf, 2009).

To facilitate the trade across the line, one of the most promising recent developments has been the formation of the Federation of Jammu and Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Joint Chamber), the first formal joint establishment across the Line of Control. The Joint Chamber was positioned to play a central role in future attempts at enhancing economic collaboration but there seems little possibility of any consensus. The passive behavior of the IAK business community's toward expanding the ties outside trade is perhaps the most distressful reality. The national governments on both the sides also remain shirked towards asserting the state governments from recognizing the joint chamber (Yusuf, 2009).

Another attempt to facilitate trade was the formation of trade and travel authority (TATA). In 2010 the PAK government issued a regulation under which the TATA was set up. TATA is the chief agency assigned to facilitate LoC travel and trade. The agency is headquartered in Muzaffarabad and has set up facilitation centers at the two LoC crossing points in Chakothi and Rawalakot. However, due to lack of legal code assigned to LoC trade and the technology constraints, the disputes between traders remain unsettled. Moreover, disputes with custom authorities also emanate due to the poorly defined LoC trade

agreement on treatment of goods if sold in markets in Pakistan and India (Ali, 2012). The administrative problems aren't uncommon either. The trade facilitation centre is occupied by part time staff. The lack of full-body scanners leads to awkward process of opening of the goods for exhaustive examination by checking agencies (Parrey, 2010). Therefore, the notion of 'uninterrupted flow of consumer items in the valley and for exporting fruits and other items from Kashmir' (Akhter, 2009) can't follow the suit. Consequently, the costs to traders would rise which could lead to arbitrary decisions, hinder normal operations of supervision and audit activities and rent attempting behavior. Also the traders want the trade to be dictated by the market, not the bureaucracy (Parrey, 2010) but as Yusuf (2009) mentions, "two countries see each other through a zero-sum lens whereby granting unilateral concessions is a sign of weakness and the strongest opposition on both sides comes from the bureaucracies". Qadri (2013) also argues that the fizzing-out of trade has been proved by a recent Indian-government-order banning every Kashmiri who has a relative on the Pakistan-controlled-Kashmir from participating in the cross-Line of Control trade. Qadri (2013) further states that the list of 42 blacklisted traders was given to the Asif Lone, chairman of the Salamabad-Chakothi Trade Union, by the senior superintendent of Criminal Investigation Department –the intelligence wing of the state police in India.

Coming to patrilineage and trust factor, the survey, conducted by Indus Research Foundation (IRF) in collaboration with Centre for Peace Development and Reforms (CPDR) supported by Conciliation Resources, reveals that as many as 62 percent of the respondents confirmed that they have relatives on the other side and most of them said that their status of being the members of divided families was among basic reasons for joining the Cross-LoC trade (Perception survey by CPDR, IRF, 2012). Ali (2012) further affirms that most significant factor behind growth in LoC trade is the strong family ties shared by traders across the LoC. The family acts as an important guarantor to traders as their receivables are not protected through bank guarantees and they don't have the option to pursue litigation through courts.

In the tables below, it is clear how during recent years trade has decelerated due to the above mentioned bottlenecks that have been put in place by both the countries. If correctives are not prioritized, this trade may die down. Even if it continues, trade may not benefit the people living across the Line of Control.

Exports Across LOC

Table 1.1

Period	Cumulative 01-04-2015 to 18-09-2015				During 29, 30-09-2015 & 01-10-2015			Cumulative 01-04-2015 to 01-10-2015				
	Weight ¹	NT ²	NC ³	Value ⁴	Weight	NT	N C	Value	Weight	NT	NC	Value
2015-16	177073.62	1998	80	276.9996	3758.29	57	03	11.3511	150331.91	2053	83	283.356

Source: Office of the Custodian, Trade Facilitation Centre Salamabad Uri (IAK)

Table 1.2

Period	Weight (in Quintals)	No. of trucks	No. of consignments	Value in Crores (IC) ⁵
2008-09	3987.31	180	29	1.3625
2009-10	119004.75	1830	70	71.8046
2010-11	247235.20	3650	70	156.4756
2011-12	350079.81	4406	104	244.3543
2012-13	623171.57	7519	175	324.7251
2013-14	434019.98	5152	143	272.3884
2014-15	494188.28	5476	166	377.755
2015-16 ⁶	180831.91	2055	83	288.3507
Total ⁷	2452518.81	30268	840	1737.2162

Source: Office of the Custodian, Trade Facilitation Centre Salamabad Uri (IAK)

1- (in Qtls.)

2- Number of Trucks

3- Number of Consignments

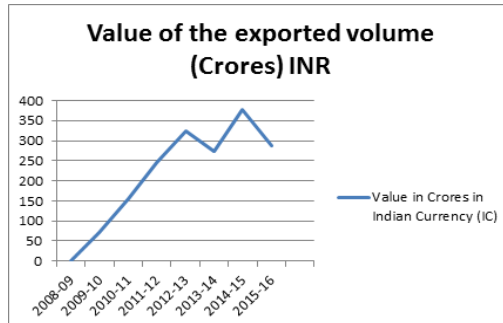
4- (INR)

5-In Indian Currency

6-Fram 01-04-15 to 01-10-2015

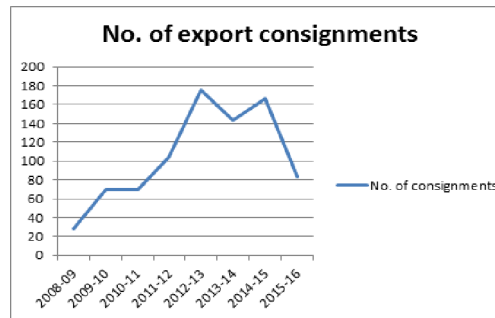
7-Fram 21-10-2008 to 01-10-2015

Figure 1.1



Source: Office of the Custodian, Trade Facilitation Centre Salamabad Uri (IAK)

Figure 1.2



Source: Office of the Custodian, Trade Facilitation Centre Salamabad Uri (IAK)

Imports Across LOC:

Table 2.1

Period	Cumulative 01-04-2015 to 18-09-2015				During 29, 30-09-2015 & 01-10-2015				Cumulative 01-04-2015 to 01-10-2015			
	Weight ⁸	NT ⁹	NC ¹⁰	Value ¹¹	Weight	NT	NC	Value	Weight	NT	NC	Value
2015-16	177073.62	933	80	325.3112	4161.27	53	03	8.6237	415937.04	924	83	333.93

Source: Office of the Custodian, Trade Facilitation Centre Salamabad Uri (IAK)

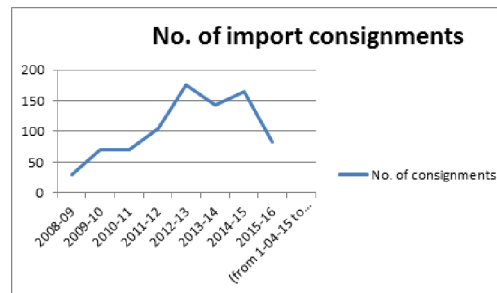
- 8- (in Qtls.)
- 9- Number of Trucks
- 10- Number of Consignments
- 11- (PNR)

Table 2.2

Period	Weight (in Quintals)	No. of trucks	No. of consignments	Value in Crores (PC) ¹²
2008-09	7239.39	219	29	NA ¹³
2009-10	193221.06	2662	70	92.4149
2010-11	159907.58	2413	70	260.4339
2011-12	201376.71	2960	104	407.7228
2012-13	298490.43	4119	175	566.7489
2013-14	238612.73	3299	143	405.2695
2014-15	164748.66	2458	164	611.1982
2015-16 ¹⁴	415937.04	984	83	333.9349
Total ¹⁵	1679587.6	19114	838	2677.7231

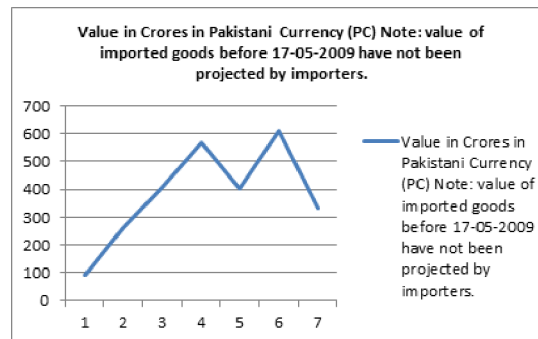
Source: Office of the Custodian, Trade Facilitation Centre Salamabad Uri (IAK)

Figure 2.1



Source: Office of the Custodian, Trade Facilitation Centre Salamabad Uri (IAK)

Figure 2.2



Source: Office of the Custodian, Trade Facilitation Centre Salamabad Uri (IAK)

12-In Pakistani Currency

13-Value of imported goods before 17-05-2009 have not been projected by importers.

14-From 1-04-15 to 01-10-2015

15-From 21-10-2008 to 01-10-2015

Conclusion

The paper documents historic silk routes and highlights the historical trade ties of Kashmir with Central Asia via Sialkot, Rawalpindi, and Lahore. The conflict that ravaged subcontinent meant that traditional trade routes that linked Kashmir to outside world got cut off. This led to sufferings on the part of people from both sides of Kashmir. But probably the most profound and unfortunately least considered aspect was the horrendous impact it had on those people living across this arbitrarily sketched LoC between India and Pakistan. The study depicts the causes of displacement of families and their movements across the LoC. The cross LoC trade hence needs to be looked into from the broader paradigm of 'peace building' in the region. Despite having moved from their traditional maximalist stances, the study also unveils, both India and Pakistan remain wedded to security-centric paradigm in their outlook toward the trade. The paper chronicles the working phenomenon of trade and predicts its possibility to fail in near future should the compulsions by both the governments not taken care of mutually. Also, unless the patrilineage factor isn't prioritized, which in itself is a huge trust building factor, the cross-LoC trade will remain peanuts compared to the endless possibilities it possesses.

Notes:

1. IAK stands for Indian Administered Kashmir whereas PAK stands for Pakistan Administered Kashmir, also termed as Azad Kashmir.
2. Some items present in the IAK list to export to PAK are present in import list of IAK as well.

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