



SOCIAL POSITION OF MERCHANTS OF BUKHARA EMIRATE

Shokhida Davurova

Director of the Central Archive of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, Republic of Uzbekistan

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36713/epra11230>

DOI No: 10.36713/epra11230

ABSTRACT

In the article has been analyzed the Bukhara region has been located on the “Great Silk Road” connecting the countries of the Near and Middle East with China and India since ancient times, the majority of the population were merchants and they actively engaged in commercial activities with different nations, and the fact that different strata of the population engaged in trade in the Emirate of Bukhara is analyzed with the help of historical sources.

KEY WORDS: *Emirate of Bukhara, commercial affairs, domestic market, cities, agriculture, horticulture, cash crops.*

INTRODUCTION

Since ancient times, the territory of Bukhara is located on the “Great Silk Road”, which connects the countries of the Near and Middle East with China and India, most of the inhabitants are merchants, and they have been active in commercial activities with various nations, so it is called “Madinat ut-Tujjor” meaning “City of Merchants” is also famous for its qualities [1, p.36]. Therefore, the position of Bukhara merchants was high not only inside the country, but also outside it in economic and social-political terms.

RESEARCH METHODS

In fact, different strata of the population were engaged in trade in Bukhara Emirate. According to sources, the number of traders in the markets fluctuated seasonally. The start of seasonal farming operations in the spring also had an impact on the decrease in domestic market sales compared to the summer and autumn seasons. For example, in winter, 250 merchants were active in the big city markets of Bukhara, Samarkand, Karshi, Kattakorgon, Karmana, and in summer and autumn, the number of sellers reached 350-400 at the expense of farmers. 100 traders worked in the markets of Khoja Arif, Kumushkent, Peshku, Boston, Sultanabad, Yangikurgan, Pirmast districts of the emirate in winter, and 140-150 in summer and autumn [2, p.25-27].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Residents living in each province and district of the emirate specialize in growing their own products for the markets. In particular, the majority of residents of Vobkent and Shofrikon districts were wealthy merchants [3, p.36]. Pirmast district grew grapes, Khutfar mainly agricultural products and needed to buy more craft products. In addition to Uzbeks, 100 Indians, about 200 Iranians and 500 Jewish families lived in Karmana. Rich Jews were engaged in money exchange in the markets [3, p.39].

Karnob district was engaged in the breeding of a large number of thoroughbred Arabian horses. Karnobs were also involved in the trade of water from Kir spring and Naiman spring. They sold water in buckets. 1,000 coins per hour and 20,000 coins per day were paid for irrigating crops with spring water [3, p.42]. Turkmen tribes made up the majority of the population of Kerki region, and they were rich and wealthy. The men of the population were engaged in agriculture, and the women wove various rugs and woolen cloths from camel wool and regularly delivered them to the market. Craftsmen of the cities of Karshi, Termiz and Sherabad in the eastern region have a special place in the field of carpet weaving. In particular, the trade of Qamashi village’s Arab carpets was very active in the market of Karshi city. Especially, Karshi and Sherabad carpets were popular with their designs. In fact, Sherabad’s various replica carpets were exhibited in Paris at that time and received high praise. The carpets were sold to the markets of India, Russia, Iran, and Turkey by large merchants from Bukhara, Afghanistan, and the Caucasus.

In the market of Guzor Begili, the trade is also intense. This market is equal in size to the market of Makarevsky Fair in Russia. More than 5,000,000 coins are traded every week. For example, 53,000 sheep are slaughtered for sale in the markets every week in Guzor and its districts. Cattle breeders from the cities of Bukhara, Samarkand, Karshi, Shakhrisabz and various districts came here and bought a large number of large cattle. A person who did not see the market with his own eyes did not believe in the



number and breadth of trade deals concluded in it. The inhabitants of the eastern part of Guzar were engaged in the trade of gypsum, lead ore, mountain mummy, firewood and coal.

The territory of the Karakol region is large and the population is dense. But he was hardly engaged in trade. The region was famous for breeding Karakol sheep, agriculture and products obtained from salt mines in the western part [3, p.29]. The black curly wool of the Karakol sheep and the bluish-gray variety grown by the Karshi Arabs are of high quality and are considered a popular product. Therefore, under the leadership of the emir himself, big merchants such as Ubaydullahhoja, Nasriddinboy, Yakhyoboy and Jorabek Arabov spent their personal funds from 15,000-20,000 to 400,000 coins for the sale of black sheep skins every year. Despite the dense population of Charjoi Bek, it was considered one of the regions with a good economic condition and developed trade. Coal loaded on more than 10,000 camels from orchards in the south was taken to the Bukhara city market and sold [3, p.63]. In addition to coal trading, the population has gained fame in the markets by horticulture and cultivation of cash crops.

The people of Hisar were engaged in grain cultivation and supplied the markets of the whole emirate with wheat flour and grain. Rich merchants made up the majority of the Barlos tribe. Also, olachas woven by artisans, knives and daggers made by blacksmiths, and seals were popular. People from Denov settled along the slopes of Bobotog, engaged in dry farming, making charcoal from maple trees in the forests, picking almonds and selling them. Tajiks grew grapes and supplied markets in all cities and villages of Hisar with raisins [3, p.123].

The above examples confirm that almost all segments of the population traded in the internal markets of the Bukhara Emirate. Among them, we can see that from the representatives of the emir's family to the court officials, in particular, qushbegi, devanbegi, korchiboshi, large landowners, scholars, artisans, and farmers were engaged. In a word, people who have a certain amount of free products or capital are actively involved in trade relations.

Bukhara merchants were masters of their work. One of the tourists who came to the Emirate of Bukhara evaluated them as follows: "Trade is in the first place in Bukhara. So far, I have never seen merchants in any market of other countries treat their customers with special attention. Merchants first invite customers to tea, and then make trade agreements with them". In the emirate, merchants are divided into several groups according to their position in society and their financial capabilities. This situation also served as an indicator showing specific internal social stratifications among the merchants. In this regard, the first category of the city's merchants were "merchants", who were mainly engaged in caravan trade [4, p.38]. Such merchants gained an understanding and detailed knowledge of various countries and cities behind their trades. The second category included rich merchants who kept their goods in caravansary in large cities and carried out large-scale wholesale trade [5]. Traders in Bukhara are conventionally divided into three categories according to the scope of their activities, foreign trade, intercity trade and domestic market traders. Foreign trade was mostly in the hands of large merchants. They owned trade and craft facilities, stalls and caravanserais, which brought a lot of income to the country. In particular, the merchants belonging to the emir's house traded black sheep skins in the "New Emir" palace in Bukhara, and cotton raw materials in the "Old Emir" palace. In "Kushbegi Palace" there was a hotel for Iranian merchants, and in "Rajabbek Palace" of Devonbegi, a large storehouse was used to store goods of merchants [6].

By the beginning of the 19th century, large merchants, through their assistants, bought raw materials such as cotton, silk, and black leather directly from farmers in various cities and villages. In particular, in one of the archival documents of that time, it is noted that a merchant named Hayitmuradboy took and sold a large amount of goods such as carpets, palos, woolen blankets, silk gauzes, large bags and khurjun bought from Kalif region to the city of Bukhara [7]. Also, each craftsman working in the cities of the emirate had his own name according to the type of work. For example, weavers of various fabrics - weavers, leather workers - tanners, book binders - bookmakers, money changers - money changers, makers of various metal household items - blacksmiths, pottery makers - potters, poplar, willow, mulberry and walnut chests and those who make shelves - master carpenters, and those who build boats and ships - are called boatmen and shipwrights[8]. Various trade goods produced by these artisans were considered the most sought-after products of domestic and foreign markets.

As large merchants in the emirate conclude various national trade agreements to carry out large-scale trade, they have attracted knowledgeable mirzas who are good at accounting and writing. In the domestic markets of the Emirate, those engaged in wholesale trade of all goods had several small servants, that is, mirzars, who were assigned their duties at the workplace. One of them was considered to be a trusted representative of his master, who settles accounts with regular customers, receives money, locks cash in a safe and fulfills the responsibility of the treasury. The mirzas who worked with rich merchants were assigned a monthly salary based on mutual agreement. Emirati traders included independent traders who had their own shops in different cities, shopkeepers who rented the shops of very rich traders, sellers of goods aimed at meeting daily needs - grocers, and there were also sellers-carriers carrying things by hand [9].

Another group of traders was made up of people who wandered around the villages and small towns around the city on market days. They bought certain types of products and raw materials from rural markets in cash or barter and then sold these products in urban markets. They were peddlers, and after collecting a certain amount of capital from their trade, they bought or rented a shop and sold the goods of the rich merchants in the city to the nation [10]. Brokers played a special role in the development of trade in the internal markets of Bukhara Emirate [11]. Brokers occupy an important place in domestic markets and stalls, and without their participation, buyers, especially nomads from the steppes and villagers who came to city markets, did not sell or buy anything.



Brokers also took an active part in retail sales processes in Bukhara city markets. In particular, they could always be found at the sale of livestock on every market day. According to information about Bukhara: "A broker who received 5-10 silver coins for one animal from a buyer who came to the market to buy livestock, conducted trade with the seller. After the transaction reaches the specified amount, the broker shakes the hands of the seller and the buyer and completes the transaction. Then the broker charged the seller and the buyer not 1-2 coins, but 3-4 coins for the service fee. Before the seller and buyer give this money to the broker, he made 1 or 2 more trades in the market" [12]. So, the brokers tried to agree the price of the goods sold between the buyer and the seller and received a certain amount of service fee for this work. In addition, money changers, cashiers and commission agents [13] also served in trade.

In the economic life of the city of Bukhara, the money changers, who are engaged in the exchange of various currency units, also played an important role. In particular, According to P.I. Demezov, in Bukhara in the first half of the 19th century there was a separate market of money changers named "Chorsui Sarrafon" [14, p.58]. According to I.V. Vitkevich, besides the Bukharians, who were engaged in money exchange, the money-changers' market was mainly occupied by Indians, who carried out usury [14, p.98]. Money changers also belonged to the social structure of merchants, and they also had their own market, caravanserai, and living quarters.

In the development of trade in the Bukhara Emirate, khassid, that is, middlemen, also played a special role among merchants. Qassids mediated between merchants and buyers in the timely return of money for the loaned merchandise. At that time, the big merchants in Bukhara made trade relations with their colleagues in different districts and by lending their goods for a certain period without paper documents, without receipts.

Russian tourist N. Stremukhov, who was in the Emirates, explains this type of trade as follows: "Bukharans do not want to buy various products for cash, but borrow them for a short or long term with the condition of paying in installments. In Bukhara, merchants carry out trade without any paper documents until a certain fixed period, only by giving loans in person with the presence of a broker appointed by the government" [16]. So, in the city of Bukhara, skilled middlemen-cashiers, who undertook to collect the debts of big merchants within the specified period, were also actively involved in trade relations.

The largest trade turnover in the country was in the hands of representatives of the emir's house and palace officials. In particular, during the reign of Amir Nasrullah Khan, the sale of blackcurrants was carried out only in the courtyard of Sarayi Barra, which belonged to the new madrasa of the emir [17]. An official decree was also issued prohibiting the sale of cattle without the permission of the emir. Those who disobeyed this decree had their property confiscated and were even sentenced to death. On the other hand, it should be noted that even during the reign of Amir Muzaffar, due to the many violations of this decree, in 1868, trading in this palace was strictly prohibited [18].

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it can be noted that the social and ethnic composition of merchants operating in the Bukhara Emirate during the research period was different. The markets of Bukhara have played an important role in the economic life of the country, as well as connecting and mediating in foreign trade relations. Therefore, from emirs and courtiers to scholars, artisans and peasants with moderate capital were engaged in trade. On the other hand, it should be noted that Bukhara merchants who saw the world through foreign trade or interacted with different categories and strata of the population as a result of trading activities had a broad outlook, were educated and aspired to enlightenment.

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