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BUKHARA AND AFGHANISTAN TRADE RELATIONS: CUSTOMS SYSTEM, BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES

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Abstract: This article examines the role of the customs system in trade relations between Bukhara and Afghanistan, as well as its formation and development. The study analyzes customs regulations affecting the efficiency of economic relations between the two regions, administrative and legal barriers along trade routes, and their impact on trade volume.

Keywords: Bukhara, Afghanistan, trade relations, customs system, customs barriers, transit trade, border control, customs duties, economic cooperation, international trade.

Hundreds of merchants from the Bukhara Emirate were engaged in trade in various regions of Afghanistan, they had their own shops and stalls. Several dozen Bukhara citizens ended up living in Afghan cities for various reasons. Also, information about Afghan citizens ending up living in Bukhara for various reasons and factors is cited in historical literature. But in most cases we can see that they came to this country to engage in trade.

According to the researcher T. Safarov, the caravan route from Central Asia passed through such trading posts as Orenburg, Troitsk, Petropavlovsk and Semepalatinsk and reached the Nizhny Novgorod fair. The length of the Bukhara-Orenburg trade route was 1744 versts. There were more than 20 wells along the caravan route, which were used for watering camels and horses and as drinking water[1]. During this period, the trade relations of the Bukhara Emirate with the Russian Empire also developed well year by year, and the goods of the two countries were in demand.

Cities such as Mazar-i-Sharif, Shibergon, Charvilayat, Akhcha, Andkhoy, Saripul, and Maimana had a special place and role in the trade between the Bukhara Emirate and Afghanistan, from which green tea, pistachios, almonds, leather, wool were imported, and sugar, iron, cast iron pots, copper, matches, chests, and porcelain dishes were exported. Russian-made mules were transported to the city of Charvilayat in Afghanistan via Bukhara. The following crossing points played an important role in the trade between Bukhara and Afghanistan: Kelif and Kerki. Local industrial products occupied the main place in Bukhara-Afghanistan trade.

The caravans on the intercity trade route traveled at different times in different cities. For example, a trade caravan from Bukhara to Maimana took 14 days, while it took 27 days to reach Kabul via Balkh. The Bukhara-Herat trade route had 3 routes, covering distances of 22, 24, and 27 days[2].

By the end of the 19th century, the annual trade turnover between Bukhara and Afghanistan amounted to 10-15 thousand camel loads. Caravans of 200-300 camels regularly traveled on the trade and caravan routes connecting Afghanistan and Bukhara. Every year, 1,000 camels of indigo (a valuable vegetable dye) were brought to Bukhara from British India via Kabul[3].

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In mutual trade relations, products produced in local farms and items necessary for daily life played an important role. Copper and cast iron pots, chests, nina and thread, leather goods, and some shoes brought to the Bukhara emirate from Russia were also taken to the Afghan market by Bukhara merchants and sold there[4].

As is known, the border between the Afghan state and the Bukhara emirate passed through the Amu Darya. At the end of the 19th century, in order to completely draw Afghanistan into its economic and political sphere of influence, Russia extended its external border to the Bukhara-Afghan border, and the territory of the Bukhara emirate was now also guarded by Russian troops. With the opening of customs posts in Chochka Guzar in 1894, the trade route on the Bukhara-Afghan border passed through the Russian trading post. Russia established a number of customs posts at convenient crossing points of the Amu Darya, such as Kerki, Kelif, and Ayvaz. From that moment on, control of the Bukhara-Afghan trade routes and the collection of customs duties on trade passed to Russia and were fully subordinated to the interests of the Russian Empire. Nevertheless, Bukhara merchants played an important role in Russian-Afghan trade relations. Local merchants actively participated in the export of goods from Afghan cities to Bukhara to Russia, and vice versa, Russian products to Afghan cities[5].

By the middle of the 19th century, the importance of waterways in trade relations also increased. The Amu Darya River played an important role in this, transporting goods from Russia to Bukhara and then to Afghanistan. The increase in the importance of waterways during this period can be seen in the following reasons:

- the relatively low incidence of unpleasant incidents related to robbery on waterways;
- it was much cheaper to deliver goods to their destination than by land.

The Bukhara Emirate and Afghanistan The importance of waterways in the development of trade relations between Russia and Afghanistan through the mediation of the Bukhara Emirate was significant, with crossings at the following points: Kelif, Chochka-Guzar, Patta-Hissar, Ayvaz, Saray, Chubek, Bogorak, Kokul and Fayzabad crossings, where local boats were used[6]. Ships that sailed along the Vakhsh and Panj rivers played an important role in transporting goods belonging to the Bukhara emirate to the Afghan border.

In conclusion, although the customs system played an important role in trade relations between Bukhara and Afghanistan, high customs rates, administrative barriers, and problems with border control negatively affected the development of trade. Nevertheless, mutual economic interest and convenient trade routes ensured the continuation of trade relations between the two regions. Improving the customs system and reducing existing barriers is an important factor for the further development of trade relations.

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